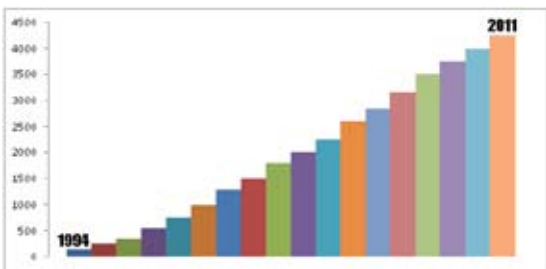




The first issue of Carers News was published in June 1994. Depicting carers who served as VOCAL's first office bearers and a small staff team (pictured above), it promoted the aim to provide support for all carers under one umbrella.

## Celebrating our 50th issue

Since the first publication of Carers News in 1994, the number of carers reading the magazine has increased from 150 to over 4,000, and now also includes over 600 practitioners.



VOCAL has produced over 180,000 copies of Carers News, and the magazine has reached some 15,000 carers in the last 18 years.

## Inside this issue . . .

Welfare Reform Bill updates	<b>page 3</b>
New short breaks funding	<b>page 3</b>
Self directed support focus group	<b>page 4</b>
Family addictions seminar	<b>page 4</b>
Useful website resources	<b>page 4</b>

## 'All under one umbrella'

An ambitious aim for VOCAL, and the headline of the first issue of Carers News published in 1994 (left). In this 50th issue we look back on Carers News headlines which have tracked the development of the carers movement in Scotland over the last 18 years . . .



In 1995 Carers News celebrated the Carers

(Recognition and Services)

Act with the headline: 'Carers (and foxes) win the Day!', a reference to the Fox-Hunting Bill and Carers Bill, both passed on the same day.

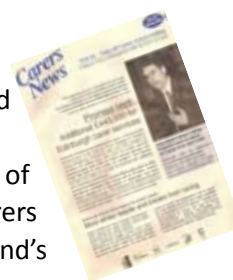


This celebratory mood was followed by a stark warning to

Government in 1996 Carers News: 'Care-less Talk Costs Lives' - as the new Act stopped short of providing carers with legal rights.



A new Scottish Government was commended in 2000 for its implementation of the National Carers Strategy: 'Scotland's Parliament has delivered for carers', followed by the plea 'Make personal care free'.



The new Community Care and Health Bill in 2001 prompted the

headline: 'In on the Act!', a reference to areas of the Bill which did not deliver on carers expectations.

Edinburgh's respite plan - 'Breaking New Ground' - dominated headlines in 2004, followed four years later by Scottish Government's commitment to 10,000 additional respite weeks.



In more recent years, the 2009 historic Carer Poverty Protest featured on the front page.

Since 2009, VOCAL's headlines mirrored many changes to Government policy, respite provision, and local procurement. At all times, Carers News promoted the need for recognition and rights of carers as pillars of Scotland's health and social care system and as equal partners in the provision of care. We will continue to promote this for the next 50 issues and beyond!



## New Energy Assistance Package for Carers

Carers in receipt of Carers Allowance will qualify for free energy assistance help, as new regulations extend the eligibility for the Energy Assistance Package. More information is available from the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012 or visit [www.energyassistancepackage.com](http://www.energyassistancepackage.com).



## ABOUT VOCAL

A carer provides unpaid care to a family member, partner, relative or friend of any age who needs help to manage a long term condition, disability, physical or mental health problem or addiction.

VOCAL supports carers in all family or relationship settings, be they defined by kinship, partnership, friendship, affection or obligation.

VOCAL delivers carer support through two carers centres in Edinburgh and Midlothian and staff in the community.

### What do we do?

Carers can access the following:

- Information & advice
- Practical & emotional support
- Training and learning events
- Social & leisure opportunities
- Family Support (Addictions)
- Counselling
- Groupwork
- Advocacy

### How to contact us:

VOCAL Carers Centre  
8 - 13 Johnston Terrace  
Edinburgh EH1 2PW

### Telephone

0131 622 6666 - General  
622 7625 - Advocacy  
466 8082 - Counselling  
672 0987 - South Edinburgh  
449 8606 - South West Edinburgh  
622 6262 - Family Support  
Addictions (FSA)  
672 0986 - FSA South Edinburgh  
0131 663 6869 - Midlothian

### Email and website

centre@vocal.org.uk  
www.edinburghcarers.co.uk

VOCAL is an active member of the Coalition of Carers in Scotland and affiliated to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Carers Scotland.

Dear carers,

For many carers, 2012 will be a difficult year, particularly financially. That's why VOCAL will increase the focus on carers' economic wellbeing.

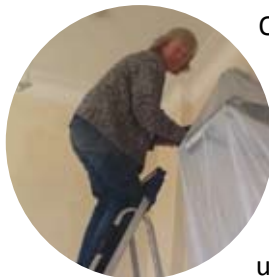
We will help carers maximise their benefits and income, provide more support to plan financially for the future, support carers in employment and help where carers need to manage debt. We are preparing a special issue of Carers News on financial support and benefit changes for June 2012.

In 2012, the Scottish Government will introduce new legislation on Self Directed Support (SDS). This will assist people with support needs and their carers to make better use of direct payments. The legislation will pave the way for local authorities to make direct payments available to carers.

As the Bill goes through Parliament committees, VOCAL will support carers to make a strong case for people to have a right to employ relatives where this is their preferred option and safeguards are in place. We have advertised two focus groups for carers in this issue, see page 4 for details.

As Edinburgh Council and the NHS reduce funding for services, we need to scrutinise the use of carer funds more efficiently, and hold people to account. May's local government elections are an opportunity to do so. Our April issue will publish Scotland's Carers Manifesto and set out what local parties intend to do to support carers and the people they care for.

Finally, carers often ask us how they can support VOCAL. Some suggested we should launch a monthly 100 Club to raise funds for our work. We have taken up this suggestion - see below for more details.



Others offer practical support, such as the four carers (pictured left) who recently spent a day painting our training room. I use this opportunity to thank them and over 50 volunteers who regularly contribute to make VOCAL work.

As we go into a New Year, we are determined to keep up and increase our efforts to support carers, and we are in turn encouraged and energised by your support and good wishes.

With every good wish for a happy and successful 2012.

Patrick Layden



## VOCAL's Carers 100 Club

Carers have asked VOCAL to start a 100 Club – a monthly lottery which raises funds for carer support and pays out 50% of funds raised in prizes. In this issue of Carers News you will find a leaflet about the 100 Club. To take part, simply return the leaflet to the freepost address provided. For details contact Gillian Hewitt on 0131 622 6666 or email [centre@vocal.org.uk](mailto:centre@vocal.org.uk)



## BENEFITS

### Keeping up to date with Welfare Reform

**With many key decisions still to be made on the details of the Welfare Reform Bill, it is important for carers to know where to go to get the right information.**

If you can access the internet, there are a number of useful websites and e-bulletins that you can sign up to and get regular information:

**VOCAL's website - [www.edinburghcarers.co.uk](http://www.edinburghcarers.co.uk)**  
 VOCAL's website has useful links to information about the Bill, for different groups of carers. Carers can also subscribe to our e-bulletin to get regular updates.

**Carers Scotland website - [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)**  
 Carers Scotland have put together a list of frequently asked questions about the Bill and produce useful briefings.

**CPAG in Scotland website - [www.cpag.org.uk/scotland](http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland)**  
 This website has a number of useful factsheets, and more detailed information about the Bill and the impact it will have in Scotland.

**VOCAL's Carer Support Teams** can provide information on the latest updates about the Bill. They can be contacted on: 0131 622 6666 (Edinburgh) or 0131 663 6869 (Midlothian)

### Some quick facts:

- A new benefit - Universal Credit - is to be introduced in October 2013, replacing six existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for working age people
- Carers who currently do not qualify for means-tested benefits and just get Carer's Allowance at £53.90 a week will not be directly affected by the introduction of Universal Credit. The Government has not announced any plans to reform the Carer's Allowance.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and will be introduced in 2013 and 2014
- Social fund community care grants, budgeting and crisis loans will be abolished from April 2013 and replaced by a system of 'payments on account'

**Watch this space . . . VOCAL is preparing a special 'Money Matters' issue of Carers News which we will send you later this year, when more details about the Welfare Reform Bill are known.**

### New short breaks funding

The Scottish Government have launched a new fund to improve short breaks for disabled children, young people and their families worth nearly £2 million. It follows the release of 2011 Local Authority respite figures which reveal declining levels of overnight provision for disabled children and young people. For more information visit [www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk](http://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk)

### Mental Health changes

There have been some changes to the way in which mental health services are delivered in Edinburgh. There are now two teams covering North and South Edinburgh. The contact details for the Mental Health Officer duty service remains unchanged (529 2200). The new contact details are: North Edinburgh (529 2200), South Edinburgh (537 6800).

### Action Group's BEMAS Transitions project

The Action Group's BEMAS Transitions project is aimed at helping black and ethnic minority young people who have disabilities or other support needs to think about their future. They help with a wide range of issues and work with young people individually, in groups with other young people, and include their families, carers and friends. For more details please call the Transitions project on 0131 475 2315 or email [infoandadvice@actiongroup.org.uk](mailto:infoandadvice@actiongroup.org.uk)

### Living well with dementia resource

A new DVD called 'Living Well with Dementia' has been launched by Alzheimer Scotland (email [helpline@alzscot.org](mailto:helpline@alzscot.org) for copies). Carers may also be interested in the Open Dementia e-learning programme available at [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk).

### Edinburgh West Carers

#### Mike Crockart MP surgeries

VOCAL is supporting a surgery run by local MP Mike Crockart, for carers living in the Edinburgh West constituency. The surgery will take place on Friday 2 March, 10am - 2pm at the constituency office (1a Drum Brae Avenue). Carers from the local area are invited to attend, and a member of VOCAL's carer support team will be on hand to answer any questions. For more details contact [mike.crockart.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:mike.crockart.mp@parliament.uk) or call 0131 339 0339.





## VOCAL's Carer Survey published

After receiving comments from over 600 carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian, VOCAL decided to publish the results of our annual carer survey. The report has been widely circulated and shared as the comments reflect a wealth of caring experience. Carers have highlighted priorities which should be of interest to

planning and commissioning officers and other service providers. Thanks to everyone who took part in the survey. Copies are available to download at: [www.vocal.org.uk](http://www.vocal.org.uk)

## Self directed support focus groups

VOCAL is organising two focus groups to discuss elements of the Government's new Self Directed Support Bill, and prepare to give evidence to Scottish Parliament committees. The groups are:

### **Direct Payments for Carers**

Tuesday 31 January, 10-12.30 includes a light lunch.

### **The use of Direct Payments to employ family members**

Wednesday 8 February, 1.30-3.30pm, includes a light lunch. If you wish to take part, please register your interest with Sebastian Fischer by email: [sfischer@vocal.org.uk](mailto:sfischer@vocal.org.uk) or call 0131 622 6666.

## Families affected by substance misuse

A seminar to explore the emotional and practical implications of caring for a family member addicted to alcohol or drugs, will be held on **21 February** at the Schoolhouse, **Astley Ainslie Hospital**, 1pm – 4.30pm.

If you work with families or carers and are interested in attending this free seminar, please email Carole Kelly, Carer Services Development Manager, [carole.kelly@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:carole.kelly@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk) for more information.

## Research study: caring for a partner with dementia

A Psychology student from Edinburgh Napier University is conducting research for her dissertation on caring for a partner with dementia. She would like to interview carers who live with and support a partner with dementia, and who access social care support services (eg. in-home care, respite service, day centres, support groups). Interviews will take place from 16 January - 12 February. Contact Danielle Leahy, email: [08010368@live.napier.ac.uk](mailto:08010368@live.napier.ac.uk) for details.

## Useful websites and resources

### Edinburgh's new carer training website

The new Edinburgh carers website lists free training and events, including social and leisure activities, for carers. Go to [www.carerstraining.co.uk](http://www.carerstraining.co.uk) to have a look.

### NetBuddy: tips and advice for parent carers

[www.netbuddy.org.uk](http://www.netbuddy.org.uk) is an award-winning website for parents, carers and learning disability professionals. It is a space to hunt for ideas, swap tips and access information on everything from brushing teeth to challenging behaviour.

### Care of older people

NHS Education for Scotland, and the Scottish Social Services Council have developed a website with information on care of older people - visit [www.sskss.org.uk/olderpeople](http://www.sskss.org.uk/olderpeople)

### Stroke carers website

A new training resource has been launched by Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland. A great source of advice for stroke carers, it is available at [www.stroke4carers.org](http://www.stroke4carers.org)

## A New Year, A New Hobby

Third Age Computer Fun is a charity providing home tutoring and group sessions to teach valuable skills to make the most of the internet. Clubs meet weekly, annual membership is £25 per year and £3 per session or £5 for housebound. Contact Mamie on 0131 346 1179, email [info@thirdagecf.org.uk](mailto:info@thirdagecf.org.uk) or visit [www.thirdagecf.org.uk](http://www.thirdagecf.org.uk).



If you would like to update or remove your details, or would like your name added to VOCAL's mailing list to receive Carers News, then complete this form and return to: VOCAL Carers Centre, FREEPOST 3172, Edinburgh, EH1 OXG

Title: ..... Name: .....

Add

Address: .....

Remove

Previous address (if updating): .....

Postcode: ..... Tel: ..... Email: .....

Update

Condition of person being cared for: .....

Relationship to person being cared for: .....

The information provided in this form will be stored on VOCAL's database. This will allow us to let carers know about events, training and other relevant opportunities. We may occasionally contact carers by telephone. We will add carers to VOCAL's carer email list. We will not share any personal information with a third party unless required to do so and will always seek to obtain consent first. Information is regularly checked to ensure it is accurate and up to date. If you wish to view the information we hold about you or if you wish your details to be removed, please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 or email [centre@vocal.org.uk](mailto:centre@vocal.org.uk). Please tick here if you do not wish VOCAL to do this