

Our priorities for the future

Carer demand for VOCAL support continues to increase year on year. One of our main priorities will therefore be raising the necessary funds to assist the growing number of carers to manage their caring role with support and confidence.

We will continue our transition to offering carers more personalised support. We work with carers to identify the key issues in their lives, assist them to plan for the future and to access relevant networks, funds and services to support them in their caring role.

We will strive to widen the range of interventions carers can access: financial planning; income maximisation; debt management; specialist advice and support on legal matters such as guardianship and power of attorney; employment coaching and much more. We will strive to provide a wider choice of support through VOCAL's Carers Centres in Edinburgh and Midlothian, home visits and support from other agencies.

Supporting carers to cope with the emotional impact of caring will remain a major priority for VOCAL. We will continue to seek long-term funding for the Carers Counselling service and for peer support activities which help carers share their concerns and learn from others.

We will carefully analyse the responses of over 600 carers to our survey in July 2011. The priorities expressed by carers through this survey will guide the development of future services, subject to funding.

In Midlothian, we will deliver a new hospital discharge carer support project and will prioritise identifying and moving to new premises.

Nationally, VOCAL supports the government's direction for self directed support: introducing direct payments for carers. We will work with carers to influence new legislation on Self Directed Support to relax restrictions on people with support needs who wish to use direct payments to employ relatives.

We will also continue to support the work of the Coalition of Carers in Scotland, to ensure Scotland's carers' movement grows in strength to reflect the increasing responsibilities placed on a growing number of carers.

In all our work we will be guided by the needs and aspirations of carers. We will promote opportunities for carers to engage in consultations and shape the direction of future services and support.

Statement of Financial Activities		2011		2010	
		for the year ending 31 March 2011			
Total incoming resources	863,468	799,157	799,349	820,716	64,119
Total resources expended	799,349	(21,559)	445	153	64,564
Net income for year					(21,406)
Net movement in funds					64,564
Funds at 1 April 2010			264,666	243,260	264,666
Funds at 31 March 2011	307,824	243,260			
Balance sheet at 31 March 2011					
Fixed Assets			14,294	28,093	14,294
Tangible			93,150	92,705	93,150
Investments			107,444	120,798	107,444
Current Assets			74,225	19,868	74,225
Debtors			195,147	152,723	195,147
Cash at bank			269,372	172,591	269,372
Creditors due within one year			68,992	50,129	68,992
Net current assets / (liabilities)			200,380	122,462	200,380
Net assets			307,824	243,260	307,824
Funds			99,994	82,331	99,994
Restricted			194,294	153,093	194,294
Designated			13,536	7,836	13,536
General fund					
Total funds			307,824	243,260	307,824

Our funders and supporters

VOCAL's carer services are partly funded by block contracts with NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council. Several service contracts in Edinburgh and Midlothian are funded from time-limited government funding through the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership, NHS Carers Information Strategy or Fairer Scotland funding.

The Big Lottery Fund and several national and local trust funds contribute vital funding for carer services which provide additional capacity, added value, direct carer benefit and improved quality of service to those in greatest need.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers contributed some funding for individual carer grants and educational bursaries. VOCAL receives many contributions in cash and kind from carers and supporters, and we thank everyone for their kind help and support.

VOCAL is governed by a Board of Directors primarily consisting of carers and former carers. Carer services are managed and delivered by a team of over 20 part-time and full-time staff and some 50 volunteers, including those who run the Carer Centre reception areas and who work with carers as counsellors or advocates.



VOCAL's work in 2010-11 and priorities for the future



5,964 carer contacts

Over the course of the year VOCAL had 5,964 one-to-one carer contacts. Our Carer Support Team provides free, confidential support on all aspects of caring including benefits and financial support, respite and community care.



1,823 carers

Our Carer and Family Support Teams worked directly with 1,823 carers, offering a person-centred service delivered through home visits, appointments at our Carers Centres and local support in the community.



Over 4,000 carers were supported through regular e-bulletin and newsletter communication, and personalised information on training and events.

9,950 people visited VOCAL's website since its re-launch in October 2010.

VOCAL assisted carers in receiving a total of £160, 499 in additional financial support.



1,246 new carers

We identified and supported 1,246 new carers during 2010-11. VOCAL works in partnership with GPs and health and social care teams to improve early identification and referral of carers.



1,397 counselling hours

Our counselling service offered 1,397 hours of counselling to 72 carers. Demand for counselling and emotional support is increasing and VOCAL continues to seek long-term funding to secure the continuation of this valuable service.



554 carers (training)

554 carers attended our *Caring with Confidence* training programme. We offered 39 courses, seminars and workshops designed for carers in a range of different caring situations. We supported several hundred carers to access leisure and healthy living courses and events.



90 carers (advocacy)

Our advocacy service provided intensive support to 90 carers experiencing complex difficulties with their caring role. This included support at meetings and formal complaint procedures.



145 carers (groupwork)

145 carers attended 21 workshops on dealing with guilt, changing relationships, loss and bereavement and stress management.

The Princess Royal Trust VOCAL Carers Centre

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Introduction to VOCAL

VOCAL manages two VOCAL Carers Centres in Edinburgh and Midlothian and a local carer support service in South Edinburgh. Our services include:

- advice, information and planning for the future
- emotional support, stress management and counselling
- training and learning opportunities
- social and leisure activities
- benefits, legal and power of attorney surgeries
- carer advocacy service
- support for people affected by someone else's addiction
- gateway to other services.

Outcome evaluations for carers

595 carers completed outcome evaluations over the past 12 months. They raised 2,802 issues or concerns, reporting big or small improvements 74% of the time:

96% of the time carers reported big or small improvements in feeling better informed about issues linked to their caring role

84% of the time carers reported big or small improvements in their confidence in managing their caring role

77% of the time carers reported big or small improvements in their physical and mental well-being

76% of the time carers reported big or small improvements in their ability to deal with changing relationships resulting from the caring role

Delivering on quality

In October 2010 VOCAL became the first organisation in Scotland to be awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark Level 2 by Charities Evaluation Service (CES) and the title of Centre of Excellence from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

The awards reflect the strong collective commitment to excellence in carer support by VOCAL board members, staff and volunteers and a strong tradition of partnership work with funders and service partners.

VOCAL's commitment to delivering high quality services to carers was reinforced in the 2011 Carer Survey in which 87% of carers rated their satisfaction with VOCAL's services as either excellent or good.

Case study: Support for older carers

Margaret* (81) first heard about VOCAL at a local day centre which her husband, who has dementia, attends once a week.

Following a home visit from VOCAL's Carer Advice and Development Officer, Margaret identified a number of priorities. She wanted to be better informed, feel more confident in her caring role and improve her health and well-being.

Margaret was referred to a number of VOCAL's services including: a Power of Attorney surgery; dementia training courses and a carer reading group. She was also supported to apply for Attendance Allowance for her husband, who was awarded the low rate.

Getting a suitable and regular break from caring was a key concern for Margaret. It proved difficult to find a service that met her husband's needs and this left her feeling increasingly stressed and exhausted.

Following a successful application to VOCAL's Short Breaks Fund, Margaret was awarded money to organise a sitter service for her husband. The funding allowed her to try out a new service and gave her the flexibility to purchase care which suited both of them, rather than working around set hours and days.

Since contacting VOCAL, Margaret feels more informed and confident in her caring role although improving her own health and well-being remains a key priority. She says; "It has made all the difference to know that there is someone who can give me support to continue in my caring role."

*name has been changed to protect carer's identity