



A fond farewell...

Partners and colleagues from health, social care and the voluntary sector in Midlothian joined VOCAL staff to wish a fond farewell to Midlothian Service Manager Jan Barnett (pictured above meeting The Princess Royal in 2003) who left VOCAL in September.

Jan has worked with Midlothian carers for over 13 years, building on the work of Carers Action Midlothian to raise carer awareness, provide support and create long lasting partnerships with health and social care. In the last three years Jan has overseen the move to our new Midlothian carer centre in Hardengreen – now a vibrant hub of activity for carers with free training, health surgeries, social and peer activities.



We wish her all the best for the future!

Carer coffee mornings

Come along and join us for a cuppa & cake. Whether you are new to caring and want to have a look around the carer centre or if you're a regular visitor and want to catch up with other carers and make new friends – we look forward to welcoming you!

Our next coffee mornings will be held on: Wednesday 23rd November & Wednesday 21st December between 10am & 12noon at the VOCAL Midlothian carer centre (see over for full address).



Carer workshops & events



Visit the new mobile-friendly Carer Events website to find information on our free courses, social groups and workshops. Go to www.carerstraining.co.uk and click on 'Learning & Social' to see what is available and register online.

Your Support, Your Choice

Would you like to find out how to get more choice and control over the support that you or the person you care for receives? Come along to one of our workshops and learn about creative options that can help you live the life you choose. Call VOCAL Midlothian on **0131 663 6869** or visit www.carerstraining.co.uk to find out more.

Craft & chat

Join in our fun regular groups to learn or develop a new skill whilst meeting other carers and having a cuppa and a blether including:

- Craft circle - bring your knitting and/or cross-stitch or use our starter kits to learn from others in the group.
- Book art - have a go at book folding/cutting and create a masterpiece of your own.
- Card making - come along and learn how to make your own cards for all occasions.



For dates and to book your place, please call **0131 663 6869**.

Your own health & wellbeing: free health checks for carers

VOCAL Midlothian are working in partnership with the Community Health Inequalities Team to offer appointments for carers to come along and speak with a specialist nurse about their physical health needs.

Carers will have a basic health check including blood pressure, weight and waist circumference. The specialist nurses also support carers to identify aspects of their lifestyle they would like to make changes to, offering the appropriate referrals and providing information on activities and support within the local community.

Book your health check now - call us on 0131 663 6869.

Think working carer: Raising awareness within NHS Lothian

To mark Carers' Week 2016, VOCAL supported NHS Lothian to record a series of films to raise awareness of the unpaid carers who work for the organisation, valuing their contribution and highlighting the support available to enable employees to better balance their work and caring roles. You can watch the videos here: vimeo.com/nhsllothian



Tim Davison,
Chief Executive NHS Lothian

Managers and staff were interviewed for the films including:

- **Podiatrist Rachel Derbyshire and GP Alyson Reive** talking about being working carers.
- **Clinical Nurse Manager Dawn Arundel** highlighting the importance of staff letting their managers know about their caring responsibilities to enable their manager to support them.
- **NHS Lothian Chief Executive Tim Davison** (pictured above) recognising the contribution staff who are carers make to the organisation and detailing NHS Lothian's commitment to supporting staff who are carers.
- **Employee Director Alex Joyce** detailing the support available to staff through occupational health, counselling, physiotherapy and the unions.

VOCAL has also been delivering **Think Working Carer** sessions for managers of some of Lothian's biggest employers.

Ensuring that line managers are aware that some colleagues have unpaid caring responsibilities is both good staff management practice and good business sense. Otherwise they could lose the skills, knowledge & experience that these employees bring to their work.

To learn more about supporting employees who have caring responsibilities please contact VOCAL at midlothian@vocal.org.uk or call us on **0131 663 6869**.

Do you know about the VOCAL 100 club?

The VOCAL 100 club is a monthly lottery which raises funds for carer support. For a minimum of £5 a month, you have the chance to win one of six cash prizes in every monthly draw. To join contact Gillian Hewitt at ghe Witt@vocal.org.uk or call **0131 622 6666**.

Planning for the future: Setting up Power of Attorney

VOCAL are supporting a Midlothian-wide campaign to increase awareness and uptake of Power of Attorney (POA) including a 'Midlothian POA Awareness Month' in November 2016.



Power of Attorney is a legal document which gives someone you trust powers to act on your behalf if you become unable to make decisions for yourself for example due to dementia or other health conditions. As well as giving powers over financial matters a POA

can grant authority to make decisions on welfare matters such as care, treatment plans and where you live. It is often assumed that a spouse, long term partner or next of kin will automatically have the authority to access the bank account of the person they care for, or make decisions on their behalf if they were to become incapable due to ill-health or an accident. However this is not usually the case and POA can only be granted whilst the person cared for still has capacity, so it is really important to plan ahead.

Many older people qualify for help with the cost of setting up POA under the Legal Aid Scheme. The Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network are producing a guide to POA (available from VOCAL from November) with details of Solicitors in Midlothian who can provide help with POA under the Legal Aid Scheme as well as local Solicitors who have agreed to offer reduced fees for POA work during the November POA Awareness month.

VOCAL offers free monthly appointments with an independent advisor to support carers and their cared for to write and register a POA document. This free service can replace the need to visit a solicitor. To book an appointment please get in touch by emailing midlothian@vocal.org.uk or phoning VOCAL on **0131 663 6869.**



Where to find VOCAL Midlothian:

VOCAL Midlothian Carer Centre:

30/1 Hardengreen Estate,
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Tel: 0131 663 6869

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Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/MidlothianCarers

