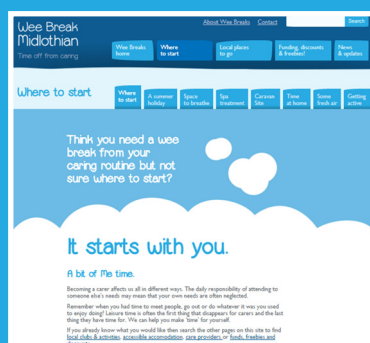
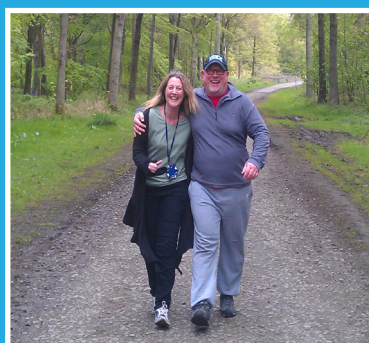


Review of Wee Break Midlothian

Time off from caring
Oct 2013 - Oct 2015



www.weebreak.org

INTRODUCTION

Wee Break Midlothian was commissioned by Midlothian Council to contribute to their vision that ***“carers feel supported to effectively manage their caring role and are able to have a life outside of caring”***. It works alongside carers and practitioners to co-produce short breaks leading to positive outcomes for the carer and the person they care for.

Wee Break Midlothian is managed by VOCAL Midlothian, linking it to a range of additional carer support and training options aimed at preventing breakdown of the caring relationship and improving ability and confidence to care. Two members of staff were in place by 1 October 2013 to deliver four areas of work:

- Create a central point of information - the Wee Break Midlothian website (www.weebreak.org)
- Support carers to make informed choices and sustainable changes
- Feed into planning structures to improve short breaks provision and a change in culture
- Train health and social care practitioners to assess, plan, deliver and review short breaks.

Wee Break Midlothian has delivered on the above areas of work and broadened its reach to include:

- Managing £150,000 of funds to support carers to access short breaks
- Simplifying processes involved with short breaks
- Developing new models of respite.

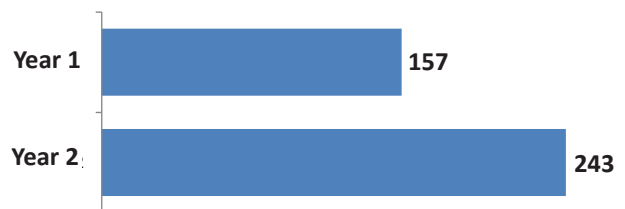
Successes

- 308 carers supported to make informed choices and take a break
- £99,897 awarded to 213 carers
- Dedicated website with comprehensive directory of information
- Worked with 71 partners to improve the infrastructure around breaks – simplifying processes, improving equity of provision and developing new models of provision.

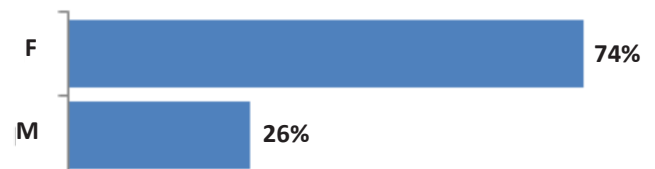
Challenges

- Wee Break Midlothian could be more integrated and have a clearer role within VOCAL and Midlothian Council.

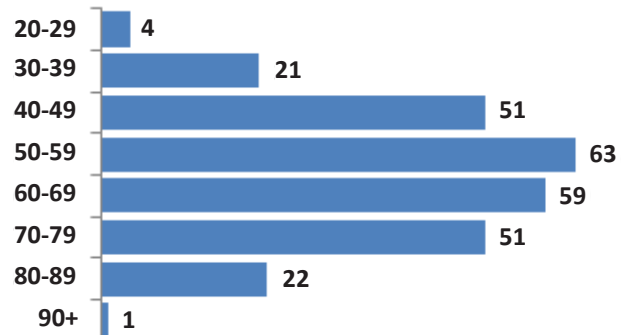
No. of carer contacts



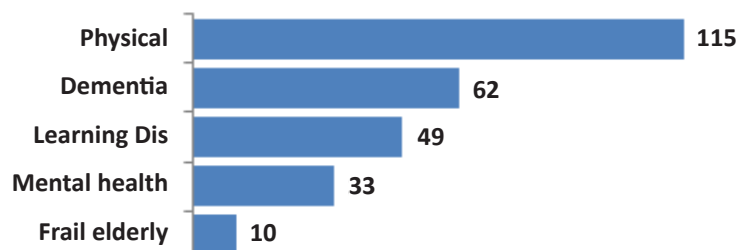
Gender

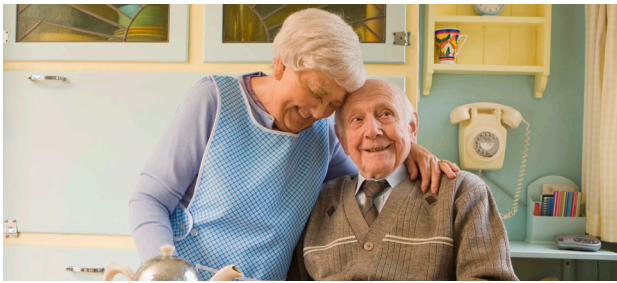


Age



Caring responsibility





SUCCESS 1:

Impact on carers

Wee Break Midlothian supported **308** carers to make informed choices about the most suitable break for them. Carers who identified health and wellbeing as an issue reported an improvement **78%** of the time. Carers who identified wanting to be more informed about their caring role reported an improvement **96%** of the time.

“The break made me kick start a couple of new initiatives such as going swimming in Bonnyrigg.”

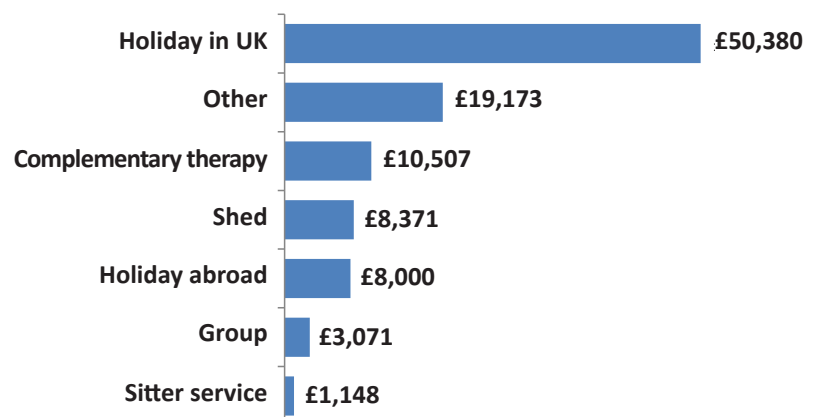
“My GP said she believes the massages have kept me out of hospital this year”

Outcomes identified by carers	No of times identified	Improvement	No deterioration	Worse
More informed about caring role	194	96%	4%	1%
Health and well being	183	78%	19%	3%
Economic well being	111	74%	24%	2%
Social well being	106	79%	17%	4%
Confidence in caring	91	87%	10%	3%
Confidence in ability to shape services	88	85%	13%	2%
Changing relationships	62	71%	23%	6%
Personal Safety	23	83%	17%	0

Innovative breaks and time away from caring role

Carers identified options such as sheds, driving lessons or fishing equipment but the majority chose local accessible holidays. Each break was tailored to the individual carer as they were supported to consider new places and new forms of replacement care. For many, simply having ‘permission’ to take time for themselves was new.

Type of break supported



Importance of access to funds

Access to local funds, managed by Wee Break Midlothian, has allowed carers to resource their time away. This has been fundamental to the success of Wee Break Midlothian in engaging with carers and motivating them to consider their options and make long term changes.



SUCCESS 2:

Partnership working

“Not knowing what services are available, what funding is available or how to go about applying is a step too far when you are worn out by your caring role. VOCAL Midlothian have tackled this head on ... an excellent example to all local authorities.”

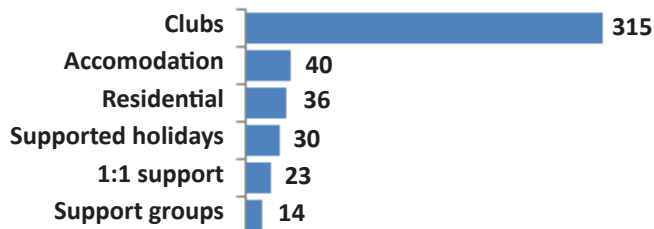
Shared Care Scotland

Wee Break Midlothian has worked with over **70** partners and key stakeholders to improve access to a range of short break opportunities - improving awareness of existing providers and developing new models of respite provision.

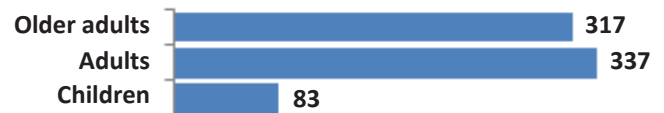
Improved understanding of existing provision

The Wee Break Midlothian website (www.weebreak.org) went live in April 2013 and has been used to work in conjunction with partners and providers including the NHS House of Care group, The Red Cross, Volunteer Centre, Lothian Disability Sport, Euan's Guide, Ageing Well, Midlothian Voluntary Action, Midlothian Tourism Forum, Enable and Community Learning. It lists over 450 opportunities and 200 funding, freebies and discounts.

Breakdown of opportunities



Breakdown of opportunities by age



The website is well used with 13,700 unique users. By collating information in one place it enables users to search for local information. Much of this information is not available elsewhere - for example photographs of accessible rooms at local hotels, many of which are not available on their own websites.

“It is very accessible and it seems to me contains the type of information that people would want/need.”

Head of Adult and Community Care

“Thank you for that and for all the ongoing information you provide. It is a great help and much appreciated. I am seeing a client next week whose husband is struggling with caring for her and I think he would really like to find out about the places you have mentioned.”

Occupational Therapist

“As we continue to try to keep up on all the wonderful services available to our patients or clients I wanted to highlight this website. IT....IS....EXCELLENT.” **NHS Senior Health Promotion Specialist**

Improved processes - booking, financing and entitlements

At the beginning there was confusion surrounding existing processes which made it challenging to offer clear guidance to staff and carers.

- “There is nothing written down, you just have to know the right people”

Social Worker
- “Midlothian don’t do that – we don’t pay for carers to have holidays”

Community Care Officer
- “We don’t pay for sheds, we only pay for Respite”

Finance Officer

Wee Break Midlothian worked with a variety of staff in Midlothian Council to simplify and explain the processes involved.

Booking

Wee Break Midlothian developed a bed availability calendar for the main respite providers in Midlothian.

- “I had a very complicated situation to tease out for a carer and being able to have respite availability in front of me whilst negotiating with Highbank was amazing”

Carer Support Worker (VOCAL)
- “The website and the calendar are great – I use it in all inductions of new staff”

Carer Support Worker (Alzheimer Scotland)

Room Availability

There are 5 rooms available to book at Highbank. 4 more will be available in the near future.

You can check room availability on the calendars below.

Green is available and Red is booked.

Call 0131 270 5640 to book your stay.

Highbank Room 1 (M2)

February 2016

March 2016

April 2016

M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
29							28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	

Debunking myths

Wee Break Midlothian developed ‘dummie’s guides’ for transferring packages of care, financial assessments and eligibility criteria. These helped ensure equity of provision as they highlighted discrepancies in practice.

Paying for a wee break at Highbank and Newbyres 2015/16

A night at a local authority residential care home costs £89.95 (under 65) or £65.53 (over 65).
A night at a local authority nursing home costs £101.21 (under 65) or £65.63 (over 65).

If the person you care for has less than £26,250 in savings the council can help with the cost. To work out how much the person you care for will have to contribute the council look at how much money they have coming in and out each week. This sheet explains how they do this.

Money coming in:
i.e. how much money the person you care for receives each week

Income	e.g. Money from pensions, income support, pension credit, employment and support allowance, widow benefits, wages etc	Pension: occupational Pension: retirement	£160.00 £72.00
Savings	If they have over £16,250 In savings this is assumed to bring in some income. The chart over the page shows how this is worked out.	£10,000 in savings	£0
TOTAL			£232.00

Money going out:
i.e. how much money the council allows the person you care for to keep to pay for their everyday costs each week

Personal expenses	Everyone can 'keep' £25.05 for items of a personal nature		£25.05
Savings credit	Some people can 'keep' an extra £6.00 if their income is over £151.20 a week	£232.00 as above	£6.00
Respite allowance	Everyone can 'keep' an extra £20 for household expenses		£20.00
TOTAL			£51.05

Total to pay per week: Money coming in – Money going out
i.e. this is the maximum the person you care for will be asked to pay per week. The council will pay the rest.

TOTAL (week)	£180.95
TOTAL (day)	£25.85

This is a guide only. Before the break the council will send the person you care for a personalised invoice.

Support available from Midlothian Council for a wee break

From a few hours a week to two weeks away there are many ways the Council can support you to have a wee break. Call the Adult and Community Care team on 0131 271 3900 to talk about your options.

Organise your own break

As a carer you should “have a life outside of caring”. If none of these options suit you, you can apply for a direct payment to organise support that does. You are entitled to financial support equivalent to the cost the local authority would incur if they provided the service directly.

Lunch Clubs

Staff and volunteers support the person you care for to catch up with friends, learn something new or rekindle an old hobby for a few hours a week.

1:1 Day opportunities (for carers and personal assistants)

Trained staff spend time regularly with the person you care for – either in your own home or on day trips and activities.

Crossroads Alzheimer’s

All other providers and personal assistants

Day care services

Trained staff and volunteers support the person you care for during the day at purpose built centres.

Local Authority providers

All other providers

Temporary care in support

Trained staff can increase support for the person you care for – this can be in your home if you go away separately or at your holiday destination if you go away together. (NB - this is on top of your package of care which can continue whilst on holiday)

Shared Lives

The person you care for can stay with a trained carer – in the carer’s home. This can be for a few hours a week to a longer stay overnight. (NB - for people with learning disabilities)

Residential placement

Trained staff can support the person you care for in a residential setting and provide 24 hour care if required.

LA provider <6 wks

LA provider >6 wks

All other providers

SW

These services require an allocated Social Worker.

Awareness raising and training

Wee Break Midlothian has undertaken awareness raising and training with a range of professionals across health and social care and the voluntary sector. This has included contributing to:

- Conferences for Occupational Therapists, Shared Care Scotland and being asked to represent good practice in Scotland at an International Short Breaks Association conference in Germany.
- Staff and carer forums for social workers, Midlothian Older People's Assembly, and the Gorebridge Over 50s.
- Consultations on reviewing provision of day services and respite for people with learning disabilities.

"Really good so simple and clear... think we should collate the easy use guides you have done and have some kind of resource bank" **Self Directed Support, Practice Development Worker**

"Lots of great ideas all working towards supporting carers to keep going." **Occupational Therapist**

Building relationships to develop new opportunities

Wee Break Midlothian has tried to widen the understanding of what could constitute a 'respite' break:

- **Respitality** - Wee Break Midlothian was selected as one of four pilots in Scotland to develop the Respitality model. Respitality is backed by the Scottish Government to link the hospitality sector with carers. We have negotiated with hotels, attractions, spas, tour companies and caravan sites to offer 'gifts' that have been taken up by carers supported by Alzheimer's Scotland, MS Support Group and VOCAL.

"Can't thank you enough for thinking of us and passing this (Respitality) on to us"
Alzheimers' Scotland

- **Pilot at Calvert Trust** - Worked with a respite provider in Northumberland and the carer's group at Woodburn to trial a new form of supported respite.

"The carer loved it, enjoyed the food, found the staff helpful and enjoyed the sensory rooms and relaxation rooms. When she got back her daughter helped her replicate these rooms in her spare bedroom. "What a difference it made – I realised I could actually do that at home"

Carer support worker – Woodburn

- **Groups** - Wee Break Midlothian has supported groups of carers to shape the services they receive. For example we have successfully applied for a 'Golden Ticket' at Dynamic Earth for the MS support Group and supported the Woodburn Carer's Group, the Woodburn Wellbeing, Health and Motivation Group, a card making group and the Stroke Club to make group applications to funds to access lunches and day trips.
- **Midlothian Tourism Forum/Euan's Guide** – Worked with members of the forum to improve the provision of information regarding accessibility in both food and drink establishments and hotels.
- **Shared Lives and Community Access Team** - Supported staff to make their own promotional material to improve information offered to carers. It has also supported them to think about alternative 'holiday packages' to increase respite opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

"Working with Wee Break Midlothian has been really helpful in developing our promotional material so carers understand what the service can offer" **Shared Lives**

- **Rangers/Green Team** - Wee Break Midlothian has discussed ways to increase outdoor opportunities for carers.
- **Libraries** - Worked with the "In my community" group to create Information hubs to improve access to information about local opportunities.



Looking ahead: strengthening partnerships

“Are you using the learning from your experience across the Midlothian Partnership? The provision of good clear information is in my view an essential prerequisite to all assessments and professional interventions but we’re not always good at it.”

Head of Adult and Social Care

Wee Break Midlothian could benefit more carers and practitioners without increasing the cost of provision.

The cost of Wee Break Midlothian is £60,000pa for staffing and running costs which, taken together with £41,000pa from the Change Fund on direct carer support, equates to a cost to the Council of £400 per carer. VOCAL is keen to maximise investment in Wee Break Midlothian and seeks to reduce this unit cost further through strengthening closer working with other organisations, health and social care partners and internal VOCAL services. This would:

Improve understanding of the processes and possibilities

It has been hard to get information ‘signed off’ and disseminated, and Wee Break Midlothian are not always included in decisions regarding respite by all teams. This has hindered our ability to offer clear guidance to carers and staff. Inclusion in decisions, working together to create ‘official’ guidance and streamlining information (on both the VOCAL and Midlothian Council websites) would improve the experience of carers and reduce workloads across staff teams.

“No hadn’t seen them, good guides as the cost is not always clear.” **Finance officer**

Increase awareness and usage of Wee Break website

Streamlining information would increase the use of the resource. The more it is used the easier it is for people to provide feedback and thus improve information.

Improve implementation of new initiatives

Respite is an example of a new, exciting initiative that offers a range of options for developing short breaks in Midlothian. For it to be successful we need to work more closely with both the public and private sector – including local businesses and the Community Life and Leisure sector.

Increase use of the fund

The opportunity to access funding for time away from your caring role has been a key driver for the success of Wee Break Midlothian. It is crucial that more carers are made aware of these funds and supported to access them.

CONCLUSION

Wee Break Midlothian has successfully delivered the areas of work set out in its original proposal, and maximised other opportunities and areas for development. It has been identified nationally and internationally as a model of good practice, and was selected by Shared Care Scotland to pilot innovative approaches such as the Respite model.

It has been running operationally for just over two years and in this short space of time has seen major changes in both practitioner and carer's views on the possibilities of a respite break. This has only been possible through close working with a range of people and organisations.

A number of future developments in both the national and local landscapes bring exciting changes to the work of Wee Break Midlothian. They include but are not restricted to: the Carers' (Scotland) Bill, national waiving of charging for carers and the development of the Respite model. Local developments include closer working with the NHS 'House of Care' group and the newly created post of practice development worker within Adults and Social Care. These opportunities aim to make short breaks more affordable, improve the provision of information and ensure a cohesive delivery of the new Midlothian Carers' Strategy. We also look forward to active participation in the International Short Breaks Association conference to be held in Scotland for the first time in September 2016.

Short breaks, Wee Breaks, respite breaks or a life alongside caring – however you describe it, time to yourself, away from your caring role is important in ensuring carers are supported to continue to care. Don't just take our word for it – below is a selection of quotes from people we have been in contact with:

"It was the best thing I have done in ages - getting out fishing again. It gives me time away and my wife is enjoying the break from me too"

"A break in routine, at present we are locked in routine"

"Knowing I have something that is just for me makes me feel valued"

"just would like a break to be able to be me"

"The future is brighter thanks to you"

"Just to get up and think what would I like to do today?" "the bike has brought me a lot of joy and freedom that I didn't have before"

"The massages have kept you out of hospital this year"

"I can relax and the stress can fade away"

"I had grasped a part of my old self"

"TLC for me" "I look forward to a full night of unbroken sleep and no responsibilities"

Midlothian



Wee Break
Midlothian
Time off from caring

v o c a l
working with carers

NHS
Lothian

Short
breaks fund

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