

# Our priorities for the future

Carers and people with support needs face turbulent times ahead. Over the next couple of years three major developments will fundamentally change the way people receive services and support:

- The UK review of welfare benefits with the introduction of Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments
- Scottish Government plans for the integration of NHS and health and social care services, and
- New Scottish legislation on Self Directed Support

At the same time, the fast growing number of older people and the continuing economic pressures on NHS and local authorities will further shift caring responsibilities to 'communities' – effectively families and friends.

Small charities like VOCAL face difficult challenges to prepare well to guide carers through the maze of changes while providing consistent and reliably high quality support.

In 2012-13, we are investing considerable resources on extensive staff and volunteer training. Nearly 100 people now contribute to VOCAL's work in Edinburgh and Midlothian, nearly 70 as volunteers. Most of our

volunteers are themselves carers or former carers. Their contribution adds much to the warm welcome and the quality of support carers receive at our Carers Centres.

VOCAL is also investing in the development of a new Carer Impact System. This powerful casework management system will provide much improved information on the carers' journey and evidence of what has changed as a result of the support given, now known as personal outcomes. We are pleased we are developing this system in partnership with MECOPP, the Minority Ethnic Carers Centre in Leith.

VOCAL is also investing in new Carer Centre premises in Midlothian. We are working with Midlothian Council to find a long-term and sustainable solution from where we can provide a wider range of support to many more carers in all parts of Midlothian.

Finally, we welcome new Big Lottery support from April 2012. Our new five-year grant secures three carer support worker posts focussing on improved economic wellbeing, self directed support and carers in employment.

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## 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.

Carers Trust 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.

## About VOCAL

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 25 part-time and full-time staff and nearly 70 volunteers, including those who run the Carer Centre reception areas and who work with carers as counsellors or advocates.

## Our finances for the year ending 31 March 2012

Statement of Financial Activities		2012	2011
Total incoming resources		943,242	863,468
Total resources expended		815,166	799,349
Net income for year		128,076	64,119
Net gain on investments		580	445
Net movement in funds		128,656	64,564
Funds at 1 April 2011		307,824	243,260
<b>Funds at 31 March 2012</b>		<b>436,480</b>	<b>307,824</b>
<b>Balance sheet at 31 March 2012</b>			
Fixed Assets	Tangible	4,568	14,294
	Investments	46,378	93,150
		50,946	107,444
Current Assets	Debtors	28,978	74,225
	Cash at bank	518,266	195,147
		547,244	269,372
Creditors due within one year		161,710	68,992
Net current assets / (liabilities)		385,534	200,380
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>436,480</b>	<b>307,824</b>
Funds	Restricted	136,744	99,994
	Designated	279,568	194,294
	General fund	20,168	13,536
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>436,480</b>	<b>307,824</b>



**VOCAL's work in 2011-12  
and priorities for the future**





# 6,819 carer contacts

Over the course of the year VOCAL had 6,819 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.



# 2,612 carers

Our Carer and Family Support Teams worked directly with 2,612 carers, offering a person-centred service delivered through home visits, appointments at our Carers Centres and local support in the community.



306 carers attended VOCAL's legal and benefits surgery appointments, including support for setting up Power of Attorney.

Over 5,000 carers were supported through regular e-bulletin and newsletter communication, and personalised information on training and events.



VOCAL assisted carers in receiving a total of £191,188 in additional financial support.

13,874 people visited VOCAL's website.

# 1,523 new carers

We identified and supported 1,523 new carers during 2011-12. VOCAL works in partnership with GPs and health and social care teams to improve early identification and referral of carers.



# 1,661 counselling hours

Our counselling service offered 1,661 hours of counselling to 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.



# 508 carers (training)

508 carers registered for our *Caring with Confidence* training programme which offers courses, seminars and workshops designed for carers in 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.

# 148 carers (groupwork)

148 carers attended 18 events and 20 individual sessions, on dealing with guilt, changing relationships, loss and bereavement and stress management.



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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.

## Positive impact for carers

717 carers reported positive outcomes following support from VOCAL, in eight key areas:

92% reported improvements in feeling better informed about issues relating to their caring role

81% reported improvements in their confidence in managing their caring role

78% reported improved confidence in their ability to shape services

75% reported that their physical and mental well-being had improved

67% reported improvements in their ability to deal with changing relationships resulting from the caring role

65% reported improvements in their economic well-being

63% reported improvements in their personal safety

60% reported that their social well-being had improved

## Case study:

### Personalised support for carers

Susan cares for her son who has an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. She called VOCAL feeling very stressed and 'stuck'. Over a series of phone calls and meetings with VOCAL's carer support worker, Susan was encouraged to talk about her preferred future and identified some key issues she would like to address: using her son's direct payments effectively; having a regular social activity each week; and funding for a short break.

VOCAL's carer support worker worked with Susan to identify goals for the next week, fortnight and three months. They talked about what the signs would be that she was continuing to make progress and she was encouraged to notice the changes between now and her next meeting.

At the next meeting with the carer support worker Susan reported a number of setbacks, so they focused on building a picture of what was already working - focusing on her strengths and assets, and what elements of her preferred future were already in place.

By the next meeting Susan reported that she was starting to feel 'a bit like her old self'. Her confidence was coming back and she did not feel as stuck or unable to make decisions. She had met with VOCAL's specialist in self directed support and arranged for her son to go on a weekend's respite using direct payments. Susan talked about the relaxation she felt when her son was away and how this was a sign that she was moving towards her preferred future.

The carer support worker sent Susan details of volunteering, social activities and supported her to make an application to VOCAL's Short Breaks Fund. She received £150 which she used to put towards a leisure activity for herself.

Following time limited regular and intensive support, VOCAL undertakes an outcomes review with carers to identify if any improvements have been made in the issues that they identified.