

Help shape Scotland's new benefits system

The Scotland Act 2016 is devolving several benefits to the Scottish Government, including Carer's Allowance, disability and housing benefits.

Once fully devolved, these will account for around £2.7 billion, or 15% of the total Scottish benefit bill. The remainder of benefit spending in Scotland will remain under control of the UK Government.

The Scottish Government is now seeking people's views on the benefits being devolved, including disability and carer payments, and how they are delivered by a new Social Security Agency.

Carers are urged to take part in the consultation. The Scottish Government has already announced an increase in Carers' Allowance to the same rate as Jobseekers' Allowance and now wants to hear more about people's own experience of benefits, and how they think the system could be improved for the future.

The full consultation document, a summary and details of how to respond are available on the Scottish Government website: consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland

VOCAL is organising two stakeholder events - details of local events can be found on the VOCAL website: www.vocal.org.uk

The consultation runs until 28 October 2016.



New Minister for Social Security in Scotland, Jeanne Freeman MSP, met with carers at the VOCAL Edinburgh carer centre in June to discuss changes to Carers' Allowance and other carer issues in advance of the consultation on Scotland's new social security powers.

New times...New vision!

Carers on VOCAL's Board of Trustees have endorsed a brave and bold new business plan for 2016-21. At its heart lies a commitment to increasing carer support in Edinburgh and the Lothians over the next five years from 7,000 to 10,000 carers each year.

To deliver this ambitious target, VOCAL aims to identify and reach out to more carers earlier in their caring role, in every sector of the city and in every local community.

We plan to achieve this by strengthening collaboration with existing and new partners, by raising additional funds and by identifying new premises in different parts of the city.

For over 20 years, VOCAL has provided most carer support from our carer centre at the top of the Royal Mile. We are now starting a process to seek new headquarters, develop small carer centres in different localities and co-

locate more staff with partner agencies. VOCAL will also shortly introduce a range of new priorities for carer support, building on the best of our traditions and widening the scope of our person-centred approach.

We are inviting carers groups and agencies with similar aspirations to get in touch with us - see page 2 for contact details. **Let's explore what we might be able to do together!**

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ABOUT VOCAL

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

What do we do?

Carers can access the following:

- Information & advice
- Individual support
- Legal & financial surgeries
- Training & groupwork
- Social & leisure opportunities
- Family Support (Addictions)
- Carer counselling service

Connect with VOCAL:



Email:
centre@vocal.org.uk



Website:
www.vocal.org.uk



Twitter:
@EdinburghCarers



Facebook:
www.facebook.com/
VOCALCarers

VOCAL Carer Centres

VOCAL Carer Centre

8 - 13 Johnston Terrace
Edinburgh EH1 2PW
Tel: 0131 622 6666

VOCAL Midlothian Carer Centre

30/1 Hardengreen Estate
Dalhousie Road, Dalkeith
EH22 3NX
Tel: 0131 663 6869

Additional services:

Family Support
Addictions (FSA) 0131 622 6262
Counselling 0131 466 8082
South Edinburgh 0131 672 0987
South West Edin 0131 449 8606

VOCAL is an active member of the Coalition of Carers in Scotland and is affiliated to Carers Scotland, Shared Care Scotland and Eurocarers.

Dear readers,

This September, Edinburgh will play host to the 10th International Short Break Association conference, welcoming delegates from around the world to share their knowledge and experience of short break provision.

Providing flexible and regular short break opportunities is now widely accepted as vital for the health and wellbeing of carers, to enable them to continue caring and to build a life outside their caring role. Despite this there is growing evidence of significant reductions in respite care services across Scotland.

National Carer Organisations have called for greater scrutiny and the need for local authorities to be resourced and accountable for delivering their Carers' (Scotland) Act commitments. This includes greater availability and choice of short breaks and free replacement care to eligible carers.

Locally, carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian have rated more opportunities for breaks from caring as one of their most important issues for the future in the 2015 VOCAL Carer Survey (www.vocal.org.uk/carers-survey2015). VOCAL has responded to this in our new five-year business plan, and is exploring sustainable and creative solutions for short breaks provision. Our priorities include developing and expanding *Respite* provision, strengthening short breaks fund capacities and short breaks planning.

Fundraising

It has been a busy year for VOCAL fundraisers who have taken to their bikes, donned running shoes, abseiled and hosted picnics to help raise money for carers. Special thanks to our two half marathon runners Kevin and Stuart, eight intrepid abseilers who took part in the 2016 Forth Rail Bridge Abseil, two brave cyclists and the many people who turned out for VOCAL's sponsored walk and Picnic in the Park.

You can read more about the fantastic fundraising efforts of VOCAL supporters and get involved yourself at www.justgiving.com/vocal/donate - and if you are on social media please like and share!

With best wishes

Ann Anderson, Vice-Convener

Raise money for VOCAL every time you shop

Shop at your favourite online stores and a donation will be made to VOCAL without costing you a penny extra.

Get started raising money today by visiting www.giveasyoulive.com/vocal



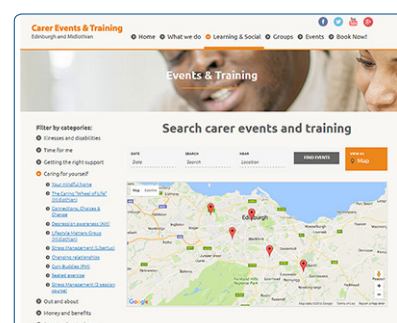
Give as you Live®

VOCAL launches 'one-stop shop' for carer events in Edinburgh and Midlothian

VOCAL has launched a new website for carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian to find out about free courses, leisure and social events.

Carers can use the website, which is fully mobile and tablet friendly, to browse and register for local groups and courses including safety in the home, first aid, mindfulness, fitness, dementia, welfare rights and practical bodycare skills.

Visit the website: www.carerevents.co.uk



New VOCAL carer support services

Tired of small talk? Join the conversation!

In October 2016 VOCAL is launching monthly 'conversation cafés' for carers in Edinburgh. So often carers can feel left out of the conversation as their experiences can set them apart from others; VOCAL aims to allow carers to join in and be part of the conversation.

Conversation cafés are open, drop-in sessions bringing together people interested in sharing thoughts and ideas on a theme over a coffee in a relaxed and informal space. They are structured to ensure that everyone who wants to gets a chance to share and reflect.



For details of locations, dates/times and conversation themes visit www.carertraining.co.uk or contact our café host Wendy:
Email: wbrooks@vocal.org.uk or call 0131 622 6666.

Carer drop-in sessions - no appointment necessary

Carers in Edinburgh now have the opportunity to meet with VOCAL carer support workers in locations across the city without the need for an appointment at our new drop-in sessions.

Carers can use these sessions to access information on welfare rights, how to look after yourself while caring, practical support for the person you care for and ways to take a break from caring. They are open to carers who have already had contact with VOCAL as well as those new to being a carer and who may not know their rights or the support available to them as a carer.

The next carer drop-in sessions are:

- ♦ Thur 29 Sept 10am-1pm @ VOCAL Carer Centre, 8-13 Johnston Terrace
- ♦ Fri 21 Oct 2-4pm @ VOCAL Carer Centre, 8-13 Johnston Terrace
- ♦ Mon 24 Oct 10am-1.30pm @ Leith Library, 28-30 Ferry Rd

For more information and future sessions visit:

www.vocal.org.uk/carers-support

Recognition for student carers

Students across the UK with caring responsibilities could be in line for more support, thanks to a campaign group at Edinburgh University.

University admissions body UCAS will be changing its application forms by 2018 to identify students who care for a family member, putting them on a par with care leavers and other disadvantaged groups.

Campaigners hope this recognition will lead to more support for student carers with applying to higher education and completing their studies.



More support services for carers in Edinburgh

The Eric Liddell centre offers a number of support services for carers including:

Carer befriending - befrienders provide one-to-one support through regular meetings and taking part in activities together. For many carers just having someone there to listen is the most important thing.

Lunch breaks - a lunch club for carers to attend with the person they care for.

A two-course lunch is followed by guest talks and other activities. Fridays 1-3pm.

Mindfulness taster & drop-in sessions

- improve your mental, emotional and physical well-being and learn this great tool to find peace in an otherwise busy world!
Wednesdays from 7 Sept.



For more details or to register please contact Martha Pollard at the Eric Liddell Centre, 15 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4DP
Email: pollardm@ericliddell.org
Tel: 0131 446 3301

The Edinburgh Headway Group

has launched a project to support carers of someone with a brain injury.

Carers in Edinburgh can access:

- social and information events
- individual support either face to face or by email or telephone
- 1:1 respite with the cared-for person for up to 2-3 hours per week
- support with financial planning and benefits advice and
- an advocacy service.

Carers in Midlothian or West Lothian can access support by telephone and email.



Please contact Edinburgh Headway if you or someone you know cares for a loved one with a brain injury:

Tel: 0131 537 5997 or

Email: carers@edinburghheadway.org.uk

Think working carer: Raising awareness with 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/nhslothian



Tim Davison,
Chief Executive NHS Lothian

- **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 would be losing the skills, knowledge & experience that employee brings to their role.

To learn more about supporting employees who have caring responsibilities please contact VOCAL at centre@vocal.org.uk or call us on 0131 622 6666.

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.

Government scraps DLA & PIP rules for children in hospital



There was good news for parents carers this year when the UK government scrapped rules that previously suspended payment of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) when a child was in hospital for 84 days (28 days if aged 16+). And as long as their parent is caring for 35 hours a week or more, they no longer lose their Carers' Allowance when their child is in hospital.

Where a child first made a claim for DLA when in hospital, they used to have to wait until they were discharged home before those payments could start. Similar rules also applied to PIP. These rules have also been scrapped for children under 18 years old.

Community Navigator - information for 65+

It can be hard to know what's going on in your local area and how you can access the support and services you need. Community Navigator can help over 65's in SW Edinburgh find a local group or a supporting service at their informal information stations across or through their information phone line. Call the information line on **0131 225 8508** or email edyta@health-in-mind.org.uk



Castansa Trust funds counselling for carers of someone on the autistic spectrum

VOCAL has received funding from The Castansa Trust to provide counselling to carers of someone on the autistic spectrum including Asperger Syndrome and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA). Carers will be offered an intake appointment and up to 8 counselling sessions at our Johnston Terrace and Midlothian centres. To access counselling please contact the VOCAL Carer Counselling Service directly on **0131 466 8082**.

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: **FREEPOST RTJZ-RBZT-LHGH, VOCAL, 8-13 Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh, EH1 2PW**

Title: Name: Add ☐

Address: Remove ☐

Previous address (if updating): Update ☐

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. Please tick here if you do not wish VOCAL to do this ☐