



VOCAL volunteers, board members and staff on a visit to the new Edinburgh & Leith Carers Hub at 60 Leith Walk, which is due to open in April 2018. See page 2 for more details...

Carer's Allowance to increase from April 2018

The Scottish Government has at long last announced that Scotland's carers will receive the promised increase to Carer's Allowance (CA) in 2018.

First pledged by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at the Carers' Parliament in 2015, Cabinet Minister Angela Constance confirmed that carers in receipt of CA will receive a twice yearly top-up payment from the Scottish Government from summer 2018 whilst still receiving their regular payments from DWP. This will bring CA to the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance (from £62.70 to £73.10 per week) with the top-up payments backdated to April 2018.

This is an interim measure until a new Scottish Social Security system is put in place to manage the welfare benefits now devolved to Scotland which include Carer's Allowance, Attendance Allowance (AA), Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

Carers can continue to apply for Carer's Allowance online - see www.gov.uk/carers-allowance for details of eligibility and the online application form.

VOCAL offers free 'benefit checks' for carers and the cared for person to make sure they are getting all the support they are eligible for.

To book an appointment please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 or visit our website - www.vocal.org.uk/carers-support - for more information.

Breaking new ground for carers

Exciting news of a three-year Big Lottery award to enable carers and their families to access additional short breaks of a different kind!

Breaking New Ground is a partnership project to develop a Short Breaks and Respite Hub in Edinburgh. This Hub will offer person-centred support to plan and broker short breaks for carers. It will also develop online digital resources to enable carers to access a wide range of short breaks information.

VOCAL has appointed Hayley Burton (pictured right) as Short Breaks & Respite Development Officer. Respite combines 'respite' with 'hospitality' and Hayley's role will be to shape new partnerships with commercial providers in the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry. Through these partnerships, *Breaking New Ground* will open up a broader range of breaks in mainstream holiday and leisure settings for those caring for family or friends, with or without the person they support.

In Edinburgh, VOCAL has joined ranks with six local agencies to form a new collaborative partnership. REaL (Respite Edinburgh and Lothian) will develop creative additional breaks and already includes major local providers. For further details please contact VOCAL directly and find out how you can benefit from a break or become a Respite provider - see page 2 for contact details.

respite

Giving carers a break with Scottish hospitality



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 453 9457

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

Dear carers, practitioners, partners and friends,



On behalf of my carer colleagues on the VOCAL Board, I am pleased to inform you that VOCAL has acquired new premises for the relocation of the Edinburgh Carers Centre. After 21 years at 8-13 Johnston Terrace we expect to move to 60 Leith Walk in early 2018, following extensive refurbishment.

As part of our long-term strategy to bring carer support closer to Edinburgh's communities, VOCAL has already successfully co-located staff with services in South Queensferry, Greater Pilton, Wester Hailes, Liberton and (soon) in Firrhill. The move of the carer Centre to 60 Leith Walk will add to this by not only serving the North East of the city better, but greatly increasing accessibility from and to all parts of the city as a result of much better public transport links.

At 60 Leith Walk, VOCAL will continue a long tradition. For over 100 years, this building has served as a doctors' surgery. In July 2017 the surgery moved to new premises on Duke Street. VOCAL is pleased to continue the tradition of public service from this building with a new Carers Hub serving the local community as well as the city overall. Following refurbishments, the Edinburgh & Leith Carers Hub will provide much improved consultation rooms, carer training, learning and peer support facilities, counselling rooms, digital technologies, a new Short Breaks and Respite Hub and space for a new social enterprise to help improve carer income.

This venture is a big undertaking for our small charity. To help us deliver our ambitious plans, VOCAL will be launching a major development appeal this autumn. We hope many readers and supporters can help us promote this appeal – for only the best is good enough for carers!

Thank you for supporting VOCAL!

Patrick Layden, Convener

Implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 from April 2018

VOCAL contributes in many ways to preparations for the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act. We are seeking interested carers to register for a focus group to discuss Edinburgh's draft eligibility criteria for future carer support on **Tuesday 12 Sept 1pm-2.30pm** or **Tuesday 19 Sept 6pm-7.30pm**. Please contact sfischer@vocal.org.uk to confirm your interest and your preferred date.

VOCAL staff celebrate *That's Life!* success

VOCAL staff attended an event at the Macdonald Holyrood Hotel in June celebrating the work of 12 projects funded by the Scotch Whisky Action Fund. With the help of the fund VOCAL was able to deliver its recent project *That's Life!* which supported carers to reflect on their own health and their relationship with alcohol.

The event provided the opportunity for all those involved in the projects to meet, mingle and share successes and was hosted by Scotch Whisky Association Chief Executive Karen Betts and Kezia Dugdale MSP.

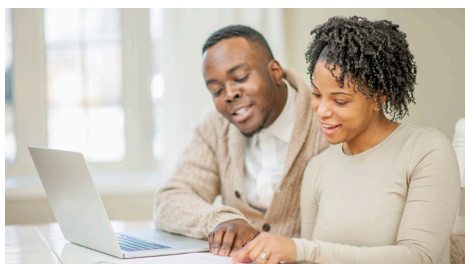


Make your money go further - savings and discounts for carers

The cost of food, bills and day-to-day living has been steadily increasing in recent months so it's important to make the most of the money you have. This is especially true for carers - in the most recent VOCAL carer survey, nearly half of carers reported that caring had affected their financial situation.

Energy bills: switch to save

With recent announcements that energy bills will be rising, now is the time to look at whether you could be paying less. Simply bring a recent gas and electricity bill to VOCAL's switching labs or energy surgeries to find out if you can save money on your fuel bills and get support to change to a cheaper supplier.



Join our next switching labs at the VOCAL Edinburgh Carer Centre on 19th September 10am -12pm or 21st September from 1.30-3.30pm. Energy surgeries are monthly - to book an appointment call 0131 622 6666.

Travel and transport

Getting around can be more difficult if you or the person you care for is ill, frail or disabled.

A Taxicard (£20) provides reduced rates for people with disabilities for up to 104 taxi journeys a year (www.edinburgh.gov.uk). The card also entitles holders to free train travel in the Lothian area.

People under 60 who are disabled may also be eligible for free bus travel and carers can travel for free when accompanying someone with a National Entitlement Card as long as they have applied for Companion

Travel too. Visit www.mygov.scot/transport-travel/local-travel/ for more details.

Leisure and entertainment

The Cinema Exhibitors Card (www.ceacard.co.uk) allows a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them at participating cinemas. The Kings and Festival theatres offer half price tickets for both the carer and cared for person when they visit together (book by phone/box office - not available online).

Many visitor attractions offer special rates or free entry for carers and carers receive free entry to Edinburgh Leisure facilities when accompanying the person they support.

Food and drink

Reducing food waste is good for the environment and also for your bank balance. Love Food Hate Waste has a great website - scotland.lovefoodhatewaste.com - with useful hints, tips and recipes to make your



food last and use food that you might otherwise think of throwing away.

Food co-ops are an excellent source of cheaper fruit, veg and other supplies - see the Edinburgh Community Food website (www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk) or call them on 0131 467 7326 to find out where your local food co-op is.

Discount codes

There are lots of discount 'voucher code' websites around, but our favourite is Give As You Live which has lots of exclusive offers and also generates donations for your favourite charity VOCAL!

Sign up as a supporter at www.giveasyoulive.com/join/vocal to bag some bargains and raise a free donation every time you shop.

Learn to speak up with confidence!

Carers often tell us that they have to become an advocate for the person they are caring for. This autumn, VOCAL is offering free courses to help carers improve and learn new communication skills to give them the confidence to communicate their own needs too:

Words that change minds:

Thurs 19th October 10.30am-12.30pm
Whinpark Medical Centre

Finding your voice:

Thurs 26th October 10am-2.30pm
West Pilton Gardens Social Work Centre
Thurs 16th - 23rd November 10am-12.30pm
VOCAL Carer Centre

Coping with anger:

Tues 28th November 10am-2.30pm VOCAL Carer Centre

To book a course go to www.carerstraining.co.uk or contact Gurjit by email (gpanesar@vocal.org.uk) or by phone on 0131 662 6666.



Befriending for Edinburgh carers

Would you like to get out of the house and take a break from your caring role for a few hours? Would it help to have someone to do this with?

As a carer it is important that you take a break from your caring role allowing you to continue to care in good mental and physical health. Having a befriender could support you in taking a break - that might be going out for coffee, visiting a museum, pursuing a hobby or going for a walk - whatever fits in with your schedule and works best for you.

To find out more please contact Sally at the Eric Liddell Centre on 0131 447 4520.

MECOPP 3 R's Project

MECOPP has received funding from The Baring Foundation and Life Changes Trust for a new project supporting people with social care needs to access the rights and entitlements laid down by the Social Care (Self-directed Support)(Scotland) Act 2013.



The project can assist individuals and carers by:

- Providing advice and information to individuals and carers about their legal rights under self-directed support, human rights and equalities legislation.
- Supporting individuals to challenge local authority decision-making.
- Making a referral to a firm of solicitors or law centre in appropriate circumstances.

You do not have to be a member of a minority ethnic community to access the project.

If you would like to find out more about how the project could support you or the person you care for please email info@mecopp.org.uk or contact Jennifer Paton or Janet Marsh on 0131 467 2994.

Edinburgh Headway Group: support for carers

Edinburgh Headway Group's Carer's

Project is dedicated to supporting unpaid carers of adults with an acquired brain injury (ABI).



For carers living in Edinburgh, they provide access to individual support and social/information events as well as respite opportunities.

Their **Supper Club Project** is an opportunity for both the carer and the person they care for to go out together and meet others with similar challenges in a relaxed, fun and supported environment.

The Supper Club is open to all unpaid carers in Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian who care for an adult with an ABI.

To find out more about the support available or to book a Supper Club place please contact Fiona Robertson at carers@edinburghheadway.org.uk or call 0131 537 9557.

Do you have a family member aged 12-20 who has learning difficulties?

Contact A Family Scotland is looking for young people and families living with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help explore the issues around leaving school and what comes next.

Starting in September, families will be able to share their thoughts, questions and experiences through regional workshops, online discussion groups, or directly by email or telephone.

To take part email tracey.francis@cafamilly.org.uk or click on 'Going forward – Preparing Parents for Transition' at www.cafamilly.org.uk/scotland

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:

Previous address (if updating): Remove ☐

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 ☐