

25 years of working with carers

Welcome to a special edition of our regular newsletter celebrating our 25th anniversary! There've been a lot of milestones over the past quarter of a century – for VOCAL and for carers – and we've picked out a few to remember below. See if you can spot some familiar faces!

1994: VOCAL's first management committee & staff pose "all under one umbrella". The first **Carers Emergency Card** is also launched this year



1995: Working with carers in East and West Lothian, VOCAL supported the development of the **Carers Strategy and Action Plan** for East Lothian



1999: Carers celebrate in style at the Balmoral! The Scottish Parliament reopens and the first **Strategy for Carers in Scotland** is published



2013: Midlothian's brand new **Carers Centre** opens on the Hardengreen Estate in Dalkeith, serving carers across Midlothian



2009: Marching from VOCAL's Carers Centre to Holyrood, the **1st public protest by carers in Scotland** demands more investment in carer support



2004: The Princess Royal popped in to mark **VOCAL's 10th anniversary**, meeting volunteers Anne Adams, Christine Winton & Irene Jamieson



2014: Nicola Sturgeon launches the Expert Working Group's Report on Welfare at VOCAL. The report recommends raising Carers Allowance



2016: Jeane Freeman, Minister for Social Security, visits VOCAL as the **Carers (Scotland) Act 2016** enshrines better carers' rights into law



2018: Edinburgh Council leader Adam McVey and Cabinet Secretary Aileen Campbell open **VOCAL's new Edinburgh Carers' Hub**



Reaching 7,518 carers in Edinburgh

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:



centre@vocal.org.uk



vocal.org.uk



[@VOCALEdinburgh](https://twitter.com/VOCALEdinburgh)



[/VOCALEdinburgh](https://www.facebook.com/VOCALEdinburgh)

VOCAL Carer Centres

VOCAL Edinburgh Carers' Hub

60 Leith Walk

Edinburgh EH6 5HB



0131 622 6666

VOCAL Midlothian Carer Centre

30/1 Hardengreen Estate

Dalhousie Road, Dalkeith

EH22 3NX



0131 663 6869

Additional services:

Family Support

Addictions (FSA) 0131 622 6666

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.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE



Looking Back With Pride

VOCAL's history is a history of partnerships and our partnership with carers is at the heart of all success.

Our many funders and supporters come a close second, with continuing support from City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council, NHS Lothian, the Scottish Government, National Lottery Community Fund and many trust funds, foundations, corporate and private donors. They all deserve credit and our thanks and appreciation!

Back in 1994, in the days of Lothian Regional Council, carers from across the Lothians formed themselves as a lobby group, in the best tradition of community development and self-advocacy. Individually, they had been fighting for recognition and support for many years, but in those days no one recognised family carers as the bedrock and pillars of our caring society.

VOCAL has often been called a 'flagship' organisation, an example for developments in other parts of Scotland, because of the way VOCAL has managed to combine advocacy for carers with provision of support. We are particularly proud to have contributed to many partnerships over the years – in our local communities, in the Lothians and nationally through the Coalition of Carers in Scotland – to represent carers' interests at every level of society and politics.

Today, VOCAL is one of Lothian's main providers of carer support. We employ 38 staff, who together with some 70 volunteers support over 10,000 carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian through the Edinburgh Carer Hub, the Midlothian Carers Centre and a range of local community bases.

We sometimes call ourselves 'part of a 21st century trade union' – representing not the paid, but the unpaid care workforce locally and across Scotland – family, relatives and friends. As equal partners in care, they deserve more rights and entitlements: to information and support, regular breaks from caring, financial security and practical and emotional support. The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 has been a milestone, the personal really is political and VOCAL will be needed for many years to come!

So is your support: as carers, former carers, supporters, friends and partners. We hope our 25th anniversary can lay the foundation for a further successful 25 years to come!

In solidarity with carers, **Sebastian Fischer** Chief Executive, VOCAL



Remembering VOCAL's Origins: By Carers, For Carers

Back in the early 1990s a group of carers got together to build – for themselves – the kind of support they needed and weren't getting. At the meeting they bounced around ideas for a name, finally settling on Voice of Carers Across Lothian, or VOCAL for short.

The support they designed for themselves took the form of a new charity which took the name they'd chosen. It opened its doors from a tiny office on Bellevue Crescent in April of 1994 with one employee, a phone, a typewriter and a list of around 50 carers needing support.

Alan Fletcher – then caring for his first wife, living with Alzheimers – had been an instrumental part of those meetings right from the beginning. He was the representative the group had there on day one to welcome that first employee: Sebastian Fischer.

Sheila was one of those VOCAL supported in the early days, as she cared for her terminally ill first husband. Later – having spotted Sheila's unflappable demeanour and head for numbers – Seb approached her to join the charity's small but growing team. It was there that she and Alan met.

Help Us To Show Hidden Carers They're Not Alone

If you're reading this you've not only made the journey to find support in your caring role, you've also made the journey to identifying yourself as a carer.

VOCAL currently supports 10,254 carers across Edinburgh and Midlothian but statistically that still leaves thousands of hidden carers out there: Carers who've yet to recognise their own caring role. It's estimated 3 in 5 adults will find themselves in an unpaid caring role at some point in their life.

As part of VOCAL's 25th anniversary we'll be sharing 25 carer stories, covering the wide range of caring roles, circumstances and impacts. We hope this will help some of the thousands of hidden carers out there to stop and think "hang on, that sounds like me..."

If you'd like to share your story please email social@vocal.org.uk.

Our 25th celebrations

... and how you can join us

To mark 25 years of working with carers we're hosting a range of celebrations over the coming months. You can see details of the main ones here.

If you'd like to join us at any of these events call us on **0131 622 6666** or email centre@vocal.org.uk to register your interest.

Places are limited but we'll work to ensure that we celebrate with as many carers as possible.

30th May

bass rock boat trip & seabird centre

"As impressive as any wildlife spectacle in the world," is how the BBC's David Attenborough described the world's largest colony of gannets on Bass Rock.

Join us for a spectacular experience and a visit to the Scottish Seabird Centre.

11th June

employers' event

8am to 12pm

Hosted by the Royal Bank of Scotland's carers' network, we're holding a morning of talks & workshops for employers looking at caring & employment.

To represent your business register at vocal25.eventbrite.com

13th June

edinburgh ceilidh

6:30pm to 11pm

It wouldn't be a proper celebration without a ceilidh.

Volunteers, staff and carers will whirl the night away at the Lauriston Hall with music from local ceilidh band Auld Spice.

Availability is limited.

Enquiries to **0131 622 6666** or centre@vocal.org.uk

14th June

midlothian party

1pm to 4pm

Join us at our Midlothian Carers Centre for a fun filled afternoon of music, refreshments & chat – for all ages.

Call Pauline on **0131 663 6869** or email midlothian@vocal.org.uk to find out more.

25th June

forth bridge boat trip

1:30pm to 3:30pm

Carers take to the seas again in June! This time aboard the *Forth Princess* to cruise the three bridges & circle Inchcolm Island.

Watch for wildlife or just relax with a drink from the onboard bar & enjoy the stunning views.

visit our anniversary minisite at vocal25.scot



help VOCAL prepare for the next 25 years



sponsor Seb!

VOCAL's first employee in 1994 & still at the helm after 25 years! Our Chief Executive Sebastian Fischer hopes to lay the foundation for the next 25 years.

"Definitely my last act of lunacy, but Wendy & I hope to raise £5,000. What a way to mark 25 years in the job! No better cause & a great team at VOCAL to support carers!"

justgiving.com/fundraising/sebastianfischer

sponsor Wendy!

Wendy first got involved with VOCAL for support in her own caring role. Having become part of the team she has a keen sense of how crucial VOCAL's work is.

"This year VOCAL turns 25 at the same time as I turn 50 so doing something spectacular to mark it feels right. Together Seb & I hope to raise £5,000."



justgiving.com/fundraising/wendybrooks

TreasureTree

Treasure Tree are very excited to announce our very own website with sellers' stories, a link to our eBay store and a regular blog. You can find us at treasuretree.scot

As it is all about celebrating Silver at VOCAL this year, Treasure Tree would like to tell you about our Silver donations. These are donations of goods which, once sold, seller and VOCAL share the proceeds 50/50



Recently we were given a petrol lawn mower as a silver donation. It sold within two days and the seller has received 50% as a Silver Seller.

However, if you would like to donate to VOCAL with goods, for example privately bought mobility equipment, you can raise your donation to Gold whereby VOCAL receive 100% of the proceeds to enable them to continue support for carers.

By the time you are reading this we will have received goods from our 100th client. In order to grow we desperately need stock to sell so please don't let anyone throw out anything without checking with us first! At this time, we don't take clothes or books (unless they are first editions!).

Keep it local. Sell through VOCAL



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: **VOCAL Edinburgh Carers' Hub, 60 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 5HB** or email us with this information:

Title: Name:

Address:

Previous address (if updating):

Postcode: Tel: Email:

Condition of person being cared for:

Relationship to person being cared for:

The information provided in this form will be stored on VOCAL's secure systems. We will use it to send you information about carer support and services by post and email. We may occasionally contact you by telephone. We will not share any personal information with a third party unless required to do so or with your consent. 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 for your details to be removed, please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 or email centre@vocal.org.uk You can read our full data privacy statement on the VOCAL website: www.vocal.org.uk/privacy

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