



VOCAL's work in 2019-20
and our priorities for the future



Our priorities for the future

Responding to the pandemic

From the early days of Covid-19, the pandemic has thrown long shadows for vulnerable people and their carers. VOCAL will carefully study the impact and implications of the pandemic on carers. Jointly with our partners, we will adjust services to provide more flexible support and help carers to manage their individual and personal caring situation and work-life balance to meet the challenges of the pandemic.

Shaping the 'New Normal'

The 'New Normal' also requires more flexible ways of working for staff and volunteers. VOCAL is a public service and will seek to provide support from publicly accessible venues in all of our communities. At the same time, this commitment will need to be balanced by careful measures for the protection and safety of carers, staff and volunteers.

New carer support contracts in Edinburgh and Midlothian

In 2020-21, VOCAL will engage in the public procurement of new carer support contracts in Edinburgh and Midlothian. VOCAL is well placed to consolidate and expand carer support and will make fully commit to the effective implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act and the effective use of Adult Carer Support Plans.

Short Breaks and Respite

VOCAL will seek to expand short breaks opportunities for carers, increase Short Breaks Funds for carers and expand short breaks planning and respite events. We will take some steps to explore becoming a short breaks provider by directly managing short breaks accommodation for family breaks.

New Business Plan 2021-2026

VOCAL will shape a new Business Plan for the period 2021-2026, based on the emerging needs and trends of caring and on the outcome of carer support contracts. Our Business Plan will seek to set out the way we consolidate the best of our traditions while charting new directions and social enterprise activities for the benefit of carers.

Our funders and supporters

VOCAL is commissioned by the integrated joint boards in Edinburgh and Midlothian to provide a wide range of carer support across all local communities. The National Lottery Community Fund and several trust funds and foundations complement many of our services and enable VOCAL to provide creative new projects for carer support.

Donations from carers and supporters contribute much additional capacity and we are also grateful to our staff and volunteers who support VOCAL's fundraising efforts, appeals and collections.

Legal experts and professional specialists continue to provide a wide range of surgeries for carers free of charge and we benefit from many opportunities and gifts in kind from businesses across the city.

We thank all our supporters for their kindness, their time and their commitment to carers. Please consider VOCAL as your personal or work's Charity of the Year and help us make a difference to carers!

VOCAL's audited accounts are submitted annually to all main funders, to Companies House and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. They can be accessed by the public through the websites of these agencies.



Our finances *for the year ending 31 March 2020*

Statement of Financial Activities		2020	2019
Total incoming resources		£1,440,027	£1,480,592
Total resources expended		£1,332,146	£1,336,173
Net income for year		£107,881	£144,419
Net gain on investments			£0
Net movement in funds		£107,881	£144,419
Funds brought forward		£970,128	£825,709
Funds at 31 March 2020		£1,078,009	£970,128
Balance sheet at 31 March 2020			
Fixed Assets	Tangible	£1,221,306	£1,258,963
	Investments	£1	£1
		£1,221,307	£1,258,964
Current Assets	Debtors	£86,457	£62,899
	Cash at bank	£204,060	£195,014
		£290,517	£257,913
Creditors due within one year		£119,870	£220,228
Net current assets / (liabilities)		£170,647	£37,685
Creditors due after one year		£313,945	£326,521
Net assets		£1,078,009	£970,128
Funds	Restricted	£72,691	£26,943
	General Fund	£1,005,318	£943,185
Total funds		£1,078,009	£970,128

14,786 carer contacts

Over the course of 2019-20 VOCAL recorded **14,786** individual one-to-one carer contacts. Our carer centres provide free, confidential support on all aspects of caring including benefits, financial and emotional support, short breaks and community care.



4,256 carers

VOCAL provided individual support to **4,256** carers, offering a person-centred service delivered through home visits, appointments at our carer centres and local support in the community.

Over **1,300** carers attended VOCAL's legal and benefits surgery appointments, including support for setting up Power of Attorney.

Over **9,500** carers received regular information through VOCAL's e-bulletins, printed newsletters and personalised information on training and events.



1,751 new carers

We identified and supported **1,751** new carers during 2019-20. VOCAL works in partnership with GPs and health and social care teams to improve early identification and referral of carers.



£1,150,000

Carers reported receiving **over £1.15 million** in additional financial support as a direct result of assistance from VOCAL staff.



47,407 unique users

47,407 people visited VOCAL's websites in 2019-20: our training site carerstraining.co.uk our short breaks site weebreaks.com (which launched this year) and vocal.org.uk including the mini-site for our 25th anniversary.

By the end of 2019-20 the combined totals for Edinburgh and Midlothian social media reached **2,021** page likes on Facebook and **1,868** followers on Twitter.



1,899 counselling sessions

VOCAL received **336** referrals for counselling and offered **1,899** counselling sessions to **183** carers in 2019-20.

92% of carers said that they feel more confident in managing their caring role since starting counselling **100%** said that they would recommend the counselling service to other carers.



1,969 carers

1,969 carers registered for our *Caring with Confidence* training programme and group work sessions. These offer courses, seminars and workshops designed for carers in different caring situations to enable carers to develop skills and knowledge to improve their confidence in their caring role.

Group work sessions included dealing with guilt, changing relationships, loss and bereavement and stress management. VOCAL also supported **several hundred carers** to access leisure, health and wellbeing courses and events.



VOCAL

Registered address: Edinburgh Carers' Hub,
60 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 5HB

0131 622 6666

@centre@vocal.org.uk vocal.org.uk

Support for carers

VOCAL manages two carer centres and provides local carer support in communities across Edinburgh and Midlothian.

Our services include:

- Person-centred support, information and planning for the future
- Emotional support, stress management and counselling
- Training, learning, social and leisure opportunities
- Benefits, legal, long-term care and power of attorney surgeries
- Support for people affected by someone else's addiction
- Creative short breaks and Respite
- Gateway to many other services

Our positive impact

Over 2,000 carers reported positive outcomes following support from VOCAL:

87% reported improvements in feeling better informed about issues relating to their caring role

82% reported improved confidence with their caring role

79% reported improved confidence in their ability to shape services

83% reported that their physical and mental wellbeing had improved

63% reported improvements in their ability to deal with changing relationships resulting from the caring role

61% reported improvements in their economic wellbeing

52% reported improvements in their personal safety

73% reported that their social wellbeing had improved

Case study: Time off from Caring

Dawn and her husband care for their daughter Emma 19, who has Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy. Emma requires 24 hour care which Dawn and her husband share between them while managing their own small business and caring for their other child.

Dawn reached out to VOCAL for support when their ongoing respite arrangements were cancelled, and she was unable to employ a PA or secure other regular assistance. She explored the support available, recognising that the family really needed a break but were not financially in a position to fund one.

Tammy, a VOCAL Carer Support Worker, guided Dawn through her options and together they secured funding for a break for the whole family at a secluded holiday cottage on Skye.

The family enjoyed the remoteness of the break, benefitting from the open safe space outside and were able to relax and enjoy walks nearby. Their home is situated in the city and the family found it difficult to go outdoors locally and safely with their daughter.

After the break Dawn said that it "came at the right time" as the family were "feeling overwhelmed and it was just what they needed!"

"It was brilliant, really good, refreshing for all of us. It was in the middle of nowhere and calm. The break made a huge difference and Emma enjoyed making a short film while we were on Skye."

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