



Carers' News

From VOCAL | August 2022



Welcome

Welcome to Carers' News, VOCAL's newsletter with the latest news, updates and information for unpaid carers. As we have eased out of lockdown into more 'normal' ways of life, we realise that 2022 has brought about new challenges for carers and those they care for.

The energy and cost of living crisis is impacting so many, and as we edge closer to winter, this will hit our lives even harder. In this newsletter, we have included information on applying for financial support and the services you can access through VOCAL to support your emotional wellbeing.

0808 196 6666
vocal.org.uk



News in Brief

- A huge “well done and thank you” to all those who took part in the 10k, half marathon and full marathon in Edinburgh in May, raising a whopping £4,756.69 for VOCAL!



- The National Care Service will be one of the biggest developments in health and social care in Scotland since the creation of the NHS, and will be delivered by the end of 2026. The Scottish Government has started consulting on the service, and more information is available on their website: gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-scotland-consultation/
- Edinburgh-based global investment managers Baillie Gifford have chosen VOCAL as their employees' Charity of the Year! We look forward to working with Baillie Gifford as a carer-friendly employer and to raise funds to expand carer support.
- The Scottish Government and Edinburgh's Health and Social Care Partnership are reviewing and updating the national and local Carer Strategy. Supported by increasing Scottish Government funds for carers, both strategies will focus on consolidating and expanding carer support, particularly for those in greatest need. Both strategies are expected to be published later this year.
- Have you read the results from VOCAL's Carer Survey? Every two years, we undertake a survey to help us understand carers' experiences and views of support and services. Over 1,200 carers took part in our 2021 survey and we would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who was able to complete it.

To read the results, visit: vocal.org.uk/carers-support/information-resources/vocal-carer-surveys/



VOCAL services

Carer Assistance Fund

Applications have re-opened for our Edinburgh Carer Assistance Fund. This grant programme can support you with **fuel payments, food vouchers, or general costs associated with improving your financial situation**. Grants can also cover wellbeing activities to reduce stress, breaks from caring, basic furniture (including white goods), support to seek employment and costs associated with caring such as training, transport or equipment.



Funds are targeted at those in greatest need and carers will be asked to describe what difference the funding would make to their life. Carer households can apply for a £250-£500 grant. It is possible to make two applications to the fund but there must be at least six months between applications. Successful awards are for carer households and do not need repaid.

For more information and to apply, visit our website: vocal.org.uk

Hawthorn Brae

VOCAL and EMMS International officially opened Hawthorn Brae, a new holiday house for unpaid carers and those they care for! Located near Blair Atholl, Hawthorn Brae was made possible through a partnership with EMMS International and funding from the Swinton Paterson Trust. We thank them for their generous support.



Every year Hawthorn Brae will benefit over 50 people with life-limiting conditions and their carers, providing a break from caring routines and improving their physical and mental health. To find out more, visit: weebreaks.com/hawthorn-brae

EMMSInternational
Health for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

 **Swinton
Paterson
Trust**

VOCAL services

Wee Breaks and Time to Live funding

VOCAL Wee Breaks can help you take time to breathe, recharge and think about yourself for an hour, a day or longer. You can apply for a grant to fund activities, devices and support, which will provide you with a break from caring.

If you are a carer and have an interest you find difficult to afford, but it would make a real difference to your care-life balance, please consider applying!

To apply, visit the Wee Breaks website and go to the 'Funding Your Break' section: weebreaks.com/funding-your-break/



Carer support and services

Our team of carer support practitioners provide one-to-one support to carers regardless of the age or condition of the person being cared for. We can support you in any caring situation, online, via telephone, and in person.

Our range of supports include:

- | **Support and information on carer rights and entitlements**
- | **Self-directed support and sourcing services**
- | **Creating an Adult Carer Support Plan and Emergency Plan**
- | **Welfare rights and financial support | Short breaks**
- | **Training courses and events | Addictions (alcohol and drugs)**
- | **Future planning including Power of Attorney**

Events and activities programme

Whether you are looking to learn more about a topic, meet other carers or take some time to yourself, there is something for everyone in our quarterly events and activities programme! There are short courses and workshops on health and wellbeing approaches, stress management and mindfulness. We also cover condition-specific topics such as Dementia, Stroke and MS.

We have recently updated our website to make it easier for you to book multiple events and check your bookings. If you haven't booked through our website before, visit now and create your account! carerstraining.co.uk

Carer counselling

Becoming a carer affects us in different ways. Whether by choice or circumstances, the caring journey can bring rewards, but can also be very difficult at times. Our COSCA recognised counselling service is open to carers across Edinburgh: vocal.org.uk/carers-support

Information and advice surgeries

Our information and advice surgeries are led by professionals in specialist areas. All surgeries are currently delivered by video or telephone with regular monthly appointments available.

| [Money matters and welfare rights](#) | [Power of Attorney](#)

| [Legal matters](#) | [Long-term care](#) | [Accessing Wee Breaks](#)

Family Support Addictions

We offer 1-2-1, group and peer support for carers and you can find out more on our website: vocal.org.uk/carers-support/info-for-carers

Peer mentoring

Inspiring Volunteers Award

We would like to say a huge congratulations and well done to our Peer Mentoring team who collected their Volunteer Edinburgh Inspiring Volunteer Award! Our Peer Mentoring team dedicate their time to supporting other carers through similar situations and we are so pleased they received recognition for their important work.



Access peer mentoring

Carers often learn from the experiences of friends and family. However, many carers don't know anyone in a similar caring role or situation.

VOCAL's Peer Mentoring Service matches a carer with another carer who has lived through a particular experience or coped with a particular situation. Our peer mentors have varied caring roles and can talk about diagnosis, the impact of caring and support that is available. They also have experience with common caring situations, such as coping techniques, dealing with difficult behaviour, addictions and more.

Meetings are available via telephone, video call or in person, and they can last anywhere between 15 minutes to one hour depending on what works best for you.

If you would like to hear more please call us on **0808 196 6666** or email: centre@vocal.org.uk

Become a peer mentor

We currently seek new peer mentors to join VOCAL. For more information, email centre@vocal.org.uk or call us on **0808 196 6666**.

Cassie's story

Through the Parent Carewell partnership, The Action Group, VOCAL and FAIR Advice work together to support parent carers across Edinburgh. Cassie* was referred to VOCAL by FAIR Advice, having previously been supported through the Black and Minority Ethnic Service at the Action Group and FAIR.

In VOCAL's Carer Survey, over half of respondents agreed that being a carer has negatively impacted their finances. Cassie came to VOCAL as she was struggling to make ends meet, supporting her three children, one of whom has learning disabilities.



Cassie met with a Carer Practitioner at VOCAL and they discussed what Cassie hoped to achieve. After this, financial support options were looked at, and we supported Cassie to access a short breaks grant. She used this to buy an iPad, to give her a break from caring and she also received a ScotSpirit short break. We also reviewed the benefits that Cassie was entitled to and supported her to apply for grants.

Carers often forget about their own health and wellbeing, putting the needs of the person they care for above their own. In VOCAL's 2021 Carer Survey, only half of respondents considered themselves to be in good health. Cassie shared that she wanted to improve her own health and wellbeing, and through VOCAL she was able to access Edinburgh leisure facilities at a reduced cost. She has also joined some of VOCAL's health and wellbeing events.

Cassie was really appreciative of the support she received, stating:

“Thank you so much for all you are doing for this family”.

Through our links with charities across Edinburgh, we can signpost you to the most relevant service for your situation: vocal.org.uk

**The carer's name has been changed to protect her identity.*

We're part of the
**Parents Carewell
Partnership**



Fundraising

VOCAL's monthly lottery!

VOCAL's 100 Club is a simple and fun way to support VOCAL's services and gives you the chance to win a monthly cash prize too! For £5 a month you will be given a lottery number with the chance of winning one of six cash prizes each month.

50% of donations go towards the prize fund and 50% to support VOCAL's services. You can buy more than one number to increase your support and your chance of winning!

To join and for more information, visit:

vocal.org.uk/support-vocal/vocal-100-club

Fancy donning a kilt and strutting your stuff for VOCAL?

Taking place on 18 September, the Edinburgh Kiltwalk is now open for applications! There are three walking distances to choose from: Mighty Stride (24 miles), Big Stroll (14.6 miles) and the Wee Wander (3.5 – 4.5 miles).

You can participate as an individual or a team, and you can select VOCAL as your chosen charity! If you would like more information before registering, email: awarburton@vocal.org.uk.

Alternatively, visit the Kiltwalk website to secure your space:

thekiltwalk.co.uk/events/edinburgh

Treasure Tree

In 2017, we established a new social enterprise called Treasure Tree. Treasure Tree specialises in selling affordable mobility equipment that would otherwise end up in landfill, helping to generate income or reduce the purchase costs for carers and their families. Items we accept and sell include 'Rise and recline' chairs, wheelchairs (manual and electric), wheelchair accessories, walkers, stair-lifts and both static and mobile hoists.



Treasure Tree works by selling carers' donated goods on their behalf, with a percentage of the profit donated to VOCAL. This can relieve carers of the practical and financial burden of selling their unwanted equipment. For carers who wish to sell their own goods, Treasure Tree also runs training courses on how to trade online.

If you would like to find out more about Treasure Tree or are looking to buy or sell mobility equipment, please email sell@vocal.org.uk or call us on **0131 622 6666**.

Update your details

Has your caring situation changed or do you need to update your personal details?

You can do this on our website through the following webpage or scanning the QR code below: vocal.org.uk/update-my-details



About Us

VOCAL is the Voice of Carers Across Lothian, a Scottish charity run by carers and for carers since 1994. VOCAL supports unpaid carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian, offering tailored support for all caring situations and relationships. This includes caring for a family member, partner, relative or friend, of any age, who might need help to manage a long-term condition, a disability, a physical or mental health condition or a substance dependency.

Contact

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Scottish Charity: SC020755
Company Registration: SC183050

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