



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 and 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.

0131 663 6869
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 Midlothian’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.
- Do you shop in a local Co-op? You can choose VOCAL Midlothian as a local cause to support! For more information, visit: membership.coop.co.uk/causes/62743
- 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

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/



Counselling service available

We are pleased to now offer enhanced counselling services to carers in Midlothian. Carers often put their own wishes and needs second to the person they care for and feel that they can't always talk openly about how they feel about their caring situation.

Counselling gives you the opportunity to talk to someone who is outside your situation and carers can often find this really helpful. It can help you explore:

- your feelings and thoughts about your situation
- how to deal with your feelings
- your feelings about your relationship with the person you care for and others
- how you might deal with things differently in the future

We received the following from a carer who has accessed our counselling service which highlights how it might be able to help you:

"I feel so much better and able to cope with my caring responsibilities since my counselling. I really appreciate the sessions and counsellor. Even on a bad day I know I'm not alone and I have a wee self help guide for myself now. Thank you."

For more information, please email counsellingmid@vocal.org.uk or call us on **0131 663 6869**.



VOCAL services

Are you a parent carer?

If you're a parent carer, read on! Measures during the pandemic, such as isolation, social distancing and lockdown meant that there were little or no opportunities for carers to meet or connect like they used to. We found that carers began to look for other chances to create a sense of community and that many reached out to support each other online.

Carla, VOCAL Senior Carer Support

Practitioner, recognised this new opportunity to keep social connection going and reduce carers' risk of isolation. Carla created a private Facebook group for parent carers and this has gone from strength to strength.

There are now 185 members and the group is used for carers to share thoughts, experiences and coping strategies. The group is carer-led and members need to live in Midlothian. This means that you can learn from others, ask for advice and even receive local recommendations.

To find out more, email: midlothian@vocal.org.uk



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 training 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

Mental Health First Aid

Thu 1 Sep and Tue 6 Sep | 9.30am - 1.30pm | Midlothian Carer Centre

Two half-day workshops to learn about Young People's Mental Health First Aid, helping you to better understand mental health and how it affects young people.

Caring in Midlothian

Tue 6 Sep | 10am - 12pm | Midlothian Carer Centre

Find out what support we can offer you in your caring role now and in the future. The session is for new carers or carers whose caring role has changed.

Carers Action Midlothian

Wed 14 Sep | 10.30am - 12pm | On Zoom

Engage with other carers and find out how you can shape local services. Raise and discuss issues that are important to you as a carer.

Dementia Information Day (later stages)

Wed 21 Sep | 9.30am - 2.30pm | Midlothian Carer Centre

Do you support someone with later-stage dementia? Join us for day focused on practical and emotional strategies to cope with caring for someone with dementia.

Carer Cuppa

Wed 5 Oct | 10am - 12pm | Midlothian Carer Centre

Come along and enjoy a cuppa and blether and meet other local carers. Enjoy a short quiz or game of bingo!

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**

Connecting the community with British Red Cross

VOCAL Midlothian works with the British Red Cross to support carers in the community, by joining up local services and supports. Lorraine McNab is a Community Carer Support Worker, based in Midlothian and she has shared Des' story.

Des cares for his wife who has Vascular Dementia. Due to her condition, he cannot leave her alone in the house and often has to remind his wife about the 'next steps' in her day. Des' daughter got in touch with The British Red Cross as she felt her dad needed more support.

Lorraine visited Des at home and supported him on telephone calls. They completed a Support Plan together, which set out goals to help Des better cope with his caring role.

Des was registered with VOCAL and Lorraine also helped him create an Emergency Care plan. This was really important as Des doesn't keep good health himself.

Before taking on his caring role, Des used to meet a friend every second Friday afternoon to catch up. Des shared that he had a computer at home, and would like to use this to stay in touch with friends and family.

He was referred to Volunteer Midlothian Connect Online and through this service, a volunteer will teach him computer skills at home. Des also applied for Wee Breaks Funding for a paid companion for his wife while Des was out.

Since working with Lorraine, Des has expressed a sense of relief that there is a plan to keep him and his wife safe. He's also looking forward to using his computer! Des said:

“Just by knowing that there are things in place and a service there to help me, has really improved my mental health. I feel less isolated knowing that I can get a break from caring when my wife's companion is in, and that I have the opportunity for some time to myself too.”

To find out more about we could help you, visit vocal.org.uk or call British Red Cross Carer Support on **0131 654 0340**.

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**.



TreasureTree

Keep it local. Sell through VOCAL

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