

Welcome

Support
for carers in
Midlothian

vocal
working with carers



**your emergency
card was here
(let us know if not)**

**an emergency card
for the person you
care for was here
(let us know if not)**

Planning for emergencies

An emergency plan can provide reassurance as well as continuity of care. Your plan might include:

- The name, address and contact details of the person you look after
- Who should be contacted in an emergency – friends, family and/or professionals
- Details of any medication the person you look after is taking
- Details of ongoing treatment they receive



Welcome to VOCAL



working *with* you

Here is just some of the support we offer at VOCAL:

- Legal matters and your rights as a carer
- Money matters, benefits, funding and discounts
- Carer training courses
- Counselling
- Short breaks and time off from caring
- Self-directed support

We are VOCAL - Voice of Carers Across Lothian, an organisation run by carers for carers since 1994. We're really glad you got in touch.

This booklet covers the different kinds of support we offer and outlines some of the basics in each area. It's just a taster of the wide range of support available to you as an unpaid carer. We hope you'll find it useful in deciding how we can help.

As this is just a taster we've included short web links where you might want to read more on a subject. They look like this: vocal.org.uk/example. Just type them into a browser on your phone, tablet or computer. All additional information is also available in print on request.

If English isn't your first language or you've any accessibility needs please just ask us.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব

ترجمہ کے لئے حاضر 很乐意翻译 يسعدنا توفير الترجمة

Adult Carer Support

Under the Carers' (Scotland) Act 2016 you have a right to request an **Adult Carer Support Plan**. This sets out your personal outcomes, identified needs and any support to be provided to meet these needs.

This starts with a conversation where you discuss your caring role and what is important to you in your life.

Why is an adult carer support plan important?

It helps you to think about what support you might need if you wish to continue caring and what could help you to have a life alongside caring. The plan sets out any needs you have and how they will be met.

How do I start?

VOCAL works jointly with Midlothian Council in supporting carers to create their plans.

You'll make the plan in conversation with a Carer Support Worker. Key points of the conversation are written down with agreed actions to become your Adult Carer Support Plan. It's a live document which grows & changes with your situation. You – and anyone you choose – can have a copy.

Outcomes from your plan

- Improved Health and Wellbeing
- A Life of your own
- Improved relationships
- Feeling financially secure
- Choices in caring
- Feeling informed/equipped and safe
- Feeling confident and able to continue caring
- Feeling actively involved in shaping support
- Quality of life for the person you care for
- Plans for their future care





Additional information

- Midlothian Council's PA directory
midlothian.gov.uk/directory/60/
- Care Information Scotland: Telephone service and website with information about care services for older people living in Scotland.
careinfoscotland.scot
- A-Z of NHS Lothian health services:
services.nhslothian.scot

The Carers' (Scotland) Act 2016

This Act extends the rights of adult and young carers in Scotland. As well as establishing your right to receive an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement, it also gives local authorities and health boards the following duties to support carers:

- To provide support to carers, based on their needs according to local eligibility criteria
- To establish and maintain an information and advice service for carers
- To involve carers and representatives in the planning and evaluation of services which support carers
- To consider breaks from caring as a form of support
- To publish and review a short breaks services statement
- To inform the carer and to invite their views before a cared-for person is discharged from hospital

The Act is now in effect, however at the time of writing some local authorities are still determining aspects.

Supporting you as a Carer

Becoming a carer impacts us all in different ways. Whether we felt we had a choice or were thrown into it because of circumstances, caring can be difficult at times. Carers don't usually have advance training, most learn as they go, and attending to someone else's needs often means we neglect our own.

Talking to someone

Just talking to someone can make a big difference to how you feel. VOCAL offers free one-to-one support for carers. We also have peer support opportunities where you can talk with someone who has been in a similar situation.

Taking part in groups

Joining a carer support group can be another way of getting both practical and emotional support.

Courses for carers

Our regular training courses for carers can also provide support. Including courses specifically targeting emotional support like mindfulness and stress management.



Carer Counselling Service

VOCAL's COSCA recognised counselling service is open to carers who require emotional support.

For carers living in Edinburgh or Midlothian, financial contributions are agreed at a level to suit your individual circumstances. Carers who live in other local authority areas can also access counselling at a cost of £20 per session.

To find out more about counselling call us on **0131 663 6869** or email midlothian@vocal.org.uk.

Help with getting a break

VOCAL offers a range of options to support carers taking a break, to discuss your options and eligibility please contact the carer support team on -

weebreaks.com is our hub for breaks for carers. You can search for breaks, explore local events and get information on funding.



Breaks from caring

Leisure time is often the first thing that disappears for carers, yet it is proven to be one of the best stress relievers. Time away from your daily routine gives you a breather and time to pursue your own interests.

Planning your break

Breaks can vary from a few hours to a few weeks. They may be on a regular planned basis, as a holiday, or in response to a change in circumstance.

Breaks can take many forms - you can go away or stay at home; try something new or make time for your old interests; spend time on your own or with others. Whatever form your break takes it should be your choice.

Support with taking a break

There are many structures in place for supporting you to get a break from caring. Talk to a member of our carer support team to find the right support for you.

Safeguarding and Planning for the Future

VOCAL's carer support team can support you with planning for the future, including looking at options for **long-term care**. Many decisions will depend on the capacity of the person you care for. Capacity in this sense is the ability to understand, retain, weigh up and communicate a decision. The law assumes someone has capacity, unless there is evidence otherwise.

A Power of Attorney is a legal document in which an individual gives authority to another person to make decisions on their behalf about financial and/or personal welfare issues, in the event they lose capacity.

A Guardianship Order can be sought through the sheriff court if someone lacks capacity. The appointed guardian can then make decisions for that person.

You may want to make provision for the person you care for in your **will**, or by setting up a **trust**. Bear in mind that money you leave to the person you care for may affect their welfare benefit entitlement and any financial contributions they make to pay for their care.

Our specialist surgeries

VOCAL offers **Power of Attorney** surgeries as a start-to-finish process in partnership with an independent advisor. Carers and those they care for can explore their options, decide the shape of PoA that suits their needs and circumstances, and take the necessary steps toward setting one up.

VOCAL also offers 30 minute legal surgeries where carers can get professional specialist advice on matters such as **Guardianship**, **wills** and **trusts**.

Surgeries are free of charge. If you would like advice on any of these issues please call us on **0131 663 6869** or email midlothian@vocal.org.uk to book your place.





Money Matters

Caring can hit our finances hard, whether through a reduction in our own earnings, the loss of an income when the person we care for ceases to be able to work, or the additional costs of specialist equipment or treatments.

How we can help

VOCAL run regular and comprehensive free welfare advice surgeries for carers in Midlothian helping ensure carers and the person they care for are receiving the benefits they are entitled to.

Appointments are available for information and support in understanding benefits and how to access them. We help complete application forms, maximise your income through benefits and offer advice on entitlements.

If you are worried about the impact caring will have on your finances – or just want to make sure you and the person you care for are getting all the welfare benefits you are entitled to – please get in touch. You can email midlothian@vocal.org.uk or call **0131 663 6869**

Available benefits

Benefits and entitlements which carers or the people they care for may be able to claim include:

- Carers Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Personal Independence Payments
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Job Seekers
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit

Hospital discharge

Local health boards have a legal duty to involve carers in discharge from hospital when the person being discharged is likely to require care.

It is important to identify yourself to hospital staff as soon as possible and let them know how to contact you. You also need consent from the person you care for to discuss their care and discharge plan with health and social work staff.

Being involved in this way gives you the opportunity to decide and communicate what you are willing and able to do, and to think about how any changes in your role may affect you as a carer.

Hospital staff have a duty to involve you in discharge planning. This may be a discussion in person or over the telephone to arrange the details of when and how the discharge will take place.

VOCAL Midlothian has a dedicated Hospital in-reach Carer Support Worker who can support you with this. Contact midlothian@vocal.org.uk or **0131 663 6869** for more information.



Help getting around

For many carers supporting the person they care for to get around can be expensive and difficult.

There is a lot of help available from simple things like the National Entitlement Cards for over 60s or those with disabilities, through specialist taxi arrangements, volunteer car services, Shopmobility and the Blue Badge scheme.

We keep a regularly updated guide to travel support across Edinburgh at vocal.org.uk/help-getting-around

Shaping your services and care

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 establishes everyone's right to choice and control over any support they might need. The law ensures you, and the person you care for, can shape a package of services which meet your individual needs and circumstances.

Some people can manage their support on their own, while others need help either from family or friends, or a support organisation.

For more details visit the Midlothian Council site at midlothian.gov.uk and search "SDS".



Services and Care

Care and support services for the person you care for can be organised a number of ways:

- You can arrange private care if you know what support is needed, and the person you care for is able to pay for it. Carer Support Workers can advise on this if needed
- The Care Inspectorate maintain a searchable list of registered home care providers and inspection reports. www.careinspectorate.com
- If the person you care for is eligible for support from the local authority follow the steps laid out on our guide at vocal.org.uk/la-support
- On discharge from hospital intensive support, or 'reablement', is available for six weeks. If help is still required after this, ongoing support is offered

Remember that some services will have waiting lists.

Caring and Employment

Over 250,000 carers combine caring with paid employment, often giving up work to continue caring, impacting their income and emotional health.

Flexible working

You can request flexible working if you've had at least 26 weeks continuous employment with that employer at date of application. Employers can refuse, but only on the grounds of a good business case.

Emergencies

You can take a 'reasonable' amount of time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependent. Whether the time off is paid or not is at your employer's discretion.

Carers@Work

VOCAL maintains this private Facebook group where working carers share information and support - email social@vocal.org.uk for details or an invitation to join.

Our work with employers

VOCAL works with Midlothian employers to train line managers, develop carer policies and improve support for carers at work. To learn more on this or any of the above visit vocal.org.uk/work or call **0131 663 6869**.

Learning and leisure opportunities

VOCAL runs various free courses, group work, social and leisure activities for unpaid carers all year.

Some focus on skills and knowledge to support you in your caring role. Others provide space to explore and develop new or existing interests away from caring, or improve your own health and well being.

Courses are held across Edinburgh and all offer a relaxed environment to meet other carers and take time for yourself.

You can browse our current course calendar at carerstraining.co.uk. Alternatively call **0131 663 6869** or email midlothian@vocal.org.uk and ask for your copy.





Family Support Addictions

The chaos of substance misuse and addiction does not just affect the individual but also those close to them. People with a loved one affected by drug or alcohol misuse can often feel overwhelmed by all that is happening around them.

It is easy to lose sight of who you are as person and what you need. You may not realise that there is confidential support available for you.

You matter too!

VOCAL's Family Support Addictions team can support you over the phone or face to face. Think of it as space to talk about things from your point of view.

You can offload any concerns in a neutral space, discuss how the situation is affecting you and explore anything you want to change in your life.

Getting support for yourself, in your own right, is a step along the way to feeling less isolated, getting more balance in your life and thinking about the role you want to play in supporting your friend, partner or family member.

What is FSA?

The Family Support Addictions team support work with people who are caring for someone affected by drug or alcohol use.

They provide one to one support and also run monthly support groups, SMART Family and Friends meetings, courses, occasional workshops and de-stressing activities.

To contact the Family Support Addictions team, email midlothian@vocal.org.uk or call **0131 663 6869**.

Children and Families

Local authorities have a duty to assess the needs of children with, or affected by, a disability. In Midlothian, an outcomes-focussed assessment is prepared with the parent/carer and the child or young person where possible. This assessment will include a home visit and takes into account:

- The child or young person's needs
- The wider family context
- What is important to the individuals involved
- Support you may already be receiving
- If eligible, further supports for any unmet needs
- A review of outcomes should also be carried out

Additional Support for Learning

Children who require additional support, short or long term, have various rights in law geared to help them make the most of education. The same laws also guarantee their parents rights to support.

Visit vocal.org.uk/children to find more detail on any of the issues on this page.

Transition from child to adult services

Midlothian Council's Transition Team support the move from school and children's services to adult services. They work with young people aged 14 to early 20s who have a disability.

If transitional planning is required, the young person is referred to the Transition Team by their school around S2 stage.

Parents can access training courses on preparing for the transition from child to adult services.

For more information contact VOCAL on **0131 663 6869** or referrals to the Transition Team can be made by contacting **0131 271 3900**



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Bonnyrigg Health Centre EH19 2DA



Midlothian



EXEMPLARY



Contact VOCAL

Midlothian Carers' Centre

30/1 Hardengreen Estate
Dalhousie Rd, Dalkeith, EH22 3NX

 0131 663 6869

 midlothian@vocal.org.uk

 vocal.org.uk

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

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