

# 18,533 carer contacts

VOCAL's carer centres provide free, confidential support on all aspects of caring including benefits, financial and emotional support, short breaks and community care.

Over the course of 2022-23, VOCAL recorded **18,553** individual one-to-one carer contacts.

# 6,503 carer beneficiaries

VOCAL provided support to **6,503** carers, offering a person-centred service delivered through home visits, appointments at our carer centres, and online and local support in the community.

**1,287** carers attended VOCAL's legal and benefits surgery appointments, including support to set up Power of Attorney.

Over **10,000** carers received regular information through VOCAL's e-bulletins, printed newsletters and personalised information on training and events.

# 2,503 new carers

VOCAL identified and supported **2,503** carers who were new to caring or had not previously accessed VOCAL support or services.

# 65,235 website visitors

**65,235** people visited VOCAL's websites in 2022-23, including the VOCAL website [vocal.org.uk](https://vocal.org.uk), Carers Training [carerstraining.co.uk](https://carerstraining.co.uk) and our short breaks website [weebreaks.com](https://weebreaks.com).

VOCAL's Edinburgh and Midlothian Facebook pages reached **71,466** people across 2022-23 and our Twitter accounts achieved **149,032** impressions.

# 2,710 carers

**2,710** carers registered for our carer learning, activities and leisure programme in 2022-23, including group work and peer support groups.

# 2,937 counselling sessions

VOCAL received **461** referrals for counselling and offered **2,937** counselling sessions to **241** carers in 2022-23. **95%** of carers reported that the counselling was helpful and 93% confirmed that they are more aware of the things that affect their emotional health and wellbeing. **98%** would recommend VOCAL's counselling service to other carers.

In 2022-23, VOCAL's counselling service went paperless by upgrading to an online client management system. In Midlothian, we continued to expand and managed to increase counselling provision by 50%, giving more carers the chance to benefit from this much needed support.



## VOCAL

Registered address: Edinburgh Carers' Hub,  
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## About VOCAL

VOCAL is an advocacy organisation, a provider of carer support and a social enterprise. With two carer hubs and locality bases across Edinburgh and Midlothian, we offer digital and in-person support, and our services and support measures include:

- Creating Adult Carer Support and Emergency Plans
- Carers rights and entitlements
- Extensive events and activities programme
- Emotional support, counselling and wellbeing
- Welfare rights, finance and legal issues
- Short breaks
- Support for employers and those working with carers
- Family Support Addictions (drug/alcohol)
- Treasure Tree, a social enterprise which supports the economic wellbeing of unpaid carers and their families

## Our positive impact

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

<b>84%</b> felt better informed about issues relating to their caring role
<b>80%</b> reported improved economic wellbeing
<b>77%</b> felt more confident in their ability to shape care services
<b>80%</b> reported that their physical and mental wellbeing had improved
<b>82%</b> felt more confident in their caring role
<b>75%</b> reported that their social wellbeing had improved
<b>63%</b> reported improvements in their ability to deal with changing relationships resulting from the caring role
<b>58%</b> reported improvements in their personal safety

## Case study: Family support addictions service

Louise was referred to VOCAL by our partner organisation, No. 11 which is based in Dalkeith. No. 11 supports those recovering from substance or alcohol use and were supporting Louise's husband. They realised that Louise, as his carer, needed support and referred her to VOCAL. Louise felt exhausted, and as a carer for her son too, she was feeling low and unable to see a way out of her situation.

Peter, Carer Support Practitioner at VOCAL, specialises in supporting those who care for someone with an addiction. Peter met with Louise and they discussed how she was feeling and how VOCAL could help. They created an Adult Carer Support Plan together, which identified her best hopes for engaging with VOCAL.

Louise was looking for time to herself and support with her own health and wellbeing, to help her relax and unwind from the stressful day-to-day. Through VOCAL's Wee Breaks and Respite services, she was able to access a break from caring by attending our complementary therapy service. She also went to Conifox adventure park with her family to help get a break from caring routines.

She said: "Getting the funding for complimentary therapies, and knowing that can help me makes such a difference as I could not have afforded this myself. As well, being able to have some family time out together means so much. We all had a great day so thank you again."

Scottish Charity: SC020755 Company Registration: SC183050





# VOCAL's work in 2022-23 and our priorities for the future



## Our priorities for the future

### Remaining vocal on the challenges faced by carers

Carers are absorbing the impact of a failing health and social care system, often to the detriment of their own health, wellbeing and finances. The loss of statutory supports over the pandemic has never been fully restored, with more cuts anticipated over the coming years. There is a pressing need to set out new directions that will bridge the implementation gap and address immediate and long-term issues for carers. This year, we will continue to be vocal about these issues, using feedback from over 1,700 carers who responded to the Edinburgh and Midlothian Carer Surveys to drive much needed and urgent change.

### Strengthening and developing short breaks provision

In 2022 VOCAL supported 627 carers to access short breaks funding and 982 carers to benefit from free respite breaks. Our Carer Support Practitioners provided brokerage support and our Wee Breaks website and hub attracted over 34,000 people looking for short break opportunities. VOCAL also opened its first carer cottage – Hawthorn Brae – providing 60 carers with free or discounted breaks. Following its success, and recognising the changing short breaks landscape, VOCAL has

been funded by Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership to purchase additional accommodation. In 23-24 VOCAL will continue to develop our short breaks offer, diversifying and expanding provision based on carer need.

### Specialist and accessible support

We pride ourselves on our ability to support carers with a range of issues, recognising that no caring situation is the same. Our benefits and legal surgeries continue to expand and in 2023-24, we are further enhancing this service. VOCAL will partner with local legal agencies and work with Bequeathed's Wills for Good Service to enable carers and those they care for to access a will for free. We will work closely with partners to continue to increase our visibility in localities and communities across Edinburgh and Midlothian.

### Developing corporate partnerships to increase our reach

Lothian Buses connects the populations of the region, with approximately 120 million customers every year. We were delighted to have been chosen by Lothian's staff as their Charity of Choice from 2022 – 2024.

This year our VOCAL-branded bus will travel daily across Edinburgh and Midlothian, raising awareness of caring and

how to access support. We will be using the 'on bus' screens across their fleet to reach carers. and we hope the opportunities this partnership brings will ensure more carers can access the support they need.

### Leading the Midlothian Care Cooperative

Building on successful models in Scotland, VOCAL is leading a new Midlothian Care Cooperative project which aims to simplify health and social care processes for carers. The Cooperative will bring together organisations across the region to enable carers, health and social care staff and those using health and social care services to broker, source and purchase support.

### Supporting accessibility in the city

VOCAL's social enterprise, Treasure Tree has gone from strength to strength in the past year. Following feedback from carers and those they care for, we found that there are barriers to accessing affordable mobility and accessibility equipment. We are now accepting donations of these items and selling equipment in our new Treasure Tree shop in Ocean Terminal. We have received an overwhelming response from the local community and look forward to expanding our stock further in 2023-2024.

## Our funders and supporters



Commissioned by the Edinburgh and Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnerships, VOCAL reaches and supports well over 10,000 carers in local communities of Edinburgh and Midlothian.

VOCAL is supported by the Scottish Government, National Lottery Community Fund and several trust funds and foundations, to deliver new projects and innovations, ensuring that carer support continues to develop carers' needs.

VOCAL relies on individual donations from carers and supporters and we are grateful to our staff and volunteers who support our fundraising appeals and efforts. We also work with legal and professional specialists who donate their time and expertise to our programme of free information surgeries. A huge thank you to local businesses who continue to support VOCAL.

We express our sincere gratitude to our huge range of supporters for their time and commitment to carers. Your support continues to make a big difference to carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian. We are delighted to have been chosen as Lothian Buses Charity of Choice for 2023-25. Annual partnerships have a significant impact on our charity and if you would like to support VOCAL's work, please consider choosing us as your personal or employer's Charity of the Year.

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

## Our finances for the year ending 31 March 2023

Statement of Financial Activities		2023	2022
Total incoming resources		£3,584,998	£3,255,650
Total resources expended		£3,314,782	£2,380,050
Net income for year		£270,216	£875,600
Net gain on investments			
Net movement in funds		£270,216	£875,600
Funds brought forward		£2,008,836	£1,133,236
Funds at 31 March 2023		£2,279,052	£2,008,836
Balance sheet at 31 March 2023			
Fixed Assets	Tangible	£1,553,745	£1,563,909
	Investments	£1	£1
		£1,553,746	£1,563,910
Current Assets	Debtors	£7,665	£25,779
	Cash at bank	£1,350,005	£1,237,062
		£1,357,670	£1,262,841
Creditors due within one year		£632,364	£695,008
Net current assets / (liabilities)		£725,306	£567,833
Creditors due after one year		-	£122,907
Net assets		£2,279,052	£2,008,836
Funds	Restricted	£1,022,619	£791,298
	Designated funds	12,208	-
	General Fund	£1,244,225	£1,217,538
Total funds		£2,279,052	£2,008,836