

Do you look after someone close to you?

Then you may be an unpaid carer



Seeing yourself as an unpaid carer

You may not have called yourself a carer until now... maybe it's just what you do. Whether out of love, kindness or a sense of obligation and responsibility.

If you're supporting a family member, child, partner, relative or friend of any age to manage a long-term condition, disability, physical or mental health condition or addiction, the answer is yes – you are a carer.

"I never saw myself as a carer. The role was thrown upon me. Because Sean is my partner, I just knew I'd look after him when he became mentally unwell... but it's really challenging and stressful. VOCAL provides a place to talk about it."

– Victor



3 in 5
people in
the UK

have caring
responsibilities
at some point
in their lives



VOCAL is here for
unpaid carers like you

VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian) is a carer-led charity that provides help and support to anyone in Edinburgh who is caring for a partner, family member or friend.

Do you spend
some of your
time caring
for someone
– a partner,
child, family
member, friend
or neighbour –
who relies on
your help?



Is that person living with...?

- Frailty
- Long-term condition or disability
- Physical health condition
- Mental health condition
- Additional needs
- Drug or alcohol use

**If yes, you're definitely
an unpaid carer.**

How we can help you

Being an unpaid carer can sometimes be a challenging and lonely journey. At **VOCAL**, we are beside you for every step of your journey. We are here to support you with information and advice on practical issues, emotional and social support, and the chance to take a break and just be yourself.

One-to-one support

Find out about your rights and what's available to you as a carer during a one-to-one support session. We will work with you to create an Adult Carer Support Plan and look at planning for the future. You can request follow-up support whenever you need.

Counselling

Life changes a lot when you become an unpaid carer. We're here to help you manage your own emotional wellbeing and mental health. Our counselling service offers emotional support and can help you to develop coping mechanisms.

Support near you

To help you access support at a time and place near you, our Carer Support Practitioners are based in community locations throughout Midlothian.

For more information, please visit our website: vocal.org.uk/find-us

Browse the Carer Support Finder

Easy-to-use online directory of organisations offering local support, information and advice for unpaid carers. supportfinder.vocal.org.uk

Peer support groups

Through a peer support group, you can share experiences with other carers who are in the same boat as you. Support groups meet online and in person throughout Midlothian.

Caring for someone who uses alcohol or drugs

Are you affected by a friend or family member's drug or alcohol use? This service offers one-to-one and group support, as well as short training courses.

Nearly 1,000 people in Scotland become an unpaid carer every single day*



**According to research published by Carers Scotland in November 2022 (statistical analysis by the Centre for Care, University of Sheffield of data from 2010 to 2020).*

Help with benefits and financial planning

Our team can assist with welfare benefits applications to ensure you're claiming everything you're entitled to. Help with Power of Attorney, Guardianship, wills and trusts planning is available too.

Events, training and activities

Our range of courses and workshops can help boost your confidence and knowledge on a range of issues, from caring for people with particular conditions to money management and looking after your own wellbeing. Take a look at vocal.org.uk/training

Referral to our partners

Once we understand your circumstances and your needs as a carer, we can refer you to partner organisations for additional help and support.

Buy and sell equipment with Treasure Tree

At Treasure Tree, our social enterprise store based in Ocean Terminal, you can buy affordable second-hand mobility and accessibility equipment such as mobility scooters, wheelchairs and rise-and-recline chairs. You can also sell via the shop. All funds raised go towards our services. Find out more at vocal.org.uk/treasure-tree

Taking a break

As an unpaid carer, it can be difficult to find time to yourself to rest, recharge and do things you enjoy. Our Wee Breaks service can help you plan a much-needed break by arranging replacement care and helping with travel arrangements, funding options and more. We also have three short breaks properties available to carers for free breaks.

Take a look at vocal.org.uk/wee-breaks

"I care for my son alone who has Asperger's and depression. I often feel isolated and have had some financial difficulties, which makes taking a break and enjoying hobbies very difficult. The cottage break came at exactly the right time – I feel able to manage things better now."

– Carer



What happens next?

Here's what you can expect when you contact us at VOCAL.

Give us a call or complete our online referral form at vocal.org.uk/referrals or scan the QR code opposite.



A member of our team will follow up to discuss your caring situation.

After this initial discussion, you'll have access to:

Regular advice and information

Our range of support services including groups, events, counselling and funding options

Ongoing one-to-one support

Support to create an Adult Carer Support Plan and Emergency Plan.



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