

CARERS NETWORK BULLETIN



THE NEWSLETTER FOR CARERS IN HIGHLAND

AUTUMN 2010

FUTURE PLANNING

Some people embrace change as a fresh approach that can blow away the cobwebs. Others are fearful that things change too quickly and they will be left behind. There are plenty of changes being planned for the future of health and social care and here at HCCF, we aim to keep our readers up-to-date about decisions that affect you, and the people you care for.

Recently, the news has been a bit depressing due to the recession and subsequent government cuts and yet we continue to receive reports that the Scottish Government really values the contribution of unpaid carers (see back page). Recent surveys show increased numbers of carers, which means the estimated amount that carers in Highland save the local health and social care services is **£450 million every year!**



The Highland Council and NHS Highland have made a decision about how carers' support services will be delivered after March next year. They require public tenders, i.e. bids, from organisations who wish to provide carers' support services next year.

The good news is that we know support services for carers will still exist after our current funding runs out next March. Unfortunately, if we are not successful in our bid, we don't know who may be providing these services in the future. This affects the individual advocacy service for carers, information and training for carers as well as services for young carers.

Staff here are committed to continuing our work to improve carers' lives and therefore intend to do everything in our power to secure the contract. If you wish to find out more, please call Marion on 01463 723561 or email carers@hccf.org.uk.



NEW EQUALITY LAW

The Equality Act 2010 is a new law aimed at stopping discrimination and helping to encourage equality.

If you're looking after someone who is elderly or disabled (including a disabled child), the law will protect you against direct discrimination or harassment because of your caring responsibilities. This is because you're counted as being 'associated' with someone who is protected by the law because of their age or disability.

You're already protected from discrimination and harassment if they happen at work, but the new law will also protect you if you are caring for a disabled person when you:

- shop for goods
- ask for services
- get services
- use facilities, like public transport

Direct Discrimination

This is where you're treated less favourably than someone else because you're caring for an elderly or disabled person. At work this could include your employer:

- refusing to offer you a job because of your caring

responsibilities

- treating you less favourably because of your caring responsibilities

Outside work, this could include:

- discouraging you from using a service because you care for someone who is disabled
- making it impossible for you to use a facility because you look after someone who is disabled
- providing you with a worse service than someone else who is not caring for a disabled person.

Example:

Ms Battle applies for a job which involves a lot of travelling. She has the best

skills and experience but the company knows Ms Battle cares for her son who is disabled. The company makes an assumption that she cannot manage because she has a disabled son and so it doesn't offer her the job. This is direct discrimination because Ms Battle is associated with a disabled person. It's against the law to refuse to offer her the job for that reason.



Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour related to say, disability or age. It hurts your pride or creates an intimidating, degrading or offensive environment for you. It might be deliberate but it doesn't have to be. Someone could be harassing you even if they don't mean to or don't realise they are doing so.

It's already against the law to harass you at work but it will also be against the law to harass you when you buy goods or services if you are caring for a disabled person. If you're caring for an elderly person, the new law will only protect you at work until more sections of the Act come into effect later.

Example:

You're a carer for your disabled husband, who is a wheelchair user. When you're trying to buy something in a shop, the shop assistant makes rude remarks about wheelchair users to her colleague, which you find offensive and upsetting. You may have a claim of harassment related to disability, even though you are not disabled.

Victimisation

If you complain about direct discrimination or harassment,

the law will protect you if you are treated unfavourably because of your complaint. You have to believe that your complaint is true for this to apply.

Most of the Equality Act started to apply in October 2010. The Government is looking at how the rest of the Act can be implemented in the best way for business. It will make an announcement about this at a later stage.

There will be a slightly different test of what 'disability' means under the Equality Act 2010. When the new law comes in, it will be easier for someone to show that they have difficulty carrying out their day-to-day activities, and therefore that they come under the definition of 'disabled person' and are protected under the Act.

If you want to find out more you can contact us on the Information Line, or contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (details in the Phone Book). You can also contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline Scotland on 0845 604 5510.



CARERS CAN

We have a variety of courses running over the **Autumn/Winter** period, some aimed at helping carers to find their way around the 'system', some aimed at helping people to maintain their own physical and emotional wellbeing and some just for fun.

Come along and join us in a friendly and welcoming environment where you can meet new friends, share experiences, learn new skills and develop existing ones. All of our courses are free to unpaid carers with respite, travel and childcare costs provided.

Planning for the Future

This course helps carers to identify some of the issues that they need to consider when thinking about the future for the person that they care for and for themselves. Topics covered include Powers of Attorney, Guardianship, future care options, benefits and pension considerations.

The morning session, which runs from 10am-12.30pm, is aimed at carers of people up to the age of 19. The afternoon session, which runs from 1.30-3pm, is aimed at carers of people over the age of 19.

9th Dec, The Assembly Rooms, Wick

Stocking fillers 10am-3pm

This session offers carers the opportunity to try out some crafting skills in time for Christmas. Come along, relax and prepare for Christmas. During the day we will be trying our hands at card making, jewellery making and chocolate truffle making.

Lunch will be provided.

30th Nov, Joss Street Hall, Invergordon

7th Dec, Wick Town Hall

Moving with confidence 10am-3pm

This session is aimed at any carer who stretches, bends, twists, lifts or just stands still.

Whether you provide care for a child or an adult, at some point you will have to lift or assist the person to move. Sometimes all it takes is the wrong move at the wrong time for physical damage to occur. The course aims to help carers understand how to minimise the potential for injury to themselves and the person they care for and if the damage has already been done the course aims to help carers to undo bad habits of the past. By using practical examples

the course helps carers to understand how to help the person that they care for move in a way which safeguards physical wellbeing. Lunch will be provided.

10th Feb, Inshes Church, Inverness

22nd Feb, Kinraig House Hotel, Invergordon

1st Mar, Pentland Hotel, Thurso

Sleep 10am-3pm

This course aims to help carers to help themselves to get the sleep that they need to keep themselves well.

Topics covered include barriers to getting a good sleep, healthy sleep routines, breaking bad habits and ways to aid sleep. Lunch will be provided.

23rd Feb, Anam Cara, Inverness

2nd Mar, National Hotel, Dingwall

9th Mar, Castletown Hotel, Castletown

Next Steps

I first ran Next Steps in the Autumn, it was very successful and I am planning to run further sessions across Highland in the New Year. The course is aimed at

people who want to explore learning, volunteering or employment opportunities or who just want to find out a bit more about the options for trying something new. The course runs over two days. Day one helps participants to identify their own skills and interests and to explore options for activities which can be combined with caring. Day two adopts a practical approach to taking the next steps and includes presentations from Skills Development Scotland and Job Centre Plus.

Navigation Courses

These courses are two and a half hour sessions focusing on topics which carers have told me they want to know more about; I will be running sessions across Highland in the New Year and will let you have more information soon.

If you are interested in any of the courses but cannot see one running in your area please get in contact; I may be able to set up a session in your area, if there are other carers who want to attend the same course. If you wish to discuss running a course for any existing groups please contact **Tina: 01463 723573** or **tmorrow@hccf.org.uk**.

CARERS' MANIFESTO

Scotland's Carers Manifesto was launched in the Scottish Parliament on 27th October. Published by the National Carer Organisations (NCO) it sets out clear demands for the Scottish Elections in May 2011 and presses political parties to commit to support carers.

As part of the Manifesto Campaign representatives from the NCO Group have been meeting with key MSPs, both to raise awareness of the campaign and to seek commitments to carers within party manifestos which are currently being finalised.

So far the Manifesto has met with a great response, with over 18 MSPs signing up to support the campaign and many more turning up for our photo opportunity.



To download a copy of the Manifesto, please follow the link <http://www.carersnet.org/campaign/index.php>.

At the recent Labour Party conference in Oban, one of their headline proposals was the creation of a National Care Service.

In his speech Iain Gray, Leader of the Labour Party, acknowledged the current difficulties faced by carers, in announcing this new proposal:

"How many of you have tried to get respite for a disabled brother or sister and found nothing to help with the caring responsibilities that secretly stretch your love to its limits. We have come a long way. But families still wait months on assessments. Respite services are still inadequate. Applications for direct payments are still delayed and discouraged. Services are too often tendered out in a process dominated by price. Too many carer visits have been cut to fifteen minutes – not even long enough to get someone up and dressed with any degree of dignity."

To download a full transcript, please follow this link <http://www.scottishlabour.org.uk/NEWS>

We will provide you with more information on individual party manifestos as details emerge.

NEW STAFF!

We have two new members of staff at HCCF who have taken the opportunity to say hello to our readers.

Hello, my name is Sheila Nairn. I am the HCCF local development worker for the Lochaber area. I work from my home in Kentra and can be contacted on 07733881834 or email to snairn@hccf.org.uk.

Over the next few months I will be out visiting the lunch clubs, exploring the possibility of establishing a Lunch Club Forum for this area. I'll be making contact with the existing community networks and carers groups and will be available to act as a local resource on all relevant issues or developments so please contact me to discuss your ideas or concerns.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Hello, my name is Lorraine Barker. I have recently joined the carers' advocacy team covering the Ross-shire area.

I have a range of experience and skills which I feel give me a good understanding of

the issues and challenges that carers face.

I have a degree in Occupational Therapy & Psychology and also have first hand experience of being a carer. My previous post was within a community rehabilitation team for individuals with physical disabilities based in Glasgow.

During my time there I became aware of the real value and expertise that carers possess and was overwhelmed by the lack of support many carers experience. This led me to explore career options that focused on support for carers.

Being a stranded Highlander in Glasgow desperate to return home - this post with Highland Carers Advocacy combined my desire to return, with a career I feel very passionate about.



STAY SAFE!

Hi, I'm Cath Findlay, Volunteer Co-ordinator for the Inverness Older People's Stay Safe Project (Stay Safe Project). Some of you may know me already; I've travelled the length and breadth of Highland, co-training with Tina Morrow from Connecting Carers.

The Stay Safe Project came about after a survey, carried out by Highland Senior Citizens Network (HSCN) found that older people had issues concerning their safety.

Research by Highland Community Care Forum (HCCF) identified that informed personal talks from their peers would help older people to become and feel much safer and supported at home and in their communities.

The Stay Safe Project is all about increasing older people's feelings of being safe. We want to do this without creating fear, and we want to prevent older people getting into difficulties in the first instance.

We will do this by building a team of well trained, confident, older volunteer speakers who will go out to older people's groups to provide information

and advice on key topics of safety, security and support services that promote the well being and independence of older people. This will help older people living in and around Inverness become better informed, feel safe and more supported.

The project is managed by HCCF, working with HSCN, Age Scotland, Northern Constabulary and the Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service. Thanks to Age Scotland and Comic Relief for supplying funding to make the project happen.

So, if you are an older person and would like to volunteer to become a speaker or support the speaker, please contact me; my details are below. Or, if you know of an older people's group who would like a talk from the Stay Safe Project just let me know.

Cath Findlay, Mobile: 07553 353825, Email: cfindlay@hccf.org.uk, HCCF 01463 718817.



INSPIRING BREAKS

A brand new programme of **Inspiring Breaks** workshops kicked off in Paisley in October. The workshops are targeted at people with care and support needs and unpaid carers and aim to equip them with knowledge and ideas so they can be more actively involved in planning and directing their short breaks.

The workshops will allow people to learn from other people's experience of funding, how to source and arrange short breaks and respite care; find out about the different ways that breaks can be supported, and learn a new approach to planning breaks that helps people achieve the outcomes they want. The programme is being co-delivered by six 'peer facilitators' - people with direct experience of living with a long term condition or caring for someone who does.

Workshops are being planned right across Scotland between October 2010 and May 2011, and thanks to funding from the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland, they are free to attend.

Contact Shared Care Scotland on 01383 622462 for more details.

CARERS' DROP IN

We run a Carers' Drop-in every Tuesday morning from 10am-1pm in the meeting room in Highland House, Inverness. Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits are made available.



The sessions bring carers together to chat, relax, share experiences and take some time out from their caring role. Anybody who is a carer is welcome to come along. If you can't make the whole session, just pop in any time for as long as you can spare, it would be lovely to see you.

Please note that members of the Drop In will be taking a break from 16th November and resuming on 18th January 2011. We look forward to seeing new and old faces then!



CARERS CONNECT

My name is Trina, I am the Carers Information and Support Worker for the Highland Community Care Forum (HCCF). I will be hosting the Carers Connect Telephone Support Groups, a service which is available to carers throughout the Highlands.

The Telephone Support Groups will offer a very similar role to normal support groups except the support will be given over the phone via a conference call. This service is great for anybody who is unable to attend a face to face support group; this may be due to their caring role, transport issues or not having a group in their area.

I'm looking for people who are interested in becoming part of a group which will consist of 4 or 5 carers and me. They can be run on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis; it will up to the group members to decide what is best for them. Similar to any other support group, I will be able to invite guest speakers to the Telephone Support Groups to provide specialised information to group members. This will be something for the group to discuss and agree on.



To join the group, an operator will call you at the agreed time and date and I will be there waiting to greet you. Once all of the group members are connected the group will begin. HCCF will pay for the cost of the calls for the first twelve weeks, after this it will be up to the group to decide if they want to continue to meet. A one hour conference call should cost around £1.75 per person.

During the twelve weeks I will be looking for people who would like to become a volunteer Telephone Support Group Host. The volunteer will take over the hosting of the group; their main role will be to ensure that everyone has the chance to speak if they want to.

If you would like more information or to put your name down for one of the groups, please contact me on 01463 723571 or email thastings@hccf.org.uk.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

Unpaid carers who also have paid jobs can sometimes find it difficult to juggle their caring role with work, particularly if the person they care for has frequent hospital/GP appointments to attend.



- flexible holidays to fit in with alternative care arrangements

The right to request flexible working, gives working parents of disabled children under 18 the right to request flexible working arrangements from their employer. You also have the legal right to ask your employer for flexible working if you are caring for an adult who is a relative or lives at the same address as you.

Caring for a disabled relative is often unpredictable and care arrangements can be complex, so it may be a good idea to talk to your employer about your concerns and commitments. If you want to work, it is in your employer's best interest to consider making reasonable changes to your work pattern to help you work and continue caring.

The Direct.gov website provides interactive tools to help you find out if you have the statutory right to apply, and help to prepare a case to convince your employer.

There are many different ways of working flexibly. You could work from home or have flexible starting or finishing times.

Other working arrangements might be:

Follow this link or type this into the address bar of your internet browser http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Diol1/EmploymentInteractiveTools/DG_10028030 to find help to choose a method of flexible working that will suit your work and put together a case for flexible working. You can also download a standard form for submitting an application to your employer, to consider your request.

- compressed working hours (where you work your normal number of hours in a shorter time - typically fitting five days working time into four days)
- working during school terms
- job-sharing
- part-time working

Connecting Carers can also help you with advice, information and training to help you with these choices.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Flying Doctors take to the air! Scotland's flying doctor service is extended to treat critically-ill patients across the country. Following a successful pilot scheme in the west of Scotland, the Emergency Medical Retrieval Service (EMRS) was rolled out to remote and rural parts of the country from 25th October.

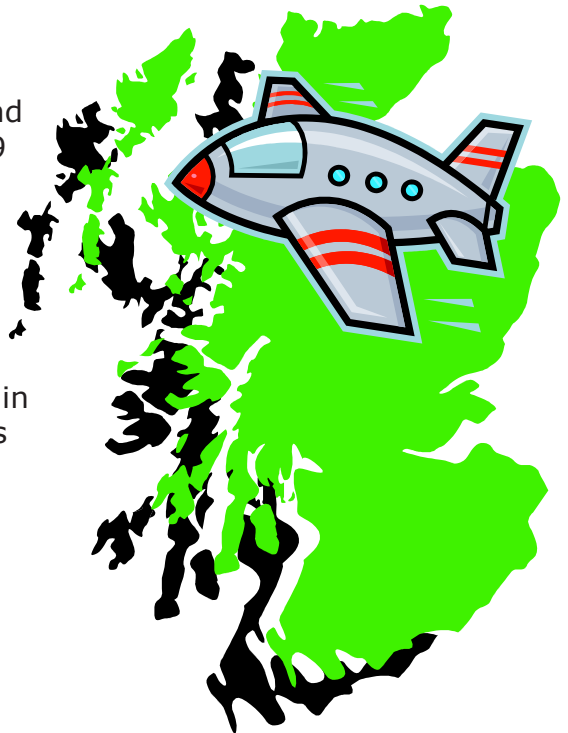
The service, staffed by air paramedics and consultants who are specialists in emergency medicine, will fly across Scotland to treat critically-ill patients on the spot. Since it began in June 2008, the team has undertaken 565 retrievals and given advice to a further 469 patients.

The decision to expand the service was taken after an evaluation of the pilot programme concluded that it offered good quality healthcare, value for money in terms of benefits for patients and significant support for healthcare staff working in remote areas.

Dr Intesar Malik, a consultant at Caithness General Hospital, said: "It's absolutely wonderful to see this service extended to cover all of remote and rural

Scotland including Caithness and Sutherland. It will help to ensure people in remote and rural areas can get access to specialist care as safely and as quickly as possible.

The EMRS team also provides telephone advice to local doctors providing an important source of professional support. The introduction of this service will also reduce the number of times a local doctor has to travel out of the area with a patient so it complements and strengthens the whole service."



SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT

Self-directed support (SDS) is when someone who needs support services can arrange some or all of the support they need themselves, instead of receiving directly provided services from the local authority social work or housing department. It is not the name of a particular type of service, but a way to tailor-make community care that suits the individual's needs better.

They can buy the support they need from an agency that sells care services or they can employ their own staff, sometimes called a support worker or a personal assistant (PA), instead of using services. It could also be used to provide short breaks, equipment and temporary adaptations, or for housing support services.

The Self-directed Support Strategy contains a 10 year vision for the development of self-directed support nationwide; setting a framework for significant change in the way support is provided and giving consideration to the ways self directed support can be used to meet the needs of particular groups.



Earlier in the year the Scottish Government consulted on proposals to develop a Self-directed Support (Scotland) Bill. The consultation proposed, amongst other things, a default opt-out option for SDS where people entitled to community care services would automatically be offered help to self-direct their support (using a Direct Payment for example).

The extension of Direct Payments to unpaid carers was also proposed along with legislative changes that would give new powers to local authorities to support unpaid carers in their own right. There was overwhelming agreement with this proposal and the Government stated, "We are considering the views provided and we expect the draft Bill to retain these proposals."

The Scottish Government response to the consultation confirms that it intends to proceed to publish a draft Bill for further consultation. In addition, a Steering Group has been set up to ensure that practitioners, organisations and users can guide the development of the draft Bill.

PASS IT ON!



Surprising as it may seem, there are 10 million adults in the UK today who have never used the internet. Perhaps this is you, or your mum, dad, friend, or neighbour?

Those of us who are on the 'web' are aware of how much money can be saved by going online, whether it's for Christmas shopping, comparing insurance providers, or for your fuel bills.

I recently read about a couple whose daughter went online to find a replacement heating system for her elderly parents - they are now getting £4000 from the Energy Assistance Package towards home insulation and a heating system.

Of course, not all types of help or information are **only** available online but the problem with information is, that it's only useful if it's there when you need it - that's one of the advantages of the internet!

Another advantage is the low cost of supplying services and information. For example, we at HCCF can provide our members with information by email or on our website for

little or no cost, compared to the comparatively high cost of sending out large mailings every time we want to update our members.

This is the reason there are savings to be made online, from finding cheaper energy tariffs to opting for online billing. The estimated savings from being online - £560 a year - is a lot more than the cost of using the internet (providing you have broadband access). So one way you could cut costs, if the recession is affecting you, is to learn how to use the internet.

If you can't afford to buy a computer help may be available if you are in receipt of benefits or on a low income. These days you don't need a desktop computer; netbooks are just for browsing the internet and available at a much lower cost.

Libraries offer free (or low cost) access to the internet and you can contact them to find out if they run courses for novices or there may be other courses in your area.

If you want to help somebody else get online, there's a FREE help programme called Pass IT On. Go to www.helppassiton.co.uk to help someone learn how to use the internet to their advantage.

RESPIRE RESEARCH

Over the last few months Shared Care Scotland has carried out an extensive piece of research with local authorities and Health Boards in Scotland.

The purpose of this work is to provide a clearer picture of the different strategic approaches that are being used to plan and provide short break services, and to find out what's being done to introduce greater choice and personalisation.

The report highlights areas of both strength and weakness in current practice and suggests specific areas where attention could be focused to improve the way services are planned and promoted. The report was published on 8th November and is available from www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk or request a copy from them on 01383 622462.

The research looked specifically at planning and provision related to Adult and Older People's services. Shared Care Scotland is working with For Scotland's Disabled Children to gather information on services to Children.



FLU VACCINE

Unpaid carers are encouraged to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting the seasonal flu jab.

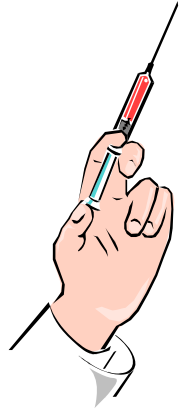
Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon recently launched the seasonal flu campaign with a group of unpaid carers - who formed a 30ft human barrier to highlight the benefits of the vaccine. GP practices across Scotland will now begin to contact patients to invite them for vaccination, including unpaid carers.

H1N1 is expected to be the predominant circulating strain this flu season, and this year's vaccine will protect against three strains of influenza, including H1N1.

The following groups will be eligible for this season's vaccine:

- Those aged 65 years of age and over
- Those with a medical condition which puts them in an 'at risk' group
- NHS healthcare staff
- Unpaid carers
- Pregnant women

Contact your GP for more information.



CARERS & YOUNG CARERS STRATEGIES

During a Parliamentary debate on 28th October, Shona Robison, Minister for Public Health, announced:



"We should note that there is a strong economic argument for supporting carers, as set out robustly in the strategy: with timely and appropriate support carers can continue to care for longer and in much better health, diverting significant demands away from health and social care services. In the current economic climate, it is even more important that health and social services, as well as the third sector, make the best use of existing resources. There is a clear spend-to-save argument for supporting carers through earlier, preventive interventions." This is backed up by studies of the economic value of investing in young carers services which concluded that *"for every pound invested in a young carers project the saving to the Exchequer and wider society is £6.72"*.

Ms Robison added, *"The strategy highlights the fact that many of the improvements that carers look for do not require significant additional investment. Carers tell us that it is often the small things that make a difference...when a GP is sensitive to the impact that caring can have; young carers tell us that having a supportive teacher who gives them extra time for homework makes a difference."* We welcome the Minister's comments and the apparent commitment to these strategies.

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