



December 2019

Connecting Carers

A better life for unpaid carers in Highland

CARER NEWS

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greetings*



Connecting Carers moving forward into 2020

In June's newsletter my key message contained an update on NHS Highland's intention of procuring the Carers Service from early 2020. I'm delighted to let you know that the timescale for this exercise has been put back and in the meantime Connecting Carers will continue to support you until at least December 2020. Therefore if you need support, information, guidance, a short break, access to counselling or your Adult Carer Support plan completed, updated or reviewed, please contact your Carer Link Worker or the support line on 01463 723567.

Inside this quarter's newsletter you will find details on a new initiative regarding breaks for Carers and who in the team is moving on to pastures new after six years.

I know it's slightly early but I wish you all a happy and peaceful festive season when it comes.



Best wishes, Roisin



Carer and Volunteer Leader of the Dornoch Carers Group, Nicki, shares her experiences in this wonderful article - Dornoch do things differently

I first became aware of Connecting Carers approximately 6 years ago. At the time there was a drop-in group at Tain, which I regularly attended. I had struggled for many years with caring for my husband despite having my own health issues (we care for each other); it was wonderful finally having support and the opportunity to meet with others in a similar situation. Over the years I have attended training sessions, fun activities and outings as well as being able to access grants towards training and short breaks and the Wee Treat fund which paid for a ticket to see the ballet at Eden court in January, a truly wonderful experience!

The Tain group moved to Dornoch several years ago, eventually settling at West Church Hall which is a fantastic venue and perfect for our needs. Originally it was run by a staff member but due to illness and staff changes, I was asked if I would be prepared to organise the group - as a volunteer- from Spring 2018. At my first meeting we did container planting, which was a great way to get to know each other and have a chat - and make a lovely mess. Thank goodness for wooden floors! We all took home a planter which brought us enjoyment for many weeks.

We very much enjoyed a talk by aromatherapist, nutritionist and sports massage therapist Ashley Moore, who has helped us to learn how to keep ourselves and the people we care for, as healthy as possible.

At one session Thea came along to do some laughter yoga and mindfulness with us, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and it helped us relax.

For Carers' week in June we met at the Ferrycroft Centre at Lairg for a lovely woodland walk accompanied by 3 dogs! This was followed by a delicious lunch at The Pier. Everyone really enjoyed themselves and we were asked if further walks could be arranged; some of us met up at Camore Woods, near Dornoch. One of our Carers has a very sociable horse, called Mouse, who joined us on a walk - Mouse now has the honour of being the only horse to ever attend a Connecting Carers event!



Crochet blanket pattern by Lucy of Attic 24

We have also enjoyed some craft activities, fabric dyeing is especially popular; I now have a complete wardrobe of dyed t-shirts! A crochet workshop was arranged after a request from one of our Carer's, this was greatly enjoyed and some of us continue to regularly crochet, it's a great way to relieve stress.

The Pot Luck Lunch at the October meeting was very enjoyable; the carrot and orange soup was quite popular and we even had vegan mince pies to finish!

Our future plans include a return visit from Ashley Moore in November, this time to make Christmas presents including lip balms and bath salts. Christmas lunch at the Burghfield house in Dornoch and then a meditation workshop for the December meeting followed by another Pot Luck Lunch! In the New Year we have a decluttering workshop and then a visit from Cycle UK to get us out and about (after all those lunches!).

Over the year these sessions provide entertainment, a sense of achievement, companionship and a complete break from our normal routine as well as advice and support as required. Whatever we are doing, we try to have fun!

My favourite thing about the group is that carers often arrive stressed and unhappy but go home happy and smiling, which makes it all worthwhile.

Connecting Carers are excellent at training and supporting their volunteers; there are many opportunities available, not just leading drop-in groups. It's a wonderful opportunity to give something back to your community and help other Carers. I have even obtained a qualification through LEAD Scotland based on my volunteering role with the charity.

Thank you to Connecting Carers for always being there for us and for making life easier and brighter.

Nicki

EVENTS

Creative workshops for February next year

Join Creativity in Care for some friendly and creative workshops, using a variety of materials with gentle step-by-step support. The team of artists, with backgrounds in health and social care, have been working with families and Carers around the Highlands for many years. The sessions are often described as 'fun' and 'uplifting' and are prepared so that people without any art experience can participate. Here are some of the comments from Carers at the last session:

'I've never really done art before, but I've enjoyed myself and been surprised by the results...'

'The artwork and atmosphere have really helped me relax and enjoy myself.'

Each session is for about 2 hours with refreshments. We will be looking at how creative activity supports mental and physical health, as well as trying out some painting, crafts, creative story-making, expressive arts and gentle music and movement. Try it for relaxation, or for meeting others, or for ideas to do at home.

Creativity in Care aims to improve quality of lives, inclusion and joyfulness, in care and community settings with families, individuals and organisations. The team use an established model of connection that combines creativity, mindfulness and person-centred approaches.

**The creative workshops will take place on:
Friday 7th, 14th & 21st and Thursday 27th
February 2020, from 12.30 – 2.30pm
at Inshes Church, Inverness**

For more information or to book a place please visit:
www.connectingcarers.eventbrite.co.uk
or call Michael on 01463 723575



Christmas Event

Please join us for a festive get together!

**On Wednesday 11th December
From 12 noon - 4pm
At the Royal Highland Hotel,
Station Square, Inverness**

- Refreshments with mince pies
- Christmas crafts
- Carol singing
- Santa has a gift for all!



For more information or to book a ticket visit:
www.connectingcarers.eventbrite.co.uk
or call Michael on 01463 723575

Events for 2020

We will be planning the events programme for next year soon and would like to hear what kind of events or training you would like to see available. We would be very grateful if you have any suggestions, just let us know!

Give Charlotte a call on 01463 723561 or email:
cmackenzie@connectingcarers.org.uk

Respite breaks at the Loch Ness Clansman Hotel

Connecting Carers is entering into a partnership arrangement with Soirbheas and the Glenurquart Centre in Drumnadrochit to offer respite opportunities at the Clansman Hotel near Inverness. The Hotel has kindly made available some rooms on a discounted basis for Carers to book, either on their own or with the looked after person accompanying them. In the first instance this offer is being made on a pilot basis and is restricted to February 2020 with the hope, that if it is successful, then more dates may be made available.

While the accommodation is not adapted, and some of the room facilities are not suitable for people using a wheelchair - due to steps and shower trays, the rooms are well appointed, doubles can be made into singles and the public areas are easily accessible. Guests are advised to discuss their requirements with hotel staff.

What does the offer include?

- Discounted accommodation at **£50 per room per night B&B for a double/twin**
There are several room options to suit families, couples or individuals; including accommodation in the annexe - one room has a double and single bed; and family room with separate bedrooms of double, twin and bunk beds. Within the hotel, the four double/twin rooms on the first-floor rooms are served by a lift.
- Self-catering cottage (for 4 people / 2 bedrooms) at **discounted rate of £100 per week.**
- 50% discount of the cost of meals when staying at the hotel accommodation (not including drinks)

Please get in touch with your Carer Link Worker if you wish to take advantage of this offer and/or you wish to apply to the Time2Be fund for help with the cost. NB Applications to the fund are restricted to once every two years and the maximum grant awarded is for £300.



Carer's Portal

With more and more services being available online, we would like to offer Carers the option of accessing and updating their information from their smart phone, tablet or laptop.

The new Carers Portal contains your personal details as well as basic information about the Cared-for person, which you can update at any time. You will be able to view your Adult Carer Support Plan and Review and upload additional documents such as Emergency Planning so everything is in one place. The portal also allows you to contact your Carer Link Worker or the Carer Centre if you need any advice and information and support with your caring role.

In order to take advantage of this option please register your online account with us. An email invitation with instructions on how to access the Carers Portal will be sent out in December. We appreciate that not everybody is internet savvy, so if you would like some guidance, please do get in touch. There might also be basic IT training available in your local area. However, if this is not something you are interested in, traditional channels of communication remain open to everybody.

Your feedback would be greatly received so please let us know what you think of the new portal.

For more information please contact: Kasia on 07850 794423 or email: kwilczynska@connectingcares.org.uk

Goodbye & Good Luck Kirsty

Kirsty Campbell joined the Young Carers team in August 2013 as the Young Carer Worker. During that time Kirsty has supported many Young Carers on residentials, 1-1 support, school events and through partnerships with the other Young Carer services throughout Highland. During her six years Kirsty was successful in her application to become Young Carer Development Worker, a post which she held for three years. The team and the Board wish Kirsty every success in her new role with CPAG based in Elgin. Good luck Kirsty, you will be missed.



Shirley-anne tells us about her role as Connecting Carers Hospital & Community Carer Link Worker

Hi, my name is Shirley-anne Smith and I'm the Hospital and Community Carer Link Worker for Connecting Carers. My role is to provide an extensive support and advice service for people with a caring role whilst the person they care for is in hospital. Of course, it could be that the person doing the caring could be in hospital themselves. My support and advice would still be available.

When I receive a referral my aim is to make contact with that person as quickly as possible to establish where things stand. The sooner we can make contact, the more support I can provide, and the more time we have to ensure that services are in place ready for discharge.

I am able to help with the following:

- provide emotional support and advice
- provide support and advice for future planning and emergency planning
- provide access to an advocacy and support service for meetings with care professionals and other service providers
- ensure that the Carer is involved in discharge planning in accordance with the Carers Act
- provide support and advice for services required after discharge e.g self directed support, respite, short breaks
- provide an Adult Carers Support Plan
- provide access to our counselling service
- provide access to grants and funding
- provide support and advice regarding benefits e.g. Carers Allowance, Blue Badge, Plus One



The list is endless and if there is something I'm unable to help with within my role, then I can signpost to other services.

To give you an insight, here is a case study example:

"When John was admitted to hospital, he had previously lived independently in the family home with a care package in place. However the property was becoming less suitable for his needs and having to access the stairs for sleeping and washing facilities, was beginning to become an issue and a risk to his health and wellbeing. Unfortunately after a fall at home John was brought into hospital. During his stay in hospital, I was able to meet with his daughter to discuss future planning with her and to offer support with some difficult decisions. I was able to attend the discharge planning meetings to discuss the various options and to ensure that the daughters voice and concerns were heard and taken into account. It was agreed by all that John was no longer able to continue to live independently at home, even with a care package and his daughters support. I was then able to help and support the daughter with progressing the move to a care facility. We visited a few care homes that she had selected and I was able to provide some impartial support. Whilst we awaited confirmation of a place becoming available, John was transferred to a care facility for respite, which then conveniently became his new home. I am happy to say that father and daughter are happy with the placing and that the daughter takes great comfort in seeing her father thrive reaffirming her difficult decision."

It's a great privilege to be able to assist and complete a journey with a Carer and to help obtain the best outcome for all involved.

Each Carer and caring role is different and I treat them individually and respect whatever level of support they require. The support can vary from week to week, or month to month, or even several months at a time. Our support is always available for the life of the cared for.

I thoroughly enjoy my job and look forward to continuing to expand our services within the hospital.

**To contact Shirley-anne, please call 07760779461
or email ssmith@connectingcarers.org.uk**

Support for Carers at New Craigs

Connecting Carers and New Craigs are forging ahead to strengthen their relationship to support Carers within the hospital setting. Starting in November Connecting Carers will be present in the hospital to not only raise awareness of the service but to support Carers in the care required for the Cared-for and to actively support Carers in preparation for hospital discharge. The partnership will also involve raising awareness amongst staff relating to the rights of Carers via the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and ensuring that the Triangle of Care is implemented within the support structure of the hospital.

Lead Occupational Therapist, Fiona MacLean is aspiring to establish a new Peer Support Group led by Carers supported by the hospital. She would like your help to suggest a name for the peer led group. Therefore you can email your suggestions to rcconnolly@connectingcarers.org.uk and Roisin will ensure that she passes them onto Fiona.

Young Carers



We are very pleased to tell you that the applications for the new Young Carer Grant are open. This new payment introduced by the Scottish Government recognises that this is an important transitional time for Young Carers aged 16 - 18. The yearly payment of £300 will help support Young Carers with their own health and well-being, improve their quality of life and reduce any negative impacts of caring. You can be caring for anyone – a parent, sibling, grandparent, neighbour or friend. You do not have to be living with them to apply. You can also apply if someone else is already getting Carers Allowance for the person you care for.

Young Carers who receive the payment can spend it however they like. It could be on a laptop to help with school or a college course, something social like a holiday away with friends or the cost of a gym membership. You are eligible if you are at school, college, in employment or unemployed. This is not a loan you have to pay back and it will not affect any other payments, benefits or money that you already earn. You can apply for this grant annually.

Young Carer Grant For Young Carers aged 16 - 18

To be eligible to apply you must also:

- Live in Scotland
- Be aged 16 – 18
- Be providing care to someone for at least 16 hours a week for at least 3 months – care can be physical, mental or emotional
- The person you are caring for must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit (see link below for more details)
- You are not receiving Carers Allowance yourself.

Young Carers can apply for the grant in the following ways:

- Online at <https://www.mygov.scot/young-carer-grant/>
- By phoning Social Security Scotland for free on **0800 182 2222**
- By paper form that can be downloaded at mygov.scot and returned to: **PO Box 10314, Dundee, DD1 9GN.**
- They can also request the paper form with a prepaid envelope by phoning the agency.

Following on from our successful photography sessions with Young Carers over the summer, we were delighted to be supported by Jessops to have the groups images printed onto canvas.

The sessions led by Angus Mackie from Scotland360 – Images of Scotland were held in August and September with the first session focussing on nature and the second held in an urban environment. We are very pleased that 12 of the images are currently being exhibited at Highland Council Headquarters in the Members' foyer. Well done to all that were involved.

Photography Project



NOW LIVE!

We are delighted to tell you that our two free Young Carer e-learning modules, which launched in September are now live. The first module was designed in collaboration with Young Carers and was created to help teachers and other professionals working with young people recognise and understand the added responsibility that Young Carers have. The second module is for young people of secondary school age and helps explain the role of a Young Carer, where to get help and how to support a friend who has a caring role. We are urging anybody who has an interest in learning about Young Carers to log on and have a go. Both e-learning modules can be found at:

<https://calaelearning.co.uk/>

Think Health Think Nature



Getting outdoors, even for five minutes, can have positive benefits for your health. It is known to:

Reduce Stress

Create social connections

Improve mood and self-esteem

Reduce pain

Improve circulation

Assist with better sleep

Increase strength and balance

Spending time in nature can be as simple as sitting outside in your backyard or going for a walk around your neighbourhood. Even looking out on to nature has been shown to speed up recovery from illness.

Most of us have some green space near to our homes and connecting with nature doesn't need to cost anything. Scheduling a little outdoor time into your daily routine can do wonders for your health and wellbeing.



Now that the clocks have turned back and the weather has turned colder, it can be hard to motivate ourselves to go outside. Below are a few ideas on how we can continue to connect with nature over the winter months:

Feed the birds – Putting out nuts and seeds at this time of year will encourage a range of birds to your garden or window sill. Maybe you could keep a “window list” of what you’ve seen? Make homemade fat balls and bird feeders with younger members of your family or take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch: www.rspb.org/birdwatch



Stargaze – The crisp and clear cold winter nights are perfect for looking up at the night sky to watch the stars, the moon, and perhaps if you are lucky, catch an aurora. Highland is filled with dark sky areas. Use the dark skies discovery map to find one near you: www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk

Join a ranger led walk – The High Life Highland Countryside rangers run events all year around including short walks providing leisurely exercise, friendly company, great views, and fresh air. Or, why not join one of their evening bat walks, storytelling by the fire or treasure hunt? A full list of upcoming events can be found at: www.highlifehighland.com/rangers/upcoming-events

Build a snowman – Wrap up and build a snowman, an igloo or a snow sculpture. Take out the sledge, the skis or throw snow balls. Blow bubbles outside to see if they freeze or simply stand on your doorstep to watch your breath for a quick energiser.

Bring the outdoors in – Pine cones can be gathered and scented with cinnamon to make wonderful festive pot pourri. Driftwood washed onshore in winter storms can be used in woodcraft. If the weather gets really wild outside then stay by the fire and watch a nature documentary with a warm cup of cocoa.

Think Health Think Nature is the work programme of the Highland Green Health Partnership, one of four area-wide pilots underway in Scotland. It will contribute towards "Our Natural Health Service", a national programme, led by Scottish Natural Heritage, and aims to show how greater use of the outdoors can help tackle physical inactivity, mental health issues and health inequalities.

More information can be found at www.thinkhealththinknature.scot



Haven Appeal

Ambitious plans have been drawn up by the Elsie Normington Foundation to put smiles on the faces of the children and young people in our communities who most deserve our help. The Foundation launched the Haven Appeal and aims to develop a specialist multi-purpose facility in Smithton, Inverness. It will be called the Haven Centre and will serve children and young people up to the age of 30 with multiple and complex needs. The centre will provide support to people across the Highlands and it will include an indoor and outdoor play centre, respite facilities, supported accommodation, a community café and much more!

The Haven Appeal aims to raise the £4 million that is required to deliver the project. The Appeal has received tremendous support from the local community in Smithton, where the Haven Centre will be built. In addition, the Inverness Courier have adopted the Haven Appeal as their chosen charity, and they have received £380,000 from the Robertson Foundation and £75,000 from the Hugh Fraser Foundation. In total, they have raised £1.3 million to date but need your help to reach their target of £4 million.

If your family or someone you know could benefit from the Haven Centre, please get in touch today. They would love to hear your story! If you are interested in fundraising for them, please get in touch to request fundraising materials, including leaflets, sponsorship forms, stickers, posters, invitation postcards, balloons and much more!

You can contact Iain Boyd on 07706148333 or email: iain@havenappeal.org.uk

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Elsie Normington Foundation for FREE, please visit: www.havenappeal.org/membership/

For more information about the Elsie Normington Foundation and the Haven Appeal, please visit: www.havenappeal.org.uk

Contact Us

Call in confidence for information about how Connecting Carers can help you.

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**Have a natter.
Raise money.
Change lives.**

It's good to talk



To mark World Mental Health Day on 10th October at the Connecting Carers office we had a Tea & Talk get together to raise awareness of mental health issues and also to raise funds for the Mental Health Foundation. We enjoyed some great conversations with a cuppa and some cake.

www.connectingcarers.org.uk Support Line: 01463 723560 Email: carers@connectingcarers.org.uk

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