



Connecting Carers

A better life for unpaid carers in Highland

Carers Guide Book

Connecting carers
to the support they need
for a better life

www.connectingcarers.org.uk

Please get in touch...

We're committed to providing an excellent service for unpaid carers and would love to hear from you.

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Contents

Am I a Carer	4
Carer Centre Services	6
Connecting Young Carers	8
Advocacy Support	9
Support & Activity Groups	10
Information Packs	12
Your Rights as a Carer	13
Planning for Emergencies	14
Respite Care Options	16
Making Decisions for Someone Else	18
Power of Attorney & Carers	19
Who's Who in Caring	20
What is a Carer Liaison Worker	23

OUR VISION IS:

A better life for unpaid carers in Highland

OUR MISSION IS:

To connect carers to the support they need for a better life



Am I a carer?

Do you look after a relative,
friend or neighbour who
couldn't manage without
your support?



Connecting Carers

A better life for unpaid carers in Highland

At Connecting Carers we work with unpaid carers every day and have learned a great deal from them. We use this knowledge, and our position as the Highland Carer Centre, to ensure that unpaid carers in Highland are not caring alone, that they are acknowledged and supported and that they have access to the information they need to enable them to carry out their caring role.

Based in Dingwall, our team covers the Highlands from Caithness and Sutherland in the north to Lochaber in the south. Our centre is open from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm, Monday – Friday where a member of the team is always on hand with help and advice.



Care centre services

We aim to ensure that unpaid carers in Highland are not caring alone, that they are acknowledged and supported and have access to information they need to enable them to carry out their caring role.



Caring for someone can happen suddenly through illness, stress or accident. Caring for someone can happen progressively with age or disability. However a person becomes a carer, it may be time to ask for help.

Connecting Carers can...

- Carry out Carer Support Plans, an important way of identifying the needs as an unpaid carer
- Empower carers to manage their caring role and have a life alongside caring. Keep carers informed through a network of support groups, newsletters, events and training
- Improve support. Help with access to services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring for someone in Highland
- Support carers to be key partners in the planning and delivery of health and social care



Connecting Young Carers

Ensuring young carers are seen, heard and supported

Connecting Young Carers provides opportunities for young people in caring roles to get together, have fun and have their voices heard.

We offer a range of activities, away-days, respite holidays and access to funding for young carers throughout Highland.

By connecting to our growing network we hope young carers will be better informed, better supported and have a life alongside their caring responsibilities.

To speak to one of the Young Carers team call

01463 723562

or email

youngcarers@connectingcarers.org.uk



Why get involved

- Support in your role as a Young Carer
- Develop new skills & knowledge to help you cope in your caring role
- Activity days out with other young carers
- Theatre trips
- Music & Art projects
- Away mini-breaks
- Help and advice about grants & money
- Meeting new people, learning new skills, growing in confidence



Highland Carers Advocacy

A better life for unpaid carers in Highland

A carers' role is often a lonely, demanding, frustrating and exhausting one and being asked to express your views to others, particularly professionals, can be a daunting prospect.

At Highland Carers Advocacy we believe that the views and opinions of carers are of the utmost importance and we are committed to supporting carers to have their voices heard. Highland Carers Advocacy is a free, independent, confidential and accessible service available to unpaid carers throughout

Highland.
Supporting Carers to Speak Out

01463 723569

or email

advocacy@connectingcarers.org.uk



Why get involved

We have supported Carers with a wide variety of issues such as:

- Respite
- Guardianship
- Educational provision
- Complaints procedures
- Care Plan Reviews
- SDS (Self-directed Support)



Support and Activity Groups

Connecting Carers has lots going on throughout the Highlands to support carers where they can meet others in similar situations, learn new skills or just have a chat over a coffee. The groups are a great way to meet other carers and share knowledge and experience.

To find out about a support group near you or to get involved as a volunteer please give Connecting Carers a call on
01463 723560
or email
carers@connectingcarers.org.uk



Information Pack - What you should know

Being informed can make a carer's life so much easier and Connecting Carers has a wealth of information available.

What good is information to me?

Being informed about what you are entitled to, who might be able to provide it and where to go when you need more information is very important. Being as informed as possible about the condition of the person you care for can also be hugely beneficial.

Connecting Carers can provide you with a comprehensive Information Pack which contains all the essential information you need when carrying out a caring role, as well as information about things that may be relevant in the future as your caring role continues. Our pack will ensure you are up to date with clear, concise information.



Your Rights as a Carer

What you should know?

Carers Support Plan

Carers are entitled to their own Support Plan if they care for someone such as a partner, family member or friend. This is available even if the person you care for has their own assessment.

Flexible Working/Carer Positive

Did you know that working carers have a legal right to request flexible working from their employer to help balance work and their caring role? Requests should be considered in a 'reasonable manner' and can be refused but only for clearly specified reasons.

Carers Allowance

If you care for someone for 35 hours or more each week you may be entitled to Carers Allowance. Carers Allowance can affect other benefits that you and the person you care for might receive.

Parental Leave

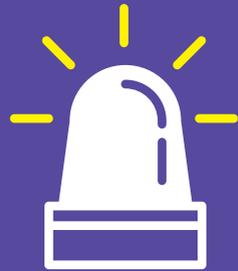
If you care for a child who is under 5 years old and have worked for your employer for more than one year you are entitled to 18 weeks Unpaid leave (per parent per child). The age limit rises to 18 if the child is under 18 years old and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Time off for Dependents

A carer has the right to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off work to manage an emergency involving someone they care for. This right involves some protection from dismissal or victimisation and employers can decide if this time off is paid or unpaid.

Patient Discharge from Hospital

Carers can request to be involved in discharge planning when the person they care for has been hospitalised and is about to be discharged. This includes informing carers of the intention to discharge and as far as is possible, taking into account the carers own views about the discharge process.



Planning for Emergencies

What you should know?

As a carer you need to know that if an emergency happens, replacement care will get sorted out speedily and efficiently.

When emergencies happen, our lives are put on hold whilst we deal with the aftermath. For many carers life cannot simply be put on hold, when the person they are looking after relies on them for vital help and support. When a carer is rushed into hospital, who will step in?

Creating an emergency plan

Connecting Carers advise all carers to create an emergency plan, for you and the person you look after. Having a plan in place can help ease your worries if you are not able to care for the person you look after at any point in the future.

In order to create an emergency plan that fits your needs, you will need to consider:

- Contact details of the person you look after
- Who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency – this might include friends, family or professionals
- Details of any medication the person you look after is taking
- The names of two emergency contacts who know the caring situation and who also know your emergency plans
- Details of any ongoing treatment they need

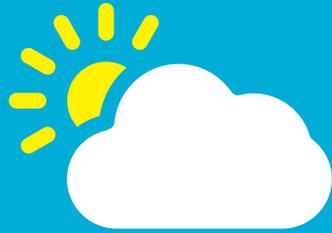
Involving others in the plan

You may be able to arrange help and support from family and friends but it can be reassuring to have the involvement of your local council in case informal arrangements fall through.

Remember it is important to involve at least two other people that you trust and can rely upon. The details of these people must be in the plan, and they should know that they are named in the plan so they can act in the event of an emergency.

Emergency carer card schemes

In some areas there are emergency card schemes that have been set up for carers, often by the local NHS or a local carers centre. In Highland this is called a 'Carers Emergency Card'.



Respite Care Options

Taking a break from caring

Respite means a carer and the person they care for are supported to have a valuable break from the normal routine and demands of their caring situation.

These short breaks are an essential part of the overall support that carers need.

Carers tell us that getting some respite or a break from caring, can make all the difference, giving them a chance to have some time to themselves.

Types of respite

Breaks in specialist/dedicated respite accommodation - These breaks are based in accommodation which is used only for respite/short breaks.

Breaks in care homes - Some care homes may have a small number of places set aside specifically for respite breaks.

Breaks in the home of another individual or family - These involve overnight breaks provided by paid carers in their own home.

Home-based respite - provided at home through a care attendant or sitting service. This includes individual support provided in the home of the cared for person for periods of a few hours or overnight.

Supported access to clubs, interest or activity groups - These opportunities might focus on a particular activity (e.g. lunch clubs or leisure activities)

Holiday breaks - These include opportunities for the carer and cared for person to have a short break or for them to go away separately.

Befriending schemes - where volunteers provide short breaks. Befriending can involve a paid worker or volunteer accompanying the cared for person to social and leisure activities.

Day care - This is typically based in a community building and provided by a local authority or voluntary organisation.

Hospital/Hospice based respite - This type of break is for people who need medical supervision because they have complex or intense health care needs.

Connecting Carers & Respite?

Connecting Carers & Respite is a grant awarded by Connecting Carers aimed at ensuring carers have the opportunity to access a short break.

Time 2 Be - is about having the chance to plan out a break or a way of getting yourself some timeout from your caring role. It allows you to create a break that works for your particular needs and circumstances.

Wee Treat - If you can't get away or have time to plan a bigger break, you can access our Wee Treat grant. It is a small grant of up to £30 for you to have a wee treat for yourself. Carers have used it for things such as a haircut, a massage, a take-away meal, cinema tickets and even afternoon tea with a friend.

Respite fund - On occasion an invite to a family event or fantastic opportunity might come your way and you find yourself considering declining the invite because your caring situation prevents you from attending. The invitation makes you think about who is going to look after your loved one if you accept. The support package you have in place might not cover the additional care/hours of care that your loved one needs so that you can go. Connecting Carers offers a respite fund that you can apply to, to purchase additional hours from your care provider to enable you to attend. You as the carer, can apply twice to this fund in any financial year (funds dependent) for a maximum of 8 hours per application.



Power of Attorney & Carers

Making decisions for someone else

Power of Attorney (PoA) is a written document giving someone else authority to take actions or make decisions on your behalf. PoA details the names of the people, known as attorneys, who you want to help you and lists the individual powers that you want them to have. The PoA will also state when your attorneys can begin acting.

Who can make a PoA?

Anyone over the age of 16 who is capable can make a PoA. There are restrictions if you have been made bankrupt.

What does it do?

The PoA provides legal authority for the attorney to make decisions for you. The PoA could be used in the future if you become incapable of making decisions for yourself.

What does the Office of the Public Guardian do with my PoA?

This is a court appointment which authorises a person to act and make decisions on behalf of an adult with incapacity. Anyone with an interest can make an application for a guardianship order. When we refer to an adult, this is someone who is aged over 16 who is not able to look after their own affairs.

Where can I get further help or information?

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau or solicitor may be able to help. There is lots of useful information on The Office of the Public Guardian website (www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk) or you can phone or email them if you prefer Telephone: **01324 678300** Email: **opg@scotcourts.gov.uk**



What is a Carer Liaison Worker?

Within Connecting Carers we have a team of Carer Liaison Workers (CLWs), based throughout Highland, from Caithness & Sutherland in the north to Fort William in the south.

Our CLW's provide information, advice, support and help to unpaid carers and work with other care service providers promoting carers' rights and ensuring that carers' needs are heard and recognised.

What can a CLW's do for you as an unpaid carer?

- CLW's will support you in person and are happy to meet you either in your home or at a suitable venue, to discuss your caring situation.
- Complete a Carer Support Plan for you. This is a conversation with the CLW focussing on what you want to achieve, to ensure you have a life alongside your caring responsibility. The outcomes that you identify then become your personal plan and form a framework for future discussions and is a great tool for assessing your own caring situation.
- Caring can be an information minefield and CLW's can signpost you in the right direction.
- CLW's will follow up on any referrals they make with you to ensure that they have been effective.
- If you feel isolated or live rurally it can be difficult to access support services.
- Our team of CLW's have established links with partner organisations to help you access the help you need.
- Work in partnership to provide training sessions and activities aimed at building strong effective support networks for carers.
- Provide a listening ear for those times when you just want to chat about your caring situation.

If you think a Carer Liaison Worker could help you in your caring situation please get in touch.

Telephone **01463 723560** or
email carers@connectingcarers.org.uk



Who's Who in Caring

People who can help you

When you care for someone you may come across a lot of professionals from different places. Although it can be quite daunting at first, it helps to have an understanding of the role each professional plays and how they can support you and the person you care for.

Advocacy Caseworker - is someone who supports you to speak up and express your views and opinions. This could include contacting agencies by phone or letter, support at meetings and explaining information. Highland Carers Advocacy provide advocacy to carers.

Care Homes - All residential and nursing homes are now referred to as care homes and details of local establishments can be provided by Connecting Carers.

Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN)- When someone in the family has a mental health condition (e.g. depression or schizophrenia) or dementia, CPNs can offer support to the individual with the condition, and their family. CPNs can often form part of someone's discharge plan following a hospital stay and can visit people in their own home.

Continence Nurse/Advisors - They provide information and advice about managing bowel and bladder problems. In the first in-stance, you should speak to your practice nurse at the health centre for initial advice.

Community Nurse - They can visit people in their own home and offer help and advice on the practical and medical aspects of caring, such as physical care, medication and dressings.

Dementia Link Worker - They are allocated to people who have had a diagnosis of dementia, they offer support and signposting for the first year after diagnosis, the aim is that you will then be linked in with all the relevant services and information you need going forward.

General Practitioner (GP) - are well placed to identify carers and alert them to sources of help and advice.

Health Visitors - are based within the community and visit mums and babies in their own homes, up to the age of five.

Homecare Workers - (sometimes referred to as Care Workers) can come into your home for a few hours each week to help with tasks such as cooking, feeding, bathing, shopping, dressing and collecting pensions or prescriptions. Homecare can be provided by the NHS, via Self Directed Support or some voluntary sector and independent providers.

Mental Health Officer (MHO) - are Social Workers with special experience and training in the area of mental health conditions and mental health law. They carry out duties under the Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003. MHOs may be involved in assessments concerning a person's need to be admitted to hospital for treatment, or to be the subject of a guardianship order. They may also be involved in offering support and advice to individuals and families in matters of mental health and mental impairment and can provide details of resources in the local community.

Named Person - is nominated by a person experiencing a mental health condition. Named Person is also the name given to the professional who has responsibility for children as they grow.

Occupational Therapist (OT) - work in the Health and Social Care teams and aim to enable individuals with long term and/or complex needs to live a full and independent life within the limits of their physical and social circumstances. They can provide advice and support relating to illness or disability, advice on housing or major adaptations, provision of small pieces of equipment and minor adaptations, referral to other services that are required, and rehabilitation in activities of daily living such as washing, dressing, meal preparation, etc.

Physiotherapists - will work with people to help them regain lost movement, improve mobility, and maintain safe independence in such activities as using the stairs.

Practice Nurses - will provide care in the GP's surgery or health centre with matters such as injections and dressings. They also provide **chronic disease clinics**.

Pre-School teaching service staff - offer home teaching for preschool children with special needs.

Service Provider - is an organisation that provides service to people with disabilities (sometimes referred to as service users).

Social Workers - can advise on all sorts of personal and practical issues. They can arrange services such as respite care, sitter services, or a day centre place for the person you care for. Social Workers can be contacted directly or you can call: NHS Highland, for adult services on 01463 704000; or The Highland Council, for children's services on 01463 702000.

Speech and Language Therapist - will work with adults and children, offering information and advice on communication, speech, etc. and/or eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.

Support Worker - assists people with disabilities or mental ill

health to get out and about while maintaining their independence. They can assist with shopping, going for a walk or a coffee, or getting to an appointment, when a person is isolated or needs supervision to maximise their potential.

Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) - is responsible for administering and regulating the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 which deals with Powers of Attorney and Guardianship.

Voluntary Sector/Third Sector - This is the term used to refer to the wide range of services provided by voluntary or charitable organisations. Some of the health and social care services available within the community are provided by the voluntary/third sector e.g.



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