

Our priorities for the future

As we publish this annual report in September 2013, VOCAL completed a detailed independent quality inspection by the Charities Evaluation Service and has been awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark Level II for a further three years. This puts our organisation in a good position to consolidate and further expand the range of quality support we are able to offer carers. A new business plan will set ambitious targets:

- The successful opening of a new Carers Centre in Midlothian with full disabled access, allowing us to support twice the number of carers in future.
- The development of a Short Breaks Bureau and website in Midlothian to help carers and practitioners to broker breaks from caring.
- Doubling the number of carers benefiting from VOCAL's Counselling Service from 80 to 160 over the next two years.
- Expanding advocacy support to carers, helping them to have their voices heard or to negotiate support for complex caring challenges.
- Widening the range of specialist surgeries, with valuable *pro bono* work from professional experts

- Improving our support to carers in employment, and with employers in the city

VOCAL will continue to contribute to strategic planning groups, the development of local carer strategies and national policy and guidance. At the same time we will expand opportunities for carers to contribute to consultation on services which are vital to support them in their caring role. To this end, we will publish a detailed report of VOCAL's 2013 Carer Survey which invited some 5,400 carers to identify the main priorities for their caring roles for the future and comment on the quality of our services. Over 700 carers responded in great detail and we shall publish their views and promote them widely to local authorities and NHS service planners and commissioners, and to the Scottish Government.

As ever we owe much to carers, volunteers, staff, funders and partner organisations locally and nationally in making a difference to carers' lives. We hope to build on your continuing support.

Only the best is good enough for carers!



Our funders and supporters

VOCAL's carer support services are funded from over 30 different sources and funding streams, mostly through NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council. April 2012 marked the start of a new five-year grant from The Big Lottery Fund to develop VOCAL's person-centred carer support services with specific focus on self directed support, money matters and employment.

We gratefully acknowledge donations and sponsorship from many individual carers and benefactors and from several trust funds – many of these funds help us to develop our support for carers as funds are not tied to specific projects.

VOCAL's audited accounts are submitted annually to all main funders, to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and to Companies House and can be accessed by the public through these agencies.

We thank all our supporters for their invaluable help!

About VOCAL

VOCAL is governed by a Board of Directors primarily consisting of carers and former carers. Carer services are managed and delivered by a team of nearly 30 part-time and full-time staff and 60 volunteers, including those who run the VOCAL Carer Centre reception areas and who work with carers as counsellors or advocates.

Our finances for the year ending 31 March 2013

Statement of Financial Activities		2013	2012
Total incoming resources		1,059,677	943,242
Total resources expended		987,772	815,166
Net income for year		71,905	128,076
Net gain on investments		221	580
Net movement in funds		72,126	128,656
Funds at 1 April 2012		436,480	307,824
Funds at 31 March 2013		508,606	436,480
Balance sheet at 31 March 2013			
Fixed Assets	Tangible	6,381	4,568
	Investments	46,599	46,378
		52,980	50,946
Current Assets	Debtors	17,952	28,978
	Cash at bank	694,475	518,266
		712,427	547,244
Creditors due within one year		256,801	161,710
Net current assets / (liabilities)		455,626	385,534
Net assets		508,606	436,480
Funds	Restricted	162,550	136,744
	Designated	331,381	279,568
	General fund	14,675	20,168
Total funds		508,606	436,480



**VOCAL's work in 2012-13
and our priorities for the future**



6,668 carer contacts

Over the course of the year VOCAL recorded 6,668 one-to-one carer contacts. Our Carer Centres provide free, confidential support on all aspects of caring including benefits, financial support, short breaks and community care.



2,037 carers

VOCAL provided individual support to 2,037 carers, offering a person-centred service delivered through home visits, appointments at our Carers Centres and local support in the community.

449 carers attended VOCAL's legal and benefits surgery appointments, including support for setting up Power of Attorney.

Over 5,500 carers were supported through regular e-bulletin and newsletter communication, and personalised information on training and events.

VOCAL assisted carers in receiving a total of £203,497 in additional financial support.

19,873 people visited VOCAL's website.



1,275 new carers

We identified and supported 1,275 new carers during 2012-13. VOCAL works in partnership with GPs and health and social care teams to improve early identification and referral of carers.



1,434 counselling hours

Our counselling service offered 1,434 hours of counselling to carers. Demand for counselling and emotional support is increasing and VOCAL continues to seek long-term funding to secure the continuation of this valuable service.



465 carers (training)

465 carers registered for our *Caring with Confidence* training programme which offers courses, seminars and workshops designed for carers in different caring situations. We supported several hundred carers to access leisure and healthy living courses and events.



130 carers (advocacy)

Our advocacy service provided intensive support to 130 carers experiencing complex difficulties with their caring role. This included support at meetings and formal complaint procedures.



142 carers (groupwork)

142 carers attended 18 events and 20 individual sessions, on dealing with guilt, changing relationships, loss and bereavement and stress management.

VOCAL Carers Centre

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T: 0131 622 6666 E: centre@vocal.org.uk

W: www.vocal.org.uk

Introduction to VOCAL

VOCAL manages two VOCAL Carers Centres in Edinburgh and Midlothian and a local carer support service in South Edinburgh. Our services include:

- advice, information and planning for the future
- emotional support, stress management and counselling
- training and learning opportunities
- benefits, legal and power of attorney surgeries
- carer advocacy service
- support for people affected by someone else's addiction
- social and leisure activities
- gateway to other services.

Positive impact for carers

647 carers reported positive outcomes following support from VOCAL, in eight key areas:

93% reported improvements in feeling better informed about issues relating to their caring role

84% reported improvements in their confidence in managing their caring role

87% reported improved confidence in their ability to shape services

76% reported that their physical and mental well-being had improved

70% reported improvements in their ability to deal with changing relationships resulting from the caring role

49% reported improvements in their economic well-being

76% reported improvements in their personal safety

65% reported that their social well-being had improved

Making a difference: Multiple caring responsibilities

Brenda (49) belongs to a growing number of carers with caring responsibilities for more than one person, supporting her 23-year old daughter with complex learning and physical difficulties and her 84-year old aunt who recently moved in with her family. Brenda was referred to VOCAL by her GP as she had issues with her own health, lacked confidence and sought a break from caring.

VOCAL supported Brenda to access a respite break and she attended a five-week *Caring for an Older Person* training course. It brought Brenda in contact with expert tutors and carers in similar situations and she reported a big improvement in her knowledge. With one to one support from a Carer Support Worker she obtained a community care assessment for her aunt, a carers' assessment, explored the possibility of a direct payment and took up life coaching support.

Following four sessions with the life coach, Brenda reported big improvements in her confidence, health and wellbeing. She learned to manage her time, lower her stress levels and felt her relationships had improved as a result. Later, Brenda participated in a three-session manual handling course and joined a weight management group through VOCAL. As a result, she reported further improvements in her health and wellbeing, this time focusing on her physical health.

When Brenda evaluated the difference the support had made to her life, she reported:

"I enjoyed my sessions with the life coach very much. It helped me concentrate on areas in my life which I feel are neglected and helped me organise my time better."

"Manual handling training was brilliant; I learnt a lot of new techniques to help protect my back and other aching joints"

Brenda managed to lose even more than a stone in weight, achieved her target weight and gaining free membership to Scottish Slimmers. She wrote to VOCAL:

"Everything feels more manageable now. I am fitter, healthier and happier. I can't tell you how much I appreciate what you do for carers. To have that support there is invaluable – many, many thanks!"