

WESTERN ISLES COMMUNITY CARE FORUM

WORKING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY CARE

CO-ORDINATOR: JOHN MACLEAN



**Old Hostel, Tarbert, Harris, HS3 3BG, Tel/Fax 01859 50 2588
E-mail john.maclean2@virgin.net**

CARERS' NEWSLETTER (Western Isles)

WELCOME to the first Newsletter from the Western Isles Community Care Forum the principal aim of which is the provision of **information and advice** which will lead to **enhanced services for carers, elderly and disabled throughout the islands.**

There are 500,000 carers in Scotland and research has shown that there are also others who do not realise that they are carers and consequently do not claim all the Benefits to which they and the person they look after may be entitled. There are also other carers who are unknown to the authorities. It is hoped that this Newsletter, as well as containing up-to-date information and advice for carers may be a means by which some of those other problems can be addressed. Your comments, including ideas or articles for future issues, would be

Barra Carers' Night Out

Castlebay School Tuesday 14th December 1999

Under the umbrella of the Community Care Forum and Sonas, the Health Promotion project for Uist and Barra, an evening was arranged to give individuals who care for people in their own home the recognition they deserve. The idea of Caring for the Carers came from a proposal of Treats for Carers made by the Community Nurse for Barra, Nellie MacArthur, and coincided with the establishment by the Community Care Forum of Carers' Support Groups throughout the islands.

A partnership of Norma Neill of Sonas, Jessie Macneil of both Voluntary Action Barra and the Community Care Forum and Katie Nicholson of LVDA developed the idea into a Caring for Carers night out. The people who care so diligently for their relatives or friends would be cared for on the night and it would also give them an opportunity to meet fellow carers and a chance to discuss issues relevant to Caring.

Twenty Carers attended and they were given a choice of having their hair done, a cleanse and make-over, a taste of swimming, aqua aerobics and the sauna, and also a chance to participate in relaxation techniques. This was followed by a buffet and refreshments. Transport was provided for anyone who wished. In summing up the evening it was agreed by all that it was a resounding success and they were of the opinion that they would readily come back for more of the same. It was unfortunate that some carers, for one reason or another, were unable to attend but having heard of the success of the evening have vowed not to miss the next one, and that in itself is a nice tribute to the organisers.

The following are thanked for their hard work, Rhona MacLennan and Margaret Elder – who did not stop all night- Norma Neill, Ann Hughson, Hella Bickle and Mrs Eleanor Robertson and her Hospitality Group of fifth and sixth year pupils.

Thanks are also extended to Norma and Nellie for recognising that carers provide an invaluable service in our community, often being involved twenty four hours a day. **Jessie MacNeil**

appreciated. Enclosed with this issue is a copy of a "flier" of emergency contact numbers which has been compiled from the **WICCF Register of Care Services**, a copy of which is available on request. We also hope that the **Disabled Access Guide** will be ready for distribution by early Summer. The Guide was first published in 1997 and its purpose is to provide information on local facilities for the disabled .

Compilation of a **Western Isles Register of Carers** is another project which has been undertaken by the Forum. The aim is to *identify carers and thereafter to make them aware of the benefits and services* which are available to them. The permission of carers will be sought before entries are made in the Register. It may be interesting to note that since the WICCF embarked on the Carers' Register project, the Government has announced that a question regarding carers is to be included in the 2001 Census. That information should be available in the Western Isles through the Register long before that time. We hope to be able to expand on those and some more of our activities in the next issue. **John MacLean**

PARKINSON'S DISEASE SOCIETY

Provisional arrangements have been made for the Parkinson's Disease Society Mobile Unit to visit the Western Isles at the beginning of May. The Unit is purpose built and is somewhat similar to a mobile library. It is full of information about the illness and with staff on board who can give advice to those who have Parkinson's or to those who care for someone with the disease.

Details of dates and venues will be published in the next edition of the Newsletter.

For further information contact the Society on 0141 332 3343 or the Forum on 01859 50 2588.

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Western Isles Community Care Forum held a Carers Evening on Tuesday 22nd of February in the Grianan Centre, Stornoway. Contact numbers, page 4

Faire:- Western Isles Community Alarm Service

FAIRE is the innovative and effective social alarm service introduced in 1998 by the Social Work Department of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

WHAT IS THE FAIRE CARELINE? - This is a special telephone unit which can be linked to your telephone enabling you to get help quickly at the touch of a button, wherever you are living in the Western Isles—whenever you need it—24 hours a day, every day of the year.

WHO CAN BENEFIT? - This service can be supplied to anyone with a telephone. A pendant button is supplied which allows assistance to be summoned from anywhere in or around your own home. If unable to speak, help will be obtained anyway. Smoke alarms can also be linked to the monitoring centre providing support and assistance when it is perhaps needed most.

TODAY EVERYONE should consider the benefits of such a service:

- For elderly persons living alone or in isolated locations it prolongs their independence.
- For younger persons with health problems including disabilities, allergies and asthma.
- Any person with restricted mobility or unable or unlikely to cope in an emergency.
- Any person threatened with domestic violence or an increased fire risk.

Carers deserve to have some confidence and freedom to live their own lives and have some time to themselves. Perhaps a 'Careline' could give you some of that freedom or independence while still secure in the knowledge that assistance would be obtained for your loved one in the event of any anxiety arising.

HOW TO MAKE CONTACT:- While most users are referred by professional carers, this is not necessary. Self referral is fine. Simply telephone FAIRE on 01851 70 1702, and we will supply, install, test regularly and replace the equipment if necessary. We also charge £1 per week for the constant

monitoring service.

OUR TRACK RECORD:- FAIRE have responded to over 250 actual emergency incidents since coming into service. How sad that many only accept our service after experiencing a fall or other problems.

Remember we are here to help with:

- Friendly Gaelic speaking staff
- Always available around the clock, with.....
- Immediate response in any emergency or anxiety, giving ..
- Reassurance to you, the rest of the family, and
- Extra freedom and peace of mind for Carers.

Just telephone **01851 70 1702** and benefit from our service **NOW**.

"Working together for the people of the Western Isles"



ABILITY NET

The national charity for computing and disability—launched its first facility north of the border on Friday 18th February. Further details from the WICCF office.

BUS CEANN A DEAS NA HEARADH

New Community Minibus for South Harris will be equipped with hydraulic hoist for wheelchairs.

THE BRITISH TELECOM GUIDE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Copies of the Guide are available from the Western Isles Community Care Forum Office.



WESTERN ISLES ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE CENTRE TAIGH BLATH

WARM UP FOR WINTER, TAIGH BLATH CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR:-

- Loft insulation, draught proofing of doors and windows and cavity wall insulation
 - Pipe and tank lagging
- and provide energy advice tailored for your home.

GRANTS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:-

Householders using ELECTRIC as the MAIN source of heating i.e. night storage heaters, total control etc.

Householders in receipt of qualifying benefits:

Attendance Allowance, Council Tax Benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Disability Working Allowance, Family Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (which must include Constant Attendance Allowance) War Disablement Pen-

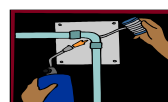
sion (which must include the mobility supplement or Constant Attendance Allowance), Working Families Tax Credit and Disabled Persons Tax Credit.

Grant assistance is also available for the installation of condensing boilers.

The Energy Centre can also provide qualified staff in your home, who can help you understand electricity and gas bills, demonstrate how to use heating controls correctly, give out impartial advice on selecting a new heating system and fuel costs and help action prevention of condensation and dampness in your home.

To find out how we can help you save money, phone:-

Tel: 01851 70 4300/70 1060



CARERS HARDSHIP RELIEF FUND

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Hardship Fund gives grants to Carers in financially straitened circumstances, where the purchase of an item or a service would improve the quality of life of the carers.

For example, grants will be made for equipment which materially enhances and assists the life of the carer, such as a washing machine, deep freeze or bed. Also respite care costs to enable the carer to participate in special occasions, contributions towards the costs of a holiday, transport costs for a special occasion, etc.
More information and an application form from Western Isles Community Care or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

CARERS BURSARIES

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers grants bursaries to enable carers and ex-carers to enter further education and take courses not directly related to their caring experience. Education courses which are considered appropriate are:

- Recreational skills; e.g. craft/hobby course or skills aiding the return to paid employment.
- Personal development/improvement of self esteem, academic achievement.

Carers have taken courses in; interior design, travel and tourism, counselling, music therapy, computing and driving lessons. Further information from WICCF Office on 01859 50 2588

CROSSROADS-CARING FOR CARERS

Crossroads (Scotland) Care Attendant Scheme was set up 21 years ago and since then schemes have sprouted up all round Scotland. Harris, the first Scheme in the Western Isles set up in 1985, followed by Stornoway and District. Recently we have seen TAGSA Uibhist set up to provide a similar service in Uist.

The aim of Crossroads is to provide domiciliary respite care for carers. An experienced trained Care Attendant goes into the home to take over from the Carer to allow the Carer a break. This can be on a regular daily, weekly, monthly basis or as required by the Carer. If you are a Carer who would appreciate a break from caring either on a regular basis or occasionally contact:-

LEWIS

Judith Dick
Tel: 01851 70 4044

HARRIS

Morag Munro

Tel: 01859 50 2171

UIST

Cathy Mackinnon-
Tel: 01870 602 111

GOING TO THE MAINLAND?

SCOT RAIL has introduced a £10.00 flat return Club 55 ticket for those over 55 years old between any two Scot Rail stations. Book by 6 pm previous day. Can be pre-booked by telephone and credit card.

It may be of interest to you to know that carers save the economy £3.4 billion per annum.

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

The Scottish Executive, in November 1999, launched its Strategy for Carers in Scotland, with a paper that set out some key priorities for service development. The launch was followed by a letter to all Scottish local authorities, earmarking funding within the Grant Aided Expenditure specifically for carers' services.

That letter said that Ministers "expect authorities to use the new **additional** resources (i.e. half the allocation) to create **additional** services for carers, including respite, and to **develop** existing quality services" [their emphasis]

The priorities for action within the Strategy are:

- The promotion of new and more flexible services for carers, including respite care, at a local level.
- The introduction of national standards for such services.
- The need for monitoring by the Scottish Executive of the performance of health and social services in supporting carers.
- The introduction of carers' legislation to allow carers' needs to be met more directly.
- The provision of better and more targeted information for carers at a national level.
- Attention to the specific needs of young carers.

So far, so good, apparently.

It is scarcely surprising that many organisations and individuals harbour ambitions for the extension and promotion of carers' services. The ink on the government press releases were barely dry by the time approaches began to be made to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar with proposals for spending this bonanza.

The 'additional resources' for the Western Isles amount to £40,000 for the next financial year.

The problems arise when this is looked at in the context of the overall allocation of grant towards social work services in the Western Isles. The money referred to here is contained within the annual grant settlement. For 2000—2001, the grant for social work services has been reduced by the sum of £225,000 or 3% of the previous year's grant.

The difficulty therefore is that, to meet the Scottish Executive's strictures on the use of the funding for carers, the allegedly 'new resources' actually have to be funded from further savings from the existing budgets, over and above the reductions the Social Work Department already needs to make. In other words, and bluntly, the new resources—certainly for the Western Isles—do not exist.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, with its partners in the voluntary sector, wish to expand services to carers. The paper on the Strategy for Carers in Scotland is a useful framework within which to expand services.

However, it is time to insist that if promotion of these developments is being taken seriously by the Scottish Executive, the community has a right to expect that new resources are real and not illusory. Anything else is a cruel deception. The Comhairle will be making strong representation to the Executive on this point, and it would be helpful to the case if this was backed up by similar views being expressed by the voluntary sector.

Malcolm Smith

Director of Social Work

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

HOW DO I GET HELP? - A CARER'S GUIDE TO ASSESSMENTS

How do I get help? Booklet not only explains your rights to assessment for community care services, but also how to prepare for the assessment in order to get the best from the services.

Available from Carers National Association, 91 Mitchell Street, Glasgow, G1 3LN. Tel: 0141 221 9141 or from WICCF office, Tel: 01859 50 2588.

The Western Isles Community Care Forum has representatives from the four island areas on its' Management Committee. Contacts for each area are given below. Reference was made on page one to some of the work of the Forum. The following may also be of interest: representatives of the Social Work Dept and of the Health Board attend our quarterly meetings. Representatives of the Forum have been appointed to the Western Isles Mental Health Partnership, to the Learning Difficulties Partnership and to the Social Work Committee. Any points raised at local Fora meetings can be pursued through those avenues. Funding applications have been made on behalf of member organisations and the Forum contributes to submissions to statutory bodies by the SCCF of which we are a member organisation.

Co-ordinator

John MacLean (01859 50 2588)

Lewis

Cathy Paterson (01851 70 6868)

Harris

Morag Munro (01859 50 2171)

Uist

Jean Branagan (01870 602 111)

Barra

Jessie MacNeil (01871 810 401)

Please contact: 01859 50 2588 if you require information or advice on anything contained in this Newsletter. If we are unable to help, then we will contact other organisations on your behalf.

Carers' Evening In Lewis

Contact Nos:-

WICCF Office 01859 50 2588

Lewis Committee Members:

01851 70 6868 or 01851 70 1010

Crossroads (Lewis) 01851 70 4044

Details of February meeting in next Newsletter

Details of carers' events in other areas will be announced in next Newsletter, in the local press and on radio.

LEWIS CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Many people do not claim all the state benefits to which they may have entitlement and therefore it is important that they are made aware of what benefits they may be entitled to claim.

In this article I wish to highlight the two main disability benefits (Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance) that can be claimed and the Carer's benefit (Invalid Care Allowance).

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

DLA is a benefit paid to people who need help with personal care and or have difficulty in walking. This benefit can only be claimed up to the age of 65. To be eligible to claim the claimant must have met the qualifying criteria for 3 months prior to claiming. There are two parts to this benefit—Care and Mobility Components.

Higher Rate Care Component—£52.95 a week:- This is to be paid to those who need a lot of attention day and night in connection with their bodily functions (getting in and out of bed, washing, bathing, toileting, cutting up food etc) and or continuous supervision in order to prevent danger to themselves or others e.g someone who suffers from Alzheimers Disease, severe epilepsy etc.

Middle Rate Care Component—£35.04 a week:- This is paid to those who require the above help day or night.

Lower Rate Care Component—£14.05 a week:- If someone just needs occasional help (about an hour) through the day or if he/she is over 16 and cannot prepare a cooked main meal for themselves then they may qualify for the lower rate.

Mobility Component:- To be eligible for the mobility component a person must be aged between 5 and 65.

Higher Rate Mobility Component:- £37.00 a week, To qualify a claimant must be either unable to walk or virtually unable to walk.

Lower Rate Mobility Component:- £14.05 a week, This is for claimants who can walk but are so severely disabled mentally or physically that they need guidance when outdoors in unfamiliar places.

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE:- This benefit can be claimed by those who are over 65 and so severely mentally/physically disabled that they require a lot of care, attention and supervision from another person. Claimants must satisfy the attention or supervision requirements for 6 months prior to claiming.

Higher Rate:- £52.95 a week, Claimant must need frequent attention in connection with bodily functions through the day and night and or constant supervision throughout the day and night in order to avoid substantial danger to themselves or others.

Lower Rate:- £35.40 a week, If someone satisfies the day or night conditions as mentioned above they are eligible to make a claim. It can take 1½ - 2 hours to fill in the DLA/AA claim forms. They are very long and repetitive and the completion of them for many people can be a very daunting task. Therefore, advice should be sought for the completion of these forms.

INVALID CARE ALLOWANCE:- £39.95 a week, ICA is a benefit for people who regularly and substantially care for a sick or disabled person who receives Attendance Allowance or the Care Components of Disability Living Allowance at the Middle or Higher Rate. The Carer must be between 16 and 65 years of age at date of claim and must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone who receives Attendance Allowance or the Care Component of Disability Living Allowance at the Middle or Higher Rate.

If working, their earnings must be less than £50 a week. Qualifying for any of the above benefits may mean the claimant can claim Income Support or if already on Income Support may be able to increase the amount they receive.

This information is only a brief guide to these benefits and anyone wishing further information can contact one of the following Citizens Advice Bureau who can offer free, confidential, independent advice on these benefits or any other topic.

Lewis Citizens Advice Bureau, 2 Bells Road, Stornoway, HS1 2QT

Tel: 01851 70 5727, Fax: 01851 70 6913.

Harris Citizens Advice Bureau, Pier Road, Tarbert, HS3 3DG

Tel/Fax: 01859 50 243.

Uist Citizens Advice Bureau, 27 Winfield Way, Balivanich, Isle of Benbecula, HS7 5LH, Tel/Fax: 01870 60 2421

Barra Citizens Advice Bureau, Castlebay, Isle of Barra, HS9 5XD

Tel/Fax: 01871 810 608.

This article was contributed by Mr Roddy Nicholson, Manager Lewis C.A.B.