

# CARERS' NEWSLETTER

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## Advocacy Western Isles

The Advocacy Working Group worked to a tight schedule but it was still possible to deliver a Draft Plan to the Scottish Executive on time. Visits to Stornoway by Charlotte Lee, Advocacy Development Officer and seemingly endless correspondence led to agreement on contentious issues such as the bearing of particular funding on the independence of such an organisation. On her final visit in May, Ms Lee expressed general satisfaction with the Plan and that reflected well on the dedication of the Working Group.

A Research and Development Officer, Anne Ryan, was appointed on 8th April to prepare a report for the Management Committee on the extent to which Advocacy is currently available in the Western Isles. She has contacted organisations and users and carers and she will report back in early July. The post of Co-ordinator was advertised and it should be possible to make an appointment in August. Among the first tasks will be recruitment of Volunteer Advocates throughout the islands and Advocacy Western Isles should be able to take referrals towards the end of the year.

Until an appointment is made, contact the Co-ordinator of the Community Care Forum, who is also Chairman of Advocacy Western Isles, at the address below for further information.

"It is vital that people who, for whatever reason are unable to put forward their own case are helped to find a voice to represent their interests and their views, and to ensure that they get the services they need." Malcolm Chisholm, Health Minister.

## PRINCESS ROYAL TRUST—FUNDS FOR CARERS.

The following Trusts are open to applications from those caring at present and, in some cases, those who have been carers until recently.

**Scottish Return to Work Educational Bursary Scheme**—Grants to allow carers to do training to allow them to enter or return to work.

**The Educational Bursary Fund**—To enable carers to take part in courses or training events which enhance their quality of life.

**The Carers Relief Fund**—For items or assistance with costs which provide relief from the burden of caring.

**The Wooden Spoon Society**—For young carers under the age of 18 to allow them to develop a talent or interest or to improve their educational attainment.

**The Carers Break Fund**—offers assistance with the cost of breaks for carers. Those eligible to apply are carers nominated by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers or other approved organisations working with carers. Grants available cover several criteria including holidays, recreational or social outings, educational activities etc.

**For more details** about any of the above, contact Marion MacNeil of the Highland Carers Project helpline on 08457 660026.

**STAYWARM** is an energy service designed to give peace of mind to the over 60s over their fuel bills. For a fixed payment—depending on the number of rooms and number of people in your house (maximum 3 rooms and 4 people), payments remain the same no matter how much electricity or gas you use—even in the coldest winter months. For more information, contact Julie Bellamy on 0141 637 3999 or **StayWarm** on 0800 1 694 694 quoting reference R1. We have limited information in the WICCF office.

## WESTERN ISLES COMMUNITY CARE FORUM

*(Jointly funded by CnES and the WIHB)*

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**HOLIDAY SPECIAL** A number of organisations can help carers plan a holiday or find a suitable place. Before booking, make sure that the resort or hotel fully understands your needs. *Don't pass over any disability—think about what you will need to make life as easy as possible.* When holidaying in standard accommodation, even if it states that it has wheelchair access, check on door widths, bathroom size, access to dining room etc.

In this country you may be able to hire equipment. It may also be possible to hire abroad, but check carefully. In the UK, the British Red Cross has a medical loan service. There may be a nominal charge, but most equipment is loaned free. Contact your local branch, or the one in your resort for information and help.

#### **YOUR HOLIDAY, TOO**

As a carer, you need a chance to relax and appreciate a change of scene. There are places where care is provided and organisations that can provide assistance.

**RADAR** has a Holiday Fact Pack with a list of holiday providers and possible sources of funding. It costs £8 from 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF. Tel: 020 7250 3222.

**HOLIDAY CARE** is probably the first port of call for a wealth of information. This national charity has a database covering 120 aspects of information on accessible tourism, from visitor attractions, accommodation and transport to activity holidays, accessible overseas destinations and funding. Tel: 01293 774535 or write to Holiday Care, 2nd Floor, Imperial Buildings, Victoria Road, Horley, Surrey. RH6 7PZ.

**SMOOTH RIDE GUIDE** is a wonderful guide to transport, accommodation and accessible tourist spots if you

are travelling in the UK in a wheelchair. It costs £9.95. Tel: 01279 777966; website: [www.smoothrideguides.com](http://www.smoothrideguides.com)

#### **FINANCIAL HELP**

Holidays with the person you care for can work out more expensive, especially if you are looking at places with special needs facilities or need a helping hand. In addition to RADAR, Mencap also have information on holiday grants. Contact the helpline on 0808 808 1111 or through the website on [www.mencap.org.uk/helpline](http://www.mencap.org.uk/helpline) Your local Citizens Advice Bureau will have information of other organisations which may be able to help. Carers UK advisers can also help with names and numbers. Contact them on CarersLine 0808 808 7777. For people with mental health problems, contact your local branch of Mind. (Helpline 0845 76660 163 or Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk))

**The Family Holiday Association**, 16 Mortimer Street, London can be approached via your social worker if your family is under stress with children aged three or over and you haven't had a holiday for four years.

**Disabled Christian Fellowship** has trips in the UK and abroad for people wanting a spiritual dimension to a holiday. Tel: 01372 737046.

**Winged Fellowship** has holidays and planned breaks with care at five purpose-built centres across the UK and run a New Discovery holidays programme for travel abroad. Tel: 0207 833 2594; website: [www.wft.org.uk](http://www.wft.org.uk)

*The above is an extract from the May/June issue of Caring (Carers UK magazine), and further information can be obtained from them.*

**CARERS UK** has launched a website which gives those with access to the internet a one-stop-shop for advice, support and information. (CarersLine—0808 808 7777 - is still available for those without internet access.) The website address is [www.carersonline.org.uk](http://www.carersonline.org.uk).

**PUBLICITY** Organisations which provide care, whether voluntary or statutory, are invited to publicise their activities through articles in the Newsletter. Many of those in need are unaware of worthwhile services provided by such organisations throughout the islands.

**WESTERN ISLES COMMUNITY CARE FORUM**  
**“Working together in Community Care”**

**The Elizabeth Finn Trust** aims to help British or Irish people who come from a professional or similar background and their immediate families “regardless of religious denomination, political opinion, age, or place of residence”. Depending on individual circumstances, the Trust offers grants, regular allowances or one-off gifts for specific needs. The people the Trust helps fall into two groups—those who live at home and have capital worth no more than £16,000 (excluding the value of their property) and those who need help with fees for a residential or nursing care home and have capital worth no more than £5,000. If you would like more information, contact Mrs Linda Bates, Regional Co-ordinator North, 2 Lanton Close, Swarland, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 9QX (tel: 01670 787 135; fax: 01670 783 122) or the Trust’s Headquarters, 1 Derry Street, London W8 5HY (tel: 020 7396 6700).

### **CONTACT A FAMILY**

Contact a Family launched a new national helpline for families and carers of children with disabilities, rare disorders or a special need. “Being told your child has a disability, rare disorder or life-threatening condition is devastating” says helpline manager Mark Robertson. “The first thing you want is information and advice.” Designed to be a one-stop information and advice centre, the new **freephone** service will provide information on disabling and medical conditions, together with advice on many issues facing parents, such as benefits, special education needs and respite care. The helpline will also put parents in touch with local information services and support groups, or other families, for example, who are dealing with the same rare disorder. The helpline number is **0808 808 3555, open 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.**

### **CARERS TAKE A BREAK**

Do you know of an elderly person who would like to take a break in the seaside village of Rosemarkie on the Black Isle in Ross-shire? They would have a room to themselves and get two meals a day for £150 per week, so allowing their carer to take a break.

Abbeyfield House in Rosemarkie is offering a room, for very sheltered accommodation, for elderly people who are reasonably fit, on a short-term basis, so that carers can have a break. The scheme has attracted many people since it started—with some returning for further visits.

All enquiries should be addressed to Mrs R Balfour, House Convenor, on 01381 620643.

### **INVALID CARE ALLOWANCE**

From October 2002 carers aged 65 and over will be able to claim Invalid Care Allowance for the first time, giving older carers access to ICA and other income related benefits. Also, benefit will continue for up to 8 weeks after the death of the person for whom care was provided. The name of the benefit will change to Carers Allowance from April 2003.

*During our lifetimes*, eight out of ten of us will at some point become a Carer. This may be looking after a sick child, caring for a son or daughter who has long term difficulties, looking after a friend or a member of our family who has suffered an accident which alters his/her life, caring for husband or wife through a severe illness or looking after an elderly parent who is no longer able to manage alone. These are all difficult situations, which will have long-term effect on our own daily living. The Western Isles Community Care Forum

**Directory of Care Services**, which will be updated in July, is free and available on request. It contains details of services provided by the Health Board, by Social Work and by Voluntary Sector agencies such as Alzheimers, Crossroads, Arthritis Care, Cul Taic (cancer support), Volunteer Stroke Scheme and the Western Isles Association for Mental Health. In Lewis alone, there are over thirty such voluntary organisations listed in the Directory and each one is available to help in a specific field in time of need.

**SPEECH and LANGUAGE THERAPY** is the process of enabling people to communicate to the best of their ability. Some speech and language therapists also work with people who have swallowing difficulties. Therapists assess the nature of the client's problem and then provide treatment, advice and support. They also work closely with families, carers and members of other professions including doctors, other therapists and teachers.

Communication and swallowing problems can result from delayed language development, stammering, inappropriate use of speech sounds, learning difficulties, autism, stroke, head injury, dementia, disorders of the voice, cancer of the mouth and throat, laryngectomy, cleft palate, psychiatric disorders, physical disabilities, degenerative disorders such as Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone Disease, etc.

Speech, language and swallowing difficulties may lead to feelings of isolation and educational problems, and may affect job prospects. With the right help and support many people overcome these difficulties. Therapy can take place in hospitals, clinics, residential homes, nursing homes, day centres, schools, pre-school nurseries, or the client's own home. Anyone can make a referral to Speech and Language Therapy for themselves, or on behalf of others. A referral can also be made via your GP. You can contact the Speech and Language Therapists at the Western Isles Hospital, Stornoway (Tel: 01851 708282); or at Winfield Way, Benbecula (Tel: 01870 603241). Some of the team are pictured above.



### **REGISTER OF CARERS (WESTERN ISLES)**

Compilation of a Register of Carers is ongoing with approaches being made to carers by GPs, Nurses, Health Visitors, Social Workers and voluntary care organisations. In the interests of confidentiality only those carers who return signed forms will be entered on the Register and they will be offered information and advice on benefits, allowances, services, etc. They will also be directed to organisations which will provide support and—if necessary—take a case up on their behalf.

Information from other organisations will be circulated by the WICCF to carers on the mailing list but that list will not be made available to any other body, statutory or voluntary, with the exception of the GP Practices.

### **DISABILITY ACCESS PANELS**

The term access covers a wider area than access to buildings and includes issues relating to access to employment, public transport, information and various services. Those affected, in addition to wheelchair users and the ambulant disabled, include people with hearing, vision and Learning Difficulty impairments. Consequently, a Panel should ideally include people with as wide a range of disabilities as

possible, as members with technical knowledge.

A Lewis Panel was appointed at a meeting in Stornoway on 19th June and, in Barra on 27th June, it was decided that a Panel should be set up at the next meeting. The numbers at both meetings, which were attended by Mr Malcolm Crate, Senior Building Control Officer, CnES and chaired by the WICCF Co-ordinator, were encouraging. Further meetings will be held in Uist and in Harris.

Further information—contact details on the front page—from the Co-ordinator, John Maclean.

### **CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

Recent visits have been made to the islands by the **Clinical Standards Board for Scotland, Mental Health and Well Being Support Group, Scottish Health Advisory Services and Scottish Health Feedback**. The Co-ordinator has represented the Western Isles Community Care Forum at those consultations and also at seminars on **Joint Future, Free Personal Care, Adults with Incapacity, Supporting People, the I-Reach presentation and Volunteering in Primary Care**.