

# CARERS' NEWSLETTER

## WESTERN ISLES COMMUNITY CARE FORUM

### **REGISTER OF CARERS**

The Western Isles Community Care Forum is working with GP Practices and with the Social Work Department of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to identify family carers. The aim is to provide carers with information on services and benefits to which they could be entitled and to refer them to statutory and voluntary agencies which could be able to offer practical assistance. While the WICCF is working with such organisations to compile a database of carers it will also rely on private individuals to make referrals, as not all carers are known to the Health Board or to the Social Work Department. We would be obliged if you could suggest to any such person, known to you and who might benefit, that they should approach the WICCF or, indeed, allow you to do so on their behalf. Referral forms are available from the office at Tarbert and it will be necessary to obtain the carer's written consent before their name is revealed to the WICCF. Confidentiality must be observed at all times.

A commonly accepted definition of a carer is: anybody who is looking after a relative, partner or friend who, because of illness, old age or disability, may not be able to manage at home without them. It may not necessarily be a requirement for the carer to be resident in the same house. "Family carer" could be an appropriate term to differentiate them from carers who are employed by the Social Work Department. There could, of course, be some circumstances where an employee could fit into both categories, depending on their personal situation.

It was estimated by Carers UK at the end of 2005 that carers throughout Britain were missing out on an estimated £746 million per annum in unclaimed benefits. Some 250,000 carers over 60 years of age were not claiming Pension Credit, with a further 64,000 losing out on the extra benefit, Carer Addition. Estimates show that in just Carer Addition alone, £86 million was going unclaimed, which could be "just the tip of the iceberg" according to Imelda Redmond, Chief Executive of Carers UK.

There is no reason to believe that carers in the Western Isles do not also lose out on benefits. It is unfortunate that those who are most in need and who often devote their life to the care of others should lose out on their basic entitlements. There are agencies which may be able to help in many such situations but it will not, obviously, be possible for them to act unless they are approached for assistance. Registers of Carers in other parts of the country have been used successfully to enable carers to access their various entitlements. This is not an easy exercise as it deals with a constantly changing sector of society but it is one which is worth pursuing for either the short or long-term benefit of carers.

The WICCF, which can be contacted by: tel/fax: 01859 502588; email [john.maclean2@virgin.net](mailto:john.maclean2@virgin.net) or by post at the Old Hostel, Tarbert, Harris HS3 3BG will be pleased to assist in any way that it can.

### **CONGRATULATIONS MARGARET ANNE**

Margaret Ann Montgomery, Volunteer Representative in the Western Isles, recently came second in the Local Hero awards held by the Stornoway Gazette. She had been nominated by her mother, Catherine, for being a dedicated mum and for all the support she offers other parents of children with additional needs in the Western Isles. As well as being a representative for Contact a Family, she was involved in Open Sesame project and is a member of the newly formed Hearts of the Isles group. Well done!

**Many people over 60** are still missing out on extra money each week. A new service allows you to apply for Pension Credit and Housing /Council Tax benefits with one call. To find out more call Freephone 0800 99 1234. **Don't miss out—you've nothing to lose.**

### **LARGE PRINT NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE - PLEASE CONTACT US**

(WICCF JOINTLY FUNDED BY WIHB AND CNES)  
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**Well?** Magazine is published by the Scottish Executive as part of its programme for improving the nation's mental health and wellbeing, which aims to help raise awareness and prevent the stigma around mental health. The magazine contains lots of positive articles on all aspects of mental health. The summer issue has features on dementia, the links between mental and physical health, and tips on living life to the full. It's produced twice a year and is free. To subscribe call 0131 244 5055 or write to The National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being, The Scottish Executive, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG.

### **PATIENT TRAVEL INFORMATION**

Patients who have health service appointments on the mainland can now access a wealth of recently compiled information from the Western Isles NHS website regarding patient travel and support.

From the Health Board home page ([www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk)) click on the tab called "Links" and then click on the box called "Western Isles Patient Travel Online".

The information has been extensively researched in the last several months, but if any changes are required, please contact Katherine Mathis or Norma Neill of Health Promotion at 01870 602588 or [hpuist@wihb.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:hpuist@wihb.scot.nhs.uk)

### **NEW ON-LINE SERVICE**

Work on a website for the WICCF is nearing completion and it is hoped that the newsletter and other publications will be available on-line soon. The address to look for is [www.wiccf.co.uk](http://www.wiccf.co.uk)

### **CARERS WEEK 2007**

This year's Carers Week is using "*My life as a Carer*" as its theme. You will need to complete and return a registration form in order to qualify for all the free leaflets etc. Copies of the form are available from this office.

### **CAN ANYONE BEAT THIS?**

Is Buster Martin Britain's oldest working man? He celebrated his 100th birthday on 1st September by taking a day off work! He had planned to celebrate with just a pint in his local but he was whisked off for a VIP tour of Chelsea's Stamford Bridge football stadium. His employer's, Pimlico Plumbers of Lambeth, south London, set the tour up as a treat and arranged for him to be presented with a Chelsea shirt with "Buster 100" on the back. The widower, who

has 17 children and more than 70 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, helps maintain a fleet of 100 vans for the firm.

He retired from working on market stalls three years ago at the of 97, but started looking for a new job just three months into his retirement, after getting bored and having, as he put it, "Too much time on my hands." He explained "Boredom is a big killer of men. I went back to work as I like to keep active. If I did not work I would become miserable, so I don't want to stop working."

Once he got over the surprise of having a 97 year old applicant, his boss said that Buster was definitely an asset—as are other older workers who bring a wealth of experience into the workplace.

(This article was reproduced from the *Daily Express* of 1st September.)

We would be interested to receive stories from people who have worked on long past retirement age or took up new hobbies/challenges at an age when other people become content to put their slippers on and sit at the fire.

You can contact us at the address on the front page, and we would be happy to print your stories—with your permission.

### **SCOTTISH HEALTH COUNCIL**

The new office of the Scottish Health Council in the Western Isles was opened by Scottish Health Minister, Andy Kerr on 11th September. It is located at Harbour View, Cromwell Street Quay, Stornoway and is staffed by Donald Crichton and the Administrator, Carmen Morrison.

The Scottish Health Council is a new body set up by the Scottish Executive to ensure that the views of patients and the public are properly taken into account by Health Boards.

Rather than speak on behalf of patients and the public, it will make sure that they have the chance to give their own views to Health Boards and that those views are properly taken into account.

As well as assessing how Health Boards are involving patients in decisions about health services, it will develop and share examples of best practice in public involvement, and help patients to give feedback to Health Boards about their experiences of services.

The Scottish Health Council is independent from Health Boards and will be able to comment honestly on how well they involve people in decisions about the care and services they receive.

For further information call 01851 703292 **or** email [donald.crichton@scottishhealthcouncil.org](mailto:donald.crichton@scottishhealthcouncil.org)

**NHS COMPLAINTS** are now dealt with by the four island CABx. If you have a complaint about any aspect of Health Care, contact 01851 705727; 01859 502431; 01870 602421 or 01871 810608

## **WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS**

Winter is now with us and most, if not all, winter fuel payments should have been paid out. If you got a payment last year you should have got this year's payment automatically. If you were 60 before—or during—the week 18-24 September last year, and receiving Social Security Benefits, the payment should also have been automatic. If not in receipt of benefits and you meet the qualifying criteria you should make a claim immediately. If you have not received your payment, contact your local benefits office or CAB for advice. You can also call the Winter Fuel Helpline on 08459 15 15 15 or visit the website at: [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)

### **(continued from page 4)**

**Diabetic sufferer:** fall detector, inactivity monitoring, bed occupancy sensor, epilepsy sensor.

**Frail and Vulnerable:** Lifeline 400 Alarm, big button phone, Co2 Detector, Smoke detector, Flood Detector, Bed occupancy sensor, Zoning Button, Arm/disarm/trigger, Enuresis Sensor etc.

**Falls Management** - 70% of falls occur at night and 8,000 elderly persons fall daily. This accounts for 10% of acute hospital admissions. Hip fractures cost the NHS £1.7billion a year and 1 in 5 who fracture a hip die within 6 months.

**Package** - Fall Detector, Bed Occupancy Sensor, PIRs for inactivity monitoring.

**Dementia** - affects 750,000 people in the UK and forecast to double to 1.5 million by 2050, 154,000 dementia sufferers live alone of whom 40% experience wandering as a problem.

**Package** - Property exit sensors to detect wandering, bed occupancy sensors, flood detectors, temperature extremes sensors, temperature extremes sensor, Co2 detector, natural gas detector, gas shut off valve, enuresis sensor.

These are just some of the available packages. There are others."

Further information will be included in the next edition of the Newsletter, along with details of TELEHEALTH which is geared to the medical sector. It is described as "*the consistent, reliable and accurate monitoring of a patient's vital signs through the use of simple, easy to use equipment that professionals can customise to each patient, enabling day to day individual care according to need*".

*(This article was contributed by Iain Macpherson of Faire.)*

## **FEE WAIVER FOR PART TIME STUDY**

A carer who thought her lifelong ambition of getting a degree would never be realised because of the cost of a course and losing entitlement to Carers Allowance, has found that there is a way.

When she contacted the Carers Allowance Unit she was told that if she did the course part time, she would be able to retain her Carers Allowance. When she contacted UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) she was informed that because she was in receipt of Carers Allowance and studying part-time, she would be entitled to a fee waiver. She is now fully motivated to embark on her course and shares her experience so that others in her situation may be encouraged by it.

**I**f you've been looking after someone at any time during the last three years and have not worked, or have been on a low income, you may be eligible for more State Pension when you retire. To make sure you don't miss out, you may need to apply for **Home Responsibilities Protection** to help build your pension entitlement—no matter how far off your retirement is. For a free guide telling you the entitlement conditions and what you need to now do, simply call **08457 31 32 33** or visit the website at [www.pensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.pensionservice.gov.uk)

## **CEREBRA'S GRANT SCHEME**

Cerebra has increased their budget this year to give more grants to help children who have disabilities because of a brain related condition or injury. The condition may be of a physical nature or a learning difficulty or both.

The equipment or resource requested must improve the child's quality of life and not be available from statutory agencies like Social Services or the NHS. The child must be aged 16 or under. Some examples of grants made are touch screen computer, holidays, approved therapies, power wheelchairs and sensory toys.

Parents and carers can request an application form by calling 0800 328 1159 or by e-mail at [debbieg@cerebra.org.uk](mailto:debbieg@cerebra.org.uk). It can also be downloaded at [www.cerebra.org.uk](http://www.cerebra.org.uk)

Decisions on completed applications are made weekly.

## New Technology to Assist Care

“FAIRE” from the Gaelic word meaning “watch”, is the Social Work Department Careline support service which came into being in March 1998 and has been continually operational for eight and a half years now. Working within the good neighbourliness of the Western Isles – with up to three “contact persons” for each service user, (not on any formal rota but prepared to help out if available), to see that an elderly or vulnerable person living alone requires assistance. Faire currently has 775 alarms and a lesser number of smoke alarms in private homes around the Western Isles as well as sheltered housing, care units etc. and install an average of 15 new alarms every month.

However, society is now looking for more from technology, aimed at allowing the elderly and disabled to remain in their own home with proper support - and delaying admissions to hospital and residential care for as long as possible. Designed to be linked to a 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to a monitoring centre there is now a whole range of devices which can be brought into use to achieve greater safety, quality of life and reduce problems for the elderly at home.

To achieve this vision, we look to the new buzz word of **Telecare** which is:

*“the continuous, automatic and remote monitoring of real time emergencies and lifestyle changes over time in order to manage the risks associated with independent living.”*

In mid August 2006, the Scottish Executive announced that it was making £8 million available across Scotland over the next two years for the provision of alarms, Telecare equipment and other technology to allow persons to remain longer in their own homes with a better quality of life, and to reduce hospital admissions and release pressure on the National Health Service.

It is believed that the Western Isles has access to at least £75,000 but it has to be paid for by way of a joint approach from health and social care and it has to be sustainable.

With “Faire” careline centre well positioned to be at the forefront in the use of such technology within the Western Isles, a whole new and exciting era of Telecare and Telemedicine is about to become available to the elderly and vulnerable in the Western Isles.

Ian MacPherson, Manager of the Faire Careline Service said “We are currently working towards putting in a bid for funding to enable some of the more tried and tested area of Telecare and Telemedicine to be available to the elderly and vulnerable within all parts of the Western Isles.”

Some of the items of equipment which it is hoped will be available for use in various permutations to suit individual cases are:

**Arms and Gems** - the conventional triggers carried by a user to activate the alarm unit.

**Arm and Disarm Trigger** - for an alarm to monitor activity or inactivity.

**Bed Occupancy Sensor** - an early warning that the user has got out of bed and not returned within a predetermined time period, say ten minutes or half an hour depending on individual lifestyles. The sensor can also switch lights on and off to prevent falling.

**Bogus Caller Button** - fitted near a door can be used to call for assistance from the 24 hour response centre when a stranger wants entry to a home.

**Carbon Monoxide Detector** - warns of dangerous Carbon monoxide levels within a property.

**Enuresis Sensor** - a discreet method to detect enuresis without the need for regular intrusion, positioned between the mattress and sheet of a bed.

**Epilepsy sensor** - monitors the user’s vital signs including heart rate and breathing patterns to determine the onset of an epileptic attack while in bed.

**Fall Detector** - worn at waist level, it detects a serious fall and raises an alert.

**Flood Detector** - alerts the call centre of potential flood situations in the home.

**Gas Shut Off Alerts** - automatically shuts off the gas supply when a leak is detected.

**Home Alert Pagers** - for carer and user.

**Medication Dispensers** - automatically dispense medication over 28 day period with audible and visible alerts.

**Natural gas detector** - warns of dangerous gas leaks.

**Pillow Alert** - A vibrating pad under a pillow to alert of smoke/heat activation.

**PIR Movement Detector** - detects an intruder or detects inactivity depending on purpose.

**Pressure Mat** - 24 hour monitoring of inactivity or intruders, depending on individual needs.

**Property Exit Sensor** - someone has left by that door and not returned within a predetermined period of time.

**Smoke Alarms/Radio smoke Alarms** - sounder beacon for the hard of hearing e.g. for a sensor or telephone.

**Temperature Extremes Sensor** - detects low, high or rate of rise of temperature - and raises an alert.

**Video Entry** - visual confirmation when something is activated.

**Zoning button** - to allow freedom upstairs but monitoring downstairs.

Some examples of packages which could be put together for individual needs are:

*(continued in left column on page 3)*