

CARERS' NEWSLETTER

WESTERN ISLES COMMUNITY CARE FORUM

Renal unit opened in Stornoway—COMMENTS FROM USERS.

Donald MacLeod from Uig described the development as life changing. "The new Renal Unit has made a big difference to my life—it's the best development that could have happened. Before the Unit opened, I had to travel to Raigmore from Monday to Friday for 4 years" explained Donald, who cut the ribbon. "Now I come here and go straight home afterwards. It's an excellent unit and the nurses are all very, very good....I feel so much better now that the Unit has opened here."

The first patients were dialysed in the £474,000 unit in March. The new satellite renal dialysis unit is designed as a six-stationed unit—five dialyses stations plus one facility for isolation. Gambro Dialysis machines do the haemodiafiltration (HDF) treatment.

Norma MacLeod from Stirling Square was the first person to receive dialysis in the new unit. She had spent the last two years travelling to Inverness for treatment. "It makes such a huge difference to my life now that I am back home" said Norma. "It's brilliant to be able to live in my own house again. I am on top of the world. It makes such a difference to everything."

The third patient currently dialysing at Western Isles Hospital, Iain Macleod from Cromore, described the Unit as "an Excellent development. My quality of life is now a lot better and I haven't been ill since I started here. Everything is on the up. It's a very good Unit and the nurses are excellent."

One of the founder members and past Chairman of the Western Isles Kidney Patients' Association, Martin Macleod, welcomed the establishment of the new Unit. The Association had started lobbying and fund raising in 2001. He made the point that, while the Unit would invaluable to island residents, it would also be useful to visitors.

LOCAL AREA CO-ORDINATOR (LEARNING DISABILITES)

Local Area Co-ordinators work alongside people with learning disabilities, child or adult, to support the person along with the family by providing information, advice, support and advocacy on their behalf. The LAC is based in and connected with the local community to fulfil the requirements of "The Same as You—a review of services for people with learning disabilities."

LACs are independent, but overall management of the service lies with Advocacy Western Isles, in whose offices they are based. People can drop in there or meetings can be arranged at some other suitable location. The LAC can work with them in an individualised and person-centred way to identify strategies and support. They can also advocate and negotiate access to services, create new opportunities, work towards accessing new funds and liaise closely with other agencies in doing this. Local area co-ordinators are not a replacement for services that people need. They are known and valued by the community and have a recognised role across the service networks.

Contact Norrie Macdonald (Lewis & Harris) on 01851 701755 or Margaret Fenton (Uist & Barra) on 01870 603891.

Directory of Services

The WICCF Directory of Care Services is available in hard copy, free of charge, from the office at the address below and also on the website at www.wiccf.co.uk. Contents include Allowances (including Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance) Hospitals, Surgeries, Health Centres, Community Clinics, Dentists, Opticians, Chemists, district nurses, Health Visitors, Social Work services, Crossroads, Alzheimers, Day Clubs, Befriending services, Health Information Project, NCH, Mental Health Drop-in Centre, Advocacy, Counselling & Mediation, Contact Centre and the Scottish Health Council.

(WICCF JOINTLY FUNDED BY WIHB AND CNES)
CO-ORDINATOR: JOHN MACLEAN

THIS NEWSLETTER IS CIRCULATED WIDELY ON A QUARTERLY BASIS TO USERS OF SERVICES AND THEIR CARERS THROUGHOUT THE ISLANDS. THE VOLUNTARY AND STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY HERE TO DISTRIBUTE MATERIAL TO PEOPLE WHO ARE ACKNOWLEDGED AS BEING HARD TO REACH. WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS

LARGE PRINT NEWSLETTER AVIALABLE—PLEASE CONTACT US

Credit Union

A Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial co-operative run by its members for the benefit of its members and the community. By saving with their Credit Union, members provide a pool of funds which allow lower cost loans to be made to their fellow members.

Anyone can become a member of the Western Isles Credit Union, regardless of their income, as long as they share the “common bond” of living or working in this area.

You can save as much or as little as you want, up to £10,000. It pays to save—each year a dividend is paid to each member (from any surplus left after running costs and building up reserves). There are no external shareholders to pay and savings protection of up to £5,000 is provided free of charge.

Members can apply for an affordable loan from £100 to £3,000, with free life savings and loan protection insurance. All loans and files are processed by the Credit Committee in Stornoway. The Western Isles Credit Union charge interest at a rate of 1% per month on the reducing balance of the loan. Interest is calculated on a daily basis, and there is no penalty for early repayment. For example if you were to borrow £1000 over 12 months, you would pay only £67 interest.

Credit Unions differ from banks in that they aim to keep money circulating within the community rather than giving it to external shareholders. They provide an ethical alternative for people who are concerned about how their money is invested and they provide financial services to those who might otherwise be excluded as well as recycling the wealth in our own community.

A Credit Union undergoes all the same checks as any other financial institution. They are registered and regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are regularly audited and monitored. Credit Unions are also covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. All staff and volunteers are bound by a strict code of confidentiality and are committed to providing a high quality, friendly and personalised service to their members.

In order to join, you must produce a Name ID document, e.g. signed passport, driving licence, firearms certificate etc., and also an address ID document, e.g. a recent utility bill or bank/credit

Carers UK

New research by Carers UK shows that the value of unpaid support provided by carers has now reached £87 million a year. This figure has increased by more than half since Carers UK’s previous calculation in 2002.

The new figure means that the average carer is saving the nation over £15,260 a year; that the value of carers is now more than total annual spend on NHS (£82 billion in the year 2006-07) and that carers’ support is worth more than four times the amount spent on social care services by local authorities each year (£19.3 billion in the year 2005-2006). Imelda Redmond, Chief Executive of Carers UK says, “When you put a monetary value on carers’ contribution to the economy, it shows the stark reality of the true costs. It is clear that without carers, our NHS and social care systems would collapse.”

(“Caring” magazine, Nov. 2007)

card statement or benefit or state pension document (showing payment amount). If you are in any doubt as to what to bring for ID purposes, please give your local access point a ring to discuss it. Access points: Ada Campbell is available to sign up new Members at the Claddach Kirkibost Centre, North Uist, on Tuesdays & Thursdays – 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Tel: 01876 510250; Marie Campbell is available to sign up new Members at Gleus House, Daliburgh, on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays during normal office hours. Please telephone in advance on 01878 700505. Marie is also available at the Lioncleit Education Centre on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during normal office hours - Tel: 01870 603653; Katie MacLeod & Morag Munro, HVS are available to sign up new Members at their office in the Old Hostel, Tarbert during normal office hours. Tel: 01859 502171; Our volunteers in Barra are Elizabeth McAtear, Claire Logan and Margaret Ann Beggs; CnES workplace representatives are available in Council offices in Stornoway, Tarbert, Balivanich and Barra. Please see workplace notice boards for contact details. You only need £3 to start off (£2 joining fee plus £1 initial saving.)

For more information, contact Western Isles Credit Union, 9 Cromwell Street, Stornoway www.wicreditunion.co.uk (Tel: 01851 701865, fax: 01851 701542, e-mail: info@wicreditunion.co.uk)

Disabled Access Guide (Harris, Uist & Barra)

The Guide will provide details of accommodation, shops, hotels, community facilities, churches, surgeries, banks, Council and Health Board premises, buses, ferries etc. throughout the three island areas and it will be funded by a Scottish Disability Equality Forum grant. Agreement was reached some time ago that a Western Isles Guide should be compiled, but that had to be revised to the three island areas, as Lewis have elected not to participate. The Guide will be available in spiral-bound form and on websites. Physical inspections in all areas will be conducted by **Lucy Macdonald (01859 530273 lucyfinsbay@aol.com)** and **Alan Ross (01859 530420 alanross@aol.com)** of the Harris Panel and Harris Voluntary Service (01859 502171 morag.munro@harrisvs.org.uk) are handling the financial side. Details can also be obtained from: **John MacLean (01859 502588 john.maclean2@virgin.net)**.

Uist: **Agnes Coyle (01870 620400 agnes.coyle@hebrides.net)**

Barra: **Margaret MacLeod (jessie.macneil@vabaorg.uk)**

The Guide will be invaluable to disabled, elderly and infirm people and also, for example, adults with young children.

PM announces carer commission.

Gordon Brown has said that caring is an issue that affects us all, requiring a long term approach. In response, he has set up a standing commission on carers. In his announcement the Prime Minister recalled meeting Carers UK member Jill Pay and her family. "Last year I went to visit one carer and I heard at first hand of her struggle and yet her desire to help others in the same position as she is in. She told me that she does not want Government to walk away. She wants a Government on her side".

Carers UK has welcomed the new Commission which it hopes will give carers a much higher public profile, especially as this has the backing of the Prime Minister.

Imelda Redmond commenting on the news urged the commission to tackle poverty amongst carers said that in spite of a changing society, policies for carers were designed in the 1970s. Also, the benefit system currently does not support carers to work and condemns many to poverty. She added that a radical overhaul of the benefits system and ways in which carers are supported to remain in work is required.

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING (1993)FUND

The Independent Living (1993) Fund is a Trust set up in 1993 by central government—from which it receives all of its funding. It is intended to support people with disabilities so that they can live independently at home, rather than in residential care. It makes payments to people with disabilities so that they can afford to employ personal assistants or agency workers to provide the support that they need to remain at home.

The Fund works in partnership with Local Authority Social Services or Social Work Departments. It can only make payments to people who get Social Work support to the value of at least £200 per week. This support can take the form of direct services, for example a day centre placement, or money from a Direct Payment Scheme.

In order to qualify you must be at least 16 and under 65, be getting, or have been awarded, the highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance and you and/or your partner must have less than £18,500 of capital and savings.

The application form, as well as notes on how to complete it, is available from: The Independent Living Fund, PO Box 7525, Nottingham, NG2 4ZT (Tel: 0845 601 8815; e-mail funds@ilf.org.uk). You can also download a form from their website: www.ilf.org.uk. You only have to complete Part One of the form—Part Two must be completed by your Social Worker (if you don't have one, you must contact your Social Work department and talk to them about getting a Worker allocated to you.) If the Fund accepts your application, you will be asked to meet with an ILF assessor and your Local Authority representative in a place that's convenient for you—usually your own home. You can have some-one with you—a relative or friend—during the visit, and you will be asked about your care needs and how best to meet them will be discussed with you. You will be notified of the outcome of the visit in due course.

**CARERS RIGHTS DAY —
7th December. To find out more, see
www.carersuk.org/CarersRightsDay or
call 020 7566 7623**

COUNSELLING AND FAMILY MEDIATION WESTERN ISLES has re-launched under a new management structure which will develop client services. The charity, which offers mediation for separating or divorcing couples and counselling for individuals and couples, is co-ordinated by Counselling and Family Mediation Orkney. Service Co-ordinator, Erica Nicholls says, *“We’re very excited to be part of the professional service in The Western Isles. It makes perfect sense for us to work together when you consider the similarities between our communities where we work with some very socially isolated people”*.

With a focus on the future, Erica went on to say, *“We’ve got a very solid and extremely experienced team of volunteers and practitioners here in the Western Isles, and I hope we can help support them to continue to grow and develop. All of our counsellors and mediators are trained professionals who are fully aware of the intricacy of the issues surrounding relationships and separation or divorce.”*

Services available in the Western Isles include Family Mediation, which is a process in which a trained, impartial third person assists parents who are separated or divorced to communicate with each other to reach their own decisions about the best arrangements for their children. Reaching agreement through mediation can avoid painful and lengthy legal battles.

The service also offers confidential counselling to individuals and couples who might be experiencing difficulties in their lives. Counselling can offer people the time and space to consider their circumstances in a calm atmosphere and can give participants the confidence to make realistic decisions about their futures.

A new Child Contact Centre will be opening in Stornoway early next year and a new Contact Centre Manager has recently been appointed.

All services, which are free and confidential, are available throughout the Western Isles in a variety of premises. Great care is taken to ensure confidentiality and ease of access for all participants.

For more information, or to make an appointment, please contact us on 0845 603 5743.

Locality Planning Groups

Locality Planning Groups are being set up by the **Western Isles Community Health and Social Care Partnership** to ensure the public have an active part to play in the planning of services. Groups have been, or are in the process of being, established on the West Side of Lewis, Broadbay, Lochs, Harris, Uists and Barra. This is one of the means by which the CHaSCP seeks to involve the public. Details are available by email at webmaster@chascp.org, by tel. 01851 701075 or on the website at www.chascp.org

While it is not possible to adequately condense this subject, some of the following points are relevant. The Groups will receive information for comment and they will be expected: to engage with the wider community; to ascertain, co-ordinate

and express the views of the community and to provide recommendations via the CHaSCP to the local statutory organisations. Groups will be able to initiate projects and make suggestions to the CHaSCP of new ways in which to deliver services. Membership of the Group is open to any interested member of the public, meetings are open to the public and any who attend will be regarded as co-opted with the same voting rights as the core membership. Each Group appoints a representative to the CHaSCP. It is intended that Groups will be public-driven rather than tokenistic and active public involvement will be required for that to happen.

**YOU CAN CONTACT THE WESTERN ISLES
COMMUNITY CARE FORUM AT: OLD
HOSTEL, TARBERT, HARRIS, HS3 3BG.
TEL/FAX: 01859 502588 OR E-MAIL:
john.maclean2@virgin.net**