

# Voluntary Action Shetland



## Carers Autumn Newsletter

### Gift Bags for Unpaid Carers



Third Sector organisations who have been involved in delivering gift bags to carers across the isles: *Moirra Bell of RVS, Kirsten Marcus form VAS Carers Support Service, Ann Skwara and Nicola Stove, both British Red Cross.*

Over the Summer, Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) were busy organising gift bags for all unpaid carers registered with their Carers Support Service.

VAS Carers Support Service initially

secured £2,000 from the Corra Foundation, who were distributing funds from the Community Wellbeing Fund. This enabled VAS to purchase gift bags for young carers and members of their sibling and lego groups. These contained items such as lego sets, a journal diary, a printing press and makeup. The remainder of the funds was used to purchase gift bags for parent carers of someone under 18 years with Additional Support Needs.

VAS was able to purchase gift bags for all other carers registered with their service when funding was secured from Scottish Government Supporting Communities Fund. Many of these were funded by local anchor organisations.

For delivery of the 270 plus gift bags, VAS used a collaborative approach utilising their own volunteers as well as third

sector partners: local anchor organisations, RVS and British Red Cross. VAS are grateful to all the funders for supporting the gift bags and for all volunteers and staff who helped with deliveries right across the isles from Unst to Virkie.

VAS Carers Support staff understand that things have been hard for carers, with support networks reduced and many services suspended. They thought the gift bags would be something nice that would encourage carers to take a bit of time out for themselves at home. The gift bags contained a gift voucher from a range of local shops as well as some colouring and puzzle activities, some practical and pampering items.



*Carer Gillian Bain with her gift bag.*

## Carers Week



This year Carers Week took place online, from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and it was very successful.

If you would like to check that you haven't missed anything important from

the week, the following link has all the key resources which we shared:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org/support/carers-week-2020>

Amanda, Laura and Kirsten at VAS Carers would like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped us during Carers Week. Thank you to anyone who sent us information about your service, recorded something for us or hosted an event.

And a big THANK YOU to everyone who took part in any of our activities during the week.

## Shetland Charitable Trust

### NEW Short Break Grant for Carers – “Time for Me”



VAS are delighted to have secured funding from Shetland Charitable Trust in a joint bid with Shetland Care Attendant Scheme (SCAS) until the end of March 2021. These funds will be used by both organisations to increase the number of opportunities for carers to have a break from their caring role.

As part of the new SCT funding, VAS have £2,563 to launch a new short break grant scheme aimed at carers who are

providing a significant amount of care to someone **UNDER** 21 years. This scheme is called ***Time for Me*** and we want to encourage carers to apply in order to have some time out for themselves.

We welcome applications for single one off breaks from carers, such as a contribution towards flights South to visit a family member, as well as applications for regular breaks such as a carer purchasing an annual swimming pass at their local leisure centre. Some carers use their grant to rediscover a hobby that they used to enjoy but now struggle to find time for. The grant allows them the freedom to purchase the items while encouraging them to set aside regular time to have a break.

Some examples of what carers have spent grants on recently include:

Online subscriptions (gym, Netflix, Disney), wool for knitting or crochet, garden equipment, painting/craft materials, massages, dining out and running equipment.

To find out more and apply, please visit:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org/support/breaks/new-time-for-me-short-break-grants>

Alternatively, our ***Time to Live*** short break grant scheme, funded by Shared Care Scotland, allows us to offer short break grants to carers who are providing a significant amount of care to someone **OVER** 21 years of age. Similarly the maximum grant available is up to £150 and there are still funds available in this grants scheme for carers to apply. For more details please visit:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org/support/breaks/short>

## Shetland CAB can help Carers

To get your benefits checked, or for help with any other issue, call **Shetland CAB** on **01595 694696**. You will need to leave a message and one of their advisors will phone you back. All their advisors are working from home so when they phone you it will say “number withheld.” You can also email them on [sicab@shetland.org](mailto:sicab@shetland.org) or check out their website for self-help advice: [www.shetlandcab.org.uk](http://www.shetlandcab.org.uk)

### HOW SHETLAND CAB CAN HELP CARERS

A lady contacted Shetland CAB as she had applied for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) but had been turned down. She has health problems herself and is a carer for her parents who she lives with. The CAB Benefits Adviser helped her to put in a PIP appeal and supported her at a Benefits Tribunal, which she won.


As a result, she is now getting a PIP payment of £89.15 per week. She also received a backdated sum of several thousand pounds, as it had been a lengthy process.

Once she got her PIP award, the Benefits Adviser did a new benefit check for her based on this new award. This identified that the client was now entitled to the Disability Premium (£34.95 per week) on top of her Income Support, as well as the Carers Premium (£37.50 per week).

Her weekly income has increased by £161.60 per week.

As a result of her increased income, the client felt able to pay back a personal loan. Her previous inability to pay back this loan had caused her significant stress. She felt her mental health had significantly improved, and felt able to look forward to the future now in a way she hadn't previously.

She asked if CAB could do a home visit to her parents to check their benefits. As a result of this, her parents were awarded Pension Credit (£265.20 per week), so the whole household's income has been greatly increased. The client feels that the support she received has transformed their lives.



## Emergency Planning



What will happen to the person that you care for if you become ill? We know that this is a huge worry for many carers during the Coronavirus pandemic, and 87% of those responding to a recent Carers UK survey felt the same.

It is only natural to worry about the person that you care for – but thinking through an emergency plan, writing it down and sharing it with others can help reduce some of the stress as you know that the information is there if and when it is needed.

An emergency plan doesn't need to be overcomplicated but should cover the Who, What and Why of caring – **Who** would be able to step in, **What** care is needed and **Why** is this important.

VAS can support you to create an emergency plan, or you can work through a toolkit yourself from the Emergency Planning page on our website. There is also a template of a plan which you can use as a guide:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org/info/documents/emergency-planning>

Carers UK have also put together some information on what you might need to consider and you can find this at:

<https://www.carersuk.org/search/planning-for-emergencies>

## Carer Emergency Grants

We still have some funds available to offer a range of small grants of up to £50 to provide emergency financial support to families to minimise the additional financial burden on carers during Covid-19.

The **Covid-19 Carers Emergency Fund** is available to benefit carers and the people they care for living within Shetland.

We understand that carers, the people they care for and their families may face unexpected difficulties due to their circumstances changing due to Covid-19. We are therefore offering a range of small grants of up to £50 to provide emergency financial support to families to minimise the additional financial burden on carers.

### Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be carers, young adult carers or young carers. A carer is defined as someone who provides unpaid support to a family member or friend who could not manage without this help due to a long-term illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse problem
- The carer must live in Shetland
- Parent/guardian must sign applications for young carers under 16

***If you are not known to our service, we will require the name of someone who can confirm you are a carer***

What can be funded?

1. **GRANTS FOR HOUSEHOLD FOOD - Up to £50** can be made available to help purchase household food. This will be given out by way of voucher either for supermarket or a local shop. This excludes alcohol, tobacco or scratch cards.

2. **GRANTS FOR UTILITY BILLS - Up to £50** can be made available to help with utility bills. Please provide details of how this is currently paid so that we can make suitable arrangements.



3. GRANTS FOR ENTERTAINMENT / LEISURE - It is important for your own health and wellbeing that you continue to have time out from your caring role. We understand that during these times Carers cannot access a traditional type of break and we can provide a small grant of **up to £40** to pay for something that will help you have a break, for example; Audiobook subscription, Magazine subscription, Arts and crafts materials, Online fitness membership.

For further information and details on how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org/support/covid-19-emergency-funding-for-carers>

## Tablet Loan Scheme

We still have some tablets available for loan to carers, for themselves or their cared for person.



We will loan the tablets out to carers for an initial period of 4 weeks. If we have new loan requests during that period we may ask for the tablets to be returned at the end of the 4 week period to be reissued. But you may be able to borrow the tablet for longer than the initial 4 weeks. You, or someone on your behalf, will be asked to sign to acknowledge receipt of the tablet on delivery.

The tablet loan scheme has been set up to support :

- carers who currently do not have access to a mobile phone or tablet for themselves or their cared for person

- carers who have very limited / no support around them and who would benefit from regular contact with family and friends virtually
- carers who are currently experiencing social isolation due to the lockdown

For more details on how to borrow a tablet, please visit:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org/support/tablet-loan-scheme>

SIC are running sessions to help you with technology which might be helpful.

For further information on technology sessions with Adult Learning, you can contact them on 01595 743888 or email [marccoyne@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:marccoyne@shetland.gov.uk)

### One-to One Basic Digital Technology Support With Adult Learning

Connecting with family and friends by phone, tablet and online video has become even more important during the Coronavirus pandemic. We now have to complete many more tasks online, e.g. job interviews and health appointments. Adult Learning offers support for your basic computer and tablet technology needs. You might need help with:

- Setting up online video meetings
- Staying safe online
- Understanding and supporting your kids online activity or homework
- Setting up Facebook Messenger or an email account
- Getting to grips with a new computer task you have been asked to complete at work
- Getting online or connecting with family on their devices.

Adult Learning can help build your confidence so you can tackle all your daily technology needs at home and work. It is friendly and confidential. Give us a call or e-mail us to arrange a one-to-one phone or video session.

Phone – 01595 743888  
By E-mail - [marccoyne@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:marccoyne@shetland.gov.uk)

Adult Learning, Community Planning and Development  
Solarhus, 3 North Ness, Lerwick, ZE1 0LZ



## Self Directed Support

A recent Self Directed Support (SDS) survey highlighted that around 60% of unpaid carers were unaware of the recent Covid-19 SDS Guidance. These were new measures brought out to increase flexibility during Covid.

## Self Directed Support (SDS) during COVID-19



In response to the pandemic, the Scottish Government and COSLA issued some additional guidance in May 2020 for those in receipt of Self Directed Support (SDS) Options 1 or 2. The guidance stated that those in receipt of direct payments could continue to use their budgets during the pandemic to meet their care and support needs.



### FLEXIBLE USE OF SDS

During the pandemic, you may be able to spend your Direct Payment on a range of different things to meet your outcomes, for example: transport, IT equipment, shopping delivery, gym equipment, or any other creative uses of your budget. Any changes to your care and support should be discussed with your Social Worker from your local authority.

### EMPLOYING RELATIVES

Under the Direct Payment 2014 Regulations, the Local Authority can agree to a supported person employing a close relative or family member where this is the only option or under 'exceptional circumstances'. Coronavirus is regarded as a time of exceptional circumstance.



### CHANGING YOUR SDS OPTIONS

You should be able to change your SDS options to meet your personal outcomes during the pandemic. For example, where an Option 3 provider, experiencing higher than usual staff shortage, cannot meet your needs, you may want to use a Direct Payment under Option 1 or choose an alternative provider under Option 2.

Full details of the guidance can be found at:

<https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/new-scottish-government-covid-19-guidance-on-sds-option-1-and-option-2>

## Guidance on adult social care building-based day services

The Scottish Government have now issued updated guidance to support the safe reopening and delivery of building-based day services for adults.

All registered adult day services that wish to reopen can do so, subject to adherence to this guidance.

To read the guidance in full, please visit:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-adult-social-care-building-based-day-services/>

## Young Carers



To find out how to apply for the Young Carers package and Carers Allowance, hear stories from other young people on their experience of being a carer and get more information on caring for someone, take a look at the following link:

<https://young.scot/campaigns/national/young-carers>



A new Carers Trust Scotland survey shows the pandemic's dramatic impact on the wider wellbeing of young carers in Scotland. The full survey can be found at:

<https://carers.org/young-carer-and-young-adult-carer-coronavirus-research/steep-decline-in-mental-health-of-scottish-young-carers-following-coronavirus-outbreak>

## Covid-19 Response Survey

We would like to understand how you have accessed our support service - or not - during lockdown. This will help us to

improve our support to you and other carers and families in the future, especially if there are ongoing or future restrictions that affect us all.

We would be really grateful if you could take the time to answer some questions. It will only take a few minutes, and your responses are anonymous. No identifying information will be collected or stored.

To access the survey, please use the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PYP7LFC>

We would ask you to complete this survey by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.

Thank you so much for your help, it is very much appreciated.

## Scottish Recovery Network



Scottish Recovery Network recently ran a programme of online conversation cafes where people from across Scotland, particularly those living with mental health challenges, came together to talk about staying well during and after the Covid-19 lockdown. The experiences, insights and learning shared during the cafes is captured in a report, podcast and animation which you can access here:

<https://www.scottishrecovery.net/staying-connected-what-people-are-doing-to-stay-well/>

## After Shielding



Carers Scotland has published guidance if you are caring for someone and need information and advice about accessing food and medication after shielding:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/managing-food-and-medication>

## Face Mask Exemption

Although it is mandatory to wear face masks in shops, it's also important to remember that some people are exempt. We know that many of our carers are concerned about going out, and that other people wearing masks will give them confidence to do this.

However, we have also had carers contact us who are concerned about other people's attitudes if the person they care for cannot wear a mask. There is more information regarding this on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings>

In light of these new guidelines about wearing a face mask, this Euan's Guide Badge might be helpful for people who are unable to wear one.



For full details and further guidance, please visit:

<https://www.evansguide.com/news/face-mask-exempt-badges/>

## Flu vaccinations



A reminder for you and the person you care for to get your flu jab. Check with your local health centre about appointments, there won't be walk in clinics this year.

## Scambusters Shetland



For the latest Scam Alert bulletin, please visit the following page and share it's

content with your friends, family and neighbours:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/tradingstandards/ScamAlerts.asp>

SCAM ALERT!

**Bulletin**  
 July 2020

**10 coronavirus scams doing the rounds**

**Covid-19 financial support scams**

1. Fake government emails offering **grants**. The emails contain links which steal personal and financial information from victims.
2. Scam emails offering access to **Covid-19 relief funds**, encouraging people to fill in a form with their personal information.
3. Official-looking emails offering a **council tax reduction**. These emails, which use government branding, contain links leading to a fake government website used to access personal and financial information.
4. Fraudsters, offering to help benefit recipients apply for **Universal Credit**, while taking some of the payment as an advance for their 'services'.

**Health scams**

5. False **NHS Test and Trace** emails and links, claiming that you've been in contact with someone diagnosed with Covid-19. These lead to fake websites, used to steal personal and financial information or infect devices with malware.
6. Fake **adverts** for Covid-related products, such as hand sanitizer and face masks, which do not exist.

**Lockdown scams**

7. Fake **TV Licensing** emails and texts, telling people they are eligible for six months of free TV licence because of the coronavirus pandemic. You're told there has been a problem with your direct debit, and are asked to click on a link taking you to a fake website used to steal personal and financial information.
8. Scam **online TV subscription services** emails, asking you to update your payment details by clicking on a link which is then used to steal credit card information.
9. Fake **social media profiles** aimed at people using **online dating websites**, and used to manipulate victims into handing over their money. Criminals often use the identities of real people to strike up relationships with their targets.
10. Scam **investment opportunities**, often advertised on social media websites, encouraging people to 'take advantage of the financial downturn'. Bitcoin platforms are using emails and adverts on social media platforms to encourage unsuspecting victims to put money into fake investment companies using fake websites.

Contact Trading Standards for a free **Scambusters! Shetland** advice pack on protecting yourself from a variety of scams. 01595 744887 or [trading\\_standards@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:trading_standards@shetland.gov.uk)

## Technology Self-help Toolkit



Researchers at the University of Sheffield Innovation Centre are currently developing a Technology Self-help toolkit for working carers of people living with dementia. This will enable carers to understand what technological solutions are available and which might help in their caring situations. They are looking for participants to take part in the research and have asked us to circulate details of the study.

If you are interested in helping with this, you can learn more via this link:



<https://research4carers.wixsite.com/research-project>

## **Sleep Scotland Online Training Completed!**



Does your child or teen struggle to sleep? Getting the right amount of sleep is as important as eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly.

Laura Russell (Young Carers Support) spent some time in lockdown doing Sleep Scotland Online Training. She has lots of resources and information to help you and your young (or not so young!) person get a good night's sleep.

There are lots of simple things you can try that can make a huge amount of difference. If you would like to know more and get a bit of support with this, contact Laura on [laura.russell@shetland.org](mailto:laura.russell@shetland.org)

## **Have you heard from us?**



*We have been trying to contact all carers registered with our service for whom we*

*have a telephone number. This is to see how you have been coping and to pass on some information which might be relevant for you.*

*If you haven't heard from us, it could be that we don't have your number. If you would like to have a chat with us then please provide us with a contact number, for us to then call you.*

## **Keep up to date with Voluntary Action Shetland on Twitter...**



**We have a new Twitter handle  
@VShetland  
Check us out and give us a follow 😊**

## **And also with Carers Support Service...**



## Online Groups

Please note that due to the current coronavirus outbreak, there are no face to face groups taking place at the moment, but if anyone needs support they should contact VAS Carers Support Team (contact details below). Any queries about Stepping Out or FAB (Families Affected By) can contact Karen Hannay on 745091.

Sibling Group is now online as a virtual group, and challenges are set fortnightly! This is aimed at young people who have a sibling with an additional support need, or might be doing a small amount of caring. Contact Laura on [laura.russell@shetland.org](mailto:laura.russell@shetland.org) to find out more.

Lego Group is also online as a virtual group, with fortnightly challenges! This is aimed at any young person who has an interest in lego! Contact Laura on [laura.russell@shetland.org](mailto:laura.russell@shetland.org) to find out more.

Parents Group – we are unable to meet face to face at the moment, but parents can be added to the online Carers Discussion page. This is aimed at parents/carers who have a child with additional support needs, and can provide peer support. Contact [laura.russell@shetland.org](mailto:laura.russell@shetland.org) to find out more.

We also have a private [Carers Discussion Group](#) on Facebook. If you would like an invite to join this group, please get in touch with us and provide your email address, so that we can send you an invite to join. We hope this group enables us all to get views on different topics - everyone on it will be a carer but there are many different caring roles. It's important to respect the views of others and, if posting a comment, not to put anything confidential on - especially regarding the person that you care for. Therefore we would encourage you to use an initial instead of someone's name.

### ***You can contact us:***

[www.shetlandcarers.org](http://www.shetlandcarers.org)

[carers@shetland.org](mailto:carers@shetland.org)

Kirsten Marcus: 01595 743980

Laura Russell: 01595 743946/743909

Amanda Brown: 01595 743923

[jim.guyan@shetland.org](mailto:jim.guyan@shetland.org)

