



Carers Rights Day



Most of us will provide unpaid care for someone who is older, disabled or seriously ill at some point in our lives. Whether you are a new carer or have been caring for someone for a while, VAS Carers Support Service believe that it's important that you understand your rights and are able to access the support that is available to you as soon as you need it.

Carers Rights Day took place on **Thursday 26th November**, and is an annual campaign across the UK for organisations to reach out to carers with information, advice and support. This year's theme was **Know Your Rights**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of caring, affecting carers' access to support and services, and their physical and mental health. Many are caring for the first time, while those who have been caring for a while are facing greater challenges and pressures than ever before. It's never been more important for carers to be informed and know their rights.

To help you know what you are entitled to, Carers Scotland have produced their **Looking After Someone** guide, which gives carers the full picture of the practical and financial support available to them every year. An electronic version of the latest 2020/21 guide can be found at:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-resources/looking-after-someone>

or you can contact us if you would like a paper version of the guide.

The guide recommends three important steps you can take to find out what you are entitled to:

1. Get a benefits check

Carer's Allowance is known as the main benefit for carers. But not everyone is eligible to claim it, so it's a good idea to arrange a benefits check to see what financial support you may be entitled to. You can also use the Turn2us benefits calculator on their website:

<https://carersuk.org/benefits-calculator>.

For information about what financial support is available, visit: <https://www.carersuk.org>, email advice@carersuk.org, visit the Turn2us website: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk> or contact Shetland CAB on 01595 694696 or email them at sicab@shetland.org.

2. Find out about practical support

You may need practical support to help you care - like short breaks, equipment to help make caring easier or information about local groups that can help.

All carers are entitled to a carer's assessment from their local council which could lead to you receiving extra support from social care services to help with caring. The assessment will look at how caring affects your life, including your physical, mental and emotional needs, and whether you are able or willing to carry on caring.

Contact your local council social work department for a carer's assessment or visit:

<https://www.carersuk.org/assessment>

for more information.

3. Connect with other carers

Caring can be isolating. There are carer support groups across the UK that can help you meet other carers, as well as access local advice and support. Carers UK's website has a directory of local services at:

<https://www.carersuk.org/localsupport>.

Many carers also find online forums a huge source of support – a place where you can share what's on your mind, anytime of the day or night, with other carers who understand what you are going through. Find out more about the Carers UK Forum at:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/carersuk-forum>.

VAS Carers Support Service want to support and empower carers to manage their caring role and have a life alongside caring. As well as providing support and information, we can help local carers to access short breaks. For further information about how we can help you in your caring role, contact carers@shetland.org, telephone 01595 743980 or visit our website:

<https://www.shetlandcarers.org>.

We are also on Facebook and Twitter as Shetland Carers.

Time to Live funding



Short breaks fund

VAS Carers Support Service were recently awarded £2563 to continue to support unpaid carers in Shetland to take a break from their caring role.

The money, from the Scottish Government's Short Breaks fund, is for distributing Time to Live grants of up to £150 to unpaid carers who provide a significant amount of caring for another adult (**OVER** 21 years), or who are classed as a young carer (under 18 years).

Due to Coronavirus, many carers have benefited this year from a break at home. Examples of how the money has been spent include purchasing garden supplies, baking and cooking items and ingredients, magazine subscriptions, running shoes and equipment, painting materials, kindles and items for knitting and crochet.

Feedback from carers who have received a Short Break grant this year have said:

"Having this short break grant made things easier for me. It helped me to recharge my batteries and absolutely made a difference. Thank you to all involved."

"This is an amazing service for carers. After my break I felt less stressed – thank you sooo much."

"It gave me something else to think about during this difficult time and helped to relax me."

"I am far more relaxed and feel I am delivering better care, which benefits both of us. I am now less stressed."

"The mental health benefits gained through the grant has helped me in my caring role. Thank you for the grant. I made good use of it and I certainly feel a positive benefit."

For full information about the Time to Live grant scheme, including details of how to apply, please visit <https://www.shetlandcarers.org/support/breaks/short>

Time for Me Short Break grants



A reminder that VAS Carers Support Service were recently awarded £2,503 from Shetland Charitable Trust 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.

To find out more and apply, please visit:

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

The following link provides further information on how to take a break during these difficult times:

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/resources/short-breaks-for-strange-times/>

Tablet Loan Scheme



We have received some of our tablets back and are now looking for new homes for them. We have extended the loan period to 6 months and also relaxed the rules so any carer without a tablet can now apply. Priority will be given to carers who have limited support around them and who would benefit from regular contact with friends and family virtually.

For full details please visit:

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

Seasonal Flu Immunisation

With Coronavirus around, it's even more important to get your flu vaccine. Flu is serious and can be life threatening.

Young and unpaid carers are amongst the groups eligible for a free flu vaccine.

*The flu is not a live virus, it cannot give a person flu

*It takes minutes to administer and takes around 10 days to work, so it is important to get it as early as possible

*You need to get the flu vaccine every year

This year, due to Coronavirus, flu clinics are running differently to previous years. Please contact your own health centre to book your flu vaccine appointment and to find out about the procedures which are being put in place for your own safety.



Face Covering Exemption Card



On 29th October, the Scottish Government launched a face covering exemption card, to support those who are unable to wear one to feel more confident and safe when accessing public spaces and using public services.

Everyone who can do so is legally obliged to wear a face covering where it is mandated by law. But there are some people who cannot, due to health conditions, disabilities or other special circumstances where a face covering may cause difficulty or distress.

You do not need to prove to anyone that you are exempt, but if it would make you feel more confident in public you can now request a face covering exemption card.

Physical and digital cards are available to request online from 29th October at:

<https://www.exempt.scot>

or via free helpline on 0800 121 6240.

Car sharing: Advice for carers

Car sharing : Advice for carers

If you and the person you provide care for don't live in the same household and need to car share:

- If possible, try to adhere to physical distancing whilst travelling with non-household members that you provide support or care for.
- If it is not possible to physically distance and you are travelling with non-household members, limit the number of passengers and space out as much as possible.
- If physical distancing in a vehicle is difficult and where there is a risk of close contact with multiple people who are not members of your household, you should wear a face covering.

Coalition of carers in Scotland
From recognition to rights

The Scottish Government have advised that carers (this includes unpaid carers or care workers) and those being cared for CAN travel together (if there is no other alternative), but they should take account of the FACTS guidance and the advice provided here:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/advice-on-how-to-travel-safely/#section-63888>

VAS work during Lockdown

VAS Carers Support Service offered support in a variety of ways during lockdown. The infographics below show some of the ways we were able to help carers.

We Supported

303 Carers from Unst to Virkie received gift bags to take time out for themselves
#nevermoreneeded

We Supported

274 Carers supported through our Carers Service
#nevermoreneeded

We Kept in Touch

7 Android Tablets lent out to Carers by Carer's Service
#nevermoreneeded

We funded

31 Carers to receive a Grant to have a short break of their choice since Lockdown
Total awarded £4,555

Pathway for support for carers in Shetland



What support can carers in Shetland expect during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Are you a carer? If you look after a relative, friend or neighbour who has a disability or long-term condition, you are considered to be a carer

Where can carers go to get information, advice or support?

<p> If you are providing care for a relative or friend, support is available for you from Voluntary Action Shetland Carers Support Service</p>	<p> Staff can still be contacted on: 01595 743 980 or email: carers@shetland.org</p>	<p> Visit our website to find out more about our services and support for carers: shetlandcarers.org</p>	<p> You can keep up to date by following us on Facebook: @Shetland Carers</p>
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What advice or support is available for carers?

<p> We can help you create an emergency plan in case you are unable to keep caring for any reason</p>	<p> SIC Citizens Advice Bureau can provide advice and support on welfare benefits and help you fill out benefit and grant applications</p>	<p> There are a number of online groups, training sessions and meetings for carers that you can attend</p>	<p> We can issue you with a carers card which can help you to confirm your ID as an unpaid carer</p>
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What help is available for carers in a crisis?

<p> We do not provide an emergency service. If you need urgent support contact the Social Work team on: 01595 744420</p>	<p> If you or the person you care for experience a mental health crisis contact your local Mental Health team: 01595 743006</p>	<p> For any medical emergencies phone: 999</p>	<p> If you are at risk of harm phone the police: 999</p>
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Let us know how we can improve our services for carers

If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can improve or better support you at the moment then we would love to hear from you. Contact us on:

Voluntary Action Shetland Carers Support Service
Email: carers@shetland.org
Tel: 01595 743 980

Please visit the following link for information:

https://www.shetlandcarers.org/site/assets/files/2335/coc_local_carer_pathway_pdf.pdf

Carers Link – East Dunbartonshire



During the Covid-19 pandemic, Carers Link in East Dunbartonshire have provided short, weekly episodes of podcasts for their carers.

Podcasts are a series of audio episodes, often focused on a particular topic or

theme. The advantage of podcast over radio is that you can download the episode and listen to it at a time that suits you.

Some of their episodes consist of light hearted chats and others include guest speakers providing support and information to carers.

You can find them all at:

<https://carerslink.org.uk/whats-on/podcasts/>

If you are interested further in accessing podcasts, you may already have a podcast app installed on your smartphone or tablet. If not, go to the app store and search for 'podcast app.' Download one of the podcast players, then open the player and type in the name of a podcast e.g. 'Carers Link' or an area that interests you e.g. 'comedy.' Choose your podcast and simply press play.

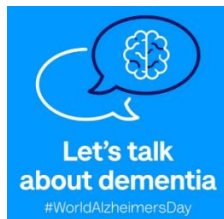
Caring behind Closed Doors



In October, Carers Scotland launched Caring Behind Closed Doors: 6 months on, showing that 87% of unpaid carers in Scotland are providing more care for relatives and 80% say the needs of the person they care for have increased during the pandemic. For more information please visit:

<https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/news/reduced-services-see-unpaid-carers-in-scotland-pushed-to-the-limit-and-desperately-worried-about-winter>

World Alzheimer's Day



World Alzheimer's Day took place on 21st September. Marked around the globe, it's a time to raise awareness of dementia and the impact a diagnosis can have – on the person diagnosed, their family, friends, colleagues and carers.

The Alzheimer's Society are encouraging everyone to start a conversation about dementia with those around them. They know it can be difficult, but talking about the condition reduces the stigma and fear that can surround it, and connects you with other people affected.

Visit <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/wad> for tips on how to get started and to find dementia support that's right for you and your loved ones.

The following link will take you Alzheimer's Scotland, where you can search for the Shetland branch:

[https://www.alzscot.org/findsupport?location\[value\]=shetland&location\[distance\]\[from\]=80.4](https://www.alzscot.org/findsupport?location[value]=shetland&location[distance][from]=80.4)

and for their Facebook page, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/alzscotshetland/>

Life Changes Trust



If you are looking after someone with dementia, you can apply to the Life Changes Trust for up to £1,000 for almost anything that will help you in your caring role during the pandemic. This fund is open until 21st January. For more information please visit:

<https://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/funding-opportunities>

Family Fund



In response to Covid-19, Family Fund received additional funding from Scottish Government. This will enable an additional 500+ families in Scotland to receive grant support during 2020/21.

As well as seeking to reach first time applicants, Family Fund are currently accepting subsequent applications from families who have not received support this financial year. For more information please visit:

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/news/coronavirus-and-family-fund>

Young Carers grant



1,710 young carers grants were awarded in Scotland between 21st October 2019 and 31st July 2020 with a total value of £490,052.

If you are a young carer aged 16, 17 or 18 in Scotland and don't currently qualify for

Carer's Allowance, you may be eligible for a yearly payment of £305.10. You can use it for things like new clothes, a day out or an online streaming subscription. You can apply here:

<https://www.mygov.scot/young-carer-grant/>

Young Carers package



The Young Carers package is a special bundle of treats (including Netflix, Spotify and Amazon vouchers) available to all young carers, aged 11 to 18 inclusive in Scotland. It's filled with special treats to help them make the most of their free time and support them in their caring role. Best of all, it's completely free!

A young carer is anyone aged 11 to 18 inclusive who cares, unpaid, for a family member, friend or member of their community, regularly and on a long-term basis.

To find out more please visit:

<https://www.young.scot/youngcarers>

Transitions to Adulthood bill



It has been recognised that well managed transitions from child to adult care services are essential for people's wellbeing. A

consultation is currently open on a bill to improve transitions for disabled children and young people into adulthood.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/news/share-your-views-on-the-transitions-to-adulthood-bill/>

Falls Prevention training

NHS Shetland Being Prepared this Winter *Taking positive steps to avoid trips and falls*

<p>Eyesight and Hearing Checks</p> <p>Going for regular eye and hearing checks. Especially if you experience any changes.</p>	<p>Footcare</p> <p>Wearing appropriate and nicely fitting shoes. Taking care of your feet.</p>
<p>Nutrition</p> <p>Having a well balanced diet and reducing alcohol intake.</p>	<p>Medication Reviews</p> <p>Getting regular reviews. Especially if you take several different medications or if you experience any changes in symptoms.</p>
<p>Home Safety</p> <p>Checking for hazards e.g poor lighting, mopping up spills, loose rugs and cables.</p>	<p>Keeping Active</p> <p>Move more, sit less. Getting up to move around every 1-2 hours. Different examples of how to stay active are walking, climbing stairs, gardening or housework.</p>
<p>Have a plan</p> <p>Think about what you would do if you fall.</p> <p>Always take your phone with you or wear your community alarm at all times.</p> <p>Further advice in up and about booklet or discuss with a health professional.</p> <p>Always tell someone if you have had a fall, even if you feel ok.</p>	<p>Strength and Balance</p> <p>Doing strength and balance exercises 2-3 times per week. Follow the super 6 exercises in the up and about booklet.</p>

Resource: Up and about booklet. NHS Scotland
For more falls prevention information visit <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/preventing-falls>

NHS Shetland's Health Improvement Team have developed some falls prevention training for anyone caring for an elderly person, or indeed for yourself.

The training goes over the importance of falls prevention and some good resources to help. The training will explain the super 6 strength and balance exercises which can be done with someone and will also show how to get up from the floor if you or the person you care for aren't hurt. The resources cover a range of different abilities, so there will be chair based exercises or more in depth exercises. The

training is informal and will be completed online, preferably as a group.

If anyone is interested in taking part in falls training and would like to put their name forward, please contact Amanda Brown at amanda.brown@shetland.org or telephone 01595 743923. Please note, a training date is yet to be arranged and may be dependent on numbers.

National Stress Awareness Week

The beginning of November saw National Stress Awareness Week.

The world is changing again and it's easy to feel stressed, down and sad at the moment. Have a look below at some tips to manage your stress.

Remember that if anything ever feels too much, to reach out for help. Whether it be a helpline, a friend or a stranger, someone will always listen.



- 1** Get Active - it can help reduce your emotional intensity & clear your head.
- 2** Take Control - work to find a solution & manage your time in a way that works for you.
- 3** Connect with people - a good support network can help ease your troubles.
- 4** Have some 'me time' - take some time to relax and do something you enjoy.
- 5** Challenge yourself - set yourself goals and challenges at work or outside of work to help build confidence.

- 6** Avoid unhealthy habits - try not to rely on caffeine, alcohol or smoking as ways of coping.
- 7** Help other people - this helps you become more resilient, build your confidence & esteem.
- 8** Work smarter, not harder - prioritise your work and concentrate on the most important tasks.
- 9** Try to be positive - focus on the positives and things you are grateful for.
- 10** Accept the things you can't change - concentrate on the things that you can.

Breathing Space

Breathing Space Open up when you're feeling down

Breathing Space is a free, confidential phone line for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16, feeling low, anxious or depressed.

It was launched in 2002 to address serious concerns about the mental wellbeing of people in Scotland. The service became a national phone line in 2004.

Their contact number is **0800 83 85 87**. Their opening hours are:

Weekdays: Monday – Thursday 6pm to 2am

Weekend: Friday 6pm – Monday 6am

Listening and Caring in Confidence

Sometimes it's hard to talk about how you feel when surrounded by trauma and anxiety; Faith in Older People has set up 'Listening and Caring in Confidence' – a free online service for carers.

Their 'listeners' are all experienced and qualified and are giving their time on a voluntary basis.

It is important to emphasise that it is OK not to be OK and the opportunity to talk can help to prevent anxiety. This free service is independent and there is no monitoring or reporting except for the numbers of people who use the service. The aim is to provide an oasis of time for carers to simply offload.

To access the service please use the following link:

<https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/listening-service>

Pure Mental Health

Fare Scotland has been working with a group of young people aged 12-16 from St Mungo's Academy, Glasgow, to develop a resource to support young people with their mental health.

The group has focused on the topic of loss and bereavement and saw this project as a great way to connect with each other and other pupils, offering support where it was required. During Covid-19, the group felt this issue more important than ever - with loss being a feeling experienced by most, wither that be loss of routine, friendships or even a bereavement.

Pure Mental Health is a resource which focuses on coping strategies and how we keep our mental health positive during challenging circumstances. The group has been asking people what their struggles have been and how they have been able to cope, recording their discussions and turning them into a podcast series. The series provides information on loss, grief and bereavement and is accompanied by a set of coping strategy cards.

The group hopes that these podcasts will allow people to hear real lived experiences and feel that they are not alone. The group

also plans to follow up the podcast with a 'Happy Songs' playlist on Spotify, to be shared with pupils who are experiencing mental health issues. Coping cards have also been printed and will be given to pupils to help them think of new ways to support positive mental health.

For further information and to listen to the podcasts, please visit:

<https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/resources/heids-together-a-wellbeing-youth-work-resource/fare-scotland-st-mungos-academy/>

Islands Online Bipolar Group



If you live with Bipolar Disorder and you'd like to share information, advice and experiences with others in the same situation, please join Islands Online Bipolar Group.

It meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 6pm for about an hour or so via Zoom. It's free to join and you don't have to be a Bipolar Scotland member to attend.

The group is open to people with a Bipolar diagnosis and their friends, family, carers, partners etc. The group offers peer mentoring and informal collective counselling.

If you are interested, please contact: graemeb@bipolarscotland.org.uk for more information or to join the group.

What's On...

Please note that due to the current coronavirus outbreak, there are some changes to the groups taking place at the moment. 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 has been able to restart under the current restrictions and have had four meetings to date. These were to the cinema to see films, a chance to create our own masterpiece at Aa Fired Up and a Halloween themed spectacular at the museum! Staff are keeping a close eye on the guidelines issued by the Scottish Government and adapt as needed. The next session for Sibling Group will be on Saturday 30th January 2021, subject to guidelines. Contact Laura on laura.russell@shetland.org if you would like to know more about Sibling Group.



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 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 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.

You can contact us:

www.shetlandcarers.org

carers@shetland.org

Kirsten Marcus: 01595 743980

Laura Russell: 01595 743946/743909

Amanda Brown: 01595 743923

jim.guyan@shetland.org





Christmas Cheer Word Search

G F P P W O B Z H Y C L J M M R Z A X N H R I G M O N V R R
 Q S Y R K B X F Z L T V F C V P O O K E F K S A N J I J V E
 H J T B E E J C A J T D N G H C L W U W X J V K W C B A B N
 O P S N V S B M W Z F Q C N H I U Q E S K K G Q L V O P E K
 U M J K F G E B R Q L J J A D V M J A O S C I S U M R O G V
 K G Z E C G Z N D W P I G N A E X N H T D M D R K Z E C L C
 J E L O Y R E D T U R K E Y J O A L E E Q E S W R V F P B N
 K L T T I L I E T S Y T I V I T A N T Y A T J A O Z N U T B
 U Q C E G V L C U U Q G A Y N X N A D D H Z M W F F P D H Z
 A G M L H N O O J G M R H A W V L J F G I K F F B G A D I J
 M Z O T P E W R H C N O S A Y O R R I F D D M K C A X I E U
 E X B S R D I A U Q Z I N S C C M L E E Z L X P Y X R N G U
 R X E I I E C T M S C G P O C J T E F M O M I K C E V G R F
 H C X M P F F I L C E V H P M B J S B Y K A Z W Y T N Z S G
 R F U M A L U O W L H C D M A P W N K I L D G X K I P L R A
 N B W M M S G N W L Q E H T L R X I A D Q K I C F P G S E X
 K U I P M A G S U K Z L A L Z G W T F A U G I F R C S T K C
 V L N K P N D Z J C A S J S K B I B Y E W D U X V N Q O C S
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 N T R I M M I N G S S R V P I Q Z K G E U F F N M X X I C I
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 A E I Z G Z D W P I G Q O D P Z V B C G A Q Y Y U H U G L I
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 S M S C I L A D C B J D Z T A E P T E L D N A C Q V O O M N
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 B O C R B E A J Y V O W P O N V D T S Z X C R S C N M J B Y
 M T B Y R E G R K P E P K N S A C Z E J K H T Q W H S V C N
 T X T D I A W K T U D G H G R D K Z Q E F R I E N D S B A S
 S A M T S I R H C P U X B V W X T X F E C S Q M Q B D X V A

Advent	Angel	Candle	Carols	Chimney
Chocolate	Christmas	Crackers	Decorations	Family
Friends	Holly	Lights	Mistletoe	Music
Nativity	Presents	Pudding	Reindeer	Robin
Santa	Snowflake	Stocking	Stuffing	Tinsel
Tradition	Trimnings	Turkey	Winter	Wrapping