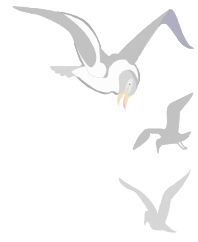




# 'E SCORRIE



**Could the New Carer's Credit Help You?** - if you are caring for someone for 20 hours or more a week but don't get Carer's Allowance or Income Support as a Carer you could qualify for new National Insurance Credits to protect your State Pension.

## **What is Carer's Credit?**

People who look after family and friends may be missing out on National Insurance contributions towards their State Pension through giving up work or working less as a result of caring.

Carer's credit helps protect a Carer's State Pension so that they don't get a reduced State Pension because of their caring responsibility.

To qualify, you need to be caring for a total of 20 hours or more a week for one or more people who get Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance. If they don't get these benefits you may still get Carer's Credit but you need a health or social care professional to confirm the care you provide is appropriate. You also need to be between age 16 and State Pension age.

**You do not need to make a separate application for Carer's Credit if you are already receiving benefits such as Carer's Allowance, Income Support as a carer, or Child Benefit for a child under 12, as in these cases your State Pension is already protected.**

## **Carers who might benefit**

There are a number of groups of carers who may benefit. These include carers who are missing out on Career's Allowance because they:

- don't care for 35 hours or more per week
- look after someone who isn't claiming disability benefits
- care for a disabled or ill person where someone else is claiming Carer's Allowance for looking after them.
- look after several people but don't care for just one of them for 35 hours or more a week.
- Care and work but do not earn enough to pay National Insurance contributions

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**This is a Community Magazine. If you, as a Member of the Public would like to contribute any information, you may think relevant Please contact :**

**Fiona Henderson**  
**Tel: 01955-609962 or**

### **E-Mail**

**fiona@cvg.org.uk**

- care and work but do not earn enough to pay National Insurance contributions for the whole year
- care and are self-employed

Carers who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance may also benefit from extra National Insurance contributions towards their State Pension if they apply for Carer's Credit.

### **How to apply?**

**Visit [www.direct.gov.uk/carerscredit](http://www.direct.gov.uk/carerscredit) for an application pack or call the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0845 608 4321**

**You can also textphone 0845 604 5312**

**A GUIDE DOG COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE**— If you or someone you know has a visual impairment and finds mobility difficult then a guide dog may be the answer. A guide dog can offer a unique safe and effective way of getting about independently and confidently. You don't need to have lost all your sight. Most people who own a guide dog still have some vision. You don't have to be formally registered as blind or partially sighted either. There is no upper age limit. People in their seventies, eighties and even nineties become successful guide dog owners. It costs just 50p to have a guide dog. All essential equipment and training is provided by Guide dogs, and we can also cover the cost of vet bills and dog food if people wish. No previous experience of keeping a dog is necessary. Providing you are committed and able enough to work with, support and care for a guide dog then our training will teach you all you need to know. It's not just about improving mobility. A guide dog and its owner exist as a partnership and the companionship, loyalty and fun that each partner brings to this relationship can be immensely rewarding.



Simply give us a call on 0845 372 7499 and we will arrange to come and talk to you, informally and confidentially, to help you decide if a guide dog might be suitable for you. Our staff understand how severely people's independence can be affected by sight loss and they can explore the best way of meeting your specific needs.

There is nothing to lose and potentially much to gain by exploring all the options - so get in touch -

Mrs. Pamela Munro BSc. (Hons),  
Information Officer for Scotland  
Tel 077799 342604

The guide Dogs for the Blind Association,  
Dean Way,  
Orchard Bank Business Park,  
Forfar. DD8 1WG  
[www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

**Message in a bottle** - It could help to save your life

The Lions Club has developed the message in a bottle scheme that has been in use in the UK for a number of years - the idea is very simple - you place a form containing personal information such as medication, illnesses, next of kin , etc in a small plastic bottle that you keep in the door of your fridge so that if you take ill anyone attending to you will have access to the important information that could make a big difference. If you have a pet, you can even provide details of the care required in case you are temporarily unable to look after it.

You need to indicate to people that you use the scheme so that they know to look out for the bottle in the event of an emergency, eg, friends, family, professional staff who visit you, social workers, home helps, community nurses, etc. You will be supplied with 2 small stickers one for the inside of your front door, the other for the outside of your fridge door, to help guide people to the bottle.

To obtain your free bottle, simply telephone the Scottish Helpline for Older People on 0845 125 9732, leaving your name and address and stating that you would like a Message in a Bottle. They will post one out to you free of charge.

Please note the Scottish Helpline for Older People does not provide any emergency services and if you have an emergency then you should contact the appropriate services by dialing 999.

**Stroke Identification:**

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke... totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognised, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

**RECOGNISING A STROKE**

**Remember the “3” steps, STR**

**S \*Ask the individual to SMILE**

**T = TALK Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (Coherently) (eg “It is sunny out today”).**

**R \* Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.**

**If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 999 immediately!! And describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.**

**NOTE:** Another sign of a stroke is

1. Ask the person to stick out their tongue.
2. If the tongue is crooked, if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke.

## **New Group to Help shape Future Health Services in West Caithness**

A new group has been set up to shape the future delivery of local health services in West Caithness—this reference group has been established to look at the health needs of local people and to consider the best way to meet these needs in the future within the available resources. The review of services in West Caithness was prompted by the inefficient use of beds at Dunbar Hospital and the need to develop services, such as community based rehabilitation services. The initial stakeholder group has done some work on outlining potential options for the future and these will be fed into the new reference group.

The areas looked at by Initial Stakeholders Group included -

- Bed Numbers
- Primary Care Emergency Centre (PCEC)
- Outpatient Dept.(OPD)
- Palliative Care Needs/End of live care needs
- Rehabilitation
- Physical condition of both Dunbar and Thurso Community Health Centre.

Various options were developed for consideration. These were

1. Closing some inpatient beds, developing rehabilitation services and retaining the Primary Care Emergency Centre (PCEC)
2. Closing some inpatient beds, developing rehabilitation services and closing PCEC
3. Closing some inpatient beds, developing rehabilitation services and operating the PCEC part time
4. Closing all inpatient beds, developing rehabilitation services and retaining the PCEC
5. Closing all inpatient beds, developing rehabilitation services and closing the PCEC
6. Closing all inpatient beds, developing rehabilitation services and operating a part time PCEC
7. Transferring the GP Put of Hours service from Caithness General Hospital to Dunbar
8. Transferring the Rehabilitation Unit from CGH to Dunbar

Four of these have been confirmed as not being viable and one further option would cost more than existing service provision—any changes have to be done within current budget available. The last two options had been rejected because they were unworkable and the preferred option was number 6 with inpatient service transferred to Wick.

Pauline Craw has stressed that no decision has been made nor are there any plans to close the Dunbar Hospital.

An open day was held on 15th July in the Caithnes Horizons with around 80 people in attendance. They were able to see displays and presentations on the various options under consideration and managers were on hand to answer their questions. Any issues/concerns raised during the event will form the discussion for future meetings of the new reference group.

The reference group has been set up to look at health needs of local people and to consider the best way to redesign services to meet these needs for the future within the available resources. The new group includes members of the former stakeholder group, members of the local community and representatives from groups and partner organizations. It has now held two meetings both with good attendance. Discussions took place regarding the issues and concerns of those present. Any further concerns/issues have been asked for and will be considered at next meeting.

The consultation process will finish with the last meeting on 27th September 2010. Depending on what is agreed, thereafter it would be up to the Government to decide if further consultation is required regarding any changes being proposed.

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NHS have a short survey to find out the views of local people who use health services this is available at <http://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/CHP/NorthHighland/Pages/welcome.aspx>  
If you would like a copy of the minutes please contact

[fiona@cvg.org.uk](mailto:fiona@cvg.org.uk)

**Do you have disabilities?**

**We do and..**

**We need your help**

**We need your advice**

**We need you to get involved**

**We Need You!**

Access Panels are groups of local disabled people, carers and people with expertise and/or interest in access issues who come together as volunteers to work for better access for disabled people in their local environment.

Access Panels are independent; they are disability-led and volunteer-led. Access Panels act as a point of contact with the local authority on access issues; they review Planning and Building Warrant Application, undertake site visits and lobby for improved access for disabled people.

Volunteers on the Access Panels play a vital role to:

- Raise awareness of access issues
- Provide a means for consultation and to influence decision makers
- Help create an improved environment for all
- Encourage social inclusion
- Empower disabled people

Eight Access Panels in the Highland Council area work to make Highland accessible and give a voice to disabled people in the area. If you would like to be involved contact your local Access Panel :

fiona @cvg.org.uk or helenbudge@aol.com

# National Carers and Young Carers Strategy Launch in Scotland

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (The Trust) welcomes the Scottish Government's Caring Together and Getting it Right for Young Carers strategies launched today on 26 July 2010 at The Princess Royal Trust Lanarkshire Carers Centre.

The national strategies set out key targets for local authorities, health boards and other strategic partners in relation to support for Scotland's 657,000 unpaid carers and young carers. The strategy is supported by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA).

Florence Burke, the Director for Scotland for The Trust, said: "We are pleased that the Scottish Government and Shona Robison, the Minister for Public Health, have committed additional resources for short breaks, carer training and money for the 2011 Scottish Young Carers Festival.

CoSLA's support for both strategies is a welcome development. The support that health boards and other public sector organisations can offer to unpaid carers is crucial to delivering the vision set out in the strategies.

This means that the local implementation of these strategies will be the real challenge – especially in light of the threat of frozen funding for Carers' Centres. We urge local and national Government, health boards and other public sector bodies to ensure that appropriate and timely support for unpaid carers and young carers, who save the state over £7.6 billion per year, remains a top priority."

## **Support Group for Users & Carers**

First Tuesday every month

Caberfeidh Court

Wellington Avenue

Wick

For further information Contact

Sue - 01847 895483

# WEST CAITHNESS COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

## 01955 605588

**This bus is owned by West Caithness Community Transport**  
and is for the use of the local community.  
It was supplied and serviced by J & G Sutherland Halkirk



Want to find out how to arrange to use the bus?

You must be a member of a non profit making organisation  
Your organisation must join West Caithness Community Transport  
and agree to adhere to the rules for using the bus.

Membership Fee £5 - Mileage Charge of £12 for first 15 miles then 40p per mile

For application or further information  
Please email: [jean.mclennan@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jean.mclennan@tiscali.co.uk) or  
[coreen@cvg.org.uk](mailto:coreen@cvg.org.uk)

We will train up to two drivers for your organisation, free of charge,  
using the MIDAS scheme.

All drivers need to be MIDAS trained before using the bus.

Want to volunteer to become a driver?

Contact Euan Falconer by e-mailing [euanfalconer@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:euanfalconer@yahoo.co.uk)