



Carers and the Scottish Parliament

a handbook

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Contents

	Preface	3
I	Introduction	5
2	What the Parliament has meant for carers so far	6
3	Executive, Parliament and MSPs	8
	The Scottish Executive	8
	The Scottish Parliament	9
	Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs)	9
4	How to make the Parliament work for carers	10
	How do parliamentary questions work?	10
	What happens in a parliamentary debate?	11
5	Legislation	14
	Ways of introducing a Bill	14
	Stages of a Bill	15
	Case study	15
6	Committees	17
	What does a Committee do?	18
	Where do they meet?	18
	Which Committees mean most to carers?	18
7	Petitions	19
8	Cross-Party groups	20
9	Devolved issues/reserved issues	21
10	How to follow what the Parliament does	22
11	Glossary of Parliamentary terms	24

Written by Alan McGinley

With acknowledgements to Sebastian Fischer, John McCurdy and John Wilkes

Preface

In the not too distant past, carers were often unrecognised, unacknowledged and unimportant within communities and society at large. Times and attitudes have changed. I have been a carer for over 21 years. Caring for my daughter, Susan, who has profound physical and mental disabilities and both my parents enhanced my determination to make others aware of carers and their issues within Scotland.

Carers are ordinary people who lead extraordinary lives. Our Scottish Parliament is the arena for politicians whose decisions affect the lives of the people of Scotland. I discovered this arena has created space for the ordinary people of Scotland. I have had the opportunity on three different occasions to offer evidence about carers and their issues within the Scottish Parliament. I met ordinary people called politicians, who were prepared to listen and keen to understand the experiences of a carer. Too often in the vastness of issues, decisions makers can become remote and insular and determine policy and practice without meaningful consultation with the people they were elected to serve.

I believe we have a foundation to be proud of in our Scottish Parliament, where the ordinary person can make a difference and influence policy and practice to improve the lives of the people of Scotland.

In appreciation

Isobel Allan

Carer of Susan

Forgive me for personalising the issue - I cannot speak for the 600,000 other carers - but, as a carer, I need what you need. I need the right to have a normal life. I am not looking for anything special or anything extra. I just want the chance to sleep, to eat, to go out, to finish a meal and to have some kind of ordinariness in my life.

Isobel Allan *carer*

Giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Health & Community Care Committee, Oct 2001

I welcome to the public gallery carers who have travelled from all over Scotland to be here today. Given the caring responsibilities that they have, that represents a considerable effort.

We all know carers. Today, we place them at the centre of our Parliament and at the heart of Scotland. They will never go away. Whoever stands here can never ignore their needs again. I move the motion on their behalf.

Iain Gray *Deputy Minister for Community Care*

Introducing an Executive motion on the Strategy for Carers in Scotland, November 1999

1

Introduction

This handbook offers a simple introduction to the Scottish Parliament for carers and carers' organisations. A substantial amount of material already exists around the workings of the parliament. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, for example, have produced excellent summaries of the structures and language and the ways in which voluntary organisations and individuals can access the parliament. This publication carries much of the same information.

However, it is designed more specifically to demonstrate not only the structures and terms of parliamentary activity but, as importantly, how carers have already influenced the politicians and made decent headway in ensuring that carers' issues are more fully understood by those elected to make decisions on our behalf.

2

What the parliament has meant for carers so far

Nearly 3 years into the life of the Scottish Parliament, carers have featured in its work many times. The first piece of legislation to be passed by the parliament was the Adults with Incapacity Act, through which, in part, carers are given new rights. Delivering a Strategy for Carers in Scotland was an early priority of the Parliament's first Deputy Minister for Community Care and gave a platform for the first full parliamentary debate on carers in 1999. Carers have given evidence to the Health & Community Care Committee on several occasions. The circumstances of carers looking after people with mental health problems was debated in the chamber in recognition of the work of a group of carers in Ayrshire. Numerous parliamentary questions have been asked and answered (perhaps not always satisfactorily!). A few years ago, children with caring responsibilities travelled to the parliament to give MSPs a chance to hear their stories direct. A Cross-Party Group on Carers was established in 2000, bringing together MSPs on a regular basis. And, of course, local carers and local groups of carers have sought out their elected members to discuss those issues which are most important to them.

Unlike Westminster, there is very little ritual to the Scottish Parliament. It is new and it is modern. Its intention to deliver a 'new politics' in Scotland may sometimes seem remote and in the day to day struggles of carers, politics itself can seem remote. However, it is important to recognise that the Scottish Parliament is based on the principle of 'sovereignty of the people' rather than 'sovereignty of parliament'. It is this principle which underpins the way

in which ordinary Scots, including carers, can access the parliament, whether through petitions, questions, submitting evidence, contributing to legislation, speaking to cross-party groups or approaching elected members directly.

Of course, the parliament is not a free-for-all. It has structures and mechanisms which need to be understood in order to get the best use out of them. This handbook seeks to develop that understanding.

While the lives of individual carers may not have changed substantially over the lifetime of this parliament, the understanding of carers has improved and that at least offers the basis for future engagement.

3

Executive, Parliament and MSPs

It is not always obvious to the public what the difference between the Parliament and the Executive is. The difference is perhaps more readily understood when looking at the Westminster Parliament, where the accusation is sometimes made that the *Government* ignores the views and wishes of *Parliament*. In other words, the Cabinet in 10 Downing St. is accused of ignoring the MP's at Westminster. Whether this is true or otherwise is not the point, but it's a picture which allows the public to feel the difference.

In Scotland, consensus and coalition are much more important factors in the way that devolved politics work. The public sees less open conflict between the will of parliament and the will of government (i.e. Executive). Crucially, some of the most important conflicts have resolved in favour of the views of parliament as a whole. The debate on free personal care for older people is a good example of this. The Executive's initial rejection of the introduction of free personal care was challenged in parliament, through the opposition and the Committee system. The Executive revised its view and set a course for the eventual introduction of free personal care.

The Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive is the government of Scotland on all devolved matters. It is led by a First Minister, who appoints a team of Ministers and Deputy Ministers. In addition, it includes the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland. The First Minister and Ministers form the 'Cabinet'. Deputy Ministers are not members of the Cabinet

Currently there are 8 ministerial departments in the Executive - Education & Young People; Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning; Environment & Rural Development; Finance & Public Services; Health & Community Care; Justice; Social Justice; Tourism, Culture & Sport. Each department has a Minister and one or more Deputy Ministers and is staffed by civil servants. The number of civil servants presently working for the Scottish Executive is around 2,000. The Executive manages an annual budget of around £20 billion.

The Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament passes laws and is there to hold the government (the Executive) to account. It does this through the actions of individual MSPs, the work of the Committees and the effectiveness of the opposition parties.

The parliament elects a Presiding Officer (and 2 deputies) who preside over meetings of the parliament. Although the Presiding Officer is an MSP, s/he is a neutral figure. The Presiding Officer is also part of the 'parliamentary bureau' which arranges the business of the parliament. The parliament has its own set of staff (separate from the civil service), who provide the clerking and administration of its business.

Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs)

The Parliament consists of 129 members (MSPs), who are elected through a type of proportional representation voting system. 73 of those elected are constituency MSPs, i.e. they received the largest number of votes in their constituency. The remaining 56 are regional or 'list' MSPs, which means they have been elected as part of a political party's list for one of Scotland's 8 regions. It is important to understand, however, that all MSPs have equal status in the Parliament.

How to make the parliament work for carers

The founding principle of the parliament is 'sovereignty of the people'. The work of the parliament to date has sought to build on that principle through being accessible and open to the public. For carers and carer organisations, as for other interest groups, there are a number of ways to promote their issues. Promoting amendments to Bills is an important area of activity and considerable work has been done recently by carers' organisations to amend the draft of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill. Seeking support for the introduction of a Bill may be less likely to succeed but the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000, which was based on many years of lobbying by mental health and dementia organisations, offers a dramatic example of conspicuous success.

We can also look in a little more detail at the capacity of parliamentary questions and debates to promote carer issues.

How do parliamentary questions work?

Carers issues have featured often in written and oral questions. The question is asked by the MSP and answered by the responsible Minister or Deputy Minister. Any MSP can ask a question in parliament.

For a local carers' organisation, an approach to their local MSP to consider asking a parliamentary question should be made only if the answer is not readily available from other sources and/or there is a clear need to raise the profile of the particular issue. The answer to the given question will clarify the Executive's position in relation to the issue. For example, if there is concern about carers' involvement in local health and community care

planning arrangements, a question might be asked about how carers are involved in the development of local carer strategies. The answer will at least provide clarity of central government policy and expectation. This information can then be used in discussion with local bodies. It goes without saying that some answers are more helpful than others.

Example of parliamentary question and written answer

Shona Robison North-East Scotland - SNP: *To ask the Scottish Executive what policies it has in place to ensure that the rights of carers and families are upheld when those they care for are being discharged from hospital.*

Holding reply by Malcolm Chisholm, 26 February 2001: *I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.*

Answered by Malcolm Chisholm, 20 March 2001: *The NHS in Scotland is required to provide patients being discharged with prescribed standards of information about treatment and follow-up arrangements. Guidance to NHS Trusts on these standards also allows this information to be given to relatives, carers and GPs, where appropriate.*

Source: Written Answers Report

What happens in a parliamentary debate?

A debate is a discussion between MSPs on a particular topic followed by a vote. Debates are held either on motions laid down by the Scottish Executive or by individual MSPs (Member's Motions). A debate may also follow a ministerial statement, when there is no motion.

For carers' organisations, the real value of a debate is to give an airing to a key issue, to engage MSPs from all parties and to measure the Executive's position on the issue.

Example of Member's Motion for debate

SIM-1287# Christine Grahame: *Funding for Disabled People and their Carers* - *That the Parliament recognises that the current levels of social security benefits for disabled people and their carers do not meet the costs of either disability or care; further recognises that means testing for community care services penalises both disabled people and their carers, and believes that the Scottish Executive should investigate and report separately on (a) income levels of disabled people and their carers, (b) take-up of services by disabled people and their carers and (c) social inclusion and equality of opportunity for these groups.*

Business Bulletin 13 November

If you are hoping to persuade an MSP to initiate a debate, there are a number of points worth remembering. Having a pre-existing relationship with the MSP will undoubtedly help, particularly in terms of having a sense of their position in relation to the issue. If, however, you don't have a particular contact in mind, you could approach an office-bearer of the Cross-Party Group on Carers for initial advice. Carers Scotland provide the administration for the Group and it may be helpful to talk to them first. Having a draft motion prepared will be helpful. If you are doing this, make sure that you have drafted it in the appropriate format (see example below). A motion should begin with "That the Parliament...", followed by a verb ("agrees", "approves", "notes", "calls upon", "recognises", "acknowledges"). To secure a debate, the MSP you approach should have no other motions outstanding for Members' Debate. Check this first before seeking a commitment. Once you have an MSPs commitment, it's worth asking that they electronically forward the motion to their colleagues with a 'button' attachment. This allows

other MSPs to support the motion with minimum fuss. Once the motion has been lodged, it needs (...) supporters to go forward for debate. It is then a matter for the business managers of the Parliament to decide which motions will be scheduled for debate. Once a debate is secured, there are a number of points to remember:

- Provide good information and material to the MSP who is speaking to the motion
- Provide a short briefing for other MSPs on the issue
- Provide case studies which will humanise the issue
- Alert the media to the debate and what you are hoping to hear during it
- Make sure that carers are in the gallery
- Write to contributors after the debate thanking them for their contributions and offering continued contact. This is also an opportunity to follow up on any detailed points raised in the debate.

Legislation

“ ... better laws result from the deliberate openness and accessibility of our legislative process. That has allowed a degree of public participation that would have been simply impossible under the old system. The processes are becoming increasingly sophisticated, involving the use of workshops, roadshows and interactive electronic communications, as well as the more traditional consultation papers. The result has been real participation in government. That has led to a sense of access and ownership of the business of lawmaking, which will, I believe, contribute a great deal more in the future.”

Henry McLeish *First Minister*

Scottish Executive Programme, 5 September 2001, Official report

The key function of the Parliament is to create those laws which will benefit the people of Scotland.

A programme for legislation is laid out in the First Minister's Speech at the beginning of the new parliamentary session in September. In the first 28 months of the parliament, 24 Acts were passed. At Westminster, over the same period of time, there would have been only a handful of specifically Scottish pieces of legislation.

However, it is not only the number of Acts passed which matters, but the ways in which Bills can be introduced and the ways in which the public can help to shape them.

Ways of introducing a Bill

There are five basic types of Bills:

- **Executive Bills:** these are introduced and supported by the devolved government, e.g. the Community Care & Health (Scotland) Bill

- **Members' Bills:** these are lodged by an individual MSP, e.g. Tommy Sheridan's Abolition of Poindings and Warrant Sales Bill
- **Committee Bills:** introduced by Committee's of the parliament, e.g. Standards Committee will be working towards replacing the existing Members' Interests Order with an Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- **Emergency Bills:** introduced to close loopholes in current law, e.g. the Mental Health (Public Safety & Appeals) (Scotland) Act 1999
- **Private Bills:** can be introduced by private citizens through a specific procedure

Stages of a Bill

Normally a Bill goes through three stages:

- **Stage 1** - consideration of the general principles of the Bill by parliamentary committee(s), and a debate on these by the Parliament
- **Stage 2** - detailed consideration of the Bill by parliamentary committee(s). Amendments are introduced at this stage
- **Stage 3** - final consideration of the (amended) Bill by the Parliament and a decision whether it should be passed or rejected.

Case study

At this stage, it is worth following the steps of a piece of legislation, which ties in closely with carers' interests. The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill has at least a few of its roots in carers' interests and, in particular, in the Strategy for Carers in Scotland, a document which many carers and certainly all carer organisations are familiar with.

In following the process from its origins, the input of carers and carer organisations are easily identified. The process itself

connects with many of the opportunities the public has to access the parliament. A rough summary of the development of this Bill to date would be:

- Strategy for Carers in Scotland introduces the prospect of new legislation for carers in Scotland. Strategy is launched with a parliamentary debate on carers
- Carers Legislation Working Group convenes. Group includes main carer organisations and individual carers.
- Health & Community Care Committee's Inquiry into Community Care hears evidence from Carers Scotland, including the need for new legislation
- Health Committee's final report recommends new rights for carers
- Carers Legislation Working Group reports its conclusions to the Deputy Minister for Community Care
- Working Group Report published for public consultation
- First Minister's Speech on the Scottish Executive's Programme includes a Community Care & Health (Scotland) Bill, which will include new rights for carers
- Draft Bill published
- Health & Community Care Committee undertake Stage 1 investigation of the general principles of the Bill
- Carers Scotland submit written evidence to Committee
- Carers Scotland invited to give oral evidence to Committee
- Health & Community Care Committee report on Stage 1 investigation accepts majority of Carers Scotland evidence

In almost all of these stages, carers' organisations and carers themselves are involved, either briefing MSPs, talking to Ministers, giving evidence or simply watching from the gallery!

The subsequent stages of the Bill, including its expected enactment, will demonstrate how effective the carers' lobby has been in this particular instance.

6

Committees

To scrutinise Government, undertake wide-ranging investigations, initiate legislation, – this was the vision for the Parliamentary Committees as seen by the Consultative Steering Group and many others in Scotland in the run up to the creation of the Scottish Parliament.

George Reid *Deputy Presiding Officer and Convener of Conveners' Liaison Group*
Foreword to Committees Annual Report 2001

The committee sees carers as partners in the provision of care and you have made some powerful statements to us. Isobel Allan may not get out much but, when she does, she comes out fighting.

Margaret Smith MSP *Convener of Health & Community Care Committee*
Response to evidence given by Isobel Allan, carer, November 2001

The Committee system is central to the work of the Parliament. It is generally acknowledged that Committees have played a key role in not only holding government to account but in introducing new and challenging perspectives to the work of the parliament and to the policies of the Executive.

There are currently 17 Committees of the parliament:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Audit | ■ Justice 2 |
| ■ Equal Opportunities | ■ Procedures |
| ■ Health & Community Care | ■ Social Justice |
| ■ Local Government | ■ Transport and environment |
| ■ Rural Development | ■ Standards |
| ■ Subordinate legislation | ■ Finance |
| ■ Education, culture and sport | ■ Public petitions |
| ■ European | ■ Enterprise and |
| ■ Justice 1 | Lifelong Learning |

In addition, a Committee for Private Bills convenes each time a Private Bill is introduced (see section: Bills and Legislation)

What does a committee do?

Committees have a number of functions. They scrutinise potential legislation, undertake inquiries into key areas of concern, hold the Executive to account through questioning of ministers. They can also seek to introduce legislation.

Where do they meet?

Committees do not have to be static, meeting only in Edinburgh. They can and often will relocate to local venues, particularly when the locality is relevant to a particular enquiry.

Which committees mean most to carers?

Every committee is in some way relevant to carers' concerns. For example, the Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Committee's inquiry into Lifelong Learning received written evidence on carers' access to education and learning. The Public Petitions Committee offers a way for the public, including voluntary organisations, to directly petition the parliament on a particular issue, which may be, for example, inaccessibility of respite care in a given area. However, on a regular basis, it is the work of the Health & Community Care Committee which has most direct meaning for carers. The Committee has sought the views of carers a number of times, and has indeed taken those views into account in its own recommendations.

It will though be important to make sure that carers' issues are understood across the range of responsibilities of the parliament. Whether it's human rights issues as dealt with perhaps by the Justice Committees or problems of isolation and remoteness as may be considered in the work of the Rural Affairs Committee, carers can and should be a conspicuous presence.

7

Petitions

...amendments to legislation have been proposed by the Scottish Executive in three cases following the submission of petitions and reports... This is evidence that petitions are taken seriously, and can have a genuine and real effect on the work of the Parliament.

Annual Report of Public Petitions Committee 2001

Any member of the public or group can submit a petition to the Parliament's Public Petitions Committee. The Committee will consider how to respond to the petition and may then

- Forward the petition to another parliamentary body for consideration
- forward the petition to an external body e.g. a local authority.

The presentation of a petition can be an opportunity for raising the public profile of the particular cause. Bringing a group of carers to parliament and alerting their local MSPs of their presence is a useful way of building momentum around the petition process.

Cross-party groups

There are currently over 40 Cross-Party Groups covering a range of topics, including carers. The purpose of a Cross-Party Group is to provide a platform for non-partisan discussion of the particular area of interest. Most groups are supported by an external organisation, e.g. the Cross-Party Group on Carers is administered by Carers Scotland. Non-MSPs are able to attend and speak at cross-party group meetings.

The Cross-Party Group on Carers has, since its inception, helped to raise the profile of new carer research, support the launch of specific campaigns and give a platform to broader discussion on carer and disability issues.

9

Devolved/reserved issues

For carers, the powers of the Scottish Parliament are key because they include the health service, education and social work. On the other hand, most carers will not underestimate the importance of social security benefits and employment rights, which remain the responsibility of Westminster.

Devolved powers

areas the Scottish Parliament has control over

health, education and training, local government, social work, voluntary sector, housing, area regeneration and planning, economic development, trade and exports, tourism, transport, Scots criminal, civil and electoral law, judicial appointments, criminal justice, civil and criminal courts, tribunals and legal aid, prisons, police and fire services, civil defence and emergency planning, the environment, agriculture and food standards, forestry and fisheries, sports and the arts, statistics, public registers and records

Reserved powers

area which the Westminster Parliament has control over

Employment legislation, social security, the constitution, UK foreign policy, including European Union policy, UK defence and national security, UK fiscal, economic and monetary system, common markets for UK goods and services, transport safety and regulation, company law, Equal Rights legislation, National Lottery)

How to follow what the parliament does

Finding out what is happening at the parliament is not simply about watching the news and reading the papers. Access can be gained through the internet, libraries or even just to visit the parliament can be a good way of tuning in to its workings.

Visiting the parliament

You can visit the parliament as an individual or as part of a group. If you're visiting the main chamber (to observe a debate or First Minister's Questions, for example), you can either turn up at the public entrance or book a ticket through the Visitor Centre. To attend a committee meeting, you need to make prior arrangements, again either through the Visitor Centre or through, perhaps, your MSP. The telephone number for the Visitor Centre is **0131 348 5411**.

Using the local library

Every constituency has a 'partner library', which acts as a focal point for information about the parliament. The partner library is situated in a designated public library in the constituency. So, for example, in Kilmarnock and Loudon, the partner library is situated in the Central Library in Kilmarnock. In many cases this will include internet access to the parliament's website.

Further information is available on www.scottish.parliament.uk/mmps/partnerlib.htm

Finding out through the internet

As a young parliament, the Scottish Parliament has been accessible through the internet from the beginning. Minutes of meetings of the parliament and committees, drafts of Bills, reports, biographies of MSPs, are all available through the parliamentary website. It is also possible to watch parliamentary proceedings live through the website. Although for some of us technology can be daunting, the parliamentary website tries to be user-friendly. Experience of using it will increase its usefulness and, for carer organisations, it is worth taking some time to look into it.

You can find the Scottish Parliament site on:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

You can access the parliament live on:

www.scottishparliamentlive.com

The Scottish Executive's website can be found at:

www.scotland.gov.uk

Glossary of parliamentary terms

The WHISP (What's Happening In the Scottish Parliament) Glossary of Parliamentary Terms provides an excellent guide to the language of the Parliament. This is available free on the Parliamentary Website (www.scottish.parliament.uk/whats-happening/whisp.html) or a copy can be purchased from the Stationery Office for £3.95.

The Stationery Office Bookshop
71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AZ
Tel: 0131 228 4181 • Fax: 0131 622 7017 or
Tel: 0870 606 5566

The following are few edited extracts from the WHISP Glossary.

PEOPLE

Cabinet: The group of senior ministers of the Scottish government, comprising all the members of the Scottish Executive, except the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland (i.e. First Minister and ministers)

Law Officers: The senior legal advisers to the government. The two Scottish Law Officers, who are Scottish Ministers and members of the Scottish Executive, are the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland.

'List MSP': An informal term for a regional MSP, derived from the party lists used for their election

Witness: A person invited or required to attend a meeting of a committee for the purpose of giving evidence

LEGISLATION

Amendment: A change, or proposed change to the text of a motion or a Bill

Bills: Draft laws during their parliamentary process, before becoming Acts of the Scottish Parliament

Enactment: Normally an Act, or part of an Act. Occasionally used to include subordinate legislation

General principles of a Bill: The overall policy and purpose of a Bill, rather than its detailed provisions, considered at Stage 1 (for a Public Bill) or at Preliminary Stage (for a Private Bill)

Lead committee: This is the parliamentary committee within whose remit a particular bill or item of subordinate legislation falls, and which takes the lead role in the relevant legislative process for that particular measure.

Policy Memorandum: A document which must accompany an Executive bill and which sets out the policy objectives of the bill; any consideration of alternative ways of meeting the bill's objectives; any consultations undertaken, and their outcome, and assessment of the effects of the bill on equal opportunities, human rights, island communities, local government, sustainable development and other matters considered relevant by ministers

MONEY

'Block grant': The colloquial name for the allocation by the UK Treasury related to most of the Scottish Executive's and the Parliament's responsibilities. Sometimes called the 'Scottish Block'.

Budget (or Budgeting) Process: The three-stage annual process for the Parliamentary consideration of the Scottish Executive's expenditure plans and proposals, based on the recommendations of the Financial Issues Advisory Group

Financial resolution: A resolution of the Parliament expressing the Parliament's agreement to a new or increased tax or charge, or new or increased expenditure out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund.

VARIOUS

Coalition: A formal arrangement between more than one party or grouping represented in the Parliament to combine to form a government. This would generally be expected to occur when no single party has an overall majority of seats in the Parliament. The first government following the May 1999 general election is a coalition government between Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

Daily business list: The detailed programme of business for a particular day, usually with times when each item is to be taken, published in the Business Bulletin.

Decision time: The period, usually of no more than 30 minutes, at the end of a day's business in the Parliament (generally 5pm on Wednesday and Thursday) when decisions are taken on most of the questions before it, whether by a division or otherwise. Some decisions, for example on business or other procedural motions, are taken at other times of day

Electronic voting: The normal method of voting at a meeting of the Parliament. MSPs can vote 'Yes', 'No' or 'Abstain' on questions before them by pressing the appropriate button on the console on their desk

Official Report (OR): The Scottish Parliament Official Report is the authoritative report of parliamentary proceedings (including committees and written answers.

Coalition of Carers in Scotland

The Coalition is a constituted network of over 60 local carer organisations in Scotland. Membership is open to carer-led groups, and since 1998 carer organisations from all Scottish local authorities have been represented.

The Coalition aims to:

- provide networking, information and mutual support to carer-led organisations in Scotland
- bring carers and workers together to explore issues, analyse developments and identify key issues confronting carers in Scotland
- develop a collective response to key issues enabling members of the Coalition to bring their concerns to the attention of interested parties at local, regional and national level.

Coalition of Carers in Scotland

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e-mail: coalition@carers.net

CARERS Scotland

Carers Scotland is the national voice of carers in Scotland. Our work involves:

- Campaigning - Raising awareness at all levels of government and society of the needs of carers and ensuring action is taken to support them.
- Informing - Providing information and advice to carers, enabling them to make their own choices about providing care.
- Free booklets for carers on all aspects around carers
- Supporting - Helping carers become more aware of their own role and status in the community, supporting them through a network of local branches.

If you would like more information on Carers Scotland, including how to become a member, please contact:

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CARERS Scotland