



Our Activities

2020–21



coalition
of carers in scotland

from recognition to rights

About us

We are a coalition of carers and local carer organisations that was established in 1998.

We have members in every local authority in Scotland and through them we connect with carers and carer-led organisations from all local authority areas and from many different caring communities.

The Coalition is led by an Executive Committee, made up of carers and staff from local carer organisations. The Coalition is supported in its work by its member organisations and volunteers and has two members of staff to coordinate activities.



policy **people** practice

We believe that carers' rights need to be at the heart of **policy** and **practice** development. It is our shared vision that Scotland's unpaid carers will feel valued, included and supported as equal partners in care and will be able to enjoy a life outside of caring.

Convenor's report

By our joint convenor
Kimberley Swan

Kimberley is the Chief Executive at FAIR (Family Advice & Info Resource)



“ I think we are all aware of the difficult year it has been for carers. The majority have had increased caring responsibilities, more intense caring roles and less personal opportunities. Many support services have continued to run at reduced levels or have not restarted.

This has caused carers to have continued additional stress and pressure placed on them. The Coalition of Carers acknowledge this and we have been working hard to get up-to-date and relevant information to carers in as fast a timescale as possible. We want carers to feel heard, represented and supported as we move forward together from these challenging times.

We continue to advocate for immediate, flexible measures to support carers and protect their health and wellbeing. In the longer term, we are hopeful that the review and reform of Social Care will produce radical change that values carers and provides guaranteed support and breaks.

Thanks to the Executive Committee and staff

Firstly we welcome the new members of our committee who were elected at our last Annual General Meeting. Peter Burke and Anne MacDougall, carers from Angus and West Dunbartonshire. Centre Managers Jess Wade and Raymond Jamieson from East Lothian and Perth. As well as Dr Gillian MacIntyre from the University of Strathclyde. They have brought a wealth of experience and energy with them and we appreciate the time they volunteer, despite their busy lives.

We would like to give a huge thank you to our Executive Committee members who are standing down this year. Firstly to Seb Fischer who was a founding member of the Coalition and also of the carers rights movement in Scotland. We are indebted to Seb for his dedication, his determination and for his inspiring leadership. We know Seb will continue to be a friend and supporter of the Coalition.

Also our thanks go to Catherine Paterson, who established the Dochas Foundation in Lochgilphead and has dedicated much of her life to supporting local carers and being a voice for rural carers on the national stage.

Lucinda Godfrey is standing down from her position as Joint Convenor this year, although we are pleased that she will be remaining as a member of the committee. Lucinda has always been a hugely positive force for the Coalition, an excellent leader and a skilled chair and we thank her for her time as Convenor.

Finally, I want to thank the Coalition of Carers staff team, Claire and Shubhanna for their continued dedication and excellent work.



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Remembering Donald MacLeod

In this year's annual report we pay tribute to our previous Convenor, Donald MacLeod, who sadly passed away in September of this year.

Donald was a long supporter of the Coalition and was also involved in the local carers movement in the Highlands.

Donald will always be remembered as a very kind, generous and compassionate man, who was incredibly insightful and passionate when advocating for carers rights. We feel blessed to have known him and to have learnt from him. His work as a campaigner has left a lasting legacy for all carers in Scotland.



Our highlights

Member Meetings

Our member meetings have been a central part of our activities since the Coalition was established in 1998. They provide the opportunity for carers and membership organisations to meet key decision makers and influence policy development at a local and national level.

Since the pandemic we have been unable to meet in person, but have continued to hold our meetings online. This means that as well as welcoming familiar faces who have been supporting the carers movement for many years we have also found a new audience of carers who, thanks to technology, have been able to participate for the first time.

Over the year we heard from the Minister for Public Health, Marie Gougeon and Chair of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, Derek Feeley. But more importantly they heard directly from carers about the impact of Covid-19 and what needs to change to improve carers' rights, recognition and support.



“Another excellent session. Hugely worthwhile, looking forward to attending many more.”

Our Learning Exchange Groups

Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic Carers

Our Black and Minority Ethnic Carers Group has been meeting for two years now. The group, which we facilitate jointly with MECOPP, is a peer support network to help staff in the third sector and health and social care partnerships better support local black and minority ethnic carers.

“Thank you for bringing this network together, it is a great platform for sharing information and to hear things first hand.”



Rural Carers Working Group

Our rural group works to ensure the needs of carers in rural and island communities are considered in the development of policy and legislation.

The Coalition reaches out and engages carers in the most remote areas of Scotland, including Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles and Argyll and Bute. During the last year we have particularly focussed on measures to support rural and island carers through the pandemic.



“I really helps being able to share information with other workers who work in a rural and remote setting as they understand the difficulties.”

Mental Health Forum

In October 2020, along with Carers Trust and the Mental Welfare Commission, we established a forum for staff supporting mental health carers.

The restrictions during lockdown and suspension of services has been particularly hard on this group of carers and many are finding their own health and wellbeing has been affected.

This group allows staff to share challenges, to increase their knowledge and to learn from one another.

“A good attendance which shows the need for this type of group and will hopefully lead to a rich source on knowledge for the forum.”



Carers Collaborative

The Carers Collaborative is a national forum for carer representatives on Integrated Joint Forums. It meets regularly to share practice, scope new developments and develop best practice resources for carers on Integrated Joint Boards. Each year it produces a scoping report 'Equal Expert and Valued' which looks at the experience of carer engagement on Integrated Joint Boards.

Over the last year we have increased the frequency of our meetings to enable the carer representatives to keep up to date and receive support from one another through these challenging times.



Support During Covid-19

During the pandemic we have had to change the way we work and develop multiple communication methods to ensure we provide carers and staff with quick, accurate and reliable information in a rapidly changing environment.

Our main focus has been to ensure the challenges carers are facing are understood by decision makers and their needs are reflected in guidance and support initiatives. We have also worked hard to provide prompt summaries of the most relevant information for carers and our member organisations.

“Just thank you for your continued support and guidance. You are the first point of contact if I need anything as I know I’ll get a prompt response!”



“Thanks so much. Things are moving at a terrific rate and this group is invaluable!”

Our finances

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland remains in good financial health.

The largest source of funding was a grant of £114,883 from the Scottish Government to fund the two staff posts and to carry out a range of carer engagement projects.

The Coalition's income over the year was £143,760 and expenditure £114,862. We ended the year with a balance of £74,032.

VOCAL continues to undertake responsibility for the day-to-day financial management of the Coalition.

John G Norman Ltd prepared the financial statements.

Copies of the full accounts are available on request to members.

Our funders and supporters

The Coalition receives grant funding from the Scottish Government. This is used to fund our core activities and to employ our Director and Partnership Development Officer.



Training for carer representatives

In partnership with Carers Scotland, at the start of 2021 we began delivering our training for carers to equip them to become more involved in local strategic planning with a view to becoming carer representatives on local strategic planning groups.

The training was co-produced by carers and delivered in five areas, in partnership with local carer representatives, local carers centres and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

The training has increased the number of carer representatives across the five areas and has also increased the ability of carers to contribute with confidence and to influence local developments.



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The Coalition of Carers in Scotland is a registered charity: Charity Number SC039434

