



# Our Activities

2021–22



**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 four 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 alongside caring.



# Convenor's report

By our joint convenor **Jess Wade**, CEO at Carers of East Lothian



“ This year has been seen as a year of COVID-recovery by many, but we know that for carers, the additional concerns and pressures that came with the virus haven't simply disappeared. Carers continue to need to access PPE, many still face reduced service provision locally, and as the world opens back up again, some carers are feeling even more isolated than before. These are issues we continue to raise at both local and national level.

Alongside this we have been advocating for dedicated financial support for carers to offset the cost of living crisis, which disproportionately affects carers and the people they care for.



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## Thanks to the Executive Committee and staff

A huge thank you to all our Executive Committee members who contribute so much. This year we say goodbye to Lucinda Godfrey, a previous Convenor, who now leaves the Committee as she takes on her new role with ACOSVO, having given so much to COCIS over many, many years, both as a leader and passionate advocate for carers.

We are delighted at news that Co-Convenor, Kimberley Swan welcomed baby Swan to the world in late September, and send our congratulations and warm wishes to the whole family for her period of maternity leave and beyond.

We also extend special thanks to Seb Fischer, who is retiring from VOCAL in March. Seb was a founder member and long-time friend and supporter of COCIS, and we remain indebted to him for his huge contribution to the recognition of carers' rights across Scotland.

Final thanks to our incredible staff team of Claire and Shubhanna who have worked so hard to ensure COCIS continues to deliver for carers, and to thrive. Thanks to their efforts, we are also now able to welcome two new staff members; Dipa Ward and Jaynie Mitchell, and you can read more about their roles in this report.



# Our highlights

## Welcome to our new staff members

My name is Jaynie Mitchell and along with my colleague Dipa Ward and thanks to grant funding from the lottery we have recently joined the Coalition of Carers team.



Our remit is to increase carer engagement in harder to reach communities, so that they can become involved in national and local policy and have their opinions and ideas heard. I will be doing this for rural and island carers and Dipa will be doing the same for South Asian Carers.

I started in August and have spent the last few weeks meeting people, making connections, and most importantly finding out what would help in the different areas to increase engagement, also brushing up on my Scottish geography!

Over time we will be establishing Carer Voices groups, supporting the involvement of carers from our respective communities and working with them to address the issues that affect them. Although we both have different remits I am sure we will be working closely together where our work overlaps and we are both looking forward to making a difference in carers lives and supporting them to have their views heard.

## 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.

This year we have mostly been holding our meetings online, but were delighted to welcome some of our members in person at our meeting in Stirling in the Summer. We intend to continue to hold hybrid meetings to enable carers to attend in the way that suits them best.

“What a super meeting earlier. I must admit it was one of the best structure wise and it just flowed. Lots of participants and great ‘chatter’”





Over the year we heard from the Scottish Government and other key decision makers about the development of the National Care Service, the National Carers Strategy and the proposed right to breaks from caring. But more importantly they heard directly from carers about what needs to change to improve carers' rights, recognition and support.

“Thanks for a very informative meeting. First time here and I’ve been inspired to become more involved.”

## Our Learning Exchange Groups

The Coalition facilitates a number of learning exchange groups for staff working in local carer support organisations.

These include our

- Rural Carers Working Group
- Communications and Social Media Group
- Black and Minority Ethnic Forum, which we facilitate jointly with MECOPP
- Mental Health Forum, which we facilitate with Carers Trust and the Mental Welfare Commission
- We also support the Centre Managers Network.

These groups allow staff to share challenges and good practice, to increase their knowledge in specific areas and to learn from one another.

They have been invaluable during the pandemic when more carers have needed support and staff have been missing some of their usual peer networks.

“Thank you for all the work you put into these meetings, I find them invaluable.”



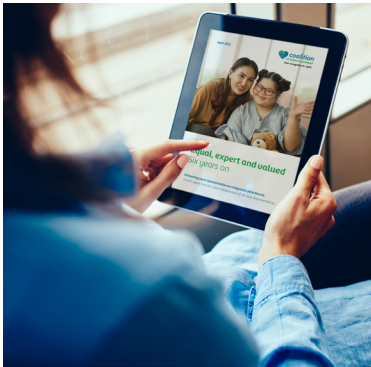
“Thank you so much for your guidance and support.”

## Carers Collaborative forum for carers on Integrated Joint Boards

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.

Over the last year the group focussed on the reform of adult social care and the development of the National Care Service, as well as working with COSLA to produce a best practice guide on including carers in Equality Impact Statements.

This year we published the fourth edition of our annual report 'Equal, Expert and Valued' which scopes the experience of carer representatives and makes recommendations for improved involvement. The report highlighted the need to recruit, train and support more carers to be involved in local planning and for local areas to invest in succession planning.



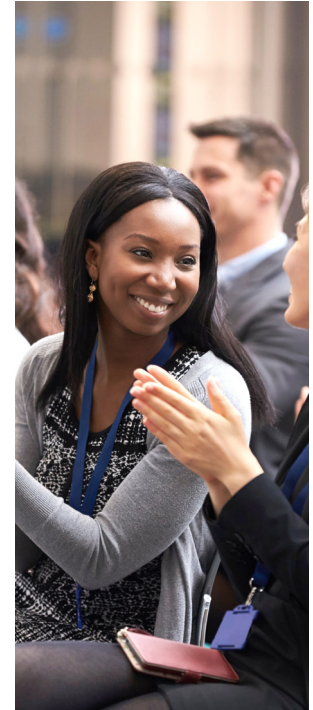
“Being a member of the Carers Collaborative helps to restore some of the power balance. On our own we have very little chance of being equal.”

## Bringing the Carers Voice to the development of Policy and Legislation

The Coalition supports carer engagement and involvement in a number of policy areas, including Covid-19 and pandemic recovery, social security and the reform of adult social care.

We do this by supporting carers on advisory groups, facilitating consultation events and engaging carers using social media. Our aim is always to ensure the carers' voice is central to the development of policy and legislation.

This year we established our Carers Collective group which brings carers together from across Scotland to meet with leaders and decision makers and contribute to national developments.

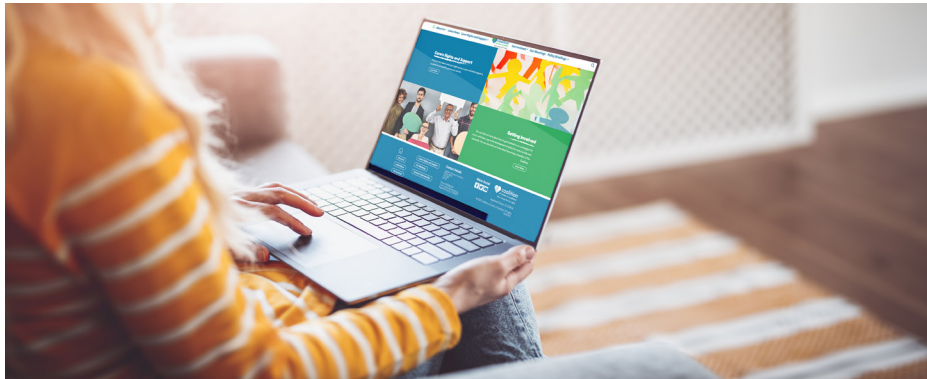


“I just feel that you are so responsive and it is so great to be able to raise something with you and it get raised and asked at the levels you engage in.”

## Our Information – Website, Briefing Papers and social media

This year we have re-designed our Website making it much easier to use, with an expanded range of resources. It includes sections on carers rights and support, our meetings, policy briefings and how to get involved in our campaigns. It is a great source of information for carers and staff who support carers. You will find all our policy briefings on it, including new summaries for carers on the National Care Service, Self-Directed Support and the National Carers Strategy.

We continue to provide information to carers and our members through our Facebook Page, WhatsApp Groups and Bulletins, sometimes on a daily basis. Over the last year our platforms have been a source of fast and reliable information on the current Covid-19 Guidance and how this affects carers, as well as keeping people up to date on the latest news and policy developments.



“Your bulletins, the WhatsApp group, the responsiveness of your approach, have all provided some much-needed consistency through an ever-changing environment.”

## 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 £123,908 and expenditure £118,087. We ended the year with a balance of £79,853.

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



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

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.



The Coalition was awarded lottery funding in April 2022. This is to fund our Community Engagement and Empowerment Project.

## Our contact details

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

