



# Our Activities

2023 to 2024



**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.

# Joint convenor's report

By our joint convenors **Jess Wade**, CEO at Carers of East Lothian and **Kimberly Swan**, a carer from Edinburgh and Chief Executive of Family Advice and Information Resource

“ Last year continued to be a challenging year for carers. They have told us that they are still feeling the impact of Covid and the legacy it has left, both for individuals, families and communities where services still haven't recovered to their pre-Covid state. The cost of living is a major concern, with rising bills, but very little in the way of additional financial support for carers who have been disproportionately impacted.

In his review of adult social care in 2021, Feeley described the system as 'broken' and it still is. While we may be moving closer to reform through the development of a National Care Service, carers need change now and this must include investment in social care services and support for carers, going beyond changing structures and systems.

Our theme over the last year has been the need to **#Make Rights Real** and **#Carers Can't Wait** and we continue to focus on carers knowing their rights and being able to access them.

**But on the positive side this has been a year of good progress for the Coalition.**

We have been able to expand our work and reach more carers through our networks and our engagement project. Through our leadership programme and training and awareness events, more carers understand their rights and have been able to challenge decisions and get the support they need and deserve.

We have also celebrated our 25th Anniversary. It was a real privilege to welcome over 100 carers, members and guests from other countries to our anniversary event, to celebrate the strength and diversity of the Carers Movement, recognise how much carers have achieved in the last 25 year and to collectively shape our vision and ambition for the future.

We would like to thank all our members who continue to contribute individually and as part of the wider Carers Movement. We would also like to thank our incredible staff team for their unwavering commitment over the last year. Without their efforts, and the support of our funders, none of this work would be possible.



Jess



Kimberly



# Our highlights

## 25 Years of the Carers Movement

In October 2023 we celebrated our 25th Anniversary at the City Chambers in Edinburgh, where we welcomed over 100 carers, members and colleagues from across Europe.

Highlights of the day included:

- Remembering our history and celebrating our successes over the last 25 years
- Hearing from carers about what has changed for them and how they see the future of the carers movement
- Hearing from colleagues about how carers are recognised and supported in other European countries.

We were able to record people's thoughts and views throughout the day and now have a renewed focus and energy on improving carers' rights, services and recognition.



# Supporting Carers Voices

At the Coalition we have a relentless focus on ensuring carers voices are 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.



“It’s so good to come to these meetings and have a chance to hear what is happening, to have a say and to know that you are raising these issues and challenging on behalf of carers.”

## 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.



“The intelligence we gain at meetings means we have more authority and are more able to ask the right questions and challenge more effectively.”

## Rural and Island Carers Collective

Our Carers Collective groups are funded by the National Lottery.

In 2023 we developed our Leadership programme ‘from recognition to rights’ for carers in rural and island areas and expanded our Rural Carers Collective Group.



“As a carer, I sat wiping away tears as I strongly recognised the story that she told so eloquently.... she gets it.”

## South Asian Carers Collective

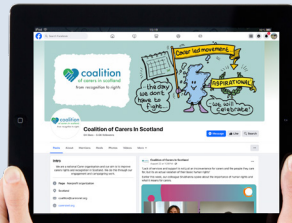
Our South Asian Carers Collective has focussed on carers rights and Self-Directed Support this year and group members have contributed to the development of national policy and legislation to ensure it takes into account the needs of carers from South Asian communities.



“Finally! A pathway for voices to be heard and change to be made – It’s the first time I’ve felt that my opinion as a carer is important.”

## Being Social

We continue to keep carers informed through our growing social media channels. We currently have 6.6K followers on Facebook.



## Making Rights Real

Campaigning for carers rights is a cornerstone of our work and part of this is ensuring carers have the ability to advocate for their existing rights and that health and social care staff are knowledgeable about carers rights legislation.

We have delivered workshops on:

- Carers Rights for carers and health and social care staff across Scotland
- Self-Directed Support training across rural and island communities
- In 2023, we launched the 'Human Rights for Carers' programme to upskill carers centre staff in their human rights knowledge.



“A big thank you from me too for your presentation last week, it really hit the mark and a few of the staff asked at the lunch break how they could learn more! A good sign!”

## Building Capacity

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

These groups include:

- 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.



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

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

## Our finances

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

The largest source of funding was a grant of £152,235 from the Scottish Government to fund two staff posts and to carry out a range of carer engagement projects.

The Coalition’s income over the year was £212,519 and expenditure £178,656. We ended the year with a balance of £168,920, of which £121,585 is unrestricted.

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

John Paul FCIE 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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[www.carersnet.org](http://www.carersnet.org)

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

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