



Think Carer

Training from VOCAL

**Identifying and supporting
unpaid carers**

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What we will cover



This session aims to build your awareness around carer's rights, their need for support and how to work as equal partners.

Today we will:

- Identify who unpaid carers are and what they do.
- Explore the psychological, physical, social, and economic impact of caring.
- Discuss some of the key legislation supporting carers
- Explore carers as equal partners in care.
- How to positively signpost carers to carer services.

We'll be discussing the experiences and impact of unpaid caring, including wellbeing and challenges that may be sensitive for some.
Please feel free to take a break at any point.



Reflect on your knowledge and practice



Rate yourself (1=minimal, 5=confident).

- Understanding of carer legislation and rights.
- Inclusion of unpaid carers in your professional role.
- Awareness of carer support services available locally.





Reflection

What part of the video challenged or changed your perspective about unpaid carers?



Who is considered a carer?



The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines a carer as: an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual.



An unpaid carer supports a family member, partner, relative or friend, of any age*, who needs help to manage a long-term condition, disability, physical or mental health condition or addiction.



A young carer is someone under the age of 18, or 18 and still at school.





Who cares?

True or false quiz



You have to live with the person you care for to be a carer.

You must be related to the person you care for to be a carer.

You have to care for more than 15 hours per week to qualify as a carer.

You can be a carer for someone who already has a care package.

You can only be a carer for someone after they have a received a formal diagnosis.

Your role as a carer ends if the person you care for moves into a care home.

You can only be a parent carer if your child has a severe disability.

You have to be receiving Carers Allowance to be an official unpaid carer.

Being a carer means you cannot have another job or profession.



Scotland's carers



722, 000 unpaid carers in Scotland



1000 people become unpaid carers everyday



58% of unpaid carers are women



52% are aged 45–64



23, 000 young carers



Unpaid carers have **£18.3 billion** economic value

Source: [State of Caring 2025](#)



What do carers do?

Personal care

Household tasks

Mobility assistance

Medication management

Emotional support

Transportation

Advocacy

Monitoring health

Respite care

Liaise with professionals and co-ordinate care

Financial support and assistance



What is the impact of caring on unpaid carers?



Impact of caring 2025



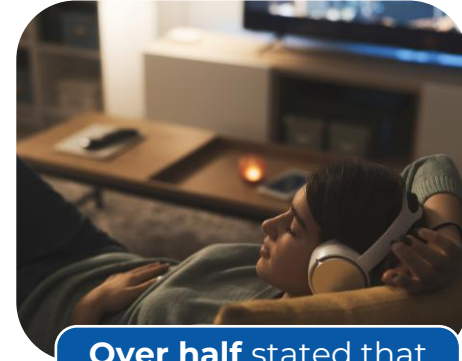
71% of carers report poor mental health due to caring role



54% of carers health has declined because of their role



86% have not been able to take a break in the last year



Over half stated that they had not had a single day off



35% of working carers have reduced their working hours



39% of carers have cut back on essentials



74% of carers worry about their financial security

Source: [State of Caring 2025](#)



Why carer identification is key



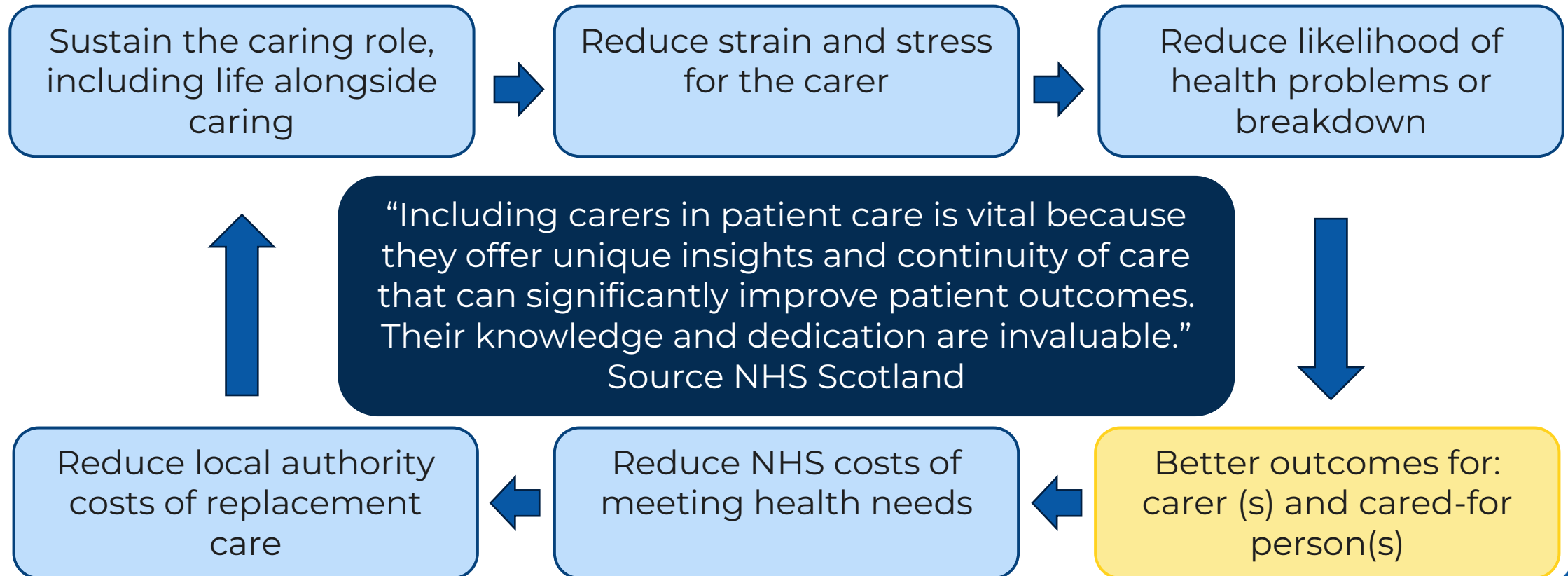
- You play a crucial role in helping people recognise themselves as carers.
- Many carers don't realise the importance of what they do, you might be the first to acknowledge their role.
- Even if someone doesn't like the term "carer", they still need access to essential advice, information, and support.
- Early identification opens the door to help, it prevents crisis and ensures carers get support as soon as possible.



Caring for carers: Rights, recognition and support



Why carer support matters



Sources: Scotland's Carers, Scottish Government, 2015; Carers UK, Caring & Wellbeing Research, 2020.



Adult Carer
support Plan

Right to be
involved in
services

Young Carer
Statement

Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

The act promotes
consistent support
for carers,
protecting their
right to a life
beyond caring

Right to be
involved in
hospital discharge

Right to support
for eligible needs

Access to
information and
advice

A helping hand for carers leaflet:
[Helping+Hand+for+Carers+Leaflet.pdf](#)



Adult Carer Support Plans



80% of carers are not aware of their right to an Adult Carer Support Plan in Scotland

An adult carer support plan (ACSP) is a tool to assess the needs and personal outcomes of a carer.

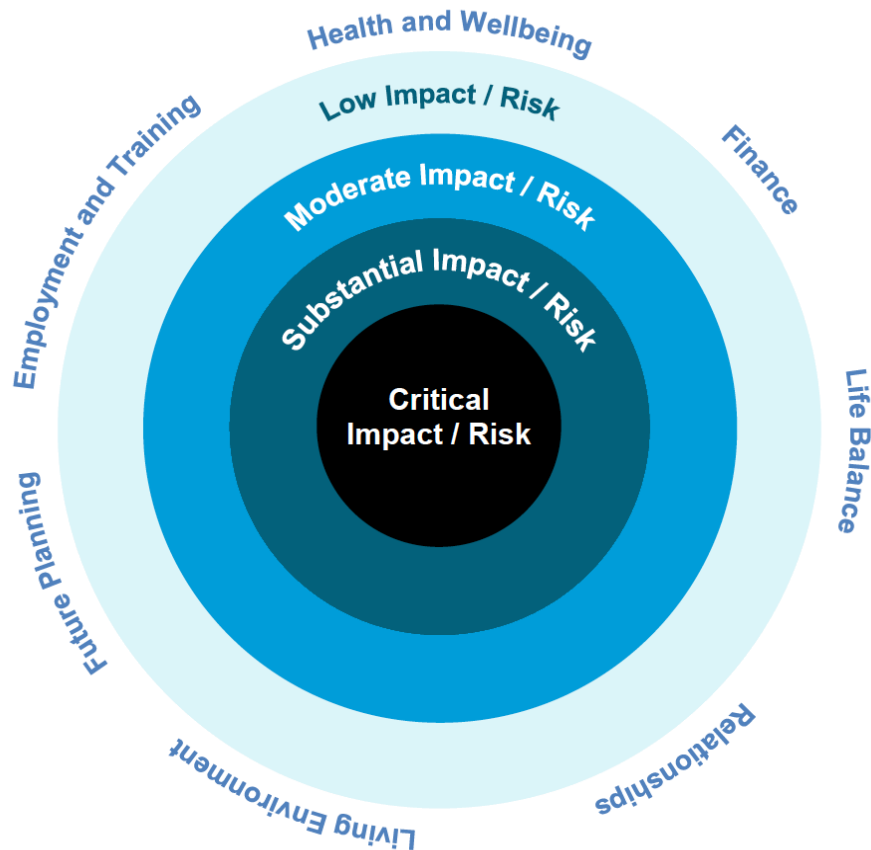
It looks at how caring affects the carers life, health and wellbeing and whether they are able or willing to carry on caring.

The plan sets out how the carers needs will be met and what support or services they might need.

The plan also helps to decide the carer's eligibility for support from the local council.



How can carers access and ACSP?



Local council
health and social
care department

Local carer centre

Support the carer
to self-refer, or
refer with their
consent

Request an Adult
Carer Support
Plan (ACSP)



Carolynne

shares her

Adult

Carer

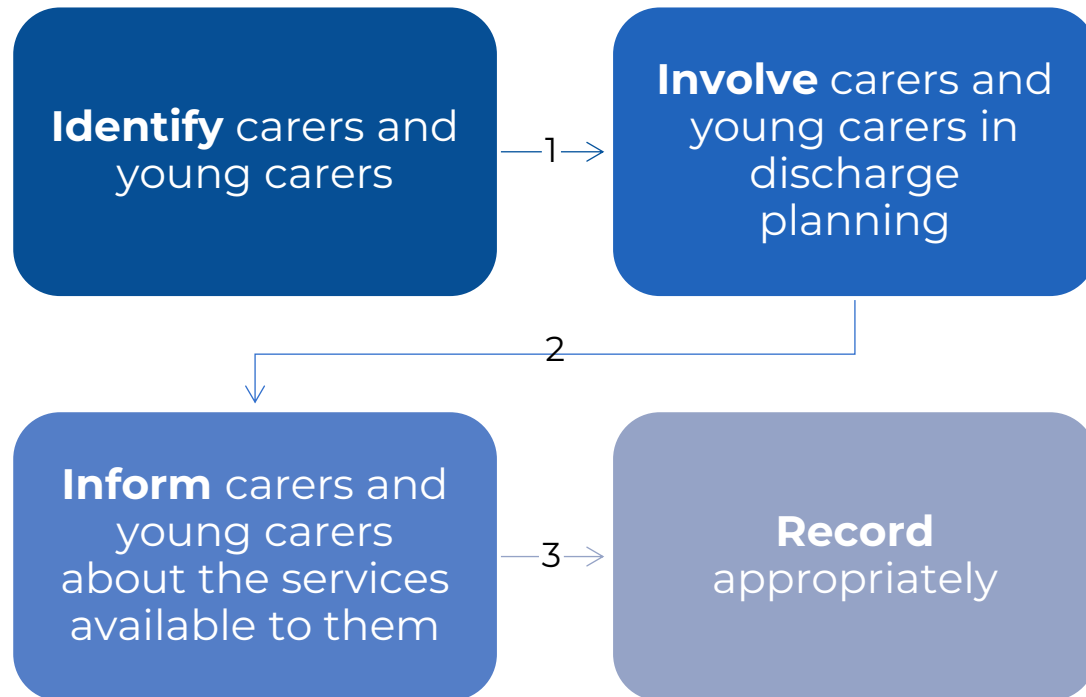
Support

Plan Story



Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

Section 28: Hospital to home



69% of carers are not involved in hospital discharges



Social worker duties: Carer involvement

Understand your role in assessing carers, planning support, and considering the needs of the person they care for.

Your duties as a social worker

ASK

INVOLVE

RECORD

1

Explain the right

Make sure carers know they can be involved in decisions about services, support and short breaks.

2

Assess carer support needs

Involve carers in their Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement and how support is provided.

3

Consider views in cared-for assessment

Take account of the carer's views and caring contribution where reasonable and practical.

4

Feed views into service planning

Capture carer feedback for carer services, local carer strategy and short breaks statements.

Good practice: Involve carers early, listen to their views, record what matters to them, and demonstrate how these have informed decisions.

Source: Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and statutory guidance on carer involvement.



Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025



Legal right to a break

Short Breaks funding

Adult Carer Support Plans

Further recognition for
carer vital role

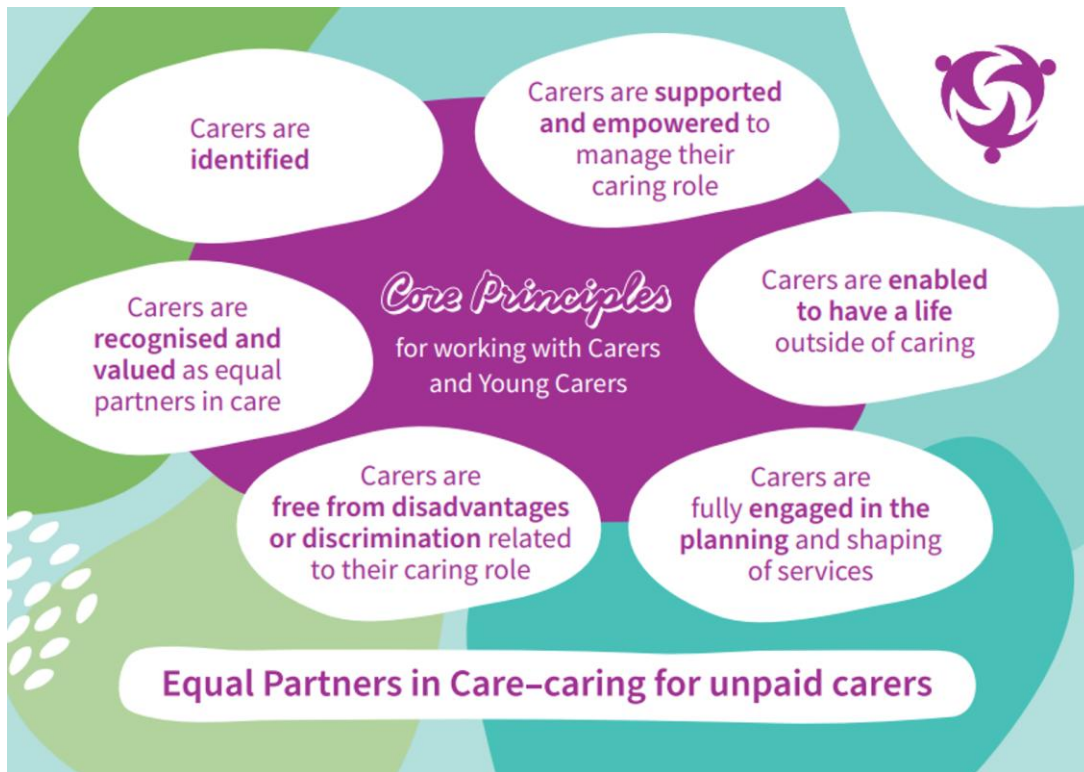


Carer Collaboration in Practice

Equal Partners in Care



Access further training on TURAS



It helps staff to:

- Understand the role, rights and needs of unpaid carers
- Communicate and work collaboratively with carers
- Recognise carers as having valuable knowledge and expertise
- Promote person-centred, inclusive and partnership-based care
- Improve outcomes for people receiving care and the people who support them



Confidentiality

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

Advice line: 0131 313 8777

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm.

Email: mwc.enquiries@nhs.scot

If emailing state which area in Scotland you are in. Any confidential information.



Mental Welfare Commission guide: [Carers, consent, and confidentiality](#)



Caring Conversations



"It was the first time my needs as a carer were truly recognised. They acknowledged me, and listened to me and not in a passive fleeting way. It felt truly empathic. I felt validated and seen. I nearly cried because of the empathy I felt. There was a real genuineness. They weren't able to fix our problems. They didn't jump into problem solving mode. They were aware that retelling my story was hard for me. They connected with me, eye contact, tone of voice was genuine, I could tell they cared. In 7 years I had never had that"

Source: Equal Partners in Care, NHS Education Scotland



Positive carer conversations key characteristics

Acknowledgement

The carer felt, for the first time, that her needs and her role were truly recognised.

Active listening

The carer felt like they were being actively listened to, not just in a passive or fleeting way.

Empathy

The carer noticed genuine empathy during the conversation.

Genuine

The carer noticed that the staff member was genuine, and not just conducting a tick box exercise.

Valued

The carer recognised that the staff member took the time to understand their situation and felt a real connection.

Non-verbal cues

The carer appreciated good use of eye contact and tone of voice.



Conversation starters to support carers

How have things been for you recently?

What's been going well for you, and what's been difficult?

Are there any parts of caring where you feel you could use a bit more support?

What might help you feel more confident or better supported?

Have you had any time for yourself lately?

Do you feel you have people or support around you when you need it?

Is there anything else you'd like to share or that we haven't touched on today?



How to identify carers in your conversations

Are you receiving any support from your family members or friends?

How did you get here today, did anyone bring you?

Do you need me to let anyone know about these changes?

Is there anyone you would like me to include in your plan?



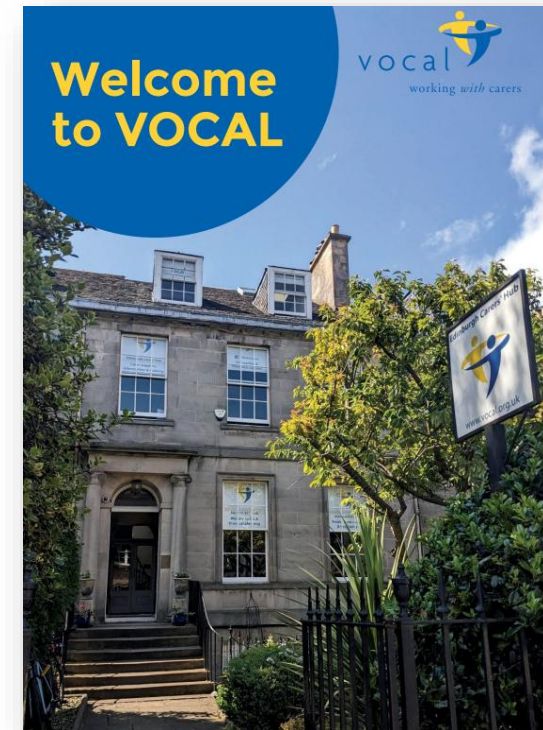
Resources for caring conversations



[A helping hand for carers leaflet](#)



[Looking after someone guide | Carers UK](#)



[VOCAL welcome booklet](#)



How can other services support?



What support can carer centres offer

Access to
information
and advice

One to One
Casework

Adult Carer
Support Plans

Hospital
discharge
planning

Counselling

Income
maximisation

Support
around future
planning

Access to
breaks

Peer support

Training

Wellbeing
activities





- Holiday homes
- Grant to plan holidays in the UK
- Café vouchers
- Spa day
- National Trust Scotland Membership cards
- Gym passes
- Almond Valley tickets
- Young Carers Grant



[Wee Breaks - breaks for unpaid carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian](#)





[Treasure Tree - VOCAL](#)

Mobility scooters & electric wheelchairs
(working or needing batteries)

Manual wheelchairs

Hoists

Commodes, shower chairs & stools

Riser recliner chairs

Walkers & rollators

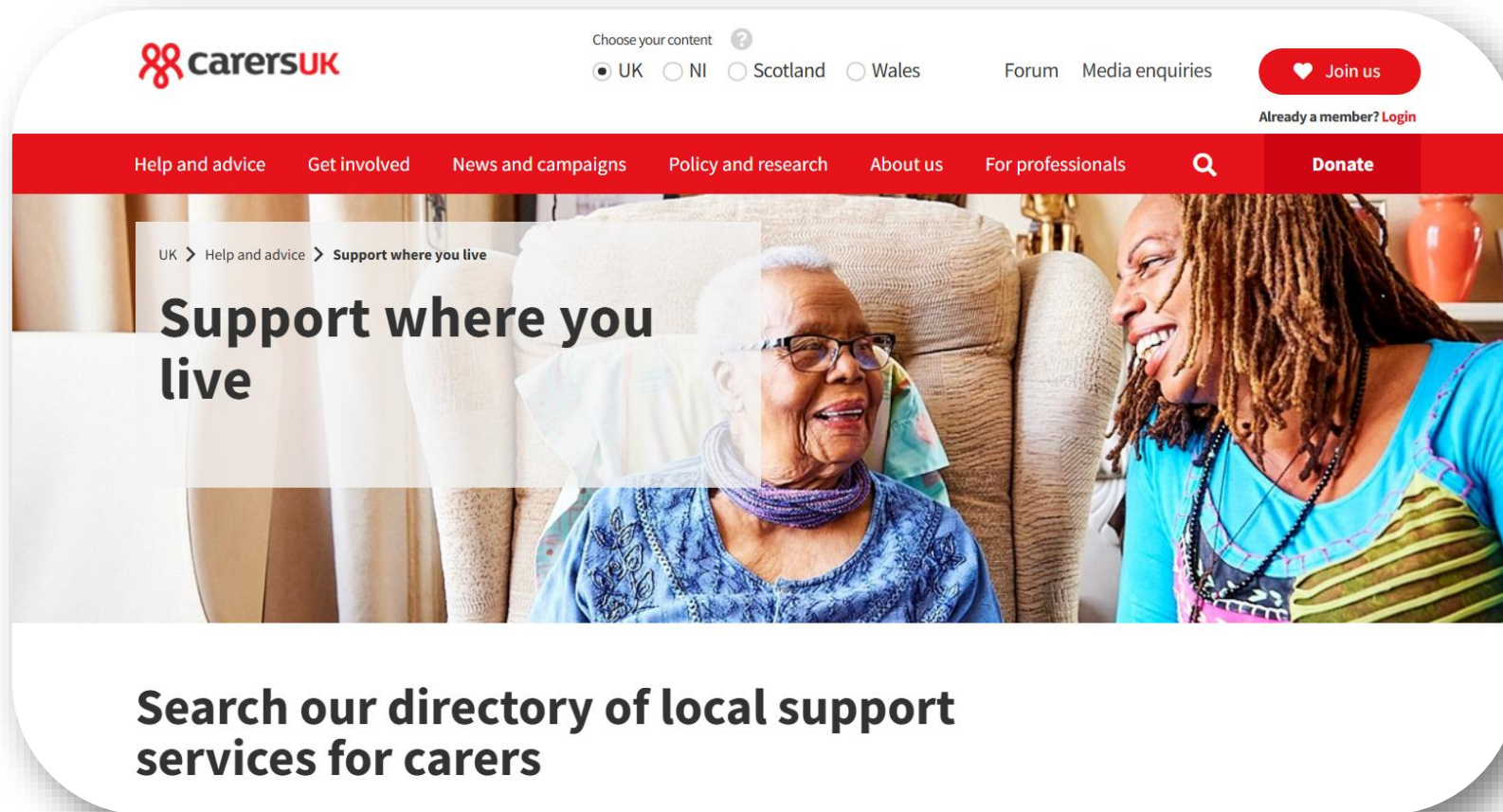
Ocean Terminal

Opening Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10am – 3pm. Wednesdays: 10am – 5pm

Book an Appointment: Email Debbie Greenough at dgreenough@vocal.org.uk



Find your local carer centre



UK Carer centre directory: [Support where you live | Carers UK](#)



Key messages



Identify: Don't wait for someone to call themselves a carer, notice who's supporting and acknowledge it.

Ask: Ask how caring is affecting them, not just how the cared-for person is doing.

Involve: Include carers in conversations and decisions wherever you can. They know what works day to day, treat that knowledge as valuable.

Signpost: You don't need to fix everything yourself. Let carers know what support is available and help them find it early.



Resources



Any
1.1
Questions

Final reflections and evaluation

VOCAL Professionals resource page: [Resources – VOCAL](#)

Carers Act: [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016: statutory guidance - updated July 2021 - gov.scot](#)

Care Reform (Scotland Act 2025): [Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#)

Carers Charter: [Carers' charter - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

A helping hand for carers: [Helping+Hand+for+Carers+Leaflet.pdf](#)

Looking after someone guides: [Looking after someone guide | Carers UK](#)

Carers & confidentiality: [Carers, consent, and confidentiality \(mwcscot.org.uk\)](#)

Emergency planning: [enable_your-emergency-plan_161215_proof-1.pdf](#)

UK Carer centre directory: [Support where you live | Carers UK](#)

VOCAL Employer Training
Evaluation





vocal.org.uk



VOCAL - Voice of Carers Across Lothian
Scottish Charity: SC020755 | Company Registration: SC183050

