

Welcome to VOCAL's e-bulletin for carers. We still have charity places available for the 2010 Edinburgh Marathon taking place on 23rd May. If you would like to run but don't have a place, please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 or email centre@vocal.org.uk for more information. Visit the official marathon website at www.edinburgh-marathon.com

News and campaigns

The Finola Education Trust

Edinburgh carer Henrietta Forman and her daughter Finola have been working for many years to make real change for young students with complex needs in Scotland. Their campaign has highlighted a shocking inequality in the Scottish further education system, where there are no specialised further education colleges, and funding to attend one of the 56 specialised colleges in England is very much a postcode lottery.

Further education choice for Scottish teenagers is severely limited unless they, like Finola, undertake extensive and constant fundraising to attend a specialised college. On 9 February, Malcom Chisholm MSP raised a Scottish Parliament motion on behalf of the Finola Education Trust, and if 30 or more MSPs support the motion it will be debated in Parliament. To lobby your MSPs go to www.writetothem.com or contact your local constituency office. For more information on the Finola Education Trust and Scottish Parliament motion go to www.finolatrust.co.uk

VOCAL is recruiting for Advocacy volunteers

The Carers Advocacy Service is currently looking for people who are interested in carers rights to volunteer as a carers advocate. We are particularly interested in hearing from carers themselves, former carers and people who understand the issues facing carers. The advocacy training course starts on 24 March, for more information please download the [advocacy training leaflet](#). If you are interested please contact VOCAL's Advocacy Manager, Mark Johnston, on 0131 622 7625.

Carer training courses

Caring for someone with a lung condition

This course provides information on how lung function is affected by different conditions, how conditions are treated, services and supports for carers and the

people they support. Practical advice is provided on how to manage an exacerbation and how to use inhalers and other aids effectively. Contact Jane or Debbie on 0131 622 6666 or email jgreenacre@vocal.org.uk to book a place. Download a leaflet about the course from [VOCAL's website](#)
Thursdays, 18 March - 15 April, 12 - 1.30pm at VOCAL Carers Centre.

Resources and consultations

New short breaks for older people

Carers of older people can access a new service from City of Edinburgh Council to enable them to take short breaks from their caring role. The short breaks opportunity is available through a Direct Payment - this is a payment from the Council, which the older person receives instead of a Council service. It allows more flexibility to choose a break that suits and includes the option, if required, for the person you care for to employ their own personal assistant to support them on the break. Download an information leaflet from the [Council's website](#) or contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 for more information.

Annual Carers Week survey 2010

The annual Carers Week survey is the largest survey of carers in the UK. This year it focuses on what carers miss out on that most people in society take for granted - and what needs to be changed. To take part visit www.surveymonkey.com.

VOCAL services are free but carers often ask how they can make donations. Donations to VOCAL can be made through our online donation facility at www.justgiving.com where Gift Aid is automatically reclaimed on any donation you make. *Gift Aid is tax relief on money donated to UK charities.*

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