



HSCN News-sheet, December '24

Warm wishes from everyone at Highland Senior Citizens Network for the festive season! We will be closing for the festive period on Friday 20th December and reopening on Monday 6th Jan 2025.



Chair's Introduction

What is it like being a Home Care Worker? We probably all have our preconceived ideas. Lots of bottom wiping and soaked pads. A recently published book by such a Care Worker gives an insight into what it takes to do this challenging job.

The author of '**All Kinds of People**' left her stressful NHS post in a London hospital for a growing fear of making a mistake. After a break and the need for income she saw an advert for Home Care Workers. She decided to give it a go – just for three weeks. After a brief induction and surviving her first 'bottom wipe,' and working alongside a fellow carer she goes solo, except for her 'Customers' who need two carers.

What unfolds is the rich tapestry of her interaction with her customers and an insight into the qualities it takes to do the job well; patience, compassion, initiative, resourcefulness, resilience, hoist wizard, a wicked sense of humour and thick skin for the cursing that will come your way from those frustrated by their physical and mental decline.

Other health professionals; district nurses, physios, GPs, occupational therapists pop in for brief visits. It is the care worker who is the one constant in the lives of many of her customers, sharing stories and secrets. Though sorely tempted on occasion, not least by the abysmal pay, she stays.

It is worth pausing and reflecting that for some of us it will be our own bottoms that will need a wiper one day. One can only hope that they are valued and rewarded more than at present. The author and daughter compared their rates of pay when working on a Bank Holiday. The daughter caring for cats, she for people. Needless to say, the daughter earned more.

Ian McNamara

HSCN and friends News - October and November 2024...

HSCN Tea-breaks – October and November

The weekly Tea-breaks continued to inform, entertain, socialise and, on the part of one participant, be incredibly productive. Joan has knitted all the wonderful bonnets and mittens in the photo on the right, many of them during the Tea-breaks. They are now packed into Blythswood shoe boxes, where soon they will be keeping people warm and providing a bit of festive cheer.



Tea-break discussions during October and November included:

- Jess Carnegie, Community Engagement Officer, Torridon Estate, National Trust for Scotland. Jess has supported a weekly Wellbeing Walk in Torridon and a weekly Ceilidh evening. Anne joined the group for a walk and enjoyed meeting participants and appreciating the wonderful Torridon scenery
- Lorna Steele-McGinn – Community Engagement Officer, Highland Archive Service and Am Baile. Lorna told us some fascinating stories of people living in Highlands in the past. We are hoping she will come back again in 2025 and tell us more about the Herring Girls
- Helen Pickles, Curator, High Life Highland, Highland Folk Museum
- Clare Lister, Partnership & Events Manager, Social Security Scotland Pension Age Disability Benefit Launch
- Cath, Red Chair — help with Zoom
- Nina Semple, Centre Manager South Highland for Alzheimer Scotland, *offering the Brain Health Quiz along with 1:1 Personalised Action Planning. Other aspects of delivery including our Brain Health Awareness education piece and risk reduction programme are now into early 2025 for launch*
- Dean Wigglesworth, Home Energy Scotland – *providing independent and impartial energy advice.*



Silver Sunday at the Eastgate Centre, Inverness, 6th October 2024



HSCN joined in the Silver Sunday event at the Eastgate Centre, Inverness. Age UK's Silver Sunday is a national day where people of all generations can come together by hosting fun and free activities for older people. It is a day where older people can meet new people, visit new places, try new activities and connect with their local communities and the generations around them.

The co-ordinators donned their most silvery outfits including footwear (check out Jo's wonderful boots) and, joined by trustees Irene and Joan, had a lovely day chatting to friends old and new, enjoying the music and coffee provided by the Eastgate Centre, and sharing information about activities and support.



Thanks very much to everyone who helped with the event, to the Eastgate Centre and Inverness BIC, to Neil for carrying, photography and coffee, and everyone who came along to chat to us. Looking forward to next year's Silver Sunday event, which will be on Sunday 5th October 2025.

Highland Care Home Olympics Photography Competition 2024

HSCN was delighted to partner with Scottish Care during the Care Home Olympics and support a photography competition. At the October Board meeting trustees voted on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes. Trustees then enjoyed meeting with the award winners and presenting them with certificates and donations to the residents' funds.

1st Prize: It's a strike, Riverside House, Wick. The photo was taken by Jean Gulloch, one of the activity staff. Jean started as a carer in 2016 then became an activities co-ordinator a few years after. The photo was voted as favourite by residents and staff. The gentleman in the photo is called John, his family now live in Texas and are delighted with the photo too.

Trustee David Hannah presented residents at Riverside House with their winning cheque and certificate. Also joining in the occasion and appreciating the opportunity to talk to residents and staff were Anne McDonald, HSCN and Gwen Harrison, Scottish Care.



2nd Prize: Seatons Still Got It! Strathallan House, Strathpeffer Photographers Jorgie and Levi are relatives of care home residents. They were delighted to come to the Olympic day and did a bit of everything, including taking photos. The photo shows Gordon's reaction to scoring 4 out of 4 goals in Beat the Goalie. Gordon played for many teams including Ross County and Hibs. He normally mobilises with a Zimmer frame so to see him come to life with a ball at his feet was wonderful.



3rd Prize: The Olympic Strike! Fodderty House, Dingwall. A staff member took lots of action shots, which are the best kind as they are so natural. You can see the great effort being put in and the enjoyment everyone is having while doing the different events.

The bowler Anne has always enjoyed different sports. She especially loves when the Olympics are on and has a passion for the horse dressage and running races. Residents were delighted with their medals and wore them for the week. Ian and Joan from HSCN presented the cheques and certificates.



Bringing people together.... it's what we enjoy most!



27 people attended our 5th Café to Connect in Kingussie on Sunday 17th November. The café alternates between Kingussie and Newtonmore and is run by a partnership of Highland Senior Citizens Network, Badenoch Shinty Memories Group, Alzheimer Scotland, Caberfeidh Horizons and NHS Highland Community Mental Health Team. We plan to try a Café to Connect in other parts of Badenoch & Strathspey.



Our HSCN Lochaber Get-together on 18th November was in partnership with Caol Bite & Blether Group and Highland Council Tenant Participation. Following a slightly different format from our usual meetings, we started with a drop-in to meet the organisations informally over soup and ended with short talks. It worked well as a Big Bite & Blether!



18 older people and 1 support worker attended over the course of the event, engaging with representatives from Highland Senior Citizens Network, Police Scotland, Highland Council Tenant Participation, NHS Highland Technology Enabled Care, Highland Council Community Support and Change Mental Health.

HSCN Trustee, Joan, outlined HSCN's Peer-speaking Talks, and Lochaber's Police Scotland Preventions and Interventions Officer, Anna Innes, added advice on recognising and thwarting Bogus Doorstep Callers.

Colleen McGee from NHS Highland Technology Enabled Care brought along their new companion cat. These sensory robotic-pets are designed to bring comfort, joy and companionship, whilst helping to reduce stress and anxiety. The TEC Team recently held a competition to name their new feline team member – Please meet **Marmalade!**

Skye Older Peoples Welfare Committee



Celebrating the Past and Looking to the Future

Skye Old People's Welfare Committee and The Budhmor Fund

Skye Old People's Welfare Committee reached their 70th Anniversary earlier this year. Their Annual General Meeting in November provided a great occasion to celebrate their past work providing transport and connection for thousands of older people over the years. Having passed their last minibus on to another community organisation, they unveiled the next chapter for the charity - administering "The Budhmor Fund".

Budhmor House care home opened in 1971. In recent years, it required urgent upgrading and refurbishing. A considerable fund-raising effort was undertaken by the local community to help ensure that this happened. However, the funds raised were never used and Budhmor House was subsequently closed down in 2022 by the then operators, Crossreach.

Given that it was already an established organisation, Skye Old Peoples Welfare Committee was approached to ensure that funds raised came back to the island. This has now happened, and a new group of voluntary trustees has been added to the committee to help administer the funds.

The Budhmor Fund is now available **for groups whose work benefits older people in Skye and Raasay**. Voluntary groups working with older people can apply for a grant up to a maximum of £5000. While larger grants from the Budhmor Fund should ideally be used to attract matched funding those of up to £500 are free from this requirement. Applications from local lunch clubs run by volunteers are particularly welcome.

More details and application forms available from the fund's website at

www.budhморfund.com/ and e-mail contact is Budhморfund@gmail.com



The Budhmor Fund launch was accompanied by fabulous photos and memorabilia from both Skye Old Peoples Welfare Committee and Budhmor House. A trip down memory lane before travelling new highways!

Janet Lamont, a longstanding volunteer organising minibus use in the north end of Skye, received a floral token of appreciation for her dedication.

Chrisanne MacDonald (SOPWC Treasurer), Janet Lamont(volunteer) and Jo Cowan, Age Scotland and HSCN

Sharing Good News!

Congratulations to Badenoch Men's Shed as they enter an exciting new development phase. Following their first Open Evening in April, which Highland Senior Citizens Network was delighted to support, they have met regularly - at the MacPherson Museum in Newtonmore and in The Paper Shop Bakery in Kingussie.



The steering group has been working away to promote the Men's

Shed, put together a constitution, gain charitable status and find premises. They recently identified premises at the former telephone exchange in Kingussie, and on 3rd December, received confirmation of their charitable status. We wish the team the best of luck for an exciting future as they develop their shed!

Contact details: e-mail badenochmenshed@gmail.com or phone 07525 366736

Camerados

The great thing about travelling around speaking to fabulous community groups who are making a difference in their communities is that you learn something new everywhere you go. When I was down in Lochgilphead recently visiting the MS Centre, I was interested to learn about their Camerados Public Living Room which they hold every Monday from 12 until 2.



You can find out more about Camerados online at <https://camerados.org/>

Here's a small snapshot from the website about the Camerados movement.

Camerados is a social movement – which really just means that there are lots and lots of us (from Baltimore to Blackpool) who think being a bit more human is a good idea. The movement started in 2015 and the main thing you'll see us doing is opening Public Living Rooms in our communities – welcoming, no-agenda places for folk to sit down with a cuppa, have a chat, and feel more human.

The Camerados movement is open to anyone, all that is asked is that you try to follow the simple ideas below. We've tried these in the toughest of situations and they seem to work, give them a go.

MIX WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT LIKE YOU
ASK SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING TO HELP YOU
NO FIXING – JUST BE ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER
IT'S OK TO DISAGREE RESPECTFULLY
TO BE SILLY IS TO BE HUMAN
IT'S OKAY TO BE A BIT RUBBISH SOMETIMES

Coming up – Activities and Dates for your diary...

HSCN Virtual Tea-breaks, 11am until 12 noon, Thursday's on Zoom

Coming up in December:

- 12th December, Ewen McIntosh, An Inverness Strategy, Area Place Plans, The Highland Council
- 19th December – A Festive Tea-break

Our last Tea-break for 2024 is on Thursday 19th December. We will meet back up at 11am on Thursday 16th January 2025. Please contact Anne – anne-hscn@outlook.com or 07933 653313 - if you would like to join in a Tea-break.

2025 will see a change to the Tea-break format, with HSCN members taking on the role of volunteer Tea-break facilitators.

Three Tea-breaks a month will be Tea-break 'brew and blether', facilitated by HSCN members. The 4th Tea-break will continue to be facilitated by a HSCN co-ordinator, with an invited guest focusing on a particular topic.



HSCN Weekly Online Tea-break

Thursday 11am until 12 noon, on Zoom



Around 10 to 15 members, from across Highland, meet up each week. Some weeks are purely social and others we have an invited guest. Our nearly 200 Tea-breaks topics have included:

- Digital Switchover, NHS Technology Enabled Care
 - Torridon, National Trust for Scotland
 - Carer Services Development, NHS Highland
 - New Quality Questionnaire, Care Inspectorate
 - UHI /NHS Past, Present and Future Research, UHI
 - Digital Connections, Myself Management
 - Mindfulness
 - Creative Activities with Creativity in Care
 - End of Life, EASE and Highland Hospice Last Aid
 - Care consultation and Air Ambulance re-procurement consultation
- We share the topics for the coming month in our News-sheet.



To join us for a particular topic or every week contact Anne for the link: anne-hscn@outlook.com

HSCN Peer Talk Series – 5 talks available...



Highland Senior Citizens Network
Nothing about us without us

HSCN Peer Talk Series



Two of our Board members have talks specially prepared for our member groups. We can deliver these to your local group:

- Stay safe from Scams
- Stay safe on your doorstep (Avoiding Urban & Rural Crime)
- Stay safe from Falls (Health & Well-being)
- Stay safe from Abuse (including Advocacy & POA)
- Reducing the risk of Dementia

All we need to know is:

- the name of the group
- where the talk will be delivered
- the time of starting and how long the talk should last
- an estimate of how many people are likely to attend. This is required as we try to produce some back-up material.

Please contact one of our co-ordinators for further information, identifying which talk you are interested in:

Anne McDonald	anne-hscn@outlook.com	07933 653313
Jo Cowan	jo-hscn@outlook.com	07933 653585

Free resources for community groups - please get in touch

Would your community group like to receive free resources to support your community project?

The Highland Health Sciences Library (<https://libguides.uhi.ac.uk/hhsl>) has been collaborating in a community project with High Life Highland Libraries. This project takes materials no longer required by High Life Highland and redistributes them free of charge to community settings.

Settings catered for include; care homes, community centres, hospitals, church groups, community groups, nurseries.

The NHS Highland Internal mail system is used to distribute materials or these can be picked up from the Health Science Library by appointment. If you are using the NHS Highland Internal mail system, please ensure you have cleared this with the relevant NHS location.

There is a wide range of materials available which can be tailored to your community group requirements. Material is mainly books - large print, western, romance, novels, arts and crafts, Gaelic and reminiscence.

Examples of the project in action include: arts, crafts and reminiscence materials supplied to various dementia groups in Lochaber, adult and child materials supplied to community projects in the Merkinch area of Inverness.

Please send your requirements, contact details and NHS Highland Internal mail location to: chris.omalley@uhi.ac.uk. The library is irregularly staffed but staff can also be contacted via the following three telephone numbers - 01463-279800, 01463-279838 or 01463-279837.

Inverness Crown Court Hotel - Everyday from 12pm

With winter fuel allowance cuts affecting many in the community, the Inverness Crown Court Hotel want to do their part to make sure everyone stays warm and comfortable this season. They are inviting all elderly locals to join them for free tea or coffee at their bar – no charge, no obligation, just a warm place to relax and enjoy a hot drink.



Our Centre

Alzheimer Scotland would like to warmly welcome you to our Inverness Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre. If you're interested in learning more about how to protect your brain health, or if you or a loved one has been diagnosed with dementia, we're here to help.



Our Centres offer friendly, accessible environments for everyone to enjoy. Whether you want to pop-in for some information, advice or support, our friendly staff and volunteers will be able to help you. Each Centre is also a base for our wide range of local groups and activities.

Our Inverness Centre, based at Strothers Lane, offers a range of regular groups including chair yoga, exercising, information sessions, regular drop-in cafes, and reminiscing – there's something for everyone.. Sessions are designed to boost wellbeing and are facilitated by our highly trained staff.

If you haven't been diagnosed with dementia but would like to find out more about how to keep your brain healthy, you can also drop in for a chat.

The Centre is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and follows the principles of dementia-friendly design. It has been carefully planned to create a local, familiar feel with a sense of homeliness which we know is important to help everyone feel comfortable and at ease.

We look forward to seeing you.



Book in for a Brain Health Chat at the Inverness Brain Health & Dementia Resource Centre Did you know small lifestyle changes could reduce your risk of dementia by up to 45%? Research shows that addressing 14 modifiable risk factors - like staying socially connected, active and eating well - can have a big impact on keeping your brain healthy.

That's why Alzheimer Scotland is putting prevention at the heart of its strategy and now has nine **Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centres** across Scotland, including one right here on Strothers Lane in Inverness. Our goal is simple: to make prevention accessible to everyone. No matter your age or stage in life, it's never too early - or too late - to start looking after your brain.

What Is a Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre? These centres are safe, friendly and welcoming spaces designed with you in mind. Following dementia-friendly design principles, each centre feels homely - a relaxed place where you can have a chat over a cuppa.

Our trained staff are here to guide you through practical steps to improve your brain health. Whether you're worried about your memory, want to learn preventative tips, or simply want advice, we're here to help. The centres also offer information and support for people living with dementia, their families, and carers, while hosting local groups and activities to boost confidence and well-being.

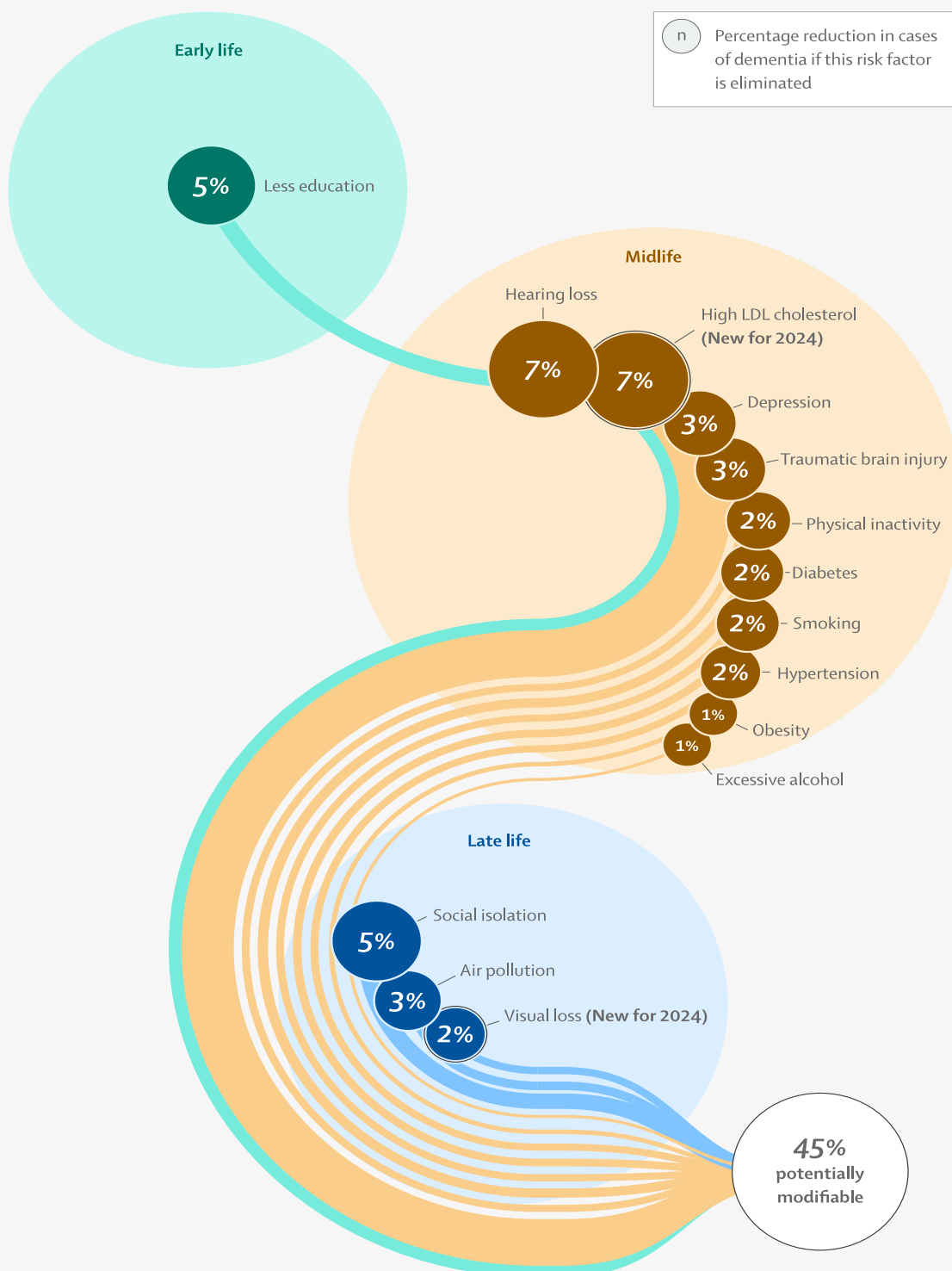
What Happens at a Brain Health Chat? A **Brain Health Chat** is a relaxed and informal conversation. You'll take a quick quiz that highlights potential risk factors for dementia, and with help from one of our friendly staff, create a personalised action plan of practical, manageable tips to suit your lifestyle.

Jim's story is a great example. Jim came to a Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre motivated by a family history of Alzheimer's and concerns about his memory. During his chat, he opened up for the first time about some lifestyle habits, including his drinking. "It's been life-changing," he said. "The first step was admitting the problem to myself." Thanks to ongoing support, Jim is now making positive changes and feels much more focused about the future.

How Can You Get Involved? Drop in anytime during opening hours or call us at **01463 711707** to schedule a Brain Health Chat. It's ideal for anyone - whether you're newly retired, concerned about memory changes, or simply looking to develop lifelong habits for brain health.

Risk factors for dementia — 2024 update

The 2024 update to the standing Lancet Commission on dementia prevention, intervention, and care adds two new risk factors (high LDL cholesterol and vision loss) and indicates that nearly half of all dementia cases worldwide could be prevented or delayed by addressing 14 modifiable risk factors.



Read the full commission update at [thelancet.com/commissions/dementia-prevention-intervention-care](https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/dementia-prevention-intervention-care)

Livingston G, Huntley J, Liu KY, et al. Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the Lancet standing Commission. *The Lancet* 2024; published online July 31. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)01296-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)01296-0).

THURSO

Christmas Day Meal Delivery for Thurso Residents

The meal is cooked fresh and prepared (and delivered) by a team of volunteers on Christmas Day at lunchtime between 12 and 1pm.

Bookings are open to people in and around Thurso who are spending Christmas alone and families who are struggling to put food on the table due to the cost-of-living crisis.

There is no charge - but any donations are gratefully received.

TO BOOK PLEASE CALL 01847 867 310 AND LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER AND WE WILL GET BACK TO YOU.



Thurso
Community Development Trust

**- BOOKINGS OPEN -
until 16th December**



Step FORWARD

A walking group in Inverness for people who have been bereaved, led by Highland Wild Walks.

Join us for gentle yet brisk health and wellbeing walks with a friendly and supportive group of people who have all recently experienced a significant bereavement.

Fourth Tuesday morning of each month.

You do not need any previous connection with Highland Hospice to join.

For more information or to register please contact Mandy Fraser, Bereavement Officer, on 07709717586 / 01463 243132 or email bereavement@highlandhospice.org.uk



Highland Hospice is a registered Scottish Charity No: SC011227

Digital Skills help

Digital Skills Sessions

Muir of Ord Library
Mondays 11:30am-12:30pm (from 11th November)

- Phone/ tablet/ laptop set up
- Computing for everyday life
- Understanding apps
- Keeping safe online

Contact:
Kirsty Maciver, Adult Learning Coordinator
07585984097
kirsty.maciver@highland.gov.uk



Digital Skills Help Hub

Invergordon Job Centre: Wednesdays 11am-12:30pm
Dingwall Job Centre: Fridays 11am -12:30pm

Digital Skills support with online forms, uploading documents, using your smart phone and basic computing

Book a session via DWP Job coaches



Digital Skills Sessions

Dingwall Library
Thursdays 12:30-2:30

- Phone/ tablet/ laptop set up
- Computing for everyday life
- Understanding apps
- Keeping safe online

Contact:
Kirsty Maciver, Adult Learning Coordinator
07585984097
kirsty.maciver@highland.gov.uk



Acts of Kindness Inverness and the Highlands was initially set up as a Covid-response group. They now aim to deliver food parcels and care items to vulnerable older adults who will fail to meet criteria for the winter fuel payments. To contact them for more information email actsofkindness@outlook.com, call 07389094816 or via the [Acts of Kindness Inverness and the Highlands Facebook page](#). They aim to respond on Monday and Thursday evenings between the hours of 6pm and 8pm.

To anyone who will be alone in Inverness on Christmas Day...

CHRISTMAS DAY
Hot Food & Community

11am-3pm
Caledonian Martial Arts & Fitness
(Ice Centre, Bught Drive IV35SR)

Come by for a soup & sandwich, tea & biscuits
Get warm and don't be alone on Christmas

Email: HighlandTopTeam@gmail.com for more info or to get involved!

Useful information and support

Police Scotland – Driver Engagement North Scheme

The Driver Engagement North Scheme was developed in partnership with Road Safety Scotland, to combat the increasing number of fatal and serious road traffic collisions involving older drivers or those that were medically unfit to drive. This programme was specifically created to engage with those nearing the end of their driving life for these reasons and to allow this engagement to occur in an informal and interactive setting.



The Simulator has been developed, to provide assistance to drivers and their families, that may be nearing the end of their driving life and would like to assess their "sharpness" and continued suitability to drive. It is desktop computer based, with three monitors positioned to replicate the views that are available when driving. There is a fixed steering wheel, gears, and pedals below. The Simulator is portable and can be set up anywhere that there is power, a table and chair.

It is pre-programmed with scenarios and the driver is requested to drive as they would and respond to any perceived hazards. In response to these hazards, they should drive appropriately and evidence their acknowledgement of the hazard by pressing a button on the steering wheel.

Each scenario takes a few minutes and takes place in a relaxed scenario, with verbal assistance coming from the officer hosting the workshop. At conclusion, the driver is offered feedback and advice. The Simulator is not a pass/fail exercise and is designed to encourage conversation and participation, in what has previously been looked upon as a taboo subject.

All that is required within the venue, is a reasonable table (approximately 180cm x 80cm), chair and access to power. We are also looking to prepare a short (20 minute) PowerPoint presentation, that would be delivered prior to the practical input.

Please let me know if this is something that you would be interested in getting involved with.

Neil MacDonald, Highland and Islands Road Policing Unit, Police Scotland

Dingwall Police Station. Tel: 01349 869562

neil.macdonald2@scotland.police.uk

Pension Age Disability Payment

A new disability benefit for people of State Pension age has opened for applications from people living in five local authority areas, including Highland. Pension Age Disability Payment is the 15th benefit Social Security Scotland is delivering in Scotland.

It is for people of State Pension age and over who are disabled or have a long-term health condition that means they need help looking after themselves or supervision to stay safe or have a terminal illness.

People who live in Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland can now apply. The payment will be available across all of Scotland by 22 April next year.

The payment is not means-tested and is worth between £290 and £434 a month depending on the needs of the person who gets it.

Pension Age Disability Payment is replacing Attendance Allowance in Scotland, which is delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). People who already get Attendance Allowance do not need to apply separately as their award will automatically be moved to Social Security Scotland, starting early 2025.

There is a separate fast-track application process for people who are terminally ill and eligible people will be entitled to the higher rate of payment regardless of how long they have had a terminal illness.

People can apply via a paper application form, online at mygov.scot/pensiondisability or by calling Social Security Scotland for free on 0800 182 2222.

People can get in person support to apply from Social Security Scotland's community based advisors. Call to make an appointment.



Pension Age Disability Payment

Financial support for older people who are disabled or have a long-term health condition.

To find out more and apply:

 **0800 182 2222**

mygov.scot/pensiondisability



**Social Security
Scotland**

Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Carer Support Payment



Social Security
Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba



Carer Support Payment

Looking after someone who receives disability benefits?

Check if you're entitled to financial help

 **0800 182 2222**

mygov.scot/CarerSupport



Scan to find out more and apply online.



Free tax advice helpline launches in Scotland to help with HMRC queries. *Advice Direct Scotland has launched a new free advice service to assist individuals and businesses with their tax affairs and provide an alternative to calling HMRC.*



The service, called taxadvice.scot, can be reached online or by phone, with specialist advisers ready to help both individuals and businesses with tax queries. Its key aim is to offer free advice to customers who may face difficulties in understanding their tax obligations, need help dealing with tax-related debts, or are digitally excluded from accessing HMRC's services.

Advice Direct Scotland is one of 12 voluntary and community sector organisations across the UK enlisted by HMRC to deliver tailored tax and benefits advice, and the only one providing the service in Scotland.

The advisers at taxadvice.scot can answer questions on a wide range of areas, from PAYE and National Insurance queries to advise on filling in self-assessment forms. They can also offer guidance on pensions, inheritance tax, capital gains tax, and marriage allowance, as well as help with claiming child benefit and tax credits. Customers can also receive support in claiming tax refunds and managing any tax-related debts.

This new service complements Advice Direct Scotland's existing consumer support channels, including energyadvice.scot, consumeradvice.scot, and moneyadvice.scot. The charity handles more than 900,000 customer contacts a year, providing free, impartial advice to everyone in Scotland, regardless of their circumstances.

Andrew Bartlett, chief executive of Advice Direct Scotland, said: "We are delighted to be launching this new service, which will help people living in Scotland navigate the complexities of the UK tax system. "Anyone who has ever filled in a self-assessment form will know how difficult the process can be, and trying to look up answers online can often be just as confusing. The launch of taxadvice.scot means that people now have the option of picking up the phone to a friendly adviser, without any charge.

"We are particularly keen to break down the barriers to accessing advice by helping those who might find it difficult to access HMRC's digital services. Our message for anyone in Scotland confused by their tax obligations is that calling HMRC isn't your only option. You can visit taxadvice.scot or call us on 0800 756 3381.

DO YOU NEED EXTRA SUPPORT IN A POWERCUT?



DO YOU LIVE WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS, CARE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN OR SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA OR HAVE COMMUNICATION NEEDS?

Register for free Priority Services and we can provide you with:

- Regular updates
- Safety advice
- Communication in large print, Braille, alternative languages or BSL
- Dedicated 24hour helpline

Everyone has different needs so scan, visit or call for more information



Visit us
psrscotland.com



or call us on
0800 294 3259



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

Where possible in any information we share we try to include a phone number so that members who are not online can find out more if they want.

Where there is no phone contact, and you would like more information, please contact Anne or Jo and we will do our best to find out for you.

Great Wilderness Challenge 2024 raises £2400 for HSCN



Our Great Wilderness Challenge participation raised £2,400 for HSCN this year. Thanks to all who took part, those who sponsored them, and the wonderful Great Wilderness Challenge organisers and supporters who organise such a fantastic event every year. Looking forward to coming back next year.

Staying in touch with Highland Senior Citizens Network

Phone or email our co-ordinators:

Anne McDonald 07933 653313

anne-hscn@outlook.com

Jo Cowan 07933 653585

jo-hscn@outlook.com

call the HSCN phone 07716 884 989

e-mail on hscn@hotmail.co.uk

write to Box 301, Mailboxes, 8 Church Street,
Inverness IV1 1EA

visit our website www.hscn.co.uk

follow us on Twitter & Facebook

