

Highland Senior Citizens Network

Nothing about us without us

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SCO34260 Feb/March 2025

Chair's Introduction

What's in a word? When it comes to the word 'Frailty', quite a lot actually. A recent article in a journal asked the question: 'Does frailty need a new name?'. The paper explains how the clinical concept of frailty has been an important advance in how the medical world approaches the care of older people. It is central to evidence-based medicine.

However, research on public perceptions of frailty shows that older people commonly understand frailty to be a state of physical, psychological, and social decline linked to dependency, loss of identity, social exclusion, and stigma. It is associated with negative age-related stereotypes. "Frail" is thus often understood as a pejorative term and can have connotations of a weak incapable person who is "failing".

By contrast, geriatricians use frailty to describe a reduction in biological reserves across multiple body systems that reduces the body's capacity to respond to stressors, resulting in increased vulnerability to adverse health outcomes associated with the ageing process. Frailty explains why an apparently small event (e.g. a new drug, minor infection, or minor surgery) results in a disproportionately large change in health state, such as from independent to dependent, or lucid to delirious.

The article advocates working collaboratively with older people to develop ways of talking about frailty that help biomedically frail people to make sense of their experiences and maintain their wellbeing: an understanding of frailty that is supportive and not a barrier to accessing care.

Ian McNamara

Staying in touch with Highland Senior Citizens Network

Phone or e-mail 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 301,8 Church Street, Inverness IV1 1EA

visit our website www.hscn.co.uk follow us on X (Twitter) and via Facebook



Getting together to address support services in Skye and Lochalsh

A 3-year project seeking to improve the development and delivery of community support services for adults is currently underway in Skye and Lochalsh.

The **Skye** and **Lochalsh Health Wellbeing** and **Welfare Collaboration Project** is being led by Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations (SLCVO) – a charity that has been supporting community activity in the local area for over 70 years. With member groups active in a wide range of activities they are well placed to understand the unique health and welfare challenges faced by individuals living in their part of remote and rural Highland.

SLCVO are busy gathering evidence of the support needs of individuals, identifying gaps in service provision, and looking at innovative partnership working between community groups, NHS Highland, the Highland Council and other agencies.

The first year of the project has already identified over 300 volunteer-led community groups supporting the health and wellbeing of people living in the area. These include:-

- local charities offering specific support for vulnerable people such as those with mental health conditions, dementia, learning disabilities and women experiencing domestic violence.
- community groups running activities that contribute to the general wellbeing of residents – keeping people active, engaging in social activities and learning new skills.

The project will publish an updated *Third Sector Profile* and compile a *Community Directory* of health wellbeing and welfare support services available in the Skye and Lochalsh area. By August 2025, a Third Sector Delivery Plan for Health Wellbeing and Welfare Support Services will have been published and added at strategic level for Community Planning to take forward and inform the development of future Scottish Government priorities.

If you are a resident in Skye and Lochalsh, SLCVO would love to hear from you!

"In April-May 2025 we will be conducting a community needs assessment, asking people what they feel contributes to their own mental and physical wellbeing, whether they feel their needs are being supported and if they see obvious gaps and barriers to support services in the community. Your responses are crucial to the development of our Delivery Plan – so please add your voice!" **To get in touch and learn more:**-

contact Michelle Seviour, Research and Engagement Officer SLCVO projects@slcvo.org.uk Mobile: 07522544279



Unite the Union were in Inverness at the end of January, spearheading their campaign to reinstate the Winter Fuel Allowance for all pensioners. Unite represents over 20,000 pensioners in Scotland, and with the bitter weather we've experienced these past weeks, we are seriously concerned about how they will heat their homes over the coming months.

Unite's survey shows that more than 67% of Scottish members feel that the cut to the Winter Fuel Allowance is unfair. The devolved leadership in Scotland have backed our campaign and signed our pledge to call for this vital payment to be reintroduced.

Our campaign continues to stay at the top of the political agenda, and we will continue to act and lobby politicians. Recently, in Scotland, we held a 100-strong rally at Holyrood and another in Northern Ireland.



This work has ensured significant victories in Scotland and Northern Ireland and local councils in England.

These victories come off the back of a strong organising campaign by retired members and their local communities.

- · Scotland £100 for every pensioner from next winter, rising to £200-£300 for those on pension credit
- · Northern Ireland £100 for every pensioner who has lost their winter fuel payment, to be paid by the end of March this year

Our campaigning with retired members has forced change in Doncaster, where the local council has announced a one-off payment of £175 for pensioners claiming housing benefit or Local Council Tax Reduction. Highland Council's City of Inverness Area Committee have also committed to an Inverness Winter Fuel Payment, this heavily means-tested benefit will leave thousands of pensioners in the cold.

Though these changes are a step in the right direction, they do not go far enough to alleviate the devastating impact of this winter on our pensioners' health and finances.

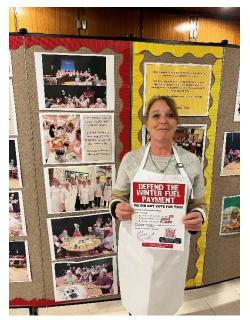
This month we met with representatives from across the Highland Council to discuss the possibility of providing more winter fuel support to those who have lost access to the payment.





With Cllrs Ruraidh Stewart and Isabelle MacKenzie

With Cllrs Alex Graham and Trish Robertson



We are also setting our sights on the Westminster government, and with many more actions planned in the coming weeks this campaign will continue to grow. We need politicians to make different choices: our research shows that a wealth tax of 1% on assets over £4m in the United Kingdom would raise an additional £23bn a year – this would more than cover the £1.4bn that Westminster is hoping to recoup by leaving vulnerable people freezing in extreme weather. We'll be building on this activity in weeks to come with actions taking place in Doncaster, Northern Ireland, and Scotland.

At Merkinch Lunch Club

We need you to get involved in our campaign, on a local or a national level, and show government officials that they cannot treat pensioners this way. You can show your support by:

- <u>Signing our Wealth Tax petition</u> at <u>www.actionnetwork.org/tax-the-rich-to-pay-</u> for-winter-fuel
- Writing to your Councillor to ask what they are doing to protect pensioners this winter (get in touch below if you'd like a template)
- Get in touch to find out more ufwe@unitetheunion.org or 07718 668506

Discover the Inclusive Cycling Experience in Inverness

Hi, I'm Katie Noble, a development officer for Cycling UK's **Inclusive Cycling Experience** project in Inverness. This initiative, funded by Motability, offers free access to adaptive cycling sessions for people with long-term health conditions, age-related disabilities, and disabled people.

Whether you're an individual looking to try something new or part of a group seeking an enjoyable, inclusive activity, we're here to help. We offer a wide range of cycles to suit different needs, including standard e-cycles, comfortable recumbent trikes with electric assist, and tandems where a partner can act as your pilot. We can make further adaptations to ensure the right fit for every participant.



Our sessions are designed to help you find the perfect cycle and build your confidence and skills at your own pace. Once you're ready, you can continue to use our cycles through short-term or long-term loans. Day loans involve collecting and returning the cycle on the same day, while long-term loans allow you to take the cycle home, with locks, lights, and helmets provided.

We're based at the beautiful Inverness Campus of UHI, which provides a safe and scenic environment to enjoy cycling. For many participants, the experience is life-changing.

One participant shared:

"Actually being able to ride a bike again and with no pain was amazing. The second bike was definitely more comfortable, and the assisted start is a brilliant idea. I will definitely be using the service again."

Another reflected on the impact:

"Because if you think about it in black and white, it's just cycling. But it's not for our guys: it's so much more than that. The experience will last with them, and they'll think and talk about it for years to come—it's huge. The impact of doing something new, doing something challenging, something physical."

If you're interested in booking a session or have questions, please get in touch. You can email me at inclusivecycling@cyclinguk.org or call **07392 279798**. Whether you're trying cycling for the first time or rediscovering it after years, we'd love to help you experience the joy of being active on wheels.

Thursday Feb 20 2025

Adult Protection Day

Culloden-Balloch Baptist Church, Wellside Road, Balloch, Inverness IV2 7GS

financial Harm



Do you support people at risk of financial harm?

Do you want to learn more about Adult Protection?

Are you worried about financial harm?

Professionals Session 10:00am - 1pm

DWP, ASP, AWI, Predatory Marriage

Public Session 12:30pm - 3pm

Trading Standards on Scams, info stalls – advocacy, Alzheimer's Scotland, hourglass, Police and more!

FREE prize bingo & Tea/Coffee & Cakes!



FREE Admission! Tickets HERE



Let's Talk Financial Harm



(walk-ins accepted if tickets are unavailable)
https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/Highlandadultprotection

Thursday <u>Feb</u> 20 2025

Adult Protection Day

Culloden-Balloch Baptist Church, Wellside Road, Balloch, Inverness IV2 7GS

Event Schedule

This event is to share awareness on how to protect yourself or adults you support from harm – Please spread the word, we look forward to meeting you! The café will be open for lunch.

	TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
	10am	Arrival/Visit Stalls & Enjoy Tea/Coffee	
	10:30am - 11am	AWI & 3 Brothers Learning Review	Catriona Grant & Molly Gilbert
	11am - 12pm	Predatory Marriage	Daphne Franks (Her Personal Story)
	12pm - 12:30pm	Trading Standards	Mark McGinty
	OPEN TO PUBLIC 12:30PM		
	12:30pm - 1pm	Lunch	
	1pm	Scam Awareness	Mark McGinty
	1:30pm	Prize Bingo!	Ariane
3	2pm - 2:30pm	AWI: Power of Attorney Info "What is Adult Protection?"	Catriona Grant & Molly Gilbert
	2:30pm - 3pm	Close of Day Visit Stalls & Enjoy Tea/Coffee	



FREE Admission! Tickets HERE



Let's Talk Financial Harm



(walk-ins accepted if tickets are unavailable)
https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/Highlandadultprotection

Simple Technology

ROADSHOWS

Drop-in to your local event to see how simple technology can help vulnerable individuals stay independent, healthy, and happy.

- 03 April Alness 10am 12pm
- 03 April Ullapool 3pm 5pm
- 10 April Drumnadrochit 10am 12pm
- 10 April Fort William 3pm 5pm
- 11 April Mallaig 11am 1pm
- 14 April Kyle of Lochalsh 10am 12pm
- 14 April Portree 2.30pm 4.30pm
- 17 April Grantown on Spey 10am 12pm
- 17 April Kingussie 2.30pm 4.30pm
- 22 April Wick 10.30am 12.30pm
- 22 April Thurso 2.30pm 4.30pm
- 24 April Inverness 10am 12pm
- 28 April Lairg 10am 12pm
- 28 April Kinlochbervie 3pm 5pm

For information on venues contact: nhshighland.telecare@nhs.scot 07929 713760



Local Services













Highland Mindfulness Group Events

The Highland Mindfulness
Group is a local charity with a team of 11 trained mindfulness facilitators. We offer a variety of mindfulness sessions and activities in person and on Zoom.

Mindfulness can bring more awareness, gratitude, kindness & compassion into our lives and can help us feel more relaxed and able to cope. It can also help to build resilience. It is a well validated scientific approach which can help with stress, anxiety, depression, isolation and chronic pain.

MINDFULNESS IN NATURE Thursday 13th February 2025 (10am to 1pm) on the Bunloit Estate near Drumnadrochit

Led by Stephen Wiseman from Nature4Health and Peter Wilkes from the Highland Mindfulness Group, our nature sessions include basic mindfulness techniques to improve awareness, concentration and relaxation. We will connect with nature in beautiful surroundings and appreciate new experiences in safe company. These regular sessions include a variety of mindfulness meditation practices - some sitting and others will involve moving and observing nature. Meet in Drumnadrochit at 9.30am. **Free but booking required.**

ANXIETY WORKSHOPS

Friday 28th February from 11am - 12.30pm at the RNI Chapel, Ness Walk, Inverness Monday 3rd March from 7pm - 8.30pm on Zoom

Join us for a 1.5-hour group workshop designed to help you manage anxiety through mindfulness techniques. Some people can become overwhelmed by anxiety and want to avoid situations that might make them frightened or anxious. It can be hard to break this cycle, but there are lots of ways to do it. In this workshop with experienced mindfulness facilitator Rhona Mackenzie, you'll gain valuable tools to bring mindfulness into your daily life including breathing exercises to calm your mind, relaxation methods to reduce stress and self-soothing practices for inner peace. **Free but booking required.**

LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS WORKSHOPS Thursday 13th March from 10.30am - 12.30pm on Zoom Wednesday 26th March from 10.30am - 12.30pm at the RNI chapel, Ness Walk, Inverness

This 2-hour free workshop is for anyone living with a long-term health condition or persistent pain. The workshop will be delivered by Catherine Lavelle from her own lived experience. When we have a long-term health condition regardless of cause, our nervous system can become dysregulated. Mindfulness can have many benefits for those experiencing pain or illness. The awareness you develop through mindfulness helps to steady, calm and regulate our nervous system. **Free but booking required.**

REGULAR SESSIONS IN INVERNESS

Our regular sessions are run at the RNI Chapel (Ness Walk, Inverness) every fortnight. The next ones are on Thursdays 6th February, 20th February, 6th March, 20th March, 3rd April, 17th April 2025. These informal sessions are from 10.30am - 12.30pm and consist of guided meditation practices and time to talk about our mindfulness experiences. Beginners welcome. Please bring anything you need to be comfortable - e.g. blanket, yoga mat if you wish to lie down, and something to drink if you wish. **Booking is not required. Donations welcome** (suggested £3 - £5).

We also run Meditation Days in the RNI chapel every 4-6 weeks. The next ones are on Friday 7th March and Friday 11th April from 10am – 4pm. **Booking required. Suggested donation £10 - £15.**

COURSES

We currently run courses on Zoom (usually 4 or 8 weeks) for all levels of experience from beginners to Intermediate and Advanced. **See our website for costs and dates.**

ZOOM SESSIONS

We have a regular schedule of free drop-in sessions on Zoom which feature a guided meditation. These are on weekday mornings from 8.30am – 9.15am, on Tuesday evenings from 7pm - 7.30pm and Sunday afternoons from 4pm – 4.30pm. Open to anyone with any level of experience.

CONTACT: Please contact Daniel Mackenzie-Winters (Project Co-ordinator) by email highlandmindfulness@gmail.com or phone 01463 22 96 60.

Check the What's On page for full details of all our activities - https://highlandmindfulness.co.uk/calendar/ More dates are added regularly.

Screening events for 'Toll': Highland Remembering Together Project, remembering the impact of Covid-19 on communities.

HSCN contributed to this project through discussion at the Tea-breaks, where we proposed an inscription for one of the bells, which will be on display. We have now been invited to the final screening events, where the film response will be shown to the public for the first time, and the bells will be brought together.

Dates and locations of the screenings:

Wick - Friday 28th February at 10am and 1pm & Saturday 1st March at 6pm (opening event) - the first and largest event to start the series - this screening will take the form of a double-screen projected film installation in the harbour warehouse in Wick and be hosted by Lyth Arts Centre and lead artists, Hector, Cat and Sinéad, including an informal meal and ceilidh on the Saturday evening.

Inverness - Thursday 6th, Friday 7th and Saturday 8th March 10am - 4pm - this public event will take place in the Eastgate centre with the film shown on loop across two large TV screens.

Fort William - Friday 14th March at 11.30am and 6pm (tbc), Caol Community Centre - this event will take the form of a double screen projected film installation with an informal meal at the evening screening.

Please let Anne know if you are interested in attending any of the above events and we will try to co-ordinate HSCN attendance.

Call on 07933 653313 or e-mail anne-hscn@outlook.com



Looking for your Feedback on Access to Public Services

Highland Senior Citizens Network would be interested in hearing your feedback on any poor experiences of contacting Highland Council, NHS Highland or other public services. A few members have recently raised the issue of difficulties in contacting agencies – particularly where face-to-

face options have diminished, and where online is not an option for the person. It would be useful to hear about **specific** instances – who you were trying to call, when, how often and for how long, and the outcome.

Please contact Jo or Anne, our HSCN Co-ordinators, to let us know of any difficulty in connecting with services. We are, of course, always happy to hear about good experiences too!

HSCN Tea-breaks introduce the 'Brew and A Blether'

Since January 2021 HSCN members from across Highland have been meeting up over Zoom on Thursday morning to socialise, hear from services and talk about a huge variety of topics. We have an invited guest most weeks, but the 'Just a Tea-break' weeks, without a guest, are often the most popular with attendees, with this week's discussion ranging from support with technology, cataract treatment, mountaineering, and the Battle of Waterloo!

For 2025 we are going to be trying something a bit different. There will still be one monthly Tea-break, facilitated by one of the Co-ordinators with an invited guest. The other weeks will become 'Brew and A Blether' chats, facilitated by volunteers who are HSCN members.

Tea-breaks and 'Brew and A Blethers' will continue to take place on Thursday from 11am until 12noon, over Zoom. For members joining there will be no change - contact Anne for the Zoom link: anne-hscn@outlook.com

- and be ready on a Thursday morning with your cuppa of choice to click on the link at 11am and catch up with the news from other members across the Highlands.

Tea-break Guests coming up: 11am on Thursday 6th March:
Unite the Union update on the Winter Fuel Payment Campaign
All welcome! Please get in touch with us if you would like to join this meeting.

..also Highland Senior Citizens Network would be interested in hearing from you if the introduction of means-testing for Winter Fuel Payment has adversely affected you.

Scottish Human Rights Commission Report on the Highlands & Islands

In November 2024 SHRC published "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands & Islands", a report highlighting the experiences of citizens in this previously under-monitored area. "By listening to the lived experiences of residents and organisations in the area, as well as through our human rights treaty monitoring work, we identified specific issues affecting rural and island communities, such as:

- Slow and inaccessible health care services
- Lack of affordable housing
- Limited access to sufficient and nutritious food
- Poverty related gaps in education
- Limited access to technology and poor internet connectivity
- Fuel poverty"

The report can be accessed on the Scottish Human Rights Commission website at https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/projects-and-programmes/spotlight-projects/economic-social-and-cultural-rights-in-the-highlands-and-islands/



Are you involved in an intergenerational project – or would you like to learn more about intergenerational practice? If so, why not join **Generations Working Together?**

Membership is FREE to most people living and based in **Scotland**, thanks to funders including Scottish Government.

- It is FREE for anyone joining as an individual.
- It is FREE to community groups, public and third sector organisations with staff based in Scotland, delivering activities here in SCOTLAND.
- Businesses operating and/or having their head office in SCOTLAND pay a fee, based on company size – turnover and number of employees.

To find out more visit the Generations Working together website https://generationsworkingtogether.org/become-a-member
Call on 0141 559 5024 or e-mail office@generationsworkingtogether.org

As a member, you are invited to attend Generations Working Together Network meetings – both geographic and themed. Coming up in Highland in June:

Inverness

Tuesday 3rd June 2025, 10:00am - 12:00pm Spectrum Centre 1B Margaret St, Inverness IV1 1LS.

Dingwall

Tuesday 3rd June 2025, 2:00pm - 4:00pm Dingwall Community Centre, Old Academy Buildings, Tulloch Street, Dingwall, IV15 9JZ.



Red Chair Highland's next group workshop is on local support services and takes place next month.

Free to attend - All Welcome!

Join us to learn about local support services and how they can benefit older adults, those with long-term health needs or mental health issues.

Friday 21st Feb 10am - 11.30am Red Chair Highland, 58 Denny Street, Inverness

We also have upcoming workshops on NHS Near Me (March 7th) and Health and Wellbeing Apps (March 21st) as part of our Alliance funded project.

For more information e-mail info@redchairhighland.scot or call on 01463 417240.



The Dementia Training team at Age Scotland have developed a new suite of workshops aimed at members of the Dementia Friendly

Communities Network. This is a network of Scottish dementia friendly communities sharing support, empowerment and inspiration with people living with dementia and unpaid carers, in their own community. You are welcome to join these workshops as an individual or as a member of a group/community organisation (even if you're not yet a member of the Dementia Friendly Communities Network).

Becoming a Dementia Friendly Community - 14th February

Online workshop using Zoom - 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

There are a growing number of groups and organisations looking at what they can do to be more dementia friendly.

The 3-hour workshop is an opportunity to:

- Hear about some work going on across the country
- Focus on what is a Dementia Friendly Community
- Look at the 9 key principles developed by the Life Changes Trust
- · Share your experiences and learn from each other

We will also share with you - thoughts and examples from people with lived experience and from other organisations who are part of the DFC network.

Book online via the Age Scotland website

https://www.agescotland.org.uk/information-advice/workshops/dementia-friendlycommunities