

**Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SCO34260** **June/July 2025**

On Friday 24th March 1995 the Inverness Courier reported on a public meeting held in Inverness to: *“Set up a senior citizens’ network in Inverness.”* Councillor Sheila MacKay is quoted saying *“This will be a non-political organisation, simply a pressure group lobbying politicians of all parties to achieve the best deal for a section of the population whose voice has been unheard for too long.”* Around 60 people attended.

*“Following the meeting a steering group of about 10 people was set up to co-ordinate a campaign for the elderly. The group, which has not yet been given a name, will operate from Inverness but will link elderly folk throughout the Highlands, representing their views and acting as a pressure group.”*

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1995 the Highland Senior Citizens Network was formally launched.

With the huge demographic change affecting older people over the ensuing thirty years, it has never been more vital that all of us, be we in the voluntary or statutory sector, work together for the health and wellbeing of older people across the Highlands. In this aspiration we have played a trusted and unique role.

To mark the occasion, the Provost is hosting a civic reception at Inverness Town House on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2025. We would be delighted to be joined by members from across the Highlands. ([Please see the invitation on page 2.](#))

*Ian McNamara, Chair, HSCN*



Dr McNamara with founder members Sheila MacKay and Molly Doyle in 2012.

Sheila and Molly received the Age Scotland Jess Barrow Award for Campaigning that year in recognition of their long service highlighting the issues of concern to people across the Highlands.



## HSCN's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Civic Reception

Inverness Town House

14:30 pm - 16:00 pm, Friday 20th June 2025

An afternoon tea style buffet will be served

Dear Highland Senior Citizens Network Members,

You are cordially invited to join the HSCN Trustees and staff for a Civic Reception in the Inverness Town House on Friday 20th June 2025 at 14:30 pm - 16:00 pm.

Numbers are limited and places will be allocated on a first come, first served, basis.

R.S.V.P. Please let us know if you can attend, and any access or dietary requirements, by **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June**.

Phone: 07716 884989 or email: [hscn@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hscn@hotmail.co.uk)

### Staying in touch with Highland Senior Citizens Network

**Phone or e-mail our Co-ordinators (until the end of July 2025)**

Anne McDonald [07933 653313] [anne-hscn@outlook.com](mailto:anne-hscn@outlook.com)

Jo Cowan [07933 653585] [jo-hscn@outlook.com](mailto:jo-hscn@outlook.com)

**call** the HSCN phone: 07716 884 989 **e-mail** on [hscn@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hscn@hotmail.co.uk)

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

**visit** our website [www.hscn.co.uk](http://www.hscn.co.uk) **follow us** on X (Twitter) and via Facebook

## June and July Tea-breaks

Thursdays on Zoom from 11am until 12 noon

Join us for a Brew and a Blether to chat to other HSCN members. Or for a creative session facilitated by Inverness OpenArts. Or for a talk about the origins of the modern Fire Service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

For a copy of the link to join any or all weeks please e-mail [hscn@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hscn@hotmail.co.uk)

<b>5<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Brew and a Blether
<b>12<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Brew and a Blether
<b>19<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	<b>Inverness OpenArts, Objects that Matter.</b> Bring along and share an object that is meaningful to you. Use air-dry clay to produce a small sculpture to represent it and/or have a go at a simple, still life drawing of it.
<b>26<sup>th</sup> June:</b>	Brew and a Blether
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> July:</b>	<b>James Braidwood, The Father of the Modern Fire Service.</b> A talk by Diana Hamilton-Jones

The world's first municipal fire service was founded in Edinburgh on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1824, and the bicentenary was celebrated last year at St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh at a service co-hosted by Diana and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

This year is the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of James Braidwood providing another opportunity to celebrate this remarkable man.



Who was this relatively unknown Scot and why has he been forgotten? We invite you to come to Diana's talk and learn about him and why he should be remembered and honoured.

<b>10<sup>th</sup> July:</b>	Brew and a Blether
<b>17<sup>th</sup> July:</b>	Brew and a Blether
<b>24<sup>th</sup> July:</b>	<b>Inverness OpenArts, Collage Self-Portraits</b> Have a go at ripping/cutting/sticking to create a self-portrait. Wonky and abstract representations are welcomed!
<b>31<sup>st</sup> July:</b>	Brew and a Blether

Anne and Jo have recently been involved in an interesting project with Brendan Stephens of the Care Inspectorate. We've asked Brendan to share a bit about the project so that you can add your views to the work if you wish.



**“To improve awareness of the impact of ambivalent noise upon people with advanced dementia living in care / nursing homes.”**

Brendan Stephens  
Inspector, Care Inspectorate

My recent project looked at the impact of ‘ambivalent’ noise upon people living in care / nursing care homes.

I chose this area as I have regularly observed care environments where the volume and type of noise experienced by individuals did not provide any discernible benefit and, at times, appeared to cause harm. I also found little evidence that individuals were regularly offered choice and control or able to influence the quality of the acoustic environment. Examples of ‘ambivalent’ noise include multiple TVs / radios on in communal areas, staff speaking loudly, doors being banged, noises waking people up at night etc.

Research indicates that there is evidence that people with advanced cognitive, hearing, or visual impairments, who are exposed to ‘ambivalent noise’, can experience increased confusion and stress / distress. The research also shows that staff can also be harmed by ambivalent noise.

My project was based upon a view that many staff and managers might lack awareness or understanding of the impact of such practices.

We spoke with 39 staff, 5 residents and 9 relatives and they told us that:

- People and their relatives wanted more say in the quality of the acoustic environment.
- People wanted more support with hearing aids and other assistive technology.
- Having written guidelines for staff, in this area of practice, would help.
- Staff wanted more training in this area of practice.
- Care homes needed to offer people more opportunities to discuss this issue.

- Care homes needed more accurate information about how people experience sound, their preferences, and their sensitivities to certain noises, before people moved in.

I contacted a range of health and social work professionals, and we designed a new piece of training aimed at increasing staff awareness of this issue. We delivered this training in March 2025 within a nursing care home in Wick and two residents attended.

The feedback from the training was that staff felt that they were more aware of the need to speak with individuals and understand their preferences and sensitivities to noise.

Identified aims from this project include:

- Recognition that all staff need access to this type of training and this could be developed as an online or in-person training.
- Care homes need to look at how they discuss this issue with people.
- Care homes need to develop ways to monitor and improve the quality of the acoustic environment.
- The Care Inspectorate needs to ensure that this area is addressed consistently during inspections and within other areas of its practices.
- Local authorities need to review assessments, support plans and reviews to ensure this issue is reflected and regularly discussed.

We're really interested in knowing your thoughts on ambivalent noise in care homes. What have you noticed?

When we are preparing guidance for care home staff, what would you like to see in there?

Please feel free to get in touch to share any experiences or comments on this issue.

### **Contact Brendan Stephens**

Email: [brendan.stephens@careinspectorate.gov.scot](mailto:brendan.stephens@careinspectorate.gov.scot)

or speak to Anne [07933 653313] or Jo [07933 653585]

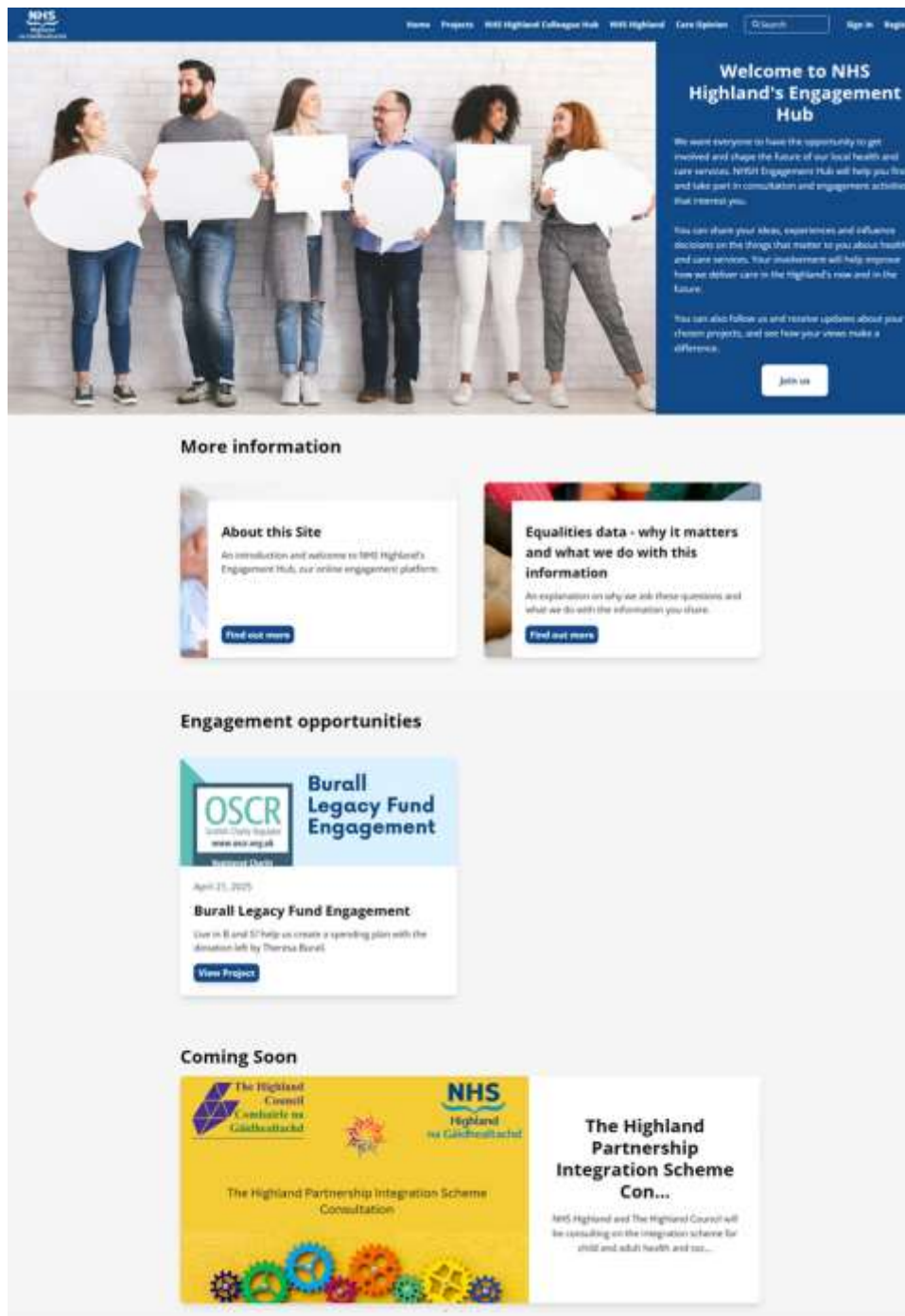
Highland Senior Citizens Network Co-ordinators who will pass on your views.



**HSCN Pride Owl** will once again be marching when Highland Senior Citizens Network joins Age Scotland at the first Lochaber Pride Parade on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June and at Highland Pride on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June. If you would like to march with us at either of these events, please contact Jo on 07933 653585 or by e-mail [jo-hscn@outlook.com](mailto:jo-hscn@outlook.com) 😊



## Join us on the Engagement Hub



NHS Highland would like everyone to be able to get involved and have a say on the things that matter to them. We know that the best plans and services are the ones that are created with people.

Especially those who may need services now or in the future, those who have experience of receiving treatment or care, those living with a condition or an illness; or those who are carers.

The Engagement Hub is an online place that puts you in control. It's where people can find out about the latest NHS Highland Health and Social Care projects that are looking for people's views.

If online engagement is not for you, don't worry. We will continue to offer alternative ways for people to take part in the projects that are on the Engagement Hub.

## What are the benefits of using the NHS Highland Engagement Hub?

- It's a safe space that NHS Highland manages. Any information you choose to share with us is private, and you can choose to participate anonymously or to use a screen name that you have chosen.
- You're in control: you choose the things that you would like to take part in. You can also choose the time, place, and the device you would like to use. For example, you could be sharing your views whilst on your sofa at home at any time, using your smart phone, tablet, or laptop. If you don't have a device that you can use, you may be able to use a computer at the local library or internet café.
- It's open to everyone over the age of 14; you do not need to be a member to take part. You can choose to subscribe to specific projects or become a member, if you would like to receive regular updates on, and new opportunities to get involved in, projects that interest you. If you decide the Engagement Hub is not for you, you can leave or click 'Unsubscribe' at any time and you will still be able to take part in items of interest.

Visit The Engagement Hub at <https://nhsh.uk.engagementhq.com/>

### **Inverness Macular Society Support Group**

**1.30pm, Second Thursday of every month**

**At Inverness Library, Farraline Park, Inverness, IV1 1NH**

**The Group is open to anyone affected by central vision loss.**

**Family, friends, and carers welcome.**

**Contact Laura for details 07948 352 967 [laura.gray@macularsociety.org](mailto:laura.gray@macularsociety.org)**

For more information on the help you can get from the Macular Society, visit our website <https://www.macularsociety.org/> or call the Macular Society Helpline on **0300 3030 111**

Lines are open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

Or email [help@macularsociety.org](mailto:help@macularsociety.org) to find out how we can help.



**SCOTTISH  
MENTAL HEALTH  
ARTS FESTIVAL**

## EXPLORING THE THEME: COMFORT AND DISTURB

This year, Inverness Openarts is proud to take part in the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF). The 2025 festival theme – **Comfort and Disturb** – invites us to think about how creativity can both soothe and challenge, heal and provoke, in ways that reflect our own journeys with mental health.



## WHAT'S NEW THIS SEASON?

Our weekly sessions will follow the usual rhythm of **fortnightly facilitated activities** (always with the option for free choice making), alternating with **open studio weeks**. But for the first time, these open weeks will offer **gentle creative prompts and themes** inspired by Comfort and Disturb.

On these themed weeks, you're invited to explore a different aspect of the festival's theme in your own way. Use any materials you like, try out something new, or simply continue working on your own projects – as always, **free choice and support** are at the heart of what we do.

## INTERESTED IN EXHIBITING YOUR WORK?

You're welcome to begin developing artwork for possible inclusion in the **SMHAF Highland exhibition at Eden Court**, taking place in autumn 2025. There's absolutely **no pressure to exhibit**, and you can dip in and out of the themed prompts as it suits you.

Whether you want to challenge, console, play, protest – or just enjoy a couple of hours making art in good company – you're warmly welcome.

For full session details, including dates and themes, see our **May–August schedule**.







## INVERNESS OPENARTS

FREE - NO BOOKING REQUIRED

**DROP-IN CREATIVE SESSIONS ARE BACK!**

Open to everyone aged 16+, these sessions offer a **safe, non-judgmental space** for anyone, especially those facing physical, mental, or financial barriers to creative activities. Build your **artistic and social confidence** while exploring a wide range of art materials through free choice activities or guided projects on select weeks. Two friendly artists will be on hand to welcome and support you on your creative journey.

**Join the Openarts community and unleash your creativity!**

### SESSION SCHEDULE: MAY- AUGUST

**ALL SESSIONS NOW HELD AT INVERNESS CREATIVE ACADEMY**

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
TUES 27 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	10AM - 2.30PM	ACTIVITY: INK DRAWING
MON 2 <sup>ND</sup> JUNE	2PM - 4.30PM	THEME: SOFT/SHARP TEXTURES
THURS 12 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE	10AM - 12.30PM	ACTIVITY: CLAY TILES
MON 16 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE	2PM - 4.30PM	THEME: THE MASKS WE WEAR
THURS 26 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE	10AM - 2.30PM	ACTIVITY: SPRAY PAINTING
THURS 3 <sup>RD</sup> JULY	10AM - 12.30PM	THEME: MIXED FEELINGS
TUES 22 <sup>ND</sup> JULY	10AM - 2.30PM	ACTIVITY: PAPIER MACHE
MON 28 <sup>TH</sup> JULY	2PM - 4.30PM	THEME: SMALL ACTS OF COURAGE
THURS 7 <sup>TH</sup> AUGUST	10AM - 12.30PM	ACTIVITY: ANIMATED COLLAGES



FIND US ON FACEBOOK:

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/INVERNESSOPENARTS/](https://www.facebook.com/invernessopenarts/)

FIND US ON INSTAGRAM

[INVERNESS\\_OPENARTS](https://www.instagram.com/inverness_openarts)



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HIGHLAND  
THIRD  
SECTOR  
INTERFACE

EMAIL: [INVERNESSOPENARTS@WASPSSTUDIOS.ORG.UK](mailto:INVERNESSOPENARTS@WASPSSTUDIOS.ORG.UK)



**Connecting Carers**

*A better life for  
unpaid Carers in Highland*

## Highland Research Project

**Exploring the experiences of unpaid Carers  
in Highland living with a long-term  
condition or disability  
as well as being a Carer for someone else.**

**1 in 5 Carers also  
have a long-term  
health condition or  
disability**



**Is this you or someone you know?**

If so, please get in touch.

Sharing your experiences with us will amplify your views and voices and help improve support and services.

**To participate, please scan the QR code or  
contact our Research and Engagement  
Officer, Andrew Scobie at  
[research@connectingcarers.org.uk](mailto:research@connectingcarers.org.uk) or call  
our Carer Support Line on 01463 723560.**





## Connecting Carers Highland Research Project see poster on page 10

Connecting Carers has been funded by the Health and Social Care Alliance to conduct a research project exploring the impact of the caring role on unpaid Carers (Adult and Young) with a disability and long-term health condition of their own in Highland Local Authority.

The 2022 Census confirmed that in Highland, 32% of those caring for another person because of disability, illness, or old age, also managed their own disability or long-term health condition. This figure is the same as the whole of Scotland. This figure will rise due to demographic changes.

Unpaid Carers with disabilities and long-term health conditions are more likely to postpone medical treatment and health care because of their caring responsibilities. Moreover, they meet greater barriers in accessing breaks and respite from care responsibilities and are more susceptible to loneliness and isolation.

By conducting this research, we aim to increase recognition of Carers with disabilities and long-term health conditions early in their caring role, so that they can access Self-Directed Support and other services without having to descend into crisis first. We also wish to ensure that their views and experiences are incorporated into mainstream channels and narratives of service provision.

We would be grateful if you could let people know about this research – especially any carers who may wish to participate. Thank you!



### Café to Connect Continues...

Highland Senior Citizens Network was pleased to partner Badenoch Shinty Memories Group (BSMG) for the first Café to Connect in Carrbridge Village Hall on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May. The informal gathering proved popular, with 39 attendees dropping in over the course of the afternoon. BSMG arranged a Badenoch and Strathspey Community ConnXions minibus to

transport people from the Badenoch end of the valley to enjoy the fellowship.



# Highland Directory of Services

**is now live!**

An online resource of local services, groups and organisations for anyone looking to improve their health and wellbeing in the Highlands.

Visit the site



HIGHLAND  
THIRD  
SECTOR  
INTERFACE

## Highland Directory of Services - NOW LIVE !



<https://www.elementalsoftware.site/nhshighlands/>

The Highland Directory of Support Services is an online resource for everyone in the Highlands to find and share information about services and organisations that may help with the health and wellbeing of individuals and families.

It includes groups, activities, and organisations on a wide range of topics, including bereavement, isolation, food support, and many others.

The directory is a joint project between NHS Highland and Highland Third Sector Interface.

## Any Questions About GP Services ?

HSCN recently received an enquiry asking, "What exactly will GP Practices do/not do nowadays?" We will be following up on this question with an article in a future edition of the News-sheet. In order to make that as useful as possible, we wonder if you have any particular questions you would like answered about the services provided by local medical practices? Or about where/how you should seek help for particular kinds of treatment/support? Contact Anne or Jo with your questions:

Anne McDonald [07933 653313] [anne-hscn@outlook.com](mailto:anne-hscn@outlook.com)

Jo Cowan [07933 653585] [jo-hscn@outlook.com](mailto:jo-hscn@outlook.com)





**The 3 Glens Community Care** is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) formed to benefit the communities of Fort Augustus, Glenmoriston and Glengarry Community Council areas.

They aim to improve the quality of life, health, well-being, and independence and to reduce social isolation of people in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability or social circumstances.

Jo attended 3 Glens Community Care AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> May and was delighted to hear about the launch of yet another new service for people in the area. We reported on their Handyperson Service this time last year – and they were pleased this year to be able to share news of their new Community Transport service.

## New Community Transport Service Hits the Road

3 Glens Community Group is delighted to announce the launch of a new local **community transport service**, aimed at helping residents stay connected, supported, and engaged with community life.

Thanks to the generous support of **Glendoe Estates**, who have provided the use of the vehicle, and the hard work of dedicated **volunteers**, the service is now up and running — offering accessible transport options for people living in the area.

*“Our aim is to make it easier for people to get out and about — whether it’s for shopping or social events. It’s a community bus, for the community, run by volunteers. We’re excited to see how it grows.”*

Beth, Development Officer & Services Coordinator  
3 Glens Community Care

The service is currently focused on **daytime local trips**, with plans to develop regular routes and support for groups such as the **Silver Surfers**, who have already benefitted from a scheduled outing.

The bus operates under a Section 19 permit, which means it’s not for private hire.

To learn more, become a member, or volunteer as a driver, contact 3 Glens via [contact@3glenscare.org](mailto:contact@3glenscare.org) – or call Beth on 07507627990. (Please leave a message as I work part-time.)



### Accessing Foot Care in the Highlands

Podiatry is a specialist branch of healthcare that focuses on the treatment and management of lower limb conditions. This includes, but is not limited to, diabetes, arthritis, and routine foot care. Podiatry services are available through the NHS or private providers, either in clinics or via home visits. However, over the years, the NHS has reduced the range of services it provides, focusing on the ever-increasing demands of high-risk patients.

In the Highlands, podiatry services are divided into four areas:

- **South and Mid Podiatry** (Badenoch and Strathspey, East Ross, Inverness, Mid Ross, Nairn, and Ardersier)
- **North Division Podiatry** (Caithness and Sutherland)
- **Lochaber Podiatry**
- **SLWR Podiatry** (Skye, Lochalsh, and Wester Ross)

Due to changes in healthcare provision, the NHS generally does not provide services such as nail care, minor callus reduction, or dry skin management unless there is a medical necessity.

## Accessing NHS Podiatry Services

NHS Podiatry operates as a **self-referral** service, meaning patients must complete and submit a form via email or post. Forms are available online at NHS Highland Podiatry <https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/all-services-a-z/podiatry/> or from GP practice receptionists. While some GP practices may not be familiar with the process, they can access and print the form for you. You will then need to return it to the address provided or send a photo of the completed form via email. Additionally, you may be asked to provide an image of your condition for triage purposes.

## Private Care Alternatives

For individuals who do not qualify for NHS services, private care providers are the only option. You can find local specialists by searching online using terms such as *Podiatrist near me*, *Foot care near me*, or *Chiropodist near me*. It's important to verify that the service meets your needs.

A term you may come across is **Foot Health Practitioner**, referring to individuals who have completed a short training course in routine foot care, such as nail cutting. They can be a cost-effective choice for those without complex conditions like diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, or arterial disease. However, **Foot Health Practitioners are not regulated**, meaning quality can vary significantly, and they may lack sufficient insurance coverage.

## Understanding Podiatry Credentials

More commonly, you'll see a **Podiatrist** or **Chiropodist**, both of which refer to professionals who have completed a degree in podiatric medicine and are **regulated by the HCPC**. These practitioners are qualified to perform minor surgeries, such as nail surgery, administer prescription-only medications, and diagnose complex foot conditions to create long-term treatment plans for pain and injury management.

Because podiatrists undergo extensive training and experience, the title "**Podiatrist**" is **protected**, requiring registration with the HCPC. If you're unsure about a practitioner's qualifications, you can ask for their **HCPC registration number** and verify their credentials on the [HCPC website](<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>) to ensure they are properly accredited and free from disciplinary actions.

No podiatrist should be offended if you ask about their qualifications or registration—your foot health matters! So, when seeking foot care, always book with confidence.

*Adam Wai-Man Lau is an experienced Podiatrist based in Inverness.*



## Highland Hospice Community Support

Could you offer companionship and social support to someone with a life shortening illness?

We urgently need new volunteer befrienders, as we have a waiting list of clients who would benefit from this service. All you need is as little as an hour a week, and you could make a huge difference to someone's life. ❤️

We cover Inverness, Nairn and East Ross-shire.

If you are interested, please do come to our next information session, where you will be made most welcome:

Our next date is the 24th of June from 0930 to 1415 in our Brahan Room at the Highland Hospice. We hold a training session every month, so if the date doesn't suit you, you can see the following month's dates when you register or just give us a call.

Register here: <https://highlandhospice.org/.../helping-hands-volunteer>

Or contact [volunteer@highlandhospice.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@highlandhospice.org.uk) or call **01463 227902**

We would love to hear from you 😊

### Could you be a Mentor?

MCR Pathways is a mentoring charity supporting young people in schools across the Highlands, who face challenges in life.

We're seeking volunteer mentors to spend just one hour a week during term time at Wick High, Alness Academy, Invergordon Academy, Dingwall Academy and Golspie High School, helping a young person to build confidence, realise their talents and reach their potential.

We currently have pupils looking for a mentor to share interests in rugby, football, horses, baking, gaming, the arts, travel, nature, science, first aid, martial arts, career choices.....our mentors come from all walks of life and age. It's about listening, caring and being a good role model.

What's stopping you? Find out more:

Visit: [mcrpathways.org/become-a-mentor](https://mcrpathways.org/become-a-mentor)

Email: [highland@mcrpathways.org](mailto:highland@mcrpathways.org)

Phone: Abby Lucas on 0752 722 7689