



Highland Senior Citizens Network

Nothing about us without us

HSCN News-sheet, Summer 2025

Co-ordinator's Edition Introduction

Travelling around the Highlands, bringing older people together, listening to their stories and hearing the richness of their experiences and aspirations has to be the best job in the world!

For over 9 years (Anne) and 8 years (Jo) as Co-ordinators with Highland Senior Citizens Network, it has been our privilege to connect with older people and those who support them, and to create and share a host of useful connections and opportunities with them. Sadly, our time with HSCN ends on July 31st through redundancy due to funding cuts.



Engagement and involvement have been at the heart of our work – so please do continue connecting with Highland Senior Citizens Network. HSCN Online Tea-breaks will continue on Thursdays after the summer break. The Peer-to-Peer Scams Talks are still available from HSCN Trustees and, subject to the success of funding bids, face-to-face events will resume.

Thanks to everyone who has supported us over our years with HSCN – and thanks to the HSCN Trustees for the opportunity to do this remarkable job. You may still come across us as we are both continuing in our other work-roles as Community Development Officers with Age Scotland.

We hope you enjoy this Co-ordinators' Farewell edition which we have tried to fill with information reflecting the five actions underpinning healthy ageing:

Connect, Learn, Give, Be Active and Try New Things 😊

Jo and Anne

Staying in touch with Highland Senior Citizens Network

Call the HSCN phone: 07716 884 989 Email 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

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SCO34260

An A to Z Celebration of Co-ordinator Connections 2015 to 2025

Highlighting many of the fabulous activities we've had the joy to be involved with over the last 10 years...

A: Activities - Kurling and Boccia

Both co-ordinators have an Indoor Kurling kit and a Boccia set. It's been great to see how much enjoyment these activities have brought to groups across Highland. Many now have their own sets and take part in local competitions.



B: Brew and A Blether / Tea-breaks, 11am Thursday



Our virtual Tea-breaks started in January 2021 and we have since met together nearly 200 times, with a range of fascinating guests and topics. Weekly catch-ups are now facilitated by HSCN members, with a monthly Tea-break with a guest.

C: Café to Connect started in Badenoch and Strathspey as a partnership between Badenoch Shinty Memories, Alzheimer Scotland, HSCN, Caberfeidh Horizons and NHS Community Mental Health Team. People with dementia, their family and friends, and anyone wanting more connections come together for a chat and a cuppa.



D: Digital Support We have supported many non-techy members to use Zoom to access the Tea-breaks. We have worked with partners AbilityNet and Red Chair to share information about the switch to digital phone lines and electricity meters, raising problems through Age Scotland policy channels, leading to the postponement of developments. We often work together with NHS Highland Technology Enabled Care team to share information about Telecare (previously Help Call) and other digital developments to support independence.

E: End of Life, Truacanta, EASE, & Last Aid

Highland Truacanta was one of 5 projects in Scotland set up in 2019 to support local communities interested in taking community action to improve people's experiences of death, dying, loss and care. We facilitated local conversations about end of life. In Cromarty and Kinlochleven people took part in Highland Hospice Last Aid (a public education course) and/or End of Life Aid and Support for Everyone (EASE) course. Creativity in Care facilitated in-person and virtual creative workshops to support conversations exploring death, dying and grief. We produced a publication summarising the project.



F: Films: Self Directed Support / Tea-breaks / Get-togethers.

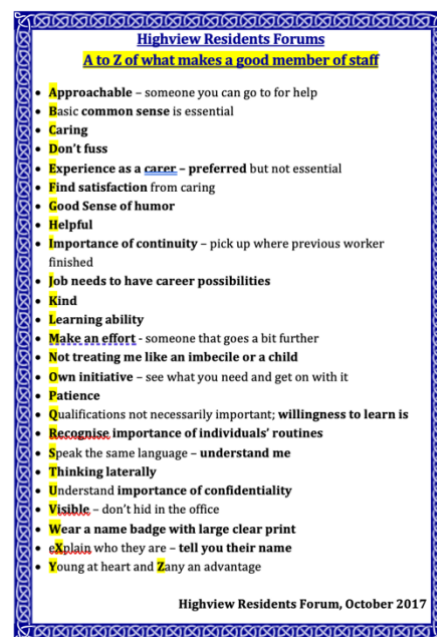


We have produced films about Self Directed Support, the Tea-breaks, the Get-togethers and The Power of a Highland Hello - saying hello to people who were isolated during Covid. These have been fantastic for letting people know about the impact of the Tea-breaks on attendees' lives and generally at getting across information when service users are unable to be present in person.

G: Get-togethers More than 50 Get-togethers, attended by 500+ people, have taken place across Highland, often working in partnership with Age Scotland, Highland Council Tenant Participation Service or the Scottish Older People's Assembly, and always involving tea, coffee and cakes! Themes included What's On, Who's Who and What They Do, Intergenerational activities, Healthy Ageing and Transport.



H: Care Home Residents can easily become disconnected from their communities. Anne supported a **Residents' Forum** with a range of activities over the years including drawing up guidance on their priorities for staff recruitment. We also linked residents with members of HSCN who supported them to complete **Care Inspectorate Questionnaires** and Care Home Quality Consultations. Recently we facilitated residents and relatives giving their views to a **consultation on Ambivalent Noise**, resulting in Staff Training around this.



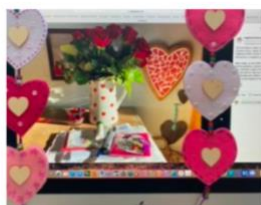
I: Inspiring Creativity to give people a voice has been one of the highlights of the co-ordinator's role. We've worked with some wonderful organisations including Creativity in Care, Inverness OpenArts and **bold** (bringing out leaders in dementia) to enable HSCN members to access creative ways to have a say in things that are important to them. Bringing creativity to Get-togethers, Tea-breaks, our Annual Conference and more.

Creativity

Creative activities were key to enabling people to talk openly about potentially very sensitive and personal topics. The activity process rather than the product was always the purpose.

Creativity in Care supported people to:

- Paint Klimt Trees, adding an envelope with a letter written to someone they had lost.
- Compose Haikus about love and loss.
- Make paper poppies while sharing experiences of love and loss.
- Use quick drying clay to model a reflective bench for the Cromarty community. The designs were passed on to a chainsaw carver who brought them to reality in the final bench.
- Design and make puppets to tell their stories of loss during Covid, Windows of Reality Puppet Show.



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J: Joint Working is essential when covering an area the size of Highland with



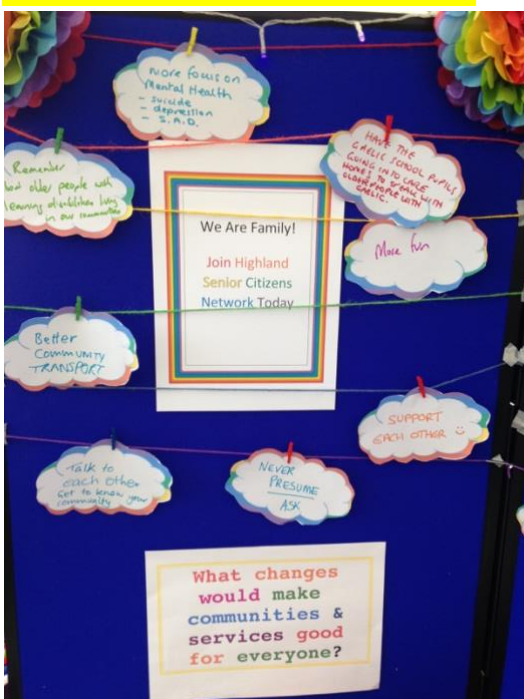
less than a full-time co-ordinator post in total. We are incredibly grateful to the many, many organisations we have worked with to give older people a voice. One recent particularly lovely project was the Care Home Olympics where we partnered with Scottish Care to award residents' prizes for the best photographs. Here is the winner of gold for 'It's a Strike' from Riverside House in Wick.

K: Keeping Up with the Times and up to date with new technology is another area where joint working is essential. We've recently supported NHS Highland Technology Enabled Care team with their Highland Roadshow, attending events from Wick to Portree. People who attended were able to see in person some of the technology available to support them at home.



As well as sharing info about new technology we also remind services of people who are not currently digitally aware and look for ways that they can continue to engage in a world that is increasingly online.

L: Listening and Research Hearing from older people about what is important to them is one of the highlights of our role.



Great conversations have included:

- At Inverness Pride about changes that would make services good for everyone
- Fireside Chats with people receiving care at home to inform service planning
- Outcomes Star conversations on the Black Isle to inform the Community Partnership
- Ambivalent Sound discussion with Care Home residents to inform staff training
- 'Stories from the Black Isle' where 10-year-old school pupils interviewed older people about their lives and then made art and a film based on these stories.

M: Membership Promoting HSCN membership has been a key part of our role and remains a challenge. Membership is free. There are currently approaching 400 individual members and 110 group members. We produced and recently updated a leaflet about HSCN and have a membership application form which can be downloaded from the website or posted to anyone interested.



N: News-sheets are key to sharing information with



members about activities taking place for older people across Highland. 10 years ago, these were quarterly, during Covid we changed to monthly, and for the last couple of years they have been bi-monthly. The News-sheet is distributed by email and post. It's always good to hear from members about things they would like shared in the News-sheet, and also to get people's reaction to the articles. We know how much members appreciate the News-sheet, particularly those who are not online and struggle to hear about events and get updates on services and other developments. Information about funding and activities such as lunch clubs are particularly useful.

O: Out and About, and how lucky we are to have jobs that get us out and about across the Highlands meeting lots of fabulous people. We've enjoyed attending Inverness Pride for the last few years, showing off our beautiful 'pride' mittens knitted by a trustee and the crocheted HSCN Pride owl. Also lovely to meet up with members we had only seen digitally for years – online is fine but it's good to be able to give someone a hug in person!



P: Peer Training provided by HSCN trustees can be an ideal way to learn about important issues from people who really understand where you are coming from. Trustees have developed training in Alcohol Awareness and Avoiding Scams. HSCN was awarded HTSI Highland Partnership of the Year Award in 2017 for their Alcohol Awareness training, in partnership with NHS Highland. Trustees Joan and Robert have travelled 100s of miles delivering their scam awareness training to more than 40 groups over the last couple of years.



Q: Questions - as well as listening, we've also been out there passing on members' questions and making sure that the right questions are being asked. Regular and recent questions include:

- How do I get my toe nails cut?
- How will this information get to those who are not online?
- Who will help a care home resident to complete the Quality Questionnaire?
- What will happen when someone with a digital phone, who has Help Call and lives in an area with no mobile signal, has a power cut?
- How do I get a Timetable for the new Highland Council bus service that is due to start next week?



We try to signpost to information providers and pass on questions about policy issues to those who can make sure they are heard by the right people such as our Highland Council Older People's Champions and Age Scotland Policy team.

R: Roadshows Our HSCN banners have certainly been well used as we've taken part in a range of information events and Roadshows over the last 10 years, on topics such as End of Life, Technology, and Adult Support and Protection and at events like the Scottish Older People's Assembly and Silver Sunday.



S: Silver Stars and Silver Sunday – we like an excuse to celebrate our connections with a bit of sparkle, and our Silver Stars postcards were perfect for that. Unable to have an in-person event we celebrated HSCN's 25th anniversary by posting more than 500 of these to people who had made life better for older people in the Highlands.



And then we brought out the silver sparkles again for last year's Silver Sunday event in the Eastgate Centre.

T: The Great Wilderness Challenge has been a highlight of HSCN's fundraising for the last 10 years. We've walked the 26 mile route and the two 13 mile routes, accompanied by various friends and family. It's always a wonderful event and we really appreciate the support and funding from the GWC.



U: Understanding Dementia - Bold and Dementia Meeting Centres



Anne and Jo were very fortunate to be able to participate in the Bold, Bringing Out Leaders in Dementia, programme. The focus of **bold** is to use a mixture of creative methods to encourage creativity, innovation and personal development.

Following on from this we have been working to support the development of Dementia Meeting Centres in Highland, with meetings taking place in Mid Ross and Badenoch and Strathspey.

An HSCN member's Haiku:



*Joyful Networking
Highland has some movers and shakers
Always moving forward*

V: Voice of Older People 'Nothing About Us Without Us' is behind all we do. Giving Older People a voice on the topics that are important to them:

- Taking part in Toll, Highland Covid memorial project. People talked about their experiences of covid and quotes were then engraved to hand bells. We have two for HSCN:
 - *I won't let anything remove my joy*
 - *In these times we endure*
- Campaigning against Care Home closures
- Getting feedback at Pride about how we can make sure **everyone** feels welcome
- Working with UHI on research into the NHS in the past, present and future
- People's experience informing design of Care Inspectorate quality surveys
- Monthly radio coffee mornings on Nevis Radio on the first Friday of the month helped to get information about activities and services for older people to those who need it.



W: 26 Walks for 26 Years For HSCN's 26th year we arranged 26 walks across Highland, meeting up with members who we had only seen online or spoken to on the phone over the last few years. We were invited for Wild Wacky Walks, organised Intergenerational Walks, met with colleagues from Age Scotland and many other organisations, walking between one and twenty-six miles.

We received a grant from Green Health enabling us to buy local flower seeds which we distributed with planters and compost. It's been great to see how people's flowers have grown as we've been out and about since.



X: eXtraordinary – Celebrated 30 Years of HSCN

with a Civic Reception at Inverness Town House on the 20th June. Great to be joined by members old and new.

Delighted to be presented with a cheque for £3000 from the Youth Philanthropy Initiative by two pupils from Dingwall Academy who were part of a team of four who successfully proposed HSCN as the charity they would like to receive the funding.

Ian cut the birthday cake and an afternoon-tea was enjoyed by all. Looking forward to being back for our 40th!



Y: Youth involvement has been one of the co-ordinators' favourite aspects of the role.

- We have been asked to speak at primary and secondary schools about breaking down some of the potential barriers between the generations.
- Young people performed scam awareness and fire prevention plays for us.
- Others invented a game to support conversation between younger and older people.
- Young people took part in several Tea-breaks during Covid, where we were often struck by the similarities in terms of their experience of loneliness.
- Many of our activities around End-of-Life involved people of all ages, resulting in the community being about to design a Remembrance bench together.



Z: Blue Zones is the name for the countries where people live the longest. Studies have shown various factors are responsible; clean air, exercise, flu vaccine, no smoking or alcohol are all important.

However, the crucial factors in staying alive for longer are interacting with people, both close relationships and social integration generally. I am sure that the connections created by HSCN have contributed to keeping people alive and well for longer and will continue to do so in the future.

Co-ordinators' Key Connections

Over the years, our News-sheets have been packed with good connections for older people. We thought you might find our Top Key Connections useful – so we brought a few together here based on frequency of enquiries to HSCN.



How do I get in touch with social care services?

Contact your local Single Point of Access (SPOA) - district list below

SPOA teams in each district are available **Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm** (except Sutherland, where the team is available between 8am and 4pm).

For social work emergencies between 5pm and 9am only please contact the **Emergency Social Work Service**:

- phone **0808 175 3646**
- email esws@highland.gov.uk

They provide a limited service **for urgent issues only** (not for routine enquiries) - overnight, at weekends or on public holidays.

Badenoch & Strathspey: phone **01479 812 618**, email nhsh.bandsspoa@nhs.scot

Caithness: phone **0345 850 9413**, email nhsh.caithnessspoa@nhs.scot

East Ross: phone **01349 853 131**, email nhshighland.eric@nhs.scot

Inverness: phone **01463 888 333**, email nhsh.spoainvernesseastwest@nhs.scot

Lochaber: phone **01397 709 832**, email nhsh.lochaberdistrict@nhs.scot
email nhsh.lochabersw@nhs.scot - social work, to report an adult concern

Mid Ross: phone **01349 860 460**, email nhsh.mrhsc@nhs.scot

Nairn: phone **01667 422 702**, email nhsh.ccna@nhs.scot
email nhsh.nairnsocialwork@nhs.scot - social work, to report an adult concern

Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross: phone **01471 820 174**;
email nhsh.singlepointofcontactslwr@nhs.scot

Sutherland: phone **01408 664 018**, email nhsh.sspoc@nhs.scot

These contacts are available on the NHS Highland website at

www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/all-services-a-z/adult-social-care/

You can also use the contacts above to report a concern about a vulnerable adult.

Where can I get information about...?

Age Scotland Helpline: 0800 12 44 222

For information on any aspect of age and ageing, or just for a friendly chat. Age Scotland also has great information guides which you can order via the helpline or find on the website www.agescotland.org.uk

Alzheimer Scotland 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline: 0808 808 3000

Information, signposting and emotional support for people with dementia, their families, friends and professionals. Alzheimer Scotland also have excellent information guides and the helpline/website can direct you to local staff and activities www.alzscot.org

AbilityNet Telephone Helpline: 0300 180 0028

Free IT (information technology) support for older people and disabled people of any age. You can ask questions on the telephone helpline, or they can arrange for a trusted volunteer to contact you or visit you at home. www.abilitynet.org.uk

Red Chair Highland: 01463 417240 offer digital inclusion services at their digital hub in Inverness and via outreach at various locations - funded digital device and connectivity provision, digital support to use devices and build digital confidence (1-1 support, group sessions and workshops), digital skills training, employability assistance and more.

Your local library may offer computer access – and may also be able to direct you to local opportunities for support to get online.

Connecting Carers Carer Support Line: 01463 723560

Information and advice for Carers, to help each Carer make the best decisions about their caring role. www.connectingcarers.org.uk

My-Self Management: 07834 753766

Raise awareness of the difficulties of living with lifelong chronic conditions and help people self-manage their conditions through training, education and fun - giving people the ability to control how they live their lives better and with confidence. www.myself-management.org

Home Energy Scotland: 0808 808 2282

Free, impartial advice on energy saving, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel, cutting water waste and more. www.homeenergyscotland.org

Changeworks: www.changeworks.org.uk

Changeworks is actively involved in partnership projects aimed at improving energy efficiency, tackling fuel poverty, and promoting a greener future for the Highlands

AliEnergy: 01631 565183 www.alienergy.co.uk

Affordable Warmth Advisors can provide energy advice sessions over the telephone or in your own home. Advisors cover all of Argyll & Bute and Highlands.

How can I get specific help with daily living aids and assistive technology?

NHS Highland Technology Enabled Care (TEC): 01478 614211

Support **use of technology to provide health and care services** to people in their own homes, or near to home, helping people to live independently and safely. Key services include: [Telecare](#) - a personal alarm system used within the home to help people stay safe and independent for longer and [Telehealth](#) – using technology to provide healthcare away from a healthcare setting, often in your own home. They can also provide guides to assistive technology you can buy independently. www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/all-services-a-z/technology-enabled-care-tec/

NHS Highland staff can also **support you to use the Near Me Service**, a confidential and secure service which allows you to attend your pre-arranged appointment using a video call, rather than attending in person. <https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/near-me/>
email nhsh.nearmeenquiries@nhs.scot
phone **07469 916150**

Highland BlindCraft Sensory Services: 01463 210558

Support visually impaired people throughout Highland and the Western Isles. Qualified and trained workers assess, support, offer **information and training to severely sight impaired and sight impaired people of all ages**, helping them to live as independently and as safely as possible. www.highlandblindcraft.co.uk/sensory-services

Highland Deaf Services: phone 01349 868 711 mobile 07887 833 889

email highland.deafservice@nhs.scot

Deaf services promote safety, independence, inclusion and as good a quality of life as possible for people in Highland who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafened or deafblind.

They provide a reablement service for those with any kind of hearing loss, including specialist environmental assessments, and provision of and guidance with:

- environmental aids
- Deaf awareness
- communication tactics
- practical support
- emotional support
- providing carer advice, guidance and support
- liaising with integrated community colleagues, partner agencies and specialist audiology services

Where can I get support for our group?

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) and Delivery Partners Across Highland

support, encourage and inspire work with community groups, clubs, charities and other Third Sector Organisations throughout Highland. Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) provide a single point of access for support and guidance for the Third Sector within local areas. Their key functions are building capacity, being a source of knowledge, connecting partners and being the voice of the third sector for their area. They offer information, training and practical support where possible.

Delivery Partners Contact Details

Caithness Voluntary Group: Email: office@cvg.org.uk Telephone: 01955 608535
www.cvg.org.uk

Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey: Email: enquiries@vabs.org.uk
Telephone: 01479 873445 www.vabs.org.uk

Voluntary Groups Sutherland: Email: contact@vgs.scot Telephone: 01408 633001
www.facebook.com/VoluntaryGroups

Voluntary Action Lochaber: Email: office@valochaber.org Telephone: 01397 706044
www.valochaber.org

Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations: Email: info@slcvo.org.uk
Telephone: 01478 612921 www.slcvo.org.uk

Highland Third Sector Interface delivers the TSI functions across the Inner Moray Firth and Wester Ross areas. Email: tsiservices@highlandtsi.org.uk
Telephone: 01349 864289 www.highlandtsi.org.uk

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. The directory is a joint project between **NHS Highland and Highland Third Sector Interface**. It includes groups, activities, and organisations on a wide range of topics including, isolation, bereavement, and food support and many others.

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



There are many more helpful sources of information, advice and support which, sadly, we can't include in our Key Connections – but we hope you find the ones we have included here useful! Your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** is also one of our Top “Go-Tos” 😊

What's on in Highland, Summer 2025

Carers Support for long term carers, Alzheimer Scotland

Do you care for a family member, friend or neighbour that is living with dementia, who has recently transitioned to long term care or have been living there for a while? Please join us for a cuppa and a friendly chat with others that share similar circumstances. This group is hosted by a dementia advisor.



Date & time: Thursday 28th August 2-3pm, then last Thursday of every month.

Location: Inverness Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre, 2 Strothers Lane, Inverness IV1 1LR

For more information please contact:

Kerry, Dementia Advisor, 07717527635 or KMackay@alzscot.org

Eastgate Centre Community Coffee Morning

Our monthly **Community Coffee Morning** at the Eastgate Centre, Inverness takes place on the 2nd Wednesday of the month – and we'd love to see you there!

📅 Date: Wednesday 13th August 2025

🕒 Time: 09.30 AM

📍 Location: Scrán Café, Eastgate

eastgate

Come along for a cuppa, a catch-up, and some good company at our new spot in Scrán Café. Whether you join us regularly or it's been a little while, all are welcome for a relaxed and friendly morning.

Plus, don't miss our fun **quiz with a prize** up for grabs! A bit of friendly competition and plenty of laughs are guaranteed.

We're looking forward to seeing some familiar faces – and hopefully a few new ones too!

Highland Health Walks – Join a walk near you!

Partnerships for Wellbeing, are an Inverness based charity and we coordinate a number of ‘Highland Health Walks’ in and around Inverness. The walks are great for finding out about new walks in your local area, meeting with others, and becoming more physically active. If you have a health condition such as arthritis, diabetes, or high blood pressure walking is a really good way to help manage symptoms and stay physically active. Walks are led by our trained and welcoming volunteer walk leaders so people can walk in confidence that there is support available and walk routes have been risk assessed.



Walking can be really good for your mental health too. When we are active our brains release feel good chemicals called endorphins and serotonin which can improve mood, and reduce stress & tension. Walking in nature, or in the company of others can lower the level of stress hormones (adrenaline & cortisol) in your body which helps you feel less stressed.

Walking in company can also help reduce isolation and loneliness, which is as important for our overall wellbeing.

One of our walkers commented:

“I noticed a poster in our local doctor’s surgery about a weekly walk group in the area and I thought apart from helping physically that it might also help me mentally by getting to know people and form some social interaction with others. It turned out to be a great decision. The walk leaders were very welcoming and informative. I have become friends with so many of the walk group I now class them as my ‘second family’.”

We are members of the Scottish Health Walk Network whose mission is to support people in Scotland to be active every day. If you would like to find out more about joining a health walk, have a couple of hours to spare to become a volunteer walk leader please get in touch: Jayne@p4w.org.uk.

My contact number is: 07824 689235

Jayne Preece, Partnerships for Wellbeing, Health Walks & Events Manager

Step into Wellness,
one walk at a time!

CHI INVERNESS



When & Where?
Thursdays
12-1pm
Meet at Reception

Therapets
may join us!



THERAPET®

Wellness Walk/Wheel

Join us for a refreshing walk to boost your mood, reduce stress, and connect with others!

Why join us?

- 🌱 Improve mental & physical wellbeing
- 🌱 Meet new people and build connections
- 🌱 Enjoy fresh air and give your mind a break
- 🌱 Release stress & tension

No advance sign up needed-just show up and walk!

Accessible paths and supported by trained walk leaders, with the option of a cuppa at the end...

Lets walk, talk and thrive together!

Get in touch for more information

Jayne@p4w.org.uk



Inverness Botanic Gardens Nature and Wellbeing Walk



 **You're Invited!** 

Nature and Wellbeing Walk at Inverness Botanic Gardens
For people living with dementia and their care partners

 **Monday 19th August**
 **12pm – 2pm**
 **Inverness Botanic Gardens**

Join us for a gentle, friendly walk through the beautiful gardens, with plenty of time to chat and take in the sights.

A light picnic lunch will be provided, and there will be time to rest, reflect, and enjoy good company.

This walk is part of a research project exploring how outdoor spaces can support the wellbeing of people living with dementia. The NATURE DEMCARE research project led by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), funded by the NHS Scotland NES National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care Programme and the UHI Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund .

 **Easy pace** |  **Guided walk** |  **Picnic lunch**
 **Conversation welcome**

To find out more or let us know you'd like to join us please contact us by 1 August:
 **Dr Anna Terje – 07920 703861**
 **anna.terje@uhi.ac.uk**

Useful Information and Support

Alzheimer Scotland, Your Amazing Brain session 🧠🌟

Looking for ways to keep your brain healthy and sharp? *Your Amazing Brain* is a fun, lively and interactive one-hour session designed to help you unlock the power of your amazing brain.

Backed by the latest research, this engaging workshop shares practical lifestyle changes that can make a real difference to your brain health, whatever your age or circumstances. Whether you're keen to boost your memory, protect against cognitive decline, or simply feel sharper day-to-day, you'll leave with simple, effective tips you can start using right away.

Come along and be inspired to take small steps towards a healthier brain and a brighter future! 😊

Available for group delivery in Inverness. For more information or to book, please contact: Nina Semple, Centre Manager – Inverness Brain Health & Dementia Resource Centre, Alzheimer Scotland 01463 711710

NSemple@alzscot.org



Carer Awareness Sessions – Online This August & November Join us for a relaxed and informative four-part online course designed to support people caring for someone with dementia. Running on Tuesdays from 2–4pm via Microsoft Teams, these sessions cover everything from understanding dementia to exploring practical support and future planning:

- *Dementia the Basics* – Learn about symptoms, causes, & helpful approaches
- *Focus on Caring* – Carer rights, support plans, and self-care
- *Strategies for the Future* – Power of attorney and where to get help
- *Technology Enabled Care* – Useful gadgets to support independence and safety

Dates: 5th–26th August & 4th–25th November **Where:** Online via Teams

To book your place, email advice@alzscot.org or call **0300 373 5774**.



Pensioners losing out on money they're entitled to

It's shocking that in Highland thousands of households are missing out on Pension Credit top-up payments they are entitled to. Many pension-age people don't check their entitlement because they don't know about Pension Credit or just assume they won't be eligible. This is why Highland Citizens Advice Bureaux are currently running a project to raise awareness and uptake of Pension Credit.

It's a means-tested payment for those who are State Pension Age and whose income is below certain thresholds, so you have to check and claim it if you're eligible. Our message is: it's always worth checking.

Pension Credit is like a magic wand! If you do qualify even for just a small top-up, you'll gain access to a host of other benefits.



If you qualify—even for a small amount—you could also get:

- A free TV licence if you're over 75
- Help with heating costs in winter
- Help with NHS dental treatment and glasses
- Council Tax reduction

Lots of people assume they won't get Pension Credit payments, but you can still be eligible even if you have some savings, or own your own home, or have a small occupational pension. Also people with disabilities or caring responsibilities can receive additional amounts. So if you're in either of those categories, you should check.

How to check? The simplest way is to call the FREE Pension Credit Claim Line on 0800 99 1234. You can also check online: <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator>.

If you're still not sure or need help to check or to apply, you can also contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau. Our advice is always free, impartial and confidential.

Are you Last Aid aware?

We've all heard of First Aid and we know just how vital this training can be in life-saving situations.

But have you heard of Last Aid?

Last Aid is a short public awareness course, offered in over 22 countries across the world, and has been proven to enhance confidence in approaching and discussing topics on death, dying and grief.

What does the Last Aid course involve?

Last Aid is a short, interactive and engaging 4 hour course covering 4 modules:

Dying as a Normal Part of Life
Planning Ahead
Relieving Suffering
Final Goodbyes

Our Last Aid course is open to everyone and is particularly useful for those currently involved in supporting people at the end of life, or likely to be faced with this in the future.

If you'd like to sign up for Last Aid training just scan the QR code.

Or for more information you can get in touch at:
01463 243132 Ext 340 or lastaidtraining@highlandhospice.org.uk



Do you want to learn how to support a deafblind individual?

Deafblind Scotland

Touching More Lives



FREE DEAFBLIND AWARENESS TRAINING

- **Online sessions available**
- **Learn about communication methods and guiding techniques**

Touching More Lives is a project delivered by Deafblind Scotland members who share their lived experience, to increase awareness of deafblindness. The trainers provide sessions to communities and organisations throughout Scotland promoting inclusivity and equality. If you or your organisation would like to learn more about deafblindness this is a good opportunity.

The course focusses on:

- The trainers lived- experience.
- Communication
- Sighted guiding techniques.
- Eye conditions

The training is free, all participants receive a Deafblind Awareness Toolkit and an Attendance Certificate. The training is via zoom and lasts approximately 2 hours.

Please contact AlisonWilkie@dbscotland.org.uk

Deafblind Scotland, 1 Neasham Drive, Kirkintilloch, G66 3FA

Tel/Text 0141 777 6111 Fax 0141 775 3311

Web <http://www.dbscotland.org.uk/>

Red Chair Highland Digital Media Course

Red Chair are looking for locations to hold these sessions. The project involves digital media literacy, mis and dis information, slides, handouts and at the end of the 4-week block, we will support each participant to produce their own media story.

It is fully funded so there would be no cost to participate. If this is something your group would be interested in, and you could 'recruit' up to 8 members who would be keen to participate, Kirsty at Red Chair would be happy to call and chat over the project.

MAKING SENSE OF MEDIA: UNTOLD STORIES

Working in collaboration with Ofcom, **Red Chair Highland** is delivering a **free 4-week course** to test an approach teaching **news production skills** to adults in areas experiencing financial disadvantage. The aim is to explore how this hands-on approach can improve people's ability to spot **misinformation and disinformation** online - all while building digital confidence and **producing your own news story**. Each week explores a key media literacy topic as well as a stage of news production.

- WEEK 1** MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION & BIAS / FINDING YOUR STORY
Learn how to recognise false or misleading information and begin identifying and researching your own news story.
- WEEK 2** SPOTTING AI-GENERATED CONTENT / DEVELOPING YOUR STORY
Explore the rise of AI in media, then we will focus on more in depth research and interview techniques to develop your story further
- WEEK 3** SCAM AWARENESS & ONLINE SAFETY / TELLING YOUR STORY
Understand how to stay safe online and then build skills in writing and structuring your story, crafting strong leads, headlines and using images to enhance your story
- WEEK 4** FINAL STORY SHOWCASE & WRAP-UP
Bring everything together. Edit and Finalise your story, reflect on your learning, and share your work with the group.

MORE INFORMATION 01463 417240
info@redchairhighland.scot

Ofcom

HSCN members speak up... Ending with what it will always be about; the voices of older people. Hoping as the co-ordinator role finishes another door opens, that Highland continues to be a place where older people can speak up about what is important, and where there are people who want to listen and act.

“Nothing About Us, Without Us” - HSCN in the words of our members

“We are all community, and you are a major part of that. You are not a burden on society just because you are getting old. The community has to give you the kind of deal you deserve. You fought for the community; you brought it up and have helped to keep it.... This is an opportunity for you to join together and make your collective voice heard on issues that affect your life”.

Councillor Sheila MacKay OBE, March 1995

HSCN haiku

Filling the space in this dark world

A listening voice

Respecting my views

People here who care

Wanting others to thrive well

In all ways always

“It is vital you are here to represent our interest as an age group”

“Such a motivated gathering with passionate people”

“There are many of us who do not think of ourselves as "old people" or necessarily behave like "old people" but the presence of The Network is valuable, especially in relation to issues arising from technology e.g. online scams”

“The strength of HSCN lies in distributing information to people and groups. I enjoy the Newsletters and look forward to reading each one. They are particularly important for those of us who do not use internet etc. Information about support locally and services available is of special value”