



Highland Senior Citizens Network

Nothing about us without us

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SC034260

March 2023

Chair's Introduction: **Power in Numbers!**

Spread the Word. We would like to encourage all our members and our other supporters to suggest to their friends and family that they consider joining our growing membership. The latest official figures record that there are over 90,000 people in the Highlands over 55 years of age. Our membership is open to anyone sixteen and over sharing our aims, and it is free to join us (although, as a charity, donations are always welcome).

We have a healthy membership of over three hundred individuals, and more than one hundred group members who receive our mailings and cascade them to their own members. When we reach our 30th birthday in 2025, it would be wonderful to have more than 500 members!

It's particularly important to us that we continue to increase the number of members who are themselves older people. Your experience of growing older in Highland is invaluable in informing and shaping services, activities, and opportunities.

We also want our membership to reflect diversity and to encompass the whole Highland area.

Our main fundraising activity is our annual participation in the Great Wilderness Challenge as one of their smaller supported charities. We appreciate any offers of sponsorship for those who take part in the Challenge, which this year will be held on 12th August.

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, Mailboxes, 8 Church Street, Inverness IV1 1EA

visit our website www.hscn.co.uk **follow us** on Twitter and our Facebook page

HSCN Tea-breaks, April and May 2023

11am till 12 noon every Thursday morning.

We held our 100th Tea-break on Thursday 23rd March, joined by Elizabeth Bryan from Age Scotland to talk about the last 80 years of being Scotland's Older People's organisation.



100 Tea-breaks have seen us meet with people from across Highland, many regulars and others joining for particular topics. Here is an A to Z of just a small selection of tea-break topics: **A**ctivities, **B**owel Cancer, **C**arers, **D**ementia, **E**nd of Life, **F**ilm making, **G**ardening, **H**ome Energy, **I**ntergenerational activities, **J**oy, **K**eeping active, **L**ove, **M**usic and Movement, **N**utrition, **O**utdoors, **P**harmacy, **Q**uality standards, **R**ealistic Medicine, **S**cams, **T**echnology, **U**HI Warm Welcomes, **V**olunteering, **W**ellbeing, **eX**tremely creative, **Y**oung people, **Z**oom.

Norma's new house needs a mention on its own as we have had weekly updates for 50 of the 100 Tea-breaks.



Please join us for one or more Tea-breaks in April and May:

6 th April	Tea-break chat	
13 th April	Reawakening Creativity, Older People Making Films Project	Drew Tremlett, Eden Court
20 th April	Mindfulness	Kate Boyd
27 th April	Tea-break chat - Focus on Care	
4 th May	Remembrance Ceilidh	Demystifying Death Week
11 th May	Realistic Medicine, polypharmacy, and pharmaceutical waste	Dr Kate Arrow and Kirsty Forman, NHS Highland
18 th May	Tea-break chat – Coronation Conversations	
25 th May	Guest to be confirmed	

Contact Anne for the Zoom link: anne-hscn@outlook.com

Highland Senior Citizens Network Taking Action

We Need To Talk About Scams!

An estimated £9 billion is lost to scams annually in the UK. Financial harm is one of the most common forms of elder abuse. As well as the financial and practical difficulties inflicted by scams, becoming a victim can also have a huge detrimental impact on both mental and physical health. Over half of those targeted annually by scams in Scotland are over 65.

We Need to Talk About Scams!

Highland Senior Citizens Network Trustees have developed a Conversation about this vital topic to have with older people across Highland.

We're ready to come out and speak to groups!

Please contact our Co-ordinators for more information or to book a date.

If Scams are such a high risk to older people, why aren't we talking about them more?

Is it embarrassment, fear, resignation – or just that we really don't think that it will happen to us?

At Highland Senior Citizens Network's Annual Conference last year, a member stood up and bravely related to our gathering how they had become the victim of a scam. They wanted us to be aware that it can happen to anyone – **and asked what we could do about making older people more aware of scams.**

Our Trustees have turned that question into action by putting together a "Conversation About Scams" that they can bring to your group.

They are happy to come along to groups as older people to speak to you "peer-to-peer" about up-to-date information on scams and sources of support – and also to listen to your experiences. In drawing the information together, they have taken input from banks, Trading Standards, and others.

Please get in touch with our Co-ordinators if you would like our Trustees to visit your group!



Handyperson and Care & Repair Services

At ILM Highland, our mission is to support vulnerable people in our community to live at home for longer – giving them greater independence and quality of life. As a local registered charity, we do this by providing a range of home improvement services across Ross-shire, Sutherland, and Moray available to older people and those living with a disability, as well as to veterans.

Our Handyperson service can assist with simple tasks in and around the home, like hanging shelves, moving furniture and even changing lightbulbs. Our team can undertake approved interconnected smoke alarm installations. We can also assist with larger jobs, including fitting handrails or ramps to help improve mobility and access. We also offer a Veterans Handyperson service with funding from the Veterans' Foundation, and Age Scotland.

Large home improvements and adaptation jobs are available through our Care & Repair service. This may include wet room installations for example, and organising surveys and drawings, obtaining quotes, or dealing with contractors. We can also support residents to access housing improvement grants to adapt and modify their home.

In addition to our charitable home improvement work, we provide electrical recycling and electrical retail services. We sell new and refurbished electrical appliances in our Alness store as well as online. If you choose home delivery we are able to take away your old appliance for free. We also have a Spares and Repairs service to help save you from having to replace your broken electrical appliances. Our expert staff will provide an honest assessment as to whether it would be financially worthwhile.



For more information about our home improvement services, as well as our electrical retail services:

please visit our website - www.ilmhighland.co.uk –

or give us a call on 01349 884774. ILM Highland is here to help.

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) & Community Justice Service Volunteer Opportunity

Café 1668 is a social café with three core beliefs informing our work:

- We believe that anyone can find themselves in need of a helping hand and, if we can, we should offer support.
- Food waste is avoidable; it is both detrimental to our environment and heart breaking when so many adults and children live with hunger as a part of their daily lives.
- Employment and skills can make a real difference to building positivity in our futures and life chances.



Volunteering opportunity at Café 1668

Where: Café 1668, 86 Church Street, Inverness

We are actively seeking volunteers to join the team at Café 1668, to be part of the new Volunteer and Placement Project, working alongside individuals with community payback orders who will fulfil those hours in the café.

Full training will be given.

To find out more about this opportunity please contact Val on 07472677663 or email Val@highlandtsi.org.uk



The Café facilitates a food larder and works alongside the Community Justice Partnership in facilitating a safe place for individuals involved in the criminal justice environment.

Based at Café 1668, in Church Street, Inverness, we are looking for volunteers to buddy individuals on Community Payback Orders who will fulfil their hours in the café. It is proven that those who avoid custodial sentences are less likely to re-offend.

This initiative will offer individuals the opportunity to upskill, train and hopefully move into employment.

Café 1668 Volunteer Opportunity continued...

As a volunteer a professional and friendly approach to all tasks is required – offering the placement the opportunity to learn from mirrored behaviours. The ability to explain processes in a clear and concise manner, whilst also ensuring the needs of café customers are being met is important. No prior experience is required.

We can offer access to the full HTSI eLearning suite which includes Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and IT Skills Development.

For more information please contact Val Cooper on 07472677663 or email val@highlandtsi.org.uk

NHS Highland Technology Enabled Care: Spring Tech Event



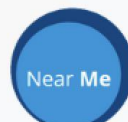
The poster for the Spring Tech Event features a light blue background with a faint map of Scotland. It includes several line-art illustrations: a hand holding a smartphone, a heart with a pulse line, a blood pressure monitor, a laptop, and a small medical device. The NHS Highland logo is in the top right corner.

Spring Tech Event

Thursday, 27 April 2023
Leonardo Hotel
(formerly Jurys Inn)
Inverness
IV2 3TR
11am-3pm (drop-in)

Come along to find out about digital technologies that can help you live safely, happily, healthily and independently at home

Featuring (amongst many others):



Let's Get On With It Together (LGOWIT) News:

Let's Get On With It Together (LGOWIT) will be known as MySelf-Management from 1st April 2023 and you will find us at www.myself-management.org or contact info@myself-management.org

LGOWIT and Covid Aid have teamed up to provide an online tool to help people living with Long Covid in Scotland to manage their symptoms. You do not have to be formally diagnosed with Long Covid to access this eLearning portal.

Register for a FREE one year licence before the end of March at – <https://covidaid.jlmscloud.com/login.aspx>

Find out more about Covid Aid here - <https://covidaidcharity.org/.../covid-aid-celebrates...>

LONG COVID ELEARNING

LGOWIT and Covid Aid are combining their expertise around Self-Management and Long Covid to provide a high-quality self-management programme and an annual package of online community support for those with Long Covid – providing a comprehensive and tailored solution for those in Scotland experiencing long-term symptoms as a result of Covid-19.

This site is for people who have had Covid and are still experiencing long covid symptoms, you don't have to have been diagnosed with Long Covid to sign up.

**SIGN UP TODAY FOR FREE ACCESS
UNTIL THE END OF MARCH >>>**

covidaid.jlmscloud.com



"I recognise the impact that long COVID can have on the health and wellbeing of those affected and I'm delighted the Scottish Government is supporting this new initiative which has the potential to help thousands of people across Scotland."

Health Secretary Humza Yousaf

- Available Scotland-wide
- For anyone with Long Covid symptoms – formal diagnosis not required
- One year free access
- Sign up by 31st March

Discover Digital In-Person Support Sessions across Highland Let's Get On With It Together (LGOWIT)

Discover Digital Drop-in sessions

Want to make more of digital technology, but lack confidence?

Nervous about asking 'silly' questions?

Struggling with your devices?

Join us for our series of in-person drop-in events for folks with little or no experience using the internet.

Bring along your devices and ask our team of digital helpers any questions that you have around making technology work for you.

To sign up, email
lgowitadmin@highlandtsi.org.uk
or phone **07454 905 383**

Mon 20th Mar	2 - 4pm	Dingwall Community Centre, Dingwall
Mon 17th Apr	11-1pm	Aviemore Community Centre, Aviemore
Wed 17th May	10:30 - 12:30pm	Tain & District Development Trust, Tain
Wed 17th May	2 - 4pm	West Church Hall, Dornoch
Mon 26th Jun	2 - 4pm	United Reformed Church, Thurso
Thu 24th Aug	1 - 3pm	Macphail Centre, Ullapool
Thu 7th Sep	11am - 1pm	Skyelab, Skye
Mon 16th Oct	11am - 1pm	Muir of Ord Hub, Muir of Ord

Tech support from

LGOWIT is funded by the Highland Third Sector Interface, HTSI, SRG - SC0645521

In March we are launching a new series of in-person digital support sessions for anyone who needs to build their confidence going online in 8 locations in Highland. These sessions are offered as part of our Discover Digital project to address digital exclusion, funded by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. Please can you help us to reach more people who are digitally excluded or lacking in confidence about going online and living with a long-term condition in Highland.

Forthcoming Poverty Seminar from Highland Third Sector Interface

SEMINAR:

Poverty

Monday, 24 April, 9.30am - 3pm

Ness Bank Church, Inverness

Spend the day listening to speakers including Sue Lyons PhD student, Chris Birt from The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Peter Kelly from the Poverty Alliance, as they talk about poverty in the Highlands and the importance of language.

HIGHLAND
THIRD
SECTOR
INTERFACE

Sign up on Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/seminar-on-poverty-tickets-576939390247> or call HTSI on 01349 864 289 to book a place.



Faith in Older People

Maureen O'Neill, Director

www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk

Body, mind, and spirit are the key elements to achieve good health as stated by the World Health Organisation. Our focus is predominantly about ensuring the health and safety of the body without taking into consideration the effect on our spirits as we might physically or mentally change, or our social circumstances.

We use expressions like 'low spirits' or in 'good spirits' as our spirit is a life force which gives us the spark to do things, to engage with others and to feel we have something to offer.

People are very wary about discussing spirituality as the general impression is that it is only about religion and that if you don't have a faith, it is nothing to do with you. Spirituality is so much wider. My favourite definition – and there are many – is: *Defining spirituality is always tricky. In this context, we mean the search for that which gives zest, energy, meaning and identity to the person's life, in relation to other people and the wider world.* (Froggatt K and Moffitt L (1997) *Spiritual needs and religious practice in dementia care. State of the Art in Dementia Care, London: Centre for Policy on Ageing (Ed. M. Marshall)*)

The concept of spirituality might be difficult to understand although there is an increasing acknowledgement that it plays an important part in our lives. There are two approaches to the definition of spirituality; both acknowledge a search for **meaning**. For some people, a **divine presence** is central; for others spirituality is a **secular concept** involving inner life and personal belief.

Faith is the sustaining force for some and for others it is music, relationship, nature, and creativity. It is not about one or the other but how each person realises their sense of meaning and purpose and what makes them the person they are.

Faith in Older People is a small Scottish voluntary organisation which works with all those of faith or none. Our overall aim is to create awareness and educate people around the importance of the spiritual dimension to the lives of older people. We also highlight to faith communities the importance of supporting those in their communities who are older and of the issues that affect older people – dementia, enduring mental health challenges, loneliness and isolation and end of life matters. We do this through research, conferences, seminars and newsletters and importantly through collaboration with individuals and organisations who have a mutual interest and who lend FiOP knowledge and expertise.

Faith in Older People continued

We also want to influence the Scottish Government and other public bodies on the importance of spiritual care education to ensure that it is included in future strategies and in particular the proposed National Care Service.

Our hope is to influence change through education and awareness raising across all sectors.

Latest report [The-gift-of-age.pdf \(faithinolderpeople.org.uk\)](https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/The-gift-of-age.pdf) Older people, faith communities and volunteering.



MINDFULNESS

Kate Boyd is a self-employed counsellor and clinical hypnotherapist living and working in Inverness. Kate's background is in general and mental health nursing. She became interested in Mindfulness ten years ago and has trained and practised with many groups and individuals. She is a Trustee with Highland Mindfulness Group.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is at the heart of the ancient practice of meditation. It could be seen as a life skill which can help us to feel better about ourselves and the world around us. It's about paying attention in a special way. We pay attention to what is happening in the present moment, just accepting what's there without judgement.

There are many definitions of mindfulness. Jon Kabat Zinn a teacher of mindfulness says: *"Mindfulness is a turning towards life, to live as if each moment is important, as if each moment counted and could be worked with, even if it is a moment of pain, sadness, despair, or fear"*.

We spend time looking back on regrets, on 'if only' and on rumination and self-criticism. We also spend time looking into the future worrying about the 'what ifs'. Dwelling in the past or the future, means we can miss what is most valuable in our lives and we can miss out on possibilities for our own growth and change now, whatever age we are.

How is mindfulness practised?

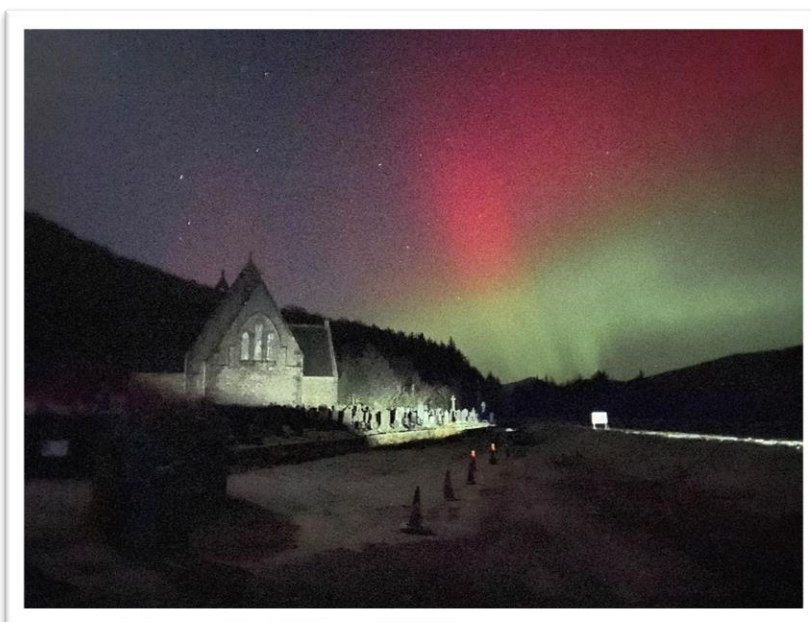
It is a challenge to stay for any length of time in the present as we are so often pulled in different directions. Mindfulness teaches us to learn to focus on a single point of awareness such as our breath or sound, so that when we find the mind wandering off in many different directions we can come back to an 'anchor'. This is not about stopping our thoughts because of course they just keep going and that is normal, perfectly fine!

With regular practice in mindfulness, we can begin to see things a little differently. For example, we begin to see that there is space between ourselves and our thoughts. We don't usually notice this space and mostly we just engage with these thoughts and go with whatever pops up. Mindfulness helps us recognise and develop this space. We then find that we have a choice as to what we think so that instead of feeding energy into negative thoughts believing they have to be true, we can develop positive ones.

What are the benefits of Mindfulness?

Meditation has proven health benefits. Sometimes our habitual way of thinking, judging, and feeling leaves us feeling unhappy, even suffering. An analogy might be like the clouds obscuring the sun. The clouds represent all our worries and life ups and downs. The sun represents our inner well-being and peacefulness which is always there behind the clouds. With mindfulness practice the clouds start to break up and disperse and the sun begins to shine through more and more.

If anyone would like more information on mindfulness and how it can be used, Kate will be delighted to hear from you. Contact details: kml.boyd@hotmail.com
Tel) 01463 238972 Mob) 07554 375363



A passing car added to the atmosphere of this Aurora photo at St John's Churchyard near Ballachulish.

The churchyard often features in calendars due to its beautiful annual display of bluebells later in the Spring.

Gardening Corner

The story so far

Ùisdean, Head Gardener, here again with a small selection of gardening advice. This column will be in a new format covering the months of March and April. I will also provide some notes of a distinguished gardening colleague at the end of the column.

	March	April
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to feed birds. March is a low point in their food supply. • Complete bare root planting • Plant strawberries and raspberries • Mulch borders with compost • Finish pruning roses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue bird feeding • Start mowing lawns (on high cut) • Feed roses with rose fertiliser • Deadhead daffodils • Start staking taller perennials • Plant onion sets and potatoes
Seeds to sow	Indoors (heated propagator) Antirrhinum, dahlias, lobelia, marigolds, basil Outdoors Poppies, nigella, stocks, lupins, parsley, sprouts, cabbage, parsnips	In greenhouse Cucumber Outdoors Nasturtium, cornflower, wallflower, forget-me-not, thyme, parsley, maincrop peas, carrot, beetroot Bizzy Lizzie, African violet, fuchsia
Cuttings to take	Chrysanthemums, dahlias and fuchsia	Forget-me-not, hyacinths, early tulips, rhododendron
Looking good	Bears ears, primrose, muscari, clematis	

Early colour - Wallflower



Early fireworks -crocuses



Notes from Ùisdean – John Fraser (1750-1811) was born in the Tomnacross area and served time as an apprentice weaver. This work took him to London where he married and had two sons. In 1782 Fraser headed out to Newfoundland where he developed an interest in botany and developed close links with the Chelsea Physic Garden back in London. From Newfoundland he started plant hunting in the Carolinas and after many adventures arrived back in the UK in 1788 with many new plants and botanical details of many more.

Fraser travelled to France in 1788/89 where he made the acquaintance of the US President Jefferson. He also travelled to Russia where he became plant hunter to Queen Catherine the Great. Fraser returned to America in 1799 to collect plants for Catherine. On the return journey he became shipwrecked in Cuba during which time Catherine died so he was unable to profit from his adventures. After one final trip to America Fraser died in London. He did not leave many written records but his legacy lives on in the plants he collected which grace many UK gardens and the nursery he set up in Chelsea.



John Fraser portrait from Google eBook: Companion to the Botanical Magazine, vol. 2, 1836, p. 300.

See also - <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/107303#page/303/mode/1up>
<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2018/10/06/the-indefatigable-john-fraser-and-his-american-nursery/> and page 24 of <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.spanglefish.com/s/2/documents/kiltarlity%20newsletters/kiltarlity%20news%202011%20spring.pdf>

Robin All Alone

Why are you always on your own,
 Robin Redbreast, Robin all-alone?
 Perched on my fence you sing your song
 With bright eyes watching other birds throng
 In twos and threes and sometimes more
 To eat the crumbs outside my door.
 When they have gone you have your fill,
 Then you sit on my windowsill.



Robin Redbreast, Robin all-alone,
 When Spring comes and the snow is gone,
 Perhaps you will bring your lady love
 And build a nest in the tree above.
 Or in a crevice, or old tin can,
 A rusty kettle, or rusty old pan.
 Then I could watch your young all day
 Until they learn to fly away.

Phyllis Jermy (Deceased)

Sounds Familiar 10th Birthday Celebration - 7th February 2023



80 people gathered at the Craigmonie Hotel recently to celebrate the 10th birthday of Sounds Familiar Singing Group for People with Dementia and their Carers. Set up by Audrey Whyte and a team of enthusiastic and talented volunteers, the community group offers the benefits of singing together in a relaxed and friendly environment specifically for those with Dementia in Inverness and the surrounding area.

Pre-Covid attendances ran at 80-90 each session. As other groups also experienced, getting restarted proved difficult but with perseverance and determination, an encouraging capacity of 70 -80 now meet fortnightly in the Craigmonie Hotel. It is an ideal venue and over the years the Manager and Staff have been exceptional in welcoming 7750 attendees.

The 7-piece band played favourites from the last ten years and the afternoon was a joyous celebration of singing and dancing followed by socializing over afternoon tea.

The birthday cake was cut by Christine MacDonald and her daughter Shona Thomson who have attended for over 5 years. They were assisted by Vera Nairn one of the volunteers - at 95 years young- and Carol Stevenson founder member who brought her mother along 2013 -2015 and stayed on as a volunteer.

Audrey paid tribute to the dedicated and empathetic 26 volunteers (almost all have been with the group for 10 years). She also welcomed Isla Cuthbert and Anne MacDonald from HSCN who, along with Jo Cowan and Ian McNamara, have encouraged Sounds Familiar over the years.

“The highlight of the week” was the verdict from one of the regular attenders.

Family members often comment on the improvement in mood which can last long after participating. One husband remarked that it was the only social activity he felt confident to take his wife to and they could enjoy together. A daughter, also her mother’s carer, was overjoyed to hear her mum who had stopped talking sing happily all the words of the songs. It stimulates memories, promotes feelings of well-being, self-worth, can aid communication, and eases isolation and loneliness .

Sounds Familiar is looking forward to another 10 years of enthusiastic music making!

Good Kurling “ConnXions”



Anne and Jo received a lovely invitation last month. On a very snowy Tuesday, they joined **Badenoch & Strathspey Community ConnXions' Befriending Service** for some curling! Happily, this curling wasn't on ice - but instead a chance to try out Highland Senior Citizens Network's new New Age Kurling (with a k) sets in Boat of Garten Community Hall.

With the choice of playing seated or standing, the kurling game is accessible to people of all abilities. We also have 2 Boccia sets. Boccia is a softer, more colourful, smaller-ball version of bowls – again open to all abilities, and excellent fun!

Our merry band had lots of fun and laughter, and mutual encouragement a-plenty, although there was definitely a good deal of friendly rivalry going on alongside the hilarity. We didn't neglect the social side of the game and stopped for a welcome cuppa and chat half-way through. The verdict at the end was a big “thumbs up” to kurling!

If your group would like Anne or Jo to visit for “Kurling and a Chat” or “Boccia and a Blether” (or a combination of both!), it's a lovely way of getting to know Highland Senior Citizens Network better. Please do get in touch.

We're also happy to come just for a Cuppa and a Chat if you prefer that!





Shining a Light on Scottish Care's Campaign

Time to Shine a Light on Social Care: the time for action is now.

"Scottish Care is a membership organisation representing the independent social care sector in Scotland. We work with members and stakeholders in social care to create conditions for sustainable human-rights-based care and support."

This month, we've been following with great interest Scottish Care's campaign month which is shining a light on the value of social care in Scotland.

About the campaign

Scottish Care worked with members to produce the 'Social Care Campaign'. This campaign aims to raise the profile of social care in Scotland, across care homes and homecare. We hope to use the campaign as a positive vehicle for sharing good practice, information and evidencing the sector's value.

Social care is often undervalued and unheralded. The success of the health system is largely dependent on the sustainability of the social care sector. This sector allows people to return home from the hospital to receive the care and support that they need – relieving pressures on the health system and stopping unnecessary admission. Social care allows people to live independent and fulfilling lives.

Today, we are seeing a crisis in social care like nothing we have seen before – with workforce shortages, the rising cost of living and other problems which make it increasingly challenging for sustainability.

Everyone will rely on social care at some point in their lives, we want to see action taken to tackle the social care crisis.

Now is the time to #careaboutcare. We need your help to get involved in this campaign and **#shinealight** on the social care sector.

#shinealight #careaboutcare

Those of you who are online can get more information on the campaign from Scottish Care's website www.scottishcare.org For those who aren't online, we will pick up some of these important themes in our future news-sheets.