

newsletter

Information for Carers throughout Falkirk District and Clackmannanshire

WINTER 2025

What could the Right to a Break look like?

The Care Reform (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on Tuesday 10 June 2025. The Bill aims to strengthen support for unpaid carers by establishing the right to a break.

This is a vital first step in ensuring that carers in Scotland have a legal right to breaks from caring. The new right will be embedded within the existing Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 framework and will establish a statutory right to personalised breaks for carers who are currently unable to access "sufficient breaks".

Additional sections of the Bill will also require Ministers to set timescales for the preparation of Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carers Statements, and for certain additional information to be included in short breaks services statements.

While the groundwork is already being done to progress these changes, there will be insufficient time to bring them into effect before the May 2026 election.

This new right has the potential to vastly improve and protect the wellbeing of carers and to support and sustain caring relationships.

However, it will take time, work, funding and commitment to implement these changes and the Scottish Government have undertaken to work closely with unpaid carers, carer organisations, local authorities, health and social care partnerships and short break providers to implement this new right for carers. Consultations with all parties with an interest, including carers, will look at key areas which will include:

- **Defining 'sufficient breaks'**
- **Identifying the types of breaks that should be in scope**
- **Planning the transition from the current system**

We welcome this commitment to supporting and improving the lives of Scotland's unpaid carers and will be working to ensure that carers' voices are heard in the journey towards making it a reality.

We recently asked carers at the Carers Centre's Voice meeting what a "Short Break" means to them. Here is what they said:

"The chance to just stop, relax and take time for myself".

"A short break means just a wee while away from home to relax and chill and rejuvenate your energy and feel that you can go back to your caring role".

"A few hours just to chill out"

So, what could the right to a break for unpaid carers in Scotland look like? A short break is often thought of as a holiday, or a night away, however, it can mean different things to different carers. A break is something that fills your cup and can be as simple as a walk in the fresh air, a cuppa with a friend or taking time out with a book.

To help carers achieve a break that is meaningful to them, we support carers to access a variety of short break options through the Carers Centre. If you would like to discuss short break options for carers, please contact the Short Breaks Team: shortbreaks@centralcarers.co.uk or **01324 611510** (Option 1).

"For me, a break can mean time out for as short as an hour to give me headspace and occupying my mind with something else rather than worrying."

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Information and training for carers and professionals

Carers Rights Day



This year, Carers Rights Day, is on Thursday 20 November 2025. Carers Rights Day is a national campaign to raise awareness of the rights of unpaid carers. The theme this year is "Know your rights, use your rights." It aims to empower carers with knowledge about their entitlements, including:

- **Carers Leave Act:** It grants unpaid carers the right to take up to five days of unpaid leave to support their caring responsibilities.
- **Flexible Working:** Carers can now request changes to work arrangements from day one of their employment, including working hours and place of work.
- **Hospital Discharge:** If you are a carer and the person you care for is being discharged from hospital, the hospital must identify and consult with you, where possible.
- **Protection from Discrimination:** Legal safeguards under the Equality Act and other legislation protect carers from discrimination or harassment because of their caring responsibilities.
- **Adult Carer Support Plans:** Carers in Scotland have the right to request an Adult Carer Support Plan (or Young Carer Statement for young carers). This looks at how caring affects your life, including your physical, mental and emotional needs, and whether you are able or willing to carry on caring.

The Carers Centre supports carers to learn about their rights as a carer and to access relevant support and information. Further information about carers' rights can also be found on the Carers Scotland website: www.carersuk.org/scotland and the Coalition of Carers in Scotland website: www.carersnet.org/carersrights.

We will be holding drop-in sessions between 10 am and 4 pm for those who wish to know more about their rights as carers. Come along to the Centre (1a Bank Street, Falkirk) for some cake, a cup of tea, and to have any questions about your carer rights answered. No appointment necessary.



Above: Information session for carers at the Dementia Centre

Falkirk Care with Confidence

The Care with Confidence Team offer regular sessions for carers to learn about topics that can help them with their caring role. These sessions are held in-person at the Carers Centre or online via Zoom, with sessions held both during the day and in the evenings.

The sessions cover a variety of topics, with targeted sessions for parent carers and carers of those with dementia. Upcoming sessions include falls prevention, dementia session covering how to communicate to avoid upset or arguments, and we will be offering a series of Carer Essentials sessions, too!

In August, Donna and Sarah from the Support Options Team at the Carers Centre took carers for a visit to the Dementia Design and Technology Suite at Stirling University. Carers viewed the different rooms which were set up to demonstrate the variety of ways in which design choices can be implemented to support people living with dementia. Carers were given guided tours by professionals in architecture, design and dementia care, and given thought-provoking advice.

The Care with Confidence programme, outlining the variety of sessions available, can be found on the 'What's On' section of our website. If you would like to speak to someone to find out more about the Care with Confidence sessions, please contact one of the Training Co-ordinators:

Donna Mulder - donnmulder@centralcarers.co.uk

Dayna Faulds - daynafaulds@centralcarers.co.uk



IN FOCUS

Kaela Taylor

Office Administrator

Kaela has been a fantastic addition to the team since she joined the Centre in March 2024. We borrowed a few minutes of her time to ask her a few questions so that we can all get to know her a little bit more.

Can you tell us about your role with the Carers Centre?

My job role at the Carers Centre is Office Administrator. I help all the teams within the centre with various tasks. I'm the first point of contact to most carers and the first face they'll see when they walk through the door.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I'd say the learning is what I enjoy most about my job; each day I grow my knowledge and gain new skills. I've worked at the Carers Centre for over a year now, and I've learnt so much and gained so many new skills.

I've also learnt a lot about the struggles carers go through daily. I grew up being an unpaid carer and never considered myself one. Working here has helped me realise that I am, and I really enjoy helping others realise that they are as well.

But I mostly enjoy working with the team I have around me, especially my line manager, who has helped me since the beginning in many ways, including building my confidence. My colleagues have taught me so much, and they have helped me be able to help carers.

How do you think your role makes a difference?

I'm the first point of contact to carers, I'm the first face they'll see when they come into the centre. I gather the details needed so our support workers can get in touch and offer support. I think my role makes a difference because I play a crucial part in the process of helping carers get the support they need. I do my part in helping the rest of the teams so they can further support the carers.

What do you do in your spare time?

I really enjoy my chill nights where I binge-watch movies and shows. But I'm a busy body, and most of my spare time goes into spending time with my boyfriend and friends, going on long walks, exploring new places, and going out for food. But one of my favourite activities is going for drives alone or with my boyfriend, it's either me blasting music, having a sing-along, or we do it together. We like to go for nice drives and find new places to go for a walk.

Tell us an interesting fact about you!

I was born with one blue eye and one brown eye. I had this up until I was about 3. Unfortunately, I was attacked by a dog, and possibly due to the trauma or who knows why, my eye then turned dark brown. To this day, they aren't the same; one is lighter than the other, but it's not as cool as it would have been if one were still blue!

Forth Valley Carers Cards

The Forth Valley Carers Card is a carer identification card that has been developed by local carers, Carers Centres, NHS Forth Valley and local authorities to ensure that carers are more easily identified by health and social care professionals and recognised and valued as equal partners in care.

You can apply for a Forth Valley Carers Card using our online application form (found by scanning the QR code). If you are unable to complete the form, please call us on **01324 611510** and select **Option 1**.



Staff Changes

Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed some new staff members to our Carers Centre team.

In August, **Amy Cox** and **Nicola Riddell** joined our Young Carers Project as a Young Carer Support Worker and a Young Carer Support and Involvement Worker. Then, in September, **Dayna Faulds** joined the Care with Confidence Team as a Training Co-ordinator. We welcome them to the team and wish them all the best in their new roles.



From left: Nicola, Dayna, Amy

Sadly, we have also said goodbye to some of our team. **Aileen Barclay** retired from her role as Team Lead for our Falkirk Adult Support Team, and **Jordan Rowse** left her post with the Young Carers Project to take up a completely new and exciting role. We wish them both the best of luck.

Support

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Individual and group support for carers



Better Breaks Project

We are delighted to share that we have been awarded Better Breaks funding for short break activities in 2025-26.

The Better Breaks project, funded by the Scottish Government's Short Breaks Fund, provides short break activities for disabled children and young people, and their carers. The child or young person must be aged 20 and under and be residing in Falkirk district or Clackmannanshire.

The project is now well underway, with carers and their children enjoying a varied programme of activities, including exclusive use of the Mariner Centre swimming pool and soft play areas.

So far, we've enjoyed a trip to the National Museum of Scotland, had lots of fun building dens and campfires alongside Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC, and got creative with local artist, Lyn Sutherland.

We still have spaces available for swimming, soft play and art sessions in the new year. If you are interested in any of the activities, please complete the Expression of Interest form (<https://form.jotform.com/CentralCarers/bb-family-activities-2-EOI>) by scanning the QR code, and a member of the Short Breaks team will be back in touch.



Register your interest for family activities here!



Short
BREAKS fund



The Carers Centre can also support carers to access short breaks grants which are funded by the Scottish Government's Short Breaks Fund and also by the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership and Respiteability breaks which have been offered by local hospitality and activity providers and are free to carers

YAC Residential

This year, the Young Adult Carers Project mixed things up and took our annual residential on the road during the summer.

We spent a weekend in June flipping around on the loops of The Smiler and stomaching the drops of Oblivion at Alton Towers, before trekking from the African plains to the Monsoon Forrest at Chester Zoo.

9 young adult carers (YACs) attended the 3-day trip. There was a lot of laughter across the weekend – although some of this might have been nervous giggles on the rollercoasters... For some, it was their first experience of a theme park; others were seasoned veterans, but everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The highlight was definitely the water ride on a particularly sunny day.

After the thrill seekers got their rush out at the theme park, we relaxed a little at Chester Zoo. We were able to walk around the zoo, see the variety of animals and conservation work, or just find a nice spot to sit and watch the world go by.

As much fun as our trip was, it was also an opportunity for our YACs to have some respite from their caring role. These trips play an important role in helping reduce social isolation, promoting positive mental health and well-being, and encouraging our YACs to be young people.



Break with a Book

There are a lot of ways to take a break, and sometimes immersing yourself in a book from the comfort of your own home can be the perfect way.

We are excited to launch our **Break with a Book** project to support carers to take a break anywhere. Books are a great way to recharge and enjoy some time to yourself!

We know that, sadly, not all carers will have the opportunity to sit down and read a book, however, for many carers, reading is the perfect way to relax in the times that they do find for themselves.

Break with a Book encourages you to explore new stories by selecting a beautifully wrapped mystery book. We have also included some small treats to enjoy alongside your story!

Once you have selected your mystery book, you can take it away to enjoy your break at any time.

You are welcome to keep it, or if you would like another one, you can return the book or bring in a different one.

Dive into your new book and become a detective, explore a new planet, or perhaps take a trip back in time. With **Break with a Book**, you can have a whole new world in the palms of your hands.

Want to hear more?

Contact shortbreaks@centralcarers.co.uk



Prefer Paperless?

To keep the costs associated with our newsletter down, and to get more up-to-date information from our e-bulletins, we would encourage anyone who is able to receive this newsletter online to get in touch and let us know your email address! Get in touch with us today or scan the QR code to sign-up to our e-mailing list.



Support

continued....

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Clackmannanshire UPDATE

Clackmannanshire carers and those they care for have been getting out and about thanks to our grant from the Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund.

Our monthly Creative Workshops at Reachout with Arts in Mind in Alloa have been well attended and carers have told us how relaxing it is to become engrossed in creating something (see photos above).

Our newest Carer Get-Together at the Cochrane Hall in Alva has been running since April. As well as a tasty light lunch provided by the Cochrane Hall team, we've enjoyed quizzes, body boosting bingo, and a visit from the Renaissance Choir, who made use of Cochrane Hall's wonderful acoustics. Our Get-Togethers at Hawkhill Community Centre in Alloa, and Tullibody Civic Centre are both well attended, and carers tell us how much they enjoy having a lunch made for them, as well as the friendly chat and activities. Tullibody attendees recently had a go at line dancing, whilst Hawkhill enjoyed a visit from some Therapy Ponies. Please contact Amanda Rutherford (amandarutherford@centralcarers.co.uk) if you would like to be added to the invitation list for the Carer Get-Togethers.

Our carers group at Hawkhill Community Centre in Alloa is a chance for carers to relax and chat with other carers. As well as occasional speakers and craft activities, the group enjoyed an outing to the Japanese Garden in June. You are welcome to drop in to the carers group, but please contact Caroline Quinn (carolinequinn@centralcarers.co.uk) if you would like more information.

Since our Training Co-ordinator, Jason Thomson, left us in April, we have not been running Care with Confidence sessions in Clackmannanshire, although we hope to get these running again once we have recruited his replacement. In the meantime, you are welcome to attend relevant Care with Confidence Sessions at the Carers Centre in Falkirk. These sessions can be accessed in person or via Zoom. Please contact Nicola Weedon (nicolaweedon@centralcarers.co.uk) if you would like to be added to the mailing list for the Care with Confidence programme. See back page for further information about the groups.



Scottish Young Carers FESTIVAL 2025

For many of our young carers, the Scottish Young Carers Festival is a much-anticipated annual event.

Over 500 young carers from across Scotland joined together to celebrate the 18th birthday of the Scottish Young Carers Festival - a two-night camping event organised by Carers Trust and funded by the Scottish Government. This year, we supported seven young carers from Falkirk and Clackmannanshire to take part in the festival and enjoy a short break from their caring role.

During the trip, they participated in various activities such as animal handling, inflatables and a silent disco. Several members of the group also met with Scottish Government Ministers and local authority representatives, guiding them around the festival and sharing their personal experiences as young carers.

One of our young carers was successful in becoming a media ambassador. This was an exciting opportunity for them to gain hands-on experience with camera equipment, plan and edit films, and carry out interviews. We will share their work on our social media channels, so keep your eyes peeled!



Involve

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Opportunities for carers to have their voices heard

Clackmannanshire Carer Involvement Update

At our Carers' Voice meeting in May, attendees elected a new Clackmannanshire Carer Representative to the Integration Joint Board of the Clackmannanshire & Stirling Health & Social Care Partnership (C&S H&SCP).

Andy Witty is a carer for his adult daughter and brings considerable experience of representing members' views at meetings alongside a keen interest in carers' rights and the implementation of Self-Directed Support.



At our Voice meeting in September, as well as an update from Andy, Katy McBride from the C&S H&SCP told carers about her review of the provision of aids and adaptations across Clackmannanshire and Stirling, and asked for carers' experiences and views. If you would like to hear more about Carer Involvement opportunities in Clackmannanshire, please contact Nicola Weedon (nicolaweedon@centralcarers.co.uk).

Falkirk Carers' Voice **UPDATE**

Falkirk Carers' Voice meetings are held monthly on a Monday between 10 am and 12 noon. Carers can attend in person at the Carers Centre in Bank Street or via Zoom!

During the last few months, we welcomed staff members from the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership, who came to seek carers' views on a variety of topics, such as locality planning, self-directed support, short breaks, and dementia support. The Children with Disability social work team also attended to talk about their services. We also welcomed other external organisations such as Parenting Across Scotland, the Office of the Public Guardian, the Falkirk Food Train, Police Scotland, and many more! More professionals will be coming along to share how their services can help you and the person you care for, but more importantly, to find out what you need from them!

Thank you to all the Carers who attended the Voice and any of the carer consultation events. Your views really matter and can help drive positive change. Your Carer Representative, Mandy, was invited to a round table discussion at Parliament as a direct result of the Parenting Across Scotland consultation! Our dementia Consultation sessions with Yvonne Cairns, NHS Forth Valley Dementia and Delirium Lead, have been a great success so far. We are excited to continue these consultations and keen to find out how your views will make an impact.

Thank you to all the carers who completed our questionnaires relating to the State Pension and Carers Allowance (now Carer Support Payment). Your views have been shared with Carers Trust, who will use them to influence politicians to include unpaid carers in their manifesto priorities!

In May, we held a Carer Representative Day, which celebrated the amazing work that our Carer Representatives do. Members of the senior leadership team from both the Carers Centre and the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership were able to hear why your Carer Representatives decided to get involved and what they hope to achieve during their time as Carer Representatives. A massive thank you to all our wonderful Carer Representatives, your time and commitment to helping others are highly appreciated!

When participating in meetings, Carer Representatives contribute to discussions and provide advice and scrutiny from a carer's perspective. Where possible, they may add relevant items to meeting agendas and are prepared to raise relevant points and ask questions. If you'd like to share your experiences, please contact Sharlene Ramage, Carer Participation Development Worker, who will ensure the relevant Carer Representative shares your views on your behalf.

If you would like to more information about the Voice or other involvement opportunities, please contact Sharlene on: **01324 611510 (Option 4)** or email sharleneramage@centralcarers.co.uk

'5 Days of Christmas' PRIZE DRAW



Our '5 Days of Christmas' prize draw is back for 2025! A draw will be held every few days, starting from Monday 15 December, with multiple winners each day!

We want to support local businesses, so prizes may include options such as vouchers for local activities, or a meal out, relaxation experiences, and more!

To enter, please contact us, complete the tear off slip below and send back to us using the freepost address provided, or simply scan the QR code. You only need to enter once to be included each prize draw.

Winners will be notified by telephone.



Christmas Lunch

We are delighted to confirm that once again we are holding our annual Carers' Christmas Lunches, in both Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

In **Clackmannanshire**, the lunch will be on Thursday 11 December (12 noon for 12.30 pm start) at **Dunmar House Hotel** in Alloa. Lunch will cost £5 pp. Spaces are very limited - to book a space, please get in touch with us on **01324 611510 (Option 2)**.

Falkirk carers are invited to join us on Wednesday 17 December (12 noon for 12.30pm start) at the **Grange Manor Hotel** in Grangemouth. Lunch will cost £5 pp and spaces are also very limited - to book a space, please get in touch with us on **01324 611510 (Option 1)**.

Name

Address

Contact number

Email address

☐ Please include me in the '5 Days of Christmas' Prize Draw

☐ I agree to receiving future information by email

☐ Please remove me from the mailing list for this newsletter

Freepost address: **Central Carers Association, Freepost SCO167, Falkirk, FK1 1BR**



Festive Opening Hours

Although the Carers Centre will be closed from **Wednesday 24th December 2025**, our staff in Falkirk and Clackmannanshire will be available to take your calls up to and including the **24th December**. The Carers Centre will open again on **Monday 5 January 2026**.

Group Support Activities



Falkirk

- **Falkirk Carers Lunch** – This group meets for lunch on the first Thursday of every month (except December) at **Tamfourhill Community Hub**, between 12.30 and 2 pm. Carers and the person they care for are welcome to come along too. For more information contact Sarah at the Carers Centre on **01324 611510 (Option 1)**.
- Our partnership with **Central Wellbeing SCIO**, who run support groups for carers in Falkirk, continues. Currently, they offer a range of groups, including the Carers Cafe drop-in, every Wednesday at the Carers Centre, and the men's group, which meets at the Carers Centre on the first Tuesday of each month.

You can find out more about the groups at the What's On section on our website, or by visiting Central Wellbeing's website (centralwellbeing.org).



Clackmannanshire

- **Carer Support Group** – This group meets every Tuesday (except the first Tuesday of the month) at **Hawkhill Community Centre** between 1.30 pm and 3 pm. You are welcome to just come along, but if you would like more information, please contact Caroline, carolinequinn@centralcarers.co.uk, Tel: **01324 611510**.
- **Alloa Carer Get-Together** – This group meets for a light lunch the first Tuesday of the month at **Hawkhill Community Centre**, between 12.30 and 2 pm. Carers and the person they care for are welcome.
- **Alva Carer Get-Together** – This group meets for a light lunch the second Monday of the month at **Cochrane Hall**, between 12.30 and 2.30pm. Carers and the person they care for are welcome.
- **Tullibody Carer Get-Together** – This group meets for a light lunch every third Monday of the month at **Tullibody Civic Centre**, between 12 noon and 2 pm. Carers and the person they care for are welcome.

Please contact Amanda, amandarutherford@centralcarers.co.uk, Tel: **01324 611510**, if you would like to attend any of these Carer Get-Together events.



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Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre is managed by a board of trustees elected from the membership of Central Carers Association, a voluntary organisation comprising carers and those with an interest in carers' issues.

The organisation is a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company No SC184443) and a Registered Scottish Charity (No SC023658)

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