

Five things you need to know today



Council seek views on carers – Petitions Committee – Forth Bridges Festival 2014 – Save the Swifts project – Edinburgh Drawing School exhibition coming to an end

Edinburgh residents who provide unpaid care to family, friends and neighbours are being urged to have their say on how public and voluntary organisations can provide them with better support.

The City of Edinburgh Council has launched a [consultation](#) on its draft Joint Carers' Strategy, developed in partnership with NHS Lothian, the voluntary sector and carers themselves.

Estimates of the numbers of carers in Edinburgh are around 47,000 based on the Scottish Household Survey 2007/08, with potentially up to 5,000 of these being young carers. Without their input, the estimated cost of replacement care in Edinburgh is valued at £771m a year (Carers UK, 2011).

The Joint Carers' Strategy, and consultation, covers six priorities:

- identifying carers – helping people who care for others realise they can get support
- information and advice – carer training, advice, help with finances and benefits
- health and wellbeing – emotional, social and practical support to improve health
- short breaks and respite – giving carers a break from caring
- young adult carers – supporting the transition to adulthood for carers

- personalising support for carers – support that meets the individual needs of carers

The Council offers a range of support to carers, including a pilot scheme to provide a one-off Carer Support Payment of £250, which was recently highlighted as an example of best practice by the Scottish Government. The payment was made available unpaid carers, adult and young carers who met the criteria, allowing them to spend some time on themselves to improve their health and wellbeing.

Another successful scheme has been the Carer's Emergency Card, which was launched in November 2012. These cards are designed to inform emergency services that the holder is a carer and that someone depends on them. It also provides the names of people who can be contacted in case of an emergency. To date 258 carer's cards have been registered and these will continue to be promoted.

Both schemes received positive feedback in a newly published carers' survey, designed to evaluate these and other initiatives. The Carer Support Payment proved to be particularly popular, with 738 payments made to adult and young carers. 84% of people in receipt of the fund said that it provided them with the support as they intended and 30% chose to spend the money on respite or a short break.

✗ Councillor Norman Work, the Council's Carers Champion, said: "Our vision for carers is that those who want to can continue as valued and equal partners in providing care, while being able to live healthy and fulfilling lives themselves. With young carers, it's essential that they are helped to be relieved of any inappropriate roles so they can have a quality life of their own.

"The recent feedback we received from carers about the Council's support initiatives has been very encouraging. We have committed additional funding of £500,000 over the next

year, so we will use their input to build on these successes and improve services for the future.

“With an ageing population, and increasing health needs, it’s more important than ever before that we and our partner organisations work together with carers to support them as much as we can.”

Further details are contained in a [report to the Council’s Health, Wellbeing and Housing committee](#).

The petitions committee meets at the City Chambers this afternoon. More on this [in our article here](#).

The Forth Bridges Festival which was launched yesterday is shaping up to be something special. A torchlight procession across the Forth Road Bridge and the Big Lunch are just two of the events which are being organised to celebrate the 50 years since the bridge was opened.

We interviewed Mike Cantlay the Chair of VisitScotland who are backing the Festival along with others at the launch yesterday:-



[Edinburgh World Heritage](#) say that they are becoming involved in a project to increase the number of swifts living in the city. They report that the numbers of these beautiful birds have declined since 1994 and so they are installing bird boxes in collaboration with the council's bio diversity officers. The bird boxes are being made in Saughton Prison.

EWB would like to hear from any schools who want to put up the nesting boxes.

☐ Last chance to see the exhibition at the Edinburgh Drawing School which closes tomorrow. EDS tell us

"Ah...we are coming to the close of our fabulous 'pop-up'

Festival Exhibition!

We are open until Friday 6th September, 11am – 6.30pm, and during this last week, we are featuring the wonderfully evocative, and beautifully drawn, figurative sketches of Edinburgh artist Greg Mitchell. Ranging in price from £125 to £200, this charming collection will appeal to all those who love figurative work.

“Greg will be one of a selection of artists who are hosting Weekend Workshops with us once the Drawing School starts back up for it’s Autumn Term here at Great King Street, on 23rd September. Please see the [website](#) for full details of our Adults and Kids Courses, Weekend Workshops and classes.”

