



CAITHNESS VOLUNTARY GROUP

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2010



Welcome to the Caithness Voluntary Group Newsletter. This is our regular publication where we inform you about community activities, training events and funding opportunities for the voluntary sector in Caithness.

Changes to sick notes

The current sick note asks GPs to make a decision as to whether their patient should or should not work, and for how long they should not work. The revised "fit note" will allow them to indicate that an individual may be fit for some work if the workplace and/or duties can be temporarily amended.

To help employers understand the implications of the changes, ACAS will be delivering short training events that will explain what the new statement of fitness to work will mean for you, your employees and your organisation.

One of these takes place in Inverness on 6th May, from 10am to noon and from 2-4pm. The cost of attending is £60 plus VAT. To book a place, call 08457 38 37 36.

From 6th April 2010, the new statement – known as a statement of fitness for work, or "fit note" – will mean doctors can advise that the patient either:

- is not fit for work
- may be fit for work

A doctor will give a “may be fit for work” statement if they think that your employee’s health condition may allow them to work – as long as you give them the appropriate support.

If a doctor uses this option, they will give advice about the effects of the patient’s health condition and, if appropriate, some suggestions about the types of adjustment or adaptations you could consider making to help your employee back to work.

While you won’t have to act on the doctor’s advice in a “may be fit for work” statement, it may help you make simple and practical adjustments to help your employee return to work and reduce unnecessary sickness absence.

If for any reason you can’t make the changes necessary to support your employee’s return to work, you should – for sick pay purposes – consider the statement as if the doctor had advised that your employee is “not fit for work”.

For more information on this, go to <http://online.businesslink.gov.uk>

CVG at NDA bidders’ event

Caithness Voluntary Group had a stand at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority’s stakeholder event in Wick on Friday 5th February, the first part of a major exercise focusing on the future running of Dounreay.

Nuclear industry representatives from around the world were among more than 150 people attending the event in the Assembly Rooms. It centred on the competition to become the first private-sector owner and operator of the Dounreay site, and stakeholders were given the chance to speak directly to bidders about opportunities in the area.

The CVG stand was manned throughout the day, providing information about the thriving voluntary sector in the county and distributing leaflets from a wide range of local community groups. An encouraging level of interest was shown in what the voluntary sector has to offer and the vital role it plays in the socio-economic fabric of Caithness.

Speakers at the event included Sir Anthony Cleaver of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership, Trudy Morris of Caithness Chamber of Commerce and Donald McBeath of North Highland College UHI, while local MP John Thurso was also there along with representatives from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Highland Council and the NDA.

The second stage of the event is due to take place in Glasgow on 9th March.

TRAINING

Social Enterprise

An insight into Social Enterprise will be given at an event being led by HISEZ (Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone) in Wick next week.

It will take place in the Community Education Building, Ackergill Street, from noon to 3pm on Wednesday 17th March.

If you would like to find out more about Social Enterprise then come along to this free event. There will be speakers from HISEZ and also a presentation from the Highland Council covering its recent decision about what it buys from the voluntary sector and how this is assessed as grant aid or a contract. There will also be a couple of short presentations about how to do business with the council, and how it can help. To book a place, call Yvonne at CVG on 01955 609960 or e-mail Yvonne@cvg.org.uk

Free First Aid

A FREE training course in Basic First Aid is being run in both Wick and Thurso on various dates over the next few months.

The full-day course covers blood loss, burns and scalds, fractures, strains and sprains.

It is suitable community groups, sporting clubs, youth organisations or any other groups in the voluntary sector that would benefit.

Venues and dates are as follows:

Assembly Rooms, Wick, 9-5pm

- Thursday 27th May
- Wednesday 23rd June
- Tuesday 17th August
- Thursday 23rd September

T3UK, Janetstown, Thurso, 9-5pm

- Thursday 15th April
- Friday 21st May
- Thursday 24th June

To book a place or to find out more, contact Yvonne Hendry at CVG – phone 01955 609960 or e-mail Yvonne@cvg.org.uk

Events being run by Women @ Work Caithness over the next few months:

- Confident Communication, Friday 26th March, 12-2pm Thurso (venue to be arranged)
- Self-Awareness for Self-Confidence, Friday 30th April, 12-2pm, Norseman Hotel, Wick
- Listening Skills, Friday 28th May, 12-2pm (venue to be arranged)
- Kundalini Yoga, Friday 25th June, 12-2pm, Norseman Hotel, Wick
- Laughter is the Best Medicine, Friday 30th July, 12-2pm, Thurso (venue to be arranged)

All events are FREE. Lunch is provided at a cost of £3 or bring along a packed lunch. To book a place, call WEA on 01463 710577 or e-mail the following address:

womenatwork-dmin@weascotland.org.uk

Social Enterprise Academy

Social Enterprise Academy is planning to deliver a course on Social Accounting and Audit in Wick 13th/14th April at Family Centre. Social accounting and audit is a process whereby your organisation can prove the value of its performance and can account for its social, environmental and economic impact and report on its performance to stakeholders. This is a FREE two-day course.

The social enterprise also intend to run a course on an introduction to writing tenders on May 11th in Thurso venue to be confirmed.

Both these courses are FREE to find out more contact Yvonne at CVG or Kate kate@theacademy-ssea.org





If you want to find out whether your group can apply for funding from BBC Children in Need then come along to a presentation from Children in Need on Wednesday 31st March at the Wick Family Centre, from 2.30-4pm.

The presentation will cover information on the small grants programme. These small grants are intended to help community organisations with funding for a range of activities – for example regular weekly programmes, equipment, play schemes or modest expansion into new areas. Small grants are for under £10,000, and funding can be given for between one and three years.

To book a place or to find out more, contact Yvonne Hendry at CVG on 01955 609960 or Yvonne@cvg.org.uk

FUNDING

Highland LEADER grants

To apply for LEADER support you must be a constituted community group, social enterprise (micro or small businesses), voluntary organisation or public-sector body with a project idea that will benefit a rural community.

Individuals can also apply in some cases, provided the project is community-driven and will benefit a wide section of the community. You must have match funding in place before LEADER funding can be approved.

To find out more contact Fiona Cameron, Tel – 07827 281469 or 01408 635215
Email - fiona.cameron4@highland.gov.uk LEADER development officer, or contact CVG.

Some groups in Caithness that have been successful in securing LEADER funding are:

- Caithness Archaeological Trust
- Lyth Arts Society

- Caithness Voluntary Group
- Thurso Players
- Pulteneytown People's Project
- Ormlie Community Association
- North Highland College
- The Rotary Club of Thurso

There are eight themes to the Highland LEADER Programme 2007-2013. These are:

- Local development strategies
- Culture and heritage
- Training and learning opportunities
- Access to activities, facilities and services
- Land, environment and access to the countryside
- Renewables
- Tourism
- Social enterprise and micro-businesses

£50 Million Scottish investment aims to transform lives

Big Lottery has announced a new £50 million Lottery investment in Scotland aimed at transforming the life chances of young people leaving care and fundamentally improving the lives of older people with dementia and their carers.

The key aim is to use lottery funding to improve all of Scotland's communities by targeting support directly at those most in need. This investment package seeks to address the key challenges faced by young people leaving care and people with dementia in Scotland by focusing on the specific needs of those individuals involved.

While some previous grant funding programmes have been set up to address one single aspect of people's lives at a time, this is intended to develop a new approach which looks at supporting all aspects of an individual's life together in one package – a person-centered approach over a much longer period which is committed to driving forward positive change in people's circumstances.

This significant and substantial funding package will be invested in order to make a step change to the lives and life chances of some of the most vulnerable people in Scotland today, which Big Lottery believes will in turn make a positive difference to every Scottish community. To find out more go to www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/scotland

National Churches Trust

The National Churches Trust aims to protect and support the built heritage of churches, chapels and meeting houses. Repair grants are for both listed and unlisted churches as long as they are open to public worship.

- **Repair grants:** Grants of £10,000 and above for structural repair projects that will cost more than £50,000.
- **Community grants:** Grants from £2,500 to £25,000 for providing facilities that will benefit your place of worship and local community – for example toilets, kitchens and meeting rooms. Grants will not exceed 50% of the project cost.

For more information, visit www.nationalchurchestrust.org/howgrant.html or call 020 76006090

COFFEE MORNING

Crossroads Care Caithness is holding a coffee morning at the Royal British Legion (Scotland) in Thurso on Saturday 3rd April, starting at 10am.

The £1 admission includes tea/coffee/biscuits, etc. There will be a baking table, a bottle stall, a raffle and a bric-a-brac table.



Enclosed with this month's newsletter is a questionnaire from Pulteneytown People's Project regarding community learning opportunities throughout Caithness.

PPP would be very grateful if you could spend a few moments completing and returning the questionnaire, as it will help form a clearer picture of local needs.

North of Scotland Friends of ARMS has its centre at the Braehead, Smith Terrace, Wick. The centre has a hyperbaric chamber which is used to alleviate the symptoms of multiple sclerosis.

The chamber has also been found to be beneficial to people suffering from, cerebral palsy, sports injuries, ME, Crohn's disease, Raynaud's disease, autism, leg ulcers, migraine, arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Before anyone considers using the chamber they must have discussed it with their GP to ensure there is no underlying medical reason as to why they should not use the chamber.

Also the main room is available for groups to use for training, meetings or arts and crafts classes. There is no charge – if groups use the facility they can just offer a donation.

To find out more or to book a space to use the chamber, contact Jan Farrington on 01461 531 209.

Caithness Voluntary Group has decided to raise its annual fee for membership from £5 per year to £6. Becoming a member allows you to access office services at a reduced rate. For a complete list of services contact Helen Mackay, office manager, on 01955 603453.

Anyone who would like to contribute information about their community group or events planned, or would like to find out more about anything in the newsletter, can contact CVG on 01955 609960; e-mail Yvonne@cvg.org.uk; or pop in to the CVG office at Telford House, Williamson Street, Wick.

