

Newsletter January 2022

Local news and services

Youth and Philanthropy Initiative

VAO supports the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative in Orkney and invites your charity to come and be involved. This Wood Foundation project was inspired by the original programme run in Canada and is now a fixture in the calendars of over 80% of schools nationwide.



Run annually, all S3 pupils at KGS and Stromness Academy research social issues in their community, and the charities set up to help tackle these inequalities. This is an EXCELLENT opportunity for you to raise awareness of your service, to help educate our young people about the challenges we face as a society, and to let them know where they can turn to for help should they need it in the future.

Through taking part, you will reach over 200 young people, and for a few lucky charities you will have the chance to win £3000 each, the prize money donated by The Wood Foundation for every participating school.

Participating groups need to meet a few key criteria – you must be OSCR registered, you must address a social issue (help people) and you must be able to guarantee that should you win the prize money, it will be spent locally.

If this sounds like something your charity would like to be involved in, please contact brian.cromarty@vaorkney.org.uk. There is a fairly tight turnaround to be prepared for submissions, so please get in touch by Monday 7 February for more details.

Relationships Scotland Orkney LINC sessions

Relationships Scotland Orkney are running LINC sessions to help people get back into the community after covid. The aim of these sessions is to encourage anyone who may be feeling isolated or lonely to connect with new people in a relaxed and friendly environment.



With many social groups no longer running due to the impacts of covid, RS Orkney are providing weekly sessions where people can meet and take part in activities. Come along and join in with crafts, board games, book swaps and other activities. Share or learn a new skill and meet new friends, or just come along and have a coffee.

LINC sessions are free for all ages and run every Tuesday from 10am to 12pm at the St. Magnus Centre throughout February and March. Please call 877750 or email enquiries@rsorkney.org.uk to book a place.

North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub information sessions

The North Highlands and Islands Climate Hub, funded by the Scottish Government, has been established to support community groups in the region to develop and sustain climate action projects. If this is of interest to you and you want to find out more, come along to the Climate Hub's very first event.

The Climate Hub are hosting two 60-minute information sessions on Thursday 3 February at 2pm and 7pm. The sessions will introduce their team, outline the aims of the Hub, and Scottish Government, in supporting community led climate action, provide information surrounding their funding for new climate action projects and hold a Q&A session. The team will be joined by guest speakers who have led on their own community climate action projects.

To register, please click on the links to register for the [afternoon](#) or [evening](#) session. .

For more information about the work Climate Hub, please visit their [website](#).

Sanday Men's Shed

The Sanday Men's Shed has a new website. Click [here](#) to find out more about Men's Sheds and the projects completed in Sanday so far.

Also in the news



Negative and discriminatory attitudes towards people living in poverty blight lives of people across Scotland

Charities have welcomed a call for evidence on the impact of poverty-related stigma following warnings about the effects from politicians in Holyrood.

The Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Poverty, which brings together MSPs from all parties with organisations working to tackle poverty in Scotland, has issued the call as part of its new inquiry into the causes, impacts of and solutions to poverty-related stigma.

The move comes after MSPs were told by experts that negative and discriminatory attitudes towards people living in poverty are continuing to blight the lives of people across Scotland. Read the full article in [Third Force News](#).

Funding & Finance



Pension Enrolment

The Pensions Act 2008 requires every employer in the UK to assess their workforce to determine the individual pension contribution requirements of each worker. There are three categories of worker, each with different entitlements. VAO have produced a Briefing Note on Pension Enrolment to help organisations determine their requirements. Click [here](#) to read.

Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

VAO is the funding lead partner for Orkney, working collaboratively with the Orkney Partnership's Community Wellbeing Delivery Group, and the Integration Joint Board (IJB), to effectively distribute the Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to small, grass roots, community groups and organisations.

We have been awarded £75,197 to support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population. Our local priorities have been identified in collaboration with statutory and third sector partners and service users, and comprise: Social Isolation; Prevention of suicide; Unpaid Carers; Older People; Rurally/Island Distanced; Poverty; Trauma

Whilst the deadline for large grant applications has now passed, VAO is still welcoming applications for small grants (up to £2,500) up until 9am on Monday 14 February.

If you would like further information, and to download the guidance and application form, please click [here](#) or contact [Clare Gee](#).

Families urged to apply for Best Start Grant payments

Social Security Scotland are urging families to apply for Best Start Grant School Age Payment before the deadline and to apply for help with early learning costs.

Eligible families with children born between 1 March 2016 - 28 February 2017, are being encouraged to apply for the School Age Payment before applications close on 28 February 2022. Parents or carers enrolling children in nursery this year have also been urged to check whether they are eligible for a one-off payment to help with early learning costs.

For Early Years Payment, eligible families who are in receipt of certain benefits or tax credits with a child who is aged between 2-3 and a half years old. Parents or carers who are eligible for the Early Learning Payment receive a one-off grant of £252.50.

The money can be used to help pay for clothes, equipment, bags, books or anything else which is helpful for people caring for children in that age range.

Eligible families for School Age Payment may be parents or carers who are in receipt of certain benefits or tax credits with a child who is old enough to start school. School Age Payment is a payment of £252.50 per child and is designed to support children at a key stage in their life.

It is not directly linked to taking up a school place. As such, even if the child's school start has been deferred until next year, or if the child is not going to start school at all, parents or carers should still apply for the payment by 28 February 2022. If they do not apply by this time, they will not be able to receive the payment.

Social Security Scotland want to ensure that everyone who is entitled to money for Early Learning or School Age Payment receive it and they would welcome support from stakeholders to make sure people don't miss out on these payments. Please encourage any clients in your networks to apply for School Age Payment before the 28 February deadline and for Early Years Payment when enrolling their child into nursery. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Did you know that VAO produces a monthly Training & Funding Update? It contains useful information and links about current training and funding opportunities as well as enterprise and governance advice. To sign up, email: enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk and let us know you would like to be added to the mailing list. The January update can be viewed [here](#).

Job opportunities

Relationships Scotland Orkney Child Contact Centre – part time vacancies



What is a Child Contact Centre?

A Child Contact Centre provides a safe and neutral venue for children to maintain or re-establish contact with a parent they no longer live with, a relative or other person who is important in their life. The Centre can also be used to reintroduce a child to a parent where there has been a substantial gap in contact. It may be that trust has broken down or communication has become difficult following parental separation.

RS Orkney work closely with other services throughout Orkney to provide contact and support for families from all backgrounds. The Centre offers a range of contacts such as managed handovers, supported in-centre contact, supervised in-centre contact, indirect and escorted contact.

What are the opportunities?

RS Orkney are looking for sessional workers to help facilitate contacts, which usually take place on Saturdays and sometimes weekday evenings. Hours vary from week to week, depending on families' needs and staff availability. Experience of working with children and families is preferred and full training is provided. Staff must have the ability to remain impartial, empathetic and respect confidentiality at all times.

What's working at the Contact Centre like?

These comments from Contact Centre staff explain their experience of working at RS Orkney:

"I have worked at the Contact Centre for nearly a year now, I have thoroughly enjoyed it. It is an interesting and satisfying job – good to feel that you are helping people get their lives back on track and enabling children to keep in touch with everybody they need in their lives. It is a warm and friendly environment and does a great and much needed job. I would recommend joining the team."

"Having worked at the Contact Centre for many years I have met a variety of different interesting people of all ages and with different skills. Every member of staff has their own unique outlook and qualities to bring to the job. Understanding and listening are essential and good communication is always an asset. I can say that my time spent at the centre is enjoyable and always a learning experience."

"At RS Orkney we work in small groups facilitating vital contact for families. Not always plain sailing but always rewarding to see the progress made by families over time and gaining their trust in the process. A nice bunch of support workers to chat with in between contacts and handovers with parents and children."

To find out more or apply for a position please get in touch by [email](#) at or call 01856 877750. For more information about Relationships Scotland Orkney, please visit their [website](#).



Training opportunities

Cyber Resilience Training

Come along to a free, and very informal session and learn three really simple steps to make sure you are safer online and your organisation's data is more secure - it sounds scary but it isn't!

Delivered via Teams, in a session lasting no more than an hour and a half, this training is being rolled out by the Third Sector Interface Network for voluntary organisations across Scotland. In Orkney it is being delivered by Clare Gee, VAO's Community Development Worker. You do not need to have Teams installed to attend. The next two sessions will be delivered on:

Wednesday 16 February 7pm – 8.30pm
Saturday 19 February 10am – 11.30am

If you would like further information, or to sign up for one of the sessions, please contact [Clare Gee](#).



DYW Employer Workshops

Developing the Young Workforce Scotland is offering a programme of free training webinars for employers across Scotland to support them in informing, inspiring and hiring young people. The sessions have been developed in response to industry need and include the following topics:

- Inspiring Young Minds
- Delivering Meaningful Work Placements
- Remotely Onboarding Young People
- Mentoring Young People
- Steps to Inspiring Young People with Additional Support Needs (in partnership with Enable)
- Inclusive Workplaces; Ensuring you're not missing out (in partnership with Forth Perspectives)

To take part email orkneydyw@uhi.ac.uk with your name, your business/organisation's name and the name and date of the webinar you wish to attend.

Find out more and view the dates [here](#).

Volunteering opportunities

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

There are all kinds of opportunities currently available to help local organisations and people in Orkney. For more details and to register as a volunteer, get in touch today.

Sam Stringer

Volunteer Development Worker

Samantha.stringer@vaorkney.org.uk

01856-872897

Gardener



The Yard Plant Nursery
@theyardplantnursery · Gardener

Kennel Assistant



Beach Clean Volunteer



Adviser



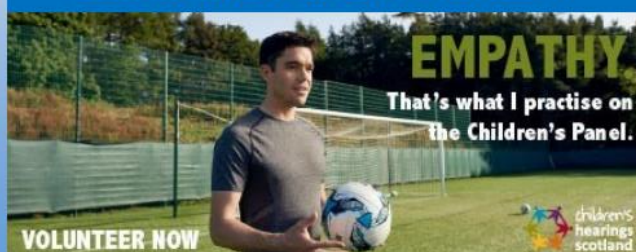
Youth Leader



Trustee



Children's Panel Volunteer



Bird Hide Cleaner



If you would like to promote your organisation, an activity or project or have an interesting story to share, please contact Cecily.cromby@vaorkney.org.uk