

Carers of East Lothian (CoEL) Annual Summary 2019/20

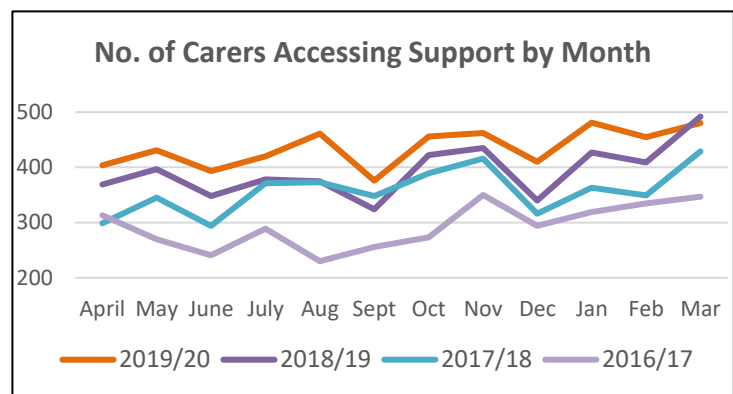


“It has been so helpful having someone on the end of the phone and giving house visits when we didn't know where to get help. Their support has made a lot of our problems disappear.” (Miss B from Tranent).

“Knowing that CoEL know and understand the difficulties and stages of caring has been so very beneficial. Often there's no need for words as the carer's needs and uncertainties are understood. I would not have been able to care for my husband without the continuing support from CoEL.” (Mrs B from North Berwick).

Our busiest year ever

- We directly supported **1,202¹** individual carers over the year including **516** carers who were referred to us for the first time during the year (up 8% on last year).
- The average number of carers supported per month was up **10.9%** compared to last year
- At the end of the year we were in contact with **3,421** carers in total.



Supporting Carers & the people they care for during the COVID19 lockdown

- The whole country has been impacted by the lockdown but none more so than unpaid carers and the people they care for. Carers have faced the triple whammy of needing to shield the people they care for, huge levels of isolation and reduced levels of support from Health and Social Care.
- CoEL's investment in agile working and cloud-based systems enabled us to maintain and step up our support for carers. In just the first 6 weeks of the lockdown CoEL:
 - Provided direct support to a total of **732 Carers – 53% up** on the same period the year before
 - Adapted our small grants scheme supporting **47 families** caring for a child with additional support needs through grants totalling **£4554** to help ease some of the huge pressures they were experiencing.
 - Proactively contacted **292** vulnerable Carers who we had not recently supported to check they were OK.
 - Wrote to over 3,250 Carers providing information and advice and issuing a letter on behalf of East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELHSCP) confirming and facilitating critical importance of their unpaid caring role in the response to COVID19.
 - Developed a directory of local resilience resources in East Lothian and shared this widely.

Supported Carers to claim a record £1,164,000 of benefits

- For the first time ever in 2019/20 CoEL supported Carers (and the people they care for) to claim over £1,000,000 in annualised welfare benefits. We supported a total of 476 Carers with benefits issues and as well as supporting claims we also help by sorting out delays and problems with payments which are just as

¹ Calculated slightly differently from previous years fewer types of contacts included – using the old methodology the figure for 19/20 would be 1,381.

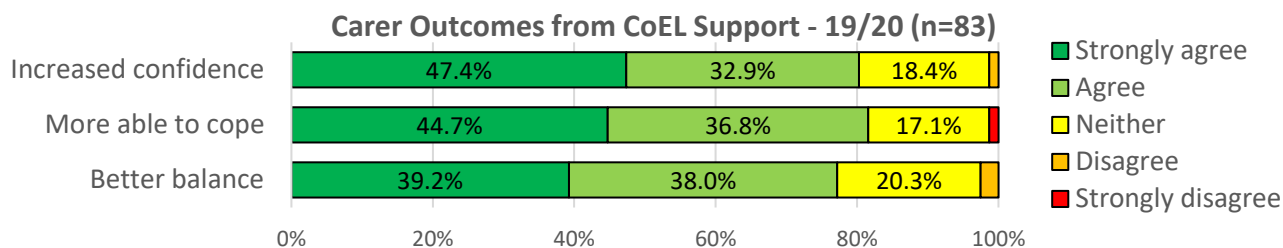
important if not more so. We are delighted that the Health and Social Care Partnership has agreed to continue to fund our specialist benefits Carer Support Worker in 2020/21.

Other forms of support provided by CoEL

- As well as helping Carers with Benefits issues and during the COVID19 lockdown, CoEL has continued to provide a wide range of support for Carers depending on their needs. This includes:
 - One to one information, advice and emotional support – for example linking an isolated parent carer with other parents or supporting a carer to know how to respond when someone has suicidal thoughts.
 - Specialist support and small grants to help carers get a break – we focus on helping carers take breaks and, as part of this, last year we provided grants totalling **£8,035** towards such breaks.
 - Run workshops, events and monthly support groups for Carers attended by **164** carers overall.
 - Run Power of Attorney, Dementia and Financial Planning surgeries.
- Carers are overwhelmingly positive about our support and we maintained our **99% approval rating**.
- CoEL also supports other organisations where we see this as providing benefits for carers and we continue to host the North Berwick Coastal Community Connections project as it grows and develops.

The outcomes from our support for Carers

- Carers tell us our support makes a real, positive difference for them.



New offices, new counselling service and new Chief Executive

- In Nov. 2019 we moved into our new offices at the heart of the East Lothian Community Hospital. Our phone number and contact details remain the same and we maintain offices and regular surgeries in Musselburgh to ensure we continue to support the Honest Toun!
- In April 2020 CoEL appointed Jess Wade as our new Chief Executive. Jess came to CoEL from running SDS Scotland and is a Board Member of OSCR – the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- We appointed our first Counselling Coordinator and are in the process of setting up a COSCA certified short course counselling services for Carers

Our financial resources

- CoEL's funding from ELC and NHS Lothian increased to £405,506 in 2019/20 largely because of our work continuing to support the ELHSCP's implementation of the Carers Act. We also won an additional £11,195 funding from the CATs Fund administered by SCVO.
- We raised a fantastic £8,342 in donations (inc. Gift Aid still to come) largely in response to our first ever appeal to help with the costs and to make the most from our office move.

“Couldn't have done it without [the Carer Support Worker], couldn't do enough for my Mum and the support she has given me was priceless. Always there to speak to for help.” (Mrs W from Musselburgh).