

Meeting Note – Carers’ Panel

Title	Carers’ Panel
Venue	Zoom
Date	17/02/2022
Attendees	Dorothy Barbour, Helen Wedgwood, Jacki Aston, Mary Baxter, Patricia Gordon, Kirsteen Powell (CoEL)
Apologies	Anne Bisset, Agnes Stevenson

Agenda

- Review of last two months’ meeting notes and actions
 - Feedback from Kirsteen's meeting with Paul McLennan's office on Wed 16th Feb 2022
- Any issues Panel members wish to raise
 - Dorothy - Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) Bill
- Carer engagement opportunities
 - Group Activity
 - National Care Service consultation analysis
- Carers Card - examples and options
- Any other business

Summary of discussions

Meeting note for 12/01/2022 reviewed and approved without changes.

Engaging with other local political representatives

There was a brief discussion of who else the Panel should consider engaging with to ensure carers’ voices are heard. Kirsteen suggested inviting Councillor Shamin Akhtar (Cabinet spokesperson on health and social care at East Lothian Council and vice-chair of the Integrated Joint Board) to speak to and hear from the Panel. Helen agreed that it was important to engage with councillors as local authorities are responsible for delivering many local services and will also be key players in any future discussions on the National Care Service.

Importance of community hospitals

Panel members discussed how important community hospitals were to carers in providing local, accessible and high-quality care. Helen described the Edington as a “place of humanity” in relation to her experience of caring for her late mother in the first year of the pandemic. Other Panel members echoed this sentiment. Kirsteen stated that MSP Paul McLeannan, who she had met with the previous day, had committed to finding out the timescales and processes for the re-provisioning of Edington and Belhaven Hospitals and how carers will be involved. Dorothy noted that MSP Craig Hoy had also been very active in the campaign to save Edington Hospital and may be another key figure for the Panel to approach on this issue.

Access to GP appointments

Panel members raised concerns about how difficult it was to book an appointment with a GP across the county. Advanced nurse practitioners were not always an adequate substitute. Mary noted that there were no new health care facilities included in the plans for the building of

Blindwells. Patty added that they were struggling to recruit GPs in Musselburgh leading to the closure of practices. Dorothy highlighted the pressure being placed on carers to make health care decisions as the automated message at her local GP surgery advised callers to ring 999 for urgent medical attention. Jacki said that A&E were turning people away if they were presenting with an issue that could be dealt with by a GP. This left people stranded, unable to see a GP urgently or access A&E. Everyone agreed the problem was a national issue, and one that should be flagged in ongoing discussions on the National Care Service (which could potentially include GP contracts).

Disabled children and young people (transitions to adulthood) bill

Dorothy gave an update on the discussions in the cross-parliamentary groups on autism and disabled people on the bill proposed by Pam Duncan-Glancy, which would give every disabled child and young person the right to support with transitions until the age of 26. The bill was supported by 59 MPs, including Paul McClennan, and will now go through the parliamentary legislative process.

Equality impact assessments

Dorothy shared that Forth Valley College had been criticised for making a decision about who could use the disabled toilets in its buildings without consulting any disabled staff or students first or assessing the impact any changes would have on these individuals. Jacki spoke about a related issue, where disabled persons parking spaces were being converted into electric car charging points in East Lothian. Kirsteen suggested Jacki write to MSP Paul McLennan to raise the issue as the Council had a duty to conduct an equality impact assessment on any such policy changes.

Universal basic income

Mary stated that Wales had decided to pilot a universal basic income scheme for care leavers. She wondered if Scotland could introduce a similar scheme for carers to give them the dignity, respect and financial security they deserved. There was unanimous support for this idea. Kirsteen agreed to raise it on behalf of the Panel in relation to the National Carer Strategy and Covid-19 Recovery Plan for Carers during the CoCiS meeting on Wed 2nd March.

Group activity

Kirsteen outlined possibilities for a group activity. The majority of panel members present expressed a preference for a face-to-face event with a targeted focus to help the group develop a plan of action as opposed to a more generic communications skills workshop. Kirsteen will liaise with In Control Scotland to see what can be organised on this basis.

Carer's card

As time was short, it was agreed to discuss the carer's card paper at a future meeting. Helen suggested that developing and delivering a carer's card for East Lothian might be a good focus for the session with In Control Scotland.

National Care service consultation responses

Helen asked for time to be set aside in the next meeting to discuss the responses to the National Care Service consultation and to receive an update on CoCiS meeting's exploration of what was said and next steps.

Next steps/ Key decisions

- Discuss National Care Service consultation responses and next steps at March meeting

Actions		
Who	What	By when
Kirsteen	Liaise with In Control Scotland on designing an in-person action-planning event. Seek suggestions from Panel members on a focus for event (one possibility is development of local carer's card)	28/02/2022
Kirsteen	Raise idea that universal basic income for carers should form part of National Carer Strategy at CoCiS meeting	02/03/2022
Kirsteen	Invite Councillor Shamin Akhtar to Carers' Panel meeting	04/03/2022

Carer Engagement Opportunities

Immediate (next 4 to 6 weeks)

#1 CoCiS Member Meeting – National Care Service & National Carers Strategy

Wednesday 2nd March, 10:00 am to 12:30m pm, Online

This meeting will cover:

- **The National Care Service:** What did people say in the consultation and what happens next? We will hear from the Programme Lead at the Scottish Government
- **A National Carer Strategy and Covid-19 Recovery Plan for Carers:** A national strategy will be developed by late Spring - your chance to tell the Scottish Government what needs to be in it

This is a save the date notice – online registrations are due to open shortly. Sign up to become a member of CoCiS (free for all carers) to receive meeting details by email directly.

<https://www.carersnet.org/contact-and-membership/>

#2 Exploring community models for activities and support for Adults with Complex Needs

Thursday 10th March, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, The Fraser Centre, 3A Winton Place, Tranent, EH33 1AF

This meeting is for people, groups and organisations in East Lothian who are interested in different ways to offer activities and support for adults with complex needs. It's a short session to begin exploring some different community models. Please register via link below to attend meeting.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/exploring-community-models-for-activities-and-support-tickets-262413544977>

Medium term (next 3 months)

#1 Carers' Panel Group Activity

Thank you to everyone who completed the brief survey I sent about a possible group activity for Panel members. You can see a summary of responses (n=9, all anonymous) here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=suZ3wvWubEubdLaUIIQFEzS9JhDINHhDjYovHuB6z1BUQko4Wk40UDFXVDg3MIZTNEIXQJg4M0VaWC4u&AnalyzerToken=MQ2XbKWDUzOzKY03NZf4JZMcrFh4htYB>

- 4 people expressed interest in communication/assertiveness skills training
- 2 people expressed interest in team building event
- 3 people expressed interest in other events
 - Lunch or other face-to-face chat
 - Event to develop Panel's strategy to support carer recognition in East Lothian
 - Pilates class

A few people commented they'd like to meet face to face to have a more focused conversation on the way forward and to get to know each other.

Given this feedback, I would suggest two events – an online workshop on communication/assertiveness skills and a face-to-face event that combined a social element with strategy and action planning. Does this sound like a good compromise?

The organisations I have approached to explore delivering a workshop are:

- Not a Care in the World: <https://www.notacareintheworld.co.uk/>
 - Carer-specific training organisation based in England
- In Control Scotland: <https://www.in-controlscotland.org/>
 - Scottish capacity building organisation for people who use health and social care services

I do not have any dates or venues in mind yet – do you have any suggestions?

Longer term (next 6 months)

#1 Update from Carers Team, ELHSCP

I contacted Ashley Hardy and Trish Carlyle from East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership (ELHSCP) to request a follow up meeting to update Panel members on service developments and explain what happens with Adult Carer Support Plans and eligibility criteria (Trish and Ashley spoke to Panel about Carers Act funding in Sept 2022). Trish responded that she is retiring at the end of March. If it's not possible to arrange a meeting with her before she retires, I will set up one up with her successor when they are in post.

#2 Possible meeting with Marie Prior, Young Carers Service

I have been in contact with Marie Prior, the Young Carers Coordinator at ELHSCP. She has offered to come to speak to the Panel about the service that is currently being developed and rolled out in schools – would the Panel like to invite Marie to speak to them? ELHSCP is encouraging young carers, including sibling young carers, to identify themselves by completing Young Carers Questionnaire.

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210577/carers/12430/young_carers

#3 Haddington Farmers Market

I will continue to see if we can get a slot for an information stall. As I explained previously, availability depends on a regular stallholder cancelling their booking.

Additional Notes

National Care Service (NCS) Consultation Analysis

Here are the links to the analysis of the responses to the NCS consultation:

- **Easy-read version (42 pages long!)** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-consultation-analysis-easy-read/pages/2/>
- **Full version (171 pages long!)** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-consultation-analysis-responses/>

Specifically in relation to Breaks from Caring, most people said:

- everyone should have a right to a break from caring
- support should be what each person needs rather than the same support for everyone
- services should be flexible and change if needed
- services should be preventative to stop people getting to a crisis where things are difficult or dangerous

Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

Here is some information on the disabled children and young people's bill mentioned by MSP Paul McLennan and Panel member Dorothy Barbour for anyone who wishes to learn more about it (NB. Paul McLennan supported the bill)

- <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/proposals-for-bills/proposed-disabled-children-and-young-people-transitions-to-adulthood-scotland-bill>
- <https://www.camphillscotland.org.uk/msps-confirm-support-for-transitions-to-adulthood-bill/>