

Meeting Note – Carers’ Panel

Title	Carers’ Panel
Venue	Zoom
Date	15/03/2022
Attendees	Anne Bisset, Agnes Stevenson, Jacki Aston, Jane Innes-Campbell, Mary Baxter, Kirsteen Powell (CoEL), Jess Wade (CEO CoEL – Guest Speaker)
Apologies	Dorothy Barbour, Helen Wedgwood, Patricia Gordon

Agenda

- Introductions
- Guest Speaker – CEO Jess Wade on CoEL’s new business plan
- Review of last month’s meeting note/ update on actions
 - Feedback from CoCiS member meeting
 - National Care Service consultation and next steps
- Any issues Panel members wish to raise?
- Carer engagement opportunities
 - Save the date – Wed 11th May – Group Activity
 - Short-term Working Group Carers Week
- Any other business

Summary of discussions

Jess Wade, CEO of CoEL, talked Panel members through the organisation’s draft business plan/ strategy.

The document is due to be reviewed and approved by CoEL’s Board in the next few weeks. Once it has been signed off, it will be shared on CoEL’s website and can be circulated to Panel members.

Background and context

The draft plan covers 3 years, from 2022 to 2025, and sets out the organisation’s key priorities and targets. These have been determined by a) CoEL’s contract with the Health & Social Care Partnership to deliver adult carer support services in East Lothian and b) discussions with unpaid carers, board members and staff members in a series of workshops held in summer 2021.

The draft plan restates the organisation’s ambition to be carer-led, solution-focused and person-centred, with support focusing on what’s important to carers and how they want their lives to be.

The draft plan acknowledges key challenges for delivering effective and sustainable carer support services, including:

- Lack of replacement care/ respite care available
- Shortage of social care staff
- Services being focused on crisis response rather than early intervention and prevention
- Limited funding for social care
- Uncertainty in relation to the development of a National Care Service (NCS)
- Transport in relation to rural nature of parts of East Lothian

Opportunities for development

The draft plan identifies 12 themes/ areas for growth. These include:

1. Improving online presence of CoEL and the developing a communications strategy
2. Identifying “hidden carers” (individuals who may not recognise themselves as carers who may be reluctant to identify themselves as such to services)
3. Greater visibility of who’s who at CoEL, including board members
4. Reviewing and improving office space to make it a welcoming, safe and supportive space for carers to visit/ offering alternative community venues to meet with carers (e.g. at Volunteer Centre East Lothian’s premises in Tranent)
5. Greater involvement of volunteers in CoEL and a more strategic approach to volunteering
6. Expanding practical support offered by CoEL (see below)
7. Growing service in new directions especially in relation to developing specialist offerings for young adult carers (18-25 years) as a group that is currently underserved
8. Consolidating CoEL’s training offer and possibly selling training services to businesses to help them become more carer-friendly employers
9. Supporting former carers (carers who have been bereaved or who no longer have an active caring role)
10. Increasing carer engagement, reaching out and listening to carers, and strengthening carers’ voices in the planning and development of services
11. Developing a more strategic approach to fundraising, campaigning and influencing, including setting out what aspirations the organisation has that are not currently funded and then seeking funding for these specific projects
12. Focusing on staff health and wellbeing and reviewing staff terms and conditions

Expanding practical support offered by CoEL

CoEL will look at the possibility of developing practical support services for carers e.g. a sitter service; however, the organisation has to be careful not to overlap with statutory services or responsibilities. One possible idea is to trial a service with RVS or Red Cross volunteers to offer a sitter service to enable carers to attend essential appointments that they would otherwise have to cancel.

Other ideas contained within the draft plan

Jess highlighted that the draft plan also mentions:

- providing more support to parent carers and mental health carers (CoEL currently has dedicated parent carer support workers and mental health carer support workers in the team and is looking to expand the hours attached to these roles)
- providing more coordinated support to carers of people living with dementia (could a carer support worker be part of any future meeting centre in East Lothian?)
- providing more coordinated support to carers of people attending the resource centres (building-based services for adults with complex needs under the age of 65)
- possibility of developing a care needs website that would make it easier for carers to source care (The basic idea is that the carer/ the staff member helping the carer would log what was required and providers who could meet these requirements would then contact the carer. Providers would be contacting carers not vice versa.)

How priorities were decided

Anne asked what were the top three priorities, how had they been decided and where had they come from. Jess explained that there was lots of overlap between what carers, board members and staff members had said during the strategy sessions. However, the top two issue for most carers was a lack of replacement care and respite options.

Carer identification

There was a brief discussion of how to reach out to carers who might not be aware that there is support available. Mary suggested local social media pages (e.g. Pans Folks, Dunbar Online, North Berwick News and Views) as one avenue to raise general awareness. It was noted that GP services had a role to play although there were many leaflets competing for patients' attention in the waiting room/ there was a lack of engagement from some surgeries. Jacki suggested that perhaps the local authority should collect and maintain a register of carers with an annual question being sent out with Council Tax bills. Jess acknowledged that a multi-faceted approach would be required and noted Panel members' suggestions.

Carers' Panel Group Activity

Kirsteen asked Panel members to save the morning of Wednesday 11th May for workshop with In Control Scotland.

There was not time to review the previous month's meeting note or discuss the remaining agenda items – these will be rolled over to next month.

Next steps/ Key decisions

- None noted

Actions

Who	What	By when
Kirsteen	Invite Councillor Shamin Akhtar to Carers' Panel meeting	04/03/2022 Outstanding – will aim for June 2022

Carer Engagement Opportunities

Immediate (next 4 to 6 weeks)

#1 Save the Date – Group Activity – Wed 11th May, 9:30 am to 1:30 pm

Please save Wed 11th May if possible for a face-to-face half-day workshop with In Control Scotland followed by lunch. The venue is still to be confirmed. I'm waiting for confirmation that Fraser Centre, Tranent, can accommodate us on this date.

The outline programme is:

- Welcome, quick intros and warm up exercise
- Introducing theory of change – thinking about goals and strategies, using examples from other well-known campaigns. What did they set out to do and how did they achieve it; what can we learn from them?
- Developing our own theory of change – if we do x, then y will happen, because of z – this first big-picture strategy setting is really important, everything else will flow from here
- Introducing the campaign plan – setting a SMART objective, thinking about who has the power to make the change, using a framework to think about what forces are working for and against the change, and who do we need to bring on board?

There may also be the possibility to do a follow up workshop online to develop the campaign plan further and discuss tactics, messages and channels – this needs to be explored further with In Control Scotland.

Wherever the face-to-face workshop takes place, it will include catering – please let me know if you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

#2 Carers Scotland: Online Carers Summit 2022 – Wed 23rd Mar, 10am and 1pm

Carers Scotland are holding an online conference for carers. The draft programme includes:

- Consulting on plans to replace Carer's Allowance with a new Scottish Carer's Assistance
- COVID recovery and future planning to support carers
- Carer Scotland review of the year and future priorities including employment, social security, digital technology, support and more.

Register via Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/carers-summit-tickets-252156716527>

#3 Short-term Carers Week Working Group

My colleague Catherine Cain is looking for a few carers to join a short-term working group on events for Carers Week 2022 (6th to 12th June). Please contact Catherine at Catherine.Cain@coel.org.uk if you're interested in helping out or wish to contribute any ideas for events.

Medium term (next 3 months)

2 Public Consultation on Scottish Carer's Assistance – deadline Mon 23rd May

The Scottish Government has launched a public consultation on "Scottish Carer's Assistance", the benefit that will replace "Carers Allowance" in Scotland in the future. Please share your views and experiences via the link below: <https://consult.gov.scot/social-security/scottish-carers-assistance/>

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.