**Carers Panel meeting 8.2.23**

*Hybrid meeting Pefferburn Room ELCH and Zoom/ TEAMS*

*CoEL staff member: Gemma Twells-Davison, Volunteer and Training Coordinator.*

*Attendees: J. Aston, M. Baxter, D. Binnie, A. Bissett, H. Doig T. Flockhart, , P. Gordon, M Scrimgeour*

*Guests:*

*Catherine Findlay, Health and Wellbeing Development Officer - Libraries and Customer Services*

*Simon Brown, Librarian, John Gray Centre, Haddington, East Lothian Council*

**Meeting Notes**

**Background information from Catherine Findlay**

*East Lothian Libraries and COEL met in 2019 to look at some joint partnership working, as part of this partnership working a funding bid was submitted to the Scottish Library Information Council to create a collection of high quality of self-help resources which would be key-worded and promoted to carers in East Lothian.  The secondary purpose was to raise the profile of carers in East Lothian and the support for carers, through the cross promotion of COEL and East Lothian Libraries.*

*The project was delayed for a number of reasons, but funding was awarded which is required to be spent by March 2023.*

*As part of the funding awarded we would like to speak to carers in regards what would be most useful for them in regards to this project.  The plan is to pull together a collection of books based on stock already owned by the library and make it easier to find through a key word search.  The carers can access our collection via*[*Home | East Lothian Council (spydus.co.uk)*](https://eastlothian.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME)*you can already search on key words such as carers.*

*·       We can use some of the money to support the purchase of new stock if there are books that carers recommend that are currently not within stock.*

*·       We would like some direction on the key word(s) that carers would like to like to be used to help them find relevant resources to support them.*

*·       Alongside the books there is the option to pull together a book mark / leaflet for Carers which outline resources available for carers in East Lothian including the stock, activities and local support organisations such as COEL.*

*We would like feedback from the carers and COEL on what they would find most useful.*

*Alongside this project, we have talked about COEL being visible within the Libraries in Carers week 2023.*

*We are currently developing the Health and Wellbeing section of the library website and as part of that we plan to have a section for Carers which will highlight resources including:  the collection, activities that happen in libraries (e.g. Dementia groups), online library e-resources, and home services which can be accessed by carers from their home and links to local organisations that support carers such as COEL.*

**Discussion content**

CF introduced project to panel and summarised background information, as above.

JA shared a booklet that she had become aware of in the borders that helped carers to self-identify and be aware of relevant support in the area. The booklet also incorporated information on carers’ rights. JA felt that an equivalent resource would benefit carers in EL and be well placed in a library. Other panel members expressed support for this idea.

Discussion around tangible resource (ie leaflet, booklet) vs online resource. Several panel members explained that when short on time, a tangible resource can be so beneficial, as they can take it away with them and refer back to it later. Discussion around keeping a resource live when it is in print form. Suggestion that the resource supports identification and signposts only to a simple menu of support: eg, CoEL, Wellbeing resources within the library, Community folders (based in library – to signpost to other valuable activities in the area).

Discussion around self-identification as a carer. Panel members explained they identified years into their role and support would have benefitted much earlier. Suggestions from individual panel members that the funds would be well spent on something that helps people realise they are a carer and where they can go to for support. The idea of a book mark that has been suggested could be used to promote self – identification.

Discussion around the variety of different ways that carers can benefit from existing resources within the library services, such as home/ online services/ audio resources/ computer buddies. Discussion culminated in panel members suggesting that carers need to be made more aware of the library resources that may benefit them.

Discussion around library activities that run. Again, panel members suggested that carers need to somehow be made more aware of the variety of activities that are on offer.

SB explained key wording to panel members as a way of curating their stock using words and phrases to help people to find what they are looking for. Suggestions for key wording included specific health conditions, “help for carers”, “support for carers”, “Information for carers” and any key words that help carers to identify resources that can help with the day to day management of their caring role and find practical tips. MB raised “disability” as a key word relating to carers and explained that she feels that people caring for someone with a disability are often missed from the conversation around caring.

Specific resources were suggested that could benefit the library:

The Selfish Pigs Guide to Caring – Hugh Marriott

Where Memories Go: Why Dementia Changes Everything - Sally Magnuson

Wendy Mitchell books about dementia.

Finance/ benefits resources – GT to ask LM.

Brief discussion around panel involvement in Carers’ Week. Potential to support library roadshows. This will be further discussed in March panel meeting.

CF to circulate a list of all library activities for panel members

CF to think about the development of a book mark/ leaflet.

CF to liaise with GTD about content for resource development.