

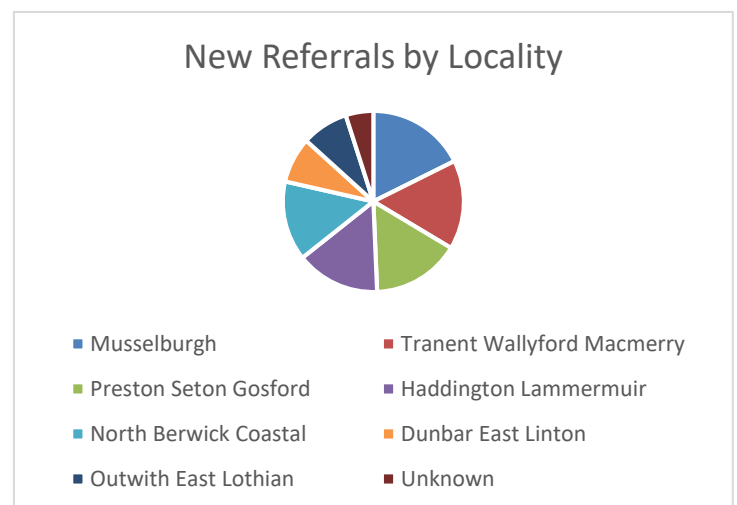
# Carers of East Lothian (CoEL) Annual Summary 2021/22



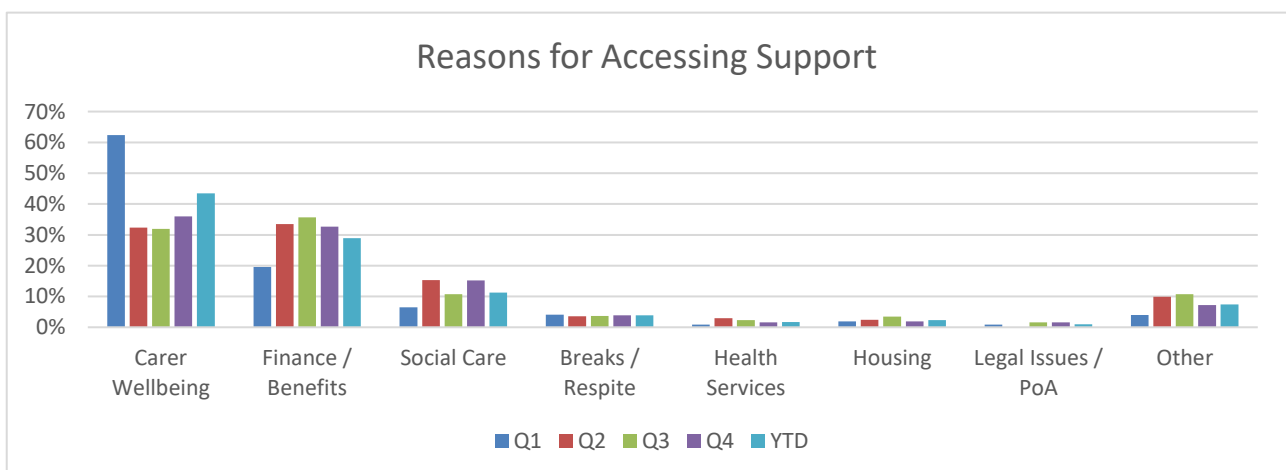
*“Putting pen to paper was the biggest support to complete relevant paper work. Now we have achieved our goal for my son Greg. To help him in life with his extra money and support he needs long term if still required. I can be more at ease now.”*  
(Mrs L from Musselburgh)

## Our busiest year ever

- We directly supported **1,652** individual carers over the year including **527** carers who were referred to us for the first time during the year.
- At the end of the year we were in contact with over **5,000** carers in total.
- We supported carers from across the whole of East Lothian for a wide range of reasons, with the most common being carer wellbeing, finance / benefits and social care.



## The Support we provide for carers:



Carers continue to approach us for support on a range of issues, the most common highlighted above. We offer person-centred support to carers, including:

- 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 support Breaks from Caring – we focus on helping carers take breaks from their caring role and last year we provided grants of over **£20,000** through our Breaks from Caring Fund, which is supported by both Shared Care Scotland and East Lothian Council.
- Run workshops, events and monthly support groups for Carers attended by **278** carers overall.
- Run Power of Attorney, Dementia and Financial Planning surgeries.

- Welfare Rights Service - In 2021/22 CoEL supported carers, and the people they care for, to claim over **£1,000,000** in annualised welfare benefits. We worked with a total of 600 carers on benefits issues along with over 1,000 Carers accessing our specialist benefits helpline.
  - Counselling Service - Our specialist counselling service offers carers the chance to explore and express the thoughts and feeling they have around their caring role, to support them to feel better able to cope. Last year, an average of 10 carers accessed this service every month.
  - Carers' Panel and Strengthening Carers' Collective Voice – Our Carers' Panel has continued to meet throughout the year, and now has a total membership of over 20 carers and former carers who come together on a monthly basis to discuss relevant issues and solutions.
- Carers are overwhelmingly positive about our support and we maintained our **99% approval rating** for our overall response.

## The outcomes from our support for Carers

- Carers continue to tell us our support makes a real, positive difference for them; 88% of respondents said our support left them feeling more confident in their caring role, 89% said they were better able to cope with their caring role, and 80% felt they had better balance following our support.

## New projects and services

- We entered our new contract to provide adult carer services across East Lothian to June 2023 in July 2021, and this brought additional resource and opportunities. We were able to recruit a Volunteer & Training Coordinator and begin the work to set up a new Befriending Service for Carers and a more coordinated approach to training on carers' issues and rights for local professionals.
- We accessed additional funding both from the Scottish Government and East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership to enable us to offer additional small grants for carers, to support Winter Recovery (£13,640) and address Financial Insecurity (£4,479). The Winter Recovery funding also supported carers to access additional group activities and enabled us to set up our new bereavement boxes scheme, to ensure bereaved carers have good information and support at a very difficult time.
- We continued our work with the Carer Positive Employer journey, this year attaining 'Established' status.

## Our financial resources

- Carers of East Lothian's overall financial position improved in 2021/22. Our net income significantly increased due to additional funding, particularly due to additional grants secured to support carers directly. We are grateful to all our funders, without whom we would not be able to continue to support carers across the region.
- You can see our full Accounts on our website here: <https://coel.org.uk/about-coel/governance-and-accounts/> or just ask us for a copy.

***“Having someone to talk to at times of distress was life saving. My support worker calmed me down and gave me the confidence and self belief to continue for another day. She gave me valuable strategies to get through each day.” (Ms T from Haddington)***

***“Always willing to help”  
(Mr F from Tranent)***

***“I found COEL extremely helpful from early diagnosis of my wife's health issues to her passing. A first class caring organisation.” (Mr M from Musselburgh)***