

Carers of East Lothian Strategy 2022 to 2025



Executive Summary

'Having someone to talk to at times of distress was life saving'

At Carers of East Lothian, we know the work we are doing really matters to carers, because we regularly receive feedback like the above. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, carers were among the hardest hit, and it was against this context that we set out to develop our new strategy, to ensure we continue to offer the right support for carers in the future.

In doing so, we made the most of opportunities to bring people together in socially-distanced and safe ways, where possible, as well as using technology to support inclusion and involvement in other ways.

This strategy was therefore developed in the context of the pandemic, focussing on pandemic recovery, as well as against the backdrop of a successful procurement process, awarding Carers of East Lothian the contract to provide Adult Carer Services across East Lothian until 2023, with the possibility of extension to 2025. This provided much needed stability for the organisation and the opportunity to plan with that in mind, whilst looking to future possibilities.

This strategy has been prepared by, and for, Carers of East Lothian, with involvement from our incredible staff team and Board, as well as Volunteers,

and, most importantly, of course, the carers we exist to support. Stakeholders came together in a series of sessions to agree our key aims, outcomes, and areas of focus for the coming period, building on our work so far. We also had exceptional support from Peter Hill (CFM Consulting Ltd) in facilitating our sessions and planning our approach. We would like to thank everyone who gave their time, passion and ideas, to develop such a thorough, far-reaching and ambitious plan to support us in **making a difference for carers**.

Through these conversations we discovered that carers continue to value our existing work; the consistent base of a local carers' centre offering information, advice, and 1:1 support as well as peer support, group activities, and access to grants and counselling all delivered using a preventative and person-centred approach. We also learnt what carers want us to do more of: ensuring their voices are heard on the local issues that matter to them, streamlining our communications and support, strengthening our organisation, and developing more practical, proactive, tailored support. This strategy sets out how we will do this over the coming years, ensuring carers are better supported locally through pandemic recovery and beyond.

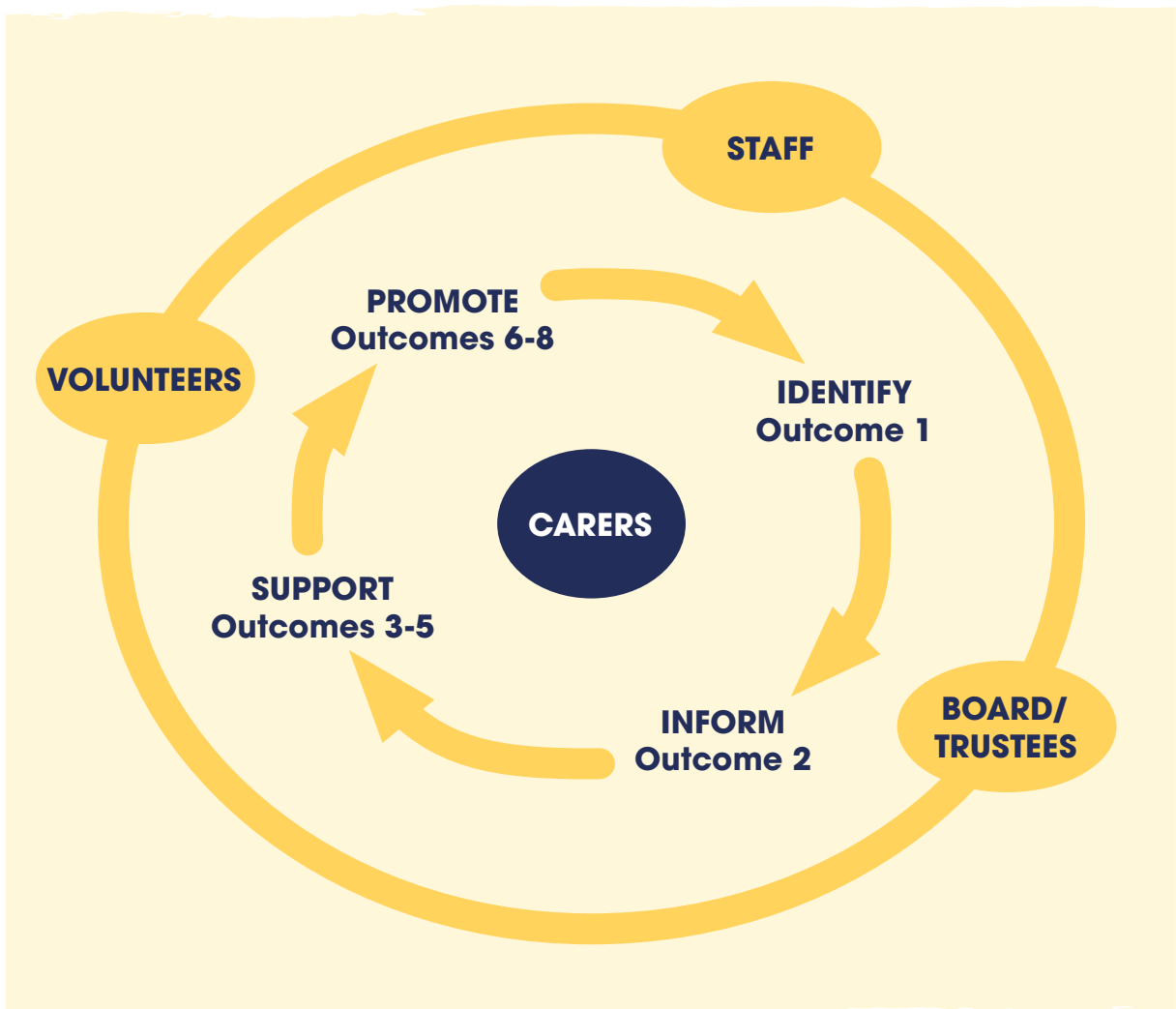


About Carers of East Lothian

OUR MISSION: *to support all adults in a caring situation in East Lothian to get information and services to help their individual caring role, enhance their own wellbeing and strengthen their collective voice to improve services.*

Carers of East Lothian was formed in 1996 with the dual aims of supporting carers and ensuring that carers' needs and voices are reflected in the development of policy in the

local area. We still hold those aims today, focusing on **individual support and collective action**, and working to PROMOTE, IDENTIFY, INFORM and SUPPORT.



We aim to offer a service to all adult carers in East Lothian who want it, although we know that we currently reach only around one third of local carers. We want everyone to know that we are **here to support the vital role of carers**.

The organisation has been through significant change in recent years, most notably in moving to our new hospital-base at East Lothian Community Hospital in Haddington, and successfully securing the contract to deliver Adult Carer Services across East Lothian for at least two years, from July 2021. The contract enables us to continue to deliver local services using a personalised approach across the following areas of work:

- ▶ Carer Identification
- ▶ Information, Advice and 1:1 Support, including:
 - Adult Carer Support Plans
 - Support to link to local services
 - Welfare and Benefits advice
 - Dedicated support for Parent Carers
 - Dedicated support for carers of people with mental health problems
- ▶ Peer Support Groups, Workshops, Training and Events
- ▶ Counselling
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Carer Engagement through a Carers Voice group: our Carers Panel

as well as supporting us to develop the use of Volunteers within the organisation, including in offering a new Befriending Service.

In addition, we continue to support carers to access Breaks from Caring, particularly through our local Breaks from Caring Grant Fund, which continues to receive Scottish Government funding through Shared Care Scotland, as well as local top-ups.

Delivery of this work will support us in achieving the following Outcomes and ultimately **support carers to live the life they choose**:

OUTCOME 1:

Adult and Young Adult Carers are identified and can access support.

OUTCOME 2:

Carers are well informed and have access to tailored and age appropriate information and advice throughout their caring journey.

OUTCOME 3:

Carers are supported to maintain their own physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

OUTCOME 4:

Breaks from caring are timely and regularly available.

OUTCOME 5:

Carers can achieve a balance between caring and other aspects of their lives.

OUTCOME 6:

Carers are respected by professionals as partners in care and are appropriately included in the planning and delivery of both the care and support for the people they care for and services locally.

OUTCOME 7:

Local Communities are supported to be carer friendly.

In addition, Board and stakeholders are keen that we continue to work to the following Internal Outcome:

INTERNAL OUTCOME:

Carers of East Lothian is a more sustainable and effective organisation for all carers.

At Carers of East Lothian we work with carers to identify and address their needs and to help them achieve the outcomes they want. We work in a person-centred way, and Board and stakeholders are clear that the following are crucial to our approach:



In achieving our aims, we work with a number of strategic partners, including as members of the Coalition of Carers in Scotland and Carers UK, and working closely with Shared Care Scotland and Carers Trust Scotland. Our key local partners are East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership and East Lothian Council, with our contract to deliver adult carer services throughout East Lothian being with the latter. As part of our role to strengthen carers' collective voice to improve services, we liaise nationally and locally, including through our membership of a number of networks coordinated by Volunteer Centre East Lothian. We are building close working relationships with both Bridges Project and East Lothian Young Carers to support positive transitions for young carers to adult services, as well

as ensuring young carers can access our local Breaks from Caring Fund. Our base at East Lothian Community Hospital provides the opportunity to develop strong links with health and social care staff, especially in the post-pandemic environment, to support us in **making connections for carers**.



Context and Environment

Our stakeholders have identified a number of key challenges and relevant factors that impact our work in our current operating environment:

**Lack of sitter services/
alternative care/
reliable respite**

**Shortage of
care workers**

**Focus on crisis rather
than early intervention
and prevention**

**National agenda: proposed
National Care Service**

**Limited funding for social care
Post-pandemic funding
and planning**

**Rurality of area we serve,
including transport issues**

We have also identified key challenges and opportunities that we should consider, which fall into the following themes:

- ▶ More strategic communications, including improved online presence and support
- ▶ Increasing awareness of carers, engagement with carers, and becoming better at identifying hidden carers
- ▶ Greater visibility of Board
- ▶ Reviewing and improving our space, to embody **a safe space for people who are caring**
- ▶ Greater involvement of Volunteers
- ▶ Expanding our practical support
- ▶ Growing our service in new directions whilst maintaining our solutions-focused approach
- ▶ Consolidating our training offer
- ▶ Supporting former carers
- ▶ Developing our approach to fundraising, campaigning and influencing
- ▶ Improved staff benefits and conditions, including better induction and leaving processes for staff, and a renewed focus on Health & Safety and Wellbeing



Operations Plan

Our current contract with East Lothian Council to deliver adult carer services throughout the county gives a solid basis from which to build our operational plans, drawing on the key areas of work, focussing on the seven agreed outcomes and our key targets. Board and stakeholders also want us to invest time and energy on our Internal Outcome, to become a more sustainable and effective organisation for all carers.

Our Operations Plan is made up of the following:

- ▶ **Communications plan**
- ▶ **Delivery plan**
- ▶ **Fundraising plan**
- ▶ **Wellbeing plan/strategy**

All planned actions and activities can be found in these living documents, with key highlights outlined below:

- ▶ Develop better online and digital support, for example an online forum, more engaged social media, all carers emails, improved website
- ▶ Re-imagine our office space to be more inviting for carers
- ▶ Make better use of community spaces throughout the county instead of being tied in to one satellite office
- ▶ Develop a Sitter service through engagement of Volunteers
- ▶ Develop a local Care Needs website
- ▶ Establish a Carer Befriending service through engagement of Volunteers
- ▶ Offer more support for carers of people with Mental Health problems

- ▶ Offer more support for Parent Carers
- ▶ Offer more tailored support for Young Adult Carers (age 18 to 25), and a better coordinated approach to transition from young carer services
- ▶ Working alongside others in East Lothian, offer more, and more coordinated, support for Carers of people with Dementia
- ▶ Working alongside others in East Lothian, offer more coordinated support for Carers of people who attend local Resource Centres
- ▶ Adapt our Available Carer Support Worker offer to be more responsive to carers, including evening availability
- ▶ Working with key stakeholders locally, improve the experience of completing an Adult Carer Support Plan and increase the number of Carers taking up this opportunity

Carers of East Lothian Board will review our strategic plans on an annual basis and the CEO will update all delivery plans on an ongoing basis, with new plans produced for each financial year.

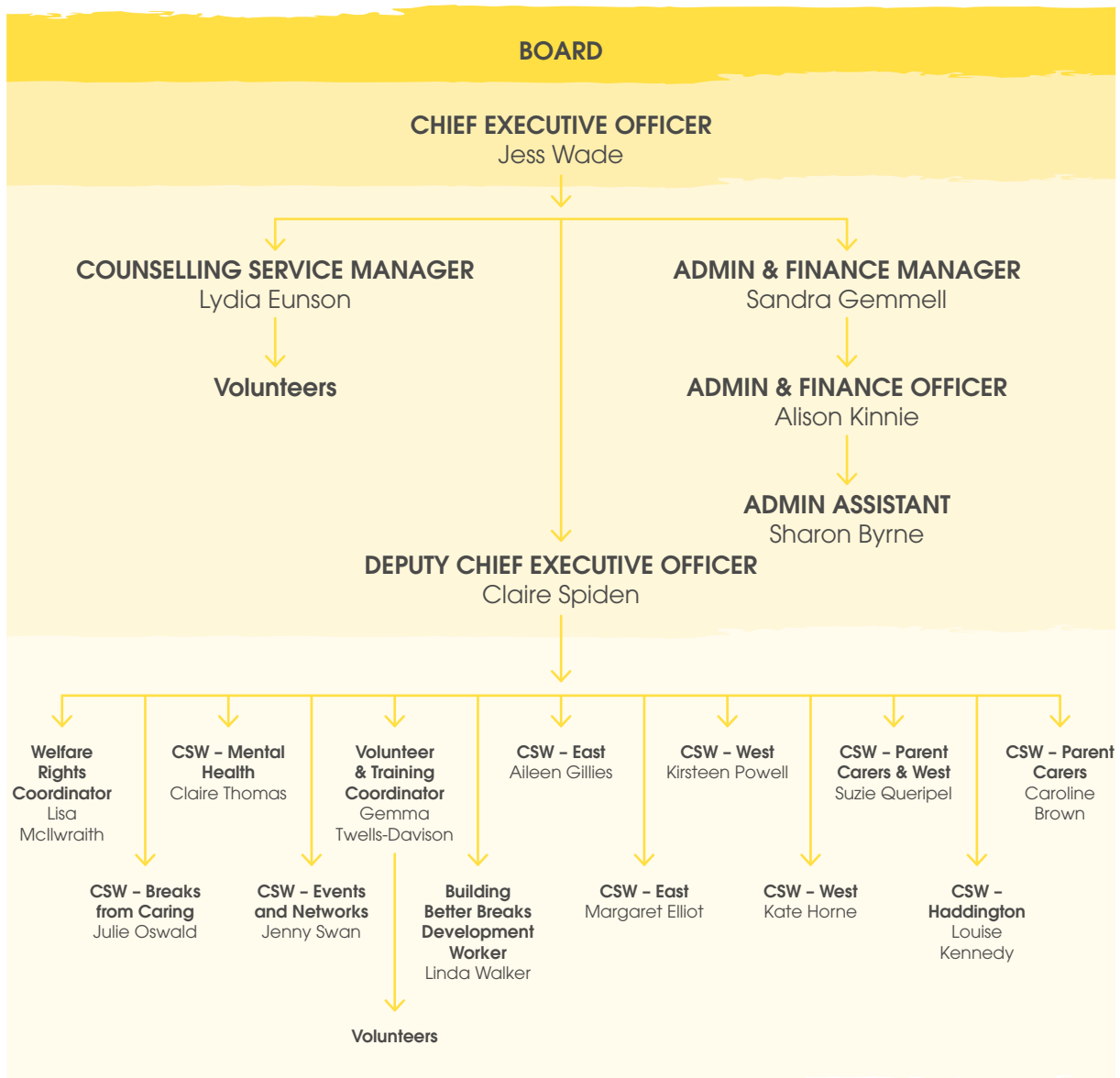
We will begin the process to review this Strategy in 2024, involving all key stakeholders, particularly carers, in our approach.



People

At Carers of East Lothian, we recognise our people are most important asset. Our experience, passionate and talented staff team carry out much of our work, supported by our wonderful team of Volunteers, including our Board of Trustees. Together, we work to

support our Carers, without whom the organisation would not exist. You can see where everyone fits in in the diagram below, and find out more about our people on our website: <https://coel.org.uk/about-coel/staff-team/>



CSW = Carer Support Worker

Impact measures

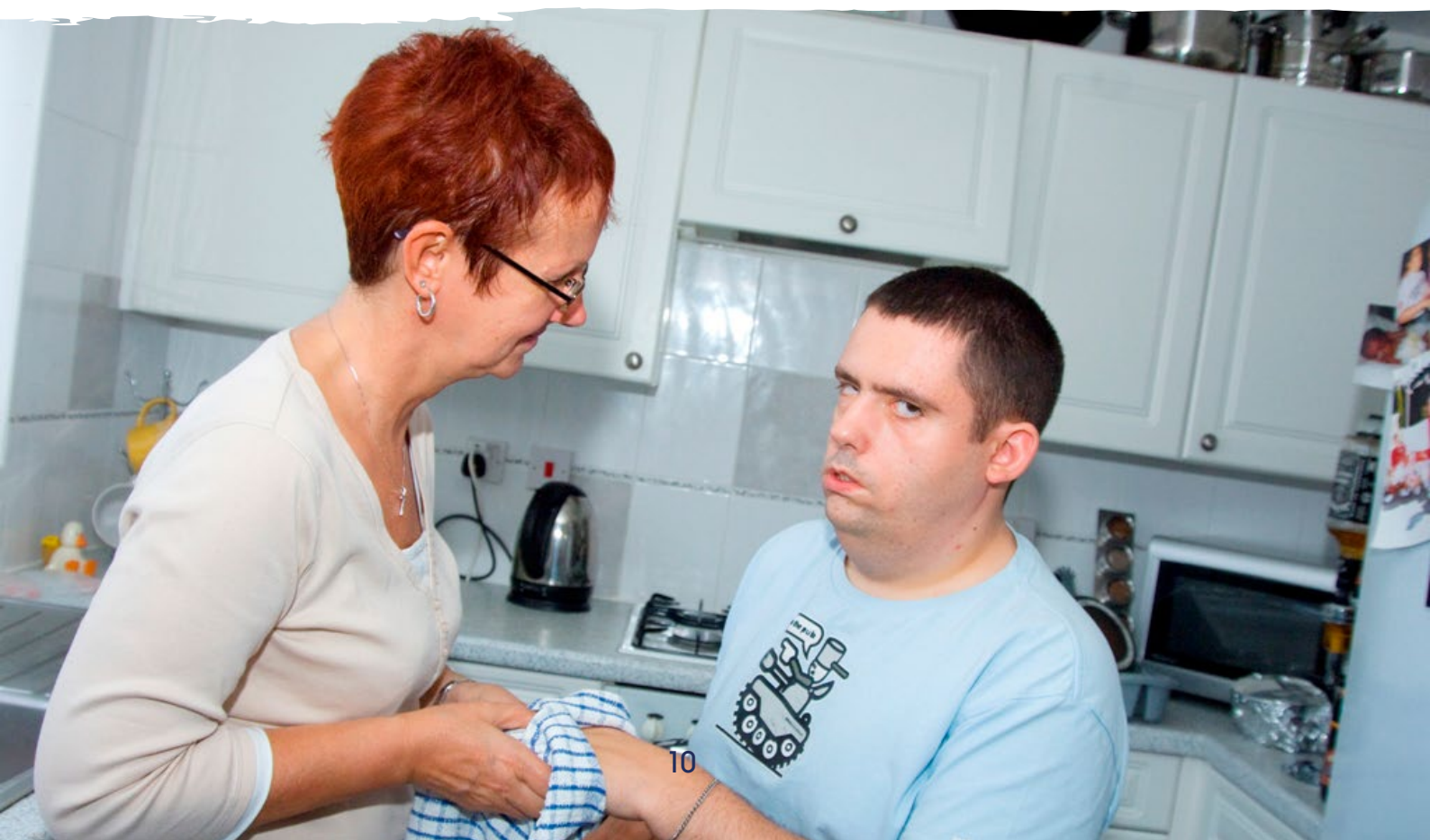
In line with our contract to deliver Adult Carer Services across East Lothian, we work to the following Key Performance Indicators, as well as the seven Outcomes detailed earlier:

- a. 90% of referrals \self-referrals to the Service have an initial acknowledgement from the Service Provider within 5 working days
- b. 90% of referrals to the Service have an initial engagement with the Service within 3 weeks
- c. Evidence that 100% of identified carers have been offered an Adult Carer Support Plan
- d. 85% of carer feedback received indicating an improvement in confidence, ability to cope and a better balance in their lives as a result of the Service
- e. % of Specification Service Levels achieved:
 - i. Identify a minimum of 450 new carers annually
 - ii. Minimum of 1,200 carers accessing advice, information and support annually
 - iii. Minimum of 425 carers accessing welfare rights advice annually
 - iv. Minimum of 80 Adult Carer Support Plans completed annually
 - v. Minimum of two peer based carer support groups per month
 - vi. Minimum of two carer training sessions per month
 - vii. Minimum of 250 counselling sessions for carers per year, delivered to a minimum of 50 carers
 - viii. Minimum of 10 training sessions for NHS Lothian and other organisations



We will use the following monitoring, recording and reporting methods to support our ongoing evaluation and service improvement, in line with our Quality Management Policy, to ensure a high quality service, responding flexibly to carers individual needs and using feedback to support continuous improvement:

- ▶ Charity Log – recording of all activity to support tailored reports on all KPIs, including monthly statistical reports, with regular reports to Board
- ▶ Unsolicited feedback, including on key issues affecting carers (Carers' Voice), complaints, and through our website 'Feedback' button, recorded and report run monthly
- ▶ Develop use of individual outcomes recording and reporting on Charity Log for Carers where appropriate
- ▶ Develop regular collection of case studies of carers' experiences with CoEL
- ▶ Carer Satisfaction Survey for carers following the end of their support with us
- ▶ Counselling Evaluation Survey for carers following the end of their Counselling sessions with us
- ▶ Annual Carer Survey to capture more and wider feedback on our services, ensure our records are up to date and support us in understanding the key issues affecting carers
- ▶ Six-monthly written reports
- ▶ Annual Summary covering key statistics, qualitative feedback from carers, and organisational highlights for the year



Resourcing our Strategy

The majority of our planned work is funded through our contract with East Lothian Council to delivery Adult Carers Services across East Lothian. However, we recognise that to flourish at a local

level, we must identify and embrace both local and national opportunities for additional funding. Our approach to this is detailed in our Fundraising plan.

Risk

Carers of East Lothian keeps a Risk Register to manage Risk proactively at an organisational level as well in addition to the day to day risks that are managed within the staff team. The Risk Register sits with the Finance Subcommittee of the Board and is reviewed regularly at their meetings, with reports of changes made to the full Board.

Currently the top five areas of risk identified are:

- ▶ Social Care staffing crisis
- ▶ Unsustainable growth in demand for support
- ▶ Cyber / IT security and access
- ▶ Funding
- ▶ Retaining and Recruiting excellent people, including Volunteers, Staff and Board

Acknowledgements

Carers of East Lothian would like to thank everyone involved in developing this strategy, who gave their time, energy and ideas to ensure we continue to grow as an organisation and meet the changing needs of Carers locally as we do.



Carers of East Lothian

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