**Carers Panel 28.2.24**

**Present: RG, AB, DB, HF, LS, JIC, PG, JM**

This meeting was held with a focus of Carers Week 2024

* **Introduction to the campaign in general**

Carers Week is led by Carers UK with the support of a number of other charities.

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

The campaign is brought to life by thousands of individuals and organisations who come together to provide support for carers, run activities, highlight the vital role carers play in our communities and draw attention to just how important caring is.

* **Announced theme for 2024 inclusive of themes day by day**

This year the theme is ‘Putting Carers on the Map’ highlighting the invaluable contributions of carers across the UK and ensuring their voices are heard loud and clear. Together we want to help increase the visibility of carers among politicians, employers and throughout our communities. And by raising awareness we hope that they will better recognise the challenges unpaid carers face and help them to access the support that they deserve.

'**Putting carers on the map**' is the theme for this year, where we want to make sure that the voices of unpaid carers are heard by politicians, employers, service providers, educational establishments, journalists and throughout our communities. We want caring to be made more visible, ensuring that carers feel seen and respected and that they can access the services and support that they need.

Each day will have a specific focus too:

* Monday: **Launching our latest Carers Week research**
* Tuesday: **Health and social care**
* Wednesday: **Work and employment**
* Thursday: **Younger carers**
* Friday: **Older carers**
* Saturday: **Mental health and wellbeing**
* Sunday: **Reflections on Carers Week**
* Gemma shared examples from carer feedback from 2023 with the panel, including some positive and some areas for improvement.
* Shared proposal for this years Carers Week, inclusive of Communal Lunch, Photography Workshops and Exhibition, wellbeing day, Evening session to meet the needs of working carers, session for male carers, Carer Positive event for employers.

Feedback positive from the panel. Suggestion that we widen the ask to involve other community organisations. Discussion around identifying free/ discounted offers for carers from organisations in EL. Gemma shared that CoEL are looking into ‘respitality’ as an offer, but that they are identifying the most efficient way of managing this.

Suggestion from JM that CoEL could organise information stand where other organisations could showcase information of relevance to carers. GTD to consider whether organisation has capacity to organise this and feedback to panel.

Members to approach organisations as follows:

* RG – Group he is a member of/ music/ jam night/ Foxlake
* AB – Beyond Boundaries
* DB – Dunbar Garden Centre
* LS – East Links
* Gtd – Enjoy Leisure
* Members to feedback to Gemma

Discussion around ID card as a means of identifying self to organisations willing to offer discount. PG asked if carers card had ever been considered by CoEL for registered members. GTD to take this to Jess Wade.

Nex meeting Monday 25th March at ELCH/ Via zoom.