



**Carers of
East Lothian**

Supporting people who
care for family and friends



ANNUAL SUMMARY



2023-24

Carers of East Lothian (CoEL)

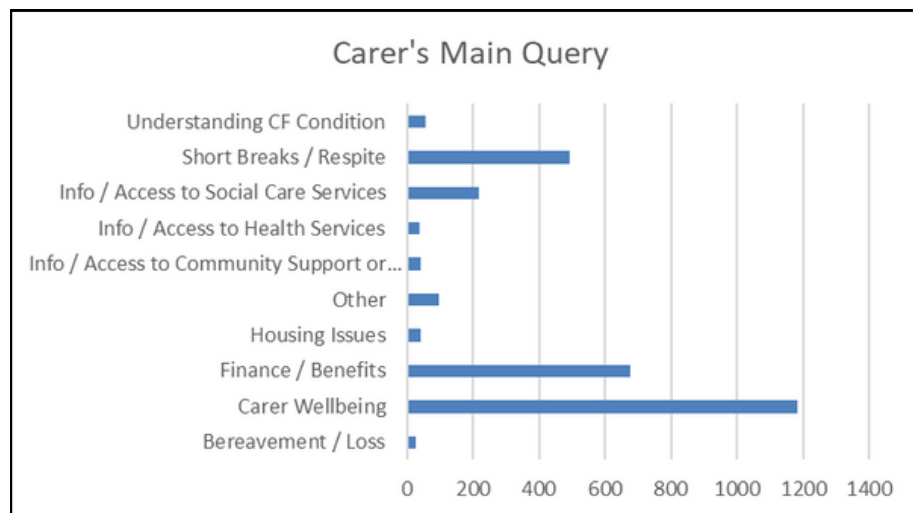
Annual Summary

2023/24

“A huge difference. I feel much better about having someone who can answer all my questions and help me navigate caring for my mum. Everyone I spoke to was very knowledgeable and very kind. It has made me feel less anxious about dealing with everything on my own as they are very supportive.”

- We directly supported 1,568 individual carers over the year including 596 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 6,700 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, short breaks / respite, and social care.

The Support we provide for carers:



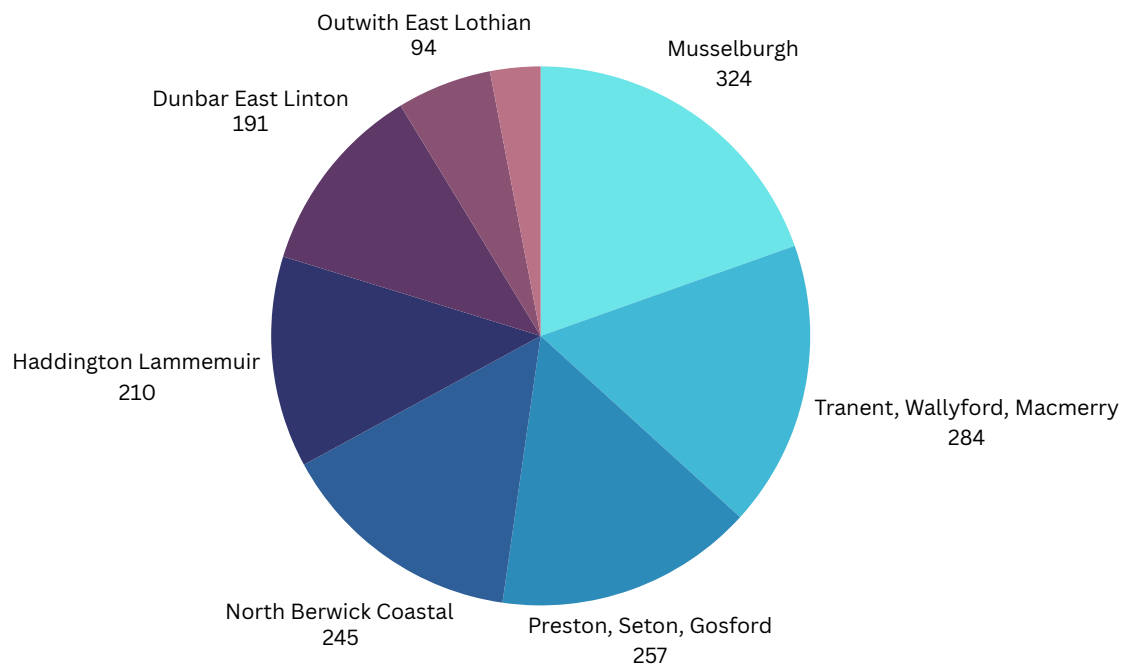
Carers continue to approach us for support on a range of issues, the most common highlighted above. We offer person-centred support to carers, including:

- **One to one information, advice and emotional support** – for example linking an isolated parent carer with other parents or supporting a carer to complete their Adult Carer Support Plan.
- **Time for Me: small grants to support Breaks from Caring** – we focus on helping carers take breaks from their caring role and last year we provided grants to 192 carers through our Time for Me Fund, which is supported by both Shared Care Scotland and East Lothian Council.
- **Run workshops, events and monthly support groups** for Carers attended by over 1500 carers over the year.
- **Run Power of Attorney, Dementia and Financial Planning surgeries.**

- **Welfare Rights Service** - In 2023/24 CoEL supported carers, and the people they care for, to claim over £1,200,000 in annualised welfare benefits. We worked with just under 600 carers on benefits issues along with over 600 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. In 2023, we delivered 249 hours of counselling to 23 carers. 100% of who accessed counselling would recommend us to other carers.
- **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.

Organisations and people accessing the service by district:

Musselburgh - 324, Dunbar East Linton 191
Haddington Lammemuir 210, Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry 284
North Berwick Coastal 245, Preston Seton Gosford 257 Outwith East Lothian 94 Unknown 50



The outcomes from our support for Carers:

Carers continue to tell us our support makes a real, positive difference for them.

- 91% of respondents said our support left them feeling more confident in their caring role
- 95% said they were better able to cope with their caring role
- 82% felt they had better balance following our support.

New projects and services

- We worked with local professionals to review and re-design the local Adult Carer Support Plan and supported carer engagement on local eligibility criteria.
- We received additional funds via Shared Care Scotland 'Better Breaks' to run a local Family Summer Programme, offering creative and adventurous activities for the whole family to support parent carers and siblings to access a participatory break.
- We continued to receive 'Creative Breaks' funding via Shared Care Scotland too, enabling our fabulous Care To Sing! Choir to keep singing together on a weekly basis. This year, in addition, we worked in partnership with Art in Healthcare, who also received 'Creative Breaks' funding, to support their local art group for carers.
- As part of our strategic focus on quality assurance, we were absolutely delighted to be awarded the Carers Trust Excellence for Carers quality mark. The assessment process for the award found that, 'the service demonstrated good practice across the quality standard areas. The organisation's person centred approach, focus on improving the lives of carers and genuine partnership approach with carers is a real strength of the organisation. Overall there was strong evidence of good service provision provided to meet carer needs, outcomes and interests. Values of co-production and principles of free flowing conversations as the foundations for carer engagement, support and 'assessment' were evident across the services.'



Our financial resources

Carers of East Lothian saw an overall increase in total income 2023/24. Expenditure increased significantly as a result of spend of reserves brought forward from the previous year and therefore there has been an overall reduction in reserves at the year end.

You can see our full Accounts on the governance and accounts section of our website [here](#) or just ask us for a copy.



CARER FEEDBACK

"The help, support and advice I have received from various members of the team at COEL has been invaluable. I really would have been floundering without that assistance. Everyone has been extremely professional and friendly."

"Made my life a lot easier and always there to help me; I'm not alone now"

"As a result of CoEL's assistance, we were able to secure the maximum award for our son's ADP. While he will continue to face challenges going forward, the ADP will make a massive difference to him and relieves a lot of worry and stress for us. We would not have achieved this outcome without CoEL's assistance."

"Having alternative perspective and clarity is a huge relief. Thank you so much for all your support. I literally feel taller" (Counselling Service)



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