**Carers Panel Meeting Note 28.11.24**

**Present:** A. Somerville, M. Mitchell, L. Sandie, J. Howie, R. Grant, P. Lanson, D. Bartholemew, K. Holak, J. Mcallister, A. Bissett, M. Baxter

**Apologies**: J. Aston,K. Greig, C. Wightman

New members MM and AS introduced themselves to the group. New carer MM shared a moving backstory that he had prepared. Other members were thankful.

**Integrated Impact Assessment – Adult Carer Services**

Following on from the engagement event on the service specification for adult carer support in East Lothian, panel members are invited to participate in an Integrated Impact Assessment looking at the proposed service specification. This process will review whether people feel that spec will meet the needs of local carers, particularly those with protected characteristics. Members were asked if they would like to attend this meeting. RG, DB, LS and KH suggested that they may be able to attend. G to forward information about the meeting.

The meeting will run as a hybrid meeting on **Tues 5th December at 1.30pm at John Muir House in Haddington, Saltire room 1 and** be facilitated by Kate Thornback – Equalities and Engagement Officer.

4 members said that they may attend. GT to inform Kate and Maria.

**ID Cards**

G shared updates about recent discussions with Smart Cards, raising the issue that administrative impact on CoEL makes proceeding with cards prohibitive. CoEL do not currently have the resources to take on the administrative processes. Smart Cards have advised HSCP that they would require a part time member of staff employed .5 of a week to cope with the administrative demands.

G asked the panel with knowing this, do they see this as a priority. Members certainly did not feel that the ID card should take priority over carers receiving direct support from CoEL, but they did feel that a local card would support the outcomes of the local carers strategy, such as carer friendly communities (through discount schemes, partnerships with local businesses), as well as offering carers acknowledgment of their caring role, a simple way of identifying themselves and the function of storing emergency contact information.

Members did feel that if resources could b made available, this would be of significant benefit to local carers. However, members gave following suggestions for alternative approaches:

* Members to research whether there are local ‘cards’ from organisations that support the person with care needs (eg. Alzheimers Scotland provide a Carers Card that is a means of ID and storing emergency information -member AS shared this with the group). When a list is compiled, some communication could go out from CoEL to carers about the availability of these cards.
* Could CoEL explore the idea of a volunteer supporting the administrative demands? 1 member suggested rota of people to support the project.
* Could community councils implement something for their area?
* Can something be added to the national entitlement card?
* Carers buy their own national card.

Action – G to feedback to M. Burton.

**GP Practice Project**

Discussion around priorities moving forwards. Panel agreed that developing a ‘partnership’ offer for GP practices would be best course of action. Offer would include:

* Examples of positive experience – directly from carers (PL offered to share her experiences)
* Offer of Think Carer training session
* Visible and striking resource (eg. poster for waiting room wall) to support carers to self identify and refer to CoEL
* Suggestions for practice manager – (eg. linking to web pages)

Action – G to establish likelihood of visiting Practice Manager network facilitated by B. Ramsey.

Update following meeting – Maria B informed that Marie P will attend network in January to discuss YC Service. Following this, MB will support an introduction. Format is normally online for these meetings.

**Carers Rights Day**

Shared update on CRD with panel**.**

21st November 2024 was Carers Rights Day. This year’s theme was recognising your rights. Every day, 12,000 people become unpaid carers for a partner, family member or a friend – many of whom don’t see themselves as carers, often unaware of their legal rights and what they’re entitled to in terms of support and benefits. The aim of Carers Rights Day this year is to help carers recognise and understand their rights, and to access the support available to them, whenever they need it.

Carers of East Lothian and East Lothian Council Young Carers Service have worked with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership to develop this short video with the aim of supporting carers to recognise their rights and find out more information about how they can access support in East Lothian.

To mark Carers Rights Day, Carers of East Lothian have also written to all elected members for East Lothian, asking them to commit to actions to support unpaid carers, including supporting the right to breaks from caring and increased financial support.

**East Linton Elf**

Shared update on EL Elf with panel.

EL Elf supporting Carers of East Lothian throughout December 2024 by raising awareness of our cause as well as fundraising to support our work.

Encouraged panel members to follow, share etc by following him on Facebook (East Linton Elf) or Instagram (East\_Linton\_Elf) If you’d like to sponsor the East Linton Elf, you can do so on his just giving page by clicking the following link : https://www.justgiving.com/page/elelfineastlothian

**Art Sale**

Updated panel on art sale.

Colour for Carers - In November, we were delighted to be supported by local artist Kate Henderson. Kate made 20 drawings of the Ormiston/Pencaitland railway walk, forming her ‘Colour for Carers’ project. Kate sold 14 of these pieces and generously donated 100% of the funds she raised to support the work that we do at Carers of East Lothian. Her fundraising so far totals an incredible £1150.00. Kate said: “I wanted to support Carers of East Lothian to thank them for the support they gave to my late mother. My mum was the main carer for my dad who sadly developed Alzheimer’s at 66. They provided her support and information, and she regularly attended weekly meet ups for coffee; she continued to attend these after my father died as she had established friendships within the group and was able to help others who were experiencing the same issues she had already been through. I decided to create colourful drawings inspired by walks along the Ormiston/Pencaitland Railway Walk which is close to my workshop and I thought Colours for Carers was an appropriate title to sum up the project.” If you are interested in purchasing a beautiful A5 piece of local art and supporting Carers of East Lothian, please contact us. You can see the 6 remaining pieces below. Each piece is priced at £75.00

**Any other business**

AB informed the rest of the panel members that she will be standing down from the Carers Panel. AB informed that she has been involved with dementia now as a carer or volunteer for 18 years and feel it's time to start move on. GTD thanked AB for all of her support and commitment to the panel since its conception.