



ANNUAL SUMMARY

2024-25

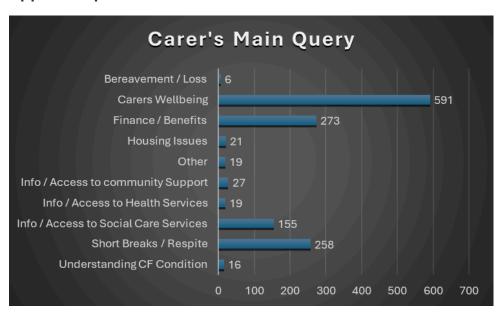


Carers of East Lothian (CoEL) Annual Summary 2024/25

"The support I received has made me appreciate how much help is available. I always had a friendly, caring voice at the end of the phone and this put me at ease. I honestly don't know where I'd be without the help in form filling, encouragement and advice I received each time."

- We directly supported 1595 individual carers over the year including 571 carers who were referred to us for the first time during the year.
- We signposted 1142 carers to other organisations.
- At the end of the year, we were in contact with over 7294 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 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 303 to carers through our Time for Me Fund, which is supported by both Shared Care Scotland and East Lothian Council.



- · Workshops, events and monthly support groups for carers attended by over 1513 carers over the year.
- · Power of Attorney and Financial Planning Surgeries
- · **Welfare Rights Service** We supported 468 carers, and the people they care for, with benefits advice and 542 carers with specific welfare benefit claims in the last financial year.
- 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 2024/5, we delivered 334 hours of counselling to 32 carers. 100% recommendation rate from those who answered the evaluation survey.
- The Counselling Service has supported two students through their practical counselling placement to qualification. We also used funding from Shared Care Scotland to increase accessibility for carers as well as wait times.
- Carers' Panel and Strengthening Carers' Collective Voice Our Carers' Panel has continued to meet throughout the year and has a membership of over 20 carers and former carers who come together to discuss priority areas for carers and take positive action.

The outcomes of our support for carers:

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

- 89% 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.
- 80% felt they had better balance in their lives following our support.

New Projects and Services

We successfully recruited two members of staff to cover maternity for our Welfare Rights Coordinator and our Volunteer and Training Coordinator ensuring continuous service delivery.

During February and March 2025, we completed the tender process with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership for local adult carers' services. We were awarded the contract to start on 1 June 2025. This is a 2-year contract with the option of plus 2 years plus 2 years (possible 6 years in total).



We continued to receive 'Creative Breaks' funding via Shared Care Scotland, enabling our fabulous 'Care To Sing!' Choir to keep singing together on a weekly basis.

We continued our partnership with Art in Healthcare, who also received 'Creative Breaks' funding, to support local art groups for carers with a monthly group operated in East Lothian.

Hospital Link Care Support Worker (HLCSW) – This service is based in East Lothian Community Hospital (ELCH) and provides intensive, tailored support to unpaid carers of patients, particularly during hospital stays, and continuing through discharge and beyond.

Core Aims & Activities:

On-Ward Support. The Hospital Link Worker:

- delivers one-to-one emotional and practical support to carers while the cared-for person is admitted.
- helps carers adjust to medical emergencies, hospitalisation, and their future role.
- o promotes involvement in discharge and care planning.
- visits each room in Ward 3 every Tuesday and Thursday.

Ongoing Carer Support:

- o connects carers with CoEL services such as:
 - Benefits advice, legal support, counselling, respite funding, and support groups.
- assists carers in developing Adult Carer Support Plans (ACSPs) post-discharge.

• Integration with Hospital Teams. The Hospital Link Worker:

- is fully integrated into Ward 3's care model.
- o participates in multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings and huddles.
- o promotes carer involvement in care decisions.



Men who care - Therapeutic Work

Lottery funding enabled us to offer therapeutic support for unpaid male carers experiencing poor mental health; loneliness; anxiety and depression. This pilot project incorporated a confidential bespoke 1:1 coaching support service incorporating therapeutic approaches such as Energy Care; Solution Focused Therapy and Ecotherapy. Support has been delivered by an experienced practitioner in a flexible and personcentred way to suit each individual carer and their unique caring responsibilities. The support was delivered through home visits; online; telephone and suitable community-based resources. The project focuses on supporting and preventing mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackling underlying causes, adversities and inequalities.

Our financial resources

Carers of East Lothian saw an overall increase in total income in 2024/25. Expenditure increased significantly as a result of spend of reserves brought forward from 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, or you can ask us for a copy.





CARER FEEDBACK

"Your support enabled me to recognise & receive so much help & info that I had no idea existed."

"It's hard to express how much the support I received kept me afloat through a very difficult time. The understanding, information and support and just speaking to someone who "just got it" without having to explain was invaluable. At times when I felt like I could no longer cope, the support from CoEL kept me going. It is an amazing service. I find it hard to accept help and to talk about my situation but the calm and reassuring staff persevered with me in such a lovely way. The carers break was amazing. A night away felt like such a luxury and the lovely memory of that night kept me going through some tough times. Thank you for everything you have done for my family."

"Your support enabled me to recognise & receive so much help & info that I had no idea existed."

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



Photo credits: Louise Anne Kennedy