Carers of
East Lothian
Supporting people who
care for family and friends

Carers of East Lothian Newsletter Spring 2026

Carers of East Lothian support people who care for family members or friends.

The Carers of East Lothian Newsletter is sent three times a year. We hope that it keeps you up to date with relevant and important information and in the loop with what we are up to as an organisation.

A note from Claire, our Deputy Chief Executive

As the days lengthen, the clocks spring forward, and new life begins to appear all around us, Spring brings a welcome sense of renewal and possibility. It's a season that encourages us all to step outside, breathe more deeply, and reconnect—with nature, with each other, and with the things that matter most. At Carers of East Lothian, this spirit of growth and fresh beginnings couldn't feel more timely.

This Spring marks an important period of change for Scotland too, with a new Scottish Parliament on the horizon. As we look ahead to the elections, we hosted a hustings event in early April—which was an opportunity for carers across East Lothian to hear directly from local candidates and ensure carers' voices remain at the heart of political conversations.

We're also beginning an exciting new chapter of our own: developing our Strategy for 2026–2031. This strategy will shape the next five years of support for unpaid carers, and your input is essential. This summer, we'll be running events and engagement opportunities to gather your views, ideas, and priorities. Just as Spring invites new growth, this strategy is an opportunity for us to grow—together—in the ways that best support you, the carers.

And speaking of celebrations, this year marks **30 years of Carers of East Lothian**. Three decades of commitment, compassion, and community support is no small milestone, and we'll be reflecting that in a vibrant programme of activities throughout the year and for **Carers Week** in June.

So as the world outside comes back to life, we look forward to a season filled with connection, participation, and shared purpose. Thank you for being at the heart of everything we do. We can't wait to step into this Spring—and the next chapter.

EXCELLENCE FOR CARERS
Carers Trust Quality Award

Carers of East Lothian updates

Carers of East Lothian - 30 year

YEARS
Carers of
East Lothian
Supporting people who care
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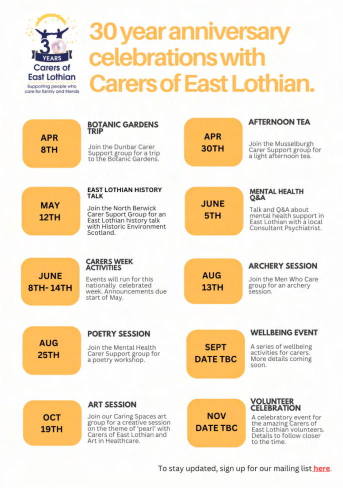
anniversary

As you may have heard, we are celebrating our 30th anniversary this year at Carers of East Lothian.

To mark this really special milestone, we are hosting a variety of events throughout the year. Our Carer Support Groups are opening their doors to guests to be part of the celebrations.

We are delighted to announce some of the events that will be happening through the year. Please see the image below for our programme of upcoming events, including trips, an afternoon tea, activities and information sessions.

Bookings for each session will open closer to the event and will be announced to our mailing list, on our social media channel and by word of mouth via our staff team.



YEARS
Carers of
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30 year anniversary celebrations with Carers of East Lothian.

APR 8TH
BOTANIC GARDENS TRIP
Join the Dunbar Carer Support group for a trip to the Botanic Gardens.

APR 30TH
AFTERNOON TEA
Join the Musselburgh Carer Support group for a light afternoon tea.

MAY 12TH
EAST LOTHIAN HISTORY TALK
Join the North Berwick Carer Suport Group for an East Lothian history talk with Historic Environment Scotland.

JUNE 5TH
MENTAL HEALTH Q&A
Talk and Q&A about mental health support in East Lothian with a local Consultant Psychiatrist.

JUNE 8TH- 14TH
CARERS WEEK ACTIVITIES
Events will run for this nationally celebrated week. Announcements due start of May.

AUG 13TH
ARCHERY SESSION
Join the Men Who Care group for an archery session.

AUG 25TH
POETRY SESSION
Join the Mental Health Carer Support group for a poetry workshop.

SEPT DATE TBC
WELLBEING EVENT
A series of wellbeing activities for carers. More details coming soon.

OCT 19TH
ART SESSION
Join our Caring Spaces art group for a creative session on the theme of 'pearl' with Carers of East Lothian and Art in Healthcare.

NOV DATE TBC
VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION
A celebratory event for the amazing Carers of East Lothian volunteers. Details to follow closer to the time.

To stay updated, sign up for our mailing list here.

YEARS
Carers of
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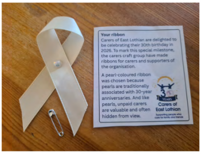
30 year 'pearls'

You might have heard us mentioning pearls in relation to our 30th anniversary celebrations.

This is because pearls are traditionally associated with 30 - year anniversaries. And like pearls, unpaid carers are valuable and often hidden from view. Using pearls as part of our celebrations was a lovely idea from one of our carers panel members.



Your ribbon

Carers of East Lothian are delighted to be celebrating their 30th birthday in 2026. To mark this special milestone, the carers craft group have made ribbons for carers and supporters of the organisation.

A pearl-coloured ribbon was chosen because pearls are traditionally associated with 30-year anniversaries. And like pearls, unpaid carers are valuable and often hidden from view.

30 YEARS

Carers of East Lothian

Supporting people who care for family and friends

Our craft group got involved to make pearl ribbons to gift to carers and mark the anniversary. These ribbons have been given out to staff in the team who will gift them to carers at events running throughout the year.

If you are wearing a ribbon, please tell people all about why. You might just help a carer to access support.

If you would like a ribbon, you can drop Gemma an email: gemma@coel.org.uk. We have a small amount left in the office and crafters willing to make more.

As well as the ribbons, we have a very creative team member who has decided to make a pearl sculpture that we will fill with 'pearls of wisdom' from one carer to another. We would love to hear from you if you'd like to share a pearl of wisdom. We are asking carers to answer the question:

"If you could give a piece of advice to a carer who was just starting out in their caring journey, what would it be?"

We will fill the sculpture with all of the pearls and open it later in the year. Please click the button below to submit your pearl.

Share your pearl of wisdom

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people
Vision
STRATEGY
development
Marketing

Carers of East Lothian Strategy

We're developing our next five-year strategy at Carers of East Lothian, and your voice matters.

Our team and board have been exploring our vision, mission, values, and strategic goals—and now we want to hear directly from carers.

During Carers Week, we'll be holding our first session for carers to share their experiences, ideas, and priorities. We hope to welcome as many people as possible, from a wide range of caring roles and life experiences, so we can shape our future work with carers' needs at its heart.

More details about the session will be shared soon—we'd love for you to join us.

Changes to the CoEL staff team

We have had a few changes recently within the staff team and so here is a little update for you.

We were delighted to welcome **Louise McQuade** as our new Admin Assistant towards the end of 2025. She has joined Kirsty in the admin team. Louise will help the charity to run smoothly and provide a warm welcome to carers visiting or contacting the organisation.

We are very pleased to welcome **Sarah Earl** to our Hospital Link service as the Hospital Link Carer Support Worker. Sarah is working on Wards 5 and 6 of East Lothian Community Hospital.

Working closely with hospital staff and the wider care team, she focuses on making sure carers are part of the conversation, understand what's happening, and know where to turn for help once the person they care for leaves hospital.

WELFARE RIGHTS

We are thrilled that **Diane** will be continuing with Carers of East Lothian. Diane will be moving into her new role as **Welfare Rights Accessibility Coordinator**.

Diane will be offering a tailored approach for carers and cared-for individuals who face challenges in accessing welfare advice. Diane will be working alongside our Welfare Rights Coordinator to ensure no one is excluded from receiving the support they need.

Linda Walker is moving into the role of **Innovation and Improvement Manager**. Linda will be leading on the development and implementation of strategies, processes and procedures that ensure Carers of East Lothian are offering the highest quality services for carers.
Linda will continue to oversee the Time For Me Grants programme.

Gemma Twells-Davison is moving into the role of **Communications and Engagement Manager.** Gemma's role focuses on ensuring carers' voices influence service design, policy and planning; overseeing the development of events, training and information resources; and CoEL's external communications.

SCOTTISH
ELECTION
2026

Carer Hustings 2026

On 2nd April 2026, we held hustings at Carers of East Lothian offering carers the opportunity to hear directly from local candidates standing in the Scottish Elections in May. We were joined by carers in person and online, as well as the following election candidates:

- Paul McLennan (SNP)
- Martin Whitfield (Labour)
- Miles Briggs (Conservatives)
- Jane Alliston Pickard (Liberal Democrats)
- Angela Ross (Reform)

Carers posed very pertinent questions related to their circumstances and the collective challenges that the unpaid carer community experience. The session was recorded and can be viewed by clicking the following link. Link to watch hustings recording on CoEL website. We are also following up with candidates with questions that could not be answered due to time constraints.

Share your views

Share you views/

Are you caring for someone who is living with mental health issues? If so, we would love to have your input into the development of the group support we offer to carers in your situation.

We have designed the following survey that will be open until Friday 8th May to try and help shape the group support we offer over the next year.

Two completed entries will be selected at random to receive a £25.00 East Lothian voucher in acknowledgement of the time taken to support our development work.

Click this link to complete the survey

Carers of East Lothian
Supporting people who care for family and friends
WE ARE RECRUITING FOR OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are Recruiting -

Board of Directors
We are currently recruiting for our board of directors. Please **follow this link** to the goodmoves advert for more information and for details of how to contact our Chief Executive Officer if you are interested in hearing more.

We have recently advertised for a new Admin and Finance Assistant and a Carer Support and Caseload Manager. We have shortlisted candidates and the interview process is due to be held w/c 13th and 20th April. We will share updates as soon as we can.

Carers of East Lothian
Supporting people who care for family and friends
vocal
working with carers
art in healthcare

Caring Spaces
Newsletter
March2026

Monthly In Person Groups
It's been a lively and creative start to the year for Caring Spaces! Our monthly in-person groups in Dalkeith and Tranent have been busy exploring charcoal drawing, ceramic sculpture and still life — spending time looking closely, working with our hands and enjoying the calm rhythm of making together. And of course chatting and having a cuppa. All welcome- more details of upcoming sessions below in Spring Listings!

Here are some photos of our latest creations!

Caring Spaces collaboration

It's been a lively and creative start to the year for Caring Spaces, our art group running in collaboration with Art in Healthcare ! The monthly in person groups in Tranent have been busy exploring charcoal drawing, clay, and paper making — spending time looking closely, working with our hands and enjoying the calm rhythm of making together. And of course chatting and having a cuppa.

Art in Healthcare have also launched a new online art group for carers across the Lothians. The group have had the first two sessions where they have explored work from the Art in Healthcare collection to inspire creative works by the group.
If you are interested in joining in with either of these groups, you can contact Gemma on gemma@coel.org.uk Click on the image above if you would like to read the Caring Spaces newsletter.

Time for Me Grants Update
We are delighted to inform you that we have received funding from Shared Care Scotland that will enable the continuation of our Time For Me Grants Programme supporting carers to access breaks from caring. Further updates will be added to our website once we have more information.

National Trust Scotland
We have temporary membership cards available for carers to use until they expire at

the end of November 2026. The cards can be used just like an ordinary membership card and provide access to all the National Trust places and properties in Scotland. The cards may also be accepted at National Trust England properties but please check before you visit. For a full list of the places you can visit, check the website by clicking this link. To request a pass, please contact Linda by clicking the button below.

Email Linda

From East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership

East Lothian Carers Strategy
The HSCP like to thank all of you who have taken the time to share your thoughts and experiences helping shape their local Carers Strategy for 2026-'29.

The consultation draft will be updated based on feedback and a fuller action plan will set out how they intend to deliver on the five outcomes.The strategy will go for approval by the Strategic Planning Group and Integration Joint Board and be published in June 2026.

New third sector provider appointed to deliver alcohol and drug support services across Midlothian and East Lothian.

The charity, Substances Support Scotland has been chosen to lead vital support services for adults affected by alcohol and drug use in Midlothian and East Lothian.

Substances Support Scotland, which has been operating since 1977, has been awarded a one-year contract by the co-ordinating body, Midlothian and East Lothian Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP), beginning 1 April 2026.
The appointment comes after existing provider MELD announced in January 2026, it would stop services on 31 March 2026.

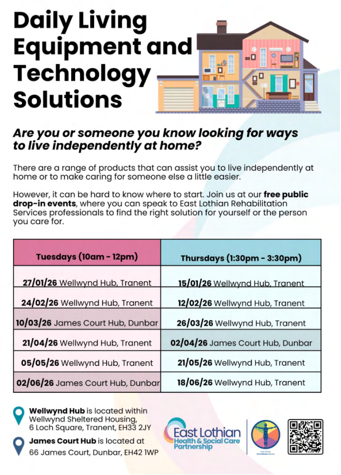
Substances Support Scotland will offer a wide range of support for people aged 18 and over, including clear information about treatment options, early help, emotional and practical support, harm-reduction advice, community-based support and peer-led recovery activities. The aim is to help people stay safe, improve their wellbeing, and build stronger, healthier lives.

The existing direct telephone line, 07843 339 958 known as the "Contact Service" will continue to operate, providing a first point of contact for drugs, alcohol and substance use related service enquiries.

Drop-in education sessions for daily living equipment, technology solutions, and carers

These sessions offer practical advice on daily living equipment and technology solutions, as well as guidance to support people in a family caregiving role. No appointment is needed — members of the public can simply drop in during the two-hour session.

Designed to empower individuals and carers, the sessions provide the chance to see and try a wide range of everyday items that can help people stay safe, independent, and comfortable at home — or make caring for someone else a little easier. Attendees will have the opportunity to speak directly with an East Lothian Rehabilitation Services health professional, who can help identify the most suitable solutions for themselves or the person they care for.



Daily Living Equipment and Technology Solutions

Are you or someone you know looking for ways to live independently at home?

There are a range of products that can assist you to live independently at home or to make caring for someone else a little easier.

However, it can be hard to know where to start. Join us at our **free public drop-in events**, where you can speak to East Lothian Rehabilitation Services professionals to find the right solution for yourself or the person you care for.

Tuesdays (10am - 12pm)	Thursdays (1:30pm - 3:30pm)
27/01/26 Wellwynd Hub, Tranent	**15/01/26** Wellwynd Hub, Tranent
24/02/26 Wellwynd Hub, Tranent	**12/02/26** Wellwynd Hub, Tranent
10/03/26 James Court Hub, Dunbar	**26/03/26** Wellwynd Hub, Tranent
21/04/26 Wellwynd Hub, Tranent	**02/04/26** James Court Hub, Dunbar
05/05/26 Wellwynd Hub, Tranent	**21/05/26** Wellwynd Hub, Tranent
02/06/26 James Court Hub, Dunbar	**18/06/26** Wellwynd Hub, Tranent

Wellwynd Hub is located within Wellwynd Sheltered Housing,
6 Loch Square, Tranent, EH33 2JY

James Court Hub is located at
66 James Court, Dunbar, EH42 1WP

East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership

The Occupational Therapy Caregivers' Pathway

The Occupational Therapy caregivers' pathway is running a 4-week self-management programme for caregivers (maximum 8 participants) in April and May 2026.

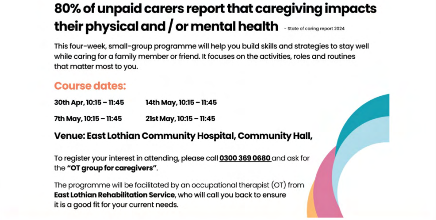
The programme will run for 4 consecutive weeks, from Thursday 30th April to Thursday 21st May, 10:15 to 11:45, in the Community Hall, East Lothian Community Hospital.

Interactive sessions will explore:

* Importance of self-care and retaining your own identity amidst caregiving
* Balancing different types of activities to meet your needs and manage your energy levels
* Building rest into everyday routines
* Managing stress and distress
* Adapting to change across the span of your caregiving role

If you are interested in this programme, you can self-refer by calling 0300 3690 680, selecting option 2, and asking for “OT group for caregivers”, or you can ask someone at CoEL to refer you to the programme.

Do you provide unpaid care for family member or friend?
East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership
How well do you balance your own wellbeing?



80% of unpaid carers report that caregiving impacts their physical and / or mental health - State of caring report 2024

This four-week, small-group programme will help you build skills and strategies to stay well while caring for a family member or friend. It focuses on the activities, roles and routines that matter most to you.

Course dates:

30th Apr, 10:15 – 11:45
14th May, 10:15 – 11:45
7th May, 10:15 – 11:45
21st May, 10:15 – 11:45

Venue: East Lothian Community Hospital, Community Hall,

To register your interest in attending, please call **0300 369 0680** and ask for the **"OT group for caregivers"**.

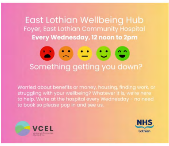
The programme will be facilitated by an occupational therapist (OT) from **East Lothian Rehabilitation Service**, who will call you back to ensure it is a good fit for your current needs.

Other Local Updates

HELP
SUPPORT
ADVICE

Information hubs

Are you looking for help, advice, or just curious about what's available locally? **Information Hubs** bring advice and support straight to your community. If you are looking for help, advice, or you are just curious about what's available locally, the information hubs bring together friendly faces from charities, the council and the NHS - all in one place. You can find out more about when they are running by clicking this link.



East Lothian Wellbeing Hub
Foyer, East Lothian Community Hospital
Every Wednesday, 12 noon to 2pm

Something getting you down?

Worried about benefits or money, housing, finding work, or struggling with your wellbeing? Whatever it is, we're here to help. We're at the hospital every Wednesday - no need to book so please pop in and see us.

VCEL
NHS Lothian

Wellbeing Hub

Do you know that there is a wellbeing hub at the East Lothian Community Hospital in Haddington every Wednesday? The hub offers confidential support, practical help, and friendly advice from local services and is open to all. Please follow this link if you'd like to know more about the hub.

Dementia Cafes East Lothian

The four East Lothian Dementia Cafés (Dunbar, Musselburgh, Tranent, and Haddington) will continue to be attended by a variety of relevant NHS and social care professionals over the next 6 months.

Community Psychiatric Nurses, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Community Care Workers will join our carer peer support groups, not to present information, but to be available for any questions or concerns you might have.
Michael Huddleston (Alzheimer Scotland, Dementia Advisor) will facilitate each group and will also offer advice and information as required. Please click this link to view more information about these sessions.

ASN expansion consultation 2026
Demand for specialist additional support needs provision.

Across Scotland, 43% of children and young people have Additional Support Needs and this figure is rising. Demand for specialist provision in East

Lothian has more than doubled since 2020/21.

East Lothian have dedicated ASN provision in three primary schools and three secondary schools.

However the dedicated school estate is now at capacity and they need to expand to meet roll projections.

They are currently consulting on proposals to create new specialist ASN provisions at Law Primary School, Stoneyhill Primary School and Musselburgh Grammar School. The consultation is open till May 5th. Please follow this link if you would like to share your views.

Local Organisation Spotlight

Our Community Kitchen

During late March, Elaine Gale, founder of Our Community Kitchen (OCK) came along to Carers of East Lothian to talk to the staff team about some of the amazing work they are doing at the kitchen. Gemma and Diane visited the next day to talk about the work we do at CoEL to support unpaid carers. They promised to spread the word with the people they are supporting to help carers to access our services. We wanted to share what they do, as we are sure that many members of the community could benefit!

OCK are based at the bowling club in Haddington on Wemyss place. They are open Tues - Fri 10:30 am - 2. 10:30 for coffee followed by lunch (delicious and cooked by classically trained chef!) and then activities/ trips. Anyone **county-wide** can attend. They charge £4.00 per day. No booking is needed, just drop in! Their mission is to *reduce isolation and loneliness by bringing people together to eat nutritious home-cooked food around a large table, by arranging fun activities and by planting and growing their food to eat around the table. They do this to allow friendships to form. Everyone will be made very welcome. There are no barriers to people's abilities.*

The kitchen also sell their food frozen at £3.00 a portion.

We highly recommend popping in to see them! For more information, follow this link to their facebook page.

National Updates

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Right to a Break Consultation

In July 2025, the Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 introduced a new Right to Breaks for unpaid carers. This new legislation aims to make sure carers can get the time away from caring that they need to rest, look after their wellbeing, and maintain their own lives.

The Scottish Government is now consulting on how this new right should work in practice. They want to hear from carers about the rules and guidance that will shape how the right is delivered across Scotland.

You can read and respond to the consultation by clicking this link. You can respond to the consultation online by following this link, The consultation is open until 22nd May 2026. In addition, Coalition of Carers in Scotland are hosting a series of informal online discussion sessions where carers can learn about the proposals and share their views. You can follow this link where you can sign up to one of their sessions.

For further information from **Shared Care Scotland,** including opportunities to share your views with them - follow this link.

Improvements
to carer benefits
Social Security Scotland

Carer Benefits - What's Changing

From 15 March 2026, several improvements have been introduced to carer payments to better support carers in Scotland:

- Automatic Scottish Carer Supplement for people receiving Carer Support Payment
- A new Carer Additional Person Payment (CAPP) for carers who look after more than one person
- Extended bereavement support when a cared-for person dies
- More flexible rules about temporary breaks in care
- All payments will be combined into one regular payment that appears as "CSP" on bank statements.

Coalition of Carers in Scotland have written a very helpful article to detail these changes. Please follow this link to view the article.

Universal Credit Changes April 2026

We are sharing a useful article from Citizens Advice Scotland that covers changes to Universal Credit (UC) in 2026.

The article includes information about UC standard allowance, the 2 child limit and the limited capability for work-related activity' (LCWRA) element.

Please follow this link to read the article.

state pension

State Pension Age - Between April 2026 and March 2028, the state pension age is rising from 66 to 67 depending on your date of birth. To check the date you will reach state pension age, use this link to the Government website: https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

Pension Credit - You may be entitled to Pension Credit. Pension Credit is a benefit for people over State Pension age on a low income.
Many people who are eligible to claim pension credit do not claim it. To find out if you could be eligible to claim, use this link to the Government website: https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator

New Rates for Carer and Disability Payments in 2026

From April 2026, many benefit payments from DWP and Social Security Scotland will rise by 3.8%. To check how this may affect you or someone you care for, see the updated benefit rates in the very helpful article that **Coalition of Carers In Scotland** have added to their website. New rates for carer and disability payments in 2026 - click this link.

To get specialist welfare rights advice from Carers of East Lothian for any benefit changes mentioned in this newsletter, or for support with any other benefits or money matters, please call 0131 665 0135 or fill in the referral form on our website. You can

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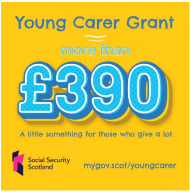
click this link to find it.

If you need extra time or support because of language difficulties, communication needs, digital skills, a disability, a health condition, or any other reason, we can do this in a way that meets your needs.



Young Carer Grant

Young Carer Grant is available to 19 year olds!
If you're
✓ aged 16, 17, 18 or 19
✓ look after someone who gets a disability benefit
You could be eligible for over £390.
Please help spread the word so that more young adult carers who are 19 are aware of this change in eligibility! Follow this link for more information.

Carers Week

Carers Week 2026 8 - 14 June 2026

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 theme for Carers Week 2026 is Building Carer Friendly Communities. This will highlight the impact of impact carer friendly communities can have in making a real and lasting difference to the lives of carers everywhere. The campaign will be brought to life by thousands of individuals and organisations taking action to ensure more communities understand, recognise and empower carers.

You can find out more about the annual national campaign by clicking this link.

Carers of East Lothian will be organising a programme of events for the week. We will promote these in early May - watch this space!

Other Local Support for Carers

Milan Senior Welfare Organisation offer support for 50+ older people from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi & Mauritian communities in Edinburgh & Lothian. The organisation runs a support group for South Asian unpaid carers in East Lothian.

If you would like to know more about this group, please contact Rukhsana Ali, Senior Day Care/ Carers Engagement Officer on rukhsana@milanswc.org

East Lothian Carers' Adventure Wellbeing Group (run by Venturing Out CIC)

Here we hear from Claire Mackenzie from Venturing Out:

"Venturing Out CIC is delighted to announce that they have been successful in obtaining funding to continue the East Lothian Carers' Adventure Wellbeing Group for a 3rd Year!

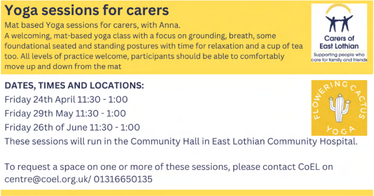
You heard it here first! What has grown over the last two years is nothing short of incredible. It started with an idea to provide a break from caring for unpaid adult carers and an aim to create a platform for social connection. Through this, there would be a natural focus on mental health & wellbeing.

This idea has now grown a group of over 100 Carers who are accessing regular adventurous outdoor activities! Strong friendships have been formed, and people are trying things they never thought they would get the opportunity to do. We have been hill walking, rock climbing, paddling, cycling, bushcrafting and coasteering. We've enjoyed walks on the Coast and in local woodlands, played team building games and tried orienteering on foot and on bike! The activities are diverse, fun and offer something a bit different. The conversation is wonderful and people never feel a pressure to talk about what is going on in their lives. The feedback we repeatedly receive is that people feel such comfort in being alongside others who simply "get" what it means to be a carer and the pressures that brings to everyday life.

What is ahead for the next year? More of the same whilst exploring new corners of East Lothian and beyond! We have a regular, varied programme of activities planned. We would like to continue to grow the group and support new members to access adventurous activities. If this sounds like something you would like to be involved in, please get in touch."

To find our more, email claire@venturingout.org.uk

Upcoming Events and Training from CoEL for Unpaid Carers



Carers of East Lothian
Supporting people who care for family and friends
FLOWERING CACTUS YOGA

Yoga sessions for carers

Mat based Yoga sessions for carers, with Anna.
A welcoming, mat-based yoga class with a focus on grounding, breath, some foundational seated and standing postures with time for relaxation and a cup of tea too. All levels of practice welcome, participants should be able to comfortably move up and down from the mat

DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS:
Friday 24th April 11:30 - 1:00
Friday 29th May 11:30 - 1:00
Friday 26th of June 11:30 - 1:00
These sessions will run in the Community Hall in East Lothian Community Hospital.

To request a space on one or more of these sessions, please contact CoEL on centre@coel.org.uk/ 01316650135

Yoga for carers

In late 2025, we ran some yoga sessions for carers with Anna from Flowering Cactus. The sessions were very well received. Anna has offered to run some more sessions between April and June. Carers are welcome to attend one, two or all three of the sessions.

The sessions will offer welcoming, mat-based yoga class with a focus on grounding, breath, some foundational seated and standing postures with time for relaxation and a cup of tea too. All levels of practice welcome, participants should be able to comfortably move up and down from the mat.

Reply to this email to request a space, or call us on 01316650135.

Volunteering with CoEL

Volunteer Carer Champions

At Carers of East Lothian, we have introduced a new voluntary role of 'Carer Champion'. Champions come from a range of teams across East Lothian. The ultimate aim of the role and the collective of champions is to increase carer awareness across the board.

Champions will provide a link between Carers of East Lothian and the teams that they work within. They will promote and embed the profile of carers within their organisation, as well as directing colleagues to relevant resources and services. Where suitable, champions will signpost carers to Carers of East Lothian.

There are currently 18 NHS volunteers based on ELCH wards and at reception. Our focus is now on building the project and recruiting new champions from across a number of settings. One Occupational Therapy Assistant Practitioner who has recently completed training to become a Carer Champion said:

"My own personal caring role for my grandparents thrived me to help others in a caring position after receiving support I never thought I ever needed.

I feel it is important for us as professionals to be carer aware as not every person has someone to look out for them to recognise this, a lot of carers don't even recognise themselves as carers. It is important that carers are aware of the support and advice available to them and how to access this."

If you are interested in becoming a Carer Champion, please contact Catherine by clicking the link below.

Email Catherine

Volunteer
Telephone Befriending

Volunteer with Carers of East Lothian

We are always keen to hear from people who are interested in volunteering and supporting our work with their time. At the moment, we are particularly keen to hear from people who might be interested in becoming a volunteer befriender with us.

We are looking for people who are good listeners to maintain regular contact with carers on the telephone. If you have two to four hours to spare each month, for up to a year, please consider volunteering with the befriending service, especially if you have personal experience of some of the challenges that caring for another person who relies on your support can bring.

What we can offer you:

- training, ongoing support and supervision
- opportunities to meet new people
- opportunities to develop your skills and confidence
- opportunities to make a difference to carers in your community
- references and recognition of your service

For an informal chat about volunteering with the befriending service, please contact Catherine Cain by clicking the button below.

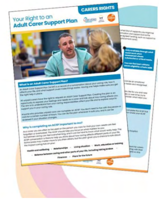
Email Catherine

Support Groups and other Group Activities for Carers

We run regular Carer Support Groups in different locations across the county as well as for people in different caring situations. In addition to this, we run a weekly singing group, a monthly craft group and a monthly art group. **Please follow this link to our website where you can find more information about these groups.**

Carers Rights

We are taking this opportunity to tell you about two carers rights leaflets we developed with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership. The leaflets focus on Adult Carer Support Plans and carers right to be involved in hospital discharge. Please click on the images below to download the leaflets. If you'd like a copy of either of the leaflets posting to you, please contact us on centre@coel.org.uk



CARERS RIGHTS

Your Right to an **Adult Carer Support Plan**

What is an Adult Carer Support Plan?

Why is completing an ACSP important to me?

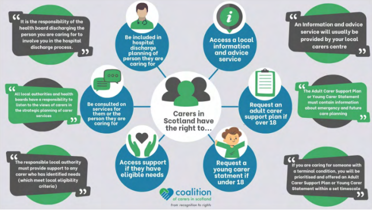
CARERS RIGHTS

Your right to be involved when **the person you care for is being discharged from hospital**

Do you provide care for someone?

Why is it important to be involved in discharge planning?

This handy visual from Coalition of Carers in Scotland outlines carers rights in a clear and simple way. For more information, you can follow this link to visit our web page on carers rights. If you have any questions about your rights as a carer, please contact us on 01316650135.


"It is the responsibility of the health board discharging the person you are caring for to involve you in the hospital discharge process."
Be included in hospital discharge planning of person they are caring for
Access a local information and advice service
"An Information and advice service will usually be provided by your local carers centre"
"All local authorities and health boards have a responsibility to listen to the views of carers in the strategic planning of carer services"
Be consulted on services for them or the person they are caring for
Carers in Scotland have the right to...
Request an adult carer support plan if over 18
"The Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement must contain information about emergency and future care planning"
"The responsible local authority must provide support to any carer who has identified needs (which meet local eligibility criteria)"
Access support if they have eligible needs
Request a young carer statment if under 18
"If you are caring for someone with a terminal condition, you will be prioritised and offered an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement within a set timescale"
coalition of carers in scotland
from recognition to rights

There are several ways that you can support our work...

Do you know that you can support Carers of East Lothian through the Community Lottery? Tickets are only £1.00 per week with 50% going to Carers of East Lothian and 10% going to other local causes. **Follow this link to the to find out more about supporting us through the Community Lottery.**

Carers of East Lothian are registered as a cause with Easy fundraising and are able to receive donations from supporters when they shop with a huge range of retailers. For information on how it works, please follow this link: **How it Works | Easyfundraising** If you are interested in signing up (at no cost to you), please visit our cause page by clicking the following link: **Easy Fundraising Cause Page, Carers of East Lothian**.

If you would like to make a donation to Carers of East Lothian to support us to continue the work that we do to support unpaid carers, you can do so using the **Carers of East Lothian just giving link.**

CoEL would like to express their thanks to…

- **Longniddry & District Rotary Club** who organised a hugely successful Charity Curling Bonspiel at Curl Edinburgh, Murrayfield on Wednesday 19th November and nominated Carers of East Lothian as the principal beneficiary of the event. Jenny and Hilary from CoEL visited the club on Thursday 22nd January where they were presented with a cheque for an incredible amount of £3000.00.
- Everyone who was involved with our **Festive Raffle**. This includes the amazing organisers - Hilary, Carol, Fiona Frances and Trudi, all of the businesses and

organisations who donated prizes and everyone who bought and sold tickets. An amazing £3,000+ was raised to support our work.
- **The East Lothian Elf** who raised £2377.00 (gift aid inclusive) for Carers of East Lothian throughout December. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time with him again and really appreciated all the effort he (and his amazing assistant) made to raise awareness and funds for our cause.
- **Pix in the Stix** who made a very generous donation of £500.00 plus gift aid to the East Lothian Elf campaign.
- **Tyninghame Sawmill** who made a very generous donation of £200.00 plus gift aid to the East Lothian Elf campaign.
- **Musselburgh Racecourse** who invited the East Lothian Elf to fundraise on their Christmas Jumper day where he collected £400.65.
- **The Robertson Trust** for part funding Carers of East Lothian's Welfare Rights Accessibility Coordinator over a 12 month period.
- **East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership** for part funding Carers of East Lothian's Welfare Rights Accessibility Coordinator over a 12 month period.
- **The National Lottery** for funding towards Carers of East Lothian's Innovation and Improvement Manager.
- **Shared Care Scotland** for funding to enable the continuation of our Time For Me Grants programme.
- **IMPACT (Improving Adult Care Together)** for funding an impact network project that will help us to further understand community support for carers.
- **East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership** for awarding £2000.00 to support our events programme for our 30th anniversary celebrations and our Carers Week activities.
- **All of our funders** for their continued support.

Future Newsletters...

The CoEL Newsletter is issued 3 times a year. Do you have an idea for something you would like to see in our newsletter that you think would be of interest to carers? If so, please contact Gemma using the button below.

The deadline for sending information for the next issue is Monday 13th July 2026. Please also contact us if you have any queries about any of the content in this newsletter.

Email us

Carers of
East Lothian
Supporting people who
care for family and friends

View email in browser

Carers of East Lothian, East Lothian Community Hospital, Alderston Road, Haddington, EH41 3PF

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