



Carers of East Lothian

Supporting people who
care for family and friends

Annual Report & Accounts 2014-15

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Charity registered in Scotland, Charity No. SC027000
Company Limited by Guarantee, No.SC366908

Funded by



Chairperson's Report

The East Lothian Joint Health and Social Care Board is currently determining how it intends to provide its services in future.

Carers of East Lothian (CoEL) remains quite clear that carers need to be involved as vital partners in the planning and development of those services that directly affect them. We consider it essential that carers are meaningfully engaged with this process, and that the benefit of working in partnership to achieve this cannot be overestimated.

The contribution made by carers should be recognised and valued. This will ensure that their caring role is maintained in a safe, effective way – one that is right for them and the person they care for.

Identifying and supporting the ever-growing number of family carers in East Lothian should be seen as a sound investment. Sustaining carers' physical and mental health and wellbeing is also crucial to ensuring their continuing ability to care.

In addition to providing a wide range of support services, CoEL is committed to advocating for carers' rights, Support Plans, the on-going request for a Carers' Champion, and continued funding for breaks from caring. Furthermore, we believe that including carers as partners in the planning of services will bring long-term benefits. We therefore look forward to seeing such inclusive planning put into action.

Laurelle Edmunds

Chairperson

October 2015

About CoEL

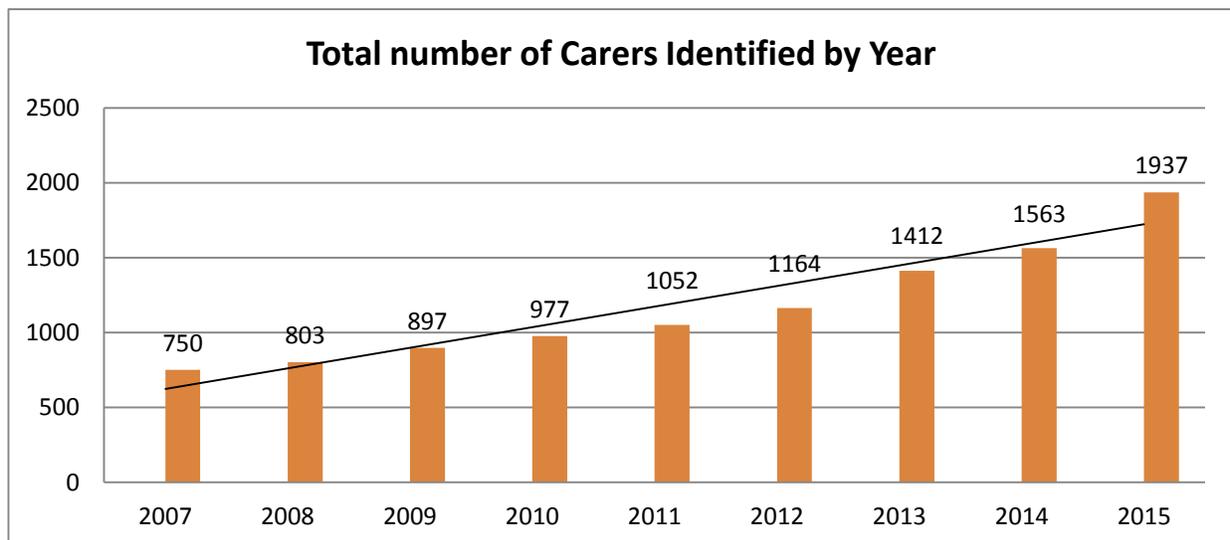
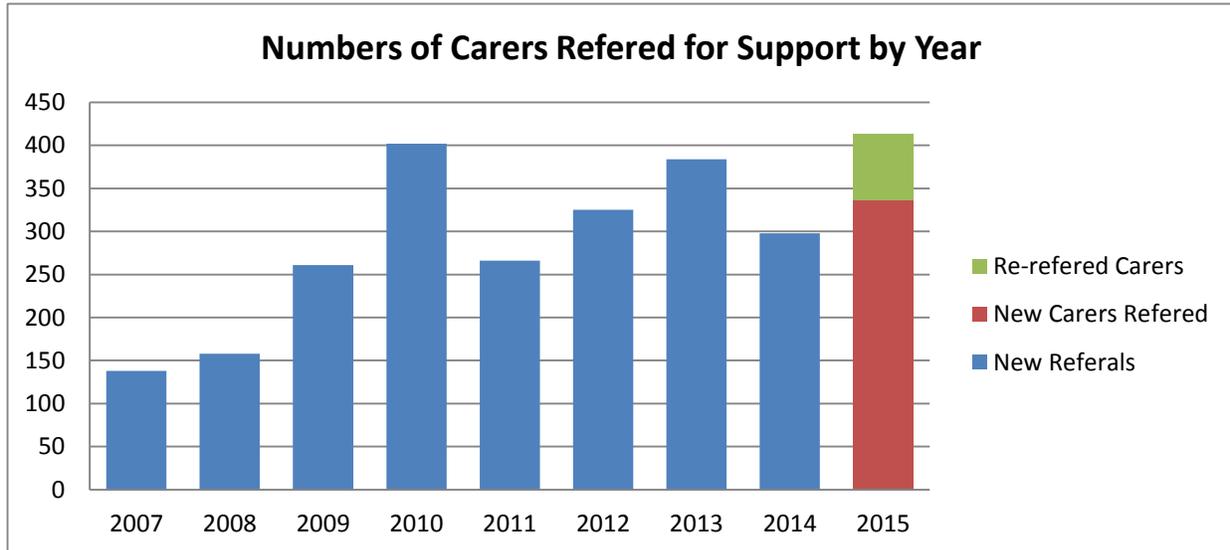
Carers of East Lothian (CoEL) was established in October 1996 as an independent charity but one of the network of Carers Trust (formally the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, PRTC) Carers Centres across the UK. In October 2009 CoEL's constitution changed and we became a Company Limited by Guarantee. CoEL is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of carers or former carers, while support for carers is primarily provided by a team of professional staff.

Our Mission

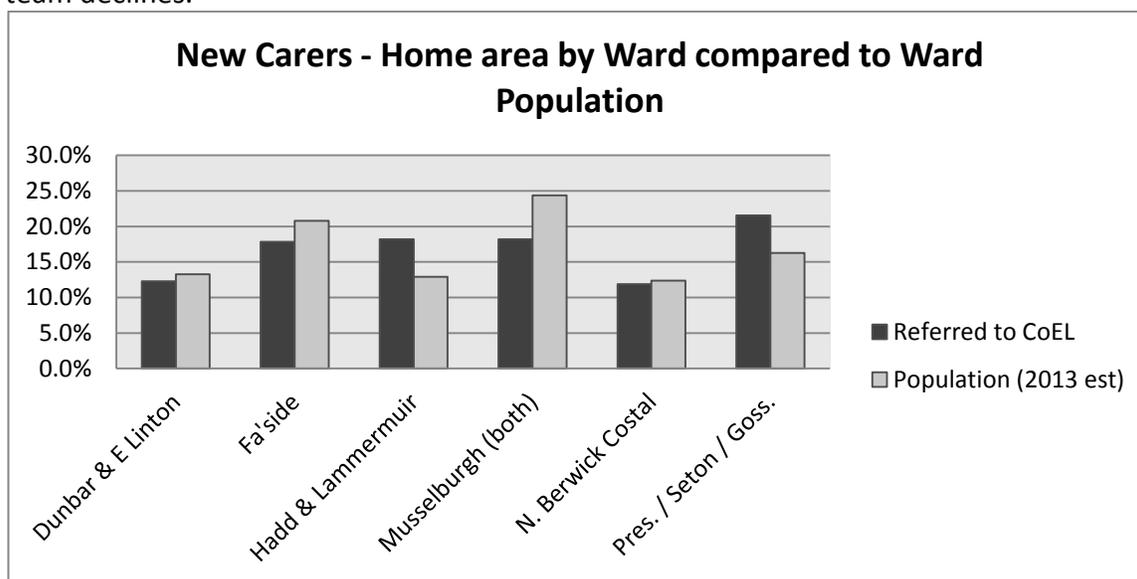
CoEL's Mission is to "support all adults in a caring situation in East Lothian to get information and services to help their individual caring role, enhance their own wellbeing and strengthen their collective voice to improve services."

The carers we supported in 2014-15

2014-15 has been another busy year for CoEL. We were contacted by 336 new carers who approached us for support for the first time and 77 carers were referred to us or asked us directly for support again. At the end of March 2015, 1937 carers were in contact with our service in total.



The trends of increasing numbers of carers looking for our support is welcome but undoubtedly also presents us with challenges as to how we can best respond, especially as our funding and consequently our staff team declines.



As with previous years, the new carers seeking support from our service come from across the county. In 2014 we changed the way we recorded Carers' home area so that we used Ward areas, allowing us to compare against Census and other official statistics. This enabled us to see that we have a relatively low number of referrals from the Musselburgh & Fa'side Wards compared to their population and we have focused our outreach in these areas as a result.

The main issues that carers are concerned with are varied but also remain broadly consistent year to year. As with previous years, the most common reason carers contact us is about finance or benefits issues closely followed by concerns about the Carers' wellbeing.

Nationally, more women are unpaid carers than men (61% to 39%). This demographic was also reflected in the new carers seeking our support in 2014-15, with again 70% being women (the same proportion as the previous year). A goal for CoEL is to focus efforts on attracting male carers to use our services.

How we support carers

CoEL continues to provide a range of support services for Carers in East Lothian:

1 to 1 Support for carers

Much of our work involves Carer Support Workers working directly with carers to provide them with support. This will include:

- Information on all aspects of caring and advice on social care systems
- Support with applying for Powers of Attorney
- A confidential 'listening ear' which understands the pressures of being in a caring role
- Help with planning for emergencies or the future

We are unique in Scotland in having a Carer Support Worker who is based alongside the Community Mental Health Team to try to ensure that carers of people with mental health problems are well supported. We are also continuing to work towards establishing close working relationships with GP practices, building upon the model of our weekly surgery in North Berwick Health Centre.

Help with claiming Welfare Benefits & accessing Grants

At the end of March 2014 our funding from Scottish Power for our fuel poverty worker came to an end, but our funding from East Lothian Council for our Financial Inclusion Project (FIP) continued. This reduced the amount of specialist support for carers around benefits issues but this remains a core part of our work as it remains very important to carers. In 2014-15 our team of Carer Support Workers supported carers to claim £504,960 in annualised welfare benefits and our specialist team of workers secured an additional £1,034,370 for carers.

Respite and breaks from caring

Our Short Breaks Service supports carers to overcome the barriers to them being able to access breaks from caring. In 2014-15 the Service supported 137 carers & professionals including providing 69 carers with direct one to one support around overcoming barriers to short breaks, assisting 39 professionals (predominately from Adult Wellbeing 65+ Team) with advice to enable them to arrange an appropriate break for the person they were working with.

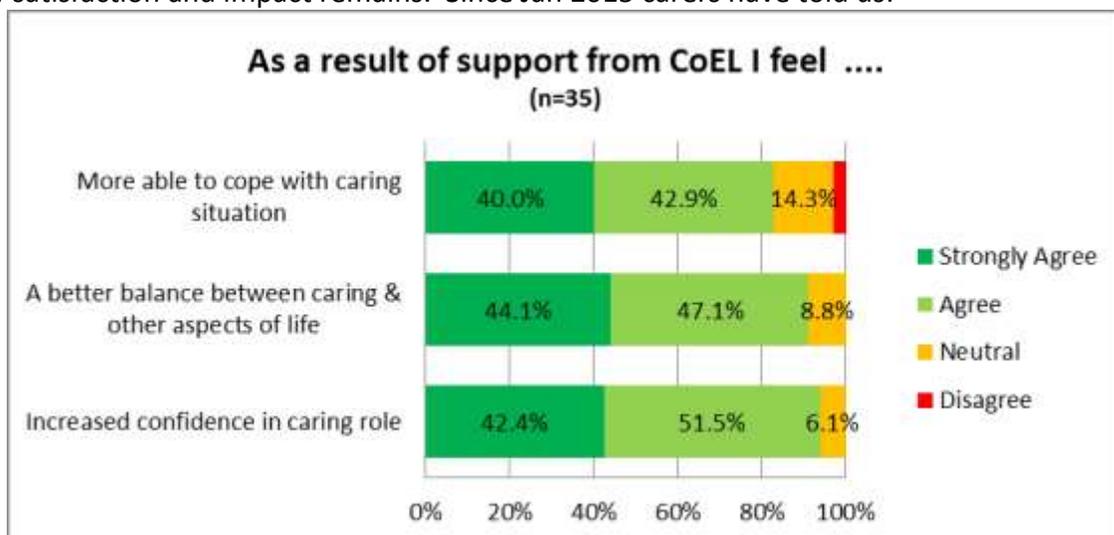
Training and Support Groups

CoEL provides training and information sessions for carers and revived our course targeted at new carers. In 2014-15 we ran courses on issues as diverse as Understanding Dementia to Sleep Counselling. Feedback remains very positive on these. At the start of the year we also reviewed the Carer Support Groups we support and unsurprisingly, people who attended were very positive about them. However, there was a need to re-focus some of these groups and a need to ensure that we were able to continue to support them given reduced resources.

The Outcomes of Our Work.

In 2013 we surveyed all carers CoEL and the Rural Project supported and found that 99% of carers rated support from CoEL as very good (86%) or good (13%) and, more significantly, the vast majority felt that our support had a positive impact in many aspects of their lives.

Monitoring the outcomes achieved for carers is now integrated into our ongoing processes but the same pattern of satisfaction and impact remains. Since Jan 2015 carers have told us:



Qualitative analysis of comments from carers about the difference support from the Rural Carers Project has made for them show consistent themes:

1. Not feeling alone and isolated in their role

"I attend monthly support group, feel better talking to others, not so isolated"

"I am now not alone, that makes such a difference"

2. Improvements in emotional wellbeing

"At a time when I was feeling low and unworthy the knowledge I gained put feelings into perspective. Knowing CoEL will be there with a smile and friendly face is greatly appreciated"

"Support has made me less stressed, more relaxed. So good to know help is readily available and I am not alone"

3. Greater confidence in knowing where to turn to with questions

"CSW approachable, extremely helpful and knowledgeable"

"Peace of mind, someone there if any questions"

Strengthening carers' collective voice

This forms a significant and ongoing part of our work and we strive to work closely with both East Lothian Council and the NHS in East Lothian via the Community Health Care Partnership to try to ensure that carers needs and concerns influence policy development.

This role has become progressively more challenging over the past year as the role and remit of the Joint Planning Groups has become less clear with time and the avenues for representing carers views diminished. Nonetheless, CoEL has advocated on a number of key issues:

- Trying to ensure that Carers views were sought and reflected in the intergrated Health and Social Care Partnership's first draft of its Strategic Plan. CoEL consulted with carers prior to submitting comments but as yet we have not heard whether or how these have been intergrated into new iterations of the plan;
- Advocated for improvments to the ways that carers and service users are engaged with by the Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure that their lived experience form one of the key planks for the delivery and development of services;
- Represented carers in the Short Life Working Group on charges for services which was able to have many of the plans for new charges for services shelved.

Future Plans

In early 2015 we developed a new Strategic Business Plan for the coming 5 years. This sets out our key priorities which focus around developing:

- Carer identification
- Outcomes focused support for carers around:
 - Information
 - Finances
 - Wellbeing
 - Short breaks
- Carer engagement
- Partnership development

Full details of the Plan can be seen on our website (www.coel.org.uk).

Our Finances

Summary of Accounts

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	
Income			
TOTAL	390,542	374,878	-4%
Expenditure			
Charitable Activities	401,247	362,806	
Governance Costs	4,186	2,898	
TOTAL	405,433	365,704	
Net movement in funds	-14,891	9,174	
Funds brought forward	70,339	55,448	
Funds carried forward	55,448	64,622	

Balance Sheet

Current Assets			
Cash	46,742	97,763	
Debtors	18,833	3,900	
TOTAL	65,575	101,663	
Creditors	-10,127	-8,592	
Accruals & deferred income	0	-28,449	
Net Assets	55,448	64,622	

Funds

Restricted	13,236	15,714	24%
Unrestricted	42,212	48,908	76%
TOTAL	55,448	64,622	

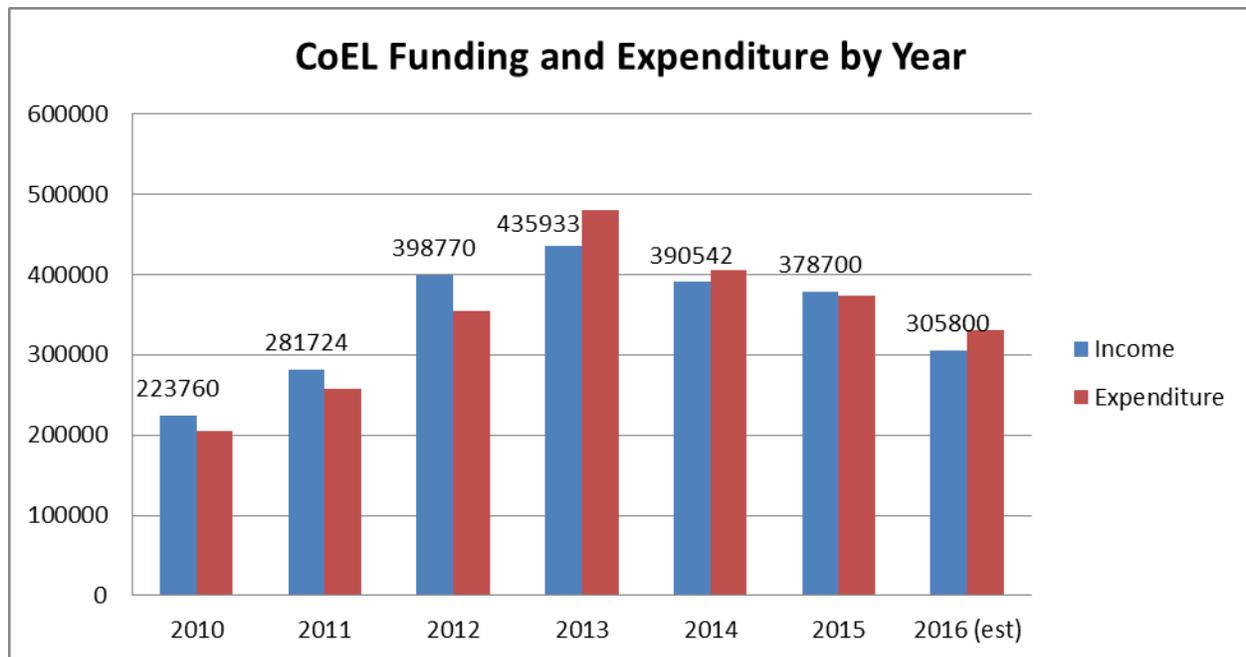
Commentary

Both income and expenditure have again been lower in 2014-15 but, as we projected last year, we have been able to operate at a modest surplus of £9,174. While this has been positive, it was also necessary following two years of deficits and we are very concerned that we are facing yet more reductions in overall funding in 2015-16. We are actively seeking alternate funds and are negotiating with the Health and Social Care Partnership but we have had to also restructure our services this year including a compulsory redundancy.

We continue to be concerned that a number of projects funded through restricted income are operating at a deficit. This has improved somewhat but there seems to be little prospect of increases in funding in others. Additionally, our SLA with the Health and Social Care Partnership end in 2016 and we are seeking to renegotiate this. We are hopeful that with the new integration, management and planning frameworks for the Partnership coming into focus, we may be able to move forward with longer term stable funding allowing us to focus on the key job of supporting carers.

Principal Sources of funding

Our principal funding come from East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian via a number of different funding streams. Further details are in the accounts.



Reserves

CoEL's policy is to hold reserves to a level representing at least 3 months' operating costs in order to guarantee the continuation of its services to carers in the event of any temporary shortfall in funding and to meet unexpected costs.

As we were able to operate at a modest surplus in 2014-15, our reserves have increased and at 31st March 2015 they totalled £64,622. Of these, £48,908 (76%) are unrestricted funds. Because our operating costs have reduced our total reserves now represent 2.3 months operating costs. While this is an improvement, we are likely to operate at a deficit in 2015-16 so our position will remain vulnerable and this is compounded by significant uncertainty around our ongoing funding. The Board remains committed to taking steps to ensure total reserves are increased in the medium term.

A full copy of our accounts is available from our website (www.coel.org.uk).

Thank You

Lastly, but certainly not least, we need to thank our funders, our staff team and our volunteers who have dedicated so much time and effort in trying to ensure that carers receive the support they require.

Signed on behalf of the Management Board

Laurelle Edmunds

Chairperson

October 2015

Reference Information

Carers Centre and Registered Office address

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Tel: (0131) 665 0135
Email: centre@coel.org.uk
Website: www.coel.org.uk

Management Board during 2014-15

Laurelle Edmunds – Chairperson
David Binnie - Vice Chairperson (appointed June 2014)
Sue van den Broek – Honorary Secretary
Terry Denton – Honorary Treasurer
Margaret McKay
George Brown
Jim Goddard
Hugh Lynch
Gill Wilson
Alan Dunton (resigned April 2015)

Independent Examiner

JS Accounting Services Ltd

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland, 36 High Street, Tranent, EH33 1HQ

Director

Andrew Tweedy

Status

CoEL is a Registered Scottish Charity Number SC 027000
CoEL is also a Company Limited by Guarantee Number SC 366908