

Meeting Note – Carers’ Panel

Title	Carers’ Panel
Venue	Zoom
Date	07/09/2021
Attendees	Anne Bisset, Jacqui Aston, Helen Wedgwood, Lorraine Sandie, Kirsteen Powell (CoEL), Ashley Hardy and Trish Carlyle (guest speakers, joined meeting at 2:30 pm)
Apologies	Agnes Stevenson

Agenda

- Review of previous meeting notes (July and August as we did not get a chance to do this last month)
 - Update on options for meeting online/offline
- Engagement opportunities
 - National Care Service consultation / Out of the Box community engagement
- Guest speakers Trish Carlye and Ashley Hardy (from 2:30pm)
- Any other business

Summary of discussions

Panel members approved meeting notes for July and August.

Feedback on Strategy Development Session (Fraser Centre – Thu 26th Aug)

All four Panel members present enjoyed the event and the opportunity to meet face to face. There was general agreement that the event was an appropriate length and the facilitator was skilled in his role. However, Jacki said she had not realised that the facilitator was an external consultant until he looked blank at a couple of comments about carers/CoEL. The consensus view was that it would have been helpful if the CEO had introduced the event and the facilitator to set the scene for everyone at the start. Panel members would also have liked to know who else was in the room (tables could not mix due to physical distancing). They suggested that all participants should have been asked to introduce themselves, taking no more than 30 seconds each, to say who they were and why they were there. Kirsteen agreed to pass this feedback on to Jess Wade.

Inviting Jess Wade to talk to Panel

Kirsteen suggested the Panel could invite Jess Wade in her role as CEO of CoEL to a future meeting. Panel members agreed they would like to invite Jess to talk to them about CoEL’s new business plan as and when it is drafted. Anne said she wished to understand the thinking behind the organisation’s priorities over the next five years (how and why they were selected etc).

CoEL AGM

Kirsteen reported Jess Wade had invited the Carers’ Panel to do a short presentation during CoEL’s AGM in November. The purpose of the presentation would be to raise awareness of the Panel’s existence and function to encourage other carers to become involved if they wished. Panel members agreed to idea in principle – content and format of presentation still to be discussed. Kirsteen will confirm the date of the AGM with Jess.

Carers Parliament 2021

Kirsteen highlighted that registrations for the Carers Parliament have now opened. Most of the sessions focus on the National Care Service. However, there will also be discussions about Scottish

Carer's Payment Assistance, which will replace Carer's Allowance in future. Jacki shared that she had recently participated in research conducted by Social Security Scotland (SSS) on this subject.

Format of future meetings

Kirsteen explained that CoEL's occupational health advisors had recommended that meetings should remain or revert to being online wherever possible due to rising Covid-19 infection rates in the community. Panel members agreed to continue meeting on Zoom.

Guest Speakers

Ashley Hardy and Trish Carlyle talked through a set of slides outlining how Carers Act funding has been spent to date and will be spent this year (slide deck to be circulated to Panel members). They also spoke briefly about their own caring roles when introducing themselves.

Young Carers Services

Lorraine was concerned that Education & Children's Services were going to be running young carers service in the future. She felt very strongly that young carers needed an independent organisation to advocate on their behalf. Lorraine stated that in her experience teachers did not know who was a young carer in their class. She gave the example of teachers pulling up young carers for not submitting schoolwork on time during the lockdown, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the challenges they were facing.

Ashley explained the decision to bring the services in house had been influenced by seeing how well the model had worked in Midlothian. Kirsteen asked if there were opportunities for parent carers to be involved in the development and/or monitoring and evaluation of the new in house service. Trish said she would ask the Education project lead and provide feedback on opportunities for engagement and timescales for the launch of in-house service.

Carers Act Funding

There was a discussion about Carers Act funding and wages – whose wages it covered and how much the wage bill was in total. Trish and Ashley explained that Carers Act funding did cover some wages – for example the wages of staff working in CoEL – but they did not have a figure for the total wage bill in relation to carer support. They also explained that their own wages were funded separately by core services of the ELHSCP i.e. their time was not paid for directly out of Carers Act funding.

The discussion became heated at times, possibly because individuals were talking at cross-purposes. But it highlighted a number of key points:

- Funding for carer support is complex.
- The HSCP does not know until the start of each financial year how much Carers Act funding they will receive from the Scottish Government. They also do not know what funding they will receive after the five-year term of Carers Act funding comes to an end in March 2023.
- Carers rely on services beyond those which are paid for directly by Carers Act funding such as replacement care (nearly £600 K spent by ELHSCP on replacement care/respite care in financial year 2019/20)
- Carers Act funding has been increasing significantly year on year but this does not mean that every carer will have felt the benefit directly. This is because:
 - more carers are being identified and accessing support each year so although funding has increased so has demand on services

- other funding streams, which have a direct impact on carer support such as replacement care/respite care, may have been squeezed due to increased demand and/or reduced resources
- Carers Act funding is ring-fenced but other budgets, which have a direct impact on carer support, are not ring-fenced.

New Carer Support Services for 2021/2022

Trish and Ashley outlined a new service was being developed to give carers fast-track access to occupational therapy and physiotherapy. Jacki was concerned that this was a duplication of existing services. Trish and Ashley explained the emphasis of the new service was distinct in its focus on early intervention and prevention. Jacki wondered why the focus of the new service was on physical rather than mental health support for carers.

Trish and Ashley also highlighted the increased funding for outreach work from the day centres for older people to compensate for the reduced capacity with physical distancing and the block booking of two respite care beds for older people.

Time constraints did not allow for further discussion of the shortages in replacement care and opportunities for carers to participate in ELHSCP structures.

Helen reflected at the end that she hoped this was the beginning of a dialogue, which would increase understanding between carers and services of each other's challenges, with a common aim of improving carer support.

Next steps/ Key decisions

- Panel members agreed to continue meeting on Zoom due to rising Covid-19 infections.
- Carers' Panel will do/ contribute to short presentation at CoEL AGM in November 2021

Actions		
Who	What	By when
Kirsteen	Research and summarise changes to benefits being transferred from DWP to SSS in 2020 including rationale for reduction in face-to-face assessments. Update Panel members.	Outstanding 31/07/2021
Kirsteen	Email newly released Carers Parliament 2021 programme to Panel members.	07/09/2021
Kirsteen	Invite CEO Jess Wade to talk to Panel members about CoEL business plan at a future meeting as a follow up to Strategy Development Day with carers. Panel members are particularly interested in hearing how organisation decided on its strategic priorities in relation to feedback from carers.	30/09/2021
Kirsteen	Confirm date of CoEL AGM with Jess	30/09/2021

Carer engagement opportunities – September 2021

Immediate (next 4 – 6 weeks)

Consultation on National Care Service

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation on the National Care Service including questions about a right to breaks from caring (they are avoiding using the term “respite”). You can access the full consultation at the link below but the document is long and the language is dense, making it difficult to read and respond to:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-care-service-scotland-consultation/>

As a result, the Coalition of Carers in Scotland are producing a set of briefing documents to help clarify the questions and their context. I will share these with Panel members once they have been published (expected w/c Mon 6th Sept). The Panel may wish to discuss how they would like to engage in the consultation process / support local carers more widely to do so.

Carer engagement in relation to redesigning services for adults with complex needs

The transformation programme has contracted an organisation called Out of the Box to carry out community engagement in relation to the redesign of services. Out of the Box are keen to hear carers’ and former carers’ experiences of support before and during the pandemic. Would you be interested in sharing your stories with them, individually or as a group? Out of the Box are very flexible about the format – a Zoom call, a walk and talk, a coffee and chat, a group activity etc. Out of the Box are looking to hold conversations/events between September and November.

Carers’ Parliament – 4th, 5th and 7th Oct

Carers Scotland have announced that this year’s Carers’ Parliament will take place on Mon 4th, Tue 5th and Thu 7th Oct and will focus on the National Care Service consultation. It will include Q&A sessions with ministers but no other details are available at present. I will circulate the programme of events to Panel members once it has been released.

Haddington Farmers Market (TBC, possibly Sat 25th Sep or Sat 30th Oct)

The Carers’ Panel is on a reserve list for a stall at Haddington Farmers’ Market for the last Saturday in September or October. My understanding is that we will only be offered a stall if a regular stallholder cancels their booking. CEO Jess Wade has confirmed COEL will cover the costs (£30 + VAT).

Medium term (next 3 months)

#1 CoEL AGM (November, exact date tbc) – invitation to present on Carers’ Panel

The board of CoEL have decided to hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM) online again this year given uncertainty over rising infection rates in the community. CEO Jess Wade has invited Carers' Panel to do a short presentation or video about its work and how carers (including former carers) can get involved if they are interested.

#2 Carers' Rights Day (Thu 25th Nov 2021)

Building on the Carers Hustings, I wanted to flag Carers' Rights Day as a possible opportunity to invite political representatives for East Lothian to answer questions from carers. Paul McLennan (SNP) is the East Lothian Constituency MSP but Craig Hoy (Conservative) and Martin Whitfield were both elected as MSPs for the South Scotland region.

Hot Topics in August 2021

Hot topics were not discussed by COEL staff at last team meeting in August.

Update on previous hot topics: No new updates.