



East Lothian Community Care Forum

Annual Report 2014-2015

*Involvement in
community care
planning &
decision making*
Charging policy

*Community
project:*
Wellbeing passport

*Community
Action
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Transport

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over the year**

At the grass roots:

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and community care
services**

**Community
groups**

Carers

Community Activists



Community Action Research

Community Action Research is collaborative research, education and action used to gather information for change on health and social care issues.

ELCCF recruits community volunteers who are concerned about or have a stake in the issue being researched. The tenets of CAR are:

- it is driven by participants rather than an outside sponsor
- it offers a democratic model where researchers are community members researching the needs of their communities
- it is collaborative at every stage, involving discussion pooling skills and working together,
- it is intended to result in some action, change or improvement of the issue being researched and in our case is used to relay alternative knowledge and opinions to the Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership

Here are our projects...



East Lothian Council Emergency Care Service Research

The Forum recruits volunteers from the community to become Community Action Researchers. Our team of researchers help the Forum evidence need of communities in East Lothian and through their research work present reports to the Health and Social Care Joint Planning Groups.

In January 2014, East Lothian Council department of Adult Wellbeing asked ELCCF to evaluate the East Lothian Emergency Care Service (ECS). This piece of work, similar to community action research was carried out by a group of community volunteers.

The Report concluded that the ESC was a very valuable resource giving clear evidence that the service keeps people out of acute care and helps people with community alarms and their carers stay at home safely with the confidence that help is at hand if needed.

"I feel comfortable with them, they do the job so wonderfully well and I know I'm safe in their hands."

Transport Research



Hand in hand with our video this year highlighting the difficulties disabled people have with transport - *see later in this report* - was our **'Are we there yet?' research project** which looked at the subject in greater detail.

It revealed that although there may be historic obstacles to overcome in the very long term such as the redesign of railway stations, many things can be done to improve the wellbeing of disabled travellers in the medium term such as the design of buses, delivering more power to the local community over bus routes, and short term answers, for example, improving the clarity of time tables and drivers' training.

The project concluded that the major impact of the problems faced by the disabled community on public transport included social isolation brought about by lack of confidence in travelling and cost.

Involvement in Planning

We live in a time of uncertainty regarding the future of financing of community care facilities and services.

While the Scottish Government, NHS and Local Authorities do their best to maintain standards, and make every penny count it is clear that given the current economic environment, community care provision faces tougher times. It is vital the voices of service users and carers and their concerns are addressed as any change take place. Right from the beginning, they must be allowed to engage with those at all levels who plan services.

Integrated Partnership

The health and social care planning structures, following fifteen years of voluntary alignment are now required by law to combine forces through joint management and share resources. With this major shake-up it is unclear what new planning structures will look like or more importantly how service users will be involved.

ELCCF along with other collective advocacy organisations are working with the Integrated Partnership to ensure service users and carers are involved in any new planning structure.

The Forum was also fortunate to get David Small round the table to discuss the future working relationship between the IP and ELCCF. David is Joint Director of Health and Social Care.

Wellbeing Passport

Following a mandate from our annual event 2013, this year ELCCF piloted a Wellbeing Passport, an initiative of one of our Members. More than 25 people took part in the pilot and created a Passport with headings and information of their choosing. The Passport offers an alternative voice for people who use health and social care services.



It seeks to build up information in an interview process which brings out more of the Passport holder's personality, his or her needs, and records the owner's own desired journey to wellbeing. It is also a possession of the holder rather than a form to be filled in and kept in a filing cabinet.

The feedback forms filled out by health and social work professionals scored highly in terms of being informative and getting to know their client/patient more quickly.

Interest in the passport is getting around and we have been asked to showcase it at the NHS Allied Health Professionals Conference in June 2015. We are currently seeking funding to take the project on to its next stage.

Bulletins & Leaflets

The Forum bulletin continued to inform on ELCCF's work and was distributed along with our leaflets to libraries, individuals, organisations and all those with a stake of interest in the Forum.

Among the issues highlighted in the past year was the campaign against new charges proposed for services for disabled people at East Lothian day centres.

The campaign involved a coalition of other groups headed by the Forum. Only recently has the issue been resolved with a positive outcome for service users.





The ELCCF Website

Our website is up and running and includes links to the ELCCF and Community Journalism Facebook pages, as well as to our Twitter page.

There are a host of links to resources such as the

Community Action Research handbook, Forum bulletins, the Community Journalism handbook, local and national consultations, Forum videos and a list of other bodies and organisations which may be of use to the Forum community.



Campaigns

Pressure from care groups in a joint campaign supported by the Forum has resulted in a rethink by East Lothian Council on new charges for community care services.

In its budget for the next three years, the council has also pledged to spend an additional £900,000 on adult wellbeing services, and £150,000 added partnership funding for voluntary and community organisations.

The Health and Social Care Partnership budget increases by 3.25% to £45.83m while the Partnerships and Community Services budget increases by 2.57% to £47.26m.

The campaign by a coalition of ELCCF, Carers of East Lothian, Partners in Advocacy and the Scottish Learning Disability Alliance ran for some months and was highlighted in the East Lothian News and East Lothian Courier.

Campaign heads are now glad the Council has responded favourably, and they have applauded Cllrs Willie Innes and Donald Grant for their support.



Cllr. Grant.

'Are we there yet' transport video

Getting out and about has been a hot topic since the forum came into being sixteen years ago. It is an issue which lies at the heart of community life and one which has inbuilt difficulties which can seem impossible to solve.



ELCCF's George Paterson produced a video highlighting the problems faced by disabled people getting from A to B. It looked at various forms of public transport and street accessibility, presented the views of service users themselves, and carried the views of local councillors and transport user groups.

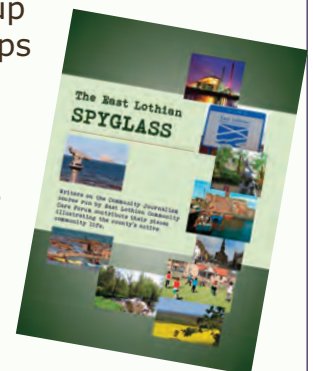
It was shown at the annual event where East Lothian MSP Iain Gray told of his own private members bill calling for greater local authority control of bus services.

Watch it on the ELCCF website: www.elccf.org

The Community Journalism Course

The course was composed of a set of six sessions run in cooperation with East Lothian Council Community Learning, taking place over two months. The aim was to skill up members of the community active in voluntary groups and organisations in how to promote their aims and issues in the media.

Course members were briefed on how to write press releases, what media editors looked for in a story to publish, the methods of production, newsletters, and photography. The course also touched on the importance of social media in putting the message across.



At the end of the course, those taking part contributed to the latest East Lothian Spyglass magazine. A further run of the course was set up for the 2014/2015 season.

ELCCF's Annual Event

Our annual event has traditionally been a time when ELCCF brings people together and showcases what it has been doing on their behalf as well as seeking approval for the plan ahead.



Janice Thomson, MSP Iain Gray and Cllr Donald Grant at the demo bus at the event.

Our annual event was held in Musselburgh East Community Association centre in October 2014.

We showcased work that required a mandate to continue development on the Wellbeing Passport. Mark Smith NHS Consultant Physiotherapist enthusiastically backed the project and outlined the benefits it carries for patients and health professionals alike.

Service users who had experimented with the Passport relate their own experiences when experimenting with in in real situations with health professionals.

The issue of transport has also been a hot potato passed from one hand to another, one department to another for as long. For disabled people and people with long term conditions transport is a life line to being able to live a normal life and to do the things most others take for granted - seeing relatives, shopping, meeting up with friends and attending doctor's appointments.

The Forum's transport video, illustrating the difficulties disabled people have in getting around was presented. Bill Hamilton of Lothian Buses explained the measures the company was taking to cater for disabled passengers.

A 'demonstration' single-decker was made available in the car park. Event goers were invited to see what kind of adaption had been made, and what other moves the bus company were taking for disabled travellers.



Inside the demonstration bus.

A Message from Forum Convener Alan Brown



This year has seen the Forum becoming involved in the integration between health and adult wellbeing services. We have given our response to the draft strategy and actively taken part in consultation.

Hopes are high that the new Partnership will lead to a better reorganisation of our health and wellbeing services and will cope not only with a challenging financial climate but with an changing and ageing population requiring health needs and elder care.

Taking major role in the campaign regarding suggested charges to services for day centres and transport was a highlights of the year and especially fulfilling with a good result. It goes to prove that not only are our voices heard but groups can co-operate for better effect.



Last but not Least

We are proud to work in partnership with our principal funder East Lothian Council, and NHS Lothian. Partnership working is the core of our ethos and we lay great importance in ensuring that we utilise precious resources to benefit people who use Community Care Services and their carers.



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