



East Lothian Community Care Forum Annual Report

2012 - 2013

A voice for people who use services and their carers to influence the planning and delivery of community care services

ELCCF's Whirlwind of Activity



Involvement in
Planning



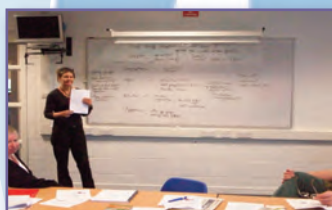
Outreach/ Gathering Views



Co-production/
joint working



Community Journalism course



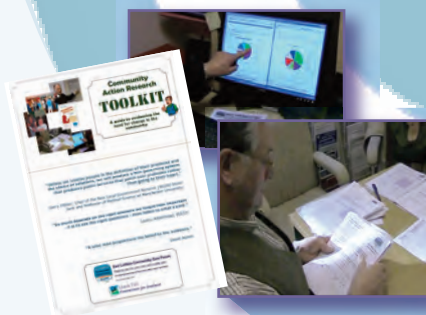
Training and
development



Peer Support



Newsletters & publications



Community
Action Research



Website



Video

A Potted History

ELCCF was formed in 1999 in the wake of a Scotland-wide governmental movement to end institutionalised care of disabled and chronically sick people. It was created in response to statutory requirements for local authorities and health boards to plan their services in consultation with service users and carers.

Early community development work built grassroots support from voluntary organisations that needed a forum for communicating with statutory organisations, and from users of community care services and carers who benefited from opportunities to share their experiences and gained access to information.

Forum representatives were appointed and received support to serve on Joint Planning Groups. The Development Worker was invited to serve on the Community Care Chief Officers' Group.

By 2004, ELCCF created specialist forums to increase the number of volunteer representatives on the Joint Planning Groups.

In year 2004 – 2005, the Mental Health Forum, the Learning Disability Forum and the Older People's Forum were established. In the year 2005 – 2006, the Physical Disability Forum was established.

These forums, regularly attended by community activists who use services and their carers, acted as a sounding board to the joint planning groups and over the years were active participants in many co-production initiatives with the statutory and third sector agencies.



The ELCCF office in Haddington's Sidegate.

It was clear that a change in direction was needed for the Forum to continue.

Collecting evidenced data was taken as a more reliable gauge of service users' needs, rather than what was seen as gathering anecdotal experiences. Community Action Research became the main focus of Forum work.

Although ELCCF no longer runs regular forum meetings we will run themed meetings as and when is helpful.

The discontinuation of the ELCCF four public forums has led to CAPS being solely responsible for collective advocacy in mental health. ELCCF continues to gather views to influence the Learning Disability, Physical Disability and Older People's Joint Planning Groups.

Throughout its history ELCCF has remained true to its prime remit - to represent the voice of the service user - and has remained and continues to be flexible and adaptable to winds of change.

What are we here to do?

East Lothian Community Care Forum's job is to ensure that services are influenced and helped in their design by those who count - the people who use them.

We provide a necessary channel of open and free dialogue between public service providers and service users, their families and supporters. To allow better communication, we build data drawn from a caring conversation with individuals and groups.

Core Aims of ELCCF

- **To be a focal point** for consultation and representation on any matters relating to community care.
- **To involve** service users and carers in the work and development of the East Lothian Community Care Forum.
- **To work** in empowering and democratic ways to gather views and ideas from the community, organise them and present them to social work, health and other groups.
- **To influence and improve** the design and delivery of community care services through partnership working.
- **To provide accessible information** to service users and their carers on matters to do with community care.

Guiding Principles

To this end, the Forum operates on a number of guiding principles.

- Service user and carer led
- An independent voice
- Adherence to our own and national guidelines of engagement
- Confidentiality
- Providing learning opportunities for volunteers
- Gathering and delivery of accessible information
- Accuracy of reporting
- Engendering trust
- Fostering co-production

How our activities deliver public benefit

The ability to gauge just how effective community care services are is a difficult task for those who plan and deliver these services. Clearly, those receiving the services and their carers are the best judges.

The gulf between the two is bridged by the Forum. ELCCF representatives on the Joint Planning Groups relate and advise on the impact of services to the benefit of service users. Service planners gain a better insight into how plans impact upon service users and their families. This brings a more balanced view to social and health care design. But diminishing resources may mean compromise.

ELCCF's developing role in community action research enriches the dialogue with service users and the communities the Forum serves.



Taking part in a housing strategy consultation event.

With evidence delivered, services and strategies can be given a tailored fit, suited not only to service users but to the public providers. At a time when every penny counts, this is a vital job.

Social care is under review and changing as never before; benefits are changing, the welfare system being redrafted, and while assurances are given by central government, those in receipt of services fear the worst.

Now is the time when the public benefit is best served by the Forum; to bring in the voices of disabled people, to hear from older people and learning disabled people, to make sure a compassionate society knows of their needs and addresses them.

Development and outreach

Planning the change

ELCCF changed course this year following consultation with East Lothian Council. The shift in focus from holding public meetings to gathering views from groups and individuals from the wider community meant careful planning by our members over several months. Our new service was launched in November 2012.

Community Action Research

Using a community action research approach, the Forum talks to people who use community care services gleaning information on questions built around the Scottish Government's Joint Improvement Team 'talking points'. Information from these conversations are collated, analysed by the volunteer representatives who sit on the joint planning groups and related back to the JPGs in the form of accessible reports. The first tranche of this research reached 100 people over two - three months.

This method of community action research will provide ongoing views about services and needs to the joint health and social care planning groups.

Community Action Research - single issue project

As part of an initiative to develop a directory for older people, ELCCF trained and supported a group of community volunteers to research how older people from their communities access information. This CAR team reached 270 people in this piece of research. The report can be accessed from our website.

Forum meetings

In the early part of last year ELCCF held the last of its public forums:

The Learning Disability Forum was attended by 35 service users, carers and centre staff. Members raised and gave their views on a variety of topics - emergency planning, transport, help to live independently, better information, more advocacy for people who have communication difficulties.

The 'Heads Up' Forum (mental health) facilitated by Peer Support Worker Andrew Kernohan looked at how to develop peer support across East Lothian with 30 participants.

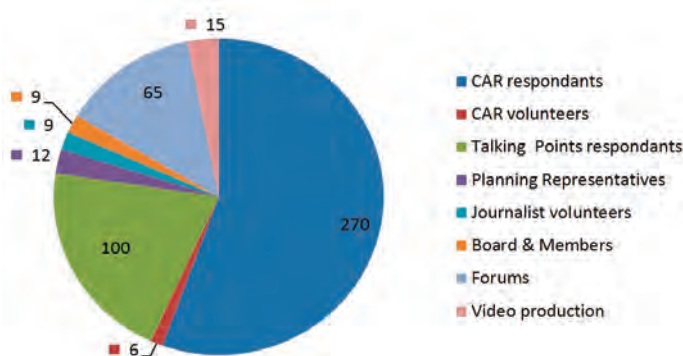
Training & development

ELCCF is committed to the development of its members, volunteers, representatives and staff through providing learning opportunities in line with the needs of the organisation. We recognise that the most effective methods for learning, particularly for excluded communities, is increased knowledge, skills and confidence.

This year ELCCF held:

- 5 training sessions in Community Action Research for volunteers and representatives on the joint planning groups.
- 3 training sessions for Board members of our newly formed ELCCF Ltd.
- A course in Community Journalism (*see below*).

Throughout the year about 500 people actively took part in the work of ELCCF either as respondents to our questionnaires or as participants in our forums, community action research project, in video work, in training or as volunteers representatives on the joint health and social care planning groups.



Although there is a high incidence of face to face connection with individuals and groups what also has to be considered is the knock on 'ripple effect' of information and influence of this dialogue spreading throughout the wider community establishing a far wider reach.

Information and communication

News and information play a vital role in ELCCF work. Not only do the reports of service users have to be compiled for the JPGs, but there is also a need for other groups, the authorities and the general public to be made aware of what's happening with the Forum and what can be done to help empower other organisations or individuals via training or publications.

Publications and information issued by the Forum necessitate a recognition of the many different readers and audiences of the material produced, ranging from professionals acquainted with jargon terms to learning disabled people. Nevertheless, the intention of any newsletter, web text or publication is clarity for all in its reading.

Over the past year information and communication work has included:

The making of an anti-hate crime Learning Disability video funded by Lloyds TSB for Scotland.

Entitled 'The Hurt I Feel' the 20 minute film focuses on bullying. It features learning disabled people telling of their own experiences and includes interviews with professionals. The film is being used by East Lothian Council as part of a series of hate crime awareness days.

The DVD is distributed free and the film is available via the Forum's website, along with the Forum's 10th anniversary film and a video describing community action research.

Running a course in Community Journalism, funded by Awards for All.

The six month course set out to skill up volunteers from groups representing organisations for people disadvantaged in the community. Participants were trained up in tips and techniques as to how best engage with the media to promote their message.

At the end of the course an 'end of term' publication, the *Spyglass*, featuring work by participants was published, along with a Community Journalist's Toolkit. Both publications are available as downloads on the Forum's website and, as hard copy, in East Lothian libraries. An end of course report was made available to Awards for All. A Community Journalism page was set up on Facebook.

In all, ten people from nine local groups were involved on the course with certificates being awarded to a 'hard core' of six at the end of the day; five of whom contributed to feature articles to the end of course publication.

Supporting the creation of a Wellbeing Passport.

The passport is the idea of ELCCF member, Ross Macphail, and has been carried forward by staff in support for design and development. The passport, when completed by the owner, carries a summary of the health history and immediate life needs and wishes. This can be presented to professional health workers and others, avoiding repetition and adding focus to the important points of their situation.

Newsletters and annual reports/ leaflets/ publicity material

Regular Forum publications contain information on ELCCF and news of relevance to like-minded groups and the 'communities' the Forum serves. The annual reports sum up the work of a year. Newsletters and other publications are posted online and distributed via East Lothian libraries, day centres and ELVON and out networks.

Community Action Research

ICW work contributed to the writing, drafting, layout and design of the resulting reports from the ongoing Community Action Research project.

Website development and maintenance

The ELCCF website carries a wide variety of information, downloads and links; resources which are readily available to organisations and individuals.

Details of consultations, both local and government can be found here, along with a library of downloadable documents and publications. The site also features active 'Have Your Say' pages where comments can be posted from web users.

What are we going to do next?

ELCCF's process has been ongoing for 13 years, ever adapting. Its work is now turning from public forums to community action research, developing questionnaires to seek evidenced information. But it's no 'tick box' exercise. Each conversation with a service user or group is exactly that, a dialogue with time given to consideration. It is a skillful method, more is revealed, and the results are more fruitful for all parties.

Gathering views to influence planning

Our research has been well received by the planning groups and we are on course to deliver more of the same, reaching more people to hear their views. In order to deliver on this:

- We are hoping to involve and train volunteers from communities in our community action research to help with our questionnaires - this would truly be members of communities researching the needs of their own communities.
- We will continue to provide learning opportunities to support community volunteers in analysis and writing up the research reports for the Joint Planning Groups.

Information and Communication

- We will continue to provide accessible information on matters to do with community care - newsletters, research reports, leaflets, easy reads.
- Website - we will be updating our website this year to fit with our new service.
- Social Media - There is also an intention to develop the ELCCF facebook and twitter functions. In keeping with modern information and communication routes we hope to develop new inroads into social media networking as a prime ingredient in our communications strategy.
- We also hope to capitalise on work already accomplished such as the community journalism course and the video and hope we may get further funding to develop these areas, while maintaining our core communications work.

Premises

We have to work as efficiently as we can within our tight budget. Expensive town centre shop front premises come at a cost so we are making a beneficial move from Haddington's Sidegate to premises in Lodge Street, (former base of the Adult Social Care office). Although we will be losing our independent accessible drop-in we will also avoid the time and pressures of factoring a premises. We will still be in the town centre, will be gaining accessible meeting space and amenities, and sharing space with good networking contacts.

Co-operation and co-production

ELCCF does not work in a vacuum but is a positive partner in joint initiatives and strategies. The Forum values the contacts it has with statutory bodies, voluntary groups and individuals. This history of joint working, co-operation and co-production will continue.

Groups and organisations we have worked with over the year:

CARR GOMM
Carers of East Lothian
East Lothian Access Panel
East Lothian Association of Day Centres
East Lothian Community Health Partnership
East Lothian Council
East Lothian Public Partnership Forum
ELVON/ VDEL
Enable
Lothian Health
Mansfield Carers Group
KICC
Partners in Advocacy: Smart Talk Group
Upward Mobility

Governance:

East Lothian Community Care Forum is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a board of 3 directors and supported in direction by 6 members. ELCCF has two part time members of staff; Lesley Aitkenhead, Development Manager, and George Paterson, Information and Communication Worker.

Trustees:

Alan Brown
Ann McCarthy
Seonaid Steven

Advisory Members:

Ross Macphail
Robert Auld
Jean Auld
David Barrie
Ross Carpenter
Elizabeth Barnes

Thanks to our Funders

Grateful thanks go to our principal funder, East Lothian Council, for its continuing support and commitment to service user and carer involvement in the planning process.

Thanks also to Lothian Health, and Lloyd's TSB Foundation for Scotland's Henry Duncan Awards for contributing to our information and communications worker post till April 2012.

Last but not least our gratitude to Awards for All Scotland to fund our Community Journalism course this year.

Partnership working is the core of our ethos and we lay great importance in maintaining friendly and professional



links with our funders, ensuring that we utilise precious resources to benefit people who use health and community care services and their carers.

What the Forum's stakeholders say and expect of ELCCF - how we tick the boxes:

"Make sure that planning is relevant to the needs of local people."



"Opportunity for everyone to voice their views."

"Accountability – a right to expect a response, clarity and transparency about issues raised."



"Gives people confidence to speak up, build up trust and relationship with planners."

"Use the advent of the digital age to communicate accessible and up-to-date information."



"Give positive feedback as well as concerns. Protect the things that work."

"To ensure that our views influence decision making."



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