East Lothian Carers Strategy – Action Plan 2025-‘26



2025/26

The East Lothian Carers Strategy was developed with the intention of supporting carers to manage their caring responsibilities with confidence and in good health, and that they are able to have a life of their own.

While the strategy outlines our vision for carers and the seven outcomes we want to achieve, the Action Plan outlines the practicalities of how these will be delivered. Implementation of the actions within the plan will be led by the Carers Programme Board, with support and feedback from our partners

Work on these actions will take place over this year and will only be achieved by continuing to build on the joint working that is already taking place, not just with our local carers organisations but with departments across the council, the NHS, and also the wider community.

| **Outcome 1: Carers are identified and can access support** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
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| Continue audit and quality monitoring of completed ACSP’s and ensure information sharing in line with General Data Protection Regulations  | 2025-‘26 | Carers strategy officer and carers organisation |
| Continue to use Viewpoint to complete Young Carer Statements and use it to generate reports on YC Wellbeing and UNCRC Outcomes | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Continue to encourage education staff to undertake “Supporting Young Carers” Modules as part of their Continuous Professional Development  | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Continue to review and update ELC and ELHSCP online information to ensure it is visible and easily accessible to all | Ongoing | Carers strategy officer, Coordinator YC, Corporate Communications Team |
| Develop a communications plan to publicise key messages | Annually | Carers strategy officer, Corporate Communications Team |
| Continue to work with our partners in primary care to encourage carer identification and increase signposting to sources of information and support | 2025/’26 | CoEL Carers panel |
| Improve identification of carers in our community hospitals to identify carers, increase recognition of carers value throughout the persons stay and to support successful discharge planning, pilot project extended for two year period. | Ongoing | ELHSCP and CoEL |
| Ensure Carers are identified and supported through roll out of ‘Home first’ model and recognised and valued in development of East Lothians Moving On policy | 2025-‘26 | ELHSCP and hospital based carer support worker |
| Work within communities to raise awareness of carers, referral pathways and their need for support | Ongoing | ELHSCP and partners |
| Work with our community partners to increase carer identification, including Day centres, sheltered housing, large employers and schools | 2025’26 focus on sheltered housing | ELHSCP and partner organisations |
| Ensure carers have access to mental health support as part of the redesign of access to mental health services and the launch of East Lothians Single Point of Contact  | 2025/’26 |  |
| Our Young Carers service will develop their work in school ‘clusters’ and continue to identify Young Carers | Ongoing | East Lothian Councils Young Carers Service and Education |
| Work with childrens services to increase identification of Young and Parent Carers in the Childs Planning Process and the role of the named person in particular working closely with schools, health visitors etc | Ongoing | ELHSCP and Children’s services |
| Maximise use of social media/websites/Access to a Better Life East Lothian to raise awareness of carers support services and referral pathways | Ongoing | ELHSCP |
| Implement Carer ID scheme based on research | 2025/26 | ELHSCP and partner organisations |
| Increase number of Young Carers holding YC ID cards to help with identification and having views heard.  | 2023/24 | Young Carers Service |
| Consider barriers to different groups identifying and accessing support, including men, different ethnic groups, LGBT people and those with other protected characteristics | Ongoing, focus on poverty and stigma | ELHSCP and partner organisations |
| Raise awareness and support for carers through Palliative Care Strategy Group | 2025’26 | ELHSCP and partner organisations |
| ELC sign the Young Carers Covenant  | 2025/’26 | Young Carers Service, Children’s Strategic partnership, Council Committee |

| **Outcome 2: Carers are well informed and have access to tailored and age appropriate information and advice throughout their caring role** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
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| Continue to commission services to enable all carers in East Lothian to have access to advice and support throughout their carers journey on wide range of issues | Ongoing | ELHSCP  |
| Review these contracts to ensure delivery of quality services to carers | Quarterly contract monitoring | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Actively engage with current providers, potential providers and community representatives in assessment of needs and identification of gaps in service provision | Ongoing | ELHSCP commissioning strategy |
| Review numbers of Carers accessing advice and information services | Ongoing | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Monitor numbers of ACSP’s and YCS being completed | 6 monthly audit process | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Monitor uptake and feedback of Post Diagnostic Support group for those diagnosed with dementia in East Lothian | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP Community Mental Health Team, Alzheimers Scotland and community partners |
| Finalise and share resource for people living with dementia and their carers  | 2025’26 | Dementia Special Interest Group |
| Review delivery of carer education programme, through dementia cafes, for carers of people living with dementia and learning on most accessible way of sharing this information with carers | 2025/’26 | Alzheimers Scotland, CoEL and ELHSCP partners |
| Include carers in East Lothians participation in Focus on Dementia; Post Diagnostic Support and Care Cor-ordination improvement Programme with Healthcare Improvement Scotland | Oct 2025-Mar’26 | ELHSCP, Community Mental Health Team, Alzheimers Scotland and community partners |
| Make information around stress and distress behaviours available and accessible to carers locally | 2025/26 | ELHSCP and partners in Dementia Special Interest Group |
| Continue to promote pathways for carers to access both direct support and help developing an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) or Young Carers Statement (YCS) | Ongoing | ELHSCP and community partners |
| Develop range and availability of materials available to Carers | Ongoing | ELHSCP and partner organisations |
| Agree on support for carers managing stress and distress behaviours while supporting people living with dementia at home | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP  |
| Continue to provide advice, information and support to maximise incomes for carers (and the people they care for) | Ongoing | CoEL and ELC’s financial inclusion service |
| Monitor Carers access to benefits through CoEL support services | Ongoing | Carers Strategy Officer and CoEL |
| Continue to strengthen our support in line with the principles of Self Directed Support and direct Carers to advice on SDS and managing personal budgets through Lothian centre for Inclusive Living where appropriate | 2025’26 | ELHSCP, SDS improvement plan |
| Improve transitions between services for Young Carers becoming Young Adult Carers | 2024/25 | ELHSCP Young Carers Service, CoEL and ELHSCP Carer support |

| **Outcome 3: Carers are supported to maintain their own physical, emotional and mental wellbeing** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
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| Improved promotion of ACSP’s and YCS’s, aim to make this the basis for the ‘good conversation’ | Ongoing | ELHSCP, CoEL, Young Carers Service |
| Support carers to promote their own health through ACSPs or YCSs and regular reviews | Reviews agreed at date of assessment, monitored as part of audit | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Continue to increase opportunities for local groups, peer/buddy support and activities for carers.  | Ongoing | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Consider ways to develop flexible replacement care options to ensure that carers who don’t have access to other supports can attend their own health appointments | 2025/26 | ELHSCP and partner organisations |
| Work with individuals to ensure that the level and nature of care provided by young carers remains appropriate for their age  | Ongoing | Young Carers Service and ELC Children’s Services |
| Continue East Lothian Rehabilitation Service’s referral pathway for Carers to access an Occupational Therapy assessment in their own right | Ongoing | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Monitor demand for CoEL counselling services | Contract monitoring 6 monthly | Carers Strategy Officer |
| Promote carers issues within Employability Partnership | Ongoing | Carers Strategy Officer, Local Employability Partnership, Carers orgs |
| Continue to develop materials to support Young Carers in school  | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Help young carers secure the use of their own rights under additional support for learning legislation via the service My Rights, My Say. | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Support Young Carers who could be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Young Carers grants and Young Scot Carers Packages | Ongoing | Young Carers Service, Education, Connected Communities, Young Scot.  |
| Provide Young Carers with free Enjoy Leisure Membership and Active Schools Activities | Ongoing | ELHSCP, Young Carers Service and partner organisations |
| Advocate for Young Carers to be prioritised by local mental health support services | Ongoing | Young Carers Service, Education and Partner organisations |
| Offer a range of opportunities for carers to look after their own health and well being  | Ongoing | ELHSCP, Young Carers Service and CoEL |
| Increase awareness of unpaid carers in those with line management roles | 2025/’26 | Workforce development |

| **Outcome 4: Breaks from caring are timely and regularly available** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
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| Follow the development of the ‘Right to a Break’ legislation and raise awareness of this within IJB and HSCP senior leaders | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP,  |
| Introduce a Breaks from caring delivery group reporting to the Carers Programme Board | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP  |
| Participate in Shared Care Scotlands short breaks brokerage community of learning and practice  | 2025/’26 | Carers strategy officer and CoEl’s short breaks specialist worker |
| Strengthen pathway from carers eligibility criteria to establishment of indicative budget for support | Ongoing | Carers Strategy Officer, adult social work and SDS improvement group |
| Continue to fund specialist short breaks support for carers so that all carers have access to information and advice on breaks from caring | Annual review | Carers Strategy Officer/ Building better breaks advisory group |
| Continue to develop ‘Respitality’ in East Lothian and promote this initiative to local businesses. | 2025/’26 | CoEL and Building better breaks advisory group |
| Recommission and increase access to respite beds for older people in East Lothian for use in planned respite situations  | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP, Care Home Link Officer |
| Support Leuchie to explore development of dementia specialist respite model | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP Carers programme board |
| Explore micro commissioner model and potential to enable breaks from caring on a local basis.  | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP and VCEL social enterprise network |
| Review learning from Meeting Centre development project to offer more support to people living with dementia and their carers at an earlier stage | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP and DfEL |
| Keep working with our existing day services, for older people, to expand the range of services on offer to support breaks from caring | Ongoing | ELHSCP and East Lothian day centres for older people |
| Develop a new integrated model of day centre and meeting centre in Musselburgh once budget confirmed by East Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP |
| Develop a community support framework to increase support for people with complex needs and their carers | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP |
| Promote our Shared Lives scheme and continue to try and attract new paid Carers to this programme | Ongoing | ELHSCP Shared lives team |
| Work to increase access to breaks out with ‘working hours’, at evenings and weekends | 2025/26 | ELHSCP and partners |
| Monitor numbers of Young Carers accessing breaks through opportunities such as active school and holiday activity opportunities, continue to develop range of opportunities available in response to Young Carers feedback. | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Support young Carers to attend the Young Carers Festival | Annually | Young carers Service |
| Continue to seek out new sources of Free Breaks from Caring opportunities for Young Carers  | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |

| **Outcome 5: Carers are supported to have a life outside of their caring role and can achieve a balance between caring and other aspects of their lives** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
| What we will do for Adult Carers |
| As part of planning process have more open and honest conversations about what is possible and what will meet individual outcomes being open local context and challenges | Ongoing | ELHSCP and partners |
| Increase use and flexibility of carers accessing personal budgets to meet their personal outcomes (Community Care Worker appointed July 2022 who will support carers in this)  | Ongoing | ELHSCP |
| Support carers in employment by increasing awareness of carer specific issues through the local employability networko Access to advice and information o Promoting the achievement of Carer Positive Status across local employers o Promotion of flexible working policies that can support carers  | Ongoing | ELHSCP and partners |
| Research policies in place to support students with caring responsibilities | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP and higher education providers |
| What we will do for Young Carers |  |  |
| Work with schools to improve identification of young carers and to ensure both a flexible and understanding approach towards young carers needs and the provision of appropriate and tailored support | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Advocate for Young Carers to be included in the Local Authority Guaranteed Interview Scheme | 2025/’26 | Young Carers Service, Children’s Strategic Partnership, Council Committee |
| Work with social work services to ensure that the cared-for person is in receipt of appropriate support (from either Adult or Children’s services) to both protect young carers from age inappropriate caring roles and to enable them to have a life outside their caring role | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |
| Monitor provision of specific transitions support for older young carers as they enter adulthood and to achieve and sustain positive destinations outside of their caring role | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP and partners, CoEL, bridges |

| **Outcome 6: Carers are respected by professionals as ‘Partners in Care’ and are appropriately included in the planning and delivery of both the care and support for the people they care for and services locally** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
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| Ensure staff have access to Carer education through Learnpro/TURAS or other platform and promote these learning opportunities.  | Ongoing | ELHSCP Workforce development |
| Raising awareness with professionals so every interaction in an opportunity to treat carers as partners in care | Ongoing | ELHSCP and partners |
| Establish demand for provision of independent advocacy support for carers through carers strategy engagement and consultation with our partners in provision of independent advocacy | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP and partners, Independent advocacy contract management |
| Encourage HSCP services to identify Carer Champions and continue to encourage schools to identify Young Carer Champions | 2025/’26 | ELHSCP, Young Carers service, Education Department |
| We will support carers to have a have a say in the development and delivery of services in East Lothian by:* + Maintaining the standards for engagement set out in our Engagement policy
	+ Ensure that carers are both represented and supported to be involved in the HSCP strategic groups
	+ Engage with CoEL “Carers Voice” group on service planning and delivery:
	+ Increase avenues for Young carers feedback including the Young Carers Forum
 | Ongoing | ELHSCP engagement officer Carers strategy OfficerCarers Strategy OfficerYoung Carers service |
| Ensure through Service Specifications that all registered and HSCP care services capture feedback from carers as well as from users of services and have forums to engage with key stake holders | Ongoing  | Planning and Performance team |
| Plan awareness raising events for Carers week | June - annually | ELHSCP, Carers strategy Officer, Corporate Communications |
| Play an active role in local Health and wellbeing groups | Ongoing | ELHSCP, Planning and performance team |
| Increase avenues for Young Carers feedback, including the Young Carers Advisory Group | Ongoing | Young Carers Service |

| **Outcome 7: Local communities are supported to be Carer friendly** |
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| **Action** | **When** | **Who/Co-ordinator** |
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| Work within communities to raise awareness of carers, referral pathways and their need for support, identify areas to focus on each year | 2025/’26 focus on housing | ELHSCP and carers organisations |
| Take opportunities to promote awareness of unpaid carers in local communities through carers week and other campaigns | Annually | ELHSCP, Strategy officer and Corporate Communications |
| Develop and distribute information for carers in spaces carers spend time | Ongoing | ELHSCP and carers orgs |
| Encourage the development of local peer and buddy groups for carers | Ongoing | Carer support orgs and other local community groups |
| We aim to make accessing information and support easier and more streamlined by:* Joining the dots between community services
* facilitating the relationships between third sector organisations and carers
* Working with community organisations to share information
 | Ongoing | ELHSCP and partners |
| Take paper to Council Management Team to discuss progression of East Lothian Councils Carer positive status from engaged to established | 2025/’26 | ELC Human Resources |
| Promote the role of Volunteer Centre East Lothian as out Third sector interface and continue to support their ‘Community First’ community support model | Ongoing | ELHSCP and VCEL |
| Support Dementia Friendly East Lothian in their aim to make our communities great places for people with Dementia and their carers to live, visit and work in | Ongoing | ELHSCP and DfEL |

Glossary of terms

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| Abbreviation | Full text |
| ACSP | Adult Carer Support Plan |
| C&YP  | Children and Young People |
| CoEL | Carers of East Lothian |
| DfEL | Dementia Friendly East Lothian |
| ELC | East Lothian Council |
| ELCHASE | East Lothian Care Home Assessment and Support Team |
| ELHSCP | East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership |
| EMA | Education Maintenance Allowance |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulations |
| ID | Identification |
| IJB | Integration Joint Board |
| LGBT | Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender |
| SDS  | Self Directed Support |
| VCEL | Volunteer Centre East Lothian |
| YC | Young Carer |
| YCS | Young Carer Statement and Young Carers Service |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |