



CARERS OF WEST LOTHIAN

Newsletter

Spring 2019

Issue 93



Information, advice and support for all unpaid carers & people with disabilities

In This Issue

- P2 Learning Disability Week
CoWL Advice Clinics
New Arrival!
- P3 Christmas Lunch & Pamper Event
Groups & Courses
- P4 Financial Well-being
Carers Week
Xcite & Short Breaks
- P6 Well-being Workshops
Mental Health Group
Transition Course
The Haven
- P7 Young Carer Service
- P8 Courses/Events

How to find us:



LOTTERY FUNDED

The End of an Era

Barbara McKenzie, our Chairperson, will retire from the Board of Carers of West Lothian at the end of February after 27 years with the organisation, ahead of her 75th birthday in early March. Barbara's involvement began in 1992 when Carers of West Lothian first came into existence.

Prior to moving to West Lothian Barbara worked as a biology and general science teacher in Aberdeen, and then held a senior position within the voluntary sector organisation SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) in Paisley and in Edinburgh. She moved to West Lothian in 1992 taking up the newly created post of Consumer Involvement Officer for social work in West Lothian, based in the social work headquarters initially in Clarendon House, Linlithgow. The headquarters later moved to an unused primary school in Livingston, and then to West Lothian House.

The post involved setting up training for social work service users on their rights under the new Community Care Act, where any adult aged 18 or over who was eligible for

and required services from the local authority had the right to a full assessment of their needs. The post also involved setting up mechanisms for all user groups to be involved in consultation and service planning.

However, the main priority of the job was to support and develop and act as



Photo: Barbara, Amber & Teddy

advisor to the fledgling group of Carers of West Lothian, who at that time met in each other's homes for peer support. This was the beginning of carers coming to be recognised as "partners in care".

Councillor Alex Davidson, a former young carer himself, was instrumental in securing from the council,

at a peppercorn rent for the group, a room above the Dovehill Arms in Uphall. It was here that the first official premises opened in 1993.

The first year or so was hard, with at times only one volunteer carer to cover the office. However funding was then secured from West Lothian Council to enable the recruitment of a part-time receptionist. Further negotiations between West Lothian Council and NHS Lothian together with the Princess Royal Trust for Carers resulted in a tri-partite funding agreement which meant a centre manager could be appointed.

In October 2004, after retiring from West Lothian Council, Barbara joined Carers of West Lothian's Board of Directors. She stood in as acting Chair in the winter of 2010 before taking up appointment of Chair in the spring of 2011 while we were based in the Strathbrock Partnership Centre in Broxburn.

Since then Barbara has been a steady, stable influence on the organisation throughout its significant development and change.

Cont on page 2

office@carers-westlothian.com

www.carers-westlothian.com

01506 448000

Sycamore House, Quarrywood Court, Livingston, EH54 6AX

Opening Hours: 9.00 am - 4.00 pm (Monday - Friday)



Information & Advice

Cont from front page

She oversaw Carers of West Lothian's move to Sycamore House in Livingston in June 2014.

She has played a major role in the development of the organisation in many areas such as securing funding, increasing staff levels, and increasing support services for carers. Her quiet, assured and calm approach has gained her the respect of fellow Board members, staff, volunteers and external partners alike.

We all wish Barbara a very happy, and well-deserved retirement - and hopefully she will have more time to walk her dogs, including her newly acquired cocker spaniel rescue dog "Teddy"!



included by their community.

Carers of West Lothian believe that everyone should have an equal share in their local community, but we know that this is not always the case.

People with learning disabilities can sometimes experience barriers to being included; local venues, activities and services are not always accessible, and people are not always made to feel welcome within their communities.

Yet, despite these barriers, people with learning disabilities are making a huge contribution to their communities and are more visible and valued in their communities now than they have been in the past.

Carers of West Lothian provide a weekly drop-in from 11.30 am – 1.30 pm at The Ability Centre, Carmondean, Livingston, EH54 8PT providing disability related information, support and advice.

CoWL Advice Clinics

Here at Carers of West Lothian we are pleased to be working in partnership with several organisations to offer the following advice clinics:



Power of Attorney (POA) – A monthly clinic run by Morisons Solicitors in Sycamore House, supporting all our service users to obtain a full POA either for themselves or the person they care for.

Benefits Advice – Fortnightly clinics run in partnership with West Lothian Advice Shop in Sycamore House – morning appointments offering carers benefits advice and support to complete application forms, and in The Ability Centre, Carmondean – afternoon appointments offering people with a disability benefits advice and support to complete application forms.

Home Energy Advice – monthly clinic run by Changeworks in Sycamore House offering all our service users home energy advice and money saving tips for the home.

Appointments are required for all our clinics. To book or for more information call 01506 448000 or email office@carers-westlothian.com. For dates and times of all clinics, see back page.

Change to Carers of West Lothian Legal Services

Due to the increase in demand for appointments at the monthly Power of Attorney clinic and, to provide a faster and more streamlined service we have decided that we will no longer be able to provide service users with the additional monthly Legal Advice clinic.

The complexity of some of the Power of Attorney applications and the fact that the return visit can not always be carried out within the 2 week timescale has meant that some applications are taking longer than we would like to complete.

By freeing up the afternoon times usually booked for legal advice and replacing them with appointments for people returning to complete applications we hope to limit these delays and complete the registration process as quickly as possible.

This decision means that from March 2019 there will be no more Legal Advice clinics, however in certain circumstances we may still be able to access advice from Morisons Solicitors on behalf of our service users.

Seated Massage Sessions

We are delighted to have Stephanie, our volunteer therapist supporting us again this year! She will be in Sycamore House once a month offering carers a 20-minute seated massage. Stephanie practices massage and complimentary therapy and believes this is an important part of taking care of ourselves. See back page for dates and times.

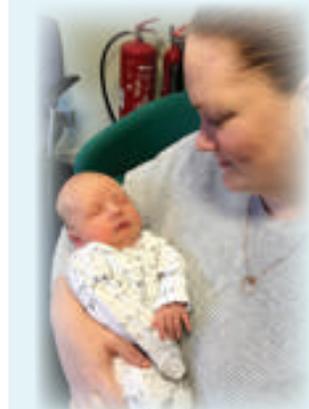
2019
Learning
Disability
Week

Scotland's Learning Disability Week 2019 will take place from Monday, 13th – Sunday, 19th May.

Learning Disability Week 2019 is an opportunity to celebrate the stories of people with learning disabilities being 'Active', 'Connected' and 'Included' citizens.

This year's theme is 'community' – whoever we are and wherever in Scotland we live, we can all be part of a community. Communities are at their best when everyone is active in their community, connected to people within their community, and feeling

Exciting News A New Arrival!



Our congratulations to Linda, our adult team support worker on the arrival of her beautiful baby boy, Callum, on Monday, 17th December, weighing a healthy 8lb 1/2oz! Our very best wishes to Linda and her family.

Fork & Field Christmas Lunch



We were delighted to be invited back to the Fork & Field for Christmas Lunch in December. Along with Heineken, the Fork & Field treated 12 carers to a delicious festive meal and a truly fantastic time was had by all. We would like to extend our most heartfelt thanks to all staff from both Heineken and the Fork & Field for making the

afternoon a wonderful experience for all!!

Pamper Event

We hosted our second Pamper Event here at Sycamore House in January and what a huge success it was. Carers were treated to hair styling, make-up sessions, manicures and massage. When they weren't busy being pampered, they had the opportunity to sit back with some tasty nibbles and chat with staff and fellow carers.

Here are some of the comments our carers had to share from the day:

"This is something I never do, but I'm really glad I did. My massage was wonderful."

"You've put on such a lovely spread, just getting to sit down, eat and chat is a treat never mind getting my nails and hair done."

"This has been truly wonderful, thank you."

We would like to say a big thank you to Sharon and Sarah from Du Beau Hair & Beauty in Murieston and Sophie and Taylor from Du Beau Hair & Beauty in Howden



for doing such a fantastic job trimming and styling hair. Gail and Rebecca for doing a beautiful job with make-



up, Linda for providing lovely manicures and to Sally from Wee Sally's Therapeutic Massage, Rebecca from Heavenly Touch Holistic Therapies, Gillian Harris Holistic Therapies and Ashleigh for providing relaxing

massages.

We would also like to thank Lush UK, Livingston for their donation of soaps, Thimbleberries for the flowers and to all others who donated goods for the day – it really is greatly appreciated!!



www.carers-westlothian.com

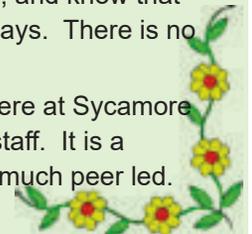
Weekly Carers Walking Group

Walking has so many benefits for our physical and emotional well-being so here at Carers of West Lothian we run a weekly Carers Walking Group, enjoying a leisurely local walk. We meet at the Sycamore House on a Wednesday morning between 10.00 - 10.15 am for a gentle 30 to 40-minute walk which still gives plenty of time to join our coffee morning afterwards, if you wish. It's a drop-in so everyone is welcome but sorry, no dogs allowed.

Bereavement Support: Supporting Yourself

The death of a loved one can be devastating and so when faced with a bereavement it is so vital for you to take care of yourself. One of the most helpful things you can do is to talk about the person who has died and share your feelings. It is up to you who you choose to talk to, it's important that you feel comfortable, and know that bereavement affects people in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Our bereavement support group runs here at Sycamore House and is facilitated by a member of staff. It is a relaxed and informal group which is very much peer led.



First Aid Training Course

Would you like to learn emergency first aid? In partnership with F.A.S.T (First Aid School Training) we are offering carers the opportunity to learn basic first aid skills covering CPR, bleeding, burns, choking and more!

The course will be relaxed and delivered using practical demonstration and role play with a fully qualified instructor over 6 hours. The course will include handouts to support learning and successful candidates will receive a HSE approved certificate at the end which is valid for 3 years. The course will run for carers here at Sycamore House on Saturday, 11th May from 10.00 am – 4.00 pm. Light refreshments will be provided but we do ask that you bring your own lunch.

Thank You!

We would like to say a big thank you to Fitwise Management Ltd who chose us as their charity of the year 2018. Throughout



the year staff at Fitwise participated in several events from donating Easter eggs and selection boxes for our young carers, to bake sales and a balloon challenge during carers week, to highlight the impact caring can have on individuals, while raising money for CoWL. Thank you for your support! It really does make a difference!

Support for Financial Well-being



West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network is a registered charity with advisors located in several rural communities i.e. Breich, Fauldhouse and Longridge. To make an appointment call 01501 771775 or email info@wlfin.org.uk

Contact West Lothian Council Advice Shop on 01506 283000 for free, impartial and confidential information on benefit entitlements, form filling, general advice on housing, energy and money issues.

The Pension Income Maximisation Service can help people aged over 60 with all areas of benefits such as Disability Living Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Carers Allowance and Carers Premium. If you would like an advisor to call you contact West Lothian Council Advice Shop, FREEPOST EH3217, Bathgate, EH48 1TS or call 01506 283000.

Better off
Advice Shop West Lothian



Turn2Us is a national charity offering online financial support to help people get back on track. Turn2Us offer an online benefits calculator and grant search facility which you can find at <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

Low income families and older people will be able to access personalised advice on money matters, from reducing household energy costs to accessing grants such as the Best Start Grant and the School Clothing Grant. This will help people avoid the "poverty premium" of paying more for essential goods and services. Freephone - 0800 085 7145



Home Energy Scotland offer free impartial advice on energy saving, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel, cutting water waste and more. If your property is in Scotland, you can call Home Energy Scotland advisors on 0808 808 2282. All calls are free and lines are open Monday to Friday from 8 am to 8 pm, and on Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm.

StepChange Debt Charity provides free debt advice tailored to your individual circumstances and in line with Scottish debt law.

They will look at your individual circumstances, work out a manageable budget and provide you with specifically tailored advice that will help you deal with your debts and get you back on track. Free helpline is available Mon - Fri 8 am – 8 pm, Sat 8 am – 4 pm on 0800 138 1111.



Carers Week 2019



This year Carers Week will be held from Monday, 10th – Sunday, 16th June. This is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities. While caring for a loved one can be hugely rewarding, it can impact on the carer's health and well-being. In a recent survey, 61% of carers reported their physical health has worsened while 72% of carers reported mental ill health as a result of caring.

Here at Carers of West Lothian we join the many other organisations raising awareness of the contribution unpaid carers make. Watch this space for more information of this year's theme and our plans!

For more information on carers week visit www.carersweek.org

Spring into Health!

We are extremely excited to be taking part in the Craigsfarm Health and Wellbeing event in Craigshill! What is Health and Wellbeing and what will an event like this have to offer? The Scottish Government states that "Health and Wellbeing are essential for a successful community and being involved in events such as this positively impacts us individually and improves the health and wellbeing of the wider community". The event will host community associations, local services and informal groups and networks. Why not come along and learn more about your community and indeed about Carers of West Lothian! The event takes place at Craigsfarm Community Hub on 16th May between 9.00 am and 12.30 pm. For more information contact Craigsfarm Community Hub, Maree Walk, Craigshill, Tel: 01506 894639 or email: www.craigsfarm.or.uk



(some of the organisations that can help)



Disability Information Scotland work with disabled people, their families, friends, carers, and the people who are employed within the sector. They offer a helpline 0300 323 9961 and a range of information guides relating to benefits such as Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments, Employment and Support Allowance

Almond Housing Association provide a benefits and money advice service for their tenants. Their advisor can:

- Check you are in receipt of your full benefit entitlement.
- Assist with benefit claims and completion of application forms.
- Help with any benefit-related issues.
- Assist with appeals and representation at tribunals.
- Advise on debt-related matters.

You can arrange to see the advisor at the office or book a home visit if this is more suitable. Please speak to your Housing Officer for a referral or call 01506 439 291.



CAB West Lothian manages the Edinburgh and Lothians Armed Services Advice Project through their regional support team – Alan Hamilton and Charlie Walker. The project aims to help the Armed Forces Community (AFC) who fall into 4 groups, currently serving, veterans, immediate families and dependants of regular personnel, reservists and veterans of those in the categories listed above and bereaved (the immediate family of Service personnel and veterans who have died, whether or not that death has any connection with the Service).

For the appointment only sessions (Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Saturday morning) please call the admin line on 01506 436132 to book.

Change works aims to provide information that helps people live in affordably warm homes. A monthly Advice Clinic with advisor Andy Price is held at Carers of West Lothian – to book an appointment call 01506 448000 or for further information contact Changeworks on 0131 555 401



Lead Scotland is a charity which provides learning, befriending and helpline services for disabled people and carers and sources funding for disabled learners.

Freephone Helpline: 0800 999 2568, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 2 pm – 4 pm and Tuesday and Friday 10 am – 12 pm.



We all know being active is good for us. However, did you know the benefits include more energy, a boost if you are feeling down, and helps you sleep better. That's why, in partnership with Xcite at West Lothian Leisure, Carers of West Lothian offers a leisure concession scheme for all unpaid carers in West Lothian to access half price leisure at Xcite leisure centres.

Xcite at West Lothian Leisure offers some of the best sports, leisure and health & fitness venues in the area. Taking regular, healthy, physical exercise is extremely important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, regardless of age or ability.

Please contact the Carers Centre on 01506 448000 or email office@carers-westlothian.com for an Xcite application form.



We know that having a short break can make an enormous difference to carers and the people they care for by providing the space to rest, to be by themselves, to pursue a hobby, catch up with friends or just relax and recharge. For some people a short break is something they enjoy having together, and for others it is enjoying quality time apart. Carers of West Lothian's Shared Care Scotland funded project "Time Out" aims to provide grants, of up to £250, to help carers achieve this. Download an application form and guidelines on our website www.carers-westlothian.com.



Courses & Information

In the annual survey you said you wanted evening courses! In response we will be running our wellbeing workshops over Spring evenings in March, April and May

2019 these will include Understanding Stress (formerly Stress management), Emotional Resilience and Mindfulness. Please call 01506 448000 or email office@carers-westlothian.com to register your interest.

Understanding Stress

In understanding stress, we will explore 'what is stress?' How do the ways we react and respond to stress impact on us? What sort of experiences and events create that stressful response within us. Together we will look at ways we can understand and acknowledge the stress in our lives which can lead us to find ways to manage it more effectively.

Understanding Stress will run over three Wednesday evenings in March 2019 at Sycamore House. See back page for dates and times.

Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience refers to our ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises. More resilient people are able to "roll with the punches" and adapt to adversity without lasting difficulties; less resilient people have a harder time with stress and life changes, both major and minor. Resilience can be developed with a little effort. Join us to explore what emotional resilience means for you and how we can learn from each other in developing our own resilience. These workshops will be delivered over three Wednesday evenings in April 2019 at Sycamore House. See back page for dates and times.

Mindfulness for Relaxation

Mindfulness is increasingly being recognised as an effective way to reduce stress. Studies have shown that practised regularly Mindfulness can be an effective method of reducing stress and anxiety and can often lead to improvements in overall health and wellbeing. We will be offering an Introduction to Mindfulness for relaxation over three Wednesday evenings in May 2019 at Sycamore House. See back page for dates and times.

Mental Health Support Group 2019

For carers of someone struggling with their mental health.



Our group aim is to support those who care for a friend or relative with a mental health condition. If you're not sure if this group is for you then please give us a call 01506 448000 or email office@carers-westlothian.com

The group will run on Mondays, 6 - 8 pm, in Sycamore House.

4th March, Guest Speaker – Emma Young, Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Manager, Health in Mind

1st April, Guest Speaker - Kathy Hamilton, Project Co-ordinator, Mental Health Advocacy Project

6th May, No support group due to bank holiday

3rd June, Guest Speaker- Cath Purdie, Carer Communication Officer, Pasda (Supporting families of adults with autism).

1st July, No guest speaker-peer support session

5th August, No guest speaker-peer support session

Parent Transition Course

This course is for parents/carers who have young people with a disability or additional support needs who are getting ready to leave school and move into adulthood.

It will be held at Sycamore House, Quarrywood Court, Livingston, EH54 6AX on Thursdays - 2, 9, 16 and 23 May 2019 from 9.30 am - 12.30 pm.

If you would like to attend this free course or would like further information please contact Elizabeth at Signpost or Caroline at Carers of West Lothian, they would be delighted to hear from you!

Elizabeth (Signpost) - 01506 431133 or email - managers@signpost-online.co.uk

Caroline (CoWL) - 01506 448000 or email - office@carers-westlothian.com



The Haven



The Haven is a registered charity providing support to people affected by a range of life limiting illnesses and to their family members and carers.

The Haven has been in Forth since 2014, however a brand new, purpose-built centre was opened in spring last year enabling The Haven to deliver more services and support more people, including people living in West Lothian. The Haven invites people who meet the above criteria to contact the service for a confidential chat on how they can support you or your family member.

The Haven aims to improve the quality of life of all clients and support them to live life positively and with hope. Transport is not provided and you must be able to make your own way to Forth to access their support.

Phone number: 01555 811846

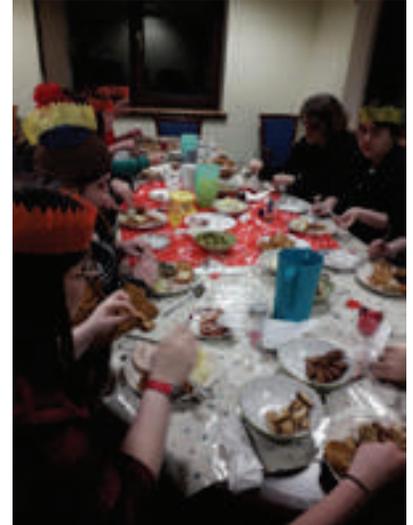
Email address: forth@thehavencentre.com

Website: www.thehavencentre.com

Young Carer Service



Wilma & Xanthe



Thank you Santa!
For all our the Christmas Goodies!

What a lovely season, with Jack Frost in the air it has been a cold welcome back to all our groups, the Young Carer Service has been very busy over the festive period.



We have taken a group of wonderful young carers to the pantomime to see Beauty and the Beast. What a fabulous time we had; oh no you didn't, OH YES, WE DID! It was a truly fantastic night; giggling, laughing and singing along! The young carers described the pantomime as magical, epic, brilliant and awesome.



In the 16+ group, they had the chance to prepare a Christmas lunch menu using donations from the local supermarkets; Morrisons, Tesco, Aldi and Farm Foods. A great team of staff assisted in the creation of their Christmas delights. The young carers also got to tantalise their taste buds on Christmas goodies with scrumptious festive snacks. There was also an exchange of presents which brought a lot of joy and gratitude to all involved.



The icing on the cake, without doubt was an amazing donation from the team at 'Forth 1 Cash for Kids'. We also received donations from Blackwell Books at Gogarburn, with a large boxful of books, ranging from baby to young adult. Fitwise Management Ltd gifted lots of selection boxes and a cash donation. This was all very gratefully received, and our thanks goes to all. Our volunteers were very busy working their elf magic to wrap and deliver bundles of gifts to our Superstar Young Carers and their families.

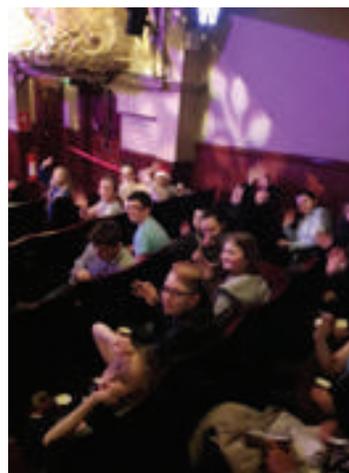
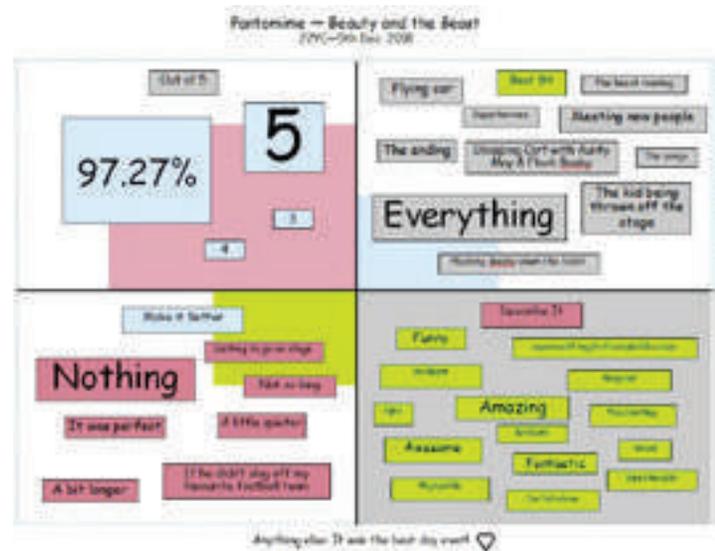


Christmas Summary 2018

- 61 Young Carers received presents.
- Of that 61, 44 were families, 21 YCs had one sibling, 18 YCs had 2 siblings, 5 YCs had 3 siblings and one YC had 5 siblings.
- In total there were 77 siblings who received presents.
- 138 YCs and their siblings received presents.
- Approx 400 - 450 books and gifts were given.

The Young Carer Service couldn't reach so many young carers and their families without your support. Thank you with all our hearts and we wish you all the best for 2019.

Wilma, Xanthe, Marion & the Young Carer Team



Oh no we didn't . . . Oh yes we did!

We really enjoyed ourselves!



Courses Mar - May19

(For more information on any of the courses below please see in inside and if you are interested in attending please call to register your interest).

March			
Understanding Stress	Wednesday 6, 13 & 20	6.00 pm - 8.00 pm	Sycamore House
Gentle Massage	Thursday 14, 21 & 28	10.00 am - 12.00 noon	Sycamore House

April			
Emotional Resilience	Wednesdays 3, 10 & 17	6.00 - 8.00 pm	Sycamore House

May			
Mindfulness for Relaxation	Wednesdays 1, 8 & 15	6.00 pm - 8.00 pm	Sycamore House
Parent Transition Course	Thursdays 2, 9, 16 & 23	9.30 am - 12.30 pm	Sycamore House
First Aid Training Course	Saturday 11	10.00 am - 4.00 pm	Sycamore House

Events Mar - May19

(Please call to confirm if you are interested in attending any of our groups as last minute changes can sometimes occur).

Weekly Events				
Carers Coffee Morning	Wednesday	10.00 am- 12 noon	Sycamore House	A drop in coffee morning for carers.
Carers Walking Group	Wednesday	10.15 am	Sycamore House	A walking group for carers leaving from Sycamore House, walking around Livingston Village, suitable for all abilities.
Disability Information Drop-in	Wednesday	11.30 am- 1.30 pm	The Ability Centre	Drop-in for information, advice and support.

Monthly Events				
Mental Health Support Group	Monday 4/3, 1/4	6.00 - 8.00 pm	Sycamore House	A support group for carers of individuals with a mental health condition.
Power of Attorney Clinic	Tuesday 19/3, 23/4, 21/5	9.30 am - 4.30 pm	Sycamore House	For carers and people with a disability - contact CoWL for an appointment.
Carer Massages	Wednesday 13/3, 10/4, 8/5	10.00 am - 12 noon	Sycamore House	Twenty minute carer massage. Call to make an appointment.
Evening Support Group	Wednesday 27/3, 24/4, 29/5	6.30 - 8.30 pm	Sycamore House	Meet other carers in a social atmosphere, share experiences and meet new friends.
Home Energy Advice Clinic	Wednesday 27/3, 24/4, 29/5	10.00 am - 12 noon	Sycamore House	Useful energy and money saving tips for the home, for carers and people with a disability.
Dementia Drop in Support Group	Friday 1/3, 5/4, 3/5	10.00 am- 12 noon	St John's Hospital OT Department	A support group for carers looking after someone with dementia at home.
Bereavement Support Group	Friday 22/3, 19/4, 24/5	10.30 am - 12 noon	Sycamore House	Support Group for bereaved carers in West Lothian.
Advice Shop Clinic Ability Centre	Wednesday 6,20/3, 3,17/4, 1,15,29/5	1.30 pm - 4.30 pm	The Ability Centre	Financial advice for people with a disability.
Advice Shop Clinic Sycamore House	Wednesday 6,20/3, 3,17/4, 1,15,29/5	9.30 am - 11.30 am	Sycamore House	Financial advice for carers.

Please note that views expressed throughout this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Carers of West Lothian. We cannot endorse/recommend any service advertised within this publication. If you have a compliment or complaint to make please see above for contact information.