



Carers of West Lothian Bulletin for Professionals

October 2020



As further restrictions have been implemented across Scotland, we have taken the decision that Sycamore House will remain closed for the rest of 2020. We would have liked nothing more than to be back, but it's important that we keep our service users and staff safe and follow Scottish Government guidelines.

We will continue to provide information and advice, telephone and online support to all unpaid carers, young carers and disabled people. The situation will be reviewed in January 2021 when we will provide updates.

The last 6 months

As you know, from the last week in March we have been working remotely due to the pandemic, leading to many changes to the way we deliver our service. All our groups are running on zoom and we are continuing to offer our information, advice, and support by telephone and online.

We have been providing emotional support by way of a listening ear and regular 'check in' calls with service users to support them with social isolation and anxiety around the impact the pandemic is having on them. Here's what they had to say:

'Thank you for keeping in touch, it's good to hear a friendly voice.'

'Thank you so much for calling, it's really good of you and helps so much. It means a lot having someone to talk to at this difficult time'.

Acting on feedback from our service users, at the end of May we introduced a Thursday night event for all. This started with a disco and quiz night and from there has continued as a fortnightly event with a mix of quizzes, magic show, music etc with the focus being on interacting with others, reducing isolation, peer support and having fun!

We enjoyed three very successful afternoon teas, one specifically for members of the dementia support group and their families, for carers and the person they care for and deliveries of activity packs to some of the people we support through our disability service.

It was nice to see everyone on our deliveries and have a little chat (at a safe distance of course)! We received some lovely messages back: 'Can't thank you enough for the



afternoon tea. This gesture and kindness has put a smile on her face. Thanks so much for all the support you have shown this last year.'

You have all done so much to make us feel a bit better about the situation of being stuck in due to COVID-19. We can't believe all the support and help you've given us. It's been amazing!

Wanted to say a big thank you for the activities that were delivered this afternoon. It was a really nice surprise. I can't wait to get started on these word searches, and the pictures in the colouring book.

In July, we reinstated our advice clinics, delivering these virtually. Our fortnightly Benefits Advice Clinic with The Advice Shop is being delivered using Teams and our monthly Power of Attorney clinic with Blackadders Solicitors via a variety of online platforms. These clinics are open to everyone we support so please refer anyone you feel would benefit from these services.

Using generous donations, we are delighted to have been able to purchase community passes for The 5 Sisters Zoo and Mill Farm which are available for all young carers, adult carers, disabled people and their families. If you have anyone who you feel would benefit from these, please get in touch with us.

Support and Social Groups

Our regular support and social groups for carers, young carers and disabled people are continuing to run on zoom and the feedback has been positive.

These groups have helped to reduce feelings of loneliness and improve emotional well-being during a time of social isolation and increased pressure. Here are some quotes from the people attending our groups:

Carer attending our coffee morning: 'I was worried about my mental health, but this will really help'

Disabled Person attending our social group: 'It's been good using this (zoom) as it means I can join in. I

Our Groups on Zoom

Carers of West Lothian

Weekly

- Carers Coffee Morning - Wednesday 10-11.30am
- Young Carers (Seniors) - Tuesday 6-7pm
- Young Carers (Juniors) - Thursday 5-6pm

Monthly

- Carers Mental Health Support Group - 1st Monday 6-7pm
- Social Group for Disabled People - 3rd Tuesday 6-7pm
- Social Group for Disabled People - 4th Tuesday 10.30-11.30am
- Carers Evening Support Group - Last Wednesday 6.30-8.00pm
- Bereaved Carer Support Group - 2nd last Friday 10.30-11.30am
- Young Carer Drop-In - Last Friday 2-3pm
- Young Adult Carer Drop-In - Last Friday 3.15-4.15pm

cannot make the group normally but can join this way. It has been good to talk to people as I am in the house all the time'.

Young Carer talking about our zoom groups: 'It's good to have something to 'come' to and see people. I've met new people at the group and it's been fun'.

Anyone wishing to take part just needs to get in touch for the zoom details. If you are working with someone you feel would benefit from peer support, please refer them and we can support them to join in with the groups.



Our Counselling service has continued through the lockdown and remains open for referrals.

Due to government guidelines we can only offer telephone or Zoom sessions.

Phone:01506 448000 email: office@carers-westlothian.com

PPE

Since July, we have been working in partnership with West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to unpaid Carers and personal assistants (PAs) in West Lothian.

If unpaid carers and Personal assistants normally use PPE in their caring role, PPE may be available to protect them or the person they are looking after.

All requests must be made through Carers of West Lothian.



To date we have fulfilled almost 400 orders and have a team of volunteers making deliveries across West Lothian.

If you are working with someone, or know someone who may be eligible please ask them to contact us on 01506 448000 to see if they meet the criteria.

CoWL Awareness Training



Do you work with people living in West Lothian?
We can deliver free staff training to raise awareness of the needs and support available to all unpaid carers and disabled people!

Free virtual training and awareness raising for partners

Why not arrange some staff training or for one of our team members to attend your next team meeting and let us tell you why it's important to support unpaid carers, young carers and disabled people!!

All sessions can be delivered online using Teams or Zoom and we can arrange this using our accounts.

Our Young Carer Service would be happy to attend school assemblies to raise awareness amongst pupils and staff around the support available to them.

So how can we help you?

When you are speaking to unpaid carers or disabled adults, if you think they need someone to talk to, need support by speaking to others in their situation or they need information or advice and signposting, we are here to help. By doing this we are working together with you, to prevent extra pressure being brought on public services, by supporting them to improve their emotional resilience.

You can make a referral in a number of ways:

Call us on 01506 448000

Email us on office@carers-westlothian.com

Visit our website www.carers-westlothian.com

Use the Fort referral system by visiting <https://westlothian.thefortsystem.com/>

