



# We'd Just Like to Say...

Newsletter of East Lothian Community Care Forum

Older People's Forum : Learning Disability Forum  
Equality Forum : Heads Up East Lothian

Autumn 2011 **Have Your Say** at [www.elccf.org](http://www.elccf.org)



## Forum's way ahead

New ways ahead for ELCCF work were shown to community activists and all who attended the Forum's annual event and agm in September.

The event in the Trinity Centre, Haddington, attracted faces old and new. MC'd by convener Alan Brown, the day saw interactive presentations outlining fresh streams of work.

Enthusiasm was given to the 'mini workshops' on development and outreach, community

action research, hopes for a community hub, and plans for a Media Shop social enterprise.

Everyone taking part had the chance to 'vote' on which new work should be priority - and it came as no great surprise that development of the four forums and outreach work won most points.

The Forum's latest **Business Plan** outlining the achievements of the past



*Continued on page 3.*

## Keep fit Cara



Cara Blair is East Lothian's new Community Health & Activity Officer.

She explains her job: "We are aiming to set up a health referral scheme to help adults with long term conditions make a smooth and enjoyable transition from health care, into the world of exercise and activity in the community.

"With a little support, motivation and encouragement, we can help those who have never exercised before to those who have fallen off the fitness wagon."

Contact Cara at [cblair@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:cblair@eastlothian.gov.uk).

## Boardmans given carers' accolade

Carolyn and Marshall Boardman receive their ELCCF Award for outstanding service in representing the views of carers at the Heads Up mental health forum and in supporting ELCCF.



# What have the ELCCF forums been up to?

## Heads Up

The proposed mental health crisis support questionnaire came top of the bill at the last **Heads Up** mental health forum.

The forum has been working hard on the project; set to gauge service users', carers' and providers' views on crisis support needs.

Encouraging more service users to take part, and holding meetings elsewhere in the county were two topics in the forum's new action plan for improvement.

## Learning Disability Forum

The **LD Forum** has learned that the Mansfield Road Centre has a future life of no longer than two years and has been deemed as no longer fit for purpose.



*Linden Ross helps make up a timetable at the Heads Up meeting.*

Meanwhile, day services at the centre have been reorganised. Service users and carers are concerned because they feel proper consultation with them has been lacking.

Concern has also been voiced at colleges withdrawing many of the courses they run for people with special needs.

## Equality Forum

At their last meeting members of the **Equality Forum** were brought up to date with progress on East Lothian's Physical Disability and Complex Needs Strategy. One of the main pillars of the plan is the 24hr Response Service, accessible via NHS 24 or through in-home **telecare** systems.

Talk ranged from a Q&A on **Self Directed Support** and **Direct Payments**, the council's **Transportation Strategy Consultation**, respite and housing. The next meeting will have a guest speaker from the **Care and Repair** service.

The forum has under discussion plans for a Community Hub -

seen as a one-stop shop to co-ordinate people's interests with their care needs for activities during the day, evenings and weekends. The service would be underpinned by an online directory of what's going on in the community.

## Older People's Forum

Progress on how the Older People's strategy is being carried out was the main topic of October's **Older People's Forum**.

Balancing the news on development of the 24hr Response and Rehabilitation Service, new care homes and new day centres, were concerns on a plan to re-provide mental health assessment beds currently provided at Herdmanflat Hospital, to Midlothian Community Hospital.

Opinion was unanimous against the proposal and the forum felt it needed more discussion at the Mental Health and Older People's Joint Planning Groups.

**Ageing Well** co-ordinator Sarah Dempster, spoke about her project and received constructive comments from all.

**Forum's way ahead***...continued*

year and hopes for 2012 was on show (and is downloadable from [www.elccf.org](http://www.elccf.org)).

One major move announced is how the Forum is changing its legal structure to a limited company with a charitable purpose. This offers more security and a route to self sustainability. It also promises more hope of success for grant funding.

Along with this is the set up of the Media Shop; a trading arm of the Forum which will offer a print and design service primarily to the voluntary



*Attendees were greeted with a smile from management committee member Elizabeth Barnes.*

sector at prices tailored to suit the needs of fellow groups and organisations.

Other plans include the development of a Community Action Research toolkit and training for more CAR team recruits, moving toward making the Forum office a one-stop shop for information, creating an online directory of services for disabled people, and issuing a questionnaire to find out how best the Forum

premises in Haddington might be used.

Office bearers appointed for the coming year are Alan Brown, convener; Ann McCarthy, treasurer and David Barrie, vice convener.

**Strategy for sense**

'A Sense of Belonging' is the five-year strategy to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people in the Lothians.

Plans are still being formed as to how it's to be carried out, but you can see the strategy at <http://tinyurl.com/7xe2g6j>.

**There's a benefit to this new service**

Disabled people and their families or carers in East Lothian with questions on social security benefits can seek help from a new welfare rights service being run by Intowork and ELVOS with European funding.

Help on offer includes filling in claim forms, challenging decisions made by the DWP, and representation at social security appeals tribunals. The service, which is available on Tuesdays, helps make sure clients get all the benefits to which they are entitled.

For help and more information, call Robert Davie on 0131 662 1962, based at ELVOS, 7 Mansfield Road Musselburgh, between 8.30 and 4.30. Home visits can be arranged.

**Forum meetings**

**Heads Up:** Tues, Nov 15th at 2pm-4pm in Fisherrow Community Centre, Musselburgh.

**Learning Disability Forum:** Mon, Dec 12th, Port Seton Centre, South Seton Park, 10.30am-noon.

**Equality Forum:** Wed, Nov 9th, 11am-1pm, Port Seton Centre, South Seton Park.

**Older People's Forum:** Tues, 29th Nov 2-4pm in Hallhill Community Centre, Dunbar (in the creche).

**What do you do?**

My main role is to support the Community Care Forums, to help give people who use health and community care services and their carers the chance to have their voices heard and influence the design of those services in East Lothian.

**What's the most important issue facing East Lothian today?**

For people who use services there are many changes in the way people receive their support due to the review of day opportunities.

It's really important that the people using the services and their carers have a say in influencing those changes and having a choice in what services they get and making sure they are for the better.

**What's the best thing about your organisation?**

ELCCF is open to the

**Introducing..**



**Karen Hamilton, ELCCF Development and Outreach Worker**

public where everyone has a voice - so come along to the next forum meetings if you would like to contribute.

They are public meetings and you can have your ideas and opinions influence the planning groups. I also think it's great the work that's ELCCF has done in the last eleven years with limited resources.

**What's next on the agenda?**

To get more service users and carers involved in the forums and find ways to make it easier and more accessible for people to get involved.

**What's been the high point of the year so far?**

For me personally it's been joining the ELCCF team and meeting lots of lovely, inspiring people who give up their time and energy to make the forums work.

**What would you do as ruler of the world?**

Everyone who wants to work would be able to work.

The benefits agency would have rapid improvement training on assessing fluctuating health problems. Everyone would have access to an allotment that wanted one and to make sure that everyone has at least one holiday a year.

**Contact Karen on [karen@elccf.org](mailto:karen@elccf.org).**



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