



# Report of the June 28, 2011, meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum in Port Seton Community Centre.

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## Who was there:

Sharon Forster	Options for Independence
Julia White	East Lothian Council
Carrie Ho	Scottish Huntington's Lothian
Margaret Drew	ELC Service Manager
Simon Bain	ELC Housing Strategy
Elizabeth Barnes	Prestonpans Centre/ ELCCF
Ross Carpenter	ELCCF
Margaret Brunton	Service User
Tom Brunton	Carer
Sarah Dempster	ELC Ageing Well coordinator
Alan Brown	ELCCF
Janice Thomson	MS Society/ KICC
Caroline Myles	NHS EL Community Health Partnership
Lesley Aitkenhead	ELCCF
Karen Hamilton	ELCCF

## Welcome and introductions

Karen introduced herself as the new outreach worker for ELCCF. Her role is to engage with people using services and support them to attend or bring their point of view to the forums - making sure that people's views can be taken to the joint **planning meetings** and thus influence the planning of services. Karen is happy to come and speak to people individually or groups and let them know about the forum.

## Physical Disability and Complex Needs Strategy Update

Julia White talked through the updated strategy. The draft is due to be submitted for 'sign off' by mid- August.

The strategy covers the following areas:

### **New 24hr Response Service**

This Service started 3 months ago to help people to stay out of hospital. It covers older people and people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments and long term conditions. It offers 24hr planned and emergency support.

The main ways to access this service are through:

- **Telecare** - provides electronic sensors and alarms in your home to provide a link to the community response service. Telecare also provides an overnight sitter service. (<http://tinyurl.com/3mtwesv>).
- **NHS 24** - is the helpline number for non-emergency medical assistance that it not life threatening. ([www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)).

Alan Brown raised the issue that some people call the emergency 'out of hours' Adult Social Care service. This service is provided in East Lothian by Edinburgh Social Work, who were unaware of the new service in East Lothian when he called them a couple of weeks back.

### **Age Transitions**

The strategy includes improving transitions for younger people moving into adult services, and people from adult services into services for older people. Work has been done to improve transitions from young people's services to adult services. However, Forum members felt there isn't enough specialist support or expertise within older people services and called for the age barrier to be removed.

**Promoting Self-directed Support** ([www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk](http://www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk)) **and Direct Payments** (<http://tinyurl.com/3dqb66u>).

Julia explained Direct Payments are not the same as Self-directed Support. There were many questions regarding both schemes. Some were:

Q. What's a direct payment?

A. A direct payment is where you personally receive the actual money and it's up to you to manage it and arrange services for yourself.

Q. 'Can I employ my neighbour across the road?'

A. It needs to be a care provider who is registered so if your neighbour was registered they could.

Q. How easy would it be for my neighbour to register?

A. Julia will look into it. We need to find out more information.

Janice spoke of how they have been able to do this in the Borders where the council are supporting local people (i.e. neighbours) to become registered carers because it's been a struggle to have the right support in rural areas. This has also been seen as part of economic regeneration.

*"274 individuals took up direct payments last year 900 personal assistants were employed in East Lothian," said Sharon from Options for Independence. "It seems that it depends on who your social worker is whether or not they take it up."*

East Lothian Council are hoping to roll out Self-directed Support over the next couple of years. Linda Young, Services Manager of Community Care Operations is leading on this initiative.

### **Reablement**

This part of the Strategy refers to looking after yourself, keeping well and preventing accidents.

### **Housing**

**Aids and adaptations** can be fitted in the home to support independence. People can now self-assess for smaller adaptations and support (<http://tinyurl.com/3l9xyef>).

Council tenants apply through the housing department and private home owners through an organisation call **Care and Repair**.

**Action:** It was suggested to get someone from Care and Repair to come and speak to the forum.

### **Intensive support**

Services to support people with high care needs are important and still under discussion.

### **Access to information**

This was an area that many people commented on at the initial consultation of this strategy. This area of work is still under discussion.

### **Living Transitions**

Providers need to plan resources properly so that they enable people to be as independent as possible. They also need to be responsive and effective.

## Transportation Consultation

There is currently a **consultation** on the council's transportation strategy which you can link into online: (<http://tinyurl.com/687bolz>).

*One voice said: "The council spends a lot of money on transport but it doesn't do what we need it to do and it's also very expensive."*

## Respite services

Julie Oswald has a 6 month contract with Carers of East Lothian to develop a respite strategy at Leuchie House and Bridge Street.

Julie uses person centred planning to plan an additional break on top of existing break entitlement to encourage people to try something new. Ideally she would like to see a short breaks bureau in the future.

## Local Housing Strategy (Particular Needs)

Simon Bain, a Strategic Policy Officer for East Lothian Council spoke to the Forum about the draft Local Housing Strategy for 2012-2017, due out for consultation at the end of July.

This covers different areas such as fuel poverty, homelessness, energy efficiency, issues around tenancies, affordable housing etc.

Part of the strategy includes making sure that people with particular needs are able to sustain affordable living that encourages independence.

**Action:** Members agreed it would be useful to hold a half day event on this in October/November as part of the consultation process.

Some comments suggested that social work and housing departments could work better together especially when people become disabled later on in life (e.g. through an accident or illness). Simon also agreed a needs assessment /research needs to be carried out regarding accommodation for people with special needs.

*A member of ELCCF shared her experience of waiting to get housed: "I was trapped in my bedroom for 2½ years and that was being a top priority."*

This raised the issue of how allocations work and if there is a need for more transparency.

*Another voice said: "I get frustrated that my named housing officer is never available."*

Simon was unable to comment specifically on this issue, but was keen to capture people's views at the half day event at which he would invite housing officers to be present. Lesley thanked Simon for his contribution.

### **Improving day/evening/weekend opportunities**

A Community Hub model. Lesley presented a model of how a 'community hub' might work; to access day, evening and weekend opportunities that emerged from the 'Our Lives, Our Opportunities' Rapid Improvement Event and subsequent meetings.

A Community Hub is seen as a one-stop shop to coordinate what you like to do/ your interests with your care needs to develop a person-centred plan of activities and opportunities during the day, evenings and weekends. This service would be underpinned by an online directory of what's going on in the community.

The success of this model will rely on links and joint working from organisations which provide support and help connect people into community activities, services and education.

Through the hub people would also have access to welfare rights, OT, social work, advocacy, volunteering etc.

Janice gave an example of a book group for visually impaired people, which was started by the local librarian. It is now being rolled out to other libraries. This is the kind of information that would be available as well as practical support.

It was the experience of the forums that people want more choice and more control over services and better access to mainstream services.

*One voice said: "The information and advice is not out there and is an area that needs to be addressed."*

People have consistently said they would like to use mainstream services e.g. leisure centres, employment etc. and use specialist resources only when appropriate or necessary.

Members present were very supportive of this model to access day opportunities and agreed that there was potential for it to be accessible to all disabled people and older people.

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**The next meeting of East Lothian Equality Forum will be held from 11am-1pm on Wednesday, November 9, in Port Seton Community Centre, South Seton Park.**

