



# Carers of East Lothian Newsletter

## August 2024

This is the second issue of the Carers of East Lothian Newsletter. The newsletter is for unpaid carers and will be sent three times each year. We hope that the newsletter keeps you up to date with relevant and important information for unpaid carers as well as keeping you in the loop with what we are up to as an organisation.

## A note from Jess, our CEO

A very warm welcome to the Summer edition of Carers of East Lothian newsletter! I hope you are all finding some time to enjoy our beautiful Scottish sunshine in between your caring responsibilities and the rain.

It has been a busy time here at Carers of East Lothian; our biggest Carers Week yet, with over 100 carers joining events during the week and overwhelmingly positive feedback. We are also delighted to announce that we have been successful in securing just under £20,000 from Awards for All to support



us in developing our Men Who Care project to offer therapeutic support for unpaid male carers experiencing poor mental health, loneliness, anxiety and depression. This is very welcome news as we had identified a real need for more support in this area.

On the subject of funding, we have also now started work on our first ever fundraising strategy. We recognise that as a growing organisation, developing our approach to fundraising is key to supporting us across all areas of work. We have lots of good ideas and plenty of opportunities so we are keen to involve a group of passionate carers and volunteers where we can. If you think you could be one of the people involved, please read more about this later in this newsletter.

Finally, we recognise that caring can be difficult at any time of year, but the Summer time can be particularly challenging, especially for Parent Carers, and for those whose services and other support may be impacted by annual leave and so on. As always, please do get in touch if you feel you need more support.



# Feedback, Consultation and Carers Views



Earlier this year we conducted a survey of unpaid carers. The survey was designed to help Carers of East Lothian deepen their understanding of unpaid care and ensure services are responsive to the needs of carers. The survey was completed by 199 carers. Since completion, CoEL staff have studied the responses for themes, gaps and areas for development. The information has been compiled into a report which has been shared

with the CoEL board of Trustees, the Senior Management team, CoEL's Carers Panel, the wider staff team and Maria Burton, Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer (Carers). A summary version of this report is available on the CoEL website. Segmented information has been shared with relevant staff in order to inform their future work with carers, for example, responses received from male carers have been extrapolated and shared with CoEL's Men Who Care worker. We would like to thank everyone once again for completing this survey. It is of great benefit to our organisation as we continue to strive to respond to current issues that are impacting unpaid carers in East Lothian.

If you would like to read the summary report, you can do so [here](#).

## Share your views with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership

ELHSCP commissions support services for Adult and Young Carers. They want to know what you think are the most important parts of an adult carer advice, information and support service and if you think there are any gaps. They would also like to know what difference any good support has made to you. Please email [carers@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:carers@eastlothian.gov.uk) to share your thoughts and experiences by Saturday 31st August .



You can also use this new feedback function on ELHSCP website, to share your experiences [Carers | East Lothian Council](#)



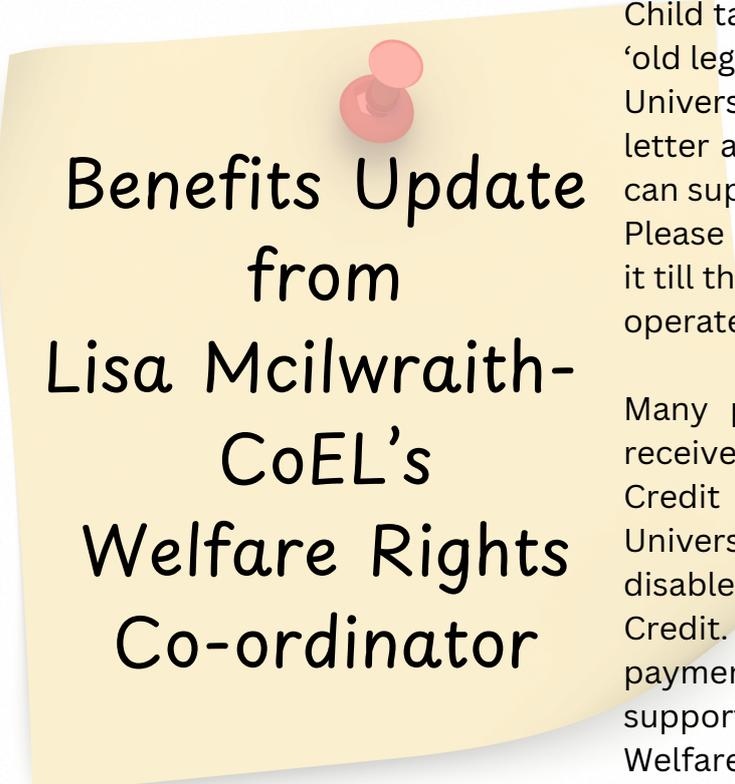
## The State of Caring survey 2024

is the most comprehensive research into the lives of unpaid carers in Scotland and the UK.

What you tell is vital to our work and will shape our future campaigns and the support we provide.

Carers, have your say by clicking [this link](#)

## Other Useful Information for Carers



### Benefits Update from Lisa Mcilwraith- CoEL's Welfare Rights Co-ordinator

Many of you will be aware that if you currently receive Child tax credits, Income Support or what is referred to as 'old legacy style' benefits you will be asked to transition to Universal Credit. If you have already received your DWP letter asking you to make a claim for Universal Credit, we can support you with this and make it a very easy process. Please obtain support as soon as possible and don't leave it till the last minute as like all support services we have to operate a waiting list.

Many people don't know that even if they have not received their DWP letter asking them to make a Universal Credit claim, they can still choose to move now to Universal Credit if they will be better off. Many carers and disabled people are substantially better off on Universal Credit. Payments can be made fortnightly after your first payment, and it is a very smooth easy transition with our support. Please get in touch with us to discuss with our Welfare Rights Co-ordinator if you would be better off on Universal Credit or to discuss any benefit related query.

Did you know that Carers of East Lothian has a benefit enquiry phonenumber where you are guaranteed to get a call back and immediate advice within 48 working hours? Average wait times in East Lothian for benefits advice is 6 weeks minimum so we are very proud of our quick response times. Have a question about what you can claim, don't know if you are getting everything you are entitled to? Need help with a review of disability benefits or an assessment to check if you meet the criteria for disability benefits? Call us now on 01316650135 and ask for a referral to the benefits enquiries line where you will get a call back within 48 working hours (weekends not included).

## CARERS PARLIAMENT 2024

Registration is now open for the Carers Parliament 2024.

The Carers Parliament provides a space for carers from across Scotland to tell policy and decision makers how caring affects their lives. The event will be hybrid ( online and in person at the COSLA Conference Centre)

You can register using [this link](#)



## Other Useful Information for Carers ctd...

### Welfare Guardians

**Date:** Wednesday 9th October 2024 **Time:** 2-4pm

**Location:** John Muir House, Haddington

There is also a contact email address for Private Guardians:

[awiqueries@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:awiqueries@eastlothian.gov.uk)

**Are you a Welfare Guardian or looking to become a Welfare Guardian?**

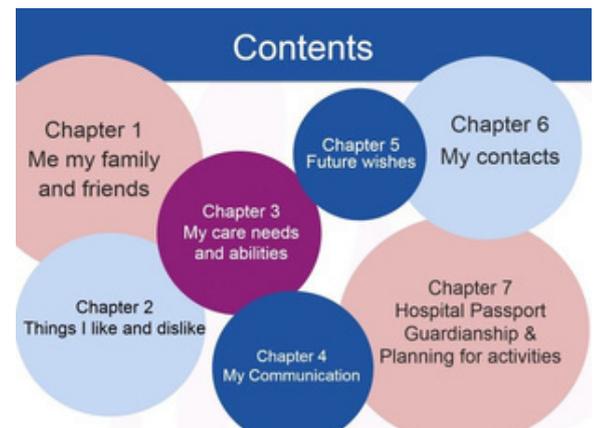
East Lothian Council Mental Health Officer Team is holding a session in October where it will be possible to find out more about support available to welfare guardians from the team and also from Carers of East Lothian.

## PAMIS Digital Passports

Developed by PAMIS in partnership with people with PMLD and their family carers, a PAMIS digital passport is owned by the person and is offered by them to help support all aspects of their lives.

A PAMIS digital passport is particularly useful for people who have complex health or social care needs. Using video and photographs allow the passport owner to communicate clearly with those around them. Passports are used in many ways: describing complex care; use of equipment; showing different communication methods; postural care and positioning; social, emotional and physical care; communication of choices; and support for sports and leisure activities. It promotes knowledge sharing and person led communication.

If you are interested in hearing more about setting up a digital passport, please contact Catriona Jamieson on the contact details below. Catriona is able to provide 1 hours training to help set up if required. A Passport is completed on Powerpoint and a tablet is required.



**Digital Passport Lead:** Catriona Jamieson **Email:** [catriona.jamieson@pamis.org.uk](mailto:catriona.jamieson@pamis.org.uk)

# Staff Spotlight

We are delighted this month to spotlight two new members of staff who joined the CoEL team in June 2024.



**Rowena Price** has joined CoEL as our **Hospital Link Worker**. This is a brand new pilot project that we are very excited about. Rowena's work will focus on identifying supporting and signposting unpaid carers in a ward setting at East Lothian Community Hospital in Haddington, ensuring carers are well placed to act as equal partners in care. In particular, Rowena will be supporting carers to become more involved in planning for the future for people they care for, ensuring the carers are aware how to access support once patients are discharged into the community.

## What drew you to work for CoEL?

I worked in the voluntary sector for many years. I took early retirement in 2021 and decided to focus on developing my artwork. Although, pretty successful, after a while, I found I missed working in people focused organisations. Having said that, it had to be a pretty special organisation to pull me away from the canvas and oil paints. I really liked CoEL's approach and way of working with folk. When I saw the Job Ad - I thought - ooh that's for me - I can do that and more importantly I want to do that.

## What are you most looking forward to about your new role?

We live in such a fast moving and often stressful environment these days and I know from personal experience, being the go-to person 24 hours a day can sometimes feel overwhelming. I'm really looking forward to giving people time; time to talk, to ask questions and then be able to help carers navigate their way through, what can at times feel distressing and complicated situations.

## Tell us 3 things that you enjoy.

I really, really like art, everything about art; The history of, learning about different artists, even looking at art works I don't understand or maybe even like, but I can mostly appreciate the artists effort. I really enjoy cooking - mostly savoury food - I love eating cakes but for some reason can only bake a Christmas cake. I like listening to all sorts of music - and sing along, usually out of tune, while cooking.

**Kirsty Rootes** has joined CoEL as our **Admin and Finance Manager**. Kirsty provides administrative, operational and financial support, to the core work of the organisation. Kirsty manages the rest of the members of the admin team.



## What drew you to work for CoEL?

The difference the organisation makes to the carers and their families. I was looking for a role in a company which has real impact and wanted to be part of team making a positive difference within our community.

## What are you most looking forward to about your new role?

The variety of the role and learning new skills. The team is so supportive, and I will have the opportunity to be involved in many aspects of the charity and that is really exciting!

## Tell us 3 things that you enjoy.

I do love to keep moving, be it power yoga, running, mountain biking, swimming - I can't sit still for long! I do love the cinema though, so once I've worn myself out I love to go see a film.

I enjoy wandering the streets of Edinburgh with my teenage girls, I love the contrast of living on the coast and being in the city in 30 minutes.

# Volunteer Spotlight

During this issue of the newsletter, we would like to introduce you to Zoe, who volunteers at CoEL as a telephone befriender as well as supporting us with some of our events.



## What attracted you to volunteer with Carers of East Lothian?

I knew I wanted to do some volunteering in Befriending after the pandemic made me very aware of how hard being isolated from outside connections was, so I searched roles in that and came across CoEL. I have experience in caring and being cared for so knew it would be a good fit as I could use my experience to try and help others.

## Can you tell us a little bit about what your volunteering has involved so far?

I am primarily a Befriender. I am paired with a carer who I talk to on the phone once a week. I have also had the opportunity to help out at events such as an alpaca trek and a craft class. I also got to do a somatic meditation workshop which I've found is useful in my day to day!

## How have you found volunteering with CoEL?

I have really enjoyed it and found that I've been able to do more than I expected. I didn't think I'd get the opportunity to help out in other ways like helping with a craft and meditation class (two of my favourite things!).

## What do you think are the benefits of volunteering?

Personally, I have gained a lot of my old confidence back after an illness in an area that means a lot to me. I've also been able to learn new skills through the Befriending training and step out of my comfort zone to help other people going through something I found to be hard myself.

## What would you say to someone who was considering volunteering with CoEL?

Definitely go for it! You'll meet the loveliest team of people dedicated to helping their community and will be given the opportunity to do things outside of what you would usually let yourself do.

Volunteer with us

Whilst on the topic of volunteering, we would like to bring your attention to an exciting new volunteer role that we have at CoEL. We are looking to create a brand new Fundraising Group to raise vital funds for the organisation, so that we can further increase the support we offer to unpaid carers across East Lothian.

Key to this group will be a team of Volunteer Fundraisers. Fundraising is a fun and rewarding way to get involved in a cause that matters to you, with lots of opportunity to meet like-minded people.

This is a flexible role, which can be adapted to suit the individuals interests, skills and availability. The group will meet monthly. Members will be encouraged to put forward and action their own ideas with the support of the CoEL staff team and a nominated supervisor. For more information on this role and on other volunteering opportunities, please follow this link: [Fundraising Volunteer](#)

# Upcoming One Off Sessions with CoEL



## FIRST AID FOR UNPAID CARERS

**FACILITATED BY:** Martyn McLauchlan, St. Andrew's First Aid

**DATE:** Monday 19th August

**Time:** 10am - 2pm

**VENUE:** Pennypit Community Centre, Prestonpans

**FIRST AID TOPICS COVERED:** CPR and defib use, Recovery position, Choking, Heart attack, Stroke, Burns

**LUNCH PROVIDED**

To request a space, please contact us on:

☎ **01316650135**      ✉ **centre@coel.org.uk**

## First Aid for Unpaid Carers - FULLY BOOKED

This session proved very popular and even with 23 spaces filled within a few days of it being advertised. This will be taken on board when we plan future training and information sessions for carers. Please email Gemma on [gemma@coel.org.uk](mailto:gemma@coel.org.uk) if you would like to be informed about any future first aid sessions we plan.



## Intergenerational Activity Afternoon

Venturing Out will run a variety of water and land based activities for adult and young carers to enjoy together in small groups.

**VENUE:** Musselburgh Lagoons

**DATES:** Friday 27th September

**TIME:** 1:30pm - 5:30pm

To request a space for an adult carer, please contact CoEL on [centre@coel.org.uk](mailto:centre@coel.org.uk)

To request a space for a young carer, please contact Marie on [mprior1@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:mprior1@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Intergenerational Venturing Out

The last time we ran an intergenerational event, it was very popular, so we are doing it again! This time, it will be with the incredible Venturing Out. The event will involve water and land based activities and will run at Musselburgh Lagoons. Spaces are available for adult carers and young carers.

Please book adult carer spaces with CoEL and young carer spaces with Marie Prior from the Young Carers Service.



## Mindfulness in the garden

Free introductory Mindfulness in nature session at Amisfield Walled Garden.

Local Mindfulness tutor, Joyce Lukkes will lead the sessions

**VENUE:** Amisfield Walled Gardens  
**DATE:** Thursday 5th September 2024  
**TIME:** 1:30 - 3:00

Please contact us to reserve your space

☎ **01316650135**      ✉ **centre@coel.org.uk**

## Mindfulness in the garden

Does your mind have a life of its own, wandering off and thinking unhelpfully about the past or the future?

Practicing Mindfulness regularly can help, as can being in nature, so we are delighted that Amisfield Walled Garden and local Mindfulness tutor, Joyce Lukkes are offering a free introductory Mindfulness session to carers as part of their Wellbeing Programme.

Contact us on 01316650135 or [centre@coel.org.uk](mailto:centre@coel.org.uk) to reserve your space.



Tantallon House, North Berwick would like to invite carers for afternoon tea.

**VENUE:** Tantallon House, North Berwick

**DATES:** Monday 30th September

**TIME:** 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Carers are welcome to take the person they care for along with them. Spaces limited! Book your space with us at CoEL.

☎ 01316650135

✉ centre@coel.org.uk

### Afternoon tea at Tantallon House

Tantallon House, North Berwick would like to invite a group of unpaid carers for afternoon tea. Carers are welcome to take the person that they care for along with them to this event. There may be transport available for people who live locally to Tantallon House, so please inform us if this would be helpful for you. Spaces are very limited. Please contact us on 01316650135 or centre@coel.org.uk if you would like to attend.

## Upcoming Courses with CoEL and partners

### 4 week Seasonal Gardening Course - FULLY BOOKED

This group filled very quickly when promoted. Please do let us know if you missed out this time but would be keen to do something like this in the future as we will factor this into our planning.

**4 week seasonal gardening group**  
Planting, harvesting, autumn tidying & pruning - No experience necessary

**VENUE:** Amisfield Walled Gardens  
**DATES:** Thursdays 29th Aug  
5th Sept  
12th Sept  
19th Sept  
**TIME:** 10:30 - 12:30

Limited availability, please contact to express interest:

☎ 01316650135      ✉ centre@coel.org.uk



4 week introduction to mindfulness and relaxation group for unpaid carers

**VENUE:** Star Room, Haddington Library

**DATES:** Thursdays 3rd, 10th, 24th and 31st October

**TIME:** 9:30am -11:00am

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

To sign up for your space, see below:

☎ 01316650135

✉ centre@coel.org.uk

### Introduction to Mindfulness and Relaxation

A four-week introduction to mindful meditation and relaxation techniques. Suitable for those new to mindfulness or those who would like to return to practice.

During the sessions, we will try a range of simple mindfulness and relaxation techniques so by the end of the course, you should be able to practice at home whenever you feel stressed or overwhelmed and need to recharge your batteries.

If you are interested in attending this course, please contact us on centre@coel.org.uk or 01316650135.

## Trauma Informed Parenting Course (online)

Following the success and popularity of our recently run Trauma Informed Parenting sessions, we will be running this online course again. Sessions are open to all parent carers, The sessions will cover how to manage children's challenging behaviours by applying a trauma informed approach. This two part online course will run on Tuesday 19th November and Monday 25th November. Sessions will be online between 10am and 12pm, A link will be sent to you on sign up. Please contact us on 01316650135 or [centre@coel.org.uk](mailto:centre@coel.org.uk) if you are interested in attending this course.




**TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING  
COURSE FOR PARENT CARERS  
(ONLINE)**

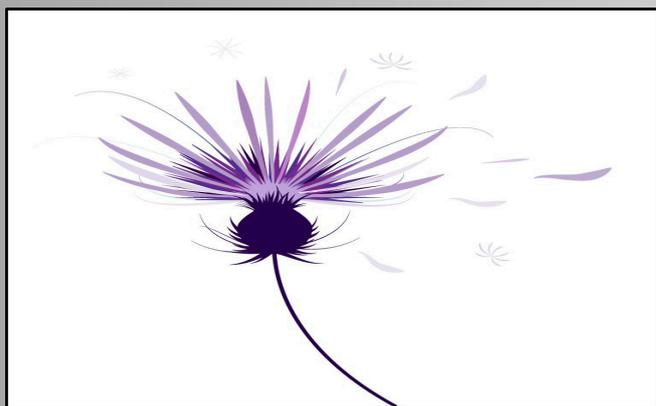
**TRAINER:** Suzanne Scott,  
Trauma Informed Parenting

**PLATFORM:** Zoom (link sent on sign up) **DATE:** Session 1 - Tuesday 19th November  
Session 2 - Monday 25th November

**Time:** 10:00am - 12:00pm

To request a space on this 2 session course, please contact us on:

 **01316650135**
 **[centre@coel.org.uk](mailto:centre@coel.org.uk)**



## Bereavement Support Group

If you are living with the grief of losing someone close, there is a group in East Lothian that is here for you. The Bereavement Support Group is a safe and friendly place to talk through your feelings and to meet other people who are going through bereavement too. The group meets in Musselburgh on the first Monday of every month from 10.30am until 12 noon. The venue is fully accessible.

The group is supported by staff from NHS Lothian Bereavement Service and Julie Oswald from Carers of East Lothian.

The Bereavement Support Group is free to join and everything that is talked about in the group is kept confidential. You are very welcome to attend whether your loss is recent or if it was longer ago. Each month there is a chance for members to talk freely as well as some simple topics to discuss in smaller groups. It's up to you to decide how much you feel comfortable sharing. You won't be pressured. There are two facilitators at each meeting and you can take a bit of time out for one to one support if you need it.

You can attend the monthly meetings whenever it suits you. You don't need to commit to attending for a set number.

If you would like to join the group, please phone the Bereavement Service for an initial chat on 0131 242 1996 or email [bereavement.service@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:bereavement.service@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

# Support Groups and Other Group Activities for Carers

We run a number of monthly support groups across the county. These are a great opportunity to meet other people in the same situation, to share experiences and receive support from our Carer Support Workers. Groups are informal and everyone is welcome.

## **Dunbar Support Group**

When: Second Wednesday of each month at 10:30am to 12:00pm

Where: The Stables, Belhaven Church, Dunbar

## **Musselburgh Support Group**

When: Last Wednesday of each month at 10:00am to 11:30am

Where: Musselburgh East Community Learning Centre, Haddington Road, Musselburgh

## **North Berwick Support Group**

When: Second Tuesday of each month at 10:30am to 12:00pm

Where: The Nether Abbey Hotel, North Berwick

## **Men Who Care** (for male carers with a focus on outings and activities)

When: Second Thursday of the month

Where: please contact Raj on 07483390080 or email [raj.singh@coel.org.uk](mailto:raj.singh@coel.org.uk)

## **Carers of People with Mental Health Issues**

When: Last Tuesday of each month at 5:00pm to 6:30pm

Where: Port Seton Community Centre, Port Seton

## **SPACE - Parent Carer Support Group** (particularly parents of children with autism/ADHD)

When: Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Where: Musselburgh East Community Learning Centre, Haddington Road, Musselburgh

## **Online Support Group**

When: First Tuesday of each month at 12:30pm to 1:30pm

Where: Online

## **Other Regular Group Activities**

### **Care to Sing** singing group for carers

When: Every Wednesday at 1:30pm to 2:30pm

Where: East Lothian Community Hospital, Haddington

### **Caring Spaces Art Group**

When: Fourth Wednesday of each month at 10:15am to 12:15pm

Where: Musselburgh East Community Learning Centre

### **Care to Create** craft group for carers

When: Third Friday of each month at 10:00am to 12:00pm

Where: Haddington Day Centre, Haddington

Please contact us on the details below if you are interested in attending any of these groups:

# Carers Rights

Family members, friends and other unpaid carers play a vital role in the care of people who are discharged from acute and community settings. NHS bodies and local authorities should address local barriers to identifying and supporting unpaid carers throughout the discharge process.

The Health and Care Act 2022 amended section 74(2) of the Care Act 2014 to include a duty for NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts. Under this duty, they must involve patients and unpaid carers (including young carers) as soon as it is feasible in discharge planning for adult patients who are likely to need care and support after their discharge, where they consider it appropriate to do so.

**The right to be included in hospital discharge planning of the person you are caring for**




Paid care workers and personal assistants should also be involved, to ensure that any changes that may be needed to someone’s support plan can be reflected in a timely manner to best support their recovery or end of life care. To read more about this, please follow [this link](#)

**The handy visual below is from Coalition of Carers in Scotland. It gives an overview of the rights that carers have in Scotland. For more detailed information, follow [this link](#) to their website.**



## There are several ways that you can support our work...

Do you know that you can support Carers of East Lothian through the **Community Lottery**? Tickets are only £1.00 per week with 50% going to Carers of East Lothian and 10% going to other local causes. Follow [this link](#) to find out more.

Have you ever fancied doing the **Kilt Walk**? Carers of East Lothian is a registered charity for the Kilt Walk this year. A small team of staff and volunteers will be walking. Find out more about how you can join in [here](#).

If you would like to make a donation to Carers of East Lothian to support us to continue the work that we do to support unpaid carers, you can do so using this [just giving link](#).

## With thanks to...

We would like to thank all of the individuals who have made donations to Carers of East Lothian.

And thankyou to our funders for their continued support.



Short  
BREAKS fund



## Future Newsletters

You can ensure that you are signed up to receive our future newsletters via email by signing up to our mailing list [Mailing list sign up link](#)

The CoEL Newsletter will be issued 3 times a year.

Do you have an idea for something you would like to see in our newsletter that you think would be of interest to carers? If so, please contact Gemma on [gemma@coel.org.uk](mailto:gemma@coel.org.uk)

The deadline for sending information for the next issue is 15th November.

Please also contact Gemma if you have any queries about any of the content in this newsletter.

Thankyou for reading

