

NORTH LANARKSHIRE CARERS TOGETHER pledges to improve the lives of carers within North Lanarkshire by actively linking carers and professionals in meaningful working relationships.

We work in equal partnership with North Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire and others to influence policy development and service provision, which affect both carers and the people we care for.

Our promise to Carers

- We will show a regard for you; treat you with respect and courtesy, and promote your rights
- We will listen, hear and respond to what you say, and be assertive in representing your views and interests
- We will work as an equal partner with others on health, social care and other issues that affect your quality of life
- We will include you if you wish to participate in the work of the organisation, and support you to influence planning and decision making to the degree to which you choose to be involved
- We will recognise that you have a range of experiences and perspectives
- We will avoid discrimination on the basis of age, religion, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other reason that may lead to you being excluded
- We will provide information that is of value to you
- We will represent you with integrity

Our aims

- To be a potent force for change
- To raise the profile of carers' issues and needs
- To influence policy development and service provision at the planning stage
- To form active links between carers and professionals
- To establish innovative and productive consultation processes with service providers
- To promote inclusion of all carers
- To represent the views of all carers, including the many young carers, in North Lanarkshire

REGISTERED CHARITY
NO. SCO33795



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THE CARERS BILL



The Carers (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 9th March 2015. This was a necessary and key step towards introducing new legislation to improve the identification and provision of support to carers. Recent statistics show that 17% of the population in Scotland are carers.

This new legislation was promised by the then First Minister, Alex Salmond MSP, at the 2nd Carers Parliament in Edinburgh in 2013 (reference: *Carers and Young Carers: Statement of Intent: 1st October 2013: The Scottish Government: Edinburgh 2013*).

The Proposals set out a range of measures including the introduction of a new **duty** on local authorities to support carers who are assessed as needing support and who meet eligibility criteria.

As things currently stand, councils have a power to support unpaid carers, but not a duty. This is a very important issue for carers because powers and duties are not the same. A **power** means the council can choose to either do or not do something, whereas a **duty** requires the council to do something by law.

For example, at present, carers have a right to a carers assessment, but no right to the services they are assessed as needing. Local authorities instead have a power to support carers. Given that there are 32 local authorities across Scotland, this means there are 32 different systems operating across Scotland - a real Postcode Lottery. The Carers Bill intends to change this by introducing a duty on councils to support carers, where they are assessed as needing support through an Adult Carer Support Plan and where they meet eligibility criteria.

North Lanarkshire Carers Together accepts that many carers already get excellent support from North Lanarkshire Council or from local carer organisations and other third (voluntary) sector organisations. This is what we aspire towards through our partnership working. But while there is no statutory responsibility to support carers, the system will always lack equity and require people to fight for support. (*continued overleaf*)

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Hilton Strathclyde Hotel, Bellshill

Monday 15th June, 2015 10am - 2pm

THE CARERS BILL - Improving the identification and provision of support to carers

Therefore North Lanarkshire Carers Together welcomes the proposals to introduce a duty on councils to support carers, and the introduction of Carer Support Plans where carers meet eligibility criteria. However, North Lanarkshire Carers Together is very concerned that local authorities, as represented by COSLA, were insistent that eligibility criteria should be set at a local rather than national level, i.e. by each local authority, and that this has found its way into the Carers Bill. Carer organisations, both local and national, want a national framework of eligibility criteria to ensure equity, fairness and consistency with respect to rights and entitlements across Scotland, and the avoidance of the aforesaid Postcode Lottery. A national framework (note: this is in place in England and Wales) would also help to ensure that a Carer Support Plan developed and agreed by one local authority, would be transferrable by another local authority should the carer choose to relocate there, thus avoiding the need for reassessment.

North Lanarkshire Carers Together has consulted with carers and worked closely with other carer organisations to respond to the proposals in the Carers Bill. We welcome the excellent and comprehensive response from the national carers organisations (including the Coalition of Carers) that identifies those proposals contained in the Carers Bill that we support, those we would like to see amended and/or strengthened, and those we do not support or those that are missing and now need to be included. These are listed here for your information.

The Proposals in the Carers Bill we support

- Carers Assessments will change their name to Adult Carer Support Plans.
- At the moment only carers providing care on a 'regular and substantial' basis are legally entitled to a carers assessment. This test will be removed so that all carers can access an Adult Carer Support Plan.
- The requirement that the person being cared for must be someone to whom the local authority provides a community care service will be removed.

- There will be two routes to assessment – a carer can request one and the Local Authority can offer one.
- Emergency, anticipatory or future planning will be covered in regulations about other information that an Adult Carer Support Plan must contain.
- The reference to a carer's ability to provide care will be removed. Instead it will refer to a carer being 'able and willing' to provide care.
- Local Authorities will have a duty to prepare and publish a Short Breaks Statement.
- Local Authorities will have a **duty** to support carers who meet eligibility criteria and also a **power** to support carers in a preventative manner where they do not meet eligibility criteria.
- Guidance will be issued on Adult Carer Support Plans, which will include information on the different stages of caring and the need for a review to address periods of transition.

The Proposals in the Carers Bill we want strengthened

- If Local Authorities are required to set out timescales in their local carers' strategy, they must be required to set out reasonable timescales so that carers can access a Carer Support Plan in timely fashion.
- Making provision for emergency planning within subsequent guidance does not go far enough. Emergency and anticipatory planning should be included as an explicit requirement within Adult Carer Support Plans.
- Emphasis should be placed on supporting and resourcing existing local carer support organisations and the wording in the Carers Bill should be changed to 'the local authority will have a responsibility to maintain an information, advice and service for carers and young carers, or establish a service where required.'

Sociable and creative?

Good organiser?

Business skills?

Web design skills?



Good planner?

Friendly and open?

Good listener?

Volunteering Opportunities

Getting Involved

North Lanarkshire Carers Together is a registered charity. All of our directors are volunteers as well as carers or former carers.

We are interested in developing volunteering opportunities for anyone (carers, former carers and non-carers) who is interested in helping us deliver better outcomes for carers across North Lanarkshire.

Volunteering can be a rewarding way of meeting other people, getting a break from your caring responsibilities and acquiring skills that might be valuable in the world of paid work.

We are always looking for new ways of helping carers

If you are interested in joining us as a volunteer, then contact us to express an interest.

Our contact details are shown below.



Large Print copies of this newsletter
are available on request.

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REGISTERED CHARITY NO. SCO33795



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- We are concerned that with the withdrawal of NHS Carer Information Strategies there is no longer any requirements on Health Boards to identify and signpost carers to support. We recognise that this will form part of the devolved function of Integrated Health and Social Care Partnerships. However, the section on identification could be strengthened and reference should be made to the crucial role of all health professionals to identify and signpost carers, to continue the good practice established by NHS Carer Information Strategies.
- The government has decided not to introduce a specific duty on local authorities to provide short breaks. This duty was almost unanimously supported by carers.

The Proposals in the Carers Bill we don't support or feel are currently missing

- The Carers Bill includes the proposal that Local Authorities must set local eligibility criteria which will determine whether a carer is eligible for support. We believe the eligibility criteria must be national rather than local.
- The proposals do not include the duty that carers campaigned for, which would place a responsibility on Health Boards to inform and involve carers in hospital admission and discharge procedures.

What happens next?

- The Carers (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 9th March 2015. Like all new legislation it will go through a three-stage process, allowing for debate, additional evidence to be gathered and amendments to be made. This allows opportunities for the Bill to be further strengthened. We will continue to work closely with carers and local and national carer organisations to ensure this happens.
- For more information about the parliamentary process and how you can be involved in influencing The Carers Bill you can download the Guide: 'Understanding how law is made: A guide for carers' at: <http://www.carersnet.org/briefings/>

Key points in response to Carers Bill

The Management Committee of North Lanarkshire Carers Together met in a seminar on Monday, 13th April 2015 to discuss the Carers Bill and how it may be Improved. Some of the key points are noted below.

Proposal 7: Local Authorities will have a duty to prepare and publish a Short Breaks Statement.

Comments on Proposal 7: We are extremely disappointed that a specific duty to provide short breaks has not been included in the Carers Bill because carers had campaigned so hard for its inclusion. We feel that there is potential to address this throughout a national framework of eligibility criteria to ensure that carers with the greatest need get the breaks from caring they need.

Proposal 20: Local Authorities must set local eligibility criteria which will determine whether a carer is eligible for support.

Comments on Proposal 20: Carers were clear in their response to the consultation on the Carers Bill that they wanted new rights linked to national eligibility criteria. There needs to be equality across the board – everyone assessed using the same eligibility criteria with the same entitlements to support and resources. Both England and Wales have recently introduced national eligibility criteria for social care services, including support for carers. Eligibility criteria is ALSO the gateway to new rights for carers. They must be clear rights available to all, equally, fairly and consistently across Scotland.

North Lanarkshire Carers Together will campaign together with the Coalition of Carers in Scotland and other carer organisations for a change at Stage 2 of the Carers Bill for this change from a 'local' to a 'national' framework to be reflected.

Additional Comment: The proposals do not include the duty that carers campaigned for which would place a responsibility on health boards to inform and involve carers in hospital admission and discharge procedures. North Lanarkshire Carers Together welcomes the invitation from the local authority to take part in RAID (Reduce Admissions Increase Discharge) Week.

A full copy of our response can be obtained from admin@carerstogogether.org.

Chairperson's Report

If you have read the first couple of pages of our newsletter you will see that this is a momentous time for carers and the carer movement throughout Scotland. This is the first time that the Scottish Government has introduced legislation specifically for unpaid carers and North Lanarkshire Carers Together is 'Working for You' to ensure that the views of carers in North Lanarkshire are reflected in our thinking and in our response to the Scottish Government.

Many of you will be aware of our long standing efforts to consult with carers and to campaign for better rights for carers, indeed our 2013 Carer Conference 'Rights to Recognition' focused on the need for increased rights for carers and the much talked about draft Carers Rights Charter. After many years of campaigning for a better deal for carers, I welcome the stage we are at just now, which marks progress for carers and carers organisations but by no means can we rest on our laurels, as there is still a great deal to do to ensure that carers are recognised as equal partners in care and have rights that reflect the crucial role that carers play in today's society.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of everyone at North Lanarkshire Carers Together to recognise the sterling work carried out by Tony Fitzpatrick, Director of North Lanarkshire Carers Together in working at many levels to progress this national agenda for carers. As well as being a Director and founder member of North Lanarkshire Carers Together, Tony is also a long standing, elected member of the executive committee of The Coalition of Carers in Scotland and a member of the National Carers Reference Group and the National Carers Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Group. It's not possible for me to note all the different carer groups that Tony is currently involved with but there is no doubt that he has played a significant role in the developments to date.

Our work at North Lanarkshire Carers Together continues to develop and I am pleased to say that we have received continued funding to develop our work as the host organisation for community capacity work within the Motherwell locality and to continue our

carer development role within the wider Community Capacity Building and Carer Support Programme as we move towards the Integration of Health and Social Care for Adults.

Changes to our Team



Carolanne Christie joined North Lanarkshire Carers Together in October 2014 as a Carer Information Worker. Carolanne has worked for many years within the voluntary sector and brings her experience of working in the childcare and disability sector to this post.

The key aim of Carolanne's role is to ensure that carers are provided with up to date, relevant information to support them in their caring role which will involve establishing good relationships with the carer community and local organisations in order to identify carers, listen to their issues, provide targeted information and signpost them to supports for themselves and the person they care for. Information for carers can be provided via telephone, email, face to face meetings and by attending local groups and events. Carolanne will also be involved in developing the social media information element which will include website, twitter and Facebook.

Anyone wishing more information about Carolanne's role or anyone requiring information relating to their caring role can contact her on 01698 404055 or email carolanne@carerstogether.org



David Hunter has decided to step down from his position as Director with North Lanarkshire Carers Together. David has held office with our organisation for 6 years. Prior to his appointment as Director, David was a regular volunteer and many of you will associate David with his interest in the issues of male carers and the CHAPS group.

We wish David and his family all the best for the future and would like to thank him for all his efforts in promoting the work of North Lanarkshire Carers Together.

Health & Social Care Integration

The overarching aims of Health & Social Care Integration are:

- to improve the health, wellbeing and personal outcomes of the population of North Lanarkshire,
- to build community capacity and capability and
- to offer a high standard of information, advice, support and care to people who need assistance or who use health and social care services, in particular those whose needs are complex and who will benefit from a fully integrated approach

In essence, integration is perhaps the final leg of a journey that began many years ago involving many other partners including unpaid carers, the third and the independent sector. Integration is focused on person-centred planning and delivery, so that people get the right advice, support and care in the right place and at the right time. But what happens next, why is change necessary, what are the key dates, deadlines and what is the ultimate destination?

The latest newsletter on the integration of adult health and social care has now been published. As well as news of latest developments, including national praise for partnership working and the opening of a new day care service, the North Lanarkshire edition maps out key milestones as integration takes effect.

Accordingly, the new edition maps out the road ahead, with answers to the above questions - and more. You can read the digital version here: <http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=31104>

Alternatively copies can be obtained from our carers centre in Motherwell. We will continue to keep you updated with information around the Integration Agenda.



Supporting Carers in GP Practices

2014/15 has been a particularly busy year for our Carer Co-ordinators who work within the GP practices in North Lanarkshire. The focus of this work is to provide up to date, timely information so that carers can be informed and signposted to a range of supports for themselves and the person they care for. Every GP practice has a carer notice board and ongoing carer awareness training takes place to ensure that GP's and primary care staff are aware of the many issues that carers face on a day to day basis and know how to refer carers for support.

All GP practices have a carer register and if you attended our Carers Health Needs Conference in November 2014 you will have heard Dr Carolyn Calder of Orchard Medical Practice explain how the GP carer register, along with the services of North Lanarkshire Carers Together, can make a difference in the lives of carers.

As well as our partnership working within GP practices our staff also liaise with the Carer Co-ordinators within Wishaw General, Monklands and Hairmyres Hospitals as well as the 2 Mental Health Co-ordinators. We can refer carers for direct carers support to the Lanarkshire Carers Centre, Carers Liaison & Support Project and the Action for Children Young Carers Project as well as provide information on the wide range of community projects that can assist carers and the people they care for.

- In 2014/15 our 2 Carer Co-ordinators:-
- carried out 325 visits to 64 GP practices including 6 outreach surgeries.
- referred 365 carers for membership to North Lanarkshire Carers Together.
- referred 79 carers to the Lanarkshire Carers Centre.
- referred 14 carers to South Lanarkshire Carers Network.
- referred 19 carers to the Carers Liaison & Support Project.
- delivered 88 GP practice and community carer awareness sessions.

For further information please contact Corinne or Yvonne on 01698 404055.

North Lanarkshire Young Carers Project

Young Carers Fun Day

In partnership with North Lanarkshire Carers Together and Community Learning and Development the Young Carers Project held a health promoting fun day on Saturday 14th March for over 40 young carers focusing specifically on young carer's health. A recent report was developed from workshops held by the young carers within the service which highlighted some of the health issues they face, these issues included:

- Sleeping difficulties
- Feeling stressed and worried
- No social life
- Eating and dietary problems
- Education worries
- Experiencing bullying

The fun day allowed our young carers to try new activities promoting relaxation and find out more information on ways to manage stress and anxieties. The young carers had a fantastic day and the project has now identified further recommendations to support our young carers in relation to their health needs. Huge thanks to Carers Together for funding support and to Joanne Boyle from Community Learning and Development for working with us to organise the event.

Visit to Maggie's Centre

As part of our partnership working with other organisations, a group of young carers recently visited the Maggie's Centre in Wishaw where staff, residents and young carers recently spent time together preparing healthy snacks.



Young Adult Carers

Our 16+ group continues to go from strength to strength and have recently taken part in carers' elections and project recruitment. As well as this they are planning to attend the Young Adult Carer Summit.



Easter Egg Gifts

Many of our young carers benefited from the generous gift of Easter eggs from Herbalife and Easy Recruit UK Ltd which were distributed to families by our staff team. Our project would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the many groups and projects who support our work.



20th Anniversary

This is the 20th Anniversary of the North Lanarkshire Young Carers Project and we shall be hosting an event in November 2015 to mark this special occasion. The project would like to recognise the efforts of Sean Harkin who managed the project for 17 years and would also like to thank the staff at North Lanarkshire Carers Together for their continued support (you know who you are!!).

Scottish Top Employer Awards for Working Families



North Lanarkshire Carers Together is delighted to have been recognised as a worthy finalist, in the category of 'Carer Scotland Award for Best for Carers and Elder-care' at the Scottish Top Employers Awards For Working Families 2015. The awards are organised by Family Friendly Working Scotland - a partnership of Working Families, Fathers Network Scotland, Parenting Across Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Sarah Jackson OBE, CEO Working Families who chaired The Scottish Top Employers for Working Families judging panel said: "The quality of entries was exceptional and it is apparent that organisations of all sizes and sectors across Scotland are wholeheartedly embracing family friendly flexible working. There is a clear understanding of the benefits this brings to business, family life, society and the economy".

Fiona McLeod MSP, Acting Minister for Children and Young People presented the awards on the day and our congratulations go to Centrica and Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service who were joint winners in our Category. Liz Seaton is pictured with Fiona McLeod MSP, Acting Minister for Children and Young People.



Certificate of Award Carer Positive Kitemark

North Lanarkshire Carers Together was awarded the Carer Positive kitemark in December 2014. Carer Positive is a Scottish Government funded initiative which has been developed with the support of a strong partnership of private, public and voluntary sector organisations in Scotland. The kitemark was listed as one of the ten manifesto commitments for carers in 2011 to 'recognise those employers who offer the best support to carers, allowing them the flexibility they often need to deliver care at home'. Carer Positive is operated by Carers Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The kitemark incorporates 3 levels or stages, from 'engaged' to 'established' through to 'exemplary'. These three stages enable employers to progress from one stage to the next, building from an initial level of commitment to embedding a culture of support for carers within the organisation. We have achieved the engaged level and are working towards recognition within the established stage.

It is estimated that there are 745,000 unpaid carers in Scotland with over 250,000 people in Scotland juggling caring with holding down a job!! North Lanarkshire Carers Together would like to encourage our partner organisations both within the statutory, third and independent sector to consider becoming a Carer Positive employer.

Interested in becoming a Carer Positive employer? The process is clear and straightforward, based on a simple self-assessment process, with employers describing how they meet the criteria expected at each level of the kitemark. For further information on our experience of applying for the Carer Positive kitemark contact Allison on 01698 404055 or email allison@carerstogogether.org alternatively contact Carers Scotland direct, details can be found at:

www.carersuk.org/scotland

Ministerial Visit to Carers Together Event

A Carer Engagement and Consultation Event was organised by North Lanarkshire Carers Together as the joint thematic lead for carer support (along with the Lanarkshire Carers Centre) to give carers the opportunity to hear about the range of work that has been developed within the Community Capacity Building and Carer Support Programme (CCB&CSP). 78 people attended the event in the Bellshill Hilton on the 29th of January where they heard from a wide range of presenters about the various activities that have taken place within each of the localities as well as hearing about what is taking place in relation to broader themes of work across the authority. Kenny Moffat, CEO of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire provided an overview of the CCB&CSP and how the work of the third sector has provided a vital role in the overall Reshaping Care for Older People Programme (RCOP). Kenny described how thematic areas of work were identified as part of a North Lanarkshire wide mapping and how third sector providers were supported to build capacity within their services to support more older people and their carers within the community.

Jamie Hepburn, MSP for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health provided a key note address and talked about the importance of carers support to the Scottish Government describing a number of initiatives and funding streams that have been made available to support carers and made particular reference to the importance of the Carers' Parliament, confirming that the 3rd Carers' Parliament will be on the 6th October 2015. The Minister also spoke about the Government's commitment to links with National Carer Organisations and highlighted the recent initiative of the Carer Positive Kite Mark which encourages employers to recognise skills of carers and employees.

The Minister concluded by saying: "This summit was a tremendously valuable event, bringing together carers from across North Lanarkshire. It was a good opportunity for me to hear what has been happening locally on community capacity building and carer support programmes, which of course I have a local interest in too as a representative of a constituency in North Lanarkshire.



I was pleased to be able to give them an update on our future plans. As a Government, we recognise the invaluable knowledge and experience that carers and young carers bring, not only to the people they care for, but to their local communities. We will continue to work together with carers, public sector, and voluntary sector partners to ensure that carers and young carers are better identified and supported across Scotland. A new Carers Bill, which will address some of these issues, will be introduced to parliament this year."

Presentations were followed by energetic round table discussions which gave carers and partner organisations the opportunity to discuss and share experiences, consider what was working and what was not as we move forward. The feedback from this day will be fed into discussions as partners forge vital plans to support growing numbers of older people and their carers in the future. A more detailed report of the consultation event can be obtained by contacting 01698 404055 or admin@carerstogogether.org

North Lanarkshire Carers Together has commissioned FMR Research to undertake an independent evaluation of the carer element of the CCB&CSP, this will consider the approach taken to carer support within RCOP, the differences it has made to carers and the impact on local carer support services. Our October issues will provide a summary of the findings of this research.

Short Break Carer Information Service

The Short Break Carers Information Service is working with various partnership agencies to bring some new and exciting short break opportunities to carers. Some of these opportunities are free of charge and some are at a reduced rate. We'll keep you updated on our website as services develop,

Respite

Lanarkshire Carers Centre and the Short Break Carers Information Service are working with Shared Care Scotland as part of a pilot project to bring respite to Lanarkshire. Respite aims to make connections between local organisations that help support unpaid carers and local hospitality providers such as hotels, guest houses, leisure clubs etc. The basic idea is that local hotels, for example, are able to make a gift of an overnight stay to a carer (plus companion) so that they can have a short break away from their caring responsibilities to recharge their batteries.

Pampering on the Move

Lanarkshire Carers Centre and the Short Break Carers Information Service in partnership with Caring for Carers Project based in New College Lanarkshire have launched their joint venture Pampering on the Move. The idea of Pampering on the Move is to enable carers to access six free sessions which can be from the podiatry service, pampering or holistic therapy sessions. Lanarkshire Carers Centre provide these services to carers across Lanarkshire, the service is only open to active carers who utilise their carer registration card.

Grants

The Short Break Carers Information Service will also hold information on the various grants that are available for carers, these include the Carers Breaks Fund, Creative Breaks, the Loudon Fund, to name a few. Although the list of grants is not exhaustive, there are some that are available to carers and not the person cared for. The Short Break Carers Information Service will be able to inform carer support workers, social work staff and other relevant practitioners of the funding cycle, how much is available and how carers can access these grants.

Carers can be supported to access any of these services via their local carer support worker and if you live in North Lanarkshire please telephone 01236 755550 (Wishaw carers please telephone Richard Adams, CLASP, on 01698 348009, alternatively if you live in South Lanarkshire please telephone 01698-428090.

Practitioners in North Lanarkshire can be supported to access any of these services for older carers or carers of older people that they work with by contacting Helen McAllister on 01236 755550 or alternatively e-mail Helen.McAllister@prtlcc.org.uk. The Short Break Carers Information Service is funded through Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP) for the first year. Please contact Helen McAllister if you wish to receive our monthly newsletter for updates on this service.

Interested in a Carers Together Presentation?

Are you part of a carers group or a group that's interested in carers issues? Would you like North Lanarkshire Carers Together to come to your group and talk about the work we do for and on behalf of carers within North Lanarkshire? If the answer is yes please contact Carolanne or Frances on 01698 404055.

We can provide you with information on carers rights, how to access services to assist you with your caring role and we can provide your group with regular updates on the developments around the national and local carers agenda. We can also ensure that your issues, as carers, are heard and represented at strategic planning levels within North Lanarkshire.

We are also developing our work with volunteers and have four levels of volunteering which include:

1. Taking part in carer consultations.
2. Supporting carer identification.
3. Representing carers' views on planning groups.
4. Becoming a director.

If you are interested in giving some of your time please get in touch.

Making Life Easier in North Lanarkshire



The Scottish Government are changing the way that people get help and support. Two examples are integration of health and social care and people being able to have their own budgets through self directed support to manage the care and support they require.

Scotland's population is also changing with more people living longer including people with not just one, but several long term health conditions. In response to the kind of help that people tell us they want and in order to manage the increasing numbers of people looking for help, North Lanarkshire Council have been investing in supports that provide preventative and early intervention as well as supported self management to help you live well with health conditions. This means that people can get help, through information and advice, at an earlier stage and have increased choices about how they manage their health and well being. Some of these investments have been made through Reshaping Care for Older People, some through strategies to improve support for mental wellbeing and dementia care and include making the Carers Journey available on Looking Local North Lanarkshire.

Making Life Easier is an online service which offers information, advice and practical support for a range of difficulties. For example, are you struggling to manage everyday activities that you never used to think about? Or are you worried about someone you live with or care for? All of us can find everyday activities like opening jars, getting on and off a chair, hearing the doorbell and struggling to get in and out of a bath or standing in a shower difficult from time to time. This might be because we are getting older, or because we live with a long term health condition or disability that just makes things more difficult to manage.

Help is at hand! Making Life Easier is an easy to use on line service where you can find help, advice, information and access to simple pieces of equipment and adaptations.

Any piece of equipment you are matched to at the end of your supported self assessment will be delivered free of charge by the Council's Integrated Equipment and Adaptation Service (IEAS) staff. About 80% of all equipment requests are delivered within 7 working days from IEAS.

Making Life Easier is free and totally confidential. It is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Around 25% of people use the service out of office hours eg after 6pm. Someone can also carry out a supported self assessment on your behalf and around a quarter of people who use Making Life Easier are doing so for a friend or family member. The family member doesn't need to live in North Lanarkshire, only the person they are helping does.

All you need to do is answer a few questions about you, your environment and how you manage to get matched to help. This usually takes around 15 minutes. You do need to register on the service which is free. This is so that if you are matched with equipment the staff at IEAS can deliver this to you. Your family member can register for you. Carers Together have staff who have been trained as Peer Advisors for Making Life Easier. Our staff can help any carer who is having difficulty accessing the website or would like more information. Contact 01698 404055.

If at the end of your supported self assessment you don't get offered any help – this doesn't mean there isn't anything for you – it means your difficulty is outwith the scope of self help and you need to see a member of staff. You will soon be able to book your own appointment online to do this. Making Life Easier is not something North Lanarkshire Council is providing instead of its usual services, it is part of the way we want to empower people to have more choice and control over how they get help and support.

You can find the service at www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/makinglifeeasier
If you want more information on the service contact one of our Disability Information Officers on
tel: 01698 274418 or 274584
mobile/SMS: 07939 283323
email: MakingLifeEasier@northlan.gov.uk

Annual Carer Conference 2014 'Carers' Health Matters'



Over 150 carers attended our annual carer conference in November where our focus was on carers' health. The aim of the conference was to highlight the findings from our own Carers Health Needs Report (1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014) which surveyed 455 carers and to discuss some of the key factors that impact on carers' health along with some of the pro-active carer initiatives within North Lanarkshire that can support carers to have a quality of life outwith caring.

The conference had key addresses from:

- Duncan Mackay, Executive Director of Housing and Social Work Services, North Lanarkshire Council. *Topic - integration*
- Corinne Thomson, Co-ordinator for Carers, North Lanarkshire Carers Together. *Topic – our work with GP practices in North Lanarkshire*
- Kate Carol, Carer. *Topic – carer story*
- Fiona Collie, Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Carers Scotland. *Topic – the financial impact on caring*
- Dr Carolyn Calder, GP – Orchard Medical Practice. *Topic – partnership working with North Lanarkshire Carers Together to meet the needs of carers.*
- Lesley Fishleigh, Carer Resource Worker, Lanarkshire Carers Centre. *Topic – carers registration card and short break carers information service*
- Melanie Menzies, Health & Wellbeing Manager, NL Leisure. *Topic – staying active.*

The Conference culminated in facilitated table-top discussions which provided all delegates with the opportunity to discuss the topics presented with a particular focus on carer experiences within GP practices. There were many points raised within the discussion sessions, here are some comments from the day:

- The carer approach taken within Orchard Medical Practice should be seen as a best practice example and promoted within other GP practices including implementation of the 'pop up' alert on computer screens which informs practice staff that their patient is also a carer.
- The lead GP for carers and GP Carer Liaison Officers should be easily identifiable in ALL GP practices.
- Greater consistency around the effective use of the GP carer register with some carers noting the benefit of invitations to flu clinics, carer information days and carer health checks whilst others were not aware of these opportunities, despite signing up to the carers register within their GP practice.
- The information provided in GP practices by North Lanarkshire Carers Together is invaluable and always up to date. Consideration should be given to carer information on electronic screens within GP practices and health centres.
- Carers recognised the benefits of being able to quickly access North Lanarkshire Carers Together staff for face to face meetings and be referred to carer supports where necessary, this was highly valued.

A full report from the conference and the Carers Health Needs report is available by contacting admin@carerstgether.org and both the Carers Health Needs Survey and Conference report have been presented to the NHS Lanarkshire Carer Information Strategy Group. We will keep you informed of any updates.