

## Keeping Caring Visible and Valued

### Working for You...



### North Lanarkshire Carers Together are celebrating our 20th-Year Anniversary this year

*"I volunteered 20 years ago, and as a 24/7 carer I knew some of the difficulties we faced. However, I was one of a group of volunteering founder members of North Lanarkshire Carers Together, and our task was to put together a brand-new organisation to be a voice for carers. We started working out of cardboard boxes from a school in Bellshill before our Hope Street office was ready. It was a great challenge to all of us, but the biggest buzz was knowing that our combined experiences could make a difference to carers known and unknown to us. Being that voice for carers at a time when carers in many respects were undervalued, and without representation became our focus.*

*We have always been fortunate in having a great staff team and none more so than the team working for you today. A huge thank you to all directors, staff, partners and volunteers along the way.*

*I still feel proud 20 years on knowing that all our work over the past 2 decades really has made a difference to the lives of carers in North Lanarkshire. That's a great reason for celebration. God bless to you all."*

#### Liz Seaton BEM

Chairperson of North Lanarkshire Carers Together.

### Provost's Citizenship Awards

This year, North Lanarkshire Council launched their inaugural Provost's Citizenship Awards to recognise local heroes and organisations who make outstanding contributions within their communities across North Lanarkshire.

We are delighted to announce North Lanarkshire Carers Together were shortlisted and alongside The Health and Wellness Hub and Community Action Newarthill, received our Certificate of Recognition for outstanding and dedicated service to our community.

Liz Seaton BEM, and our Carer Engagement and Information Worker Yvonne Cameron received the award from Head Provost Jean Jones. A huge well done to all recipients.



## Welcome to this edition of Working for You on this, our Anniversary Year.

Welcome to this year's edition of Working for You. It has certainly been a year that will have deeply affected everybody in one way or another and we hope the continued roll out of vaccinations help us all to move forward into what will be a different world for everyone, in the coming months.

Like most of our partners we have adapted our services over the last 14 months to ensure we continue to identify and engage with carers effectively. We have developed our IT systems to support the work of the organisation and now have a COVID-19 information hub on our website.

We continued with our Information and Advice service, helping carers with thousands of enquiries relating to their caring role and specific information on PPE, closure of services, where to find services as part of the COVID-19 response and more recently, how to get access to COVID-19 vaccinations. Additionally, as the locality host organisation for Motherwell within the Community Solutions Programme, we worked closely with the Community and Voluntary Sector in North Lanarkshire to meet the needs of local people, particularly during the pandemic. We provided carers with emotional and practical support and our staff volunteered to support anchor organisations to get food packs, prescriptions and wellbeing packs to those families most in need.

## Our Annual Recognition Awards Need Your Input

**Every year, a Young Carer is nominated to receive the North Lanarkshire Carers Together Tony Fitzpatrick Award in recognition of the contribution they make to Young Carers Services.**

This year we are delighted to inform you that we will also be acknowledging someone to receive the Adult Carer Representative Award for their contributions to representing the collective views and concerns on behalf of all carers across North Lanarkshire. The Board of Directors decided it would be fitting, in our anniversary year, to hold the inauguration of the new award and if successful will run annually alongside the Tony Fitzpatrick Award.

Do you have someone in mind who you think goes above and beyond their own caring role to represent other carers views that you would like to nominate?



## This Year's AGM

Another date for your diary will be our Annual General Meeting. This is taking place digitally on 26th July due to ongoing restrictions on public gatherings and will be a first for us, as we will be hosting the event via Zoom.

The theme of the AGM will be around funding for carer services and how carer engagement has played a part in shaping services.

In order to register your place, please contact us by email [admin@carerstogether.org](mailto:admin@carerstogether.org) or call our office on **01698 404055**

For those registering, a helpful Zoom guide will accompany joining instructions.

We hope to see you there!



If so, we would love to hear from you. Tell us the person's name and your reason for the nomination. You can also self-nominate. Applications will open on Monday 28th June and will close Monday 12th July.

All nominations will then be shortlisted by a panel of partners independent of our staff team. The overall winner will be decided through our Carer Forum platform (excluding any members nominated) and the winner will be announced at our AGM.

In order to register your place at the AGM or to place a nomination for the Adult Carer Representative Award, please contact us by Email [admin@carerstogether.org](mailto:admin@carerstogether.org) or call our office on **01698 404055**



# An Independent Review of Adult Social Care

In September 2020, The First Minister requested an Independent Board be set up to review Adult Social Care in Scotland and as part of that process, to submit a range of recommendations to the Scottish Government for improvements.

*'The Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland'* concluded with a report and recommendations in January 2021. This recommends that a new National Care Service be set up, and a specific government minister in a new role is to be appointed to oversee social care in Scotland.

The report states a National Care Service should be established in law 'on an equal footing' with the NHS.

One major change recommended extends to the removal of all charges for social care *'at the point of need'*, mirroring the NHS, coupled with a *'substantial uplift'* to funding and a human rights-based approach to social care.

Review chair Derek Feeley concluded however, that care services should not be nationalised, and instead pointed to higher levels of public satisfaction with services from the Community & Voluntary Sector as providers of care.

The First Minister said the report was a *"vital first step"* to creating a National Care Service and in fact the SNP stated in their manifesto in the lead up to

the recent Scottish elections that they would implement the recommendations in the report in full.

A useful 5-page summary written by the Coalition of Carers in Scotland was recently sent out in our e-bulletin which highlights the recommendations.

The key recommendations related to carers are set out below:

- National Care Service to take a human rights-based approach to support for carers
- Human rights at the heart of social care
- Reform of eligibility criteria for support from social work to allow for more prevention and early intervention
- More independent advocacy and brokerage services
- More effective complaints system and a right to redress
- Portable care packages
- Co-production and better implementation of Self-Directed Support (SDS)
- A right to respite with the development of a range of options for respite and breaks from caring
- Carers more involved in planning their own support
- Carers as full partners on Integrated Joint Boards and the Board of the National Care Service

If you would like to sign up for regular news and updates from North Lanarkshire Carers Together you can do so by visiting [www.carerstogether.org](http://www.carerstogether.org) or emailing us [enquiries@carerstogether.org](mailto:enquiries@carerstogether.org)



## Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland



# Exciting Updates We Want To Share

## Independent Advocacy for Carers

**In North Lanarkshire, there are currently four commissioned advocacy services. Between them they provide a fantastic service to older adults, to adults affected by mental ill-health or disability, to those people with a housing related issue and another for young people who are care experienced or have a disability. Until now, there hasn't been an advocacy service for carers.**

Each time any of our staff speak to carers and most partner organisations in consultation on carers issues, the issue of a need for carer advocacy comes up time and time again.

Indeed, the Scottish Government, Advocacy for Unpaid Carers, Guidance, (2016) states:

*“Some carers, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from independent advocacy to support them in many different ways, including supporting them in dealings with health and social care and other professionals”*

North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership as you may recall, conducted a tender exercise for carer services which resulted in us being awarded the contract for Campaigning, Information and Carer Representation, which began in April 2019. Part of this contract included us developing an Independent Advocacy service for carers living in North Lanarkshire.

Partnership working and meaningful consultation is important to North Lanarkshire Carers Together and as part of the development of this service, we undertook a scoping exercise to ascertain the need for such a service and to formalise the gap we knew existed. This was a partnership approach and involved carers, carer organisations, advocacy services, the Community & Voluntary sector and Health and Social Care.

Over a six-month period, we spoke to the four current advocacy providers, completed an online survey of 66 partners, spoke to 109 carers across 11 different organisations, spoke to Health and Social Care, inviting all participants to a concluding consultation event. Of all the carers we spoke to, all were in favour of and supported an Independent Advocacy Service and only 1 had heard of the Carers Self-Advocacy Toolkit. Almost all of the partner organisations were also in favour of a service for carers.

It is therefore with great excitement to be able to tell you in this 2021 newsletter 'Working for You' that North Lanarkshire Carers Together have launched a new Independent Advocacy service for adult carers living in North Lanarkshire. More details on how and when you can access this service will be shared through our usual media channels.

## Watch this space!

## Care Opinion

**As a carer who may have had positive or negative experiences of health or social care, would you like to share your experiences?**

You may have received a poor service and would like something rectified or for a service to adapt how they operate?

Or, have you received a good service and want to commend a staff member or to highlight what worked so they can keep doing what they are doing well?

Care Opinion is a safe platform where you can do that from the comfort of your own home and comments/stories are read by senior staff in health and care!

When Care Opinion publish your story on their site, they don't say who you are, and they never share your personal details with anyone else. All stories are moderated in such a way so that no individual is identifiable.

People who share their stories on Care Opinion may have plenty of experience and expertise in how it feels to use health and social work services. They also have great ideas on how services could be improved.

Care Opinion is available for use across NHS Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Health and Care Partnership. You can make a comment on Care Opinion by going to their website at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) If you need any more information about Care Opinion, please contact our office on **01698 404055** or email [enquiries@carerstogether.org](mailto:enquiries@carerstogether.org)





## North Lanarkshire Carers Together Carer Forum Want To Hear From You!

**NLCT Carer Forum was set up in 2019 and is hosted by our staff. It involves a group of carers from North Lanarkshire who want carer's collective voices and concerns heard at a local and national level and to take opportunities for engagement and participation in consultations which directly or indirectly affect carers in North Lanarkshire.**

Carers have the right to be informed, heard, and their views considered. We aim to make a positive difference to the lives of carers in North Lanarkshire through the provision of information alongside our carer representation and campaigning work.

Our organisation is a registered charity working in partnership with Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire and a wide range of Community and Voluntary Sector and National Organisations to influence policy development and service provision, which affect both carers and the people they care for.

The work of the Carer Forum is crucial in ensuring carers collective views are listened to, consulted and represented at various partnership groups as well as for the purposes of engagement and participation in the development of policies and services locally.

We have had 2 meetings this year and some of our recent consultations within the Carer Forum have been

- The recent Independent Review of Adult Social Care
- Then National Carers Organisation Carer Manifesto
- The North Lanarkshire Carers Funding Ambition

Our first meeting had 8 carers attend and we are delighted to say we now have over 20 members attending regularly and their contribution is greatly appreciated.

One carer who attends is Sharon Grant who is a parent carer. She says *"My name is Sharon and I'm an unpaid carer. I joined the Carers Forum to hear what other carers views were and to see if other carers were experiencing the same barriers and challenges in their caring role. It's good to know what's going on within our local community and meet other carers with a passion for change. It's important for me to be able to express my views and feel like my voice is being heard as so often carers feel they don't have a voice or that someone is truly listening. Since joining the Carers Forum it's given me the reassurance and understanding that NLCT are using their platform to promote change and ultimately fight for carers with carers views firmly at the forefront."*

We have had to change our way of *"getting together"* due to the pandemic and so we now meet quarterly via Zoom platform. This is proving popular as many carers can take part from their homes, reducing need for anyone to help with the person they care for and removing the need to leave the home and drive or take transport.

Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday 7th July from 12.30pm to 2.30pm and the last one of 2021 taking place on 13th October from 12.30-2.30pm.

If you would like to find out more about how to get involved please contact the office on **01698 404055** or email **[enquiries@carerstogogether.org](mailto:enquiries@carerstogogether.org)**



# What Our Team Have to Say

## Colin Smith

**Hi everyone, my name is Colin Smith and I am the Development Manager in North Lanarkshire Carers Together.**

I have been employed here since November 2020 and before that I was Service Manager at HOPE for Autism, set up REACH Lanarkshire Autism and was Carer Services Manager at Lanarkshire Carers. You will have read more about that in this issue of the Newsletter.

My role here is to manage all of the services and staff and to ensure that we continue to provide sound Information and Advice to carers and other organisations on your rights as a carer. I also support the team in campaigning on your behalf and making sure you are either supported to represent your views or are properly represented by me and my staff across North Lanarkshire when it comes to policy making and statutory service development. I am also the Carer Network Lead within the Community & Voluntary Sector programme of work called Community Solutions.

At home, I am happily married to Ayeshah, we have two adult daughters and we love going to our caravan and holidays to Ibiza (when we can). I have been a carer for my daughter and more recently for my mum too. When I get some spare time, I love walking and recently started 'Munro Bagging' although I prefer the pleasure out of it rather than seeing it as a competition! I also enjoy gardening, reading and photography. I used to play golf but as Mark Twain once said – it was a waste of a good walk (because I was so rubbish at it).

## Donna Gardner

**Hi everyone, my name is Donna Gardner and I am the Administrator at North Lanarkshire Carers Together.**

I have been employed here since July 2003. Being the Administrator has many various aspects from answering the telephone, welcoming visitors (under normal circumstances), day-to-day finances, taking minutes of all meetings and liaising with various organisations. I'm a carer for my Dad who has various health conditions. I was also a carer for my Mum who fought cancer for 5 years. Being a carer and working full-time can be challenging and it makes all the difference to be employed by an organisation that has Exemplary Carer Positive status.

I'm single and don't have any children, however I'm deeply blessed to be a huge part of my 8 year old niece's life. My Dad, Sister, Niece and I have a very close relationship and we love caravan holidays. I also enjoy spending time with friends and I am a dog lover who gets to spend time with my niece's dog Ruby.

## Carolanne Christie

**Hi everyone, my name is Carolanne Christie and I am the Senior Carer Information and Engagement worker at North Lanarkshire Carers Together.**

I have been employed here since October 2014. I have loved helping shape the service over the years. I am very proud to be part of the team and the strong partnership relationships we have with the community, voluntary and statutory sector across North Lanarkshire. I love meeting carers and being in the privileged position of hearing their stories and offering help. I have had various caring roles over the years and understand the challenges and barriers carers face.

When I am not working I love spending time with my family and friends and I imagine, similar to most people over the last 15 months I have found the pandemic very challenging as I love social interaction. When I get some me time I like to go walks, go to the gym, read books and write poetry, I find it very therapeutic. I am married to Peter, I have 3 children, 2 fur babies and in July I have the greatest honour of becoming a grandparent – so I don't imagine I will have much free time (or money left) but I cannot wait.

## Yvonne Cameron

**Hi everyone, my name is Yvonne Cameron and I am presently one of the Carer Information and Engagement Workers at North Lanarkshire Carers Together.**

I have been employed here since September 2011. I was a carer for my elderly parents and most of my time was spent looking after my dad and latterly my mum doing shopping, housework, financial aspects, holidays and other day to day things. This was to say the least very challenging at times, having to juggle work and homelife, however, North Lanarkshire Carers Together have always been an excellent employer, allowing me time to do what I needed to should an urgent situation arise during working hours. I also consider myself to have been lucky having a husband and a son who were very helpful in helping me care for my parents. Being a carer, I understand the emotional challenges, and difficulties carers face on a daily basis and I enjoy being part of the journey in helping to access the most relevant information.

I have a lovely granddaughter now who is two years of age, and I enjoy spending as much time with her as I possibly can, as well as time away with my husband at our caravan in Berwick-Upon-Tweed.

## Corinne Thomson

**Hi everyone, my name is Corinne Thomson and I am a Carer Information and Engagement Worker at North Lanarkshire Carers Together.**

I have been employed at North Lanarkshire Carers Together for over eight years now, my role and job title has changed over the years to adapt with the Organisational Structures.

No work day is the same, the same as a caring role, it is a very varied job, part of my remit is to listen, inform and of course ensure that carers know what information and support is available to them, also advising carers about their rights in line with the Carer Scotland Act 2016. As well as being the commissioned Carer Information and Advice Service in North Lanarkshire, we are also the carer representation and campaigning organisation, I am also the link person for the Carer Forum within NLCT.

On a personal level, I am happily married, have 2 grown up children, a son and a daughter and I have a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel who is our fur baby. I enjoy walking my dog which I find is great for my headspace as well as my overall well-being and fitness levels. My main passion is travelling and experiencing different countries, their cultures, food and their ways of life. I also enjoy camping and visiting different parts of Scotland, particularly the East Neuk of Fife.

Finally, I believe that life should be like a Mars Bar, work, rest and play... too much work is not good, too much rest is not good and too much play is also not good, therefore the balance of all three is essential.

## Alan McDonald

**Hi everyone, my name is Alan McDonald and I am the new Carer Information and Communications Worker for North Lanarkshire Carers Together.**

I've just started in this role and I'm very much looking forward to promoting the great work that the organisation does for carers in North Lanarkshire. Previously, I was the Data Management Coordinator for Lanarkshire Carers and I also worked for Optical Express for over a decade before coming to work in the Community & Voluntary sector.

I have been married for over twenty years and have two sons, aged 16 and 10. My wife and I care for our eldest son who is on the autistic spectrum. My personal interests include reading - where I try to read one book a month - watching terrible horror films and attending a local Taekwondo/fighting club.

## Helen McAllister

**Hi everyone, my name is Helen McAllister and I have worked at North Lanarkshire Carers Together since August 2020 as the Community Link Worker.**

I provide support to vulnerable people in the Motherwell community by supporting groups that deliver activities that help people stay healthy and active as well as making sure no one is isolated. My post is funded by Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire through Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire's Community Solutions Programme.

I have been married to my husband, Thomas, for 29 years and we have one son, Aaron. I also have a step-daughter, Connie, who I'm extremely close to. In my free time I enjoy going away in our touring caravan, reading and walking. Apart from last year (and this year), due to the current pandemic, we also have a yearly trip to Benidorm with my siblings and their partners - No Children Allowed, although all the "children" are adults, as they constantly tell us.

I am extremely delighted to be working at North Lanarkshire Carers Together and more especially this year, helping to celebrate our 20th anniversary.

## Tracy Wallace

**Hi everyone, my name is Tracy Wallace and I have recently joined the team as a Carer Information and Engagement Worker.**

I am delighted to be joining the team at North Lanarkshire Carers Together. I was employed by Renfrewshire Carers Centre for almost 16 years as their Office Manager; I gained my degree in Integrated Health and Social Care in my forties and continue to learn and develop.

I have been with my hubby Craig for 27 years and we live in Paisley with our two fur babies. I help Craig to run his home improvements business and don't get as much as a shelf up - it is true what they say about cobblers weans having nae shoes! I am very blessed to still have my parents and if there is anything good to come from the last year it is the fun stories that I heard while spending quality time with them.

## Farewell

On behalf of the Board of Directors and full staff team, we would like to thank three staff who have moved on over the past year since our last copy of Working for You.

**Elle Scott - Carers Act Implementation Worker**  
**Sean Harkin - Carer Network Lead**  
**Allison Smith - Advisor to the Board**

All contributed greatly to the previous successes of North Lanarkshire Carers Together and without their commitment to carers we wouldn't be the successful organisation we are today, working for and on behalf of carers across North Lanarkshire.





## 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.

## Important update on Working for You

As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability and to adapt to the new digital world, this will be our last printed version to be sent out to all on our mailing list.

A recent Finnish study found the lifespan of one printed newspaper to generate the equivalent Carbon Footprint to that of a car travelling 1 kilometre. We printed in excess of 4000 of these newsletters each year. We will however be sending digital versions of Working for You direct to your email address starting from next year.

If you currently receive our e-bulletin, we will automatically add you to the recipients of the new e-Working for You and you do not need to do anything.

If you do not currently receive our e-bulletin but would like to receive your e-Working for You from next year, please contact us through the following means to register your email address and update your records with us:

Email [admin@carerstogether.org](mailto:admin@carerstogether.org)  
Direct Message on Facebook [@NLcarerstogether](https://www.facebook.com/NLcarerstogether)  
Direct Message on Twitter [@nlct\\_carers](https://twitter.com/nlct_carers)

If you have no means of contacting us through these channels and do not have access to digital platforms, please call us on **01698 404055** to discuss your needs.

If you do not contact us, unfortunately you will not receive future copies of Working for You.



Like us on Facebook [@NLcarerstogether](https://www.facebook.com/NLcarerstogether)



Follow us on Twitter [@nlct\\_carers](https://twitter.com/nlct_carers)

North Lanarkshire Carers Together is a campaigning organisation that gives carers a voice. Please get in touch with us, we want to hear your stories and represent your views in the planning and development of services, please contact [enquiries@carerstogether.org](mailto:enquiries@carerstogether.org)

Our office is open from Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm.  
For information to help in your caring role call us on: **01698 404055**  
or book an appointment at: [appointments@carerstogether.org](mailto:appointments@carerstogether.org)



In association with...



## Interested in Volunteering?

If you find the work we do interesting and would like to find out more about volunteering with us please give us a call on **01698 404055** or email [enquiries@carerstogether.org](mailto:enquiries@carerstogether.org)

