



Caring Matters

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Cover image: The wonderful SCC staff team



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Editorial

Claire Smith, Charity Director

As Swindon Carers Centre (SCC) prepares to close its doors, we do so with full hearts and appreciation. This decision has not been easy, but it comes after careful reflection from the Trustees, and with the knowledge that our charity has made a meaningful impact to thousands of carers in Swindon.



We believe we have delivered in our mission: 'To improve the wellbeing of people with caring responsibilities in and around Swindon' and that we have achieved our vision of 'Creating a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported.'

Our Legacy Fund will provide ongoing support to projects and initiatives that enhance carers' wellbeing and help them prioritise their own physical and emotional health across Swindon.

Thank you for believing in us, supporting us, and for helping us to ensure carers are supported and heard. As we close this chapter, we do so with love, respect, and enduring hope for the future.

We wish Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC) all the very best and know that they will continue to drive forward change for carers.

With genuine thanks,
Claire Smith



A brief reflection on 28 years of service

SCC began offering support to carers in Swindon in 1997 and has seen many changes, including a change in name from 'Focus on Carers and Self-Help' to what we are known as now.

Our achievements include:

- 2006** - Two Royal visits from Anne, Princess Royal, who has also served as Patron of SCC.
- 2011** - Achieved our first PQASSO Quality Mark Level 2 accreditation; since then, we've been re-accredited annually under the Trusted Charity scheme.
- 2012** - Received the Carers Trust Centre of Excellence Award, with continued re-accreditation in following years.
- 2020** - Achieved the Armed Forces Covenant Bronze Award.
 - Received the Carers Trust 'Excellence for Carers' Quality Mark.
 - Swiftly adapted to COVID-19 lockdown measures, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery during a time of crisis.
 - SCC's partnership working with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) helped ensure unpaid carers were recognised as essential workers and included in the first round of COVID-19 vaccinations.
 - SCC was selected by Wiltshire Police to support the launch of the Herbert Protocol, enhancing support for vulnerable individuals.
- 2021** - Represented the voluntary sector at the Integrated Care Alliance (ICA), contributing to conversations around Swindon's health needs and promoting the voice of carers across key stakeholders.
 - Participated in a roundtable discussion with Department of Health & Social Care policy leads on reforms to the health and social care system.
- 2022** - Awarded Wiltshire Life Charity of the Year.
- 2023** - SCC carers invited by the ICB to share lived experiences of supporting someone with mental health challenges.
 - Achieved NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) certification.
 - SCC's Mental Health Carers Group was consulted during the development of the BSW Mental Health Strategy.
- 2024** - Re-certified for the NHS DSPT.
 - Invited to the Houses of Parliament to contribute to discussions on proposed changes to the Mental Health Bill, advocating for better identification of children supporting a parent with severe mental illness.
- 2025** - Our Patron and former CEO, Susanna Jones, was awarded an MBE for services to carers in Swindon.
 - GEL Studios announced Swindon Carers Centre as its charity partner for 2025

In terms of reach and impact, in 2006, SCC had approximately 2,000 registered carers. By 2025, we had grown to support over 5886 registered carers, reflecting the increasing recognition of unpaid carers and the growing need for support within our community.



Thanks and acknowledgments

Claire Smith, Charity Director

Over the years, Swindon Carers Centre has had the privilege of working alongside incredible carers, passionate volunteers, generous donors, and dedicated staff. We are immensely proud of what we've achieved together and deeply humbled by the support that has made it all possible. None of it would have been possible without your unwavering commitment and dedication.

We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our Trustees and Patrons, who have given their time, expertise, and guidance behind the scenes. Their tireless efforts have ensured strong governance and a steadfast commitment to our values and mission.

Additionally, we wish to express our gratitude to the numerous funders, grant givers and those who have donated time and funds to SCC so generously over the years. Your generosity has played a vital role in helping us deliver our programmes, from ongoing outreach to providing much-needed respite for young carers during school holidays - with many supporters, such as Friends of Young Carers Swindon, helping to make this possible through long-standing fundraising efforts.

It has been a privilege to work with each of you in building a community where carers are recognised, valued, and supported.



Introducing Swindon Carers Together

Update from Cornwall Rural Community Charity

We're delighted to share some important and exciting news about the future of carer support in Swindon. Thanks to the valuable ideas, feedback, and votes many of you contributed, we now have a **name and visual identity** for the new carer support service: **Swindon Carers Together**.



This name was the most popular choice among carers and captures the spirit of connection and shared strength that you told us was important.

- **Swindon** confirms that this service is tailored to the needs of local carers.
- **Carers** focuses on the people who provide unpaid care and support to loved ones.
- **Together** speaks to unity, collaboration, and mutual support, showing that you are not alone.

The logo was co-designed with carers and reflects key values, including **togetherness, diversity, movement, and progress**.

Our Shared Values

As part of this journey, carers and partners identified **three core values** that will guide how Swindon Carers Together is delivered:

1. **Connection:** Ensuring carers can meet other carers, access support from staff and volunteers who understand their needs, and have opportunities to improve their wellbeing.
2. **Transparency:** Working openly and honestly with carers and partners.
3. **Collaboration:** Working with others to ensure carers get the best possible joined-up support in the Swindon area.

These values will be at the heart of everything we do, from frontline support to strategic decision-making. Together, we are building a service that truly reflects the heart of Swindon's caring community.

What Happens Next

The new service will officially **launch on 1st January 2026**. Our main goal is to ensure a **seamless transition** for you. We are working hard to manage the legal process (known as TUPE) to ensure staff currently providing support have the opportunity to transfer to the new provider, meaning **familiar faces will continue to be here to help**.

What this means for you:

- You will **continue to receive the support** you need and deserve.
- There will be **minimal disruption** to your access to services.
- In the first few months, some groups or activities might be a little smaller as we settle in and establish the new provision.

We're grateful for the support of Swindon Borough Council, who are working closely with us to ensure a joined-up approach that always puts carers first.



Get Involved

We want to make sure you are kept **informed and involved** every step of the way. We're inviting you to join a **Carer Engagement Group** to help us shape how we communicate during this important transition. Your insights will help us understand what information matters most, how best to share updates, and ensure your voices are heard.

If you're interested, please contact us at ceo@cornwallrcc.org.uk or complete the short expression of interest form here: [Registration Form](#). Your voice matters. Help us build a service that reflects the values, needs, and priorities of carers in Swindon. We look forward to working with you!

Young Carers

Andrea Macdonald, Deputy Service Delivery Manager

The Young Carer Team (YC Team) are dedicated to carrying out young carer assessments, identifying appropriate support, and continuously adapting as communication methods and support measures evolve. From working as a team to sending out invites to groups and activities in paper form, 100's of enveloped stuffed each quarter, we now enjoy a digital system which has allowed us to be more productive and communicate more freely with parents/guardians. (And less paper cuts are also a bonus).

Through funding from the National Lottery, we were able to build relationships with Swindon schools and highlight why support at school for young carers will help them to enjoy, achieve and realise their own aspirations. This project led to many schools in Swindon providing a young carer lead and a support programme for young carers to access. We thank every school in the borough for the support you have and continue to extend to young carers.

Early in the charity's life, we were fortunate to be the beneficiary of the Friends of Young Carers Swindon (FOYCS) charity. For over 23 years, this group has dedicated their free time to fundraising for young carers to experience activities during school holidays, enabling a break away from caring, engagement with peers, and safe adults where they can be a child.

Activities have ranged from local outings such as cinema to paintballing, through to trips to theme parks, a London day out, and not forgetting the Young Carers Festival, where we have seen young carers grow in confidence, meet young carers from across the UK, and realise that as adults we need at least 10 hours of sleep a night but survive on the smiles and excitement this trip generated. This support has truly been amazing, and it has been a joy to work alongside FOYCS; we salute you!



We have been blessed with dedicated volunteers who have been with the service for many years. Holly supports the YC Team with administration, always with a can-do attitude and a smile. The married duo of Gary and Shirley have supported groups and activities, becoming familiar faces for young carers and providing encouragement and nurture when young carers have needed a little help. Thank you; we were fortunate that you chose SCC to volunteer for.

"[I] enjoyed being with other young people my age and staff are nice. Loads of fun and met people."

"I can be myself and not have any worries."

"Chilled, as I was taking a break for me."



Adult Carers

Tina Richards, Deputy Service Delivery Manager

The Adult Carer Team (AC Team) plays a vital role in supporting unpaid carers across Swindon. Their work focuses on helping carers maintain their own health and wellbeing while managing the demands of caring for a loved one. The team works with carers supporting adults with physical disabilities, mental health needs, learning disabilities, or long-term conditions, providing personalised, compassionate, and practical assistance.



At the core of the AC Team's work is the identification and support of carers through Carers Conversations (previously known as Carer's Assessments), which assess the impact of caring responsibilities on a person's wellbeing. These conversations help shape tailored support plans that empower carers to look after themselves as well as those they care for. The team also provides ongoing advice and guidance on local services, financial support, and navigating the benefits system. Outreach work, including presentations and event participation, helps raise awareness of carers' needs and the resources available to them.

The services delivered by the team are wide-ranging and responsive to individual circumstances. These include one-to-one support, assistance with applications for Carers Relief and wellbeing grants, and emotional support through the Carer Support Line. The team also administers the Emergency Card Scheme, offering peace of mind by ensuring there is a plan in place if a carer is suddenly unable to provide care. Carers are also supported through benefits advice, bereavement support, and access to social groups and wellbeing activities that reduce isolation and build community.

Over the years, the impact of this work has been significant. Since November 2021, the team has supported carers in claiming more than £3.4 million in benefits, including over £176,000 in backdated payments providing vital financial security. Since April 2021, they have put in place 795 new Emergency Card Plans and reviewed 344 existing ones to ensure they remain accurate. More recently, since August 2023, the team has secured 110 successful Carers Relief applications, giving carers the opportunity to take essential breaks from their caring role.

The Carer Support Line continues to be a lifeline for many, offering not only practical guidance but also emotional reassurance. For some carers, simply knowing the team is there is a source of comfort in itself. Feedback from carers highlights the trust and gratitude felt towards the team:

"Thank you so very much for getting me this wonderful service, it has made such a huge difference to me and it is invaluable, I feel so much better for it and I am immensely grateful"

"You offer the security of knowing there is someone to help when times are bad."

Collaboration has been a big part of our work. Over the years, we've built strong links with professionals and organisations, helping us offer more joined-up and effective support for carers. These partnerships mean we can respond more confidently to carers' needs and offer them the best possible outcomes. I'm incredibly proud of the Adult Carer Team and the dedication, energy, and compassion they bring to their work every day.

Through every conversation, application, and event, I've seen the Adult Carer Team make a real and lasting difference. Their dedication ensures that carers across Swindon feel recognised, supported, and never left to face their journey alone.



Parent Carers

Lorraine Kardasz, Parent Carer Support Practitioner

Over the years, the Parent Carer Team (PC Team) has worked to support families in recognising their dual role, not only as parents, but as carers for their children with additional needs. The team has consistently encouraged parent carers to seek support, access reliable information, and engage with a wide range of social activities, training sessions, and family-focused events. By offering both emotional understanding and practical help, the team has become a trusted source of support for many.



Through Parent Carer Assessments, the team helps identify individual needs and provide tailored support. This includes applying for grants and funding to enable much-needed respite, and referring families to other services where appropriate. Whether it's through one-to-one conversations or group events, empathy and respect are at the core of everything the team does.

A standout highlight was hosting a Carers Rights Day in 2023 that focused entirely on the needs of parent carers, a group that is often overlooked and under-recognised. Giving them the platform to share their experiences and have their voices heard was a powerful and successful moment, both for the families involved and for Swindon Carers Centre as a whole.

Another memorable achievement was the team's involvement in the Transition Roadshow, which sadly no longer runs. As a key part of the planning committee, the team helped grow the event into a highly anticipated and well-attended occasion. It became a valuable space for both professionals and families to come together and navigate the often complex journey from education into adult life.

On a lighter note, the team also hosted a number of Parent Carer social evenings at the Goddard Arms. These fun-filled, buzzing events provided a rare opportunity for carers to relax, unwind, and connect with others facing similar challenges. The uplifting atmosphere was just as meaningful for the team as it was for those attending, offering a much-needed reminder of the joy that shared understanding and community can bring. Listening to parents open up about their experiences remains one of the most humbling aspects of the team's work. The honesty with which carers share their challenges: the heartache, the guilt, and the daily battles - is a testament to their resilience and strength. It also fuels the team's determination to keep delivering the best possible support.

One parent, following a completed assessment, shared the impact it had: "Thank you so very much. I have read through the assessment. As much as it hurts my heart to see it all in front of me, I will try and come along to the Parent Carer coffee morning - it will be lovely to meet you and will do me good to leave the house. Again, thank you. It's the first time I've spoken to someone else that just understands."



It is this connection, this sense of being heard and understood, that drives the PC Team to continue delivering compassionate, high-quality support to families across Swindon.

Carer Events

Heather Goldsmith, Events Manager

This marks our final update as the Events Team at Swindon Carers Centre, but we're excited about the future and look forward to continuing our work under the new provider of carers' services in Swindon from January 2026.

Over the years, the Events Team has been proud to deliver a diverse, inclusive, and engaging programme of events for older carers, adult carers, and parent carers. From social meetups and peer support groups to creative wellbeing sessions and training opportunities, we've always aimed to offer something meaningful for everyone.

We've loved hosting arts and crafts workshops, relaxation sessions, and skills-based activities that brought carers together in supportive and welcoming spaces. Our ever-popular coach trips to the seaside gave carers a chance to take a well-earned break, and we've shared many special memories and moments along the way.

Supporting carers through all stages of their journey has been central to our work. We're especially proud of establishing the PATH Bereavement Support Group, which has provided a safe, compassionate space for bereaved carers navigating life after their caring role ends.

Through the 'What's On' forms and regular communication, we've kept carers informed and involved. Carer feedback has helped us shape and improve what we offer, ensuring that our events remained relevant, accessible, and impactful. We've also built valued partnerships with venues, funders, and local organisations, all of which played a vital role in what we've achieved.

A huge thank you goes to all members of the Events Team, as well as our dedicated volunteers, Roger, Sarah, Maggie and Holly, for their professionalism, enthusiasm, and commitment to supporting carers across Swindon.

Thank you also to the carers who took part in our events and activities over the years. It has been a privilege to serve you, and we are proud of everything that has been achieved together.



"I didn't realise how much I needed the escape until after I had attended...it's so nice to spend time with others that understand your situation"

"The SCC staff are amazing making sure everyone is welcomed, and a new member feels very included from the first moment they arrive. They also come and have a chat with you to see if you need any help and support, which is greatly appreciated...I am not sure where I would be without a group like this as the companionship, support and new friends is a lovely place to be."



Key dates and contact information

Swindon Carers Centre will remain open and services operating as normal until 24th December 2025, with all usual contact methods available, including our phone lines and email. As in previous years, our service will be closed over the Christmas and New Year period. The new service provided by Cornwall Rural Community Charity will begin on 2nd January 2026 and will be based at Sanford House.

To ensure there is no disruption to your support, we will securely transfer your personal data, and that of the person you care for, to CRCC in December 2025, unless you choose to opt out. This will allow CRCC to continue offering support seamlessly.

The information transferred will include your contact details, details of your caring role, your cared for details, support history, and any services you've accessed. You can find a full breakdown of information that will transfer along with the relevant legal basis in our Privacy Notice.

If you wish to continue receiving support from January 2026, no action is required. However, if you do not want your information shared with CRCC, you can opt out by contacting us by the 30th November 2025 via email, info@swindoncarers.org.uk, or telephone, 01793 531133.

Please include your full name and address when making this request. If you choose to opt out, your records will be anonymised and securely deleted after our service closes in December 2025.

Swindon Carers Centre Legacy Fund

As Swindon Carers Centre prepares to close at the end of December 2025, we are proud to announce the launch of the [Swindon Carers Centre Legacy Fund](#).

This dedicated fund has been created to ensure SCC's mission continues, supporting unpaid carers across Swindon for years to come. Funded through the charity's remaining reserves and generous public contributions, it reflects the shared and enduring commitment of our 28-year legacy to leave a meaningful and lasting impact.

The Legacy Fund will be managed by Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation (WSCF), an independent charity, who will make grants from the fund for the benefit of carers in Swindon. These grants will fund projects that support carers' wellbeing, helping them look after both their physical and emotional health. WSCF will work closely with Cornwall Rural Community Charity – the organisation taking forward the local authority contract for carers in Swindon – to identify projects for funding, assessing applications, carrying out monitoring and evaluation and ensuring the fund is having an impact.

“Over nearly three decades, Swindon Carers Centre has stood beside unpaid carers: listening, supporting, and advocating,” said Claire Smith, Charity Director. “Closing SCC is not a decision we've taken lightly. But through the Legacy Fund, and with the support of Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation, we're ensuring that our mission doesn't end, it evolves.”

“We have been proud to support Swindon Carers Centre through our grant-making for more than 20 years and are delighted to be able to continue supporting their legacy over the coming years, making a difference to the lives of carers in Swindon” said Fiona Oliver Joint Chief Executive of WSCF.

If you'd like to donate to the Swindon Carers Centre Legacy Fund you can do so by bank transfer, phone, or cheque directly to WSCF – you can find the [donation form and details here](#). We'll send you a donation form for you to link on your website and you can read more about WSCF's work here: <https://www.wscf.org.uk/>



Join us for our **CARERS RIGHTS DAY EVENT**

Thursday 20th November
10am – 1pm **drop in** session

Pilgrim Centre
Regent Circus, Swindon SN1 1PX

Meet local charities and organisations that support adult, parent and young carers.

Get information on services, wellbeing, finance, education and more.

Ask questions and get guidance tailored to your needs

Everyone is invited, and it's free!
Drop by and join us.

Please note that the event will take place on the first floor of the Pilgrim Centre, which can be accessed by either stairs or the lift. For further details, don't hesitate to reach out via email at communications@swindoncarers.org.uk.





Thank you

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