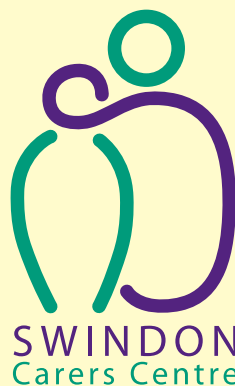


Caring Matters

Newsletter

Autumn 2019



Carers Rights Day Save The Date! page 4

Benefits news with Tim Saint page 8

Carer Groups and Activities update pages 12

Supporting Family Carers of All Ages

Autumn 2019

It's been a hugely busy summer here at Swindon Carers Centre. We had a great Carers Week – including the biggest turnout to date for our annual Walk A Mile event. You can read about it – and also find out what we are planning for Carers Rights Day in November – on page 4.

We've had a packed programme of events and activities for carers who have enjoyed the sunshine over the past few months. You'll find lots of photos and write ups about our Parent Carers and Young Carers on pages 10 and 11 with a full preview of our autumn What's On guide from page 12 onwards.

Our Welfare Benefits expert, Tim Saint writes about recent changes to benefits affecting carers on page 8 and if you need information or advice on keeping your home warm this autumn and winter, page 9 has details of the Wiltshire Safe and Warm initiative.

We have a great team of staff and volunteers at SCC who regularly

go above and beyond their job roles, so I wanted to give a special mention to Andrea and Hayley from our Young Carer and Parent Carer Team who both have taken on physical challenges, to raise money, not just for SCC but Young Minds too. You can read about their exploits on page 3. We are very proud of them!

And to finish for this edition – a shameless plug (below) for our 50:50 Lottery Club!

You would be very welcome if you'd like to join!



Susanna Jones
Chief Executive Officer



Would you like to support our carers and have the chance to win a monthly cash prize? Do something different and sign up to join the SCC Lottery Club for us £5 a month! You can find more info here: www.swindoncarers.org.uk/get-involved/lottery-club

Swindon Carers Centre – Social Media



Please follow us on Twitter!

You can access our tweets by going to [@SwindonCarers](https://twitter.com/SwindonCarers). Help spread the word about the work we do with carers in Swindon



Swindon Carers Centre Facebook page

You can keep up to date with all our latest news by visiting www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre Please don't forget to 'like' us!

Cover image: Carers Week – Walk A Mile
(l-r Fiona Prinzi, Justin Tomlinson MP, Robert Buckland MP, Susanna Jones)

Team updates



Sharon Fearon

Hi, I'm Sharon and I joined Swindon Carer Centre as a Parent Carer Support Practitioner in May 2019. I am looking forward to a long and happy future here. I previously worked for a partnership of 11 schools as a Home School Link Worker, working with children and their families, which is something I have done and enjoyed in various settings for around 15 years. I have four grown up children and seven delightful grandchildren who I love to spend my spare time with.

Super Staff!



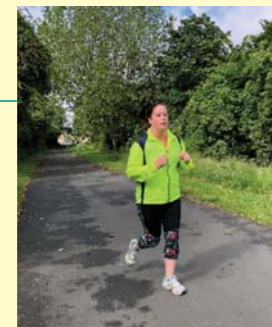
Congratulations Andrea!

A massive well done to our lovely Senior Support Practitioner, Andrea Macdonald, who completed the epic 100 KM Race to the Stones over the weekend of 13th/14th July. She raised money for Young Minds along the way too. Fab achievement!

Go Hayley!

Our fabulous Young Carer Groups and Activities Administrator, Hayley Melville, is running the Swindon half marathon in September to raise funds for Swindon Carers Centre. If you'd like to support her - we'd be very grateful!

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hayley-melville-scc



SCC AGM 2019



Thank you everyone who came to our AGM on 16th July - it was lovely to see you and share updates on what we've been doing and what our plans are for the coming year. You can have a read of our new Annual Impact Report by going to our website and clicking on the Annual Report 2018-2019 page under the News and Resources section.
www.swindoncarers.org.uk

Carer Involvement

Carers Week

A huge thanks to all who came to our Walk A Mile in Swindon on 8th June 2019 to launch Carers Week here.

It was great teamwork with other charities, organisations, commissioners, MPs and brilliant supporters to raise awareness of the vital work carers do in Swindon. This year's theme for Carers Week was all around Getting Carers Connected. Susanna Jones, CEO of Swindon Carers Centre says "Carers in Swindon save our economy £395 million per year. They are an unpaid workforce supporting our health and social care systems and they deserve to have support, information, advice and advocacy too. It's all our responsibilities to keep carers connected to their community, to employment, to education, to information and to each other". We'd like to thank Hyundai and Suzuki dealership Pebley Beach for their sponsorship of this event and all carers and supporters who were sponsored for walking with us. We raised £2,200 on the day!



Photo credit: Swindon Advertiser

Carers Rights Day 2019 SAVE THE DATE!!!!

Each year we hold a Carers Rights Day event to help carers in Swindon know their rights and find out how to get the help and support they are entitled to. This year Carers Rights Day is on Thursday 21 November, so save the date! With colleagues from Great Western Hospital we will be consulting with carers about how we can inform better practice in relation to reducing admissions and readmissions to hospital as part of this event. More details to follow over the coming months.



SCC News in Brief

Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES), Wiltshire and Swindon Carer Centre CEOs

had a very productive morning on 10 July mapping provision for carer support across the Bath, Swindon, Wiltshire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) and looking at how we can further work collaboratively to address gaps. We will continue to work closely with our regional Carer Centre colleagues on this.



Pictured l-r David Trumper, Judy Walker, Susanna Jones

SCC's, Judy, Andrea and Fiona attended Carers UK's State of Caring Conference in London on 10th July to coincide with publication of this year's State of Caring Survey. The State of Caring Survey is the UK's most comprehensive research into the lives and experience of carers. This year, more than 7,500 current carers shared their experiences and helped inform the State of Caring 2019 report. Key findings include:



- almost 2 in 5 (39%) carers saying that they are struggling to make ends meet
- over half of carers who are receiving Carer's Allowance (53%) are struggling to make ends meet
- shockingly, over two thirds of carers (68%) regularly use their own income or savings to pay for care or support services, equipment or products for the person they care for
- 1 in 8 carers (12%) reported that they or those they support received less care or support services during the previous year due to a reduction in the amount of support from social services
- 53% of carers said that they are not able to save for their retirement
- almost two thirds of carers (64%) say that they have focussed on the care needs of the person they care for, and not on their own needs.

The full report can be found here:

www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/state-of-caring-survey-2019

Thank you, Amazon!

Lovely to see Mark and Yannis from Amazon who came to discuss the £2,000 they have already kindly donated to Young Carers in Swindon and the recent donation of another £2,000.



We discussed ideas for what we'll spend the latest monies on.

Thank you to the teams of Bath University School of Management Master's students who raised carer awareness for Swindon Carers Centre with fun activities over the summer. Here's one of the teams in Swindon's Brunel Centre one Saturday in July.



Carer Story – the third in our series of 4 about caring for someone with dementia

Slowly losing the person you love

There are no names in this article to protect anonymity.

One of the hardest things about looking after someone with dementia is watching a loved one going from a healthy, intelligent, independent person, who loved life and their family, gradually losing the ability to do things for themselves. Needing help to wash and dress and being unable to feed themselves. Forgetting who they are and having no memory of the past or present. As the dementia progressed becoming incontinent and the indignity of having to be toileted, washed and dressed by strangers.

My mother was a very intelligent and elegant lady, having very high-powered jobs - including army intelligence - she had wonderful memories of her life in Hong Kong where she met and married my father who was in the military.

Just before Dad died, we noticed slight changes to mum; her memory was beginning to go and she was starting to become unsteady on her feet and had some falls. When Dad died mum had to give up her little flat as she could not cope on her own, so she came to live with us.

It was very difficult as mum went through various stages, constantly wandering day and night, trying to open the front door and get out, wanting to visit an elderly aunt who had died more than 50 years ago. She tried to dress herself with numerous layers of clothing but had no conception of day or night.

Nothing in the house could be moved as this would upset and confuse her. Everything in the house according to mum was a wedding present. Although we would try to stimulate mum with photos and pictures, mum was unable to concentrate, even forgetting she had been married. She could no longer remember Dad.

As time progressed her memory became worse. She needed help in all aspects of daily living. She needed help washing, dressing, changing, and feeding although mum had carers come and visit towards the end to tend to her hygiene needs, but the rest was down to us. This had a vast impact on our lives as mum could not be left at all, so for eight years we could not go out or have any social life as it would have meant we would have to get someone in to sit with mum, we felt very isolated and alone.



We saw a leaflet at Great Western Hospital about Swindon Carers Centre. We contacted them for some advice. And from the initial contact (registration) they supported us. Eventually they arranged for a sitting service for 8 x hours a week giving us much needed time to do things alone and together and not have to try and organise people to sit with mum.

We found out a little late that there is help in the community (but not enough of it) if you know where to look.

This is why organisations like Swindon Carers Centre is so important for all the help and advice they are able to give.

Over the eight years mum battled with Alzheimer's and Vascular Parkinson's we insisted that mum must still have the continuity and respect in her life, having the same carers every day as anyone who knew mum would know it would upset and confuse her if that didn't happen.

During the last stages of mums life, we were turning her every two hours so that she was free from pain and pressure marks. This was so difficult as we would have to be up every two hours during the night. Mum died in July 2018 aged 86.

Without the help and support of Swindon Carers Centre life would have been a lot more difficult so we are truly grateful for all the help they gave us then and for all the support they are still giving us.

Caring for someone you love with dementia is truly heart breaking and stressful. Seeing them go from a person full of life to someone that relies on you for their very existence and on the same hand no longer knows or recognises who you are.

Asda tokens for SCC

Thank you to everyone who dropped a Green Token for SCC into the Asda Green Token Giving box between April and June. We are delighted to have received more than £500 from this and really appreciate your support.



Do you suffer from Macular Degeneration?

We use a unique lens technology, to help those suffering from Macular Degeneration by:

- Increasing the Magnification - giving a larger, clearer image
- Incorporating Prism - to focus the light on a healthier part of the eye
- Special Filters - to enhance contrast and reduce glare, giving more comfortable vision



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www.visionvisit.co.uk **01793 232 588**

Benefits update

Recent Changes to Carers Benefits

Over the last couple of years, it has been largely bad news for carers in terms of their benefit entitlement. Here are some of the changes that have taken place:

Support for Mortgage Interest – this is paid to people who have a mortgage, but cannot work, such as carers. Before April 2018, this was a grant, but now it is a loan. This means that for a £100,000 mortgage, you will owe £2,629.10 to the government after the first year, increasing by slightly more each year. This will have to be paid back when your home is sold or transferred to someone else.

The two-child limit – this came into force in April 2017. Where a family already has two children and another was born after 6th April 2017, they can only claim tax credits or universal credit for the first two children. There are some exceptions, such as if twins are born, but families are missing out on up to £2,780 per year for each excluded child.

Mixed aged couples – this is where one person (often the carer,) is under the state pension age and their partner is getting a state pension. If they need to claim a means-tested benefit, they will now normally have to claim Universal Credit rather than the more generous Pension Credit. This will mean that a couple will be a minimum of £62.42 per week worse off.

There has been a little good news:

Severe Disability Premium – following a High Court victory by people with disabilities, if you have this payment as part of your benefit, you will not have to be transferred to Universal Credit at the moment, so will continue to receive the higher amount through the old benefits system.

Carer's Allowance – the net amount you can earn and still claim Carer's Allowance has gone up to £123 per week. The benefit has been rising each year, whereas other in-work benefits have been frozen. It is currently £66.15 per week.

We continue to campaign against cuts to carers benefits, including meeting with our MPs. Many carers have either retired, cannot work or can only work part time, so there is a good case for them to be exempt from benefit cuts.

If you are affected by any benefit changes and would like to discuss them, please call our benefits advice line on 01793 975329. This usually runs 10am to 12pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and will be back to its normal hours from the first week of September.



Tim Saint
Benefits Service Coordinator

Warm & Safe Wiltshire

Do you find it difficult to keep your home warm?

Do you dread your next electricity or gas bill?

You are not alone...

Roughly 1 in every 11 households in Swindon is in fuel poverty, unable to heat their homes adequately. This is likely to affect the health and wellbeing of people living in those homes as well as their finances. But there is help at hand!

Warm & Safe Wiltshire is an energy advice service provided by Swindon Borough Council, offering advice and support on the following areas:

- Help and advice relating to insulation, heating and draft proofing, including guidance on heating systems and controls
- Available grants and schemes for energy saving measures
- Financial support for energy bills like the £140 Warm Home Discount
- Combating issues with damp and condensation
- Advice on understanding your fuel bills and managing your energy use
- Help with switching energy suppliers and fuel tariffs to keep bills affordable
- Fuel debt advice
- Advice guides and factsheets
- Home visits

Home visits can be particularly helpful for providing specific energy efficiency advice, help with setting heating controls, assessing damp and mould problems and carrying out home fire safety checks. Advisors may also be able to help in contacting energy companies on your behalf or providing fuel switching comparisons to find the most affordable deals. Home visits are a good opportunity to be able to discuss or help with issues that may be difficult to do over the phone.

Why not call or email today and see what we can do to help?

The service can be contacted here:

www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk

Freephone 0800 038 5722

Email warmandsafe@cse.org.uk



Break from your caring role

Parent Carer Social Evening

We had our first Parent Carer social night at the Goddard Arms in July. What a fantastic evening with lots of lovely feedback and laughs! A special mention to Sarah, who was celebrating her birthday!

We'll be organising more events like this for parent carers.



Young Carers

Young Carer Award

Congratulations to St Leonard's CE Primary

Academy in Blunsdon who have been presented with their Young Carer Award. Such fabulous support there now for young carers. Well done everyone for all your hard work!



Young Carer Festival

We are so proud of all the young carers who attended the Young Carer Festival (YCF) at the end of June. They had great fun, behaved brilliantly, and despite us all being sleep deprived, we wish we had been able to stay longer! One of our very talented young carers, Jake, did this fantastic sketch at the festival too. We absolutely love it. Brilliant!



Study Higher Weekend

Thank you so much to Study Higher Swindon for

giving our young and young adult carers an epic weekend at their residential. It involved looking at mindsets and setting goals, personal development, zip wires, high swings, camp fires, games and songs. From one of our group: "You've got to start small & dream big"



Adult and Parent Carer Groups and Activities

As I am writing this, the temperature is forecast to reach more than 30c this week and Becky and I are busy planning our Christmas Festivities for you!

Firstly, to reflect on some of the events that carers have enjoyed in the last few months:

Parent Carers enjoyed lunch together at PREZZO and also met at Goddard Arms for an evening social event (see page 9 for photos).

The Family Focus events have included a 'funfair' styled morning at Meadowcroft Community Centre where the children could play while parents chatted over a cuppa and also a visit to Lotmead Pick Your Own!

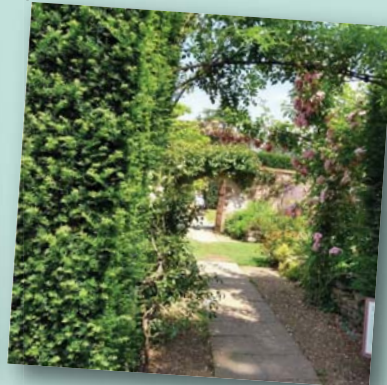
Evening Socials - Carers had 'fun & games' during our 2 evening socials -a Bingo & Quiz night and a Magician.

Our Bereaved Carers Group (PATH)

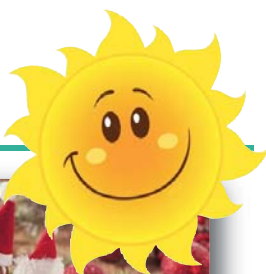
enjoyed a lovely sunny day trip together at Sudeley Castle and Gardens - see page 15 for more info about this group.



Our PATH group members on our trip to Sudeley Castle & Gardens



One of the lovely gardens at Sudeley Castle



Wellbeing

To celebrate 'Green Space & wellbeing week' a group of carers attended an event at Lydiard Park. We enjoyed a stroll together around the grounds and down to the lake, then returned to our base room for a cream tea and a cuppa.



During our stroll at Lydiard Park

Yoga - Due to its popularity with our carers, we are continuing to offer weekly Yoga sessions at The Link Centre.



Pampering - We are pleased to be able to offer 1:1 beauty sessions with a qualified Therapist, hair appointments with a Swindon salon and our group Ladies Pamper afternoons.

Mental Health Carer Group - We trialled this new group (7 sessions) for carers who support someone with a mental health diagnosis. Penny Errill (Mental Health Social Worker and Carer Champion) and a member of our team facilitated the group. Emphasis was on carer resilience and wellbeing. Speakers were invited to attend including a Psychotherapist, Psychologist, a representative from Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership. Some carers have gone on to access 1:1 counselling through our centre.



If we have enough interest shown, we will offer another group in the Autumn.

Adult and Parent Carer Groups and Activities

Bereavement Therapy Group

Thanks to funding from The Carers Trust we are able to offer another 10 session Bereavement Therapy Group facilitated by an experienced and qualified Counsellor. A small group of 4-6 bereaved carers can explore, in a safe setting, how they feel about their loss and coming to terms with a different future.



Breathing Space Returns in October-December!

Carers had 'fun & games' during our 2 evening socials - a Bingo & Quiz night and a Magician.



Carers Rights Day Thursday 21st November

Please express your interest in attending by ticking the activities request form attached to the 'What's On' handout included in this newsletter.



Coach trip to Bath

Explore, shop, enjoy the festive atmosphere.



Christmas Parties!

Back due to popular request our annual Family Christmas Party, thanks to partnership working with Citifaith Church and the Love Swindon Volunteers, plus our party for older carers (and the person they care for, if over 18).



Carol concert at Christchurch

Date to be confirmed



Christmas craft activities and Christmas Lunch/Evening meal

Dates to be confirmed



Plus!

Open Minds

This is a group that meets monthly. Older carers (and the person they care for if they are an adult too) are welcome to join us. Free entertainment and refreshments.

PATH Group (Planning an Alternative Tomorrow with Hope)

Thanks to a grant from The Carers Trust, we are able to offer additional support and events to carers who have been bereaved. We meet for a fortnightly cuppa in town plus hold a variety of activities. This grant is until December 2019.



Carers Cuppas

Carers are welcome to drop-in at the following sessions. For more information about the Carers Cuppas, contact Heather or Becky on 01793 401095.



Wroughton Health Centre Barrett Way, Swindon SN4 9LW
1st Thursday of the month 10am - 12pm

Highworth Westrop Surgery Newburgh Place, Swindon SN6 7DN
2nd Thursday of the month 10.30am - 12pm

Ashington House Surgery Ashington Way, West Swindon SN5 7XY.
4th Wednesday of the month 2.30pm - 4pm

Grange Drive Leisure Centre Grange Drive, Swindon, SN3 4JY.
Last Thursday of the month 10am - 12pm

GWH Carer's Café Refresh Restaurant, on the ground floor of GWH, near the Main Atrium Reception, Wednesdays 2pm - 3.30pm



If you would like to find out more about any of the above, please contact:

Heather Goldsmith, Senior Groups & Activities Coordinator on 07841 503849 or email heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk

OR Becky Gammon, Groups & Activities Coordinator on 07912 594238 or email becky.gammon@swindoncarers.org.uk



If you are a registered carer with Swindon Carers Centre, would like to register with us, or would like to speak to one of our team, here are the telephone numbers you'll need:



- For Adult Carer Support Services please call 01793 401090
- For Parent Carer Support Services please call 01793 401094
- For Young Carer Support Services please call 01793 401091
- For Adult Carer Groups and Activities please call 01793 401095
- For Young Carer Groups and Activities please call 01793 401092
- For Benefits Advice please call 01793 401093
- For all other queries please call 01793 401098
- Our main switchboard telephone number is 01793 531133

We look forward to hearing from you.

Swindon Carers Centre

Address and office opening hours

*Sanford House, Sanford Street,
Swindon SN1 1HE
Tel: Swindon (01793) 531133*

*Office opening hours:
9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to
Thursday and 9.30am - 4pm Friday*

*Please contact the Editor with any articles to include
via carers@swindoncarers.org.uk.*

Registered charity number: 1061116 Registered company number: 3305621

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www.swindoncarers.org.uk

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