

Caring Matters

Newsletter

Summer 2020



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Supporting Family Carers of All Ages

Summer 2020

The past few weeks have been unprecedented for all of us and the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic will no doubt be felt for months and years ahead.

I want to begin this editorial by acknowledging the vital work all unpaid carers do – day in, day out – and perhaps the current crisis further highlights how crucial carers are in supporting health and social care systems. These last couple of months have not been easy for anyone; but as carers, you no doubt will have had to cope with additional, complex pressures, often unseen. Thank you for everything you are doing.

Everyone at Swindon Carers Centre is here for you. There is a lot of information throughout this newsletter about the help and support available. We have had to adapt our service delivery, our groups and activities have stopped for now, but we have been able to continue to support in different ways, utilising the digital technologies now available and continuing with telephone support.

I would encourage anyone needing help to get in contact – all the details of how to do that, and who best in our team to call – are on the back page of this newsletter. We are experiencing high demand for our services, so there may be a wait, but we will get back to you.

Finally, I'd like to also say a big thank you to our team of staff, volunteers and trustees (including 4 new members of staff), all of whom are working exceptionally hard and have all helped the transition of working in our office to remote working, to go as smoothly as it could.

Every best wish to you, your families and friends.



Susanna Jones
Chief Executive Officer

Swindon Carers Centre – Social Media



Please follow us on Twitter!

You can access our tweets by going to [@SwindonCarers](https://twitter.com/SwindonCarers).



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!



Visit our new Instagram page

Search for 'swindoncarers'

Team updates

Welcome to:



Sonya Beale *Carer Support Administrator*

I joined Swindon Carers Centre in March. Having previously worked as an administrator for several well-known businesses in Swindon, I decided it was time to follow my interest in health and social care.

After studying with the Open University, I consolidated my learning by working for Home Instead, then for Prospect hospice and finally the Great Western hospital. These roles gave me an understanding of how vital a carer support service is, and I wanted to be a part of an organisation which goes above and beyond in their aim to support and give advice to as many carers as possible.

We have been working remotely and having video calls, which are all new experiences for me, and everyone has been amazing. I'm so thrilled to have joined.



Mark Burton *Adult Carer Support Practitioner*

Having enjoyed a varied career to-date, I am delighted to join the team here. I've worked extensively within the further and higher education sectors, firstly in a variety of teaching contracts before moving to specialise in pastoral intervention and safeguarding – including a secondment as an assistant psychologist, employing clinical supervision. I first had the pleasure of working with colleagues at Swindon Carers Centre as safeguarding lead within a large Adult Education provision. As part of my role - becoming the single point of contact for various multi-agency providers – I worked with staff at SCC to develop awareness amongst staff in relation to individuals with caring responsibilities inside the student population. Although my recent departure from the education sector will, inevitably, prove a challenge, I am relishing the opportunity to further support deserving carers in my work going forwards.



Marion Munday *Finance Officer*

I have always worked in finance since leaving school... in business and education. For the past 20 years, I have worked full-time at New College. I reduced my hours last summer to look after my grandson, one day a week, before time flies by and I miss his early days growing up.

This made me realise there is far more to life than being sat behind a desk, hour upon hour... Once I saw the vacancy, I realised this would be my opportunity to make a difference and give something back to helping others. I started in March and feel fortunate to have joined a very committed and friendly team at SCC.



Anne Saunders *Media & Communications Officer*

Hello everyone! I started at Swindon Carers Centre at the end of February, and I'm here three days a week helping to manage the website, newsletter and social media content. I'll also be putting my thinking cap on, looking at the best way to communicate with and support you through these different channels. I'm joining SCC after a year working for a Bath-based PR agency. I've also worked in-house as PR and Communications officer for a further education college, and as a local journalist. I've had a fantastic welcome from the team, and I'm really looking forward to getting to know you all too. If you have an idea you'd like to share, I'd love to hear from you (my details are on the back of this newsletter).

Operation Easter egg!

We'd like to say a big thank you to the following businesses who donated tasty Easter egg treats for carers to enjoy: TK Maxx, John Lewis, Morrisons, The Co-operative Childcare, Walcot, and Quilter Financial Planning. Our busy Easter egg delivery team chose names out of a hat at random in order to pick the lucky recipients. All social distancing guidance was adhered to during delivery!



Our team was also kept busy delivering eggs to schools. Here are just a few of the thank you messages and pictures we received.

“I just wanted to say thank you and all at Swindon Carers for organising this and all you do. With everything else going on, it was a lovely surprise.”

“Thank you so much for the Easter eggs. All the children were so happy to receive one in these strange times at school! To have a chocolate egg came as a great surprise and was a lovely treat.”

“A big thank you to Swindon Carers Centre and TK Maxx for the sweets. They cheered us up so much today, our few remaining pupils really appreciated it and the staff did too!”



AQA Programme

During the coronavirus outbreak, Swindon Carers Centre is extending its AQA programme to make this available to all registered young carers.

The programme, allowing carers to gain a professional qualification (contributing to their further education) has been running for over a year and has already been a success for children and young adults in local primary schools and colleges.

You can pick something that fits your passions and interests, as there are many different units to choose from. Here are just a few of the benefits:

- ***There is no age limit and no limit on the number of units taken.***
- ***While schools remain closed, due to lockdown measures, children and young people can receive formal accreditation and recognition for their achievements at home.***
- ***All units can be customised to suit the individual***
- ***Studying for an AQA unit can help to keep children engaged, raising their self-esteem when they receive a certificate for their work.***
- ***All units can be a stepping stone to other awards and qualifications***
- ***Many students in further education have submitted their AQA certificates to UCAS when applying to university, to evidence their extra-curricular achievement.***

All students will be registered with AQA by Swindon Carers Centre. For more information get in touch with Schools Development Manager Ann Giles: E-mail ann.giles@swindoncarers.org.uk or call 07796 479272

Safeguarding against domestic abuse: What you need to know

This is the third in our features on the importance of recognising safeguarding issues. We have already looked at financial abuse and self-neglect, this edition we're focusing on domestic abuse.

The Home Office (March 2013) defines domestic abuse as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

'Controlling behaviour' is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

'Coercive behaviour' is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.



This definition includes so-called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and recognises that past legal and cultural understanding of domestic abuse has been too narrowly focused on single physically violent incidents rather than complex and controlling patterns of behaviour.

Since this Home Office guidance was published, there has also been increased national awareness of the impact of intentional grooming. This is an aspect of some relationships where there is domestic abuse, impacting on people's choices and their ability to leave relationships within which they are being abused.

The impact of domestic abuse can be devastating. It can lead to or exacerbate:

- *Repeated short-term impacts on health including bruises, burns, cuts, broken bones, sexually transmitted diseases, and lost teeth and hair*
- *Miscarriage, stillbirth and other complications of pregnancy*
- *Long-term and chronic health problems including asthma, epilepsy, digestive problems, migraine, hypertension, and skin disorders*
- *Physical and sensory impairments, such as walking difficulties or deafness*
- *Emotional harm, including loss of confidence and low self-esteem*
- *Long-term social difficulties*
- *Poor mental health such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder*
- *Substance misuse, often as an attempt to cope with circumstances*
- *Physical and/or emotional harm to a child or dependent adult in the household*
- *Preventing an adult from being able to care for others and themselves*
- *Preventing children and dependent adults from achieving their full potential*
- *Isolation from family, friends and community*
- *A negative effect on work and possible loss of independent income*

If you are concerned that someone you know is in a potential abusive relationship – here are the contact numbers you need.

Adult safeguarding team, Swindon Borough Council

Tel: 01793 463555

E-mail: adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk

(During office hours - Monday to Friday inclusive, 8.30am to 5.00pm)

Safeguarding adults investigation team, Wiltshire police

Tel: 01380 826350

(During office hours: Monday to Friday inclusive, 9.00am-5.00pm)

Out-of-hours emergency duty service

The emergency duty service is only for reporting safeguarding concerns that require urgent action out of normal working hours. Any other concerns should be forwarded to the Adult Safeguarding Team at adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk, which will be processed the next working day.

Tel: 01793 436699

Police out-of-hours contact

Tel: 101

Coronavirus guidance: FAQs for carers

There's no doubt that the coronavirus outbreak will continue to affect communities for some time to come, creating many challenges for carers and those that they care for. That's why we're working in partnership with organisations based at Sanford House in Swindon to share updates and support as many people as we can across the county.



We're available to answer your questions, offer advice and to be a listening ear. Here are just a few of things that we've been asked recently.

How can I protect the person I care for?

At the time of going to print, government guidelines instructing everyone to stay at home to help stop the spread of the coronavirus continue to apply. However, you can still leave the house to provide care or help someone who is vulnerable – providing this care is essential.

If you're visiting someone, there are several things you can do to minimise risk.

- **Stop face to face visits if you start to develop coronavirus symptoms**
- **Wash your hands on arrival (and throughout your visit) for at least 20 seconds**
- **Cover your mouth with a sleeve or tissue (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze**
- **Put tissues in the bin and wash your hands immediately.**

It's important to have an emergency plan in place, so that the person you're caring for can get support if you're unable to continue in your caring role.

[Read about our emergency care scheme on page 10](#)

How do I get essential food supplies to the person I care for?

Many supermarkets are keeping priority shopping slots for NHS workers and vulnerable or elderly adults. Swindon Carers Centre is providing registered carers with letters explaining that they are registered with us, in order to try and help people access these restricted shopping times. If you'd like to know more, please call our Adult Carer Support Services team on **01793 401090**.

There are many different local initiatives supporting those who are self-isolating, or most affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

Swindon Borough Council is coordinating emergency household supplies for people who are social shielding and self-isolating. They can be contacted on **01793 445500** from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. You can also email customerservices@swindon.gov.uk.

Compassionate Swindon is a new initiative between Swindon Borough Council, Voluntary Action Swindon and the Volunteer Centre Swindon to help pair volunteers with those who have no one to help them during lockdown. Anyone in the Swindon community needing non-medical help can call **01793 465513** or e-mail livewell@swindon.gov.uk.

What about medical supplies?

Pharmacies are staying open, but some have reduced opening hours. This is so that their teams can focus on preparing medicines and restocking shelves.

If you are registered with a Swindon or Wiltshire based GP practice, you may be able to use a Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service to order your repeat prescriptions. Visit the following link to find out more: <https://bswccg.nhs.uk/your-health/hospital-care/prescription-ordering-direct-pod> The Royal Voluntary Service, Swindon, may also be able to help with picking up prescriptions. You can call them on **0330 555 0310** 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

New technical support line for carers

Want to learn how to set up shopping services online or use social media and video to stay close to family and friends? Carers registered with Swindon Carers Centre can call **(01249) 470148** between 9am and 5pm during the week or e-mail helpinghand@avagio.co.uk if they are struggling with digital technologies. Thank you so much to Avagio IT for their generous offer to provide this service during the coronavirus outbreak.

Useful links

Guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care/guidance-for-those-who-provide-unpaid-care-to-friends-or-family>

Extra information and links on our website

<https://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/coronavirus-guidance-for-carers/>

Finance advice for carers

<https://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/coronavirus-finance-advice-for-carers-faqs/>

Our Benefits Service Co-ordinator Tim Saint is also available on 01793 975329.

Contact details for Sanford House organisations

<https://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/coronavirus-joint-statement-from-sanford-house-voluntary-sector-organisations/>

Sign up for an emergency card

Do you worry about what would happen to the person you care for if you were taken ill or had an accident? If so, the Emergency Card Scheme can offer you peace of mind.

We're delighted to announce that our Emergency Card Scheme (ECS) is now back up and running. This is thanks to extensive joint working between Swindon Carers Centre and our partners at Swindon Borough Council and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

This credit card style ECS is available to any carer registered with us over 18-years-old. We are expecting a large uptake for this, and there may be a wait before we contact you to finalise your individual plan – so please bear with us.

If you are already on the scheme you DO NOT need to contact us again unless your current plan has changed.



Front of card



Rear of card

How does it work?

1. You develop your own emergency plan, with help from staff at Swindon Carers Centre if required. It will contain information about you and the person you care for, including what should happen if an emergency prevented you from carrying out your caring responsibilities.
2. When you join the ECS, our scheme administrator will send out a blank copy of the plan for you to complete and return. She will contact you to discuss further if needed.
3. Once your individual plan has been completed a copy will be sent to you along with a red credit card style emergency card. We will also send a copy of your plan, to be stored securely, to the Live Well Hub at Swindon Borough Council.

What happens in an emergency?

In an emergency, anyone finding the card can call the number on it and quote your unique number. The call handlers work 24/7 and will be able to retrieve and follow your plan.

It is the card holder's responsibility to inform us of any changes to the information we hold on your plan. Failure to update this will mean your wishes can't be followed.

The card is for real emergencies only. For example, if you're taken ill suddenly or have an accident. To request an emergency card contact Angela Walklate, ECS Administrator by e-mailing angela.walklate@swindoncarers.org.uk or calling **01793 975333**

Caring during Covid-19: Annabelle's Diary

We put out a call for carers to share their stories about what it's like to care for someone during the coronavirus, and Annabelle kindly offered to help – keeping a diary for seven days. It's a fantastic, engaging and insightful read. Here's just a small extract.

My name is Annabelle and I am a mother and parent carer for my son Vincent (5 years) and daughter named Vala (11 months). Whilst he is still on the waiting list for a diagnosis assessment for the second time, he has been characterised as having Complex Special Needs. Every day is different, whilst it can mean the same routines and reminders, it can also hold hope and a new possibility.



Saturday's entry:

Well we had a very interesting morning, at 12am Vincent woke up absolutely boiling hot and red cheeked. His asthma started flaring making him cough more, which made us freak out a tad. I called 111 to ask for advice on what to do if you suspect somebody having coronavirus, to be awaited by an answering machine – saying unless the person is physically unable to do anything then mild symptoms can be helped with cold and flu over the counter products.

I grabbed the Calpol and after about 5 minutes of Vincent refusing to take it, managed to sway him to take it in the end. An hour later he's cooled down, smiling, giggling and calling daddy unpleasantries. Yep, back to his own self!

He fell back asleep around 2.45am, and both kids woke up at 6.30am. I was under the impression that Vincent would sleep in a little bit longer, especially if he were sick. But no, he's up, and ready to take on the day like normal. Vincent is rarely sick.

Whilst making the kids' breakfasts, I groggily searched what would cause a child's temperature to rise during the night, to conclude he had overheated.

The activities Vincent loves to pick are arts and crafts, playing with his trains, traffic lights and cars and his Lego. But those are just the small toys. When he likes to dress up as a traffic warden, he goes around with a child-size traffic light and stop signs that he was given at Christmas. Sometimes it's hard to continue for long with that role play, especially if you need the toilet!

I think what I miss for Vincent the most at the moment is taking him outside for most of the afternoon, and him being able to go to school. He's an outdoorsy little boy. He enjoys going to parks, the old railway track and woodland areas. And he loves socialising with everyone he sees.

I understand the need for isolation and social distancing during this pandemic. But I worry more about how it will affect my child from being isolated from the outside world for so long.

To read Annabelle's entries in full visit: www.swindoncarers.org.uk/media-releases

A message from our Young Carers Team

The beginning of 2020 has provided some challenges within the Young Carers Team, due to Covid-19 and government guidance following this.

We have endeavoured to react to these by continuing to provide support to young carers, but we've had to think creatively. All young carer assessments are currently being carried out over the phone, along with 1:1 support. We are also creating fortnightly newsletters (including exciting competitions!) focusing on wellbeing.

We became Easter bunnies for a short time to visit schools with chocolate treats. We have also launched our own Instagram page for young carers to provide information, helpful hints and updates.

The great news is that our Groups and Activities Administrator has been working in the background to reschedule events, to enable us to start organising these as soon as we safely can. Once restrictions have been lifted, and we feel it is safe to do so, we will have great variety of activities and group sessions ready to offer.

The activities will include Chessington World of Adventures, Cotswold Beach, Wookey Hole, Paintballing, West Midlands Safari Park, Cinema.

Above all else, we wanted to let you know we're still here to support you even if groups and activities are not currently running. The Young Carers Team have missed being able to see our registered young carers and can't wait to see them again!



Follow us at 'swindoncarers'
Don't forget to give us a like!



The latest from our Adult and Parent Carer Groups and Activities team

Due to unprecedented times and the restrictions due to Covid -19, over the last few months we have been unable to deliver our planned range of activities, regular groups and courses.

We have really missed the face-to-face contact with you!

Our team has been working in a different way via laptops and mobiles at home and we have used a variety of ways to stay in touch with you - emails, texts, phone calls and letters. We have been involved in the Easter chocolate distribution. Names were randomly chosen, and our Tim took on the role of Easter Bunny to deliver them. (Thank you very much!).

We also held an Easter art and craft competition. Carers and their families produced some lovely entries using items that were available within their homes. Our Deputy CEO, Fiona Prinzi, had the difficult job of choosing the winners.

Within this newsletter you will find a 'What's On' activity form for July-September 2020. Although we have planned a range of activities for July-September, these are provisional and may be cancelled or subject to change at short notice. Activities will not take place until it's safe to do so. Please bear with us as we follow government guidelines.

Please take a look at this provisional list of events and if any are of interest to you, complete the tick sheet, sign and return it to us. This can be done via post or email (details on the form).

When it is safe to meet again, we will be in contact.

Judy, Heather and Zoe

Adult and Older Care Service update

Hello all, I hope you are all well after what has been an unreal few months for everyone around the world?

My name is Stuart Ilbury and I am the Service Delivery Manager for the Adult Carer Support team at Swindon Carers Centre. Some of you may know me from when I was a support practitioner or from my presence at the male carers groups over the years.



We are a team of eight, including myself. We carry out the registration of all adult (over 65) and young adult carers (18-24). We cover the carers support line should you need advice. We also offer full statutory carers assessments and 1:1 support for those with complex or multiple needs.

In the community, we do a lot of outreach work and support the carers leads in the Swindon GP surgeries, as well as attend the carers café at GWH and a host of other events. Finally, we administer the emergency card.

We currently have a very high level of referrals. While this means we are reaching more and more of the estimated 21,000 plus carers in Swindon, the downside is that it is taking longer than usual to get to you all.

I just want to say thank you to you all for bearing with us. We have recently recruited two replacement team members and they are going through a robust induction process. Please don't wait for us if you need advice or support. Instead, call our carers support line on (01793) 401090 where we always aim to respond to you within 48 hours.

Finally, we hope you all stay safe and a huge thank you for the amazing, sometimes thankless task you all do as carers.

Stuart, Tina, Amanda, Angela, Tanya, Chris, Sonya and Mark.

Easter craft competition

“Judging the competition was the highlight of my week. It was so hard to choose a top three, as they were all imaginative and creative! Thank you to all carers, of all ages who took part. You are all so talented and I felt really touched by the thought you put into your creations.”

Deputy CEO, Fiona Prinzi



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.



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

We look forward to hearing from you.

Swindon Carers Centre

Address and office opening hours

**Sanford House, Sanford Street,
Swindon SN1 1HE**

Office opening hours: 9.30am - 4.30pm

Monday to Thursday and 9.30am - 4pm Friday

(The office is currently closed due to the coronavirus lockdown, however, we are working from home and still available as normal)

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

To share your stories, ideas and news items with our Media & Communications Officer, e-mail anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk

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Visit our website

www.swindoncarers.org.uk

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