

# Caring Matters



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## From our CEO – Susanna Jones



Welcome to another jam-packed edition of Caring Matters. It has been a hugely busy time for Swindon Carers Centre, as we've been working hard to support our colleagues at the Clinical Commissioning Group and in Public Health with the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine to unpaid carers across Swindon. This has resulted in a big increase in the number of carers registering with our service. If this is the first time you've received our newsletter, hello and thank you for all that you do in your caring role.

Two big themes resulting from the pandemic over the past year have been a rise in the number of carers contacting us about support for mental health and finances. You can find out more on page 10 about what we offer regarding mental health – this may include being signposted to other specific organisations. Due to the large increase in the number of carers struggling with finances our Welfare Benefits team has produced a range of resources (have a look on our website) to help – and you can do a quick check to see if you may be eligible for Pension Credit with the article on page 9.

Every carer's story is unique – you can hear more from two carers about their caring journey – Nicky on page 6, who looks after her husband, and our very own Parent Carer Support Practitioner Lorraine, carer for her two (adult) children.

Volunteers add so much value to Swindon Carers Centre. We are delighted to have the support of new volunteer Erica with our Emergency Card Scheme, which is so important for so many people. You can meet Erica on page 3, along with Ruth who we welcome to our team as our new Grants and Impact Officer.

And finally, I really do hope you will be able to join us (remotely and adhering to social distancing guidelines!) to celebrate Carers Week in June and for our annual Walk A Mile fundraiser on Saturday June 12th. Let's hope for continued good weather so we can enjoy time outside as much as possible.

## Swindon Carers Centre Support us on social media!



Twitter: @SwindonCarers



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre](https://www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre)



Instagram: Search for 'swindoncarers'

*Cover image: Carol taking part in our virtual afternoon tea catch-up*

## A warm welcome to:



### Erica McDonagh

Volunteer Emergency Card Scheme (ECS)  
Administrator

I am very excited to have started volunteering for Swindon Carers Centre in February. When we went into our first national lockdown it created an opportunity to do something new.

I have walked in your shoes as an unpaid carer several times now. Over the years I have been an unpaid carer on three separate occasions. First, I was a young carer for my mum who had several chronic health conditions before her death from cancer when I was seventeen. Then, in 2015, after the sudden death of my late dad's wife from a mental health condition, my brother and I took on long distance caring responsibilities for our father.

Today, I am supporting a family member who has decided to self-isolate during the pandemic due to a health condition. This decision to self-isolate opened up the time and space for me to volunteer for a local charity.

What I bring to Swindon Carers Centre is understanding and compassion. I have a long-term physical disability – Cerebral Palsy – right sided Hemiplegia, which has given me an understanding of what it is to live with a chronic health condition, and the impact that this can have on close friends and family. For more than 25 years, I have chosen to work in the disability field. I have worked with individuals and organisations both nationally and internationally. I am passionate about helping people living with pain, illness and stress to re-claim their lives while mentoring and inspiring individuals along the way. I hope carers and their families derive great benefit from signing up and being a part of the Emergency Card Scheme. I look forward to meeting many of you along the way on your caring journey.



### Ruth Larkin

Grants and Impact Officer

I'm excited to have started at Swindon Carers Centre, I'm working three days a week raising funds through grants and measuring the impact of our work. I've worked in the charity sector for 25 years working with large and small organisations and covering a range of causes including international development, environmental issues, and disabilities. I have focused mainly on fundraising but moved into broader roles for smaller charities more recently. Before joining Swindon Carers Centre I was the Head of Operations for a small charity called Living Paintings – supporting blind and partially sighted people. I was attracted to working for SCC because of the fantastic and much needed support given to carers, and the positive organisational ethos. The team have been very welcoming and I'm looking forward to contributing to SCC's ongoing success.

## Sign up for our Emergency Card Scheme

Do you worry about what would happen to the person you care for if you were taken seriously ill or had an accident? Our Emergency Card Scheme can offer you peace of mind. With your support, we can build a plan detailing what you would like to happen if an emergency prevented you from carrying on with your caring responsibilities. These details will be held securely online with Swindon Borough Council. Should they be needed in the future, call handlers will then ensure your emergency plan is put in place.

**For more information, please email [carers@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:carers@swindoncarers.org.uk) or call (01793) 531133**

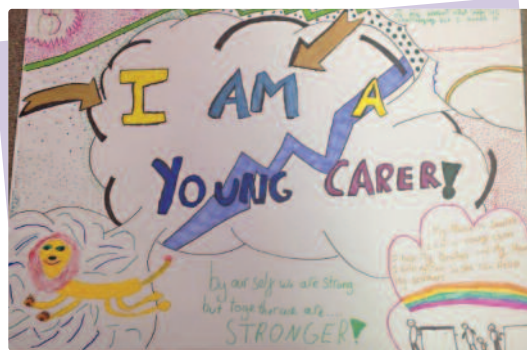




## Marking Young Carers Action Day

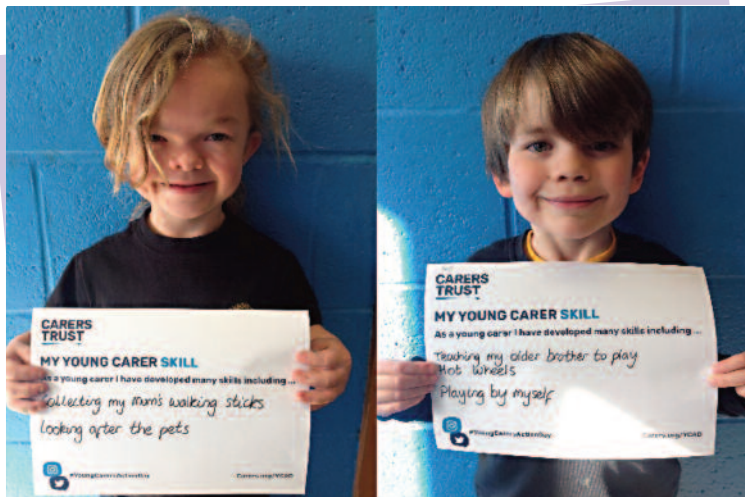
We marked Young Carers Action Day on March 16th by releasing a new film made with members of our Young Carers Forum. The theme for this year's national event was 'Protect Young Carers' Futures' highlighting the incredible skills these young people have developed through being a carer. We're very proud of our Young Carers Forum for speaking out about their experiences. They answered questions about life during the Covid-19 pandemic, the best way to support someone who is a young carer, and also reflected on the positives of their caring role.

To watch the film, search for '**Swindon Carers Centre SCC**' on YouTube and click on '**Young Carers Action Day 2021**'.



**Above:** A fantastic poster from Lawn Primary School

**Left:** Young carers at Wanborough Primary School with their skills cards



**Above:** Isaac, a member of our Young Carers Forum, also spoke to the Swindon Advertiser about his caring role looking after his younger brother Gideon.

## Celebrating Easter with our Family Focus event

Family Focus goody bag collections and deliveries were organised by our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team! It was fabulous to see some very happy faces receiving these. Thank you to Dr Neil Griffiths and WHSmith for the book donations.



## Enjoying a virtual afternoon tea



A cup of tea with friends is a great way to relax. We hope those of you who took part in our virtual afternoon tea enjoyed it as much as we did!





## Connecting during lockdown

### Nicky's story

Nicky and her husband Mick love to socialise. Before retiring, Mick's role in the RAF allowed him to travel the world. Getting out and about, as well as catching up with life-long friends from the military community is of huge importance to both of them.

It was a huge shock to Nicky and Mick when, 14 months into his retirement, Mick suffered a stroke and became seriously ill. He was moved from Swindon to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, where he had a craniotomy enabling surgeons to save his life but leaving him paralysed down his left side.

Both Nicky and Mick fought hard to rebuild their life together. Six months later, they were given private funding for a rehabilitation centre in Salisbury, where Mick stayed for a year – receiving support from occupational therapists to help with his recovery.

"There was no indication that he was at risk of having a stroke," said Nicky. "The day before, we had just done an 18-mile walk. But when I woke up on Saturday morning at 7am, I knew what was happening. After Mick came home, we decided to extend our house and put in a wet room. He lived in the lounge at first on a hospital bed.

"I was still working full-time and trying to hold down a job, but after Mick had been home for six months, I was at breaking point. I had professional carers coming in as well, which was costing us a fortune. My GP said, 'something has to give', so I had a chat with Mick and said, 'I am going to give up work'. I have been his full-time carer ever since."

Having adjusted once, Nicky and Mick faced another challenge as the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK in March 2020. This has been hugely isolating for many, including carers like Nicky who have been unable to access



their usual support network. Many have also been following shielding guidelines to protect those they look after.

"Until you actually care for someone, you don't realise what a lonely job it is," said Nicky. "With Covid-19, it has been harder for me mentally. At the beginning I was concerned if I contracted Covid-19 and transferred it to Mick he would be seriously ill.

"We have close family. My daughter lives in Swindon, though she has been working through the pandemic. The rest of my family don't live locally, so that's been quite difficult. We also have friends that Mick joined up with when he was 17, who visited as often as they could. It has been quite isolating for us, not being able to interact, because they are really dear friends."

One thing that has made a difference during this time is support from Swindon Carers Centre, in particular a virtual group held every Thursday afternoon called the Carers Cuppa, which gives carers a break from their caring role and the chance to connect with others who understand the ups and downs of life as an unpaid carer.

This is just one of the many initiatives our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team has launched during Covid-19 in response to lockdown restrictions. As well as taking face-to-face cuppa sessions online, they have worked on a full programme of remote activities including dance, singing, yoga, Zumba and craft activities.

"We try and keep positive, but it is hard to keep positive when you are up at 3am,"

said Nicky. "It's lovely that you can speak to someone who knows what you're going through because sometimes people don't understand what carers do. Just a Zoom meeting for an hour a week and a change of scenery, it's a way of breaking up the day."

Sheila, Ann and Gabriel, are also members of the Thursday Carers Cuppa group, which starts with a short quiz or game before moving on to information, updates and a general catch up to see how everyone's week has been.

"It's quite lonely when it's just the two of you in the house," said Sheila. "I don't know any of these people except through the Cuppa, but it's nice to be able to chat to others. We often think that our own circumstances are just our own circumstances. When you hear there are others with similar things happening in their lives, it is very good to hear."

"It's something to look forward to," said Ann. "Wherever you are that week, you can talk about it with others who understand." "My wife and I have been in isolation for 11 months," added Gabriel. "It's nice to see peoples' smiling faces all dressed up and nowhere to go!"

For Nicky, lockdown has made her re-evaluate life in general. Fortunately, Nicky and

Mick were able to get married three days before lockdown – they were the last ones in the registry office before it closed at the start of the pandemic. Throughout this time, it has become clear how important family members, friends and having a support network really is.

"Mick is a very intelligent man, we do puzzles and crosswords every day, but he is probably 90 per cent dependent on me," said Nicky. "It is not just my caring role, it is looking after the house, looking after the car – all those essential household jobs are now down to me.

"We used to get a break at an RAF Hotel, we would go there 3 or 4 times a year for respite. But since lockdown, both hotels have been shut permanently.

"In a way we're the unpaid NHS. When the pandemic started, it was all about the NHS, care homes, ambulance drivers – nobody said anything about unpaid carers.

"When I started caring for Mick, I didn't know anything about the support available through Swindon Carers Centre. I didn't know about applying for Carer's Allowance. I try to give information to carers or people who don't think that they're a carer, because I wonder how many people fall through the net. If only one person is helped then it is all worthwhile."



## Add your support for Carers Week and Walk A Mile

This year, Carers Week will run from June 7th to June 13th. This is a big date in our annual calendar at Swindon Carers Centre, as we use this date to raise awareness of caring, highlighting the challenges unpaid carers face, as well as to fundraise.

Our annual fundraising Walk A Mile event will take place on Saturday June 12th. As we can't gather together to walk a mile, we're asking people to do this in their local community, to walk a mile in a carer's shoes following Covid-19 guidelines.

There are many ways you can get involved. Whether you'd like to fundraise or you'd just like to take part we'd love as many people as possible to get out and about walking. Here are a few ideas:

- » Choose a route
- » Invite others to join (Please follow Covid-19 guidelines)
- » Ask others to donate or sponsor you if you'd like to
- » Get walking on June 12th or pick a different date during Carers Week
- » Share your photos with us!



We are delighted that Suzuki and Hyundai car dealership Pebble Beach will be generously sponsoring our Walk A Mile event for another year, match funding anything we raise up to £1,000. Life can be incredibly busy as a carer, but if you would like to take part here are a few ways you can make a difference:

- » Put your walking shoes on – please join us to walk as little or as far as you can. There is no need to fundraise to take part.
- » Share these dates for Carers Week and Walk A Mile with family, friends and colleagues at work who may want to join us.
- » Share your story. We want to create a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported. We're looking for people to share their thoughts, which will help us raise awareness on our social media channels, with local organisations and the media.

**For more information visit:** [www.swindoncarers.org.uk/walk-a-mile-in-a-carers-shoes/](http://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/walk-a-mile-in-a-carers-shoes/)  
**Our JustGiving page for donations is:** [www.justgiving.com/campaign/SCCWalkAMile2021](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/SCCWalkAMile2021)

**To share your carer story, your pledge to take part and your Walk A Mile photos please email** [anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk).



## Have you heard about Pension Credit?

*For approximately 40% of people aged 65 or more who are eligible for Pension Credit, the answer is 'no'. This means that 1.06 million people could be missing out on a benefit that they are entitled to.*



Pension Credit is a UK-wide means-tested benefit for people of state pension age who fall below a weekly income threshold. This is usually £177.10 for a single person or £270.30 for a couple. This amount could be higher if you are disabled, a carer or have certain housing costs, including mortgage interest payments. You can also claim Pension Credit if you own your home.

Pension Credit is a lifeline to pensioners who need of financial support. As a weekly income top-up, Pension Credit helps to ensure that people in later life do not have to make difficult decisions like choosing between buying food or heating their home.

Receiving Pension Credit also opens up access to other benefits including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, the Warm Home Discount scheme, NHS dental treatment, vouchers towards glasses, a free television licence for people aged over 75 and the cold weather payment.

You are eligible for Pension Credit upon reaching State Pension age if your income is too low, possibly due to having a low or no private pension or a low state pension. This situation could be because of having a low paid job during your working life, having caring responsibilities, or a long-term health condition that stopped you working.

**Check whether you are eligible for Pension Credit by answering the questions below:**

	Yes	No
Do you live in England, Scotland or Wales?		
Have you reached State Pension age?		
If you have a partner, have they reached State Pension age or is one of you getting Housing Benefit for people over State Pension age?		
If you are single is your weekly income less than £177.10? If you have a partner, is your combined weekly income less than £270.30? (This is income from State Pension, other pensions, employment and some benefits)		
Do you care for someone?		
Do you have a disability?		
Do you have savings and investments less than £10,000? (Every £500 over £10,000 will be counted as £1 income)		

If you have answered 'yes' to the questions above, you will have a good chance of being able to claim Pension Credit. Even if you answer 'No' to some questions it may still be possible to make a claim for Pension Credit.

It is easy to apply for Pension Credit and you can apply up to four months before you want to start receiving it. There are several ways to apply for Pension Credit, **online at** <https://apply-for-pension-credit.service.gov.uk/start>, by phoning the **Pension Service on 0800 731 0469**, or by phoning the **Swindon Carers Centre Benefits team on 01793 401093** who can make an application on your behalf.

To make an application you will need your bank account details, your National Insurance number and evidence of your income, savings and investments.

**An information sheet on Pension Credit can be found on our website at** <https://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/welfare-and-benefits/>.

## Our communications survey

A big thank you to everyone who responded to our communications survey, sent out in the last issue of our Caring Matters Newsletter. We are pleased to say that we have received nearly 300 completed forms in the post. Your responses will be hugely valuable, helping us to strengthen and develop the way that we communicate with you in the future.

## The Carers Strategy for Swindon

Swindon Carers Centre is working with other organisations, including Swindon Borough Council and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group to review and update the Carers Strategy for Swindon. This will then go back to carers for consultation so watch this space for more information in our next edition!



## Supporting carers of people with a mental health issue



*Caring for someone with a mental health condition can be a huge responsibility. Because mental health problems are not 'seen' and the support you give can be more emotional than practical, you may face slightly different or extra challenges in your caring role.*

*Please read on to hear from Stuart, Service Delivery Manager for our Adult and Older Carer Support Team, who explains how Swindon Carers Centre can help.*

We try and treat all carers as individuals, so it can be difficult to say 'we will do this and this'. As you know, if you are caring for someone with a mental health condition, everyone is different, and every day is different. But once we know what it is you would like, we try and support you or signpost you accordingly.

Last year (April 2020 to March 2021) we signposted carers to 13 different organisations for support around mental health. These included organisations such as Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind, and LIFT Psychology. We also referred carers to less commonly known places such as KOOTH, Bipolar Swindon Support Group, Mindful Peak Performance, Rethink and Willows Counselling Service.

We work to train staff, for example we invited the Senior Mental Health Service Lead and Psychotherapeutic Counsellor from Swindon & Gloucester Mind to talk at our team meeting about The Junction, a service for adult aged 16 plus who are struggling with poor mental health. At another team meeting, we also heard from the personality disorder specialist at Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

Swindon Carers Centre works with Mind, so that carers can attend their Mental Health First Aid course and also their Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training course. We also

signpost any carers who support people with mental health to the new AWP carers group.

As an organisation, we work closely with AWP and their carer leads across Swindon, attending meetings and sessions to make sure carers have a voice. We have our Carers Support Line that you can call us on or leave a message and we will get back to you within 48 hours, but usually the same day.

We can complete a full carers assessment if you wish to have one (and your dependent does not have a paid service from SBC social services) where we can look at any possible funding that may be available for you to get a break or some downtime. There is currently a wait for this service due to the demand, so if you do feel you want an assessment, please contact us sooner than later.

Finally, we have a range of groups and activities to support you the carer and your own mental health. This includes:

- » A mental health peer support group hosted by a mental health professional
- » Meditation course
- » Laughter workshop
- » Coping with caring training sessions
- » Holistic therapy
- » A walk and talk group
- » Yoga, dance and Zumba sessions
- » Singing sessions

These are all subject to enough carers wishing to attend. I urge you to come along and show interest, so we as an organisation can support you to manage your own mental health, and therefore that of the person you are caring for too.

## Finding support as a working carer

### Claire's story

*It is thought that around 3 million people, out of a working-age population of 4.3 million, juggle work while caring for a family member unpaid.*

Without the right support, combining work and care can be incredibly stressful. Faced with this pressure, some carers choose to give up work to provide care unpaid – a decision which can bring its own challenges, including the loss of a reliable income.

Swindon Carers Centre is here to support unpaid carers who are in employment. Carers like Claire, who works full-time at New College and is a parent carer for her son, who has just started secondary school. This is Claire's story:

My husband and I have two children together; my husband also has two older children, so we are a family of six. My son, who is 11, has ADHD and Autistic traits. On top of this, my daughter is a young carer as I have fibromyalgia. She does a lot for us.

Unfortunately, my son did not enjoy the last couple of years at primary school, but since he has moved to The Ridgeway School he has really started to thrive. He loves maths, and he aspires to be in the navy as a helicopter engineer. He has got to know how to regulate his feelings, which is something he was not able to do at primary school.

Two years ago, I started work on a full-time, term-time contract at New College, Swindon. It's a really busy role but I love it. I have taken the time to get to know people I work with, in my team and outside of my team. They always ask how you are and how your family is.

Having a supportive employer makes a huge difference. I was at my previous workplace for 10 years, working in various different



roles. When my son was going through a tricky time at school, my manager wasn't very accommodating. I always dreaded it when my phone rang.

All it takes is a little bit of understanding to know what staff are going through. Sometimes I worry about telling people I'm a carer, especially because I'm a parent carer and they don't always know what that means. I know they shouldn't discriminate but discussing this with employers can be challenging.

My son started at the Ridgeway School in September 2020. Staff there were great because they knew we would miss out on transition events, so they were in contact with me to help him settle quickly in September. He also attended a summer school, which meant he had an insight into what to expect. This was fabulous support for him.

If you're a working carer, it is important to be honest with your employer. Sometimes it is difficult to let go of the reins, but don't be afraid to ask for help.

**Swindon Carers Centre is encouraging local businesses to sign up to our Employers Care Award. By doing this, organisations commit to making lasting changes in the workplace for unpaid carers. Our Partnerships Manager Judy Evans will support in completing each of the standards required to achieve this award.**

**If you're a working carer and you would either like some personal support, or to get your workplace interested in completing the Employers Care Award, please speak to our Partnerships Manager Judy Evans by emailing [judy.evans@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:judy.evans@swindoncarers.org.uk).**

## A message from our Parent carer support practitioner Lorraine

*Hello to all the parent carers out there, giving it their all and feeling hopeless.*

*I want to share some hopefully inspirational and uplifting news with you all. I hope that by doing so you may feel a little less trepidation and apprehension around the what the future may hold for your children.*

I am the parent of two, now young adults, who were both diagnosed very late in life with Asperger's and autism. Between us we had little support to speak of but somehow managed to muddle through to where we are today.

My son was very poorly with his mental health by the time he was diagnosed with Asperger's, but he was also very relieved to know why he had all the feelings he had been trying to cope with over the years. We, as a family were also grateful as we had a clearer idea of how best to support him. However, the general opinion in the home was that if he managed, somehow to hold down a bit of part-time voluntary work and lived with us into his fifties that was 'good enough'.

Anyway, after a lot of ups and downs he managed to get some work experience. He needed a lot of support accessing it and got extremely anxious with the usual endless trips to the loo, and chest pains, that we all recognise before we could go out. However, with some very good support he progressed and was eventually offered part then full-time employment!

Over the last couple of years this has seen him move onto a bigger and better workplace where he is highly regarded by both the owner, staff and customers. He is knowledgeable (he works in a job that caters to his own unique interests), funny and believe it or not highly chatty. All this came as a complete bombshell to me as this

does not come across that well at home.

Since then, he has gained himself a girlfriend of a year and as of next week will be moving out of the family home and moving into his very first (mortgaged) home. To say that I am proud of his achievements is a complete understatement.

Don't get me wrong, Covid-19 had a profound effect on him, and he had to be furloughed for a length of time because he was becoming so fearful working in an environment that the general public could access. But, because of his honesty around his condition and talking with the owner at work openly he was fully supported as they did not want to lose him.

Now, this may have the opposite effect on some of you, making you feel it is still hopeless for your situation. However, I still have my daughter (autistic) trapped at home. No support, unable to engage with anyone or anything and struggling to keep control of her mental wellbeing. So, I am very aware that it does not end like this for all young people, but I wanted to share because it DOES happen for some. I hope this will give at least one carer out there the hope to carry on with the amazing caring and supporting they are doing at the moment and to keep that spark of possibility alive.

*Take care and remember to look after yourselves as well as your loved ones.*

**Lorraine**



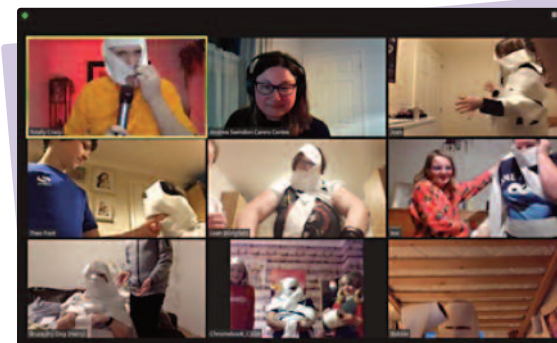
## From our Young Carers, Young Adult Carers and Parent Carers Team

### 5K Colour Run!

The Parent Carer and Young Carer Teams will be joining forces to complete the 5K Colour Run in Newbury, to raise much-needed funds for parent carers. Funds raised will be used to run activities to support our parent carers, enabling them to have time away from their caring role, recharge and meet others caring for children under 18 with additional needs or disabilities. The six team members will come together on 31st July 2021 to run, jog or walk (or perhaps dance!) their way through and over obstacles whilst being decorated by paint balloons!

### Anonymous Wellbeing Support

With the continuing easing of lockdown rules and the worries this may bring, the team behind Kooth.com would like to remind young people aged 11-25 years in Swindon that free, safe and anonymous wellbeing support is available. If you would like to book this virtually, please email [rpotter@kooth.com](mailto:rpotter@kooth.com).



**Totally Crazy, online activity**



**Young Carers at Combat Splat!**



**Roves Farm, Easter hunt**



## Young Carer Groups and Activities

### Activities

The Young Carer Team is busy planning holiday activities for the year ahead, which will include a mix of online and face-to-face activities. These are being carefully organised to ensure the team are complying with government guidelines while still continuing to offer a fun programme of activities.

Online activities will continue to be offered until this summer to ensure young carers can still access activities if they are not able to meet their peers in person yet. The YC Team have already delivered a successful programme over the Easter holidays, which included online magic shows, a Build a Bear Workshop, and face-to-face activities such as Combat Splat, Pedal Karts and a trip to Roves Farm.

We look forward to seeing more young carers in the upcoming months, when we can open up to larger group numbers and when venues begin to reopen their doors. Please keep an eye out for emails and texts from the YC Team!!

### Term-time Groups

Young carer groups have continued to run monthly online, and will continue in this format until at least September 2021, due to groups premises not currently being accessible to Swindon Carers Centre. As soon as there is an update on group venues, we will inform parents and young carers immediately.

## Hello from the Groups and Activities Team!

*During recent times we have been seeing lots of you virtually via Zoom, which we have really enjoyed. We have also been sending out our Chatterbox Newsletter and speaking to you via the phone, texts and emails.*

However, all being well with further easing of government restrictions, we hope to see more of you in the flesh soon! Our team have had their vaccinations and we regularly use Lateral Flow Testing to ensure that we test negative before an event.

Please find enclosed within this Caring Matters Newsletter our latest What's On form for planned activities during July to September 2021. Please note:

- » We have changed the title on the What's On form to read 'For all carers over 18 years of age'. This is to ensure that regardless of whether you are an older/adult/parent or young adult carer, you are welcome to apply to access any of the events on the form.
- » We are trialling sending the What's On form out both in hard copy and via email, to give you a choice and we will monitor your preferred method of sending back your activity requests.
- » Do remember to complete and return your What's On form for each quarter, as we need your signature on the front of the tick box page to say that you have read the terms and conditions.

*Thank you and we look forward to seeing you all soon.*

*Heather, Cat, Zoe and Judy*

### PATH Group

On Wednesday April 14th, the PATH Group (our group for bereaved carers) were able to meet up again at Lydiard Park. This was socially distanced, wearing face masks and bringing their own deckchair, but it was really lovely to see everyone again.



## From our Adult and Older Carer Team

The Adult and Older Carer Team have been working hard to speed up our registration process since January. Many carers wish to be registered with us, to know that they have access to our services should they need it, without wanting anything specific at that time. Carers registering often think that once they have completed our online form, that is it, they are registered.

We have listened to you and made a few changes to get you registered as quickly as possible. We hope that, as a result, carers who need support or signposting at the time they choose to register can access this in a timelier manner.

We now have just the one document to complete called an 'Initial Carers Conversation Assessment' or 'ICCA'. This has replaced all previous forms. It asks you what support you are providing and what you want to get out of registering with us. We will then send out a confirmation of registration letter with a list of our services.

**The form is also mirrored on our website. If you know any carers who aren't registered with us (and they have the internet) they can register at [www.swindoncarers.org.uk/carers-registration/](http://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/carers-registration/)**

## Carers Assessment documentation change

We are also working with Adult Social Services to streamline our full Carers Assessment documentation, to be able to support carers wishing to have one of these. We have been able to remove some of the repetitive nature of the document, to be more solution focused. During an assessment, we will look at what is going well for you, what gives you enjoyment and fulfilment, and what will enable you to continue to care. The support plan will then be based around this, as well as any other needs you have at that time.



*Our wonderfully funny colleague and Service Delivery Administrator Chris Shave retired from the Adult and Older Carer Team in January 2021.*

Chris was very poorly in Hospital with Covid-19 over Christmas and although now on the road to recovery has officially been diagnosed with long Covid. In January she decided to retire and spend precious time with her partner, daughter, her wonderful grandchildren as well other family members.

Many of you will have spoken to Chris over the last 3 and a half years, as she was the person all Adult, Older and Parent carers spoke to when they contacted us to register. When working at SCC, Chris always had a smile on her face. She certainly was the best dressed, even when we started to work from home in March 2020.

Here you will see some photos, taken of Chris receiving her leaving presents. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Chris a happy retirement, but most of all we hope she continues to improve and keep well.



*Chris with Stuart (Service Delivery Manager Adult and Older Carer Team)*



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**

## Swindon Carers Centre address

Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1HE

**Contact us between 9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am - 4pm Friday**

To share your stories, ideas and news items with our Media & Communications Officer, email [anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk)

**Registered charity number: 1061116 Registered company number: 3305621**

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**Visit our website [www.swindoncarers.org.uk](http://www.swindoncarers.org.uk)**

