

Swindon Carers Centre

Annual Impact Report 2020 – 2021



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Interactive Features in the report (online only)



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Foreword: Susanna Jones, Chief Executive

Welcome to our Annual Impact Review of 2020-2021. In a year of unprecedented challenges and increased referrals I am incredibly proud of the support our team has continued to provide for carers in Swindon.

The coronavirus pandemic has hit unpaid carers hard – many more people have taken on a caring role over the past year to help look after a family member or friend and some of those responsibilities have been very complex. A huge thank you must go to all unpaid carers in our community who are providing vital care in challenging times.

Our services adapted to continue to meet carers' needs during the three lockdowns. The development of digital access to groups and activities (and more than 800 befriending phone calls) continued to provide a lifetime to carers who would have otherwise been

isolated. And we have worked very hard with partner organisations, including Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and Swindon Borough Council's Public Health team, to ensure as many unpaid carers had priority access to the Covid-19 vaccination as possible.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our entire team of staff, volunteers and trustees who have worked very hard remotely over the past year and also to the following people who donated their expertise to support carers and our team in the early days of the first lockdown: Adam Morris (Avagio IT) who operated a free IT helpline for unpaid carers in Swindon (this was then expanded as an offer to neighbouring charities across Wiltshire and Bath throughout the pandemic); Dirk Anthony (Blank White Page) and Paul Byrnes (Byrnes Darwin Ltd) for leadership and management coaching and support.



“It took a lot for me to even consider talking to the team. But I’m so glad I did. The team have listened to me and have been very kind and understanding to my situation. I now know that I’m not the only young person going through this.”



Introduction: Hannah Crawley, Chair of Trustees

The past year has been remarkably difficult, with three lockdowns creating uncertainty and very difficult life changes for many of us, but especially for unpaid carers.

I have been so proud of the way the team at Swindon Carers Centre has shown resilience and determination keep our services up and running, adapted to new ways of working and ensured carers still feel connected and engaged with the help we can offer, despite dealing with the challenges Covid-19 has presented them personally.

Special thanks go to the Senior Leadership Team, and team managers who have done a fantastic job adapting services and managing the challenges of Covid-19 safe working, in the face of peak demand for

Swindon Carers Centre services. You should all be very proud.

This year has seen some changes on the Trustee Board with the new addition of Neil Steptoe who joined the board April of this year. Neil brings with him extensive experience in Operations Management which will be hugely valuable to the board.

Anna Teasdale stepped down from the board in the autumn of 2020 due to her relocation. We are also gearing up to say goodbye to our long-serving Company Secretary Rob Reeves, who is due to step down from the board in July. Rob has contributed a huge amount to the board during his time with Swindon Carers Centre; his eye for detail and ability to keep us all on track will be very much missed.



**There are
21,000+ unpaid
carers in
Swindon**



“This last lockdown seems to have been the worst. Having no visitors or family to come and see you has been so hard. Thank you once again to Swindon Centre, you are indeed my angels in disguise.”



Our story

“Swindon Carers Centre has been extremely supportive. Staff have gone the extra mile to get me through this period. Somehow they manage to make everyone feel special and put a smile on my face even in a crisis.”

Swindon Carers Centre is a charitable organisation, which is part of the Carers Trust Network, established to provide help and support to the 21,000 unpaid carers in Swindon.

Unpaid carers play a crucial role in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. While being a carer has many positives, it is also a role that can be physically and emotionally draining. Individuals often feel the impact of their caring role on their own health and wellbeing, as well as work, education and finances.

Our team of professionals and trained volunteers helps people to access the support they are entitled to as a carer so that they can live a healthy, fulfilling life alongside their caring role.



An unpaid carer is anyone, child or adult, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without support.

As of 31st March 2021 we have 3,882 carers registered with us:



1,209
Adult Carers



915
Older Carers



602
Parent Carers



906
Young Carers



250
Young Adult Carers



Our Vision

Creating a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported.



Our Mission

To improve the wellbeing of people with caring responsibilities in and around Swindon.



Making a difference: Our year at a glance

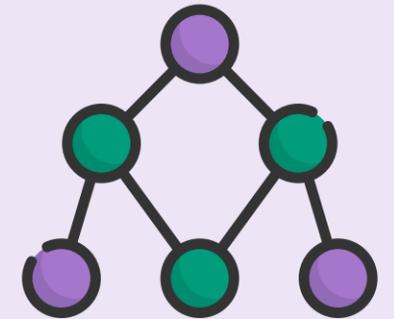


2,154 carers in total were supported by teams across Swindon Carers Centre.



100% of carers attending training said they had a better understanding of the diagnosis given to the person they care for, and how to manage their condition.

Adult Carer Support Services guided carers to **151 organisations**, self-help groups, websites and support lines demonstrating a wealth of local contacts and networking expertise.



Young carers achieved **32 AQA units** with the exam board AQA as part of our AQA Champion Award for schools and young carers.



Our Welfare and Benefits Service secured **£280,424** in benefits and allowances for carers in Swindon this year.

We completed **218 new Emergency Card Scheme plans** for carers and a further review of 27 plans completed previously.

We received a record number of calls to our Carers Support Line.



A total of **1,249 carers** got in touch this year **3,533 times**.

We received **158 parent carer referrals** for assessment, a **42% increase** on the previous year.



595 young carers attended groups and activities, giving them a break from their caring role.





Achievements during the Covid-19 pandemic, April – September



ZURICH®

Community Trust

Thank you to Zurich Community Trust, who donated **£14,000** enabling Swindon Carers Centre to respond to carers most in need during the Covid-19 pandemic.



We partnered with Avagio IT to offer a support line for carers needing help to access technology to combat loneliness and isolation during lockdown.

April

Our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team made over 800 contacts, via calls, emails or text to carers unable to join our usual programme of activities due to lockdown.

We sent out the first Chatterbox Newsletter, by email and by print, an initiative which helped some of our most isolated carers without access to technology keep up to date.



Our Adult and Older Carer Team sent out 37 supermarket letters, to help carers access priority shopping slots during lockdown, and signposted a further 15 people to Swindon Borough Councils' Live Well Hub for support with shopping and food.

We supported Adult Social Services at Swindon Borough Council to review those receiving support via direct payments and make sure that individuals were safe.

The Young Carers Team produced fortnightly newsletters, with information on wellbeing, useful contact numbers, quizzes and competitions to take part in.

Our Parent Carer Team and Young Carers Team called all parent carers they knew would be struggling, or young carers deemed vulnerable, to offer 1:1 support.



During May June and July, over 160 carers received cakes to mark lockdown birthdays, donated by local supermarkets and delivered by our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team, and Tim, our Benefits Service Coordinator.

In August, young carer holiday activities were able to start again. More than 200 young carers attended events during the summer holidays including trips to Roves Farm, Laser Quest, Rockstar Climbing and Cotswold Water Park.

Sept

Parent carers were invited to afternoon teas, weekly online yoga sessions and a comedy evening (all funded by donations) for some much-needed respite and laughs.



Achievements during the Covid-19 pandemic, October – March

Oct



As the second lockdown started, our Adult and Older Carer Team provided letters to confirm proof of caring roles again, helping people to access priority shopping slots and services.

10 parent carers received hampers donated by Zurich Enterprise Challenge.

Our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team arranged a coach trip to Gloucester Quays and Cheltenham in December in-line with Covid-19 guidelines.



In December, some young carer activities were able to go ahead outside in addition to activities online. This included a trip to Roves Farm, so children were able to meet Father Christmas and enjoy some time out.

Swindon Carers Centre continued to use funding from Zurich Community Trust to help those in need, including purchasing Aldi food vouchers to support families struggling financially.

March

Our Adult Carer and Older Carer Team signposted carers to eight different organisations for support around their, or their dependent's, mental health.

Our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team continued to run a full programme of online activities, including singing, Zumba, quizzes and Carers Cuppas.



Our Schools Development Manager challenged schools to a 'prepare and present an assembly' competition on the topic of young carers.

We sent out vaccine leaflets to carers from Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG.



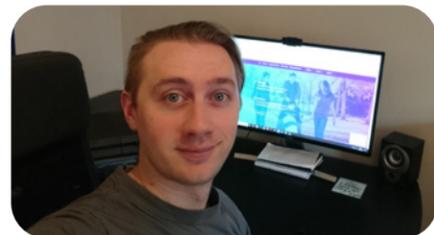
We worked in partnership with Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and GP surgeries to ensure as many unpaid carers as possible could gain priority access to the Covid-19 vaccine. 39 carers who contacted us for help with this went on to get their priority vaccine organised quickly.

Young carers attended online activities during the February half-term, including magic shows and a movie afternoon with pizza.



Our Services

Despite lockdown, all our teams have still been working hard from home





Our Adult Carer and Older Carer Team

A professional listening ear to offer support, guidance and advice.

What we offer:

- Handling referrals to register as an adult or older carer with Swindon Carers Centre
- Completing Information and Advice Assessments (IAA) which identify a person's caring role and what they hope to achieve by registering with Swindon Carers Centre
- 1:1 support, including complex work supporting carers to complete a Carers Assessment and funding support
- Our Carers Support Line, offering help with queries, signposting to external services and individual support
- Networking with professionals, to expand outreach work, in collaboration with other organisations and services
- Our Emergency Card Scheme, helping carers to put a plan in place should an emergency prevent them from carrying out their caring role



Service Delivery Manager Stuart Ilbury with the Adult Carer and Older Carer Team.



“Thank you for the warm welcome. I was astounded to witness and hear all the help that you so generously provide.”



Key achievements for our Adult Carer and Older Carer Team

At a time when demand for increased support and advice was particularly high, the team:

- Handled a record number of contacts via our Carer Support Line
- Reviewed 218 new ECS plans and a further 27 Emergency Card Scheme plans

In Jan-March 2021, we saw a record number of referrals to register carers with Swindon Carers Centre. We received 127 adult carer referrals and 29 older carer referrals – a 105% increase on the previous quarter. As a result, we have reviewed our paperwork to speed up assessment processes and to better suit the needs of carers registering.



“Thank you. I didn’t really think of myself as a carer. It has been hard to acknowledge. Talking to you has been so informative.”



This year the team have completed:

384 assessments of all types including full carers assessments and information and advice assessments.

158 assessment reviews carried out to ensure carers continue to receive the best support.

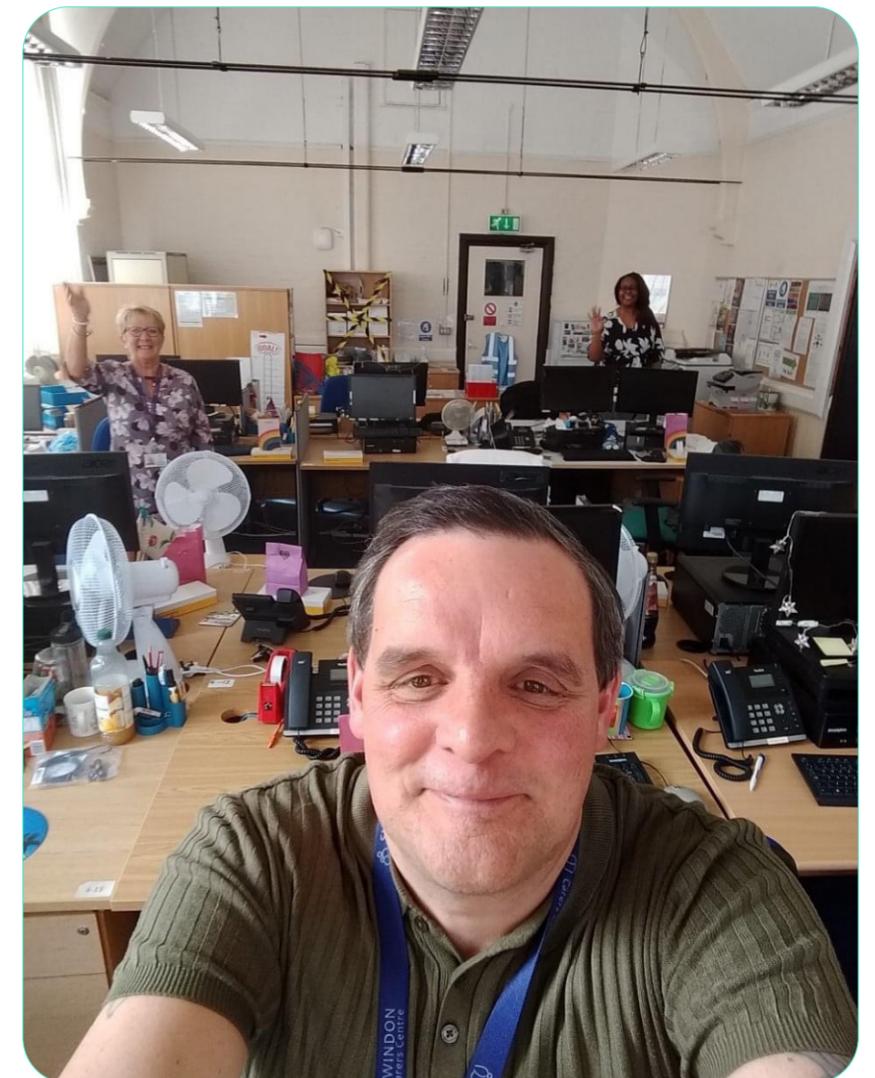
30 successful carers relief applications, which are key in enabling our most vulnerable carers to access valuable time and respite away from their caring role.



“I feel confident with the knowledge that if I’m in a crisis Swindon Carers Centre will be there to support my needs.”

How has this helped our carers?

Many carers do not see themselves as carers, simply as a partner, relative or friend doing what they can for a loved one. As a result, many people are unaware of their rights as a carer, including any help they may be entitled to. Completing a carers assessment can help individuals to put a plan in place. Despite challenging circumstances this year, 87% of Adult and Older Carers who received an assessment or review said they were more aware of support available to them, including services they may not have accessed otherwise. In addition, 85% said that, after an assessment or review, they were better able to cope in their caring role and avoid reaching a crisis point.





Abi and Steve's story

Abi and Steve's son Jacob was born with a large hole in his heart (VSD) which was only discovered on the day of his birth. After successful surgery at 9-weeks-old, attention then switched from Jacob's heart as his parents realised he was failing to meet his developmental milestones. The day before Jacob's first birthday, an assessment confirmed that he had Global Development Delay.

Here is Abi's experience in her own words:

“As the appointments with various professionals started flooding in thick and fast, we were becoming increasingly overwhelmed with all the new information we were learning. Having very little family support at the time, we felt like we were drowning.”

“It was at this time, that we learned of Swindon Carers Centre, which we found to be an enormous support. By attending events organised by them, they have given us the opportunity to meet other carers in a similar position to ourselves, which has allowed us to make life-long friendships.”

“Some days life with a disabled child can be exhausting, but one flash of Jacob's beautiful smile and his highly infectious laugh, is enough to lift our spirits. We would just like to take this opportunity to say thank you to



each and every one of you at Swindon Carers Centre. We would be lost without your support, especially in the early days of Jacob's journey.”

In December 2020, Abi joined Swindon Carers Centre as a volunteer for our Welfare and Benefits Team after having her first job interview over Zoom. We are pleased to have her on board to give her expertise in supporting our carers.



Our Groups and Activities Team

Time out for peer support and friendship

Image 1 of 33

Swindon Carers Centre offers registered carers a full programme of social events, support groups, and activities, as well as training and information courses. During the Covid-19 pandemic, our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team had to think creatively, keeping an eye on changing Covid-19 guidelines and using online technology to revamp and continue planned programmes.



Activities this year included:

- Quizzes, Carers Cuppas, Zumba, dance, yoga and singing, all online via Zoom.
- Coach trips to Cheltenham and Gloucester in between lockdowns, as well as Christmas flower arranging, and outdoor events wearing masks.
- An online cream tea, painting workshop, Indian meal and Fimo bead making. Food and resources were delivered to carers' homes for some virtual time together.
- Telephone conversations with Margaret Goldie, our volunteer counsellor.
- IT training from our trustee Mubbisher Ahmad for older carers.
- Thanks to a grant received from the Wiltshire Community Foundation, we were able to offer members of our PATH Group for bereaved carers tablet and internet access for a year.
- Groups for Young Adult Carers on Zoom, including a games and a pizza evening.

The team also thought about how to boost mental health and wellbeing for our older carers who struggle with access to technology. Our new Chatterbox Newsletter, developed at the start of lockdown is now being sent to thousands of carers in print and via email, who have opted in to receive additional updates, advice and messages of support.



“Thank you for all the thoughtfulness and gifts. They lifted our spirits when we were down in the dumps. Every gift, phone call, and email did a lot to lift our flagging spirits.”



Our Groups and Activities Team (continued)



“Thank you for all your hard work. Because of you we are all together as one strong group to be able to care for our loved ones.”

Attendances at events from carers for 2020/21



Groups: **222**

(Plus 837 befriending messages and calls during the 1st March 2020 lockdown)



Activities: **304**



Courses: **75**



Pamper sessions: **94**

How has this helped our carers?

100% of carers taking part in activities and social breaks this year said they had benefitted from a short break from their caring role. During the pandemic, when many carers have been unable to access their usual support networks due to lockdown restrictions and shielding guidelines, a simple invite to meet up and chat to others (whether online or face-to-face) has made a big difference during an incredibly tough time.



“I would like to say how interesting this past month’s Chatterbox was, some really clever people out there, and so nice to have Swindon Carers Centre give us all a chance to do things that wouldn’t be available otherwise.”



Our Young Carers, Young Adult Carers and Parent Carers Team

Recognising the vital role unpaid carers play in family life.

For our team, the past year has brought about a whole new way of working, with all face-to-face work suspended for most of the year. The team has remained focused, passionate and creative to ensure vital support has had minimal disruption and services have continued to run.

Young Carers

This year, there were 119 attendees at our young carer term-time group, which was held online instead of in-person. In addition, 476 young carers took part in both face-to-face and online activities last year, with some very positive feedback.

We arranged welfare calls for 194 young carers identified as particularly vulnerable in the past year. and four young adult carers have been supported by our student counsellor. Our new online Young Adult Carer chat sessions,

with guest speakers covering topics such as mental health have also proved popular.

A total of 120 young carers were referred to us. While some young carer assessments were put on hold until schools reopened, we were able to register 101 new young carers this year with a majority of these being completed either by telephone or video due to lockdown.

During the Covid-19, 51 young carers benefitted from funding applications for equipment like laptops, arts

and craft, wellbeing hampers, board games, and garden equipment to keep them motivated and encouraged.

Our Young Carers Forum

This group of young carers, who meet to champion young carers' rights, did an incredible job for Young Carers Action Day on March 16th 2021, when they created a video to raise awareness and support for young people in similar situations. The group have also designed their own logo, and have set their priorities for 2021/22.

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[Learn more](#)





Our Young Carers, Young Adult Carers and Parent Carers Team (continued)



“Seeing him with a smile again has made me cry. He has had an awesome time and said it was nice to be a normal kid to have fun without worrying about me or his brother. You don’t know how much that meant to me to hear him saying it. The joy and happiness you all share with kids is absolutely awesome.”



“Thank you for the fabulous magic set sent this weekend. The magic show was brilliant. Each time I popped in the presenter was really engaging. This is such a good idea to do these Zoom sessions. The magic set will really give pleasure and fun over the coming months.”

Image 1 of 13



The Young Carers, Young Adult Carers and Parent Carers Team



Our Young Carers, Young Adult Carers and Parent Carers Team (continued)

Parent carers

This year the team completed:

- 158 parent carer referrals, up 42% on the previous year
- Supported 132 parent carers on a 1:1 basis
- Completed 118 parent carer assessments, giving families personalised advice and a plan for ongoing support
- Successfully submitted 55 funding applications to Swindon Borough Council to provide much-needed respite for parent carers

The team used funding from Zurich Community Trust to identify families in financial need during the pandemic and ensure they received one of our Aldi food vouchers. This funding was also used to purchase wellbeing equipment for parent carers struggling with poor mental health.

When lockdown restrictions were eased, parent carers were able to enjoy afternoon teas, and a comedy evening, as well as weekly online yoga sessions with money donated to the team to support parent carers.



“It’s so lovely to meet other parents, who understand the difficulties to have a child with additional needs.”



Lorraine, our Parent Carer Support Practitioner



Our Young Carers, Young Adult Carers and Parent Carers Team (continued)

Supporting Young Carers in Education

Our Schools Development Manager Ann Giles has worked with 78 schools and supported 26 young carers to achieve 38 AQA Unit Award scheme units this year, increasing their confidence and raising their attainment levels in education.

Schools have worked hard to continue to support their young carers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of Ann's highlights include being able to present Zoom classroom assemblies, and some very successful Young Carer Lead meetings. Pupils also enjoyed a School's Got Talent Competition during Carers Week 2020, and a 'Prepare and Present an Assembly' competition in March 2021.

Young Carer Lead: Bernie Dudman, Shaw Ridge Primary School

It has been difficult for all the children throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, let alone our young carers who had all these extra pressures. We have 20 young carers in school. About half of them were in classes, and others were home-schooled, so it was difficult to get everyone together as we usually do.

The AQA Champion Award is a really good vehicle to motivate and encourage children. We had one family who were out of school for a long time during the pandemic due to health reasons. In addition to home-schooling, they were able to do the AQA units. It was a really good way to keep those children motivated, make them feel special and keep in contact with them.

I got them to come down to school, they came into the garden where they were separate from the other children, and we started off with the 'make a collage' unit, which was just lovely because we could do that in a Covid-19 secure environment.

I said, "have a look at the things that interest you" and they chose planets and baking. They also did road safety and months of the year. It was good for their mum to be involved as well, I think it gave her a real sense of purpose and connection with the school in a time when it was difficult to be connected.

Ann is amazing as the Schools Development Manager. I know she is always there, and she is a great support. I find the Young Carer Lead forums a really useful opportunity to meet other young carer leads, because they come up with some brilliant ideas which make me think 'I could do that'. Ann brings us all together so we can share good practice and experience.

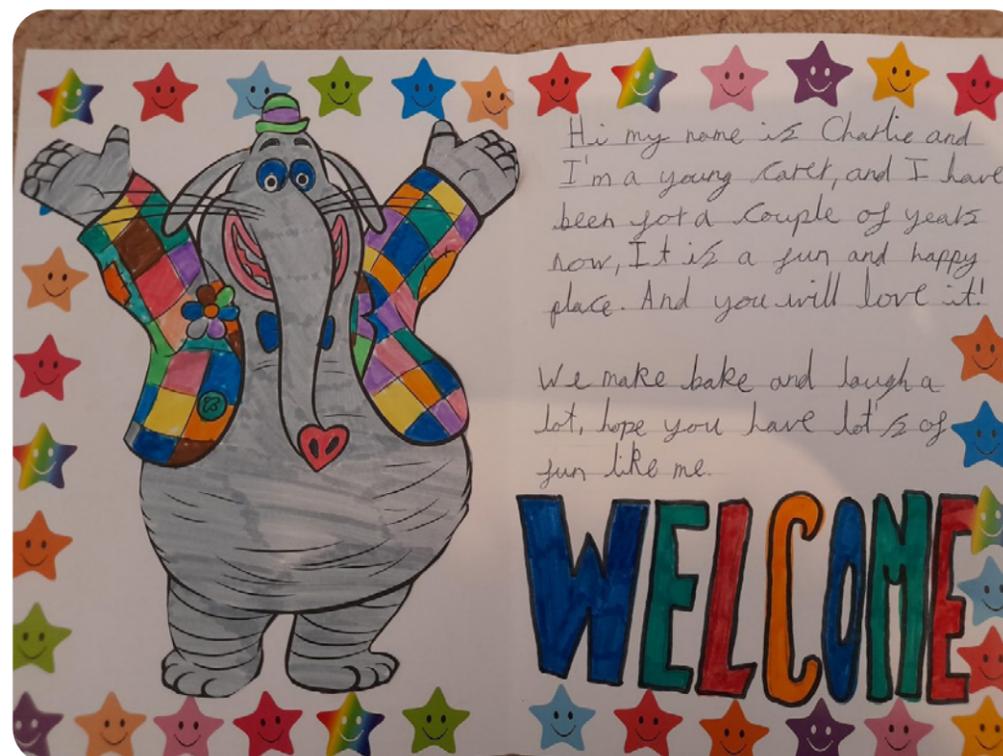


Image 1 of 5





Supporting carers in the workplace

Three million people, out of a working-age population of 4.3 million, juggle work while caring for someone in an unpaid capacity. Developing a carer-friendly workplace enables people to keep working, retaining key staff and contributing to better productivity.

Our Partnerships Manager Judy Evans is continuing to raise awareness of our Swindon Employers Care Award, working with employers in our town to raise awareness of unpaid carers, train key staff and put the right policies and systems in place to offer enhanced support.

We are pleased to say that Nationwide have recently completed this award, and we are continuing to support companies who have already achieved the award through annual reviews. Judy is now working closely with local schools and businesses who have an interest in signing up to the scheme in the future.

Swindon Carers Centre has been meeting online to build relationships with a variety of local employers, including Zurich, Nationwide, Historic England, Intel, RWE, Openwork, Thames Water, and TE Connectivity.

We are delighted that our partners have continued to support with fundraising and donations throughout the pandemic. Our local supermarkets Asda, Waitrose, Morrison's and Sainsbury's have generously provided birthday cakes, chocolates, food hampers and wellbeing hampers to our carers in need. We have also been chosen as Charity of the Year by Corporate Events, Perry Bishop and SCCR SimSports online racing.



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[Learn more](#)





Welfare and Benefits Service

Our Welfare and Benefits Service, which provides practical and emotional support for financially disadvantaged carers. This year, 344 carers were offered welfare information, support and benefits checks. The team, consisting of Tim Saint, our part-time service coordinator and four volunteers, secured an amazing **£280,424** in unclaimed income. Thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund, Nationwide and TE Connectivity for providing **£10,670** to fund this vital service.



“Swindon Carers Centre helped my family renew a claim for Personal independence Payment (PIP). The person I care for has sickle cell disease. Their condition varies, often due to the amount of sunlight, so this is a difficult claim to represent. Thankfully, we were awarded the eight points needed to qualify, giving us £59.70 a week. We were also able to keep the Severe Disability Premium on our Income Support claim of £66.95 a week”



344 carers were offered welfare information, support and benefits checks.

“I wanted to move to a new house, as my ex-husband who is facing abuse charges, was due to be bailed to an address in the local area. Swindon Carers Centre helped me to fill in a Discretionary Housing Payment form to help with the cost of the move, which was successful. My daughter and I have now moved to a new area of Swindon.”



Supporting carers in the community

We work hard to be as inclusive as possible and are continually learning and developing in our efforts to reach as many parts of our diverse community as possible.

Some key highlights include:

- Working collaboratively with Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health at Swindon Borough Council to ensure as many unpaid carers as possible had priority access to the Covid-19 vaccine
- Our Parent and Young Carer Service Delivery Manager Debbie Murphy-Myers has taken over from our former Deputy CEO as organisation lead for Equalities and Inclusion and has joined Swindon's Inclusion and Diversity Network and Voluntary Action Swindon's Equalities Coalition
- Our Health and Social Care Liaison Officer Tanya Hawker has achieved the bronze award for Pride in Practice (PIP) around supporting LGBTQ+ communities
- Two members of staff, Judy Evans and Cat Attewell, have received training to become Singing for The Brain Practitioners
- Four members of staff have completed Dementia Friends training: Sonya Beale, Stuart Ilbury, Heather Goldsmith and Cat Attewell
- Our CEO is working with the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board to ensure feedback from carers for people with learning disabilities runs throughout the Carers Strategy for Swindon





Supporting carers in the community (continued)

Carers Week

Carers Week highlights the challenges unpaid carers face, recognising the contribution they make to families and our local community. This was an action-packed week, with all events held virtually due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Our Walk A Mile event raised over £2,000 for carers in Swindon, thanks to Pebley Beach Hyundai & Suzuki Swindon, who matched our fundraising efforts pound for pound up to £1,000.

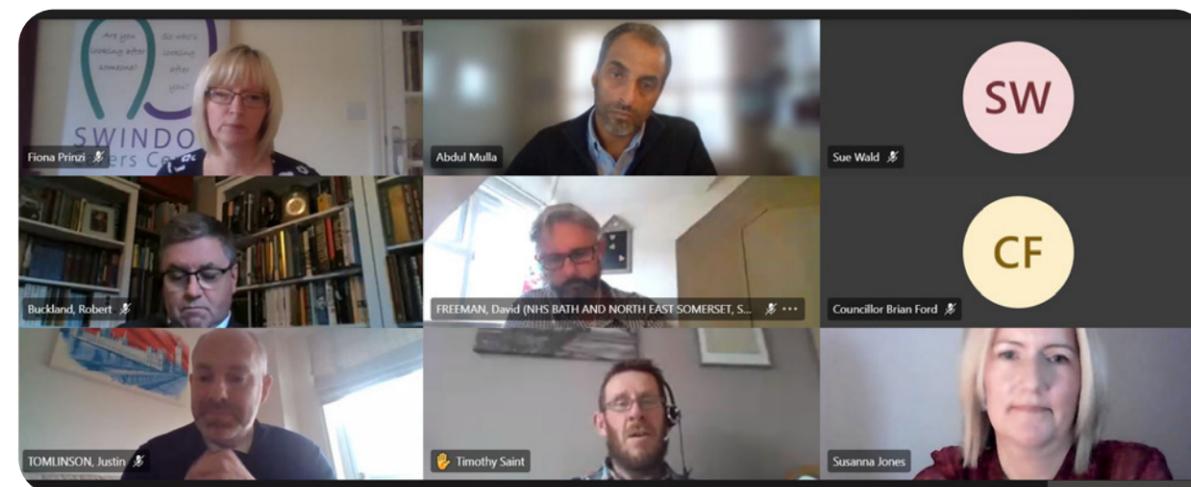


Baking event for Carers Week



Carers Rights Day

Swindon Carers Centre held a virtual online event for Carers Rights Day in November 2020. This included updates on key topics, such as hospital discharge processes, the Swindon Learning Disability Partnership Board, NHS priorities for carers and the Swindon's Carers Strategy. Carers were also able to submit their questions for a busy Q&A session with MPs and health and social care leaders.



Collaborative work with health and social care organisations

Our Adult and Older Carer Team

Our Health and Social Care Liaison Officer continues to work with a wide range of designated carer leads at GP surgeries and parish councils to widen community support. In addition, the team has undertaken extensive networking, partnering with organisations such as Swindon Healthwatch, the Older People's Agency

Network at Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, and the Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. They have forged closer links with the Adult safeguarding team, as well as the initial contact team and assessment and review teams at Swindon Borough Council.

The Young Carer/Young Adult Carer/Parent Carer Team

This team continues to attend external agency meetings, collaborating with others to raise the profile of young carers. This includes the monthly Young Carers National Voice meetings, as well as the Safeguarding Partnership Board, the Swindon Equalities Coalition Group,

Participation Network Group and Wiltshire Police. The Parent Carer Team also gave a presentation to Oxford Brookes University and their trainee nurses to highlight the role of a parent carer and the impact of caring for a child with additional needs.

The initial 2020 lockdown affected millions of children throughout the UK who were due to take GCSE exams of A-levels. After attending a webinar with the Young Carer Development Trust, letters were sent out to every secondary school and college in Swindon, to promote the consideration of a caring role when evaluating grades in 2021. This was then fed back in a national meeting, where Paul Blomfield MP was a guest speaker. As a result, he was able to take this issue forwards and raise it in Parliament.





Volunteers

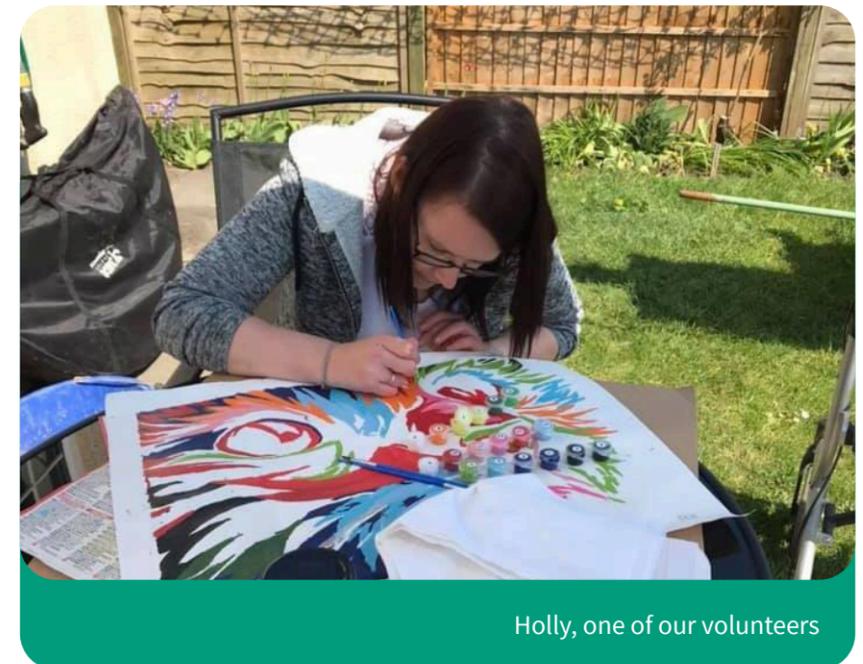
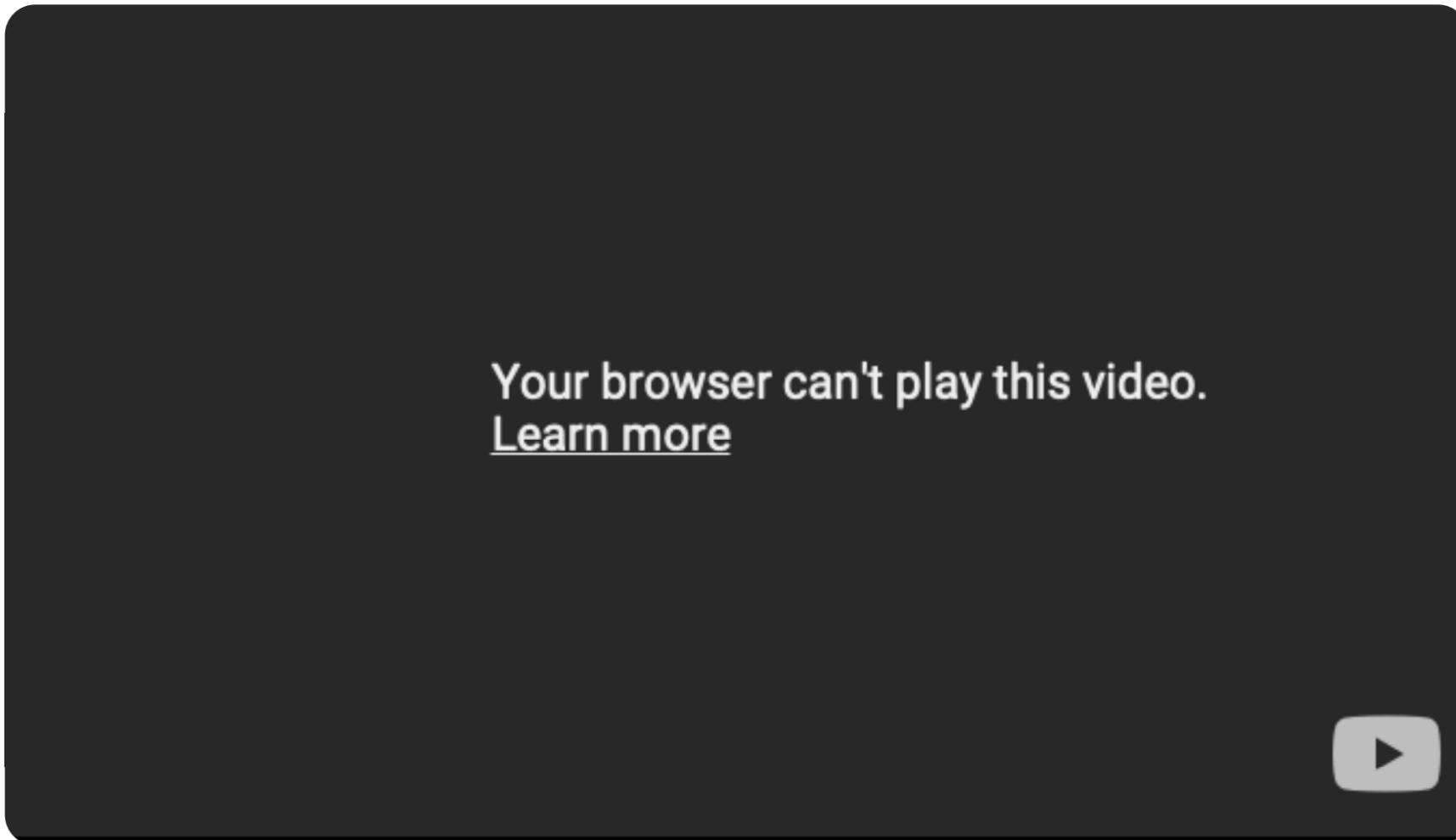
During a difficult year with the Covid-19 pandemic, our dedicated volunteers have given their time and expertise to make a huge difference to our teams.

In total, we worked with **22 volunteers**, who contributed an amazing **3,045 hours** to Swindon Carers Centre – worth an **estimated £34,174**.

Holly Egerton, Volunteer Administrator with the Young Carers Team.

“I wanted to volunteer with Swindon Carers Centre, firstly for experience for my administration course, but also because I love what they do to support others. They care and understand for a group of people that are essentially forgotten in society. I feel a part of the team, I feel useful,

and I feel that I am giving something back. I am able to help with tasks that allow my colleagues to focus on supporting carers. My advice to other people thinking about volunteering is to go for it, any spare time is greatly appreciated, and you get a lot back.”



Holly, one of our volunteers



Fundraising and Grants

The Covid-19 pandemic did not stop our Aspire Fundraising Team, who got to grips with a new way of fundraising trying online fundraisers and virtual events for the first time. We would like to say a big

thank you to local companies who supported our Christmas raffle, including Bower & Bailey, DeVere South Cerney, Nandos, Indipac, McDonalds, and many more.



A screenshot from our online fundraiser quiz

Unrestricted Donations and Fundraising Income 2020-21

	Total	Gift Aid	Total inc. Gift Aid
Christmas Raffle	£593	-	£593
Walk A Mile Event	£2,217	£178	£2,395
Quiz Night	£67	-	£67
Bath Uni Fundraising	£345	£12	£358
Donations	£325	£37	£362
Donations from other Charities and Corporations/Partners	£7,373	-	£7,373
Fundraising completed by others for us	£1,608	£157	£1,766
50/50 Lottery Club	£2,632	-	£2,632
Total Unrestricted Donations	£15,161	£386	£15,547

A big thank you to our supporters including:



Jodie, the winner of our December Raffle



Financial Review

This year was an extremely busy one for the charity as demand for our services increased dramatically during the pandemic. Overall, our income increased by 4%, (mainly due to being awarded additional Covid-19 specific grants to help carers through the pandemic and support their well being). Donations were down by 12% and fundraising income was down by 27%, although both of these drops were expected.

Expenditure decreased by 5% mainly due to the lockdowns during the year which stopped us carrying out many of our usual charitable activities although we did find many other ways of supporting carers during the crisis (in a less expensive form). This has resulted in an increase in our unrestricted reserves up to £192,754. We have also carried forward £49,550 of restricted money this year which we have been unable to spend due to the restrictions.

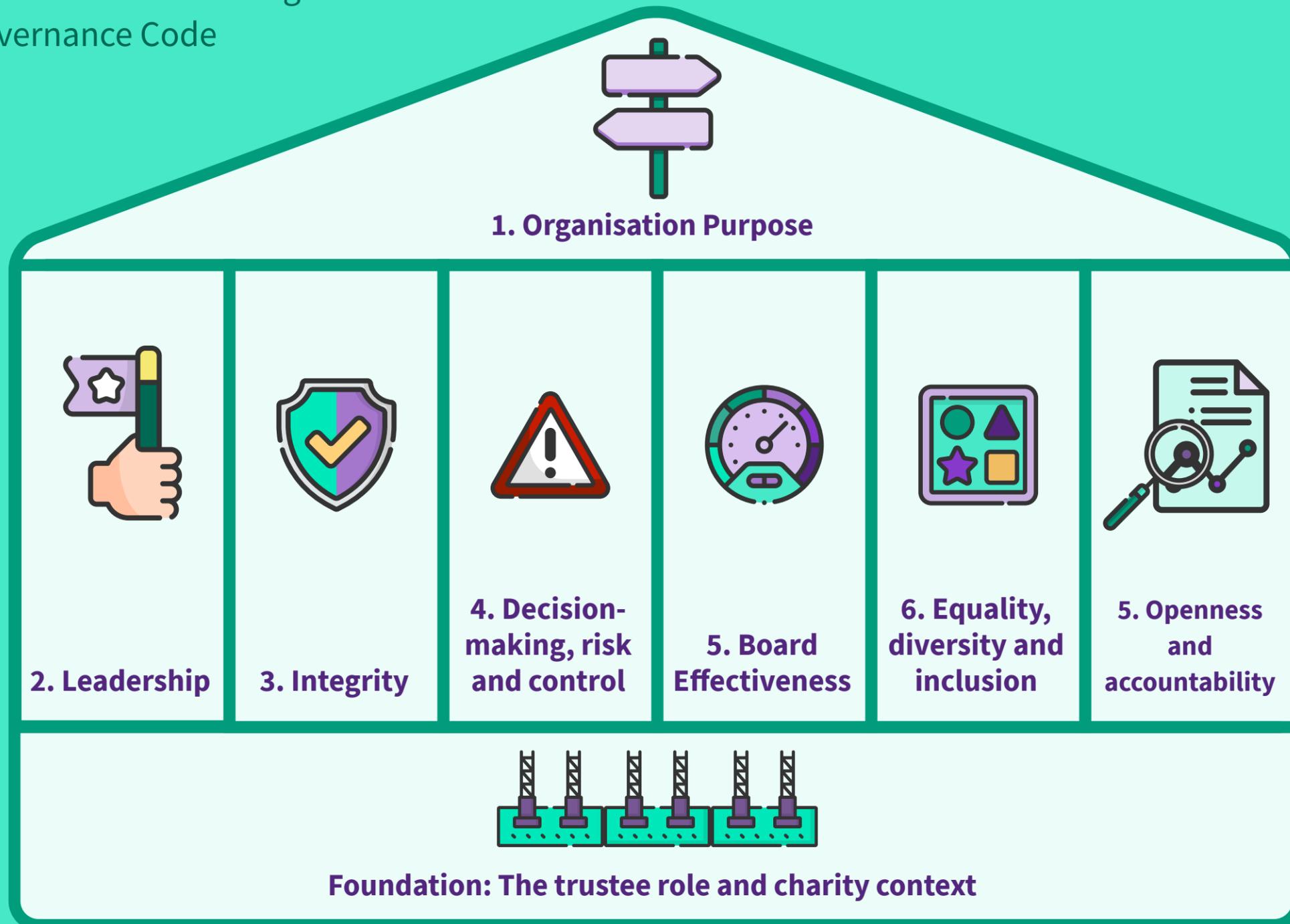
Balance as at 31 st March 2021	
General/Unrestricted Funds	£192,754
Restricted Funds	£49,550
Total	£242,304





Governance

Swindon Carers Centre is following the Charity Governance Code





The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team continues to evolve. In November 2020 Deputy CEO Fiona Prinzi decided to move on from Swindon Carers Centre and left at the end of January 2021. We thank Fiona for all her hard work and dedication during her time with us.

This led to a small leadership/management restructure, enabling both Service Delivery Managers (Stuart Ilbury, Adult and Older Carer Team and Debbie Murphy-Myers, YC/YAC/PC) to take on additional responsibilities as part of their continuing professional development, whilst enabling further investment in frontline service delivery to help meet the need of increased referrals to Swindon Carers Centre.

Finance and Resources Director Suzanne Hunt has continued to develop her team, who have led further improvements to our IT systems and development of a new website. The Resources Manager, Bronte Hague, has also taken on additional responsibilities and now leads on ensuring compliance with government guidance on Covid-19 response, policy reviews and updates, robust health and safety whilst staff and volunteers are homeworking, and a new wellbeing project for staff and volunteers.

Susanna Jones, our CEO, continues to work with external partners, including Swindon Borough Council, Bath, Wiltshire and Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England, Carers Trust, Carers UK and regional South West Carer Centre colleagues to raise the Carer agenda.

The full management team of Bronte Hague, Debbie Murphy-Myers, Stuart Ilbury, Judy Evans, and Ann Giles continue to hold accountability for their service areas and work closely with the CEO and Finance and Resources Director.



Suzanne, our Finance and Resources Director, celebrating 10 years at Swindon Carers Centre

Our Trustees

One new trustee has joined the board. Neil Steptoe will particularly support business development and act as the trustee link with our new Grants and Impact Officer, Ruth Larkin. One trustee, Anna Teasdale, stepped down from the Board following her relocation. At the 2020 AGM, Hannah Crawley, Mubbisher Ahmad, Caroline Moore, and Rob Reeves were re-elected to continue in their roles as Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Company Secretary, respectively. Chris Sims continues to offer expertise in systems and IT. Trustees evaluated the Board's performance against the principles of the Charity Governance Code at their away day in January 2019. Trustees have adopted the code and continue to aspire to meet the requirements.



Risks/Challenges

Coronavirus has put a huge added strain on unpaid carers, and the evidence of that is increasing referrals to our service. Particular consistent themes over the year from carers of all ages have been the need for support with mental health and finances. The current Swindon Borough Council and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group contract has secured funding for the next 18 months (with a possible rollover for the following two years) but it is important to identify and implement significant additional income generation plans and to review our cost base to enable SCC to continue deliver a high-quality service and meet future demands. We have yet to see how the pandemic will affect charity/funder relationships or if donations and grant funding will increase or decrease as a long-term result. We have created a new Grants and Impact Officer post to help diversify our income streams and maximise potential in this area so we can invest more in frontline support.



Goals for next year

- To continue our strong partnership work with other key stakeholders, including Carers Leads from Swindon Borough Council, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG), Great Western Hospital, and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, amongst others.
- To liaise with carers and key partners to review and update The Carers Strategy for Swindon, published in November 2018.
- To play an active part Swindon and North Wiltshire's Professional Leadership Network, which was formed in July 2020 comprising key stakeholders from health and social care organisations working on priorities for health, care and wellbeing in our locality.
- To keep working closely with other charities, including Swindon and Gloucestershire MIND, Citizens Advice Swindon, Swindon Advocacy Movement, Voluntary Action Swindon and Healthwatch Swindon to ensure residents in Swindon know of, and can access the services available to them at Sanford House.
- To enable our carers to have their say, as their feedback is vitally important to ensuring their increasing needs are at the centre of commissioning decisions as well as our service development.
- Further investment in digital technologies, capabilities and expertise, to build on investment made in our IT infrastructure. This will allow us to work in a robust and seamless way regardless of whether we stay as a remote team, come together back under one roof or have a blended approach moving forward.



SCC would like to thank all carers, funders, donors, staff, volunteers and trustees for their hard work and support over the past 12 months.

There are so many ways you can support us, by volunteering, donating, championing our cause to raise awareness and joining an event.

Swindon Carers Centre,
Sanford Street,
Swindon,
SN1 1HE

Telephone
Swindon (01793) 531133

Office opening hours
9.30am – 4.30pm Monday
to Thursday
9.30am – 4pm Friday

Join us on our website or social media:

 www.swindoncarers.org.uk

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