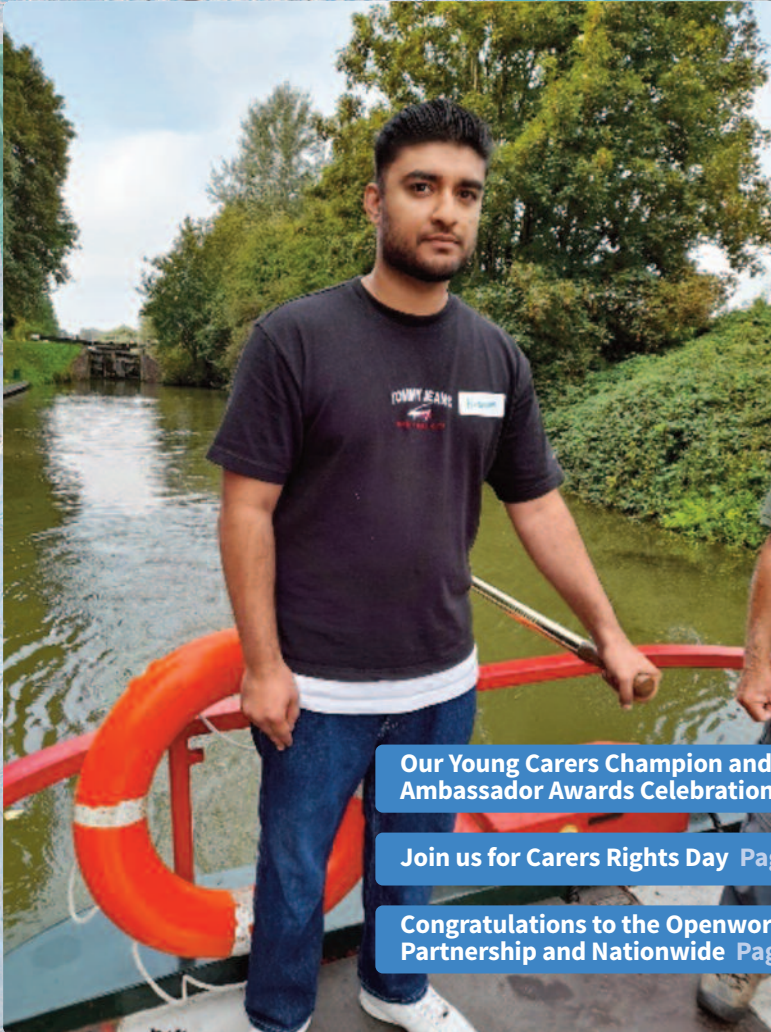


Caring Matters



**Our Young Carers Champion and
Ambassador Awards Celebrations** Pages 6/7

Join us for Carers Rights Day Pages 8/9

**Congratulations to the Openwork
Partnership and Nationwide** Page 11

From our CEO – Susanna Jones



After so long with so many restrictions, it's been fantastic to have many more face-to-face connections over the past 3 months. There's been so much going on at Swindon Carers Centre, which you can see throughout the pages of 'Caring Matters' and we also have a lot planned for the next 3 too!

One of the key dates in our calendar is Carers Rights Day. Our event this year is on Friday 26th November with a focus on mental health. At the time of writing, we are planning for this to be at the Pilgrim Centre in Swindon. All the details are on pages 8/9 along with information about how to book a place.

Raising awareness of the importance of supporting carers in the workplace is a key priority for us – please look at page 11 to see which organisations our Partnership Manager Judy has been working with on the Swindon Employers Care Award. And our Schools Development Manager Ann organised a fantastic celebration event for our Young Carer Champions Award in September – you can see some of the photos on page 6.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to the whole Swindon Carers Centre team of staff, volunteers, trustees and those on student placements. Everybody works so hard and is extremely dedicated. It's important for me to acknowledge that externally, as well as within our team. There are challenges at the moment with our waiting lists as we deal with increased referrals, and I would ask you to bear with us while we try different approaches to keep that wait as short as possible.

Winter can often be a challenging time for carers. I very much hope you stay well and safe and are able to have a restful festive period when it comes. With every best wish for 2022.

Swindon Carers Centre Support us on social media!



Twitter: @SwindonCarers



Facebook: www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre



Instagram: Search for 'swindoncarers'

Cover image: 'Our Time' group member Hisham Hameed taking part in a recent canal trip (see pages 4 and 5)

A warm welcome to:



Maddy Doel

Student Social Worker
(Adult Carer/Older Carer Team)

I am currently studying social work and applied social studies and am in my second year. I hope to develop my understanding of services like Swindon Carers Centre to support my future practice as a social worker. I am unsure of which area of social work I would like to go into, but I hope that being on placement with Swindon Carers Centre will help inform my decision. Although I have only been here for a short time, I have already learned so much. Being on placement is different due to the effects of Covid-19 but working in a variety of ways has taught me additional working methods. So far, at Swindon Carers Centre, I have shadowed staff, engaged in training, and learned more about services and support for adult carers.



The team at our away day in September



SCCR SimSports

SCCR SimSports is a charity Sim Racing team supporting Swindon Carers Centre. On November 20th, they will be holding a charity race costing £25 per team. A big thank you to Craig and the team for organising this for us. All the funds raised

from the race will be donated to Swindon Carers Centre. This will be broadcast by ApexRacing TV, with some great prizes for all class winners. To sign up visit: <https://discord.gg/Gu7jqyJSPQ> To find out more, visit: www.sccracing.co.uk

Trips out: Our favourite moments

Our very own Cat Attewell and Rachel Jannaway from Home Instead launched our new Singing for the Brain Sessions in September. Singing for the Brain brings people affected by dementia together to sing a variety of songs they know and love, in a fun and friendly environment.



SCC's Isabel and Zoe hosted a meal for parent carers at Biblop Indian Restaurant, in Old Town. This was a chance to take time out, meet other parent carers and enjoy some amazing food.



The 'Our Time' group is growing! Our social group for 18 to 29-year-olds started with Zoom meetings during lockdown. Since then we've organised a Nando's trip, a picnic at Lydiard Park, tenpin bowling and an amazing canal boat day. It is a brilliant group

for young adult carers to meet others their age who understand what it is like to have caring responsibilities. If you're a carer aged 18 to 29 then we'd love to hear from you. **Email catherine.attewell@swindoncarers.org.uk for more information.**

Fantastic fundraisers



A big thank you to Gerry who raised an amazing £1,400 for us after completing the London Marathon.



The lovely team at Swindon SEND Families Voice donated the £85 profit made from their washing line game at Swindon Pride to our Parent Carer Team.



University of Bath student Will cycled from Bath to Swindon, collecting over £200 for Swindon Carers Centre.

Join our Singing for Everyone Choir, back indoors (hurray!) at Christchurch Community Centre.

There are so many benefits of singing, which include lung health, as well as benefits to mental health and wellbeing. Our Singing for Everyone Choir meets on Fridays 10.30am-12pm. Meetings are back indoors after having been on Zoom since Covid-19 in 2020 and then being outside for the last few months. We'd love to have some new members. **No singing experience or ability is necessary!**



For information please email Cat on catherine.attewell@swindoncarers.org.uk

Our Young Carers Champion and Ambassador Awards Celebrations

It was a real pleasure to welcome pupils and school staff to our awards in September. Young carers and school Young Carer Leads enjoyed a sit-down lunch, and entertainment, as well as the chance to meet other young carers and collect their awards.

In particular, we wanted to recognise the support given to young carers by school staff in Swindon through a difficult year during the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these challenging times, Young Carer Leads in schools have continued providing fantastic support for their young carers.

Congratulations to the following schools, who were presented with Ambassador

Awards:
Beechcroft
Infants,
Haydon Wick
Primary
School, The
Commonweal
School,

Dorcan Academy, Seven Fields Primary School and St Catherine's.

Every young carer attending received a certificate to thank them for being an amazing young carer. Here are just a few more comments from the day:

It is so fun going to places with you in young carers, because you brighten up our day at the hardest times. Although we have a lot going on at home, you always help us with our problems and are super supportive. Thank you for always trying your best.

You are an awesome and kind teacher, who always gives us loads of treats and fun activities!

My teacher helps sad people be happy, so they can get on with their work.





On Friday November 26th starting at 10am

This year's event will now be held online, due to the current number of Covid-19 cases in Swindon.

Speakers to include: Alexandra Luke, Associate Director for Bath & Northeast Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) at Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership. Hazel Howe, CEO, Swindon and Gloucestershire MIND. Ruth Atkins, Head of Public Engagement and Insights, NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Q&A session to include: Robert Buckland QC MP, Justin Tomlinson MP, Hazel Howe, CEO, Swindon and Gloucestershire MIND, Alexandra Luke, AWP, Cllr Brian Ford, Cabinet Member, Adult Health and Social Care, Swindon Borough Council, David Haley,

Corporate Director - Children's Services, Swindon Borough Council.

Carers Rights Day is a national day, which exists to help carers understand their rights so that they can access all avenues of support available. Everyone is welcome, whether you are new to your caring role, or you have been caring for a while.

This year's event will have a focus on mental health and wellbeing. If you're caring for a loved one, it can be harder to look after yourself and take time out. Many people have taken on additional, more complex, caring responsibilities over the past year – so accessing support as a carer has never been more important. We do hope you will be able to join us and we look forward to seeing you on the day!



Carers UK: State of Caring report 2021

This year's report from charity Carers UK is based on a survey completed by over 8,500 current and former carers, making it the largest survey of unpaid carers in the UK. Findings from the report include:

- » 71% said the needs of the person they care for have increased
- » 30% of carers said their mental health was bad or very bad
- » 25% said their physical health was bad or very bad
- » 34% of carers said they often or always felt lonely

The report noted a worrying trend towards poorer mental health. This is something which we plan to pick up on and raise further awareness of at our Carers Rights Day this year.

How to register

This year's event will now be held online. To receive a link to join us for the day, you will need to sign up ahead of time. Please use the following Eventbrite page to do this:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/carers-rights-day-tickets-190308035457>

When you use this Eventbrite page, please don't forget to leave your contact details (including your email) so that we can send

you the link you need and joining instructions.

If you are unable to use the Eventbrite link, please email **anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk** to register your interest or call **07435 961071** and leave a message. If you are unsure about how to get online for the event please call as we can help with this.

We'd like to hear from you

When our carers talk about their experience caring for someone, it helps people to put themselves in this situation – to learn more about what it means to be an unpaid carer and why support matters. We are looking for carers to share their carer stories for Carers Rights Day on Friday November 26th. What does being a carer mean to you? What are the positives and what are the challenges? How does your caring role affect your mental health and wellbeing? If you could change one thing so that unpaid carers are better understood and supported, what would it be?

Please get in touch with your thoughts, if you'd like to share a short piece of writing, a poem or to be interviewed, email anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk

Save the date for our Christmas raffle

Our Christmas raffle is back this year, raising vital funds to help us increase our support for unpaid carers in Swindon. This year's raffle will run from November 25th to December 19th, when the draw will be made. We are finalising details, but have a link set up to purchase tickets when the time comes in November:



www.peoplesfundraising.com/raffle/swindon-carers-centre-christmas-raffle

Please keep an eye on this page and on our social media for further information about our raffle and to view prizes! **Alternatively, please email carers@swindoncarers.org.uk if you are having trouble using the link and would like to know more.**

Looking after your wellbeing

For World Mental Health Day in October, we asked the Swindon Carers Centre team to share their encouragement and advice with our carers. Here are just a few of our thoughts.



Step outside. My advice would be to go for a walk, even just out into the garden. Leaving the house can be difficult during the winter months but keeping active and getting some fresh air can do wonders.

Resources Manager, Bronte

I would say people should always ask others if they are ok, and if the response is 'yes' or 'fine', ask again. So many times, it will take being asked twice for people to open up and talk. This is especially true I feel with men's mental health.

Stuart, Service Delivery Manager for the Adult and Older Carer Team

Try not to be too hard on yourself. On a busy day, tick off small wins like getting out of the door or a calm moment with your child. Add the small wins together and you'll find you have achieved quite a bit.

Anne, Media and Communications Officer.

It's always good to talk about your feelings, however big or small. Talking about your emotions is not a sign of weakness. Be open to sharing your ups and downs with others.

Debbie, Service Delivery Manager, Young Carers and Parent Carers Team



Congratulations to The Openwork Partnership and Nationwide

We're delighted to have presented two fantastic employers with the Swindon Employers Care Award, in recognition of their commitment to unpaid carers in the workplace

Teams at The Openwork Partnership and Nationwide have worked with Judy Evans, our Partnerships Manager to complete the award – revisiting and developing support in place for employees who are also carers.

Swindon Carers Centre would love to reach more employers, and more carers who are also juggling their caring and professional roles. If you're a working carer, or an employer and you'd like to find out more, please join us for an online workshop on Thursday November 25th at 11am.

To sign up for the workshop or to find out more, email judy.evans@swindoncarers.org.uk or call 07540 703247.

To encourage you in this, we'd like to share these words from Jenni Cass, Carer Representative at The Openwork Partnership:

We need to ask how can people realise that they are a carer? How can managers and colleagues understand what a carer is? Because that's the whole point, that we're not in this alone.

I would highly recommend that any business goes through this process the obtain the Swindon Employers Care Award, because the difference you can make to individuals is phenomenal.



Warm & Safe Wiltshire

Do you find it difficult to keep your home warm?

Are you worried about your energy bills rising?

You are not alone ...

Roughly 1 in every 10 households in Swindon are in fuel poverty, unable to heat their homes adequately. This affects the health and wellbeing of people living in those homes as well as their finances. But there is help at hand!



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

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

- » Help with switching energy suppliers and fuel tariffs to keep bills affordable
- » Fuel debt advice
- » Advice guides and factsheets
- » Home visits

Warm Home Discount schemes are open now! This is a £140 rebate from your electricity supplier for eligible customers, but you need to apply for it. Our Warm & Safe advisors can check your eligibility and help you apply for this, and will check for any other financial support that may help with your energy costs.

There is also currently support for energy saving measures to make your home better at keeping the heat in. Why not see if you are eligible for these measures, if your household income is less than £30,000 a year you may qualify.

Last year we helped over 900 households in Swindon, saving them £110,000 on their energy bills. Why not call or email today and see what we can do to help?

David Miles, Public Health Practitioner – Affordable Warmth, Swindon Borough Council

The service can be contacted here:
www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk
Freephone 0800 038 5722
Email warmandsafe@cse.org.uk

Getting your flu jab

If you are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person, who could be put at risk if you became ill, you may be eligible for a free flu jab.

Government policy says that: “For those who are in receipt of a carers’ allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill. Vaccination should be given on an individual basis at the GP’s discretion.”

Carers can ask their GP to record them as a carer on their own medical record by writing, or by completing a carer registration form available at most surgeries. If you feel this applies to you, please speak to your GP surgery or local pharmacist.

From our Young Carer and Parent Carers Team

It has been a busy team for the team. We were delighted to see our young carers enjoy some time out during our half-term activities. These included a private cinema screening, trips to Thorpe Park and Wooky Hole Caves, as well as an escape room.



A magical experience at Harry Potter World, London

We are also looking forward to some special festive events, including a trip to the pantomime and a Jolly Roger Christmas soft play party! We are currently receiving a very high number of referrals. When you apply to register with Swindon Carers Centre, please bear with us. Due to unprecedented numbers, it may be a few weeks before we get in touch to complete your registration.



Our young carers at Swindon Party Warehouse

Do you support an adult with a learning disability?

Swindon Carers Centre holds a Teams meeting, attended by carers and leaders from the NHS and Swindon Borough Council. There is an opportunity to chat and meet others for friendship, share stories, gain support and information. You can also become involved in local decision making. Information is gathered at our meeting and taken to the Learning Disability Partnership Board by two carer representatives.

Contact Heather for further information. Email heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk or call 07841 503849.

Elaine Turner, Commissioner for Adults with Learning Disabilities at Adult Social Care, Swindon Borough Council, would also like to hear from carers about what they feel is working or not working around disability services in Swindon and can be contacted via email: ETurner2@swindon.go.uk

Update from the Adult, Older and Parent Carer Groups & Activities team

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and the new year. Enclosed within the Caring Matters Newsletter is our What's On form for January-March 2022. We hope that some events are of interest to you, so please return your form as soon as possible.

Carers have enjoyed a range of events during our autumn programme. These have included:

- » Getting out and about with our coach trips and walk and talk group.
- » Art and crafts, wreath making and festive flowers
- » Social events such as our quiz evenings and cuppas.

We now have some new and additional cuppa venues at Pinehurst, SN25 and the town centre. We have also been able to offer pamper sessions and events for our parent carers and their families.

Recent training sessions have included courses on autism, caring for someone with a mental health condition, coping with caring and first aid.

We hope to see you at an event very soon. Do return your January-March 2022 forms to request a place, please sign to say that you have read the terms and conditions!

*Stay safe and well,
Heather, Cat, Zoe and Judy*



Our Walk and Talk Group



Get in touch with Heather

Swindon Carers Centre is working with local organisations to make a difference to carers and loved ones affected by dementia.

The WOW guide contains a calendar of various events in the Swindon area, particularly for carers and the person they support. Please ask Heather if you would like a copy.

Are you caring for someone with a mental health condition? We have launched a new evening support group. Let us hear your thoughts about current services in Swindon! If you would like to receive more information, please contact Heather.

Email heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk or call 07841 503849.

Hello from our Adult and Older Carer Team

Hi again everyone. I cannot believe I am writing this team update for the winter newsletter, and it will soon be Christmas. I am still forgetting 2020 existed and we are nearly in 2022!

We have as always been busy supporting many of you. The changes to our registration process I mentioned in the summer have worked well. We can now register and support more carers, quicker, and can offer a more individual approach. If you have recently been registered and have any thoughts on our process, good or bad, please call us on **01793 531133** and ask for me, Stuart. I would love to hear from you.

As regard our Carers Support Line we have supported over 500 of you so far (since April) with many of you having multiple calls or emails from us. Again, if there is anything you feel we can do to improve this service, or if you have positive feedback, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Our biggest challenge is our 1:1 complex case work. This is where you can ask for a carer's conversation under the care act, often known as a carers assessment, or come to us for funding. We do have longer waiting times than we would want, but we are working hard to not only reduce this (with staff training and recruitment) but to improve the service.

If you are waiting for 1:1 support, please bear with us. In the meantime if you need anything or feel you are reaching crisis point, please contact us. While we cannot prioritise carers, we may be able to support you in other ways.

Our Health and Social Care Liaison Officer continues to do more and more outreach, although she has stopped going to the Great Western Hospital carers café while visiting restrictions are in place.

As always please remember the emergency card scheme if you are concerned about what would happen to your cared for in the event of a real emergency to you. If you have it, remember to carry your card with you. We are trying to review all the older plans we hold so if we contact you, please respond to us.

Finally, we all hope you manage to have a lovely winter and Christmas time. Stay safe and remember to call our team on **01793 401090**.

**Warmest wishes Stuart (service delivery manager)
and all the Adult and Older Carer Support 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**
- » **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

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Visit our website www.swindoncarers.org.uk

