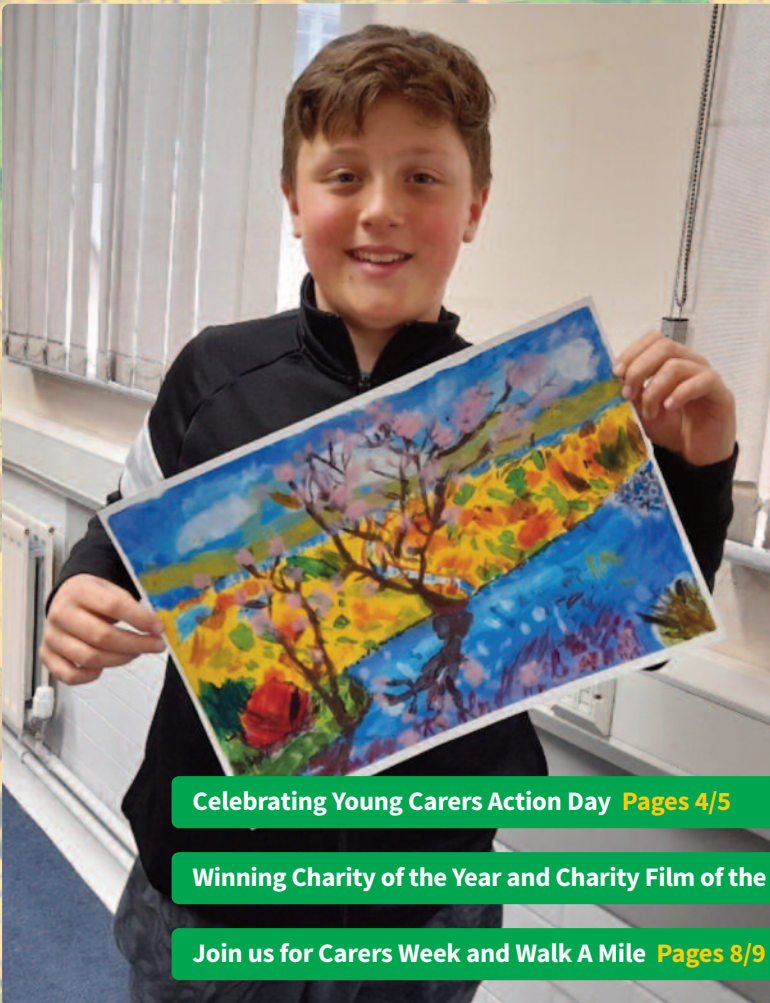


# Caring Matters



Celebrating Young Carers Action Day **Pages 4/5**

Winning Charity of the Year and Charity Film of the Year! **Page 6**

Join us for Carers Week and Walk A Mile **Pages 8/9**



## From our CEO – Susanna Jones

There's a lot about working for Swindon Carers Centre that makes me proud. I am proud to champion the work unpaid carers do – and am really pleased that as we move towards an Integrated Care System across Bath and North East

Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, the voice of carers is becoming increasingly important, with more recognition about how carers support our health and social care systems more widely.

We are launching a Carers Forum to further increase carer voice in Swindon and you can find out more about this on page 9. Our Young Carers Forum recently won a national Charity Film of the Year award too for their brilliant film *Baggage*, about what it's like to be a Young Carer. If you'd like to watch the film all the details are on page 6. This has been a wonderful way to ensure our young carers' voices are heard on a national platform.

I am hugely proud of our team at Swindon Carers Centre. We have recently won the Wiltshire Life Charity of the Year Award, which is fantastic recognition of the hard work, dedication and passion across all our staff, trustees and volunteers. You can find out more on page 7. And congratulations to Steve Colman, one of our fabulous volunteers for his 2nd place as Local Hero of the Year at the same awards too. Our volunteers make such a positive difference to the work we do.

We have also recently gone through reaccreditation for our external Quality Mark, Trusted Charity at Level 2. This helps our beneficiaries, commissioners, supporters, donors, volunteers, staff and the public to have confidence that we always work to a high standard. The Trusted Charity standard exists to build public trust and confidence in individual charities and in the sector as a whole. It is a way of making sure organisations are well run, accountable and transparent. At the time of going to print, we are still waiting for the assessor's formal report to be signed off by the moderator, but things are looking very positive, and we will update you in the next Caring Matters Newsletter!

And finally, I am delighted to say that after a two-year hiatus (where our event has been virtual) we are looking forward to getting together during Carers Week in June for our annual Walk A Mile around Swindon town centre to raise awareness of unpaid carers and the work we do too. Please have a look at the details on page 8 and I hope to see some of you on the day.

*With very best wishes, Susanna*

**Cover image:** Young carer Oliver, taking part in a painting workshop funded by Friends of Young Carers Swindon.

## A warm welcome to:



### Katie Beckett

Adult Carer Support Practitioner

I started working in the Adult Carers Team at Swindon Carers Centre in February 2022. I cannot express enough how welcoming, friendly, and supportive the team have been. Being able to see first-hand the total commitment they have within their roles is amazing. I am proud to be part of an organisation where all the staff and volunteers have so much passion. Everyone is truly dedicated to helping support carers with their own health/disabilities, their wellbeing, and enabling them to feel less isolated. I am looking forward to developing my knowledge further at Swindon Carers Centre and meeting more of our carers face-to-face soon.



### Jill Crooks Communications Assistant

I began working at Swindon Carers Centre in April 2022 and on the first day I realised what a special place it is. What makes it special are the people; everyone is welcoming, friendly and supportive. My colleagues, our volunteers and supporters of the charity all care passionately about helping unpaid carers in Swindon. I have a strong interest in health and social care and reported on these issues during my career as a local newspaper journalist.

Since 2014 I've been working in the charity sector in communications roles, helping to raise the media and public profiles of charities in health and social care. These charities were Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Prospect Hospice, Swindon. I worked collaboratively with colleagues, volunteers, patients and their families and supporters to write engaging content and stories for the media, social media and websites.

In my role here I will be supporting colleagues in all aspects of media and communications, including sharing stories of the carers we support. I'm privileged to be part of this special team and playing my part in the charity's mission of improving the wellbeing of carers.



### Monica Chumber Community Engagement Officer

Hello, I am the new Community Engagement Officer for Swindon Carers Centre. I will mainly be focusing on increasing our reach to carers in the Asian community. As part of the South Asian community myself, I know that it can be daunting to ask 'outsiders' within the local community for help. It can bring up lots of feelings, "will they understand me?", "will they understand my culture?", "what about my religious beliefs?", "how can they help me when my English is limited?"

Family life is central in our culture, and sometimes we may not even recognise the impact that caring for a family member has on us. It can be hard to ask for help, or even know where to turn, especially with something as personal as being a carer for a loved one.

Rest assured, we understand the value of family life, and we have a team of trained staff and volunteers who can provide a wide range of support and services to help you as a carer. If you would like to find out more about my role, how we can support you, or have any ideas you would like to share, please do not hesitate to contact me at: [monica.chumber@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:monica.chumber@swindoncarers.org.uk).

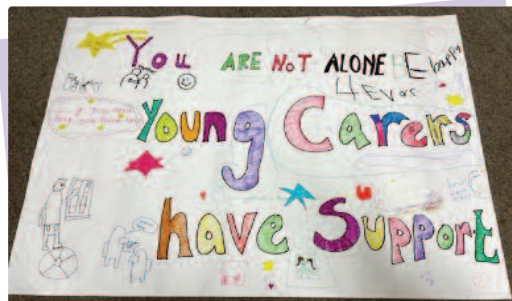
I look forward to meeting some of you at our future upcoming events!





# Celebrating Young Carers Action Day

Young carers in Swindon shared their experiences of caring for a family member for Young Carers Action Day. We received some fantastic entries in response to our call-out for drawings and artwork – helping us to highlight the incredible job young carers do and make young people aware of the support available to them. A big thank you to everyone who took part!



Above: A fantastic poster from pupils at Lawn Primary School.



Photos from Wanborough Primary School. Pupils were asked to wear something bright for Young Carers Action Day.



Above: Thank you Livia for sharing your thoughts on this year's topic – taking action on isolation.

## A message from Shaw Ridge Primary School:

"The whole school gathered around our running track for Young Carers Action Day. Every class had a ball of wool, which was then passed round to every single child so that the whole school was effectively "linked together" with wool! The message was that no young carer should ever feel isolated and that at Shaw Ridge we all support each other. It was a lovely activity, and quite powerful to see everyone joined together."

Right is a poem from the Swindon Carers Centre 'Our Time' group. Members of the group discussed the question 'what helps reduce isolation?' This poem is made entirely of their words, mentioned during the group chat.

## Swindon Young Adult Carers on Isolation



Only yourself,  
Emptiness surrounds you,  
Away from the outside world.  
Away from everyone else.

If I open up, I might be judged,  
My feelings aren't valid,  
I'm sat in a box, with people walking around it.  
I feel disconnected even from my own body.

I'm in a bubble of emptiness,  
I go out every day, but I still feel alone.  
I have friends, but still feel mentally isolated,  
I feel people don't understand.

People don't have time for me,  
I spend so long helping others but have no time to help myself.

You can't pour from an empty cup.  
It's so hard to admit I feel isolated,  
Like it is shameful.

It's a person head down,  
Sitting in silence too afraid to speak.  
It's dark and grey.

Just 1 person "getting it" makes all the difference,  
It's a relief to find someone who understands.  
Someone to acknowledge your feelings are valid,  
An understanding person to talk to.  
Counselling can help - only if it's the right person who doesn't judge you.

You just need to find the right person who you can talk to about anything,  
Getting it off your chest.

Just 1 person can change it from the worst to the best day,  
**Like a rainbow.**

View all the messages and artwork we received on our web page:  
[www.swindoncarers.org.uk/young-carers-speak-out-for-young-carers-action-day/](http://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/young-carers-speak-out-for-young-carers-action-day/)



## Awards and fundraising excitement!

We had a brilliant night at the Wiltshire Life Awards winning in the Charity of the Year category. Our volunteer Steve also took a fabulous second place in the Local Hero of the Year category, reflecting all the hard work he does not just with us, but other charity and community groups too. We're very proud of the whole team for all their hard work and dedication.



Our Young Carer Forum film "Baggage" won a Gold award in the Charity Film of the Year awards in London. This is fantastic recognition of our carers' voices on a national platform for our young carers. A big thank you to Light-up Media for their expertise on this film too. If you'd like to watch the film, please go to YouTube and enter "Baggage, Swindon Carers Centre" in the search bar.

*SCC's Andrea and Debbie at the Charity Film of the Year Awards ceremony.*



The FOYCS (Friends of Young Carers Swindon) annual ball in March raised a fantastic £38,239! This will go towards arranging activities for our young carers - to give them a much-needed break from their caring roles. We would like to say a huge thank you to the FOYCS Ball Committee, FOYCS Trustees and everyone who supported this brilliant event.



The Rotary Club of Swindon North & Thamesdown and The Inner Wheel Club of North Wiltshire raised over £1,300 for Swindon Carers Centre! This was such a great

quiz evening, thank you for inviting us to take part and congratulations also to the winning team, called "Ever Hopeful".



## Are you in the armed forces?



*There is a large current and ex-military population in Swindon. We're proud to support carers in Swindon with a military connection and would like to share this message from Samantha Jones, who is the new Veteran Support Worker for Voluntary Action Swindon.*

"After 13 years' service, I am leaving the military to start my new position with Voluntary Action Swindon. As an ex-military police woman, I believe I have the right attributes to kickstart this role and create a new platform here in Swindon to support our veterans.

"I have a real passion in promoting good mental health after struggling myself in the past and am keen to work alongside some great organisations and charities. Outside of work I am a mum of two children, my daughter who is eight and my son who is six who I spend most of my free time with. I'm also a dedicated outdoor swimmer and love nothing better than dipping in to the freezing Thames."

Get in touch with Sam by emailing [samantha.jones@vas-swindon.org](mailto:samantha.jones@vas-swindon.org).

## Support with rising energy bills

*We've heard a lot about the cost of living recently, caused by rising energy, food and transport expenses. Carers often face higher bills - particularly energy bills - than the wider population when caring for someone frail or unwell.*

**Citizens Advice Swindon's Energy Advice project:** Is open to help people who are struggling with their energy bills. Dedicated energy advisers are available to support people by contacting their energy providers, looking at budgets negotiating affordable payments and identifying whether you can apply for grants or benefits to increase your income. You can contact Citizens Advice Swindon on **0808 2787813** Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm.

**Warm and Safe Wiltshire:** Offers residents free and impartial energy saving advice.

This includes guidance on heating systems and controls, understanding your fuel bills, help with switching energy suppliers, fuel debt advice and available grants.

Please call them on **0800 0385722** or go to [www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk](http://www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk)

As part of its targeted response to rising energy bills, the government has introduced a £150 council tax rebate. For those who pay council tax by direct debit, this will be paid automatically, but those not on direct debit for council tax will be invited to apply for this.

If you would like further help regarding this council tax rebate, or with any other matter, you can contact our Welfare and Benefits Team on **(01793) 401093** on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 10am and 12 noon.

# Join us for Carers Week and Walk A Mile

*"I do think people need to know more about the work unpaid carers do. They need to wear their shoes for a day, to do the non-stop running around needed to make sure the people we look after are happy, safe and cared for."*

Ana, 29.

*Carers Week is always a big date for us at Swindon Carers Centre. It's our opportunity to highlight the need to better recognise and support unpaid carers looking after family members, partners and friends every day, 24-hours a day.*

As registered carers with us, we would love to have your support for Carers Week which runs from June 6th to June 12th. In particular, we are looking for as many people to join us for our Walk A Mile event on Saturday June 11th.

We're planning a face-to-face event after two years of virtual events due to Covid-19. For this, we're inviting carers, supporters and our local MPs to join us at Sanford House,

**Sign up by:** Booking a ticket via Eventbrite or emailing [anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk)  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/walk-a-mile-2022-tickets-319649419017>

## Donations and fundraising

We do not ask our carers to fundraise for us or to donate, but please do join us at our Walk A Mile event if you can. However, if you would like to seek sponsorship for taking part in Walk A Mile, all donations are gratefully received.

We have set up a fundraising page on JustGiving for donations: [www.justgiving.com/campaign/WalkAMile2022](https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/WalkAMile2022)



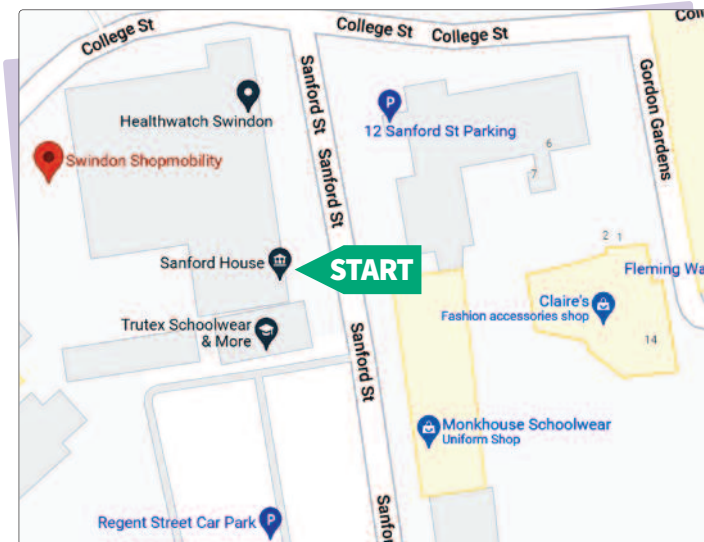
Sanford Street, for a short walk through Swindon town centre followed by refreshments back at our starting point.

This year's theme is 'make caring visible, valued and supported.' Caring is something that affects everyone. Three in five people will be carers at some point in their lives, and if you're not caring for someone, it's likely that you know a family member, friend or colleague who is.

We want more people to recognise this and are hoping for a big crowd for Walk A Mile! Please see the details below and get involved if you can. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us by e-mailing [anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk).

To create your own JustGiving page for the event, go to: [www.justgiving.com/swindoncarerscentre](https://www.justgiving.com/swindoncarerscentre) and click the blue 'fundraise for us' button at the top of the screen.

If you are an existing JustGiving account holder, simply enter your account details to log in. If you do not have an account, enter your email address to sign up to JustGiving (this won't cost you anything).



## Walk A Mile Details for the day

Event starts at: **Sanford House, Sanford Street, Please come to the reception, at the front of Sanford House.**

Please note that there will be no car parking available in the car park. The nearest car parks are at Fleming Way and Regent Street.

**Registration from 10.30am**

**Start time 11am**

**End time 1pm**

## We're launching our Carers Forum



Raising awareness is key if we're to create a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported. **We also want to give you the opportunity to influence the services we offer and the way we communicate for the better.**

We're looking for carers to join our new Carers Forum, to be launched during Carers Week. Being a member will involve meeting

three times a year to give your thoughts and feedback – this could include helping to shape future annual events like Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.

As a Carers Forum member, you will also be a champion for unpaid carers by sharing your carer story. As part of this, you may be contacted for opportunities to speak at small events or with the media. We hope to make this a fun and friendly experience. By joining our Carers Forum, you'll be letting us know that you're interested in helping us to raise the profile of unpaid carers, but there is no pressure to say 'yes' all the time to every opportunity.

If you're interested and would like to find out more, please email [anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk)



## Getting active with Carers UK

*It's not just about the exercise for me. It's about time on my own. I quite like not having to do things for people and just having the thoughts to yourself.*

*Three quarters of carers do not feel that they are able to do as much physical activity as they'd like to and want to know how to build this into their busy lives. That's according to research from the charity Carers UK.*

*In addition:*

- » 73% of carers said that being physically active makes them feel good about themselves.
- » 67% of carers said doing a range of physical activities helped them to feel more connected to other people.
- » 58% of carers said being active helped them to learn more about the importance of looking after their health.

In light of this, we want to share a few tips from 'Active April' – a campaign from Carers UK to help carers overcome some of the barriers they experience, such as finding the time and motivation to take part in a physical activity.

### **Top tips for getting started:**

**Find something you enjoy:** There are lots of options for different activities out there you can try and if it's fun you're more likely to stick at it.

**Build activity into your day:** Being more



active doesn't always mean making big changes. Making small choices throughout the day (e.g. taking the stairs rather than the lift) and fitting in small chunks of activity when you can all adds up.

**Start slowly and build up:** You can gradually increase the length and intensity of activity. Always consider warming up and cooling down.

**Be kind to yourself:** Don't expect big changes overnight and don't be too hard on yourself if you don't feel an immediate impact - starting with small changes can build up to a bigger positive impact in the long run.

For further information and resources, go to: [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/activity-hub/carers-active-april](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/activity-hub/carers-active-april)

## Save the date!

**Please save the date for our Annual General Meeting, which will be on Tuesday July 19th at 11.30am to 12.30pm. This will be a virtual meeting via Zoom to allow as many people to listen in as possible. You can register for this event, to receive the Zoom link and meeting agenda by emailing [anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk).**

## Getting active with Swindon Carers Centre

*Through our carer groups and activities, we strive to get you out and about, to try something new, and meet others with caring responsibilities.*

During Active April, our carers enjoyed dance classes at Swindon Dance, Pilates, and yoga (for our parent carers). Here are a few of our carers enjoying the latest 'Walk And Talk' event at Lydiard Park too. For an update from our Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team, please go to page 14.



## My father

*Thank you Sharon for sending in your thoughts and reflections for us to share in this issue.*

I noted old family photos of my father holding his grandchildren, a smile on his face. I reflected on how small they once were and that even now, he lives in the same place. The trees, like him, have grown and we, like him, have all grown. "You'll miss him when he's gone" I tell the others. My path looking after him is far from easy, but I will try my best and that's my commitment – to try my best even when put to the test.





## From our Young Carer and Parent Carers Team



Our young carers have been learning to paint, thanks to funding from Friends of Young Carers Swindon – as you'll have seen on our front page.



Young carers had a great time at Millets Farm Falconry Centre during the Easter break.



Our Parent Carer Team organised a social evening at the Goddard Arms.

## Coming up...

The YC/PC Team is looking ahead to the summer and is busy planning a whole host of holiday activities include trips to AquaVenture,

Longleat and Laser Quest. Our term-time groups are also booked in for yoga and sports sessions. Please keep an eye on your email inboxes for details, including details of a family focus barbecue event happening in August.

## Preparing for Adulthood

# Transitions Roadshow 2022

For parents, carers and professionals to hear about and discuss the work done to support young people age 14+ with additional needs

**Wednesday 15th June**

10am to 4pm - Swindon Town Football Club

**Save the date**

Employment,  
volunteering  
& training

Independent  
Living

Friends,  
Relationships  
& Community  
Involvement

Good  
Health

STEP  
SWINDON

Swindon SEND  
Families Voice

SWINDON  
Carers Centre

Great Western Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

SWINDON  
SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

## An update from our Adult and Older Carers Team

As you know we have successfully recruited **Katie Beckett** into our Adult Support Team as an adult carer support practitioner.

I would also like to welcome Tim Saint, our very experienced Benefits Service Coordinator to the Adult Services Team. Tim became part of our team in our recent restructure. He has also been joined by Kelly Kemmett, who started in April as a second Benefits Service Coordinator. She will no doubt give you an update in the autumn newsletter.

We have had a busy last quarter. From January to March, we received 125 new referrals. We also supported 238 carers with advice and signposting via our Carers Support Line. Our Emergency Card Scheme remains in demand. Please remember the importance of this service, which enables you to put a plan in place for your dependent should something happen to you in an emergency.

Our Health and Social Care Officer Tanya is hoping to start to contact the GP surgeries to offer Carers Corners over the next few months. Please remember to let your GP

know you are a carer for your dependent.

From January to March, our 1:1 practitioners supported 120 carers, carrying out full carer's conversations – something all adult and older carers are entitled to under the Care Act. They have also managed to reduce the waiting time for this service.

I just want to say a very sad farewell to Alice Godfrey, one of our fantastic Adult Carer Support Practitioners who joined us on a one-year contact. She has made a huge difference to us as a team, coming to us with lots of experience and knowledge in health and social care. I know she has made me a better manager, as well as supporting the rest of the team to really challenge things appropriately for carers. Alice, safe travels on your next adventure and thank you for being such an integral part of our team for the last year.

The Adult Services Team and I want to wish you all a good summer. Remember we are here if you need us on **(01793) 401090**.

*Stuart, Head of Service Delivery Adult and Older Carers.*

# Hello from the Groups and Activities Team

*We have had some changes within our team. Judy and Cat have left for pastures new, and we wish them well. For now, it is Zoe and myself, but you will be seeing some new faces joining us - staff and volunteers, all keen to help*

*provide some fun, useful and relaxing events for you!*

During our last quarter we have held a real mix of events, from training sessions to wellbeing and relaxation activities, as well as socials and peer support groups.



*Beautician Leanne delivering an Indian Head Massage course*



*Maggie demonstrating how to crochet*



*Our most recent dementia group had a street party theme!*

*We are here to take carer views and feedback to those who can influence change.*

Please join us for Dementia Action Week on Monday May 16th when we're joining the Swindon Dementia Action Alliance for an expo event showcasing support available to those living with dementia and their loved ones. This will be at Swindon Central Library from 10.30am to 12.30pm. On Thursday May 19th, there will be an afternoon tea with entertainment at MECA, Swindon. Go to: **afternoontea-swindondaa.eventbrite.co.uk**

We're also involved with Swindon Borough Council's plans to reshape services for adults with a learning disability. In addition, we hold a monthly evening group for carers who support someone with a mental illness, where we invite an influential guest speaker.

Please take a look at our July to December What's On form, included with your Caring Matters Newsletter. We have changed this to a six-month activities form. Your activity requests can be submitted via this paper copy or online at: **<https://forms.office.com/r/1sGTsiYu3m>**

If we can offer you a place, full details will be sent in an invitation to you approximately two to three weeks before the event date. This is the last time you will see a copy of the What's On form within your Caring Matters Newsletter. For 2023, the Adult Carer Groups and Activities Team will send this out separately. Please don't worry about this, as all details will be sent to you (including instructions on how to select your activities) nearer the time.

Our Chatterbox Newsletter will be sent out quarterly.

We are always interested in your feedback, so do let us have any comments. Email **[acgroups@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:acgroups@swindoncarers.org.uk)**.

Take care and stay in touch, Heather.



*Heather*



*Zoe*

## Swindon Carers Centre Support us on social media!



Twitter: **@SwindonCarers**



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



Instagram: Search for **'swindoncarers'**



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](mailto:anne.saunders@swindoncarers.org.uk)

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Design & Artwork by Keith Blackmore. Tel: 01793 876555. Email: [keith.b4@ntlworld.com](mailto:keith.b4@ntlworld.com)

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



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