

# Caring Matters



**Celebrating Carers Week and Walk A Mile** **Pages 4/5**

**Read our Annual Impact Review** **Page 9**

**Join us for Carers Rights Day** **Page 11**

## From our CEO – Susanna Jones



**Hello – as I write we are in the middle of a big heatwave, but are already thinking of late autumn and winter with planning well underway for our Carers Rights Day event in November. All the details on page 11.**

We've had a busy few months at SCC, including our annual Walk A Mile event during Carers Week in June. We were delighted with the turnout for the first face-to-face walk since 2019. You can see some photos on pages 4 and 5. We've also recently had our AGM and our Annual Impact Report has been published too and you can look at page 9 to read more.

The Emergency Card Scheme is so important for carers to give peace of mind that a robust plan is in place for the person you care for in case something unexpected happens to you. Please have a read of page 6 to make sure you have details of who to contact in case your Emergency Card plan needs updating, or you wish to initiate one.

It's vital for carers to have a clear voice in helping to influence how services are delivered and developed and there's an opportunity for carers of someone with a Learning Disability to have their views heard by Swindon Borough Council. You can find out more on page 8.

I'd like to finish by saying a huge thank you to our team of staff and volunteers. As you are no doubt aware there are huge pressures on recruitment in health and social care, we are no exception, and it feels like we are constantly recruiting at the moment! Our team continues to work really hard to ensure all services are covered and I am very proud of them all.

*With very best wishes, **Susanna***

**Cover image:** Members of Mums on a Mission, Swindon, and their children who took part in our Walk A Mile event.

A warm welcome to:



**Kelly Kemmett**  
Welfare Benefits Advisor

I started working at Swindon Carers Centre in April this year alongside the wonderful Tim and Roy.

As part of the Benefits Team, we want to make sure carers are claiming all the benefits they are entitled to. We offer help to carers to fill in forms, which some may find daunting and time consuming and take them away from their caring role.

I find my role here at Swindon Carers Centre varied, challenging and rewarding. I really enjoy being able to make a valuable contribution and a positive impact on carers' lives.

My background is in benefits advice and money advice at Parks Advice Point, Swindon. I have also worked within Social Services supporting adults with learning disabilities with employment opportunities and as a learning disabilities support worker with various charities, including Mencap.

I have two children and a dog called Ted.. oh, and a husband, Nick!

I'm really friendly and outgoing and have a great sense of humour - I can't wait to meet each of you reading this and hope our paths cross soon.



**Adela Wills**  
Service Delivery Administrator

Hello! I've recently joined the Adult Carers Team at Swindon Carers Centre.

One of my main duties is to send out feedback questionnaires and to collate and record your responses. We really welcome and value your feedback on the support and services that we offer, as it lets us see what we're doing well or where changes could be made.

I previously worked as a GP training administrator in the NHS and before that in higher education at the University of Bedfordshire. I grew up in Swindon and my family and I relocated back to the town last year after living in Hemel Hempstead for a number of years.

I've really enjoyed my first few weeks at SCC; everyone has been incredibly friendly and welcoming. I'm really looking forward to this new challenge supporting Swindon's unpaid carers and can't wait to meet everyone.

# Looking back at Carers Week

Our vision is to create a community where unpaid carers are recognised, valued and supported. During Carers Week (6th-12th June) - with your support - we raised awareness of what it is like to be an unpaid carer. Thank you to our carers for sharing their stories and creative writing pieces, which we published on our website and shared on our social media channels.

One of the contributions is from Nicola, who wrote a poem, called There is a World Out There (published below). We don't have space here to feature all the stories, but they are on our website in our News section if you would like to read them

[www.swindoncarers.org.uk/latest-news](http://www.swindoncarers.org.uk/latest-news)

## Nicola's poem

*There is a world out there,  
which few people know,  
until they find themselves in the middle of it.  
It's a hidden place of unanticipated losses.  
It's in the look of a loved one who no longer  
recognises who you are,  
It's in the answering of the repeated questions,  
It's in the measuring of daily medication,  
It's the dressing, and the changing, and the  
dressing again,  
It's in the night in which sleep is broken,  
It's in the lonely days which are homebound,  
It's the middle of forgetting who they are.  
Yet in this world there are glimpses,  
of living in the present moment,  
the flicker of recognition,  
the remembered song,  
the joy of the simple things.  
This is the world which those who care  
understand.  
This is our world.*

## Walk A Mile

*It was wonderful to hold our annual Walk A Mile event in person for the first time in three years and we were delighted to be joined by carers registered with us, the people they care for and supporters.*

We walked for one mile through Swindon town centre displaying our banner before returning to Sanford House for refreshments.

**We were joined by supporters of all ages and the feedback we received was that people enjoyed meeting other carers and sharing their experiences.**

South Swindon MP Sir Robert Buckland joined us and spoke of the importance of Carers Week, Walk A Mile and the invaluable contribution unpaid carers make to our society.

He said: "It is vitally important to raise awareness through events such as Walk a Mile so that we can let carers know that they are not alone and that they have friends. There are people here in Swindon who might not even realise that they are carers. Swindon Carers Centre can help signpost carers to the support that is available locally.

*"Carers are a part of a very large network, who without complaining, and without seeking praise, get on with the job of caring for their loved one."*

Nicola read her poem (published left) during Walk A Mile and you can watch a short video of Walk A Mile here

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_iTx-CTNpI&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iTx-CTNpI&t=19s) or by scanning this QR code.

During Walk A Mile we also fundraised for Swindon Carers Centre and, we are delighted to say, the total



achieved was £1,588.25. This includes a donation of £1,000 from local business Pebley Beach Hyundai and Suzuki Swindon. Thank you to everyone who donated to help us to increase support for unpaid carers.



Left: At the start of Walk A Mile.

Below: During Walk A Mile.



Above: During Walk A Mile.



Above: Enjoying refreshments after Walk A Mile.



Right: South Swindon MP Sir Robert Buckland.

### Trusted Charity

Carers are at the heart of everything we do and we are proud to have been re-accredited with a prestigious quality mark for the excellent service we provide.

The Trusted Charity Standard is a performance evaluation system and quality mark. We were assessed against 11 quality areas within Level 1 and Level 2. All areas were considered by the



assessor to be impressively evidenced showing continuous improvement.

The award lasts three years and this is the fourth time Swindon Carers Centre has achieved it! Achieving this award helps our beneficiaries, commissioners, supporters, donors, volunteers, staff and the public to have confidence that we always work to a high standard.

### Emergency Card Scheme

In a previous edition of Caring Matters, we discussed the importance of regularly reviewing your Emergency Card plan. As a result, several carers contacted us with amendments to their plans and these amendments have been actioned. We would like to continue to encourage you to review your Emergency Card plans to ensure that they include accurate and up to date information.

**In this edition we would like to remind our carers of how the Emergency Card Scheme operates.**

It's available to all carers over the age of 18. The scheme relies on each carer being assigned a unique number, which is on your individual Emergency Card plan and your Emergency Card (the red card). In an emergency, someone (for example, a paramedic) can call the number on the red card and your Emergency Card plan will be activated so that whilst you are absent your dependent is cared for.

The scheme relies on each carer carrying



their red card all the time. We recently heard about a carer who had their red card in a kitchen drawer, so we'd like to encourage you to carry your red card at all times.

Please check your red card is in your wallet, purse or handbag. In the event that you have lost your red card, please contact us for a replacement.

***If you would like to find out about the Emergency Card Scheme or if any aspect of your emergency plan needs to be updated, please contact Nick by emailing Nick.Precious@swindoncarers.org.uk or call (01793) 975333.***

### Language Line

If English is not your spoken language, you can call Swindon Carers Centre and request an interpreter. This translation service is provided by Language Line Solutions and is

available during our normal working hours. Do you know someone who would benefit from this? To use this service, call our main number on (01793) 531133 and ask for the language line.

### Grants for vocational training

If you are aged 16-24, live in Swindon and are starting a vocational course, training or apprenticeship in September, you can apply for a grant from Wiltshire Community Foundation.

You can apply on their website <https://www.wiltshirecf.org.uk/>

Grants can be used towards:

- » Resources or equipment needed for the course, training or qualification
- » Course-related study/field trips
- » Travel costs – in some circumstances
- » IT equipment

### Swindon 105.5

We took part in Swindon 105.5 radio's annual Community Broadcast Day in association with Zurich Community Trust.

Lexi a young carer we support, talked about her caring role, how it was impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic and the support she receives from us. Stuart, our Head of Service Delivery for Adult and Older Carers, discussed the importance of addressing isolation for older carers.



Pictured is Stuart (centre) with Mark Flay of Zurich and Shirley Ludford at 105.5.

**You can follow Swindon Carers Centre, be kept updated and join in the conversation on our social media channels!**



Twitter: @SwindonCarers



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



Instagram: Search for 'swindoncarers'



LinkedIn: Search for **Swindon Carers Centre**

## News from other organisations

### Are you caring for someone with a Learning Disability?

*My name is Annie Baker and I have recently started a new role with Swindon Borough Council focused on listening to the voice of people of Swindon with additional needs. Having a background in advocacy, I am dedicated to people being included in making decisions that affect their lives.*

Part of the new role is to help deliver the Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB) and the Autism Partnership Board. This means building good relationships with people in the learning disability and autism communities. I will be spending time visiting lots of different projects and services that already exist in Swindon and I'm really excited to be able to work closely with Swindon Carers Centre as part of this.

I will be working with Heather Goldsmith at SCC and carer reps to restart the Learning Disability Carers Group. As you are the experts, we need your input! I would love to meet you over a cup of tea to listen to your ideas.



We are holding a free afternoon tea on **Wednesday 14th September from 1pm to 2.30pm at Pinetrees Community Centre, The Circle, Pinehurst, SN2 1QR.**

You can bring along the person you care for. We'd love you to pop in for a brew and a chat.

If you have a question or want to come along, please contact Heather by email **Heather.Goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk** or call **07841 503849**.

### Get help making an NHS complaint in Swindon

## VoiceAbility

*Whether you're a professional who knows something's not right, or you're not happy with your own experience, you can make an NHS complaints referral through VoiceAbility - and get free, confidential support from an independent advocate to help you through the process.*

Your complaint could be about the actions or decisions of any NHS staff member or organisation, including hospitals, GPs, dental surgeries, NHS-funded care homes or community care. You might want to complain about your care or treatment, waiting times,

communication, the information you were given or the attitude of staff.

An advocate can help you work out what you want to complain about, and what you'd like to happen next. They can help you prepare for a meeting, support you to write a complaints letter and understand the response. They're there to help you speak up for yourself.

You can make a referral online in just a few steps at **<https://www.voiceability.org/>**, start a webchat with a real person, **or call 0300 303 1660 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).** You can also email **helpline@voiceability.org** if you have questions.

## Our impact during the last year

*It has been another exceptionally busy year at Swindon Carers Centre. Our 2022 Annual General Meeting and the publication of our Annual Impact Review (2021-2022) gave us the opportunity to look back on our achievements and to share these with carers, volunteers and supporters.*

### Making a difference: Our year in figures

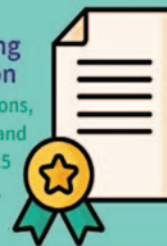


**2,437** carers in total were supported by teams across Swindon Carers Centre.



**685** young carers attended face-to-face activities organised by our Young Carers Team and 189 young carers attended term-time groups.

**110** guests were invited to our Young Carer Champion Awards Celebrations, including YC Leads and young carers from 25 schools in Swindon.



Our Welfare and Benefits Service secured an estimated **£234,982** in benefits and allowances for carers in Swindon.

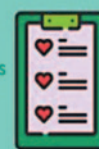


We issued **252** new or reviewed Emergency Card Scheme plans for carers.

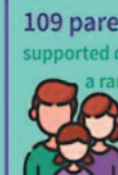


We answered **3,596** phone calls via our Carers Support Line.

**100%** of carers attending adult carer activities, social events and wellbeing events report benefitting from these.



We referred carers to **114** different partner organisations, helplines and websites, detailing opportunities for further support.



**109** parent carers were supported during the past year, with a range of issues from home-schooling, decline in mental health to financial concerns.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on unpaid carers and their families continues to be huge and the number of carers needing our support is increasing. Our key priorities for 2022/23 are:

- » Continuing to keep carers at the heart of decision-making and ensuring their voice is heard.
- » Developing a robust income generation plan that reduces our reliance on statutory funding.
- » Increasing our reach to diverse groups (such as Asian carers).

**If you would like a copy of our Annual Impact Report or a recording of our AGM, please get in touch.**

You can email **communications@swindoncarers.org.uk**. You can also call **Anne Saunders on 07435 961071** or **Jill Crooks on 07540 703247**. If we are not immediately available, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Our Annual Impact Report is also available to read on our website. Please go to 'About Us' and click on 'Our Impact'.

## Update from our Adult and Older Carers Team

### We hope you are having a lovely summer!

*We have welcomed Adela Wills, Service Delivery Administrator, and Community Engagement Officer Monica Chumber to our team. Adela is featured on page 3.*

Monica's role is primarily focused on supporting and engaging ethnic minority carers. By building connections within the local community Monica is aiming to identify potential carers that could benefit from our support and work together in a way to promote diversity and inclusion within the Asian community of Swindon.

We are incredibly sad that **Amy Cadman**, who is one of our amazing Adult Carer Support Practitioners, leaves us on Friday 19th August. Amy has made a tremendous contribution to the Adult Team and has become an invaluable team member.



*Pictured is Monica, our Community Engagement Officer, at the North Swindon Bazaar, organised by the ILm Hub at Redhouse Community Centre. As mentioned above, Monica is working to increase our reach to carers in Swindon's Asian community as part of the Making Carer Count Programme, funded by the Carers Trust.*

Amy has been accepted to study a Master's course in Physicians Associate Studies at the University of the West of England in Bristol in September 2022. This Master's course is an exciting opportunity for Amy and I would like to wish her every success with this. Thank you Amy for all your hard work and dedication in your time with us.

Our team has had a very busy **last quarter**. From April to June we registered 118 new Adult and Older Carers, gave advice and support to 225 carers who called our Carer Support Line and signposted new carers to over 68 different partner organisations, help lines and websites. Our 1:1 practitioners supported 109 carers, carrying out full Carer's Conversations under the Care Act.

Tanya, our Health and Social Care Liaison Officer who lots of you talk to on the Carer Support Line, held a successful meeting with GP carers leads, which included discussing how GP surgeries can better identify and signpost carers to us. Please remember to let your GP know you are a carer for your dependent.

We have also been having regular weekly meetings with First City Brokerage to enable them and other partner agencies to understand your needs, especially the complexities of Carers Relief.

*Stay safe and a reminder if you need us, please call (phone numbers are listed on the back page).*

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



## Save the date for Carers Rights Day

**This year we will be marking Carers Rights Day with a face-to-face event on Friday November 25th.**



*If you're caring for someone, it's important that you understand your rights. This can help you to make informed decisions about your private and working life, and to access the right financial support. It will also help you to access the support available to you as soon as you need it.*

This year we will be focusing on the cost-of-living crisis. Caring for someone can come with many additional considerations that can have a significant impact on carers and their families. With the cost of everyday essentials and bills rising, we want to look at this topic in detail. We also want to take a look at rights for carers in the workplace.

We'll be inviting professionals able to offer advice to take up a stall in our marketplace, and we'll also be inviting health and social care leaders to discuss our chosen topic further as part of our popular Q&A session.

Please get in touch with us to register your interest and for further details nearer the time.

You can do so through this link where you can enter your details and you'll be allocated a free ticket - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/swindon-carers-centre-carers-rights-day-2022-tickets-388051531577> or scan the QR code (right).



Alternatively, you can contact the Communications Team. You can either email [communications@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:communications@swindoncarers.org.uk) or call **Anne Saunders on 07435 961071**.

### Share your thoughts for Carers Rights Day

*Would you like to share your feedback and ideas to inform planning of this event? Or perhaps you'd like to share your experience as a carer to help us raise awareness for Carers Rights Day? We would love to hear from you. Please use the contact details above.*

### Join us for our first Carers Forum meeting

*Our new Carers Forum will hold its first meeting on Monday September 12th at 1pm on Zoom. We want to give our carers the opportunity to influence the services we offer at Swindon Carers Centre. We also hope that Carers Forum members can be a champion for unpaid carers by sharing their caring experience as appropriate. We'll be meeting three times a year. Join us at our first meeting to discuss what we want the Carers Forum to look like and to help shape this forum going forwards. Please get in touch with Anne Saunders using the details above.*

## News from our Parent Carers Team

*Our Parent Carer Support Practitioners, Lorraine and Isabel (pictured), attended the Transitions Roadshow meeting parent carers and other organisations.*

The roadshow, held at Swindon Town Football Club in June, was for parents, carers and professionals who support young people aged 14+ with additional needs.

Forty stallholders represented organisations from employment, training and volunteering, education and social care, health, voluntary sector services, community and sports activities.

They provided information and advice to help young people as they prepare for adulthood.

Lorraine said: *"The roadshow was a huge success with a good turnout and a strong parent carer presence, which was really positive."*



*"We talked about what we do to support parent carers and also networked with the organisations which attended and made some useful contacts. Other services can refer parent carers to us, so it was good to inform and reiterate what we do and the work of Swindon Carers Centre in general in supporting unpaid carers."*

*"We were also able to signpost parent carers to other stallholders, which for lots of the visitors made it feel like a 'one stop shop' for them."*

## An update from our Young Carers Team

*Young carers had a brilliant time taking part in team building activities and developing new skills on the SPECTRA (Support, Purpose, Enthusiasm, Challenge, Trust, Resilience, Achievement) course, run by Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue in Swindon.*



*They abseiled off a tower, learned water rescue skills and climbed up to 32 metres on a ladder platform! They ended by demonstrating scenarios for their parents/guardians, including responding to a road traffic collision and a house fire, followed by a parade where they received their certificates.*



*Other activities enjoyed by our young carers have included Combat Splat and visiting Longleat.*



# An update from the Groups & Activities Team

*We're really pleased to have appointed a new part-time member of staff, Leigh, who will be joining us in September and helping to coordinate our events.*

Our recent events have included a variety of socials, including our monthly evening quiz, (with prizes, a raffle and sausage and chips!), a coach trip to Tewkesbury, an evening meal at The Hongxin, our regular Carers Cuppas, our Dementia and Silver Linings groups and our Open Minds group with live music. Thanks to Zurich, attendees had a treat of a cream tea at our July session!

The PATH Group (for bereaved carers) have been meeting fortnightly for a cuppa, plus they attended The Wyvern Theatre, had a lunch outing and a coach trip.



*Quiz night.*



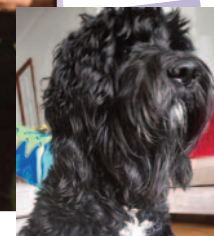
*Enjoying Tewkesbury!*



*Enjoying refreshments and a catch up at our Silver Linings group.*



*Volunteers at our Silver Linings group, Mary, Jenny, Sarah, Keren and Dilys the Therapy Dog.*



## Wellbeing and exercise

Wellbeing and exercise events included our monthly Walk and Talk at Lydiard Park, a male and a female pamper session, plus 1:1 appointments with beauty therapist, Leanne, Pilates classes and mindfulness workshop.

## Training sessions

Training sessions were held for first aid, The Court of Protection, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, Liberty Protection Safeguards, Coping with Caring, Memoir Writing and Mindfulness.

We have a whole host of Groups and Activities planned for the next few months. We will do our best to accommodate your requests. If you are offered a place, (usually two weeks before the event date), please do remember to accept or decline so that the place can be offered to another carer on the list if you are unable to attend. Thank you.

*We will look forward to seeing you soon!*

*Best wishes, Heather, Zoe and Leigh.*



*Heather*



*Zoe*

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 please contact the Communications Team by emailing [communications@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:communications@swindoncarers.org.uk)

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