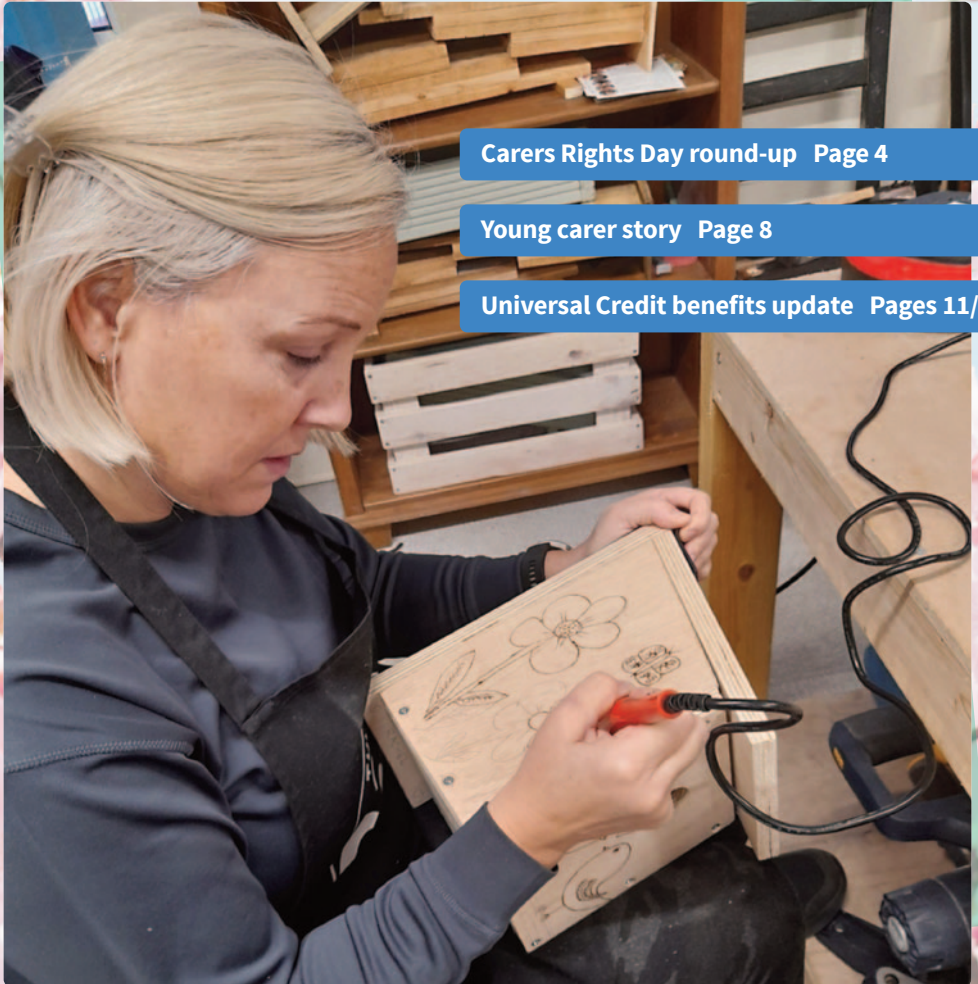


Caring Matters



Carers Rights Day round-up Page 4

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Universal Credit benefits update Pages 11/12

From our CEO – Susanna Jones



Welcome to our first edition of Caring Matters for 2023. The mornings and evenings are just starting to get a bit lighter and it's nice to know spring is around the corner!

It's been a very busy winter at Swindon Carers Centre which started with our Carers Rights Day event at the end of November – page 4 has got all the details. The Cost of Living crisis is still dominating many aspects of our lives, and there is more information about support available on page 5.

Thank you very much to Polly, who has shared her story of being a young carer with us. Find out more about Young Carers Action Day this coming March on page 9. If you would like to share your caring story in Caring Matters or if there are topics/questions you would like us to report on in future editions, please contact our Communications Team by email on communications@swindoncarers.org.uk or by post to Swindon Carers Centre, Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HE.

The 2021 Census figures for unpaid carers were released on January 19th. We will be doing a full report on this in the next edition of Caring Matters, once more data has been released in February and March, but key highlights show the numbers of unpaid carers in Swindon caring for 20-50 hours a week and for 50+ hours per week have both gone up. The likelihood is that these are people whose caring roles have become more complex through the Covid pandemic.

Overall there has been a slight decrease in the number of people saying they have a caring role. We're surprised by this as Swindon Carers Centre has seen an increase in referrals and requests for support across our service. On Jan 3rd 2023 we had 4,776 carers registered with us and 4,726 dependents. That's compared with 4,174 carers registered with us at the same time last year – so an additional 602 carers on our system. It's important to note the caveat from the Office for National Statistics about comparing 2021 and 2011 data because of changes to the wording of questions which may have had an impact on people self-reporting as carers. We are looking forward to analysing the figures in more detail once more data is made available.

With very best wishes,
Susanna

Cover image: Adult carer Rachel making a bird box at a Women's Shed workshop organised by our Events Team.

A warm welcome to:



Rebecca Thompson
Carers Support Line Practitioner

I joined Swindon Carers Centre last October. The team is very supportive and encouraging and their dedication to carers is truly inspiring.

As part of the Adult and Older Carers Team, I work on the Carers Support Line. My role is to support carers who phone in asking for advice.

It's an extremely rewarding role, as I'm enjoying getting to know some of our carers and helping them with their concerns or issues.

My role includes identifying the mental health needs of carers and what support they may need. As part of my learning and development, I'm studying Level 4 Counselling which will enhance my professional skills.



Claire Smith
Head of Development

I joined Swindon Carers Centre in November last year and I'm thrilled to be working as the Head of Development as part of the Senior Leadership Team. I will be focusing my time on looking at ways to develop opportunities to enhance the already great services from SCC and am keen to meet with some of you to hear your views. As part of my role, I will also

be supporting SCC's Grants and Impact Officers and working closely with the Communications Team.

I previously worked for Swindon Borough Council as a Commissioner for Voluntary Sector Services and am looking forward to using my skills and experience within SCC. Before that I worked in the voluntary sector, including as a Young Carers Project Manager.

I live in Swindon with my family and dog.



Sarah Wright
Events Coordinator (Adult Carers & Older Carers)

I have been with Swindon Carers Centre since January 2022 when I joined as a volunteer helping the Events Team. When a staff job became available towards the end of last year I applied, and I was delighted to be successful.

In my role I help to host various events for carers and also for those being cared for. The support that SCC provides to carers is amazing! I know from first-hand experience how much each carer values and appreciates this support as they tell us at every session.

My working background has always been in care, from nursing within mental health and learning disabilities to becoming a teaching assistant at a special needs school.

Although I only work part-time, I am loving working at SCC and feel privileged to be part of something that is so very important. Everyone I have met at SCC has been very welcoming and helpful.

Round up of Carers Rights Day

Marking Carers Rights Day 2022

We were delighted to welcome more than 60 carers to our first face-to-face Carers Rights Day post Covid-19. With our panelists, presenters and Swindon Carers Centre staff also joining, this made for a busy event with plenty of interesting information and discussions.

The session, held at The Platform, Faringdon Road, on November 25th, had a Cost of Living theme. Caring already comes with additional costs that can have a significant impact on finances and many of our carers continue to be affected by rising costs and energy bills.

Our presenters for the day included:

- ▶ Professor Steve Maddern, Director of Public Health, Swindon.
- ▶ Sarah-Jane Peffers, Associate Director of Patient Safety and Quality, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board.
- ▶ Ameeta Bassi, Financial Capability Lead at Citizens Advice, Swindon.
- ▶ David Miles, Public Health Practitioner, Affordable Warmth, Swindon Borough Council.

Carers had the opportunity to ask further questions during our Q&A session, which included Swindon MPs Sir Robert Buckland and Justin Tomlinson, Alison Barker, Corporate Director – Adults, Health & Housing, Swindon Borough Council, Claire Newport, Chief Executive, Swindon Citizens Advice and Tim Saint, Benefits Service Coordinator at Swindon Carers Centre.

If you would like to watch the Q&A, this is available on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Bkh6Vtn0Mg

We then opened our marketplace for carers. This was a chance for detailed conversations with representatives from



Our Question & Answer Panel.



Our marketplace.

Swindon Carers Centre, Citizens Advice Swindon, Warm and Safe Wiltshire, Thames Water, Healthwatch Swindon, Swindon Borough Council, Dressability, Swindon Food Collective and St Mungo's.

We were really pleased to receive positive feedback from those who attended the event. A big thank you to our presenters, panelists, marketplace stallholders and, most importantly, our carers for joining us and helping to make Carers Rights Day 2022 a success.

Our next Carers Rights Day in November 2023 will have a focus on parent carers. If you are a parent carer and you have some suggestions for this event, we would love to hear from you. Let us know what we should be focusing on, which organisations we should invite to take part and what you'd like the day to look like. Please email communications@swindoncarers.org.uk



Stallholder Rob Hanks of Thames Water.



The Swindon Carers Centre stall.



Stallholder Cher Smith, manager of Swindon Food Collective.

Cost of living advice

If you are struggling with living costs, we've put together information and advice that may be able to help.

Energy bills

The Government is giving every household £400 off their electricity bill, called the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

This started in October 2022 with monthly instalments and the final instalments of £67 will be paid in February and March 2023.

Cost of Living Payments

People in low-income households will receive Cost of Living Payments from the Government to help with the cost of living increases.

It applies to people receiving certain benefits, for example, Universal Credit, PIP or Attendance Allowance, and if you are over State Pension age and get Winter Fuel Payments.

The schedule of payments is;

£301 – First Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2023

£150 – Disability Payment – during Summer 2023

£300 – Second Cost of Living Payment – during Autumn 2023

£300 – Pensioner Payment – during Winter 2023/24

£299 – Third Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2024

Further advice

Swindon Borough Council has compiled a list of different measures on their website -



www.swindon.gov.uk/costofliving - that could benefit you if you are affected by the rising cost of living.

The tips include information on checking your eligibility for benefits to applying for cheaper broadband and phone packages.

Warm and Safe Wiltshire offers free and impartial energy saving advice and free home visits to eligible residents to help lower your bills and keep your home warm. Visit their website www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk/ or call them on **0800 038 572**

The Royal British Legion offers Cost of Living Grants to serving and former Armed Forces personnel. Call them on **0808 802 8080** or visit their website www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/financial-and-employment-support/finance/grants/cost-of-living-grants

Swindon Citizens Advice offers free advice on a range of issues including debt, benefits and housing. Call them on **0808 278 7813** or attend their drop-in sessions:

Monday and Thursday 10am-1pm at Citizens Advice, Sanford House, College Street entrance, Swindon, SN1 1HE.

Tuesday 10am-1pm at East Swindon Citizens Advice, Cavendish Square, Park South, Swindon, SN3 2LZ.

News in brief

Fundraising update

We are very excited to be one of Zurich Community Trust's new charity partners in Swindon.



L-r: Mark Flay, Volunteer and Partnership Manager at Zurich Community Trust, Emma Walker (SCC), Susanna Jones (SCC), Debs Hancock, Zurich Employee Advocate, and Stuart Ilbury (SCC).

Employees at Zurich's Swindon office chose Swindon Carers Centre and five other local charities to be charity partners for the next two years.

We have been awarded funding of £35,000 to provide a range of dementia friendly groups and activities to support carers of people living with dementia and also the person they care for.

We are also delighted to have been awarded grant funding of £25,000 by the **Garfield Weston Foundation**.



The family-founded charitable grant-making trust gives money to support a wide variety of charities across the UK.

The funding we have received is for our core costs, vital to ensure our governance, finance

and HR functions are robust, enabling us to respond to the growing needs of unpaid carers in Swindon and continue to be here for those we already support.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who bought our **Christmas cards**. We raised a fantastic £140.17!

As a charity we rely on the generous donations of individuals, organisations and businesses to deliver support to unpaid carers in Swindon. We are part funded by Swindon Borough Council, but to cover the full cost of running our essential services we need to fundraise.

Visit: www.swindoncarers.org.uk/fundraising/

Would you like to join our Carers Forum?

Our Carers Forum brings together carers who use our services and provides an opportunity for them to influence what we do.

We will meet three times a year for an hour and 15 minutes. Our next two meetings are on Tuesday February 21st (11.30am) and Tuesday May 9th (12.30pm) on Zoom.

In between this time, you may be contacted for media and publicity opportunities. We hope to make this a fun and friendly experience. By joining the 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.

At our next meeting, we want your views on how you like to be referred to as carers and planning for Carers Week in June. If you'd like to take part, please get in touch by emailing communications@swindoncarers.org.uk

News from other organisations

Warm and welcome spaces

Did you know there are dozens of community venues that have been designated as Warm and Welcome Spaces? These are places where residents can go to spend time, stay warm and feel safe.



The spaces are open to anyone for free – you won't be asked why you're there and you don't need to take part in any activities if you don't want to. The facilities at each venue will vary; some may offer hot drinks, free Wi-Fi or activities might be taking place.

The list of venues is on Swindon Borough Council's website here: www.swindon.gov.uk/warmandwelcome

Great Western Hospital's focus on carers

Tania Currie, Head of Patient Experience and Engagement at the Great Western Hospital, Swindon, gives an update on the Carers Charter.

In August 2022 we launched our new Carers Charter which sets out our priorities and commitment to carers across our local communities. Our charter was co-produced with staff, carers and external partners and forms the foundations of our ongoing work to improve services and support for carers.

We believe that families, friends and carers have

an important role in meeting the care needs of many of our patients. We are therefore committed to identifying carers and working with them as partners in care, ensuring that they are provided with the information and support that they require.

We are also aware that many of our staff are carers and are balancing working and caring commitments at the same time. We have a number of support services available to our staff.

If you would like further information, please contact me by email at tania.currie1@nhs.net or read more on our website www.gwh.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/extra-help/carers/

Voluntary sector conference

Voluntary Action Swindon is a charity that helps other charities and supports the voluntary and community sector in Swindon.

To celebrate its 90th birthday it held a Swindon Voluntary Sector Conference at the end of November with the theme of Celebrate, Integrate and Connect.



There were keynote addresses from Sue Harriman, Chief Executive Officer of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board and Amina Amawi from Swindon SEND Families Voice, and three panel sessions focused on:

- » The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Integrated Health and Social Care
- » The Cost of Living Crisis
- » Connect with and Engaging Diverse Communities

Our Chief Executive Officer, Susanna Jones, (pictured on the far left) chaired the first panel exploring the pivotal importance of the work charities and community groups do to support an integrated approach to health and social care within Swindon.

Young carer case study

Polly's story

I'm a sister and a young carer

My name is Polly. I am 9-years-old and I help care for my sister, Sammie, who is 12-years-old. Sammie has lots of problems and is sick. I help by getting Sammie her oxygen line and helping her put it on. I help support Sammie by helping my mum get the things she needs for Sammie, like a cup of water for Sammie to take her medicine or get her nappies ready for bed. I help Sammie to get her toys and I put whatever Sammie wants on the telly.

I have helped Sammie for as long as I can remember as she is older than me. Sammie was born with global developmental delay and epilepsy, but she got really sick when I was two-years-old. She got swine flu and was in hospital for four months and is now on oxygen full-time because the flu caused lots of damage.

School really helps as we have young carer meetings every week with a teacher and I really like going. We talk



Polly (far left) and her sister Sammie (far right) enjoying their trip to LEGOLAND.

about what has happened in the week. We also do crafts and spend time outside.

I find it really hard when Sammie hits me when I am trying to help and she pinches me when she wants something that I have. I get really frustrated when she doesn't understand that I don't want her in my bedroom.

I love that Sammie is always there for me and when I am sad or hurt, she will always want to make it better even if it is her that has upset me.

Swindon Carers Centre has helped me by giving me the opportunities to meet other young carers in Swindon. I have really enjoyed the sports activities that I have been to, like dance. It was really fun, and I met a new friend. I can't wait to see her again.

Polly's mum, Jo, adds: "Swindon Carers Centre plays an important role for us as a family. We feel that it is extremely important that Polly doesn't feel alone in her situation. We do our best to make sure her caring role doesn't massively impact her life, so Swindon Carers



Sammie and Polly.

Centre gives Polly the opportunities to do activities that we can't give her full time. It is a relief to know that she is meeting other children and making friends that are in a similar situation."

Thank you to Polly and her family for sharing their story with us.

There for each other - Polly and Sammie.



Young Carers Action Day

Make Time for Young Carers

Young Carers Action Day is a national day raising awareness about young carers, the challenges they face and the support they need.

Led by the Carers Trust, it takes place on Wednesday March 15th 2023 and the theme is Make Time for Young Carers.

This was chosen by young carers working with the Carers Trust to highlight their health and wellbeing. In particular, they want to see action and time taken for:

- » Better support in school.
- » More breaks and fun activities.
- » Better access to counselling.
- » More money for young carers and the services they use.

Why is making time for young carers so important?

Just a small amount of time – even ten minutes – can make a big difference.

Listening to young carers and asking the right questions helps them to get the vital support

they need, and this can make all the difference to their health and wellbeing.

If you're a young carer or you want to support young carers, you can download an activity pack from the Carers Trust website:

www.carers.org/young-carers-action-day-2023/young-carers-action-day-2023-1

Don't forget to share this with us at Swindon Carers Centre too by emailing **communications@swindoncarers.org.uk**.

Look out for our film

At Swindon Carers Centre we have over 900 young carers registered with us. We can help young carers by identifying their support needs, delivering groups and activities for them to have a break from their caring role, seek funding to support with hobbies and interests and offer 1:1 support. We also support other professionals working with young carers, including young carer leads in schools.

We actively raise awareness of young carers and we are currently working with some young carers to produce a film about their caring roles and the support they receive from our Young Carers Team.

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**



Instagram: Search for **'swindoncarers'**



LinkedIn: Search for **Swindon Carers Centre**

News from our Young Carers Team

During the first week of the Christmas holidays, our young carers enjoyed some time out, with a trip to the Wyvern Theatre, Swindon, to watch the pantomime Beauty and the Beast.

They also visited the cinema to watch the epic film, Avatar: The Way of Water, and we were so grateful to Zurich Community Trust for donating fabulous selection boxes for them.



At the cinema.



At the ballet.

A big thank you to the Friends of Young Carers Swindon (FOYCS) for funding these activities, along with a trip to the ballet at the Bristol Hippodrome in January. Fifteen secondary aged young carers had the opportunity to watch Giselle, performed by the critically acclaimed Varna International Ballet.



We are deeply honoured to have received a donation in memory of Jane Lyons (pictured left).

Jane had a long career in health and social care across Swindon and cared deeply about young carers.

Including match funding, the amount raised by Jane's family and friends was a fantastic £10,062.49. This will be used to provide activities and respite for young carers in Swindon.

We are also holding Term Time groups for:

Secondary age groups - fortnightly informal groups.
Primary age groups - monthly informal groups.

What can you expect?

- » Food and drink (available throughout every session).
- » A safe space to chill (available throughout every session).
- » A variety of activities (the choice is yours on how much or how little you participate in).

If you are registered for Term Time Groups, you will have received an invitation but if you have missed it, please contact us by calling **01793 401092**.

Looking ahead to this year, we have many exciting activities planned, including trips to the theatre, theme parks and local outings such as Roves Farm, Cotswold Country Park and 4 Kingdoms. We will be in contact with young carers to invite them to register for the trips they are interested in.

News from our Benefits Team

Are you aware of the Universal Credit benefit changes?

Tim Saint, Benefits Service Coordinator, outlines the changes that are happening to some means-tested benefits which are being replaced by Universal Credit.



Migration to Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) is a means-tested benefit for people of working age who are on a low income. It is replacing six means-tested benefits (known as legacy benefits) listed below:

- » **Child Tax Credit**
- » **Working Tax Credit**
- » **Income Based Job Seekers Allowance**
- » **Income Based Employment and Support Allowance**
- » **Income Support**
- » **Housing Benefit (other than for people of pension age)**

By the end of 2024, it is expected that anyone on the legacy benefits will have to transfer to UC after which the legacy benefits will cease.

Some areas of the country are seeing people transferring now, but there is no date at the moment as to when people in Swindon will have to move over.

When the change does happen, people will receive a Migration Notice Letter and have three months to claim.

How to claim UC

You normally have to claim online at **www.gov.uk/universal-credit** but sometimes a claim can be made by phone on **0800 328 5644**. You will also have to prove your identity online or in person at the Job Centre.

Will my legacy benefits be stopped straight away?

Tax credits payments will stop as soon as you claim UC. All other benefits like Housing Benefit will continue for two weeks after the claim.

It will take five weeks from your claim date for

you to get your first payment, but you will be able to ask for an advanced payment for up to a month's allowance, which you pay back in monthly deductions for between six and 24 months.

How much will I get?

There are set rates for UC, for single people, couples, children, those with disabilities and carers. There are also payments for housing costs like rent and mortgages and childcare costs.

UC is for people who work as well as for those who cannot. There is a work allowance meaning some of people's wages are ignored before deductions are made from your UC payments. At the moment, 55p is taken off UC entitlement for every £1 earned. Not everyone is entitled to a work allowance.

What is transitional protection (TP)?

If your payments are due to be less under UC than the old benefits combined, you should get TP. This is only if you move over to UC after being asked to by getting the Migration Notice Letter. There is no TP if you choose to transfer to UC before you are asked to or you move over naturally.

Could I be asked to move to UC before my migration letter?

You may have to change to UC if your situation changes, such as you move in with a partner or you change council. You will not get TP if this happens; your payments could go up or down.

You might be better off moving to UC now as it could be more than your current payments. You can do an online benefits check at websites such as **www.entitledto.co.uk** or call the Benefits Team at Swindon Carers Centre on **01793 401093**.

News from our Benefits Team

UC is only for people with savings under £16,000 - will I lose my benefits?

If you get tax credits at the moment and have over £16,000 and you apply for UC, you will be eligible for a year. After a year, if your savings have not reduced to below £16,000, your UC will stop.

What happens to Carers Allowance?

Under UC, you get a carers premium, so it doesn't matter so much if you get Carers Allowance or not - you will still get the same amount of money in total.

Will all other benefits stop when UC is fully in place?

Some other benefits will continue, such as Carers Allowance, Contribution Based Employment and Support Allowance and Child Benefit. The only means-tested benefit that will continue for working age people will be Council Tax Support.

What if I cannot work?

Many people who are not working full-time on

UC have to be looking for work. If you have a carers premium on your claim, you will not have to look for work.

What should I do now?

There are two things you can do now.

Firstly, if you are receiving any of the legacy benefits, check you are getting all the benefits that you are entitled to including any special premiums like the Severe Disability Premium. Again, check online or with our Benefits Team. If you are missing out at the moment and transfer to UC you will not be able to get any extra backdated.

Secondly, check whether you could get UC now and see if you would be better off as a result. This applies equally to people getting legacy benefits and those not getting any benefits at all.

A longer version of this article is available to read on our website here

www.swindoncarers.org.uk/latest-news/

An update from our Adult and Older Carers Team

What is a Carer's Conversation?

Do you think about your needs as a carer?
Or are you having difficulty with aspects of your caring role?

Stuart Ilbury, Head of Service Delivery Adult and Older Carers, explains what a Carer's Conversation is and how it can help you.

What is a Carer's Conversation and what does it aim to achieve?

Put simply, it's an assessment of your caring role. It's important to stress that it's not a test about how good you are at caring.

Our Carer's Conversation process is person-centred and is not a tick box exercise. It's an open dialogue to talk about everything that's important to you in your caring role and as an individual.

Its focus is to work out what can be done to support you to get things as good as they can be and will include a support plan to achieve this.

What is discussed?

We'll listen to you and note everything that you want to discuss. This can include:

- » What support do you provide? What is going well? Are you able/willing to continue to provide support? What is the impact of your caring role on your wellbeing (including

health, relationships, social activities and finances)?

- » What are your desired outcomes?
- » Further details relating to the person you care for, such as their care needs.

Following this, we agree a support plan with you. It might be that you want time for yourself and respite from your caring role, such as attending one of our activity groups. You might want help with practical things, such as information on dementia or completing an Emergency Card Plan. If we can't help you directly, we can signpost you to other services and organisations who can support you.

How will it benefit me?

It's an opportunity to think of yourself and your needs. It's important for you to be well and the support plan is there to help you as an individual and as a carer. If you can get the support you need, this will also benefit the person you care for.

Every registered adult and older carer is entitled to a Carer's Conversation (previously called Carer's Assessment) under The Care Act 2014. It's free and it doesn't matter if you are new to your caring role or you have been doing it for a while. If your caring role is getting tougher or the condition of the person you care for is deteriorating, I would encourage you to contact us for a Carer's Conversation so we can get the process underway to prevent you reaching crisis point.

How long does the Carer's Conversation process take?

The first meeting we have with you is usually face-to-face, either at your home or at Sanford House, Swindon, where our offices are based, but some can take place by phone.

There will be regular reviews to discuss the actions in your support plan (these are often done by telephone with you). The whole process is complete when all actions are completed or you are happy for it to be closed.

How do I request a Carer's Conversation?

Call our Carers Support Line on **01793 531133** (open 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am to 4pm on Friday). Our Carers Support Line Practitioner will ask you about your caring role and if there are any specific needs you feel you want help with. Your request will then be referred to our Adult Carer Support Practitioners who will contact you to arrange the first meeting. The vast majority of Carer's Conversations are carried out by us, but in some cases they are done by our colleagues at Swindon Borough Council if you or your dependent has a care package or day centre services paid for by the council.

*If you are a Parent Carer or Young Carer and want an assessment of your needs, please contact our Parent Carer Team on **01793 401094** and our Young Carer Team on **01793 401091** or email info@swindoncarers.org.uk*

Emergency Card Scheme update

We are continually looking to improve the Emergency Card Scheme that we manage on behalf of Swindon Borough Council and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board.

A recent development has been the sharing of Emergency Card data with Great Western Hospital (GWH) which is being added to the patient records that the hospital holds. As a result, if a carer who is registered with the Emergency Card Scheme is taken to hospital in

an emergency, hospital staff will know that an Emergency Card plan is in place and will be able to contact Swindon Borough Council to activate the plan, if required. Information on new Emergency Cards that are issued is being shared with GWH on a monthly basis.

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**.

News from our Parent Carers Team

We held a morning of tenpin bowling at Tenpin in Swindon to give our parent carers a chance to take some much-needed time out of their busy and demanding day.

There were two lanes of parent carers and there was much joviality as they got into their bowling 'stride' along with some healthy competition! For many of those who attended it was a much-needed chance to enjoy some adult company and share experiences and tips around their caring roles with each other.

We were so engrossed in the games and chatting that the time flew past. However, some of our parents decided to extend their time out a little more and got together for a spot of lunch before getting back into carer mode!

Here is some of the lovely feedback we received from parent carers who attended;



"I nearly declined this because I have so much to do in the day. But then I thought why not, and I am so glad I came it feels really naughty to be doing something for me in the middle of the day!"

"We've had a great time and now we are all going for a quick spot of lunch before the school run. Thank you so much for the invites."

"Thanks, I'll get into looking into the info you sent me ASAP. I really did enjoy the bowling today thank you and I can't thank you enough for listening to me also."

Come along to our coffee morning

Isabel and Lorraine from the Parent Carer Team will be holding a drop-in coffee morning for parent carers at The Underground, The Orbital Retail Park, Swindon, SN25 4AN on Wednesday 15th March from 9.30am-11am.

Please come along and join them for a chat over a cuppa along with other parent carers. You don't have to stay for the entire session. (Children under the age of five are welcome as long as they are under parental supervision).

Please note, you can park for free for a limit of up to four hours at The Orbital.

An update from the Adult Carers Events Team

Hello everyone, we are pleased to say that we have recruited two new part-time members – Sue and Sarah – to our team! If you have not already done so, you will meet them soon.

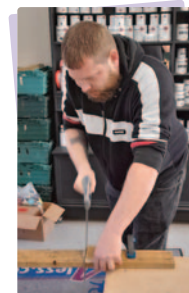
We are excited to be able to offer more events for you so, as well as our existing popular ones, we have some fresh ideas which include:

- » Swimming lessons.
- » Car maintenance workshop.
- » Love & Loss Group, for carers whose loved ones are living in a care/nursing home and are feeling a sense of loss.
- » Sharing Sundays Group, an afternoon meeting via Zoom for fun, friendship and conversation.
- » Willow Weaving.
- » Meditation & Mindfulness Session.

You can book onto an activity via our What's On form which we have changed to an annual form covering January to December 2023. When you submit your form, we will log your requests and if we can offer you a place, we will send you the details approximately two weeks before the event date.

We constantly strive to offer a wide range of events for you, to meet diverse interests and provide a break from your caring role and your feedback is very important to us. We will be sending out a short survey to ask for your comments and we would really appreciate you completing this.

Our Chatterbox newsletter, which was created during lockdown, will cease after the March edition. News and updates will be given here in the Caring Matters newsletter and via our social media channels.



Thank you to TE Connectivity for awarding us a community grant to run our Men's and Women's Sheds activities. These were a fun opportunity to learn and share skills and our carers enjoyed making bird boxes and wooden Christmas trees during two six-week courses, run by Renew in Swindon. We are always very grateful for any funding that we receive.



Also on a Christmas theme, our carers made lovely wreaths and festive flower creations during workshops we held!



Housebuilder Persimmon Wessex donated £1,000 through its charitable Community Champions scheme which we used to treat 120 carers to a festive two-course Christmas lunch at the Messenger Pub in Swindon.



Best wishes,
Heather, Zoe, Leigh, Sue and Sarah.

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

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Visit our website www.swindoncarers.org.uk

