

Caring Matters



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From our CEO – Susanna Jones



It's been a very busy few months at Swindon Carers Centre!

In June we celebrated Carers Week by holding our annual Walk A Mile in a Carer's Shoes event - you can read all about it on pages 8 and 9. That followed Volunteers' Week and I would like to publicly thank all our fantastic volunteers for the amazing work they do - it really does make a difference to the services we can provide.

In July we had our Annual General Meeting and published our latest Annual Impact Report 2022-2023. It's really important we reflect on the work we do and how we are making a difference to carers in Swindon and I would really welcome any feedback you may have on it - any comments can be emailed via info@swindoncarers.org.uk for my attention.

We are looking forward to Carers Rights Day in November and planning is already underway. Following feedback at last year's event, the focus this year is on Parent Carers and you can find out how to get involved on page 13.

Finally, a new report (see page 4) outlines the economic value of the unpaid care provided across the country, broken down into Local Authority areas. In Swindon unpaid carers are saving the public purse £592 million a year, which I'm sure you will agree is a phenomenal amount. Without the hard work you do as unpaid carers, it is likely our health and social care system could not cope. Please know that you are recognised and valued for the work you are doing and we are here to support you.

With very best wishes, Susanna

Cover image: Volunteer Roger with carers Amna and Ken at our Freshbrook Carers Cuppa during Carers Week.
Story – page 8.

A warm welcome to:



Kiran Chumber Community Engagement Support Officer

I joined Swindon Carers Centre in February this year as a volunteer working on the Making Carers Count project and I have since been recruited as a member of staff. The project involves focusing on extending our reach to Asian carers as this is the largest under-represented ethnic minority group within Swindon.

I'm really enjoying my role. As a South Asian woman myself, I feel super proud that I can do something to help my community receive the help that's available. Being community based means I get to meet lots of different people too!

I recently graduated from the University of Gloucestershire, where I studied Criminology and Sociology. After finishing university I became a carer for my mum, who had a full knee replacement and needed 24/7 care. During this time I realised how much of an impact caring responsibilities can have on a person.



Sophie Beale Events Coordinator (Young Carers)

I joined the Young Carers Team at Swindon Carers Centre in June this year. My role is to organise our programme of events throughout the year for young carers, to give them the opportunity to be themselves, have fun and enjoy time away from their caring responsibilities.

When I saw the job vacancy advertised online, I knew it would be the right events role for me and incredibly rewarding. I previously worked in the NHS in a variety of administration roles including research, clinical governance and community nursing. Prior to the NHS, I worked in events roles for a total of 14 years at companies, venue finding agencies and hotels.

Everyone at SCC has been so welcoming during my first couple of months and I am really enjoying my time so far.

I live in Swindon with my husband, our two young children and our two cats!

Goodbye for now:

Pictured with a hamper of goodies from her colleagues before she went on maternity leave in July is Adult Carer Support Practitioner Amy Bedford. Amy said: "My partner and I are enjoying this exciting time and can't wait for the SCC team to meet our baby girl. I have loved my time supporting carers in Swindon alongside colleagues in the adult team and I look forward to continuing this when I return next year."



The value of unpaid care

Unpaid carers are integral to supporting our often-stretched health and social care system.

In Swindon unpaid carers save the local economy £592 million a year - a staggering sum. This figure has risen by 43% on the previous decade and is the largest percentage increase in the South West of England.

The figure was calculated by Carers UK and the Centre for Care at the University of Sheffield based on the number of unpaid carers - 18,315 - identified in the 2021 Census. We believe this number is an

underestimation, as we know that many people caring for family members or friends don't realise they are a carer.

The Census data also showed that unpaid carers in Swindon are caring for longer hours per week. Just under 1 in 50 people (1.8%), were providing between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care each week, compared with 1.4% in 2011. Unpaid carers providing at least 50 hours of care per week increased from 2.5% to 2.6%.

Julia's story

The care Julia (pictured) provides for her mum, Sheila, 86, is an illustration of just how intense caring roles can be.

Julia's mum has dementia and Julia, 60, cares for her 24/7. She helps her with everyday tasks such as dressing, washing and eating, as well as keeping things clean and tidy and sorting medication.

Julia said: "Physically and mentally, it's challenging because you have lost your life."

"You don't relax, there is no on/off switch, it's all the time. You do it because you love them, you wouldn't do it otherwise. My mum was there for me all through my childhood and now it's her turn to be looked after."

"All these things that go into your role as a carer they mount up. I feel like I'm building a mountain out of marbles. I'm putting another marble on top, and I'm waiting for the day when that mountain is going to explode. That's how it feels, you don't know what's going to push you over the edge."

Registering with Swindon Carers Centre has offered some comfort to Julia. It makes a difference to be able to seek advice via our Carers Support Line.

Swindon Carers Centre also successfully applied to Swindon Borough Council for Carers Relief for Julia, which pays for a professional Care Worker to come and look after Sheila for four hours a week.

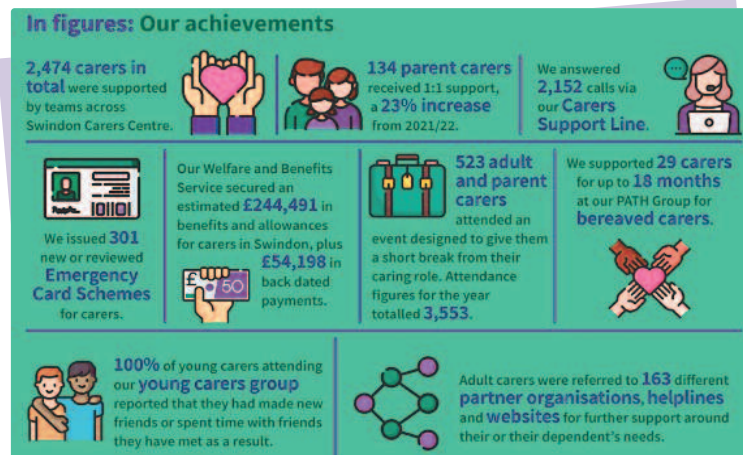
"For me it has been fantastic, just to get out and have a bit of sanity. I look forward to those four hours to get out of the house, but it's not long enough," said Julia.

Julia kindly shared her story for Carers Week in June. You can read her story in full on our website here: www.swindoncarers.org.uk/you-do-it-because-you-love-them-julias-story-for-carers-week-2023/



Our impact during the last year

During the past year staff at Swindon Carers Centre have worked hard to respond to the growing needs of unpaid carers in Swindon. Our 2023 Annual General Meeting in July gave us an important opportunity to reflect on this and to share some key highlights with carers, volunteers, supporters and partnership organisations.



We worked hard to keep up with an increase in referrals, to expand our outreach work and further partnership working. We continue to evaluate our service to ensure the support we provide is of high quality. Our key priorities for 2023/24 are:

- » Continuing to keep carers at the centre of decision making and ensuring their voice is heard.
- » Using our Income Generation Plan to reduce our reliance on statutory funding and to maximise full cost recovery on additional grants.
- » Using data available throughout the Integrated Care System (ICS) to inform gaps in support for carers and work with the ICS and Integrated Care Alliance partners in Swindon to plug those gaps and inform planning for the next carer support contract.

How we will do this:

- » We will use our Carers Forum, a refresh of the Carers Strategy for Swindon, carer feedback and effective community engagement and co-production to shape the support and services we offer.

- » We will use data and carer experience and feedback to inform quality improvement.
- » We will work with colleagues and stakeholders across integrated care in Swindon to better balance their caring role to protect their own health and wellbeing.
- » We will work with colleagues and stakeholders across integrated care in Swindon to tackle unequal health outcomes and access to services/support for carers.

To read our Annual Impact Report in full, scan the QR code below or visit our website here: www.swindoncarers.org.uk/our-impact/



Our wonderful volunteers

Our volunteers are amazing and during Volunteers' Week (1-7 June) we celebrated the valuable contribution they make to unpaid carers in Swindon.

A number of them (pictured are Kiran, Roger, Holly and Steve) joined us for cake and refreshments at our offices in Sanford House, Swindon.

Our volunteers support our work in a variety of roles, including as Trustees, helping at our events and activities, benefits advice, administrative



tasks and information technology support. Thank you for all you do!

Join us at our Carers Chai events

Our Community Engagement Team is running a new fortnightly Carers Chai event for people with caring responsibilities in the South Asian community.

It's informal and an opportunity to access information, advice and peer support. Home-made chai (spiced tea) and a selection of

Asian sweets and biscuits, including gluten free options, will be available.

The event is at Broadgreen Community Centre, Swindon, on the following **Wednesdays: August 9th, August 23rd, September 6th and September 20th** from 6.30pm to 7.30pm.

Translated leaflets

Our leaflets have been translated into seven different languages. They are available in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Konkani, Nepali, Punjabi, Portuguese and Urdu.

They can be downloaded from our website here: www.swindoncarers.org.uk/news-resources/leaflets/

Excellence for Carers award

Carers are at the heart of everything we do and we're extremely proud to have been awarded the Excellence for Carers Quality Mark.

This is the second time we have received the award and we are the first Carers Centre in

the country to be reaccredited.

The award, from the national charity Carers Trust, demonstrates the commitment of everyone at Swindon Carers Centre in providing consistently high quality services to unpaid carers.

Carers Forum meeting

Our next Carers Forum meeting will be on Monday September 4th at 1pm.

Carers Forum members are champions for unpaid carers. By sharing their caring experience, forum members are helping to inform service delivery at Swindon Carers Centre and to raise awareness externally

within the media and on social media.

This will be a hybrid meeting (both in person at Sanford House, Swindon, and via Zoom). If you'd like to attend, please email communications@swindoncarers.org.uk or call us on 01793 531133 and ask for Anne Saunders.

Fundraising update

We've received a number of donations from local supporters for which we are extremely grateful. These include;

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council which raised £3,573.51, including at a Queen's Jubilee event. Our Young Carers Team were chosen as the Chairman's charity during 2022/23.



Pictured above are Anne Saunders, our Media and Communications Manager, and Councillor Tim Page.

Hillier Funeral Service Limited donated £5,000 after choosing SCC as one of their charity recipients at their centenary dinner.



Pictured above is Claire Smith, our Head of Development, receiving the donation.

The Rotary Club of Swindon North & Thamesdown donated £500 for 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](https://twitter.com/SwindonCarers)



Facebook: www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre



Instagram: Search for 'swindoncarers'



LinkedIn: Search for **Swindon Carers Centre**

Looking back at Carers Week

Carers Week (June 5th-11th) was an opportunity for us to raise awareness of the remarkable work of unpaid carers who look after family members, friends or neighbours. The theme was recognising and supporting carers.

Our Carers Cuppas are a safe space to socialise in an informal setting and to access peer support. At our **Freshbrook Carers Cuppa**, carers told us about the importance of support for unpaid carers. When asked about how attending the Freshbrook Carers Cuppa makes a difference, carers said:

Being here today makes me feel that I am in a safe environment and able to be comfortable with others who are in the same situation as myself.

It gives me a chance to exchange stories and experiences. It provides reassurance that I am not alone.



Nicky, who is registered with us, and volunteer Roy at Freshbrook Carers Cuppa.

Being here today makes me feel not alone! Less anxious. A little break from my caring role

Walk A Mile

Our main event during Carers Week was Walk A Mile and we were delighted to be joined by unpaid carers, the people they care for and supporters to walk a mile through Swindon town centre on June 10th.

Special guests included the Mayor of Swindon Councillor Barbara Parry, the High Sheriff of Wiltshire Pradeep Bhardwaj, Swindon MPs Sir Robert Buckland and Justin Tomlinson, Sarah-Jane Peffers, Associate Director of Patient Safety and Quality at Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) and Mrs Wiltshire Galaxy Sheri Harvey.

During the walk the story of Julia, a carer registered with us (see page 4), was read out and we also handed out flyers about Swindon Carers Centre to the public.



Above: Swindon MPs Justin Tomlinson and Sir Robert Buckland, the High Sheriff of Wiltshire Pradeep Bhardwaj, Swindon Carers Centre Chief Executive Officer Susanna Jones, the Mayor of Swindon Councillor Barbara Parry and Mrs Wiltshire Galaxy Sheri Harvey.



Left: Celebrating Walk A Mile.



Above: Members of Mums on a Mission at Walk A Mile.



Above: Walk A Mile in Swindon town centre.



Right: Walk A Mile completed!

Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who took part in our fundraising during Carers Week.

Pictured are Mr and Mrs Roebuck who won a hamper of goodies in our online raffle. We raised £702.81 through our raffle and our tombola at our Walk A Mile event. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors Pebley Beach Hyundai and Suzuki Swindon, the

grand total raised is £1,702.81! This will help us to support carers to improve their wellbeing.



Influencing services to benefit carers

While Carers Week is a national week, we work all year round to raise awareness of unpaid carers and the issues they face.

The way the NHS plans and commissions healthcare services has changed creating new opportunities for us to ensure support for unpaid carers is recognised and valued and, alongside other organisations, to influence decision making.

Locally, the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) is responsible for NHS services.

It comprises of a partnership of organisations - including GPs, council and hospital leaders and voluntary sector organisations - providing a more integrated approach to delivering health and care services.

Susanna Jones, our Chief Executive Officer, sits on the the Swindon Integrated Care Alliance Development Executive Group (DEG), giving the opportunity to champion the need for support for unpaid carers during important discussions around health and care provision in Swindon.

News from other organisations

Are you on your GP's learning disability register?

If the person you care for has a learning disability, they can request to be on the learning disability register at their GP surgery. Being on the register means they will be invited for an annual health check, which explores their general health and also includes a medication review.

NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW

ICB) has produced a form for people with learning disabilities to fill in to give to their GP surgery, which includes the reasonable adjustments they need for their annual health check. You can download and fill in the form here:

www.swindoncarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Learning-disability-form-for-annual-healthcheck.pdf

Dementia awareness

As part of the Swindon Dementia Action Alliance, we and other organisations raised awareness during Dementia Action Week in May.

The alliance held an Expo at Foundation Park, Swindon Town Football Club, aimed at newly diagnosed patients and their carers to share

information about support and services available.

There were lots of stalls and an awareness session was delivered by Tim, a specialist dementia Admiral Nurse who works in Swindon.

Alzheimer's virtual courses

The Alzheimer's Society is running free information and support programmes for carers to come together and learn about dementia.

The courses are held via Zoom and the next one is on Thursday 12th October at 10am. For more information, please email crispbswd@alzheimers.org.uk.

Changing Suits

Changing Suits is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to break down cultural barriers for the South Asian community.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Susanna, and Monica, our Community Engagement Officer, were delighted to be invited to talk on their podcast about our work supporting unpaid

carers and our Making Carers Count project, funded by the Carers Trust, to increase our reach to Asian carers in Swindon.

The episode is called The Carer's Carer and was broadcast on April 28th. Visit their website here <https://changingsuits.org/about-us/>

Free gas cooker locking valves

Wales & West Utilities offer free gas cooker locking valves to homes where people can no longer operate their gas cooker safely, such as those living with dementia.

They help people to live safely and

independently in their own home while giving their family or carers peace of mind. To request a valve, please visit their website: www.wuutilities.co.uk/services/priority-customers/supporting-you/

News from our Adult and Older Carers Team

Emergency Card Scheme

Do you worry what would happen to the person you care for should you have an accident? Our Emergency Card Scheme



Susan's story

"My Emergency Card plan ensured my husband was cared for after I had an accident."

When Susan (pictured) broke and dislocated her elbow while out walking her dog, she worried how she would be able to look after her husband, Mike.

She required hospital treatment and when she returned home her arm was in a sling.

Susan is Mike's full-time carer - he lives with Parkinson's disease and dementia - and her injury left her unable to care for him as she normally would.

Thankfully, Susan had an Emergency Card plan with Swindon Carers Centre (SCC) which meant alternative care was put in place quickly.

An urgent assessment was undertaken by Swindon Borough Council's Adult Social Care Team, which resulted in care staff visiting Susan and Mike's home four times a day to help Mike, 82, until Susan recovered and she was able to resume her caring role.

On the day of her accident Tanya, an Adult Carer

enables carers to put a plan in place for this eventuality. Susan, an older carer, has kindly shared her experience of how the scheme helped her when she had an accident earlier this year.

Support Practitioner at SCC, had a pre-arranged appointment with Susan and arrived at her home to be told she had been taken to Great Western Hospital, Swindon, following her fall.

Tanya activated Susan's Emergency Card plan which led to the care being put in place by Swindon Borough Council.

Susan, 77, said: "I'm very grateful to Tanya for her help in initiating my Emergency Card plan. It saved me a lot of distress and worry knowing that Mike would be looked after. My injury meant I was unable to help him with things, including helping him to get out of his chair.

"When I had my accident I had forgotten I had an Emergency Card! I now make sure I keep it with me at all times.

"I'm fit and capable for my age - I do yoga and I swim - and I didn't think my Emergency Card plan would be needed, but accidents can happen to anyone. The Emergency Card Scheme is absolutely vital and I'm so glad I have an Emergency Card plan.

"Swindon Carers Centre offers an amazing service and I would encourage carers to get an Emergency Card because it offers peace of mind knowing the person who you care for will be looked after if you have an accident."

About the Emergency Card Scheme

The scheme is for registered adult, older and parent carers and you develop your own emergency plan with help from Swindon Carers Centre.

The scheme is run jointly by Swindon Carers Centre, Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB).

We are really pleased that our excellent collaborative working with partner organisations has resulted in the appropriate sharing of our

carers' Emergency Card data with Great Western Hospital (GWH), Swindon, for the patient records it holds. This means that staff at GWH will know carers who are admitted in an emergency have an Emergency Card and their plan will be followed.

If you haven't got an Emergency Card or if you need to update your Emergency Card plan, please contact Nick, our Emergency Card Scheme Administrator, by emailing

Nick.Precious@swindoncarers.org.uk or call 01793 975333.

News from our Young Carers Team

Festival fun!

The Young Carers Team took 17 young carers, aged 13-15, to the Young Carers Festival, at YMCA Fairthorne Manor, near Southampton, for two nights of camping at the end of June.

This annual event is organised by The Children's Society and is offered to young carers nationally as a break from their caring responsibilities. It was the first time we had attended since 2019, so it was great to be back!

The festival provided an opportunity for young carers to come together and take part in many of the activities on offer, including fairground rides, water sports, outdoor disco, karaoke, wellbeing and



beauty sessions, outdoor cinema, plus many more. It was great to see our young carers get involved in many of the activities (pictured), including singing 'We Will Rock You' on the main stage!

Our young carers thoroughly enjoyed the trip and we received lots of lovely feedback from young carers and their parents including:



"This has been amazing, and is my first time camping, I would love to come again."

"I just wanted to say thank you to everyone involved in the YCF. She has come home so happy and relaxed. She had the most amazing time and made some great friends. She said she feels recharged and relaxed. Thank so, so much."

Thank you to the Friends of Young Carers Swindon (FOYCS) for funding this trip. We very much look forward to returning in 2024!

Half-term activities

During the May half-term our young carers enjoyed a trip to Cotswold Wildlife Park where they had fun in the adventure playground, met the animals and tucked into a picnic. They also enjoyed a trip to the cinema and a theatre trip to watch The Lion King at the Bristol Hippodrome!



At Cotswold Wildlife Park.

and from our Parent Carers Team

Working with schools

We work with schools (primary, secondary and colleges) across Swindon to raise awareness of young carers.

We support Young Carer School Leads and meet with them three times a year to discuss and share good practice and ideas.

At our most recent meeting in June (pictured above right), the Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Barbara Parry attended. Barbara is also the



Young Carer Lead at Kingsdown School in Swindon. In her mayoral role she has chosen Swindon Young Carers as one of her charities to support this year.

Student social worker placement

We will be welcoming a student social worker on placement with the Young Carers Team in September.

Steven Webb, our Young Carer Support Practitioner, is currently undertaking a Management in Practice Learning course run by the University of Bath in order to support them.

Parent Carer Cuppa

For our latest drop-in coffee morning, we combined it with a leisurely stroll at the Town Gardens in Old Town, Swindon.

We managed to dodge the rain and parent carers chatted over refreshments and tucked into delicious cake at the café in the park. Those who attended welcomed being able to leave their home, have some exercise and self-care.

Their shared their experiences of being parent carers and, following the positive feedback, we plan to hold more Parent Carer Cuppas. Check our social media channels for details.



Save the date – Carers Rights Day

**Friday November 24th – 10am to 1.30pm
Swindon Town Football Club**

Carers Rights Day is a national day which promotes the rights of carers and helps them to understand what support is available to them.

Our event this year will focus on parent carers. If you are a parent carer this is an opportunity for you to have your say, find out information and ask questions on topics of importance.

Representatives from statutory organisations

and voluntary groups will be at the event and there will be presentations, a Question and Answer session with a panel plus a marketplace with stallholders.

We will provide more information on the event in the next edition of Caring Matters and on our Facebook page, but if you would like to get involved with planning for this event and receive updates then please email our Communications Team at communications@swindoncarers.org.uk.

Autism talk

Parent carers shared their experiences of caring for a child on the autism spectrum at a session we held.

The feedback from carers was really positive and it was a warm and non-judgemental meeting. They learned new things and they found it supportive to talk with other carers and shared information about organisations they had contact with.



We hope to organise another session on autism in the near future.

Adult Carers Events Team News

Since the last edition of *Caring Matters* we've held new events, plus our regular popular activities.

These included a car maintenance workshop, a coach trip to Weston-super-Mare, female and male pamper sessions.

The car maintenance session was at PJS Autos, Swindon, and carers picked up handy tips, such as changing a tyre and checking the oil and water levels.

One carer said: *"It was very well planned with lots of demonstrations and 'hands-on' work, I learnt lots of things I didn't know, and we were encouraged to ask questions."*

Changing a tyre.

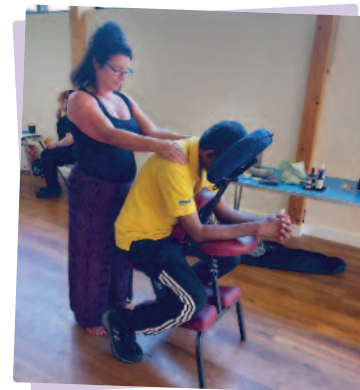


Enjoying ice creams at Weston-super-Mare.



Foot therapy.

At their pamper session, our male carers received wellbeing therapies from qualified staff, including reiki, neck and shoulder massage, foot spa, facials and hair and beard trims, and a goody bag to take home.



Massage therapy.

Carers also attended a first aid course and learned how to deliver chest compressions and give rescue breaths, plus the recovery position



Enjoying a trim.

and how to deal with a range of first aid situations. Each carer received a manual and a small first aid kit. These courses are offered regularly, so if you are interested in attending please let us know.

Supporter events

It's great to be invited to events organised by our supporters, both to raise awareness of Swindon Carers Centre and to thank them for their generous funding. Sue (pictured right) attended the TE Connectivity fun day and Heather had a stall at Zurich's new offices in Unity Place, Swindon.



Carer Voice

Some of our carers attended meetings organised by other organisations to give their views. One meeting was about mental health services in Swindon and the other was regarding services for dependents with a learning disability and/or

autism. We are always looking for carers to join us at meetings like these or you can email your views of what is working or not working and we will forward them to the appropriate people. Please contact **Heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk**.

Coming up

In addition to our events listed on the current *What's On form*, (which you should all have received), we have some additional events we would like to mention:

- » Due to a specific grant administered by Wiltshire Community Foundation, carers with a SN4 postcode - Wroughton, Chiseldon and Wichelstowe - are invited to our two new

Carers Cuppas and additional activities that we will be offering.

- » Male carer peer/social group - we will be launching a new group for men for them to take time out and talk to others. Meetings will be based around an activity.
- » A talk from The Samaritans. A speaker will tell us about what they do, plus how we might talk to someone who is struggling.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any queries - we hope to see or hear from you soon.

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

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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