

IMPACT REPORT

1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

“The opportunity to share and find that we were ‘among friends’ who just ‘get it!’”

Carer, anonymous

There are more than

120,000*

carers in this county

A Message from our CEO

Caring can be both wonderful and tough. We know that mothers, sons, fathers, daughters, friends, lovers, partners, husbands, wives, and family do so much for others every day, while trying to maintain a life for themselves.

We have all struggled in the last year to maintain a life for ourselves. The family and friend carers we work with have been trying to do that while supporting someone else through a scary and unrelenting pandemic.

As a charity team we deliver a carer facing helpline offering information, guidance, and practical support. We work with carers providing emotional, specialist, peer support and learning. We are privileged to work with

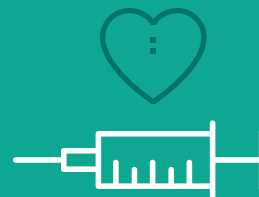
carers, communities, and partners in the county of West Sussex and throughout the south east of England.

No matter what the challenges during the year we have continued to meet carers at whatever point they are at on their carer journey, offering them recognition and empowerment, as well as a sense of community from their peers.

Sonia Mangan, CEO



Almost
30,000
carers are registered with Carers Support West Sussex



Keeping more than
20,000
carers informed and assisting with the COVID-19 vaccination programme for carers



This year, we have engaged directly with more than
8,500
carers



SEVEN OUT OF TEN
of our staff and volunteer teams are themselves carers

Working alongside unpaid carers

As part of our overall charity review, we have engaged through a survey and a series of six focus groups, with over

1,000 carers and almost **200** organisations & individuals

who make a difference to carers every day.

We are focusing our charitable efforts over the coming years on what works for carers. We want to bring the day forward when carers are seen, heard, and included.



Making an impact and taking the initiative

In March 2020, as everyone across the country began to be impacted by the Coronavirus, we rapidly modified the way in which we supported carers. Our priority was to keep everyone safe while continuing to support the increasing needs of carers who were becoming more and more isolated.

We listened to carers throughout the year and secured funding for six new services:



Online connections



Bilingual counselling



Telephone befriending



Young Adult Carers Counselling Project



Bereavement counselling



Carer wellbeing

Bereavement Support

Being bereaved during lockdown meant carers in this position were unable to reach out to natural support networks, such as family and friends.

A bereavement pilot project supported

17 recently bereaved carers

through the 'cycle of grief' and improved their online connectivity. A number of these carers have continued to get support through our successfully relaunched Former Carers Group.



“ The Digital Champion Volunteer has been a great support and I can now do things that I was not able to access before ”

Carer feedback from digital support service

Digital Champions

We supported carers to connect digitally and socially to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

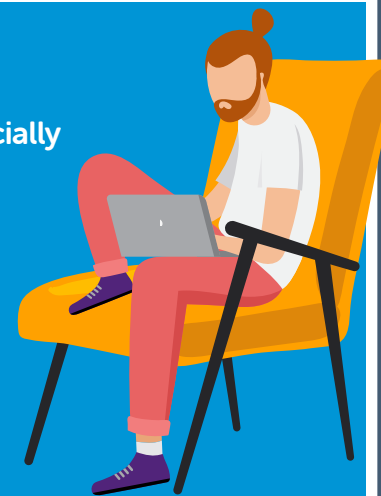
Over

£13,000

was allocated in supplying laptops and tablets to over

85 carers

with volunteers working as Digital Champions providing them with support.



“ I am very grateful for this opportunity. It feels like the most positive thing that has happened since H passed. To talk and listen to others who are in a similar situation; to maintain phone and online contact...Thank you so much ”

Carer feedback from Bereavement Workshops

Bilingual Counselling

We supported

12 carers

in accessing free, confidential, culturally appropriate and/or language matched counselling support.



Online Carer Groups

A lifeline for carers – group sessions delivered remotely during the pandemic were attended by

684 carers.



“ I’m so pleased that I contacted Carers Support, I feel I can rely on them for information and friendly support whenever I need it. Going to meetings and events has put me in touch with other carers which has boosted my morale! ”

Carer group participant

Carer Assessments

During the year our team continued to work closely with social care colleagues at West Sussex County Council providing

789 full statutory carer assessments.

The team also worked with a further

1,613

carers who needed additional well-being support.



Information, Wellbeing Support and Guidance

Some of the themes from support provided to carers included: isolation, bereavement, anxiety, hospital appointments and discharge, funding, low-level emotional support, care home issues, contingency planning, hospital admissions and foodbank vouchers.

We had

22,967

incoming and outgoing calls on the carers’ response line.

With regular ‘wellbeing’ calls made to carers during the year, we were able to support their caring role through; increased caring challenges, managing of caring in lockdown, accessing health services and vaccinations, being clinically vulnerable and changing government restrictions.



Exclusive Carer Discounts

Helping carers to save money by offering exclusive carer offers and discounts throughout the county. Over 5,000 carer discount card requests by carers of all ages.

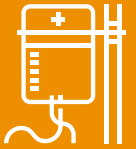


Carer Equipment Service

1,102 referrals were made to this service and over

£66,000

worth of equipment was delivered to carers.



Carer Wellbeing Fund

Accessed by

1,264 carers

to the value of

£426,588



Emotional Wellbeing Service

2,093

counselling sessions took place with

290

carers supported by a team of up to

36

Volunteer Counsellors.

70

carers have been supported by our Emotional Wellbeing Team at Worthing Hospital.

910

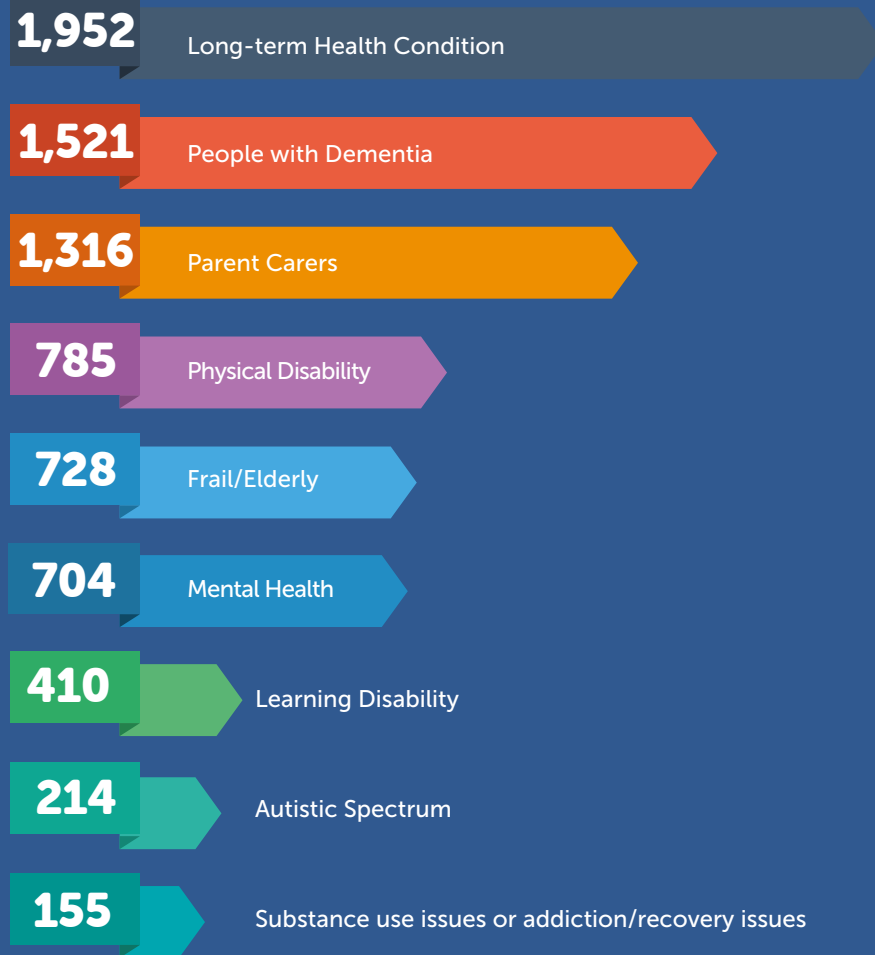
carers have received regular emotional support through our ongoing Call Back Service.



Carer Contact

Who have we worked with?

We support carers caring for those facing several different challenges, each case is taken on an individual basis. Our specialist teams have engaged and supported carers broadly within these categories:



Identifying as a Carer

3,744 new carer registrations – almost 13% increase in the number of carers on our active database.

Shine, supporting 18 – 25 year olds looking after a family member or friend who depends on that help.

Shine supported 62 young adult carers through 1-1 and small group contact via phone, Zoom, email and social media, with wide ranging issues relating to often complex caring roles.

In addition, we supported up to 15 young adult carers through counselling.



Hospital Team

The Hospital Team have been supporting professionals and carers who have been impacted by their family member or friend being hospitalised. The Hospital Team provided over 6,000 carer support hours working six days a week.



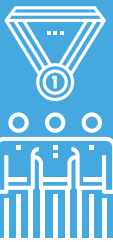
The Hospital Team offer support to all carers attending hospital whether you or the person you care for, is the admitted patient.

We could not do it without you

The Teams at Carers Support

Our outstanding teams at Carers Support meant we were able to continue to support unpaid carers across the county.

The passion and desire to work with carers shone through every day. We proudly achieved the Trusted Charity Mark, a nationally recognised accreditation for voluntary sector organisations, at the start of the year, evidencing our commitment to each other, our funders and the carers we support, by striving to be the best at what we do.



Macmillan Partnership

Supported **184** carers of people living with cancer.

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers evolved with staff to deliver exceptional service to our carers.



The volunteering team developed a telephone befriending service, a regular social call to a carer from a volunteer to check in and chat. Telephone befriending made

286 calls providing

9,195 minutes of social chats

“ I am finding life easier where I felt alone before, now I have something to look forward to each week ”

Carer anonymous

We contacted **47 local supermarkets** in West Sussex, urging them to recognise carers in the protected shopping times allocated to vulnerable groups at the start of the pandemic.



Raising Awareness

Four main campaigns ran throughout the year to highlight the continued support we offered throughout the pandemic:

We are still here for you

We are with you, no matter what

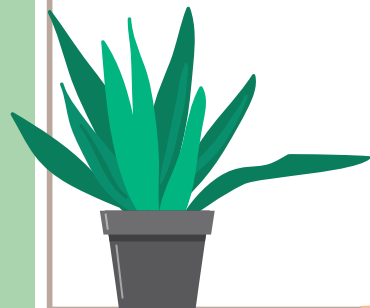
Steps to stay well this winter – which included a mailing to over 16,000 carers

A successful COVID-19 Carer Vaccination Campaign with other Sussex based carer charities which ensured vaccinations were available for all carers from February 2021 onwards.



Online events to connect carers, such as carers week, carers rights day and connecting carers reaching

338 carers in attendance figures.



*The figure from the 2011 Census for West Sussex is 89,000 carers, we know that annually there are more and more carers in this county and the 120,000 figure is our current extrapolated figure as per February 2021. State of caring report from Carers UK June 2020 says that the pandemic has led to an increase in the number of carers by as much as one third taking the number nationally to 13.6m. <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/carers-week-2020-research-report> (accessed 11.02.21)