



Annual Report 2020-21



Improving the quality of life for unpaid Carers in Brighton & Hove since 1988



Honorary President: HM Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Peter Field
Patrons: Caroline Lucas MP & Prof. Saul Becker Provost at University of Sussex

Registered Charity No. 1015728

Registered Company No. 2758481



A word from our CEO

Dear Carers and Supporters of the Organisation,

Welcome to The Carers Centre Annual Report for 2020-21. As with all charities, The Carers Centre was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic throughout the year but the organisation reacted fantastically.

Early on, we identified around 1,200 at-risk households that were registered with us and undertook assertive outreach telephone interventions with them. We worked with the local authority and other voluntary sector agencies to support carers with risk assessments, the organisation of food and personal protective equipment (PPE) deliveries and safeguarding referrals where necessary.

Towards the end of the period, we worked with the Sussex Health Partnership and carers support organisations in East and West Sussex to support the vaccination rollout for carers. Operating an opt-in system, we shared consenting carers' details with the local authority and later the Clinical Commissioning Group to identify those who were eligible for a vaccine. This resulted in over 1000 carers being identified sooner than they would have been via their age group alone.

Digital support was a further element of additional service offered during the pandemic. We sourced and secured grants enabling more than 40 digitally-isolated carers to get an IT device. We also provided training for several carers to use video conferencing software largely thanks to our Reablement Project volunteers.

A special thank you from me goes out to our trustee board. Our Chairperson Vas is a tireless supporter of both me and the charity as a whole. We were delighted Brigid joined the trustee board this year and said farewell to the wonderful Heather. We are lucky to have such a diverse range of skills and experiences amongst the trustees and their drive on new initiatives such as our new Fundraising Strategy will stand us in good stead for years to come.

Most of all, another huge thank you to the incredible carers of Brighton & Hove who make such a difference in our city every day. We look forward to working with you all in the year ahead.

Best wishes,

Tom Lambert

CEO



'Lockdown Through a Lens' Young Carers Project



Photographs by Millie White

THE CARERS CENTRE FOR BRIGHTON AND HOVE LIMITED (LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Designated funds | Total 2021 | Total 2020 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income from: | | | | | |
| Donations, grants and gifts | 3 | 1,672 | 29,209 | 30,881 | 39,646 |
| Charitable activities | 4 | 586,497 | - | 586,497 | 577,119 |
| Investment income - Interest received | | 3,914 | - | 3,914 | 3,315 |
| Total income | | 592,083 | 29,209 | 621,292 | 620,080 |
| Expenditure on: | 5 | | | | |
| Charitable activities | | | | | |
| Activities undertaken directly | | 448,724 | 36,684 | 530,833 | 522,278 |
| Other costs | | 47,519 | 1,680 | 55,821 | 54,997 |
| Total expenditure | | 496,243 | 38,364 | 586,654 | 577,275 |
| Net income/(expenditure) | | 95,840 | (9,155) | 34,638 | 42,805 |
| Transfer between funds | 16, 17 | (1,101) | 421 | 680 | - |
| Net movement in funds | | 94,739 | (8,734) | 34,638 | 42,805 |
| Fund balances at 1 April 2020 | | 434,188 | 124,176 | 342,103 | 900,467 |
| Fund balances at 31 March 2021 | | 528,927 | 115,442 | 290,736 | 935,105 |

All activities are classed as continuing. There are no recognised gains or losses other than those reported on the Statement of Financial Activities.

Achievements and Performance

Performance can be measured against the Strategic Business Plan 2016-21, as follows:

Resources development: All objectives have been achieved. Our Fundraising Sub-Committee has completed the development of a new Fundraising Strategy which will be officially launched at our 2021 AGM

Staff and volunteer development: All objectives have been achieved. The Carers Centre continues to be a “Living Wage” employer to support the campaign locally and nationally

Service development: Changes Ahead (support for carers of those with mental health conditions) has now been established as a Carers Centre project for over a year. As has our Inclusion and Development Post.

Campaigning: Carers have been empowered to contribute to engagement projects which will have direct influence on the approach of NHS decision-makers. Interaction with Caroline Lucas, MP (a patron of our charity) has seen issues facing carers raised at a parliamentary level

Information, publicity and media strategy: All objectives have been achieved; our social media presence continues to grow and we introduced our Linked In page as a new communications channel. Our Carers Hub website now features an easy-to-use translation function. Our work has been featured several times during the year by media outlets such as BBC Sussex Radio and Latest TV

Equality Action plan: All objectives have been achieved. A new post has been established (Inclusion and Development Worker), we now have an Equalities Working Group to monitor progress and our Mind the Gap research has enabled carers from underrepresented groups to outline their needs as we seek to improve engagement with all communities in the city

Monitoring and evaluation: All objectives have been achieved. We have established a new feedback procedure so that carer and stakeholder views are captured centrally and responded to via the appropriate meeting/forum. ‘You said, we did’ articles are then shared directly with contributors and more widely through our communications channels



A word from our Chairperson

What an eventful year this has been with COVID-19 affecting us all. Despite the challenges, we yet again respond and innovate, ensuring we support the carers in the city.

The staff team and volunteers having been fantastic in reaching out to over 2000 carers during the pandemic, working with food partnerships in providing packages to those that needed them and adapting to the online environment to support carers in the city.

I feel immensely proud to be part of this amazing charity, having started by running marathons to raise funds in 2013 to then becoming a trustee in 2014 and in 2016 chairman for the board of trustees.

The charity continues to evolve and adapt to support carers in the city and this will continue as the demand to support for carers will be much needed in the current environment.

I'd like to thank my fellow Trustees for their commitment and support; my appreciation to Tom who has done and continues to do fantastic job as CEO to ensure we continue to thrive as a charity; the young and adult carers team who I see continuously do fantastic work as always, and last but not least, the volunteers who give their time to support the unsung heroes, the unpaid carers in our local community.

Vas Selvaratnam (Chairperson)



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The Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 23 October 1992 and registered as a charity on 17 December 1992.

In 2020-21, the Carers Centre employed a total of 18 staff members (5 full-time and 13 part-time), 6 sessional workers and 78 volunteers (73 during 2019-20). The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Board of Trustees (10 trustees in 2020-21) and is line-managed by the Chairperson of the Board.

Trustees: (who are also Directors of the Company)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Vas Selvaratnam (chair person) | Amy Dickinson |
| Jamie Elliott (treasurer) | Jez Laver |
| Brigid Day (appointed 16/7/20) | Feylyn Lewis |
| Heather Smith (resigned 24/11/20) | Greg Bortkiewicz |
| Jim Pike | Victoria Colwill |
| Tom Lambert (Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary) | |

Our Services

The Carers Centre provides a wide range of services, which are available to any unpaid carers in Brighton and Hove. By the end of the financial year 2020-21, the Carers Centre were 3 ½ years into delivery of the Carers Hub model which provides a 'front door' access point to all carers' support services in the city. Within the 3-tier system, the Carers Centre holds a dedicated phone line – 01273 977 000 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday; and a website – www.carershub.co.uk with online resources and links related to young and adult carers. The Hub is an effective and efficient single entry point for carers to get information, advice, support and services through agreeing a series of pathways with the Adult Social Care Team, Childrens' Services, the Memory Assessment Service, Alzheimer's Society, Crossroads Care and other voluntary sector organisations.



Our artistic workshops delivered in partnership with Create have enabled hundreds of Young Carers to explore their identities through various media and share their creations with peers and family

Representation

In 2020-21, The Carers Centre represented carers at the following partnerships and working groups, with Carer Experts also involved in some of these meetings:

- Carers Strategy Working Group
- COVID-19 Vulnerable People's Local Authority Cell
- COVID-19 Communications and Engagement Group
- Young Carers Strategy Group
- Carers Hub Operational Group
- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- Brighton Chamber of Commerce
- Local Authority Anti-Bullying Steering Group
- Triangle of Care Advisory Group - Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust
- Back on Track Project Steering Group – support for children of alcohol-dependent parents
- Community Works Voluntary Sector
- Reps Group



Carers Engagement

Approx. 3,500 carers engaged with, plus estimated 300+ potential carers or employers via our new Linked In page.

Redesigned our internal feedback procedures so that carers' views are not only captured but actioned and reported on too.

The "Mind the Gap" project involved intersectional work, engaging with members of the Black and ethnically diverse, Gypsy/Roma/Traveller and LGBTQ+ communities. This involved partnership work with Switchboard, TDC, Sussex Interpreting Services and Friends, Family and Travellers. The work was commissioned by NHS England and was designed to examine inequalities within healthcare services experienced by the communities indicated.

In partnership with carers support organisations in East and West Sussex, we were commissioned by the Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups to undertake a research project to gather the experiences of carers pan-Sussex in relation to health and care during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the findings, along with six carer-informed recommendations, were presented at a webinar, which was attended by carers and key decision makers from the NHS, CCG, and local Commissioning Managers for each county. The plenary session that followed prompted a debate and it was encouraging to hear the Research Report described as a 'mandate for change' in improving the health inequalities carers face.

Volunteers

The Carers Centre has a committed team of volunteers. 78 volunteers supported our work during the period including the 10 voluntary members of the Board of Trustees. Our office volunteer works with us regularly to undertake office administrative tasks: updating and maintaining our information library, co-ordinating carer events, producing factsheets and updating our website. Our office volunteer received 6 supervision sessions during the year. We had 1 social work student on a 70-day placement with the Young Carers Project and 2 volunteers supporting the development of our social media.

Reablement Project: This year we have seen a significant increase in volunteer applications and currently have 25 new volunteers who have registered their interest to volunteer with us and 15 of those at some stage in their recruitment process. These include IT tutors, Spanish speaking volunteers and Arts and Crafts volunteers.

Our Services for Adult Carers

Our services for adult carers include the provision of emotional support, information, guidance and peer-support activities to a wide range of carers, including carers of people with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, physical or sensory disabilities and life-limiting illnesses.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, 1788 adult carers received information, support and services from the core Adult Carers Team (1419 in 2019-20). 741 of these were newly referred carers, with 499 of those presenting with a variety of support requirements necessitating a carers contact assessment. These assessments established their eligible needs and formed an intervention plan resulting in onward referrals to both internal and external support projects. In addition, over 1800 anonymous clients (1400 in 2019-20) were advised on specific matters which either did not require registration or where the client chose not to register.

The Carers Hub service delivery model has strengthened our approach to offer carers advice, information and the aforementioned carers contact assessments over the phone and/or email. During this financial year, Carers Hub has made over 21,000 contacts in person and by correspondence providing support, information and advice (16,172 in 2019-20).



Carers Peer Support

The Carers Centre peer support offer had to shift to a weekly, online provision during this period due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Carers receive support to remain emotionally resilient and physically well, both through directed information, and through the impact of shared experience with other carers away from their caring role. During the period, 40 group sessions were organised with 262 carer attendances (548 in 2019-20).

In addition, our regular group for **carers of those with learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorders**. During the period, 8 group sessions were organised with 27 carer attendances. To complement our employer advice service, we were able to secure a small grant in 2020 to develop a peer support group specifically for **working carers**. This provision also had to move online during the period but 16 different individuals attended 12 sessions across the year for a total of 41 attendances.

Carers Reablement Project

This project matches a skilled volunteer with a carer with a view to the carer learning a new skill or rediscovering an old hobby that had been lost due to their busy caring role. Owing to the pandemic, the number of volunteering hours are down from last year, but we still recorded 83 meetings between carers and volunteers that took place either over the phone, on video call or in person.

During the second quarter we launched our plan for the "Remote Reablement Project" and we matched carers and volunteers remotely, either over the phone or on Video call. During this time matches were mainly for IT support. In September, after our socially distanced 1:1 risk assessment had been approved, we also had our first in-person match with a carer and our personal trainer volunteer and we now have other carer and volunteer matches meeting in person.

End of Life Project

The End of Life support project continues to support carers of people with a range of life-limiting illnesses. The Project continues to provide 1:1 support (44 recipients during the period up from 18 in 2019-20). In March 2020, the group also met at the Plot 22 allotment project site for a peer support session. There are plans to resume our previous monthly outreach at the Macmillan Cancer Horizon Centre which has proved to be a useful way of providing face-to-face information and support to carers using the Centre on an ad hoc or appointment basis.



The Project also provides 6 months of support for bereaved carers with the addition of signposting to specialist bereavement services within the City.

Memory Assessment Service (MAS) & Dementia Action Alliance (DAA)

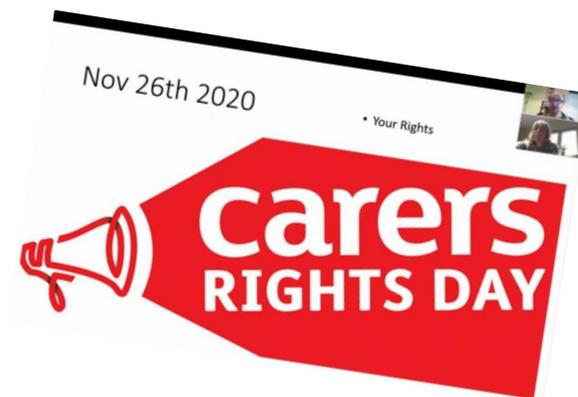
During the period, the Memory Assessment Service Carers Link Worker offered support, information, signposting and help with the assessment process for carers of those living with dementia.

In addition, the Worker offered support to carers who are caring for someone with a diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), ensuring that the caring role for someone with a mild memory problem was still acknowledged and carers assessments accessed.

Campaigning

Carers' Rights Day November 2020

This year we had to move to an online event due to the pandemic. Our focus was on promoting Carers UK's Digital Resource for Carers. We were able to provide a free code for carers to sign up to the website and our Working Carers Lead provided a guide on how to sign up and navigate the site. For those without access to the internet, a selection of the most popular resources from the site were offered to carers by post.



Carers Week June 2020

This year we offered a virtual Carers Festival, running activities on Zoom calls

throughout the week. We ran a total of 14 activities: coffee and chat sessions, a book club, creative writing and some dance and exercise classes. We had support from Reablement volunteers and other organisations in the city as well as Carers Centre staff running individual sessions. 37 carer attendances were recorded at activities during the week



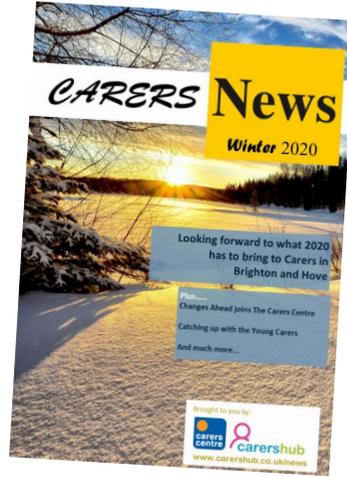
A carers online gallery was created to which both young carers and adult carers submitted paintings, photographs, poems and recipes. A Thank You to Carers poster was available to download off the website to go in windows, and a copy of the poster was included in the online Carers News COVID edition. A postal version of Carers News was created for Carers Week to include carers who may not be on line.



Development Work

Information

Carers News goes out four times a year to over 3000 carers and professionals. The Centre continues to encourage carers to receive the electronic version of the newsletter in order to save printing and postage costs. The Carers Centre also produces a series of factsheets free to carers on a range of topics including respite, transport, community care, bereavement services and returning to employment. Each of the 10 factsheets is updated annually to provide as much up-to-date information to carers as possible. Carers can also get access to information and advice via Carers Hub phone line (9-5; Monday to Friday) and website – www.carershub.co.uk, which posts regular updates, news and activities relevant to the city's carers. Different social media methods, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, have been used to stay in touch with and contact more carers in the City.



Primary Care Work

The role of Primary Care Carers Link Worker is a key part of our efforts to raise carer awareness amongst GP practices, pharmacists and other health sector professionals. We have helped to embed a carers hub referral form within the 2 main database systems used by GPs (carer prescriptions) and been a partner in the development of numerous GP surgery multi-disciplinary team meetings to advocate for carer awareness and support.

In addition, the Link Worker supported the vaccine rollout efforts via the COVID-19 Communications and Engagement Group facilitated by the local authority. Vaccination information relevant to carers was shared with GP practices. Furthermore, information packs have also been issued to 37 GP practices and the 21 healthy living pharmacies in the city.

Employment

The Carers Centre works with employers to support their workers who are also unpaid carers. Raising awareness and offering free online resources are the key focus at the initial stage. Further support is available to those seeking to embed good practice. 72 employers have engaged with the support programme during the period, several of whom attended the Carers Week employer training event. Links were also forged with Brighton Chamber, American Express (a large-scale employer in the city) and the local bus company to improve support options available to working carers.

We are excited to confirm that the post has been expanded from 1 day per week to 2 days per week for the forthcoming financial year. This will enable us to advocate for more carer inclusion within the memory assessment service and strengthen links with relevant voluntary sector agencies.

During the period, 511 carers of those living with dementia or MCI were in receipt of support from The Carers Centre.

Changes Ahead

Changes Ahead had its first full year as part of The Carers Centre. A grassroots organisation set up by carers for carers of those living with a mental health condition, Changes Ahead officially became a Carers Centre project on 1st December 2019. With a strong history of providing 1:1 and peer support for this group of carers, the successful integration of the changes Ahead offer has built upon our ability to provide specialist services.

187 carers accessed support from the service during the year which is understandable given the challenges which the pandemic has brought to those living with mental health conditions and their families. Increasing resources for this provision is a significant target in our newly-developed Fundraising Strategy.

Carer Inclusion Project

Thanks to a generous legacy donation awarded to the organisation during 2018-19, the board resolved to establish a new Inclusion Project for carers with protected characteristics. The donor was a carer from the LGBTQ+ community and having successfully recruited a worker to the new role of Carers Inclusion and Development Worker, we are now able to offer additional outreach support to carers from underrepresented groups.

The project commenced in February 2020 and during the year:

Identification and monitoring of registered carers became much more robust. For example, we now have 299 carers from ethnic minorities registered (183 in Feb 2020) and 71 carers who identify as LGBTQ+ (23 in Feb 2020) plus 5 new carers from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities registered with the service

Internally, an Equalities Working Group now meets bi-annually to embed recommendations and good practice

A monthly LGBTQ+ peer support group welcomed 12 individual carers to 16 sessions for a total of 58 attendances

A translation feature was added to the carers hub website

Our Mind the Gap engagement/research findings were published, giving us valuable insight into the barriers to accessing support for carers from underrepresented groups



Our Services for Young Carers (aged 6—17)

The Young Carers Team aims to support children and young people who care for a member of their family who has a physical or mental health support need, substance misuse issue or sensory or learning disability.

The Team aims to reduce the actual caring role and / or to reduce the impact of the caring role. The first thing we do is try to improve the support provided to the family in order to reduce the reliance on children as carers. In particular we engage with Education, Children and Families Social Care, Adult Social Care, Health and Housing services. We also provide activities and run groups, to enable young carers to enjoy a break and develop their peer support network. Furthermore, the team provides one-to-one emotional support work to build the internal resilience of young carers when they face times of particular stress or transition.

During the period, the Young Carers Team received 133 new referrals (155 in 2019-20) for young carers aged 6-17, and offered information, advice and activities to a total number of 301 young carers (271 in 2019-20).

The Team supported young carers by offering:

Casework and support to young carers and their families to improve the caring role and working in partnership with adult and Children & Families Services around the needs of the young carer and their families

An incredible 129 online group activities for young carers including comic book design, ukulele lessons, hula-hooping and baking. This also includes the continuation of our exciting art projects organised in partnership with Create. Photography was the focus for our Create workshops this year. 301 different young carers accessed these activities (up from 188 last year), taking up a total of 920 places which averages to more than 3 activities per young carer

- * Over 200 free activity packs issued to young carers at Christmas and Easter. This enabled young carers to join in with our online activities live or to feel part of things at any time by sharing their creations with the staff team.
- * 50 young adult carers aged 18-25 received advice and guidance (25 in 2019-20).



Schools work

In the academic year of September 2019 – August 2020 the Schools Worker worked with 18 schools, delivering training and running awareness sessions with pupils or teachers, attending schools conferences and cluster events. The Schools Worker's role includes Identifying young carers through partnerships with schools in the city; building knowledge and awareness of young carers issues and needs, and of the support available from the Young Carers Project (YCP) and supporting in-school support systems for young carers.

240 pupils attended a total of 7 PSHE sessions focused on young carers

480 pupils attended 3 school assemblies delivered by the YCP

6 training sessions delivered to 120 teachers and school support staff to improve the identification of young carers

35 new YCP referrals generated

Awareness raising

For this year's Young Carers Action Day (formally known as awareness day) we ran a social media campaign, supported by our two Student Volunteers at Brighton University. We also held a family event in the evening for our young carers and their families. We had a meeting with Brighton University who are in the process of setting up a Young Adult Carers Awareness event at the University and are in the process of arranging awareness training for both University and Student Union Staff for early in the new financial year.

Throughout the period, young carers reps and our Young Carers Team Manager were active participants in the National Young Carers Voice group, as well as having representation at Brighton Youth Council. Our own Young Carers Action Group continues to meet, with the group making contributions to the organisation's new strategic plan and fundraising strategy.