



Annual Review

2021 - 2022

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Annual Review 2021 – 2022



Dr Neil Churchill, OBE
Chair of the Board of Trustees

A message from the Chair...

The passing of peak-Covid did not bring much relief. Carers told us that the virus had not gone away but remained a fixture in lives which were now also dealing with exhaustion and anxiety over the rapidly rising cost of living. A priority for the charity this year has been to listen to the diverse voices of carers in East Sussex and understand both the persistent and changing pressures that can make it so hard to cope. This included our first in-person conference since the pandemic, For Caring Out Loud, and

I want to thank all those who attended to share their experiences. Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers worked incredibly hard to give carers the advice and support they needed, easing pressures and sometimes averting crises. We were delighted that our work with primary care services in Hastings won a prestigious national award and hope that the approach to supporting carers with multiple needs will be adopted elsewhere in the county. This was the achievement of a strong partnership with High Glades Medical Centre and Hastings and Rother Healthcare, Hastings Old Town Surgery and Churchwood Surgery. This was one example where we turned listening into action and we are in no doubt that we will need to redouble our efforts to meet growing carer needs. As always, we are hugely grateful to our donors and supporters who make our work possible.



Jennifer Twist
Chief Executive

...and the Chief Executive

We exist to ensure no carer is left to care alone. We continued to feel the effects of the pandemic, compounded by the rising cost of living crisis. We have supported carers to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are listened to, including through our new Making Carers Count project, in partnership with Carers Support West Sussex - and the Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove. We have also delivered a wide range of services, from our award winning primary care work in Hastings, to our volunteer-led Carers in Touch project. I would like to thank

our Trustees, staff, volunteers and partners, whose dedication and commitment to supporting carers has made such a difference in the past year.



Our services

In 2020 we acted swiftly in response to measures taken by the Government at the outset of the Coronavirus pandemic; prioritising carers access to our support.

As restrictions lifted in 2021-22 we have moved towards a more blended approach for our services, with both remote and face to face options. We still deliver some online groups, activities and telephone counselling but are now also running in-person groups, drop-ins, and face to face activities and counselling services.

Our Carers in Touch service continues to grow, and provides regular wellbeing calls to carers at risk of social isolation.

Our Carers' Conference, 'For Caring out Loud!' offered an in-person event, alongside seven online workshops and debates.

We retain strong partnerships with health and social care providers, and local voluntary and community sector groups- ensuring ongoing support for carers to have their voices heard, and working together to meet their needs.

We have plans to develop our online services, ensuring accessibility for all carers who need us, including working carers and those who may be more isolated. Alongside these developments, we will also be running more in person groups, activities and events- including from our new local carers centres in Hastings and Uckfield.

"Thanks for your help - a friendly face and listening ear is such a great support in these challenging times"

"I was feeling very isolated and vulnerable. It is such a relief to me that someone else knows about the situation. I really appreciate it."

"I've been beyond impressed with the knowledge, empathy, signposting and support I've received in such a very short space of time. You're all brilliant and such a valuable resource."



Our impact in 2021/22



99% of enquiries

into the Carers Hub
received a response
within 5 working days

Support, advice and guidance



Carers can benefit from one of our Coaching sessions or longer Directions sessions with our Support Workers, enabling them to talk through any issues they may be experiencing and receive tailored support.

This could be around a quick enquiry such as accessing carers respite grants, or discussing a wider range of worries or concerns.

Our Carers in Touch service provides regular wellbeing check-up calls, with a trained volunteer, ensuring carers take time for themselves, have a break and have someone to talk to.

The specialist Time to Talk counselling service offers more in depth emotional support through twelve free sessions with a counsellor, to help carers have dedicated time and space to talk through their feelings. The service is accessible by phone or in person. All our services are focussed on supporting carers' health and wellbeing, and ensuring that their isolation is reduced. We provide a range of support, advice and guidance services through our Carers Hub, which acts as a single point of contact for carers.

"Counselling has helped me keep my sanity under very trying and difficult circumstances. The counsellor has been absolutely amazing"

The Carers Hub is accessible via phone, email and our website. Our specialist staff quickly respond to any enquiries, providing carers with direct support, and signposting to other relevant partners and services across the country.

Supporting diverse carers

Carers from diverse backgrounds are often more hidden, and seldom heard. They may not identify as carers, and can be dealing with very complex caring roles.

In 2021 we secured funding from the Carers Trust as part of a partnership with Carers Support West Sussex and Brighton & Hove Carers Centre, to identify and support carers who are under-represented amongst the community we currently reach.

The Making Carers Count project will help us develop support that will address the barriers, challenges and needs experienced by carers from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

We have also worked with Diversity Resource International (DRI) to help them set up new carers groups for carers from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. DRI's bi-lingual advocates skilfully facilitate the groups and build on the strong community relationships DRI and Care for the Carers have across East Sussex.

Wesley, a carer from the Seaford group said: "My limited English makes it difficult for me to understand information about other services. This carers group is very good for this. It helps me to make new friends. I also want to learn from other carers how to look after my husband. In this group, we can share ideas and knowledge and this is very useful to me."



Katsumi, another group member adds: "I met someone else who has a diverse background and is a carer and it encouraged me in many ways."

Over the next year the project will continue to reach more diverse carers, providing resources and services to support their health and wellbeing and help them in their caring role.



Groups and activities

We provide a wide range of regular countywide groups and an activities programme, to provide a chance for carers to meet and spend time with each other, receive support and share resources.

Our Carers' Information and Advice groups offer people new to the caring role an opportunity to meet one another and access information, advice and support. Groups are facilitated by Support Workers, and guests are invited from relevant services to share useful information. These groups support those new to caring for up to twelve months to build their confidence, resilience and resources. There is also a monthly evening group to ensure working carers have easier access to information, advice and support at a time convenient to them.

Carers' Wellbeing groups are the 'next step' after a carer has attended a Carers' Information and Advice group for twelve months. They are aimed at carers who have been caring for a while and are already connected with services. Carers' Wellbeing groups are led by carers, for carers, with volunteer hosts being supported by a named Support Worker. Carers' Wellbeing groups focus on anything that the group feels would improve their wellbeing, so could be based around activities such as walking, arts and crafts or meeting for a coffee and chat.

310 carers

benefitted from our activities programme in the last year



"Great time with Care for the Carers as always. I was a little hesitant to come as I haven't been out with that many people in a long time. But I didn't need to feel worried, it all felt very natural and well thought out."

Carer who attended Wakehurst Place activity

We also run a range of specialist groups, for carers with specific needs or interests. These include Mental Health carers' groups for carers of people with mental health issues, monthly Making Memories groups for carers and the people they care for living with dementia, and monthly Young Adult Carer groups for carers aged 17-25 years.

Our Young Carers service has grown since its launch in February 2021, and provides a range of groups and activities. The service is designed to give young carers space for time away from their caring role, peer support, as well as opportunities to speak up on the issues affecting young carers. Support has been delivered both online and in person. Online sessions and activities have included mindfulness, drama and photography workshops, and a regular monthly youth club. Our face to face activities included a monthly youth club, and outings such as paddle boarding, Drusilla's trip and paintballing as well as drama and art workshops. We also worked with Young Carers to produce a film explaining what it was like as a Young Carer over the pandemic 'Bursting the Bubble', which was shared widely, as part of the national Young Carers Action Day.

We continued to run our popular activities programme, ensuring it offered a flexible range of both online and in person outings. When restrictions started to lift we quickly began delivering face to face activities again, which was essential for the carers we support, and helped combat the isolation they had been feeling. Our activities included days out, online physical and wellbeing sessions, spa days, meals and walks, gym passes and gift boxes.

59

Young Adult Carers (YACs) are registered on our closed Facebook group

Tools and resources

Through our work, we provide carers with the tools and resources that they need in their caring role. This includes our popular East Sussex Carers Card, which is available to any carer in East Sussex, including young carers and parent carers of children.

The card has multiple functions; as well as offering discounts from a range of local businesses it also identifies carers and enables them to link to an emergency backup plan. We administer two grants on behalf of East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The Healthcare Appointments Respite Grant supports carers to access respite to enable them to attend healthcare appointments, training courses or engagement opportunities.

Carers have access to discounts from a variety of diverse businesses, ranging from food and drink, health, fitness and wellbeing, legal and financial, and retail. We are grateful to all the businesses that continue to be part of the scheme and are proud to support so many local partners to publicly pledge their recognition of carers.



The 'Small Grants for Carers Groups' fund supports set up costs for new groups that directly benefit carers and helps established groups to develop their offer. We were also proud to have been chosen to be part of the Carers Trust funded Time for ME! programme this year, enabling us to provide grants to carers to support their health and wellbeing needs.

"We are delighted to have worked with Care for the Carers for over a decade. Our pharmacy teams throughout Sussex meet and help carers each day and we know what a great organisation Care for the Carers is." – Mark Donaghy, Senior Pharmacist, Kamsons Pharmacy

1,963
carers signed up for the
Carers Card during the year

162
businesses provide discounts
and offers to card holders

94
grants to 81 carers

40%
more grants awarded this
year, than last year

£71,941
of grants

Our Partnerships

Collaboration with a range of partners enables us to raise awareness of caring and empower colleagues from across the health and social care system, and beyond, to identify and support carers.

The East Sussex VCS Carers Network is made up of partner organisations across the county including Amaze, Diversity Resource International and the local hospices. We host the Network and also support the administration of the Small Grants for Carers Services programme, providing support to locally run carers projects. Through these partnerships we are able to develop a network of supportive services for local carers, helping to support carers from a wide range of backgrounds and identify those in caring roles at the earliest opportunity.

We are part of the Sussex Carers Partnership, alongside Carers Support West Sussex and the Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove. We collaborate on research and engagement, ensuring that carers voices are heard on Sussex-wide issues. We deliver pan Sussex communication campaigns on key carers issues such as Covid Vaccinations and Staying Warm and Well over winter. We also run projects to support carers across the three counties, including through the development of digital tools and specialist support for ethnically diverse carers.

As a member of the East Sussex VCS Alliance we are committed to collaborative working, sharing ideas and being an active partner in the transformation and design of public services across the county. On a national level we are also Network Partners of the Carers Trust, and members of Carers UK, collaborating on and supporting national campaigns including Carers Rights Day, Carers Week and Young Carers Action Day.





“I really enjoyed the session as it helped me understand so much more about your organisation but also the wide-ranging issues carers can face.”

Awareness, information and communication

We are committed to raising awareness of carers needs, and how to support them- we do this through a variety of projects, focussed on informing and building a supportive community for carers.

Our 'Building a Carer Friendly Community' programme raises awareness of the valuable role carers' play, their needs, experiences and the challenges they face. We work with local businesses and organisations, supporting them to become more carer-aware, taking into account both carers who access their services, and their own employees who are also carers. Organisations are supported to address obstacles that carers

face in the workplace and do 'small things that can make a big difference' to carers' lives. We also actively reach out to local businesses asking them to sign up to the East Sussex Carers Card and offer discounts to carers.

Our 'Think Carer' Training has been successfully delivered online since the pandemic which has led to an increased demand for these sessions; we have nearly doubled the number of participants this year. We support participants from health, social care, businesses and the community & voluntary sector, with regular open sessions anyone can attend and bespoke training, delivered directly to specific teams and agencies. As part of these initiatives we are grateful to the **286 local Carer Ambassadors** who give their time to promote the needs of carers and the support available.

Through our information and communication network we lead on the local coordination of national campaigns such as Carers Rights Day, Carers Week and Young Carers Action Day. We also undertook several local awareness raising campaigns during the year, including COVID-19 vaccination and Winter Pressures Campaign, in partnership with Carers Centres in West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Our communications include the quarterly CareLine magazine, which is distributed to over 9,000 people by email, online and post. **Our monthly eNewsletter reaches over 3,800 carers and professionals**, focusing on local and national Carers Voices opportunities, campaigns, policy updates and activities.

Our website is the first port of call for carers and professionals who wish to know more about local services for carers, while social media enables us to reach a wide range of diverse carers.



As well as providing information on our services, we share relevant campaigns, partners' services and events and use these platforms to increase awareness of carer's needs, and raise vital funds for our services.

We are continually developing and improving these resources, with plans to grow the information available on the website, its interactivity and accessibility, over the next year.

Engagement and representation

Our commitment to the meaningful involvement of carers in local health, social care and voluntary sector strategic planning is achieved through the Carers Voices Network. This Network is open for any local carer to join and enables them to share their views, experiences and needs, and influence decision making on the issues that impact their lives.



As part of the Carers Voices Network, carers participate in consultations, focus groups and campaigns led by both ourselves, and our partners. During the year, engagement opportunities included a research project exploring carers' experiences of healthcare during the pandemic, co-delivered with the Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove and Carers Support West Sussex.

Our monthly engagement eNewsletter keeps carers, volunteers and professionals up to date with local and national policy, highlights opportunities to influence decision making and raises awareness of issues of importance to carers.

Our Carers Voices events are valued opportunities for carers to explore and share issues important to them, to contribute to shaping services and local strategy and to build their networks.

The events also raise the profile of Care for the Carers' work and builds strong partnerships with colleagues across health, social care and the voluntary sector. In addition to the Annual Carers Voices Conference, our Annual Carers Survey captures carers' experiences and the impact of their caring role on their lives.

“At last I feel someone is listening, understanding and speaks the same language. I don't feel quite so scared about the future now.”

In March 2022, we held our Carers Voices Conference, “For Caring Out Loud!” a hybrid conference spanning a week, with an in-person event followed by a mix of in person and online events and workshops.

The conference included information-sharing workshops to gather carers' views, an online marketplace of local providers and opportunities for carers to socialise and build their networks.

The conference week allowed us to capture a breadth of views on carers' experiences coming out of the pandemic. We also received further feedback from several carers groups, young carers and parent carers.

51 CARERS
attended our Carers Conference, alongside 26 professionals

100% CARERS
who attended the Conference rated the overall experience as good or excellent.

234 CARERS
are part of the Carers Voices Network

Governance and management

Our Board of Trustees are volunteers and also Directors of Care for the Carers. Many of them have their own experiences of caring. During this year the Trustees introduced a new role of Associate Trustee, and were pleased to appoint Natasha Burrows to the role in December 2021. Natasha is also a Young Adult Carer, and an Ambassador for Care for the Carers.

The Trustees set the strategic direction of the organisation, but delegate the day to day management to the Chief Executive. During the year the Trustees focused on ensuring that Care for the Carers' services were flexible and responded to carers' needs, as well as beginning a detailed review of our Business Plan to guide the delivery of the objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan 2020-2025.



Trustees in 2021-22

Chair: Dr Neil Churchill OBE

Vice Chair: Mr Jake Jay

Treasurer: Mrs Susan Lilja

This year we welcomed Mary Barnes, Jane Lawrence, Richard Pearson and Vikki Carruth onto the Board, as well as saying goodbye to our former Chair Chris Raper to whom we are indebted for his dedication, hard work, and support of the Charity. We would like to thank all the Trustees for their service and ongoing commitment to carers.

'For Caring Out Loud' conference

Each year we hold an Annual Carers Voices Conference, which is free to attend for unpaid carers. We captured a breadth of views on carers' experiences, adding to feedback from regular carers groups, young carers and parent carers.



Key themes emerging from the Carers Voices conference were:

- Carers continue to experience difficulties with being recognised as a carer in the health system.
- Access to primary care remains one of the main challenges.
- Lack of support with hospital discharge remains a common experience.
- Many carers reported huge stress levels, continued loneliness resulting from caring during the pandemic and limited support.
- Carers are telling us that ability to take time out from their caring role is crucial and needed even more so since the pandemic with access to support groups and social activities remaining a key priority.
- Increase in Carers Allowance remains a priority for a number of carers.

"Keep reminding those in power that we exist!"
- Carer's message at the Uckfield conference.

We are using the feedback and evidence shared with us to work with partners to influence the services and bring about change. Thank you to everyone who attended, and contributed to the conference.

Our finances at a glance

EXPENDITURE	(£)
Support & Advice	397,875
Groups & Activities	272,550
Involvement (Engagement & Representation)	46,817
Carer Awareness	73,192
Information & Communication	44,268
Tools & Resources	37,846
Raising Funds	33,874
Development	42,802
TOTAL	949,224



INCOME	(£)
Donations and Gifts	53,263
Grants	1,047,075
Other Income	1,535
Investments	124,603
TOTAL	1,226,476

FUNDRAISING	RAISED (£)
Corporate	7,961
Trusts	143,480
Statutory grants	26,466
Individuals	2,477
Community	8,789
Legacies	34,934
TOTAL	227,107

Care for the Carers was in a good financial position at the end of 2021-22, with cash balances of £834,005 and reserves of £2,359,273.

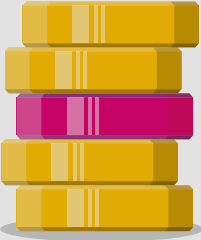
The main funding sources of regular income this year continued to be grants and donations.

Grant funding increased by £260,467 to £1,047,075, and this increase can mainly be attributed to external funding, which we were very grateful to receive as it enables us to deliver additional services to support carers and improve carers opportunities. Income from donations decreased, by £71,152, to £53,263 and this decrease is due to the reduction in Covid-19 funding which supported our work and Carers during the pandemic.

The year end result is a surplus of £267,051.

Our fundraising strategy is achieving a growth in funding streams, enabling Care for the Carers to introduce new sources of income and move away from reliance on one main funding stream. The contract to deliver the East Sussex Carers Centre, jointly funded by ESCC and NHS East Sussex CCG, remains secure and the charity's largest contract. However this is now complemented by several additional multi-year contracts, as a result of Trustees recognising the inherent risk in working with one main income stream, and continuing to lead a strategy to diversify our funding and reduce reliance on statutory funds.

We have budgeted a deficit for the coming year 2022-23, however, we expect to mitigate most of this forecast deficit thanks to the generous support of a range of funders.



1 in 5
of our services are
funded through
donations

Fundraising update

We are committed to raising funds to support carers, and the services we deliver. We continue to grow our fundraising, and raise money from new sources.

The funds we raise enable us to respond to carers' needs by providing specific projects, or one-off wellbeing events, which complement the existing services available locally. Several of our services are entirely voluntary funded including our Young Carers service, specialist dementia groups 'Making Memories', and the Activities programme.

Over the past year we have developed relationships with local and national funders and grown the range of support delivered through voluntary funding. After a successful response to our emergency COVID 19 appeal last year, we have built on relationships with partners such as The National Lottery Community Fund, securing a multi-year grant to establish new carers centres in Uckfield and Hastings.

Every penny raised and donated makes a real difference to the lives of local carers.

Thank you...

We are grateful to the following funders for their continued commitment to our Young Carers Service; the Masonic Charitable Foundation, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Arnold Clark Community Fund, the Homity Trust, Tesco Bags of Help in Uckfield, Crowborough and Hastings and Waitrose Community Matters in Hailsham. We have also benefitted from the support of Sainsburys, The Beacon, ASDA in Eastbourne and Waitrose in Uckfield.

We also thank the following community groups for their support over the last year; Seaford Youth Forum, Rotary Club of Senlac, Royal Eastbourne Golf Club, Firle and Beddingham Women's Institute, Hastings Winkle Club, Eastbourne Quizzers, and in particular Nick Law and everyone at Eastbourne Sovereign Rotary Club, for selecting us as their Charity of the Year.

We are also hugely grateful to our fabulous individual fundraisers and donors, including Barbara and Hazel, Michelle, Sheelagh, Robert, Sarah, Rosemary, Pauline, Carolyn, Lynda and Susan.

Babs and Hazel Skydive for Carers!

This year local carer Babs, and her granddaughter Hazel took on a daring challenge for us, raising a fantastic £500 to support carers.

Babs explains why she decided to skydive for Care for the Carers:

"My granddaughter, Hazel, has wanted to do a skydive since she was 12 and asked me to do one with her. I agreed, never thinking it would actually happen, and come around so quickly!"

We decided to support Care for the Carers because they have helped me as a carer, when I 'gradually' became a full time carer for my parents, and eventually also my partner, who developed Alzheimer's. I didn't realise the toll it can have on your mental and physical health and how your whole life is put on hold whilst caring. Care for the Carers supported me massively, introducing me to other carers, providing a network of support, and helping me realise I was not alone. Hazel and I raised money for them to highlight to others their existence and help them continue their magnificent work."

"It was a fantastic experience and I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone thinking of doing something amazing. HAHA, I never thought I'd be saying this!" - Babs

Hazel says "I've been wanting to do this skydive for ages, I can't believe my Nan agreed to do it with me! She has been a carer for a long time and I know how much Care for the Carers have helped her, so I'm really happy we can help them as well."



Volunteering update

Growing our volunteer base to enable us to support carers has been a focus throughout this year.



One of our most successful projects has been Carers in Touch. A group of trained volunteers make weekly calls to carers who are in need of a friendly chat and listening ear.

“**This has been an extremely rewarding experience and I will take away many fond memories of times spent with both carers and those who call them.**

– Volunteer for Carers in Touch

Throughout the ongoing lockdowns and beyond many carers have struggled with isolation and loneliness. The calls they receive from the volunteers allow them a brief period of respite from their caring responsibilities and a chance to chat about themselves and their interests. Volunteers and carers have shared a range of

fascinating conversations including history, travel, cooking, gardening and pets. The calls also allow carers to be signposted to our other projects and support as well as to partners, and events for carers.

“**When you first called I did not want to talk to you, or even say how I feel, I have not been able to open up and really talk and you have given me the chance to do that.** – Carer who received support from Carers in Touch

Over 150 carers have enjoyed calls from the Carers in Touch team of volunteers over the past year, and have benefited from the contact – knowing that someone is there to listen to them and find out how they are.



We would like to say a big thank you to all of our Carers in Touch volunteers, and those from other projects- including counsellors, wellbeing hosts, young carer and event volunteers; we could not deliver our support without you.

Carers in touch volunteer

Lauren is 70 years old and lives in Seaford. She spoke to us about her experience volunteering for Carers in Touch, our telephone support service.

“I had been volunteering for a dementia support service and had to stop because of the pandemic. Then, during lockdown, my daughter suggested that I contact Care for the Carers, who were looking for volunteers for their Carers in Touch service. I could volunteer from home, as it is over the phone. After training, I began calling carers for two hours/week.

Carers tell me about their problems and, if they need extra support, my role is to refer them back to the Hub for one of the Support Workers to contact them. Some carers are desperate and at the end of their tether. Others might want to talk about the old days and their life experiences.

At the beginning of a conversation, they may feel there is no change since we last spoke – then, by the end, there is a lightness in their voice.

I think the carers I speak with appreciate the call and enjoy chatting about themselves, as they might get little feedback from the person that they care for.

Carers can feel isolated and lonely, so if I have made a difference to one person's life, that is great. It is important that they know that someone cares how they are, and that they give themselves that special time. I have so much admiration and I am in awe of many of the carers I speak with.”



“If I have made a difference, albeit a small one, I feel good about it. I wanted to do something worthwhile at home; this is perfect for me.”

“Thanks very much for all your help, it’s been brilliant. Things are really looking up and your help has really improved things.”



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