



Caring through Covid-19

Impact Review 2020





“

Your advice has been amazing, caring is very hard at the best of times but at least we know you are there to help

Our grateful thanks to all the Carers whose words and images feature in this review. The quotes and case studies used throughout come from written feedback provided by Carers and from case studies submitted by our partners. Please note, the Carer quotes shown on or alongside Carer images should not be attributed to the people in the images.



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Our thanks to Carers, partners and funders.

A message from our CEO



The infographic overleaf documents the new services Forward Carers and our partners created to help Carers navigate the challenges caused by Covid-19.

Throughout the report, you can read all about our services during the pandemic, and the impact of our support on Carers' lives.

I write this introduction on the day the UK launched its Covid-19 mass immunisation programme. It is from this position of hope and pride that I want to reflect on the year. While the Carers amongst us have faced huge challenges and sadly a great deal of loss, it would be wrong to reflect only this and not the incredible love and determination shown by Carers.

In March 2020, many of us with a vulnerable family member become a Carer overnight, with the number of Carers across the UK increasing by up to 50 percent. We saw countless examples of friends and neighbours stepping in to provide informal help for Carers and their loved one – a shining example of what can be achieved when our communities take Carers into their hearts. And so, I am delighted to share that this year we formally launched our Carer-friendly Communities programme that will build upon the nation's greater understanding and respect for the Caring role and provide support and training to help all organisations become carer-friendly (page x).

In the following pages, you will find an overview of the changes and challenges the pandemic brought to Carers' lives and the ways we worked to provide the support to keep Carers going. While much of the world as we knew it ground to a halt, Carers didn't stop for Covid-19, so neither did we. I am incredibly proud of and grateful to the Forward Carers Team and all our Partners for all they have achieved this year. We innovated to deliver new services in response to the new challenges Carers faced and we adapted, finding creative ways to continue delivering our ongoing support to Carers. We were delighted to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of our support to the local community during the pandemic.

Looking to the year ahead, we are aligning our social objectives with our environmental responsibility, we're a Company with a big heart so we plan to be kinder to our planet by reducing our carbon footprint. With Covid-19 exposing deep rooted health inequalities we will continue to develop additional services to meet the needs of Carers from diverse communities (see page X).

Simon Fenton
CEO Forward Carers

Birmingham Carers didn't stop during Covid-19, so we didn't either

During the pandemic, we supported Carers so they could continue caring for their loved ones



6654

phone check-ins made to Carers



1690

Carers Cards issued so Carers can access support in the community



2638

New Carers Registered



523

Carer Wellbeing Budgets helped Carers to meet their health and wellbeing outcomes



£67,000

in Emergency payments helped 335 Carers



1486

Statutory Carers Assessments completed



7686

Carers sent 27 info-mails



4,000

Carers received text information about Covid-specific support



175

online groups reduced Carer isolation

We are Forward Carers

Forward Carers is a West Midlands based Carer and family support social enterprise and Community Interest Company. We pride ourselves on making a real difference to the lives of people caring for elderly, frail, sick or disabled family members through working in partnership. We power Birmingham Carers Hub, a partnership of not-for-profits, funded by Birmingham City Council, BSOL CCG and the Birmingham Children's Trust; Work in partnership with leading charities and social enterprises to deliver projects that add real value to Carers' lives; Commission specialist Carer Projects that meet the needs of Carers from diverse communities; And we build Carer Friendly Communities across the West Midlands.

As well as offering support to Carers direct, we also advise and support organisations such as public body commissioners, providers and employers, in the following areas: Statutory Carer's Assessment; Outcome-focused partnerships; Case management systems; Carer quality of life tracking; Marketing including website design, digital marketing including growing online capability; Carer health facilitation and Corporate wellbeing.

As a Carer-friendly employer, we take our responsibilities to our Carer staff seriously which is reflected in the flexible support we provide. We are an award-winning social enterprise and committed to creating 'Carer-friendly Communities'.

Reporting Back

Last year's goal:

To convert to a Community Interest Company to show greater transparency and accountability to our community.

This year's goal:

This year we are proud to have become a Community Interest Company committed to reinvesting our profits and assets to improving the wellbeing of unpaid Carers.

Thank you for the amazing things that you are doing for Carers of Birmingham and others! [The lady I spoke to] asked how everything was and I genuinely felt she was interested in my well-being, which goes a long way. I'm always the one who puts on a brave face and no one really asks how I actually am, I always get asked how my dad is... I just wanted to thank you as a company...



Our Social Enterprise Mark accreditation demonstrates that we meet our objectives to achieve real change for Carers

Get in Touch

If you are a funder, commissioner, provider, employer or Carer and would like to find out more about the work of Forward Carers CIC then please contact us at info@forwardcarers.org.uk

We Achieve Our Impact In Partnership

In 2020, we grew our network of partners, bringing 9 new delivery partners on board. We work closely with our 22 delivery partners to provide a Carer support service we are all proud of.

We pride ourselves on our fair working principles, from providing training and guidance on service delivery and database management, to prompt payment of invoices for work done. We believe the best outcome for Carers is achieved by partnering with a range of funders, agencies and organisations to deliver targeted support and services that improve Carer wellbeing. Our partners reflect the diverse communities across Birmingham, so we can reach every Carer who needs us with the support they need. Find out more about our Partners



Our thanks to Selly Oak Neighbourhoods Network Scheme (NNS) for co-funding our fantastic Carers Hub space at Touchbase Pears, Selly Oak (pictured). The space provides a space for local Carers to receive one-to-one support and information and gather in Carer Groups.

Our Funding Partners

We are incredibly grateful to our funders Birmingham City Council, Birmingham and Solihull CCG, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, BVSC and the National Lottery Community Fund; the Better Care Fund (NHS) and the Children's Trust. Throughout this review, you can read how our funders have enabled Forward Carers and our partners to significantly improve the wellbeing of Carers across Birmingham.

Reaching all Carers

We contract with organisations whose expertise is in the communities they serve. We deliver services in over 10 languages that reflect the client population, and our partnership model gives delivery partners the flexibility to develop services that meet community needs. The Carers who use our services reflect the demographic make-up of Birmingham

Our Impact: Social Return on Investment:

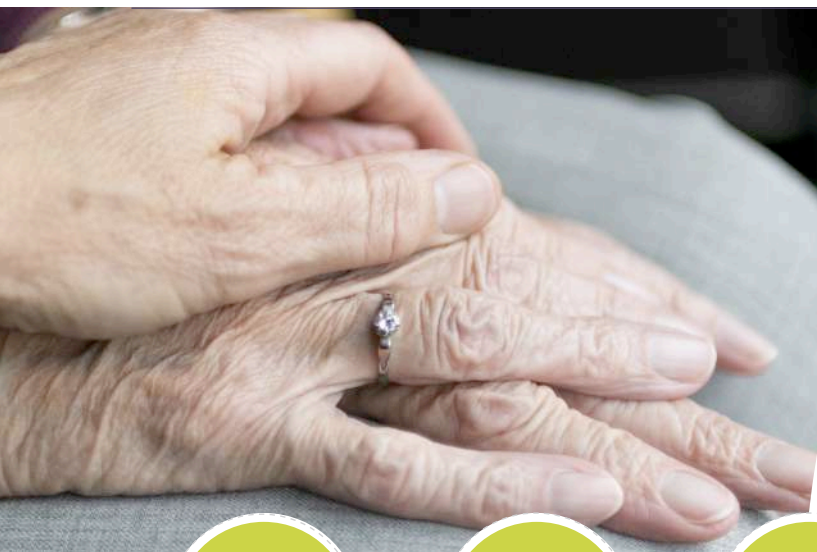
For every £1 invested in Forward Carers, £8.89 is saved by social care. (that's a total saving of up to £22.05m each year!)*

Without our wellbeing support and services, many Carers would need extra help. Our package of Carer support contributes a substantial cost saving to the NHS, facilitates increased economic contributions from Carers who remain in work, and reduces statutory costs for funded care and support. And, most importantly, improving Carer wellbeing helps Carers continue in their valuable role, happily and healthily.

*based on Adass and Carers UK methodology

Reaching all Carers bubble – can you change the word 'organisations' to 'not-for-profits' and change the bubble title to 'Reaching diverse Carers'

Why we Care for Carers



The Scale of Caring

As the population continues to grow and age, many of us will find ourselves in a caring role at some point in our lives. And for some of us, we may find ourselves in a situation where we are cared for by others. The contribution that Carers make in terms of their time and resources is almost equivalent to the annual spend on the NHS. We simply can't afford not to care for Carers.

642,257

The number of Carers in the West Midlands before the pandemic

50%

increase in Carers since the start of the pandemic

1 in 4

houses in Birmingham is home to a Carer

x2

In 2020, the number of Carers was double that in 2011

1 in 7

employees juggles work with a caring role

The Health and Wellbeing Impact of Caring

As the number of Carers increases and the amount of hours dedicated to the caring role grows, Carers are at increased risk of reaching crisis point. Without significant emotional, practical, financial and workplace support Carers would reach breaking point, rupturing families and risking our health and social care system. That's why we care for Carers.

98%

of Carers said their health had been affected by their caring role

33%

of Carers reported they don't work because of their caring role

47%

of Carers experience financial difficulties as a result of their caring role

77%

of Carers feel they don't have enough social contact

* Carer responses to 2020 Survey of Adult Carers in Birmingham

The Social Costs of Caring

The UK's army of unpaid Carers contribute so much to our society. Carers carry the majority of the caring burden, not doctors, professionals or the health and social care system. When Care breaks down and Carers' health is compromised, it comes at a high cost to our society, not just to Carers.

£57 billion*

Unpaid Carers provide social care valued at £57 billion

£22.2 billion**

The amount spent on social care by Councils

£37 billion***

the costs to the state of Carer health issues and lost income, Caring isn't 'free'

£8.89

For every £1 spent on Forward Carers, £8.89 is saved by social care

* ONS Social Care Cost of Caring

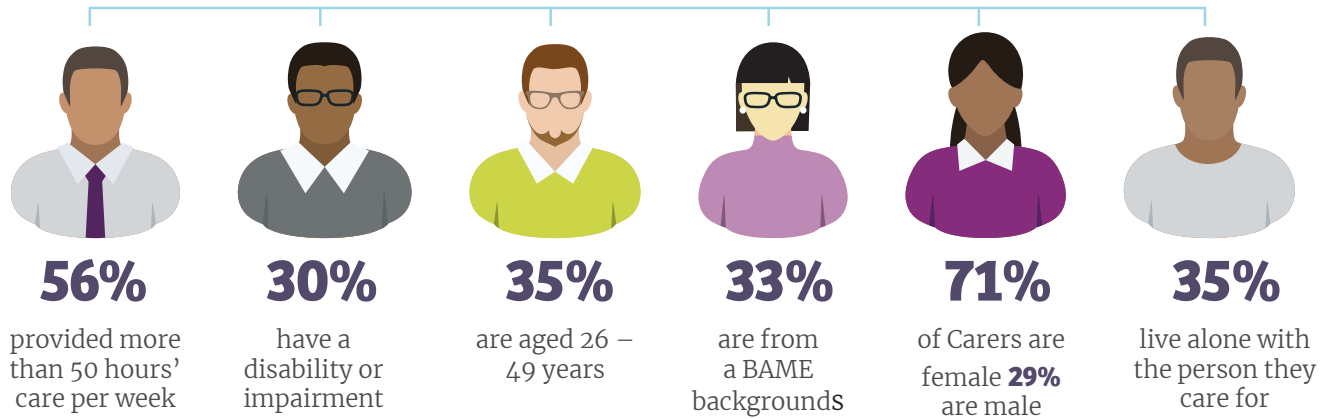
** [Social care 360: expenditure | The King's Fund](#)

*** [Unpaid care isn't free - NEF Consulting](#)

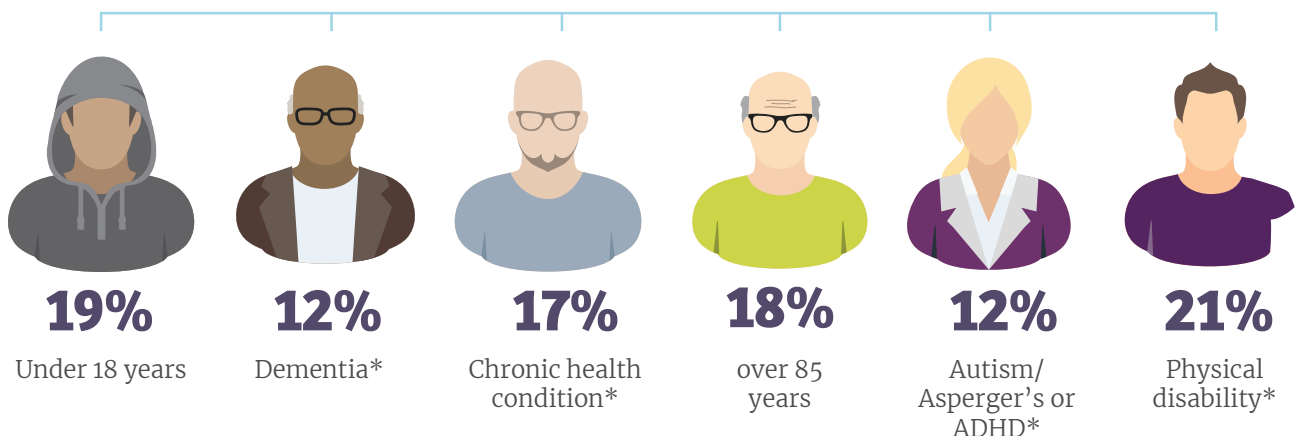
Who are the Carers we Support?

Carers come from all ages and backgrounds and are as diverse as the people they care for. Of the 18,733 Carers registered with us:

Who are Birmingham's Carers? *



Who are the people they care for?



* This includes primary (the reason care is required) and secondary health conditions of the people who Carers registered with us support

What do Carers do?

Caring isn't simply defined by personal care or physical assistance, it's any combination of emotional and practical support, ranging from a couple hours per week to round-the-clock care. For the many who live alone with the person they care for, this it can be an all-encompassing role That's why we care for Carers.



Our Services



We provide Advice and Information for Carers

P 11



We create Carer Friendly Communities

P 12-17



We power Birmingham Carers Hub

P 20-29



We deliver Ageing Better projects

P 30-33



We help Sandwell residents Home from Hospital

P 34-35



We commission specialist Carer Projects

P 36-41



We Provide Information and Advice for Carers

The pandemic has been incredibly difficult for many, but the challenges facing those caring for a loved one, are ten-fold. We stayed in daily contact with our partner agencies including local authorities and NHS staff to make sure we had the most up-to-the-minute information to help Carers stay safe, well and informed. We developed the Coronavirus Advice for Carers web page, so Carers had access to all the key information they needed.



forwardcarers.org.uk

47,930 people visited our website

11,625 Carers visit our Coronavirus advice pages



@forwardcarers

999 followers

30,833 impressions per month



forwardcarers.org.uk/news/

7,686 people receive our regular Carer Update emails

Emailing Carers

We increased the number of emails sent to Carers in 2020 to keep Carers informed about Covid-19 and the support available to them during this very challenging time.

I just wanted to say thank you for keeping in touch via carers update during this pandemic and I have found this and your resources most helpful.

Events for Carers

The annual Carers Week and Carers Rights Day provides an opportunity to amplify the voices of Carers and raise awareness of the support and entitlements available to Carers. This year's events were delivered online.

COVID-19

Really looking forward to all the online content - as a Carer that works part time, juggling my roles means that in previous years I've not been able to attend many events, so this new way of doing things makes it accessible to me, I do hope this continues going forward in future years



If you are a Carer or know someone who is, please visit our website at: forwardcarers.org.uk or call the Birmingham Carers Hub Info & Advice Line on 0333 006 9711

Creating Carer Friendly Communities

In 2020, we launched our mission to help communities across the West Midlands to become Carer Friendly, a place where we all open our eyes and hearts to the lives of Carers. We believe great things happen when communities come together

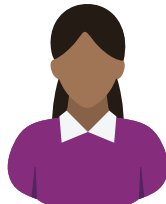


Carers need support from the community because:



77%

of Carers report they have don't have enough social contact



25%

of Carers say don't have support or encouragement from other people



47%

of Carers are facing financial difficulties as a result of their caring role



1 in 7

employees juggle paid work with their unpaid caring role

We help communities to become Carer Friendly by delivering the:

Carer Friendly Communities recognition scheme

Carer Friendly Card

Carer Friendly Business Awards

In 2020, we launched Carer Friendly Communities

22

Organisations joined Birmingham's Carer Friendly Community

1690

Carers registered for their Carers Card

53

organisations were nominated by Carers in the Carer Friendly Business Awards

Organisations and groups who join their Carer Friendly Community benefit from

Promotion of their organisation or service to over 15,000 Carers

Tools, tips and training to better understand Carers

Happier, healthier, more productive staff

We Create Carer Friendly Communities

Over half of us will become a Carer at some point in our life. With support and encouragement from those around us at work, leisure and in the community, we will all be able to balance caring for our loved ones with our jobs, volunteering work, social connections and hobbies.

IMPACT DRIVEN

In 2020:

- 13** Organisations became Carer Friendly
- 4** Organisations became Carer Aware
- 5** Organisations became a member of the highest recognition level, Making a Difference

Did you know

In in 7 workers in the UK are also in a caring role. Each year, millions of Carers give up work unable to balance both roles, at a significant cost to themselves, the economy, and your business. With the peak age for caring between 40 - 60, these are often the most experienced staff. We help employers to support their workforce, so staff in a caring role are happy, healthy and productive.

As a social enterprise and Community Interest Company, we prioritise people over profits. We reinvest any surplus funds into achieving our purpose, to improve Carer wellbeing. The Carer Friendly Communities scheme has been funded through this reinvestment, to make the greatest impact on Carers' lives.

What would life be like in the UK's first Carer Friendly?

Carers would get flexible working hours from employers, specific and knowledgeable support from the GP, the opportunity to do the weekly shop during 'inclusive hours' and they might get a coffee at a discounted price or reduced entry at local attractions, in recognition of their role. Feeling understood and valued in the community and at the workplace leads to healthier, happier Carers and families.



**Carer
Friendly
Communities**

Become Carer Friendly today!

Any business or organisation that wishes to support Carers can register as Carer Friendly and demonstrate they understand and value Carers. Click the logo above to find out more about the benefits of supporting the Carers in your community and/ or workforce

Carer Story: Neil

Working Carers juggle unpaid care with paid work. When employers make small changes to support Carers, it can make all the difference.

Neil has been caring for his dad and brother since his mother passed away a few years ago. Neil works for Marks and Spencer, who deliver a Staff Carer Support scheme in store, meaning that steps have been put into place to ensure Neil can be available for his brother and sibling for medical appointments. Neil can keep his mobile phone with him during working hours and access support when needed. This means that Neil can focus on his job, knowing he is available if needed. Neil values the support and is happier and relaxed in his role, resulting in a positive and happier member of staff.



Reporting Back

Last year's goal:

To work with businesses to become 'Carer-Friendly'

There are lots of benefits to UHB as an employer to better understanding our staff who are Carers, it lets us know what support we can put in place, where to put it and at what time. It can inform what training we want to have, it can inform our conversations with HR and Occupational Health colleagues. Ultimately, our hope is by engaging with this agenda, our staff who are Carers will stay with organisation for longer and we'll benefit from the diversity that they bring to the organisation.

Jeff Bryan, Inclusion and Wellbeing Training Development Manager at the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. UHB is a Carer Aware organisation, part of Carer Friendly Communities

Carer's Card

In 2020, we launched our fantastic Carer's Card. The card provides a simple way for Carers to verify their role; is printed with 'in case of emergency details' for peace of mind that should anything happen to them, their emergency contact will be informed and can step in to support their cared-for; and provides access to unique discounts and benefits for Carers.



Reporting Back

Last year's goal:

To develop a Carers recognition and discount card

Invaluable

The Carer Card was invaluable for Carers during the pandemic as it provided a simple way to evidence their caring duties and their right to be out during lockdown.

I would like to thank you for my own personal card. I am the Carer for my son who travels nowhere independently. The lockdown caused us terrible problems, we queued for hours at a time for a shop only to be told only one person could enter, so we had to go back home. N. has epilepsy, anxiety and learning difficulties amongst other things, so couldn't be alone and this was causing me to be anxious as well. I found out about the card online and now use it to prove who I am, it has helped everywhere and with appointments and outings no end. With this next Lockdown I shall be using the card every time we go out.

Feedback from a Parent-Carer, November 2020

Carer Story: Mustafa

For many Parent-Carers, the weekly food shop during the pandemic became a stressful experience for their loved ones, due to long queues and waiting times outside the supermarkets. Mustafa struggles with being separated from his Mum and his condition makes waiting extremely challenging. Fortunately, by showing her Carer's Card, Shazia was able to quickly enter the store, grab a few things and return to a relaxed son waiting in the car with his dad, who would otherwise have been frustrated, angry and upset. Something as simple as a card, made shopping a cinch.

Carer Friendly Business Awards

The Carer Friendly Business Awards are part of our 'Carer-Friendly' vision for Birmingham. All nominations are made by Carers and celebrate the organisations and businesses, charities, groups, retailers, managers, and staff who are doing their bit to make a real difference for their Carer employees, staff, customers, or clients. This year saw the second annual awards take place as a virtual awards ceremony.



Carer Friendly Business Award

Hair by Shabnam



Carer Aware Business Award

Nicholls Brimble Bhol



Make a Difference Business Award

Dr King, St. Heliers Medical Practice; Gordon Strachan, BCC



Carers Champion Business Award

Jennifer Addo, South City College Birmingham



Covid-19 Business Award

Rosie Barker, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Case Study: Carers Champion

Congratulations to Jennifer Addo, Head of School for Plumbing, Gas and Air Conditioning at South and City College Birmingham, who was nominated by a colleague:

"When struggling with my child's mental health and my own anxiety due to his condition, my line manager Jennifer, gave me advice and allowed me time to sort out his issues. As a Carer who was overloaded with my child's issues, her advice and compassion made a big difference to me".



Carers Champion

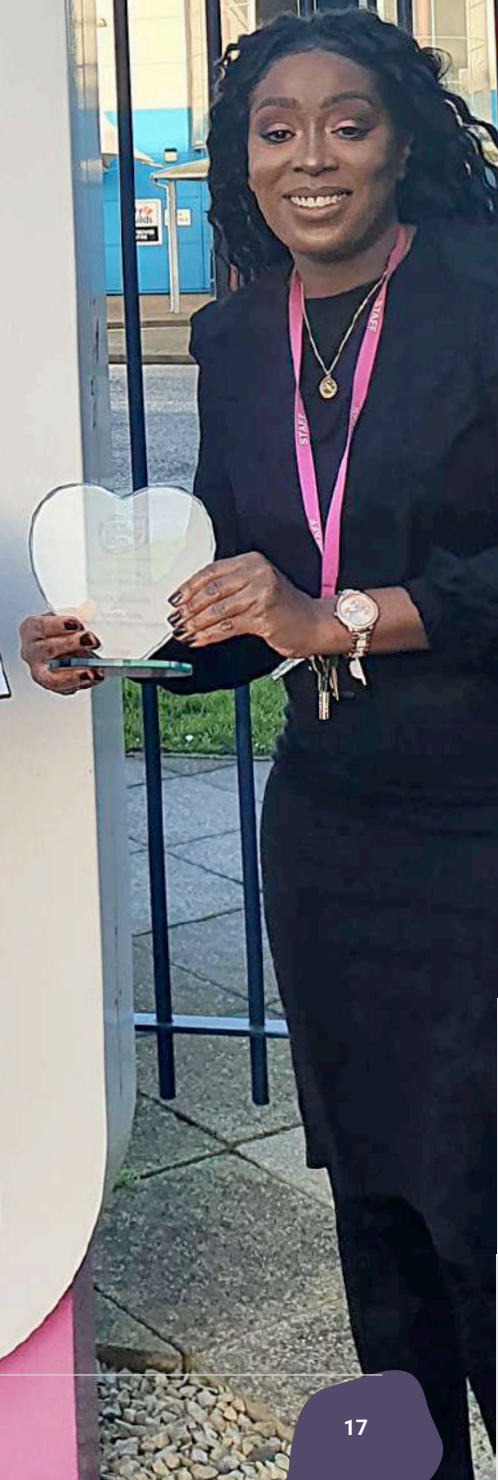
Jennifer's actions demonstrate the huge impact that simple awareness and understanding of the caring role, can have when a Carer is struggling to balance work and home-life.



Going forward I hope to lead the college, along with working with other dedicated organisations, in working with Carer Friendly Communities to help make Birmingham the first Carer-friendly City.

Jennifer

SOUTH & CITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM



Jennifer Addo, Head of
School for Plumbing, Gas
and Air Conditioning at
South and City College
Birmingham,

Birmingham Carers Hub: 2020 in Numbers



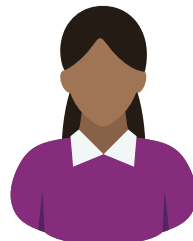
Forward Carers CIC powers Birmingham Carers Hub to provide information, advice, support and wellbeing services to Carers across Birmingham, so that families stay healthier and happier together, for longer. Birmingham Carers Hub services are delivered by a partnership of grassroots, non-profit organisations based in the communities they serve.

Support and Advice for Carers



4232

individual Carers supported



2638

new Carers registered,
1486 Carer Assessments undertaken



1549

Carers contacted our specialist helpline and partners

Carer Emergency Response Service



1156

Carers registered with CERS in case of an emergency



15

emergency call-outs when Carers faced a crisis



157

planned sittings so Carers could attend important appointments

Improving Carer wellbeing



6654

Safe & Well check-in calls made to 2966 Carers



2338

Carers attended 284 online groups



7 out of 10

Carers had better overall wellbeing after our support



Health Liaison Services



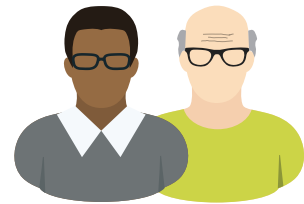
60

health services helped to improve Carer identification and support



1

Partner in Care card co-produced, so Carers are valued as partners in care when their loved one is in hospital



37

Carers whose loved ones were in hospital were supported by our two Carer Co-ordinators

Empowering Carers



193

registrations for our core training sessions



250

Young Adult Carers and kin supported



4

partners provide specialist support for Parent-Carers

Financial support for Carers and families



> £3m

the amount claimed in welfare and benefits entitlements with our help



£332,400

in Wellbeing Budgets distributed to 1354 Carers



£67,000

in Emergency Payments distributed to 335 Carers

We Power Birmingham Carers Hub

I cannot thank you enough for all your support. A light is now being shone in my days of darkness.

Helping Carers Stay Safe and Well

Safe and Well Check-ins

COVID-19

We developed a Safe and Well telephone check-in service, to see how Carers were coping during the pandemic and to find out what support they needed. We made priority contact with the most vulnerable Carers. Our 6654 calls to 2966 Carers helped us identify that Carers were struggling financially and practically, so with funds from Birmingham City Council, we set up a new Emergency Payments scheme, helped Carers access free items of free PPE and provided regular text updates to 4,000 Carers.

Carer Groups & Wellbeing Activities

The pandemic meant we had to quickly develop and launch new ways to help Carers stay connected to prevent isolation and loneliness. We ran 284 online groups attended by 2338 Carers, supporting people that care for someone with a diagnosis of dementia, brain injury, mental health, learning disability or for Parent-Carers, Young and Young Adult Carers. Helping Carers to connect and allowing us to share news and information about support and services.

Carer Group Case Study: Zoom at Noon

The Carers Zoom at Noon monthly support group started as a space to share challenges and anxieties around Covid-19, but ended with Carers sharing the vegetables they had grown, cakes they had baked and new hobbies they had started, becoming a place of laughter and warmth. We learnt that some Carers actually preferred to meet in a virtual group as it saves them precious travel time.

We also launched a Facilitators Group, bringing together support group leaders from across the city to share learning, ideas and best practice on ways to have the biggest positive impact on Carer's lives.



IMPACT DRIVEN

I was a little nervous about joining Zoom at Noon and wondered how it would all work. Georgina is so welcoming and supportive, everyone gets a chance to speak and share news and concerns, sometimes we talk about our caring roles and other times about things that make us happy (mainly food). As a Carer, support via zoom is one of the positives to come out of all of this, being able to drop in for an hour is a perfect option for me in my caring role

Wellbeing Activities Case Study: Barefoot Yoga

Barefoot Birmingham offers free yoga sessions to Carers who are registered with Birmingham Carers Hub, including the 'Carer Life Spa' run by Kam Bola (pictured). Yoga is perfect for Carers as it has the power to transform the body and the mind by reducing stress, improving sleep, energy levels and increasing vitality. Classes are currently delivered online:



It's been a hectic morning and I was dashing between hospital appointments and wasn't sure I'd be able to join the class - but after last week, I really wanted to. So....I pulled into a car park, turned off the engine, put the play list on, adjusted my seat and did as much of the class as I could sitting in the car!

Carer Feedback

At 10.55 my jaw was clenched, I was stressed and my shoulders were hunched towards my ears. An hour later and I'm breathing slowly and evenly, am aware of my body and feeling the benefit of the stretches across my shoulders, my chest and in my upper back.

Carer Feedback

Information and Advice

Carers Assessments

All Carers caring for an adult are entitled to a statutory Carer's Assessment which offers them the chance to discuss their strengths and identify any gaps in support. Advisors explain what support and services are available via Birmingham Carers Hub and partners as well as providing referrals or signposting to external services. We undertook 1486 Carer's Assessments this year.

Thanks very much for going through the Carer's Assessment with me today, you've given me some very useful information to think about. Thank you so much for listening and the information you gave me will be very useful.

Carer's Story: Anthony & Rohalia

In September 2019, Rohalia suffered a bleed on the brain leaving her with communication difficulties, immobile and unable to look after herself.

During Rohalia's rehabilitation at Moseley Hall Hospital, Headway Birmingham & Solihull, a Birmingham Carers Hub partner, supported her son Anthony. A Statutory Carer's Assessment gave Anthony the chance to discuss his caring role and the impact it was having on him, to find out about support and services and to successfully apply for a number of available state benefits such as Carer's Allowance. As Anthony is a full-time Carer for his mum and unable to work, we also awarded a wellbeing payment to help lighten the financial and emotional load of caring.

The hospital visiting restrictions made Rohalia's readmissions particularly stressful. Fortunately, our Carer Coordinators (who you can read about below) act as a point of contact for Carers like Anthony and share news and updates on a loved ones health and wellbeing.

Anthony has continued to receive phone calls from Headway providing emotional support and regular safe and well checks throughout the pandemic. The delivery of a Christmas Hamper containing food and treats brought some much-needed festive cheer. Anthony said, "Headway gave me the support when I most needed it."



Financial support

Wellbeing Budgets

**FULFILLING
POTENTIAL**

As part of the Carer's Assessment, Carers may be allocated a Wellbeing Budget to use to improve their wellbeing. Carers use their budget to pay for the things that matter to them. During the pandemic, the wellbeing payment empowered Carers to take actions that improved their lives and the experiences of their loved ones.

Carer Story: James

I used last year's Carers Wellbeing Payment to pay for some refresher driving lessons as I hadn't driven for over 20 years and we have a car that wasn't being used, as my wife isn't currently driving. The payment gave me both the means and the impetus to tackle this personal challenge! I had five driving lessons in February 2020 and got enough confidence to drive to Yorkshire so that my wife could stay with her mother for a few days who she'd not seen for a year, just before Covid-19 lockdown started.



Emergency Payments

Many Carers faced financial struggles as a result of the pandemic. Carers described the impact of shopping at higher priced local shops, increased heating, utility and food bills due to the whole family being at home and, at the start of the pandemic, the cost of purchasing PPE to deliver care safely to loved ones outside of their home.

We set-up our Emergency Payments for Carers scheme within 6 weeks of lockdown, identified the most vulnerable Carers and fast-tracked £67,000 to 335 Carers.

COVID-19

Thank you to the Carers Hub for helping me to get some financial help during this terrible period when our family have struggled emotionally and financially.

Support Claiming Welfare and Benefits Entitlements

Our benefits reviews help Carers identify the funds they are entitled to and support them in the application process. Fair access to welfare benefit entitlements can make the difference between a Carer thriving in their role and facing significant struggles. With our support, Carers claimed over £2.5 million in 2020.

As a result of the pandemic, 81% of Carers are spending more money. 72% are spending more on food and 50% are spending more on household bills. 38% of Carers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am worried about my financial situation" *

*Carers UK, Caring Behind Closed Doors report

Supporting Families

Carers Emergency Response Service (CERS)

The Carers Emergency Response Service (CERS) is a FREE emergency care back-up service run by Midland Mencap on behalf of Forward Carers. In the event of Carer illness or accident or at times of crisis that prevent a Carer from being there for a loved-one, CERS provides a safety net. CERS also provides a free planned sitting service so Carers can attend appointments that simply can't be missed.

Thank you so much. When I signed up to CERS I never thought I would be in the situation that I was last week. What a wonderful service you gave me. I was worried about Bert, I had promised him I would be home and it was like a sack of coal lifted from my shoulders when you stepped in. Thanks you so, so much.

Enid, who is a Carer for Bert

Planning for the future

During the pandemic, Carers worried about what would happen if they became too ill to continue providing care. We produced a [What IF plan](#) and template, a simple guide to help families plan and record useful information so that in the event of an emergency situation, they could rest-assured that their loved one would be well-supported.

COVID-19

121 support

We provided 836 one-to-one support sessions to 437 Carers, by phone, online or in person, helping them to prioritise their own self-care and advising on how could keep their loved ones safe.

Carer Story: Nazia

For many isolated Carers, it's been a really difficult and lonely year. After checking-in with Stan by phone, Headway Co-ordinator Ian decided that a face-to-face, socially distanced surprise visit, would put a smile on Stan's face. He was right! They enjoyed a lovely chat and by all accounts, this was just the tonic.

CARER CENTRED



Carer Training

During the pandemic millions of people took on a caring role to support shielding loved ones. Training gives Carers the skills to carry out their role safely and with confidence. To help Carers get into or back into the workplace, we also signpost to employment and skills training to help build Carers' self-esteem and confidence. 73 Carers attended training and wellbeing workshops and 82 Carers referred for back-to-work training

Reporting Back

Last year's goal:

To provide training and support to help Carers into or back to work

FULFILLING POTENTIAL

Carer Stories

Nazia Razaq studied a course on mental health to improve her understanding of her daughter's condition. Nazia said,



...it has been interesting for me personally as my daughter suffers with anxiety and panic attacks, so I am getting a lot of knowledge to understand it. Overall, it gives you as a Carer an insight and awareness of the difficulties our loved ones are facing. It helps us to understand their needs and requirements. With this lockdown it has kept me busy, although it can be difficult at times to get peace and quiet with the children being at home!

Health Liaison

Our health liaison services recognise the benefits that come from better connected health and social care services and work to build links between the time, to improve support for Carers and their loved ones.

The Partners in Care scheme brings together patients, Carers and staff across University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB) to provide the best support for patients. Carers play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of the person they care for and thanks to Partners in Care, when someone needs hospital treatment, their Carer is supported to continue their caring role in hospital, if they wish to do so, is included in conversations and is valued as a 'partner in care'.

Carer Coordinators carry out a range of roles to support Carers when their loved one is in hospital, including liaising with ward staff on the Carer's behalf to ensure provision of a guest bed, access to food, drinks or to help clarify decisions around eligibility for visiting; providing emotional support and practical information such as Carers packs and signposting Carers to specialist support. During the pandemic, our wonderful Carer Coordinators, Pat and Ali, have supported 37 Carers and their loved ones via a new Family Liaison Hub.

Letters for Loved Ones

Letters for Loved Ones was introduced as a direct result of the pandemic restrictions on patient visits, to enable Carers, relatives and friends to keep in touch and feel connected with patients whilst they are in hospital. The Carer Coordinators have played an integral part in helping organise and deliver nearly three thousand letters, messages and photos patients.

GP Liaison

During the pandemic we have kept in touch with GP practices, sharing information around Carers Rights Day and encouraging practices to share Information and contact details of Birmingham Carers Hub. Engaging healthcare providers and developing links between health and social care is key to helping Carers thrive.

In Hospital During Covid-19: Brenda and Ted's Story

Brenda was sat at home desperately waiting to hear how her husband Ted was after he was rushed into hospital with a suspected stroke. Because of Covid-19, Brenda was unable to accompany Ted in the ambulance or visit him. To make matters worse, due to Vascular Dementia, Ted struggles to use a mobile phone so Brenda just had to stay at home and wait for news.

Brenda said, *"The staff at the hospital were obviously very busy and under an enormous amount of pressure but when you are waiting for a phone call to find out how he is or to talk to him was torture."*

By contacting the Carer Co-ordinator at the Queen Elizabeth hospital, in no time at all, Brenda was able to talk to Ted's doctor and speak to Ted on the phone. *"I can't tell you what a relief it was to talk to Ted and his doctor so that I was no longer in the dark and felt reassured that he was okay."*

Specialist Services

Young Adult Carers

Our Young Adult Carers Service delivered by YMCA Sutton Coldfield offers free help and advice for those aged between 18 and 25 and caring for someone in Birmingham. We offer personalised support for Young Adult Carers in transition, supporting them with current and future work and education aspirations, social and emotional support, peer groups and activities and one-to-one support with a key worker. During 2020 we supported 150 Young Adult Carers and 100 family members, as part of our family service.

Reporting Back

Last year's goal:

To expand support for Young Adult Carers

Our support covers and transcends all elements of the caring role, coaching young people with their personal ambitions and work and education goals.

In the last year we have supported:

- 10 Young Adult Carers to transition to University,
- 30 to continuing with college courses,
- 1 Young Adult Carer into new employment

I have been with the YMCA since I was 11-years-old as a Carer for my younger brother with Autism. As well as providing me with much needed respite, the volunteering opportunities offered to me by the YMCA has shaped my career. I am now at university and training to be a youth worker. My work placement is no surprise; it's at the YMCA.

Joseph

Young Adult Carer's Story: Renée'

Since 2017, 21-year-old Renee has received ongoing support from YMCA Sutton Coldfield where she first joined the weekly young Carer drop-ins at a local coffee shop. Renee said that these meetings, "provided a much-needed place where I could just talk about everything that had been going on and finding a solution to things that seemed impossible".

Renee said that the support she has gained from the YMCA has "been immense which in turn has led to an increase in my confidence, esteem and overall mental health. One of the key ways I think you have supported us, as young Carers was to recognise the need for a temporary escape from caring to be a regular young person even if we are not always able to attend because of our caring commitments."

She added, "Throughout the difficult year of 2020, YMCA Sutton Coldfield has ensured that Young Carers are being thought of and taken care of too, whether it's through a text, a call, or a face-to-face meeting when possible, so I would just like so thank you for all of your hard work, it is so appreciated."

Parent Carers

We've made it as easy as possible for Parent-Carers to find the right help. Our partner Birmingham Children's Trust undertakes family assessments. By registering with Birmingham Carers Hub, parents gain access to the Midland Mencap Family Carers Information Service and additional advice and support is provided by our partners Action for Children, Kids and our specialist Carer Project partners Oscar Birmingham and All Saints Community Project. as part of our family service.



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

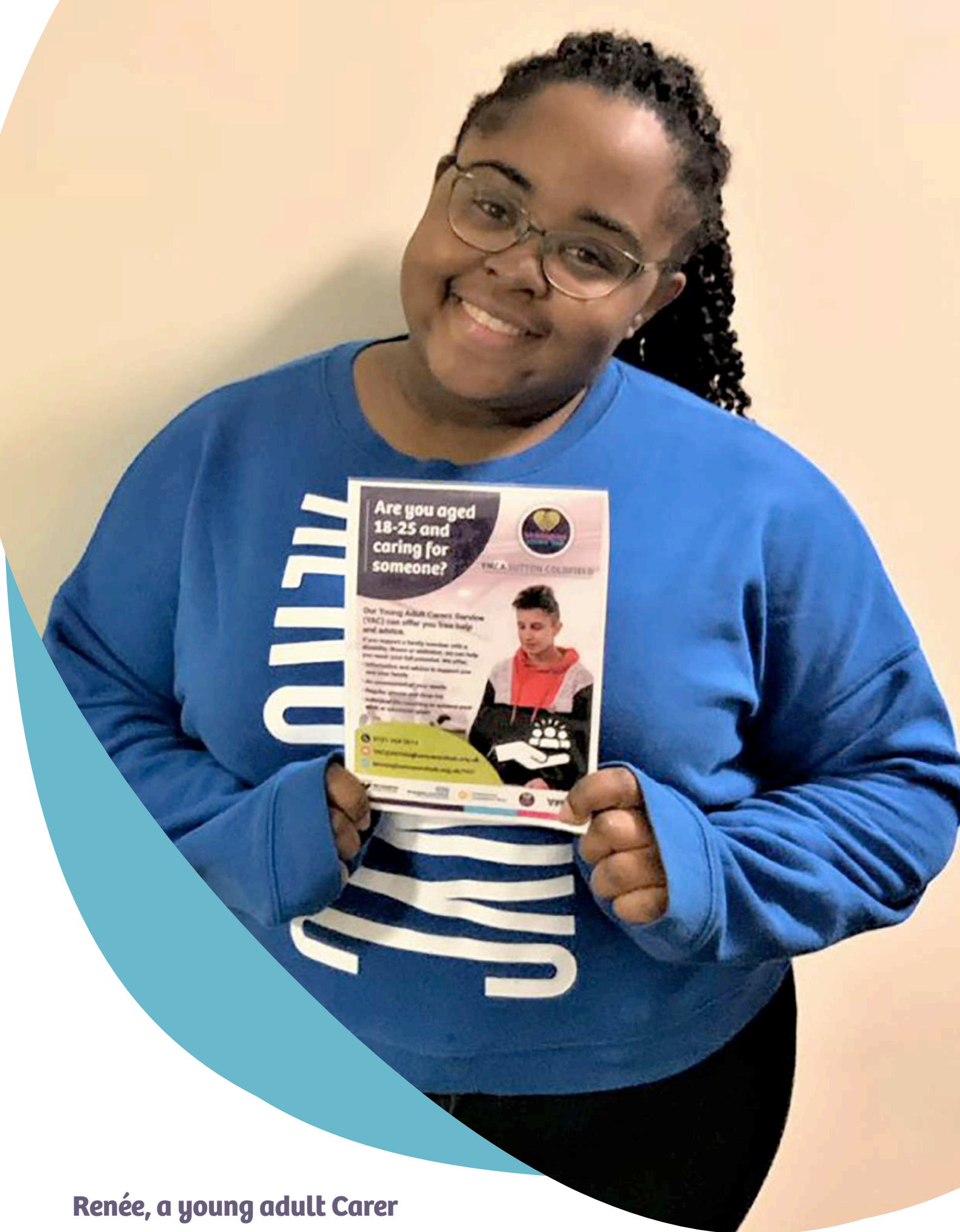
KIDS, provides support to parents in Birmingham who have children from birth to age 5 who have additional needs. Following the temporary closure of in-person activities due to Covid-19, KIDS developed a range of virtual workshops, such as understanding behaviours, good sleep routine, and parent/Carer wellbeing, which could be watched live or in their own time.



Thank you so much for the pack of goodies Jesse enjoyed it as you can see in the pictures, he got excited for everything, much appreciated.

Jackie, mum of Jesse

KIDS successfully applied for funding for 75 children's activity packs filled with sensory items such as bubbles, play dough, bells, balls, paper, paint and balloons.



Renée, a young adult Carer

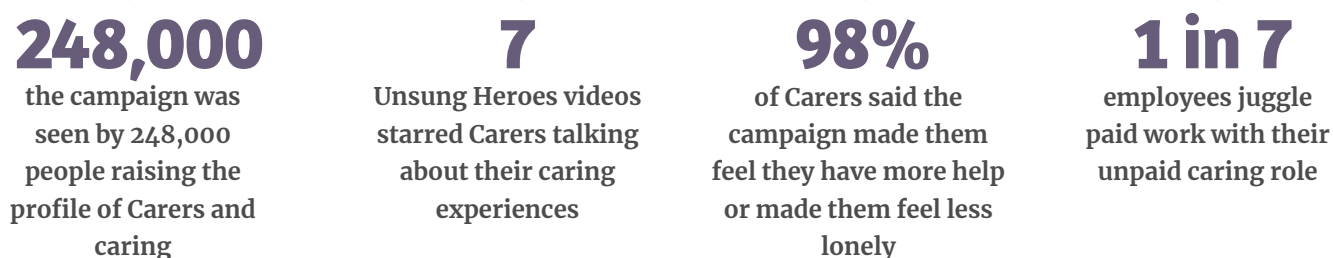
Forward Carers and Ageing Better in Birmingham : In Numbers

Forward Carers partners with Ageing Better in Birmingham, a programme funded by the Big Lottery Community Fund, to help older Carers feel less isolated and to develop connections across age-groups in the communities they live in. We're proud to celebrate the successful conclusion of Making Space for Carers and Carers Voice, and to continue to deliver the Ageing Better Fund.

Making Space for Carers: Over two years, we set up spaces across the city that brought Carers together with their peers



Over two years, we amplified the voice of Carers to raise awareness and understanding of the caring role, in all its diversity



The Ageing Better Fund provides help and funding for people of all ages across Birmingham to set up activities and groups that involve older people. In 2020:



We Empower Older Carers through Ageing Better in Birmingham

Making Space for Carers (Completed project)

Making Space for Carers provided a place for Carers to get together to offer and benefit from, mentoring, emotional and social support, information, education, and practical help, and to reduce loneliness and isolation. Spaces were set-up across the city in GP practices, businesses, and community centres, providing a time and a place to meet others in a similar situation. We are proud to celebrate the successful conclusion of this two-year project.

✓ We built connections with organisations and groups across the city

✓ We provided a supportive space for Carers

✓ We identified and supported new Carers

✓ We improved understanding of Carers and Carer support at GP surgeries and among healthcare staff

Making Space for Carers was independently evaluated – you can read the report [here](#)

IMPACT DRIVEN

Legacy

The legacy of Making Space will continue in our new Birmingham Carers Hub affiliated groups, giving Carers more opportunity to find and develop a network of support in their local area, by developing carer-friendly spaces in each of the 10 wards across the city. Our 'How to start your own group' toolkits also provide all the resources Carers need to set up their own support group if they prefer, whether that's online or in person. You can find the resources on our website



Carers told us the groups made a real difference to their lives, for some it was a 'lifeline' and others said they the groups helped them 'make sure you look after yourself'

Unsung Heroes: Giving Carers a Voice (Completed project)

The two-year Unsung Heroes campaign which ended in 2020, amplified the voice of Carers to raise awareness of and celebrate the role of family Carers across Birmingham. The work that unpaid Carers do is a 'hidden' role that is done 'behind closed'. Our videos of Carers talking about their everyday experiences gave voice to the rich and diverse realities of the caring role, helping communities understand all that Carers do to help their loved ones and support the community and showed other Carers they are not alone. With our huge thanks to all the Carers who helped amplify the Carer's Voice. You can watch their stories on the Online Support section of our website.

The Unsung Heroes campaign:

- ✓ Created connections between Carers, reducing isolation
- ✓ Inspired influential people including GPs and MPs to stand up for Carers
- ✓ Amplified the Carer Voice, helping Carers felt valued
- ✓ Empowered Carers to ask for support
- ✓ Facilitated peer-support
- ✓ Raised awareness of rights
- ✓ Empowered Carers to take part in/ influence activities that reduce isolation

Independant Review

An independent review by the Social Effectiveness Research Centre celebrated the campaign's success and innovative approach. Following the success of and learnings from this campaign, we launched Carer Friendly Communities.

[Click here to read the report](#)

IMPACT DRIVEN

It renews your faith in human nature that there are others that care.

A Carer describing the personal impact of the campaign

COVID 19

The Ageing Better Fund

The Ageing Better Fund offers grants of up to £2,000 to Birmingham residents who wish to set up a sustainable group or series of events that improve community connectivity and help people over 50 at risk of isolation.

During the pandemic, we offered Transition Funding of up to £500 to help previously funded groups find creative ways to continue safely. A new simple application form was devised, and decisions were made quickly. The funding has been a saviour for many groups, giving them incentive and encouragement to stay in touch with each other, at a time when many people felt desperately isolated and lonely.



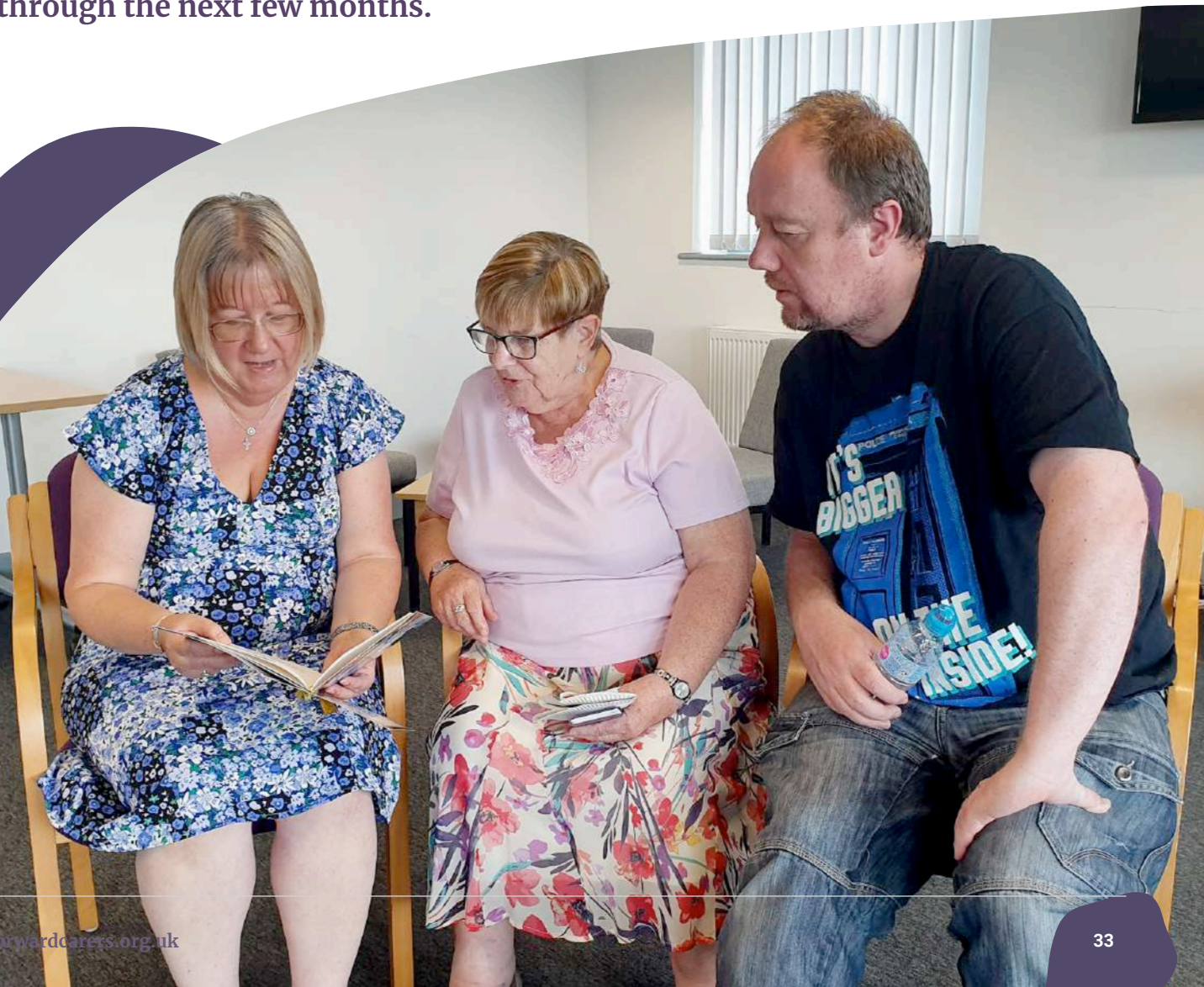
Case Study: The Park Court Smilers

The group, which is based in a sheltered tower block in Sutton Coldfield, originally received Ageing Better funding for teacher-led weekly gentle exercise sessions to Elvis Presley records. During lockdown the group missed their shared activity and successfully applied to the transition fund to start a covid-safe jigsaw club. They chose to buy Wasgijs (jigsaw, backwards!), challenging puzzles which take some time to complete. The group stays in touch by phone and discusses their progress and are able to swap jigsaws when they are completed.



Many thanks to Christine and Ageing Better for helping us to get these jigsaws which are going to be a real challenge and help me to get through the next few months.

Thank you, these jigsaws will keep us going during the dark winter days. It has given us such a boost.



Home from Hospital Sandwell:

Home from Hospital Sandwell (ran from January 2019 to January 2021) to help residents and their Carers get back on their feet after a stay in hospital, and support them to recover their health and independence at home. We provided a range of services including befriending, shopping, arranging medical appointments and helping residents return to their favourite hobbies and activities.



3 Aims:

1.

to help patients ready for discharge from hospital

2.

to support residents in their home after a stay in hospital

3.

to help residents overcome isolation and develop social connections

Who We Helped

147

Sandwell residents supported in their home after a stay in hospital

79%

of patients were aged over 65 years

11

patients had been hospitalised for over one month before discharge

How We Helped

448

services helped patients stay well and recover at home

32

food parcels distributed to patients leaving hospital

101

befriending and community signposting services helped reduce social isolation

Our Impact

92%

of all patients were successfully discharged home

97%

of people we supported were 'extremely likely' to recommend our service to friends and family

33%

patients reported feeling 33% more connected to their community with our support

We Help Sandwell Residents Home from Hospital

Our Home from Hospital Sandwell service provided a range of After Care support to help patients ready for discharge from hospital and support them to recover their health and independence at home. Our services ranged from shopping, organising and collecting prescriptions, providing a food parcel to patients on discharge to befriending, and connecting patients to statutory, voluntary and commercial services. Our support in the home helped family members and Carers by providing respite and sharing the load.

Patient's Story: Mr R

Mr R had spent three months in hospital following a stroke and although he was well enough to be discharged, he was unable to return home as his electricity had been switched off and he had no family to prepare his house for his return. With Mr R's written consent, we were able to visit his home to turn on the electricity and make his home warm and safe, so he could be discharged later the same day. We also gave him a food parcel for his return.

As part of our After Care service, we visited Mr R weekly for the next eight weeks, to help support his recovery and transition home. We helped clear a safe walkway in his home to reduce the risk of him falling, bought him a microwave so his Carers could cook him hot meals and when Mr R's medication ran out and his GP hadn't receive his new prescription details, we collected an emergency prescription and organised future prescriptions – ensuring there was no break in his medication. With our help, Mr R made a safe transition home and was able to continue his recovery without returning to hospital.



COVID 19

Funding

With funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we delivered a free 'Digi Buddies' tablet or phone and data to Sandwell residents who had recently been in hospital and provided training to help stay in touch with family and friends.

You have been wonderful. I can't compliment you enough. I never expected this. I never expected this at all. I am completely satisfied with the service and I would recommend this to anyone.

*thank you to the patients who allowed us to use their images. The quotes used are from other patients and not those shown in the pictures.

New Carer Projects in 2020



We commissioned innovative new Carer Projects as a strategic response to address gaps in support for Carers in Birmingham with diverse needs, so every Carer can access the support they need. Our new projects include support for Young Adult Carers, Carers of people with a substance issue, Working Carers, Parent Carers, and Carers from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

How We Created New Services for Carers



We invited applications from grassroots not-for-profits, so Carers are supported in the local community

1

Experts by Experience panel helped inform the selection

£154,334

distributed to fund new Carer projects

Supporting Carers with Diverse Needs



11

Projects commissioned to deliver specialist support that meets diverse needs



1000

Carers supported by more than > 25 new services



3

New Specialist Dementia Carer services created

Commissioning funded projects is just one of the services Forward Carers excels at. To find out more about how we work in partnership to improve Carer outcomes and how we can help your organisation improve support for Carers, you can view our website

We commission Specialist Carer services

Reporting Back

Last year's goal:

To grant-fund innovative projects to support more Carers with diverse needs.

As a Carer-led social enterprise, we believe Carers are experts in their own experience. We listen to Carer feedback about existing services and engage with Carers to help shape new services. The Carer Projects in this programme were selected with the support of a Carer-panel.

Partner Case Study: Birmingham Mind

As a Carer, maintaining your mental health and wellbeing is vital to being able to continue to support the person who needs your care. Birmingham Mind's Wellbeing and Resilience Sessions provide Carers with a dedicated time and space to focus on themselves and to connect with others to share experiences, socialise, take part in practical exercises and access information.



Communities

To ensure we all meet the needs of Carers across diverse Birmingham communities, we strategically plan our services and analyse service take-up on a range of demographic measures. The Carers who use our services map to Birmingham population demographics.

Carer's Story: Michael

Michael, aged 52, is a Carer for his wife Sue who has significant physical and mental health needs. When Sue's health deteriorated, Michael gave up his job but began to feel increasingly socially isolated. Mind's online Wellbeing and Resilience Sessions helped Michael to connect with others and for the first time, he recognised that as well as being a loving husband, he was also a Carer, something he hadn't considered before. Mind's specialist staff arranged for Michael to have a Carers Assessment which in turn signposted him to other support available, including other support groups where he began to develop a network of friendships. The combination of specialist support and peer friendship helped Michael feel less stressed and more like himself again.

"The service has been excellent. The service is friendly and the facilitator has an inclusive approach. The ethos is to empower people themselves, making them self-reliant, providing the tools to support with this. I feel that the service itself has a real 'family feel' and is a friendly space for me." Michael

**IMPACT
DRIVEN**



Partner Case Study: Aquarius Action Projects

Many Young Carers undertake cooking and shopping duties for the family, doing their very best to feed themselves, their parents and their siblings. In some cases, creating something out of very little.

Aquarius Action Projects developed the Meal Kit Delivery Service for Young Carers, an innovative new way to support vulnerable young Carers aged 10 and above, and their families – by delivering weekly recipe kits complete with all the ingredients needed to create simple, tasty meals; a step-by-step recipe card, nutritional advice and access to pre-recorded cook-along videos.

Patients story:

When Luke's mum's addiction means she can't take care of the family, Luke, the eldest child, takes over the care of his two younger siblings, taking them to school, putting them to bed, doing the food shopping and making the family meals.

When Aquarius delivered their first meal kit, the children worked together under Luke's guidance and enjoyed following the step-by-step recipe cards at their own speed. They loved the delicious pasta bake and the chance to do something together as. Luke and his siblings are really looking forward to receiving their next yummy meal kits.



Just a small selection of the meal kits delivered to young Carers

CARER & FAMILY CENTERED

Partner Case Study: Oscar Birmingham

Oscar Birmingham's specialist service is for family Carers supporting someone, predominantly children and young people, living with Sickle Cell Anaemia and Thalassaemia blood disorder, including co-morbidities. This city-wide service is part of Birmingham Carers Hub's support for Carers from black and minority ethnic communities.

At the start of the pandemic, people affected by Sickle Cell Anaemia were advised to shield. When restrictions were eased over the summer, Oscar organised a number of socially-distanced outdoor activities for families. After four months indoors, Carers and their families were thrilled to have the chance to enjoy days out together at Dudley Zoo and Strawberry Picking at Manor Farm Fruit – the smiles say it all.



“It can be extremely hard for me to switch off for me daily with everything that’s going on. I am so glad I have got involved with OSCAR as it has given me the chance to think about my health and meet new parents who have a child with sickle cell. I am grateful for the support and staff have been very welcoming.

Mrs H, mum to six-year-old T who has sickle cell.

Partner Case Study: All Saints Community Projects

All Saints provides all round support to improve the social welfare and health of young people aged 11 to 19 years old (up to 25 for those with disabilities) and their families in Birmingham, including young Carers. During Covid-19 they adapted their services to provide online support and workshops for young people and parents, online and socially-distanced activities, socially-distanced house visits and provided fantastic activity packs and food parcels for those who needed them, and much more.



COVID 19

Local Organisations

We believe Carers are best served by local organisations based within the community. Our open and transparent commissioning process encouraged applications from grass-roots and smaller organisations who could meet Carers' needs.

- I received one of the food parcels yesterday. It really was so helpful, and I was overwhelmed with what was in it.
- I just got a delivery of food... I felt quite emotional. There were grapes, pears, and oranges. Stuff I struggle to get because they are so expensive. Thank you.
- This was a lifesaver.
- Thank you so much, you don't realise how much this support has helped my mental health and my family.

Training and Groups for Dementia Carers:

Dementia support groups led by a dementia specialist co-ordinator provide a space for dementia Carers to come together for peer-support and to find out about advice and support. The groups cover a range of discussion topics, including What is Dementia, The Dementia Journey and Staying Healthy.

Our specialist dementia training modules can help Carers to understand the impact of the illness on their loved one, suggest ways to provide practical and emotional support and, importantly helps Carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing.

262

Carers attended dementia training and groups

58

online groups brought Dementia Carers together

I just wanted to let you know that the session today was absolutely fantastic. I have learnt so much and feel much more confident about caring for my father and understanding his condition.

Growing Older with Learning Disabilities and Dementia (GOLDD) service:

People with a learning disability are, unfortunately, more at risk of developing dementia – particularly those living with Down's syndrome.

Our new GOLDD Wellbeing Facilitator, part of the Midland Mencap Family Carers Wellbeing Service, supports GOLDD Carers to engage with each other and benefit from: information, advice and guidance, health and wellbeing workshops, GOLDD Creative Arts, GOLDD Café, GOLDD wellbeing walks. to maintain their own health and wellbeing.



I really liked the use of pictures, it really helped explain the way the brain loses bits of information. Val was amazingly informative and helpful, can't wait to do some more training.



We are working with Birmingham City Council to raise awareness of the service and build strong links with social work teams so we can develop a strong support network for all dementia Carers in the year ahead.

Our Social Value

Measuring Impact:

While many Carers describe their role as fulfilling and rewarding, it can have a significant impact on health, leisure, work, family and home life. So, it's essential that the services we offer to Carers are effective and make a real difference to their lives.

To help us measure the impact of our services, Carers complete a Wellbeing Assessment before and after receiving our support, to ensure that the services we provide help Carers to continue in their caring role happily and healthily.

IMPACT DRIVEN

**7
out of
10**

Carers showed improved wellbeing after using our services

13%

Average improvement in Carer wellbeing

Carer Feedback

1370 Carers sent a Carers Survey asking about their Caring experiences, 418 completed responses returned. The Carers Survey asks Adult Carers about their quality of life and feeds into future service decisions. This year, we also asked Carers about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on their caring role and the services they've required – this has helped us build a picture of the impact of the pandemic on UK Carers.

Reporting Back

Continue to invest in hearing the Carers' voice and ensuring we collect data across our partnerships to evaluate the difference we are making to Carers' lives

Social Return on Investment

For every £1 invested in Forward Carers, £8.89 is saved by social care. (that's a total saving of up to £22.05m each year!)*

Without our support and services, many Carers would need extra help. Our package of Carer support contributes a substantial cost saving to the NHS, facilitates increased economic contributions from Carers who remain in work, and reduces statutory costs for funded care and support. And, most importantly, improving Carer wellbeing helps Carers continue in their valuable role, happily and healthily.

*based on Adass and Carers UK methodology



A huge thank you to...

Our Partners

Our gratitude goes to our wonderful delivery partners listed below. Thank you for your everything you have done for Carers in our community, under such difficult circumstances.



And our sincere thanks to our funding partners whose belief in us empowers us to achieve so much together for Carers:

Finally, and importantly, thank you to all the wonderful Carers who work so hard and contribute so much to the lives of friends and loved ones. You are amazing.

If you are a Carer or know someone who is, please visit our website at:



forwardcarers.org.uk



Info & Advice Line 0333 006 9711

If you are a funder, commissioner, provider, employer or Carer and would like to find out more about the work of Forward Carers Consortium Ltd then please contact us at info@forwardcarers.org.uk



Our Purpose

Creating Carer Friendly Communities

Our Vision

Carers (young and old, including Parent-carers) feel positive about their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, so that families stay healthier and happier together, for longer

Our Mission

Through our work in partnership:

- We place Carers and families at the heart of everything we do
- We help Carers to fulfil their potential
- We work with partners to improve Carer Wellbeing
- We evidence the difference we're making for Carers
- We work in ways that enhance our communities

Our Values

- Family-Centric
- Fulfilling-Potential
- Trusted-Partner
- Impact-Driven
- Socially Responsible



'Forward Carers CIC is a social enterprise (Registration No. 9549033). All profits are reinvested towards our social purpose.'