



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Birmingham hairdresser, council worker and museum employee scoop Carer Friendly Business Award**

Committed businesses described as “beacons of light amid the bleak COVID landscape” have scooped awards for helping people across Birmingham in an unpaid Carers role.

The winners of the Carer Friendly Business Awards, created by Forward Carers, were announced during a virtual ceremony on Carers Rights Day, Thursday, November 26.

The awards are for businesses and individuals across the city which have contributed to supporting Carers in their community and/or workplace.

Shabnam Khussain, who runs Hair by Shabnam, was named the winner of the Carer Friendly **category** for helping make life a little easier for a mother of a disabled child. For nearly 15 years the hairdresser insists on doing home visits so 16-year-old, wheelchair bound Esha can be comfortable having her hair cut. The hair stylist also refuses to accept any payment.

There were two winners in the Making a Difference category which were Gordon Strachan, **Commissioning Manager** at Birmingham City Council and Dr Barbara King from St Heliers **one I Medical Practice**.

A Carer himself, Gordon became instrumental in improving communication with Carers across Birmingham about forthcoming services via a text service during the pandemic. He also succeeded in obtaining free online Carer Awareness training for every citizen, school and business in Birmingham, which now forms part of the mandatory training for Birmingham City Council.

Dr King was recognised for supporting the mother of a patient who has complex care needs and a very rare eating disorder. She consistently championed the child and fought relentlessly to ensure he receives the right treatment.

This year saw the introduction of a new category, called the Covid Award, which was for anyone who has stepped up to help Carers during the pandemic.

This award went to Rosie Barker, from the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, who was nominated by several different people. As a member of the museum's Creative Carers team, Rosie sent out weekly emails during the first lockdown, providing Carers with ideas, suggestions and general information about how to get creative while at home.

The Carers Champion award was presented to Jennifer Addo from the South and City College Birmingham. Jennifer was nominated by a colleague who said her line manger had been supportive when she was struggling with her Carer responsibilities at home.

Nicholls Brimble Bhol Solicitors picked up the Carer Aware trophy after being nominated by a member of staff who said the firm had supported all Carer duties and being flexible around working patterns.

All awards were judged by an independent panel of Carers and professionals who said the awards had highlighted dedication to Carers across the city.

CEO of Forward Carers, Simon Fenton, said: "It's been wonderfully heart-warming to read all the award submissions which became beacons of light amid the bleak COVID landscape. Hearing what some businesses and individuals have been doing to help Carers across the city during such a challenging time has actually been quite emotional.

"It's fantastic to see there are so many people who are passionate about their work, helping Carers and highlighting the vital role unpaid Carers have in our city. All the winners are truly deserving of their awards as they have all worked tirelessly during the pandemic to ensure that anyone needing support has had it."

Forward Carers was established to make a real difference to the lives of people caring for older frail people, sick or disabled friends and family members. Its aim is to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of Carers, young and old, including parent Carers, so that families stay healthier and happier together, for longer in a Carer Friendly Community.

The Carer Friendly Business Awards is part of Forward Carers' mission to make Birmingham the first 'Carer Friendly City'. As part of the 'Carer Friendly Brum' campaign, businesses, retailers and community groups are encouraged to offer discounts to Carer Card holders.

Businesses and organisations can sign up to 'Carer Friendly Brum' free of charge and benefit from complimentary advertising to more than 15,000 carers registered with Forward Carers.

To find out more visit [www.forwardcarers.org.uk/carer-friendly-communities/about-carer-friendly-communities/](http://www.forwardcarers.org.uk/carer-friendly-communities/about-carer-friendly-communities/)

**Notes to editors**

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