

GIVING TIME

Carer Support Wiltshire

INSIDE ISSUE 3



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**WILTSHIRE NEEDS
YOU TO PLAY
YOUR PART**
Help control the spread of COVID-19



**When you
go out:**

#WiltshireTogether



Wash Hands



Cover Face



Make Space

Hello from Judy, Chief Executive for Carer Support Wiltshire

I hope that you are all keeping well. These have been, and continue to be strange and for some, very challenging times. At Carer Support Wiltshire (CSW), we have done our best to keep you as our volunteers in the forefront of our minds.

Since the pandemic started, we've been thrilled to see 38 active new volunteers join us in just three months. I understand that some of you have been on furlough, some are employee volunteers or have come to us via corporate support. Others of you responded to our pleas for befrienders. You are all very welcome, and I thank you very much, and hope that we are providing you with information and support so that in turn you are able to help us support more unpaid carers in our communities.

Many of you have been shielding during lockdown, or helping out in other ways in your community. You may be a little overwhelmed at our pleas to try 'digital', and are yet to return to active volunteering with CSW. Others of you have given virtual a go and have picked up new skills, and are now enjoying seeing and speaking with and supporting carers once again. Everyone is different and digital may not appeal to you. However, we are ready when you feel comfortable in resuming as volunteers with us. As I write, the 'rule of 6' has been introduced, so I feel it's back to square one again about reopening our face to face carers cafés and groups. This is very frustrating for you and us, but your and carers' health, safety and wellbeing remain our paramount concerns.

You may be interested in our latest volunteering opportunity - micro-volunteering. This involves 3 months' commitment as a volunteer, so you can dip in or out of your volunteer roles. This could help you manage your voluntary efforts and at the same time manage the ever changing circumstances we are all experiencing. If so please get in touch with Lindsey or Vince. Again if you have an idea for a new way to support carers that you think we have not considered, contact Lindsey or Vince

Once again, many thanks for the contribution you make to carers and to us – you are all very much appreciated by all at Carer Support Wiltshire.

Volunteering at CSW – what’s changed

As you are aware all current volunteers roles, especially those, office based or out in the community, are now on hold. Many of you have been in contact to ask how you can help in other ways and we thank you.

Carers have been left feeling isolated and alone as a result of the pandemic, separated from family and friends and unable to attend countless support groups and cafes. It was for this reason that 8 weeks ago we vastly expanded our Talk and Support service, where volunteers call carers regularly for around 30 mins. In that 6 weeks the number of volunteers involved has more than tripled to nearly 50 and over 170 carers have received regular and vitally important calls.

The Connecting Carers project is a 3 month Carers Trust funded project to extend and expand our telephone befriending service; Talk and Support to include a virtual ‘face to face’ offering. Many of our carers have responded with feedback such as “please continue the service for other carers” and by saying that the project has been “helpful at a particularly difficult time”, helping them feel “less isolated and space to be sociable” and it is hoped the virtual, face to face befriending service will just add to what is already a valued service.

We have reduced the volunteer roles we offer. Please see our current offering below:

- **Talk and Support**
Telephone befriending service, regular call for 12 weeks.
- **Virtual ‘Face to Face Talk and Support**
To extend and expand our telephone befriending service; Talk and Support to include a virtual ‘face to face’ offering. Regular call for 12 weeks.
- **Well being calls**
A brief, welcoming telephone call to carers , many who CSW have not had much contact with over the last 12 months. Update carers personal information and check on well-being. One off call.
- **Virtual Carer Cafes Co-ordinator**
Carer cafes and chance for carers to receive peer on peer support, virtually.
- **Volunteer InfoSource**
Help us collect newspaper articles, parish news articles and radio clips of when and how CSW is mentioned and supported in the press.
- **Community Fundraiser**
Help us spread the word in your community of the [Time for Carers Appeal](#).

If you would like to know more about Virtual ‘Face to Face’ Talk and Support, click on the link <https://carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/get-involved/volunteer/> and scroll down to Virtual ‘Face to Face’ Talk and Support role profile – click and open, or for any of the above please do call Lindsey Millen 01380 908041 for an informal chat.

Liz Brown, Chair of Trustees

It has been an incredible six months for our carers and for all of us in Carer Support Wiltshire. We have all been coping individually with the effects of Covid-19 in so many different ways. I and my fellow trustees are very proud of how our charity has responded and stepped up to the plate to reach out to carers. I want to say a big “thank-you” to *you* because, without *your* help and passion, we would not have been able to help as many people. Your Talk and Support, Wellbeing Checks and Virtual Cafes have made a massive difference to carers and are inspiring the charity to think about how we can take these forward as we move into the future.

As a volunteer trustee, and your new Chair, I know it means a great deal to keep in contact and feel part of things, and I believe there are different ways in which we can all connect and stay in touch. I would love to hear from you and make contact, so please feel free to get in touch with me by email to: LizB@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk. It would be great to hear from you and get your ideas on how we might manage some virtual “Face2Face” get-togethers and meet each other.

Have YOUR SAY

Judy, our Chief Executive, encourages you to have your say.

The Carer Support Wiltshire board of trustees signed off our new vision, mission and values statement in September, which encourages a clear focus on unpaid carers

- Our mission: A society which understands and supports unpaid carers.
- Our Vision: Improving life for all unpaid carers by listening and meeting needs, providing information to give choices, giving a voice and influence and raising awareness.
- Our Values: Carer focus, creativity, integrity, collaboration and empowerment

Carer Support Wiltshire Strategy

As we exit our current strategy, 2016 – 2020, we are consulting staff, volunteers and carers about our services, prior to the national crisis, during the crisis and what services we should be offering in the future and the next four years. The results will be the start of an ongoing conversation, with additional consultations over time due to on-going uncertainties.

Please click on the link below so we can capture your views and comments about our services. Please respond by 16th October.

[Here is a link](#)

Virtual – Rising to the challenge to stay connected

Reacting to the national crisis and ensuring carers have access to services, some new and some re-invented has been a challenge. We have had to develop virtual cafes, expand talk and support for carers aged 16 years and over and spread the message that the services are still available but in a reduced capacity. Staff, volunteers and carers have all had to adapt. Volunteer training has been re-developed and is available on-line, a positive outcome with great feedback from volunteers.

There is certified training in Safeguarding Level 1 and 2 and Mental Health Awareness. We have developed a Volunteer learning pathway in Active listening, Communication, Befriending, Facilitation and step by step instruction and practical options to test a virtual cafe with no attendees.

CSW staff and volunteers comment below on their experience of taking the plunge and going virtual, co-ordinating Supporter groups; inviting guest speakers for focused groups and co-ordinating carer Cafes.

Jemma, a Community Connector for CSW says: 'I was worried it was going to be difficult to have a flowing conversation, but in reality this wasn't the case at all, conversation flowed easily and everyone got involved. My advice would be not to be nervous, it's never as scary as it seems and it's lovely to be in touch and see carers. Its been wonderful to engage with carers once again, some of whom have had very little interaction with anyone else.'

Jane, a relatively new volunteer and host of a virtual carer café comments:'I was very skeptical as to whether this means of communication would work but I was completely wrong. It has only taken a few weeks for me to feel part of a group. We have sessions where we've talked about our favorite gin and sessions where we've talked about peoples loved ones who are poorly or who are no longer with us. We have gone from very emotional topics to having a great laugh'

Carers who have attended the virtual cafes have found them helpful and have fed back "if it wasn't working no one would join in', other carers have found the opportunity to meet virtually a 'lifeline'.

Val, a volunteer who is host of a virtual cafes commented: 'Carers have been surprisingly good at getting themselves into the cafes and I think they have gained some new skills on computers during lock down, many using facetime and video calls to their family, so joining our café gives carers a chance to meet other carers and hear their concerns. Carers have really shown signs of being happier and less withdrawn during our cafés' .

So, if you would like to develop or improve your skills in virtual or access our Volunteer learning pathway, please contact lindseym@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk or call 01380 908041

Carer Involvement at CSW

We strive to involve and engage our carers to help us understand what they need by way of support. Their feedback helps shape our services and enables us to share a carer perspective with our other key partners. Jackie Maton, Health and Community Engagement Officer, and Andrea James, Young Adult Carer Support Worker, have a real passion for carer involvement. They have used their feedback to help shape carer services locally, regionally and nationally ensuring services are carer led and focused.

Jackie Maton comments ‘Carers have a wealth of experience and knowledge and can offer a unique perspective on a range of health and social care services. They can help us to see the things we don’t see; see things that are really important, and help us to start from the right place. Carers have a different perspective to health and social care professionals, and accessing their views alongside those of staff, opens up new ideas for improvement.’

Andrea James finds carers experiences and views are vital for success ‘ Every new project has had a carer led steering group and we, as a team, constantly refer to our young people so that the support and workshops are what they need to help them succeed.

We have several Young Adult Carer (YAC) volunteers that help support us running cafes and workshops. One is from the LGBT community and recently helped CSW secure funding to run a pilot project to help LGBT young adult carers in the Salisbury community.

Raising awareness is key to my role. One of our YAC’s has recently become a member of the Carers Trust Steering group in London. Through this she is going to talk to MP’s about her caring role and highlight other YAC’s issues from Wiltshire who have come together to get their voice heard.’

Rosario, a YAC, recently wrote this for the youth website ‘The Mix’ which is supported by the Carers Trust.

“A positive of being a carer as a young adult is meeting support workers at Carers Support Wiltshire. They have helped me feel like someone cares. Being a Carer has given me the ability to be independent, but that has also meant an unwillingness to ask for help. This has begun to change recently though.

Being involved with the charity has helped to give me a space to be more open about my situation. I have learnt about other young carers experiences and I would like to help other young people see the positives and feel proud of their dedication.”

Appeals – Time for Carers

Rachael Demery, CSW Community Fundraiser, has an update on our [Time for Carers Appeal](#):

I wanted to get in touch with you regarding Carer Support Wiltshire's Time for Carers Appeal, which is dedicated to ensuring that unpaid carers in Wiltshire get the breaks they need to improve their health and wellbeing. Since it started three years ago, the Time for Carers Appeal has seen incredible support. Carers who have received funding show the positive impact it is having.

Claire, whose mother has dementia, told us: "It wasn't even just about being given the money to go away - it was about being seen and valued as a carer and given the recognition and support that enabled me to carry on."

Shona, who is a parent carer for her daughter, tells us about the importance of taking breaks [here](#). David shares a greater understanding about the challenges he faces as a long-term carer for his wife [here](#).

Please help us to continue supporting carers like Claire, Shona and David to get the breaks they need to be happy, healthy so they can be well and carry on caring.

Attached to the email is a poster and an information sheet - to circulate to your friends, family and colleagues who would like to support unpaid carers in Wiltshire at this difficult time.

Donations can be made on our JustGiving campaign page: <https://justgiving.com/campaign/time-for-carers>

All funds raised now will be spent on giving carers breaks in April 2021 – March 2022, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis – when others may return to 'normality', whilst carers stay in a similarly isolated situation caring for their loved-ones.

Helpful Resources

Extra Support and Information for Carers

- If a carer feels that they need more advice and support or their own circumstances have changed, our Duty team are happy to help Monday to Friday 0900 – 1630 (1600 on a Friday). Call 0800 181 4118 and ask for the Duty Team.
- If a carer feels that the person they care for needs more support, they can contact Adult Social Care at Wiltshire Council: 0300 456 0111.
- Any queries about services funded by Wiltshire Council should also be directed towards Adult Social Care.
- If a carer needs advice about benefits, they can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau Carers Project: 01249 474064
- If carers have access to the internet, they can access information about adult services in Wiltshire at <https://adults.wiltshire.gov.uk/> or our website: www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk

In your volunteering role you will come across different terms describing particular groups of carers and how we tailor services to support them. I hope the following is a helpful breakdown of the different carer groups that you may hear mentioned as you go about your volunteering. Also be aware that a carer can belong to multiple groups depending on their caring situation and the support they are accessing. Some groups share particular concerns and challenges as carers because of the nature of their relationship, or their community or cultural backgrounds.

General – All ages

- A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend who could not always manage without their support. They might look after someone with a physical disability, long term health condition, mental health issue or a problem with substance misuse.

Adult carer 18 plus years

- Anyone over the age of 18 who can identify with the above description

Young Adult Carer 18-25 years

- There are at least 376,000 young adult carers in the UK. They are likely to be found in every school, college, university and workplace.

Working Carer 18 plus years

- Holding down a paid job whilst caring for a loved one is something that more and more people are having to cope with. A caring role on its own can be extremely demanding and exhausting – add in the demands of a paid job alongside that and it's no surprise that 1 in 5 carers ends up quitting work altogether.

Young Carer < 18 years

- A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled, has a mental health condition or misuses drugs or alcohol. Being a young carer can have a big impact on the things that are important to growing up. It can affect a young person's health, social life and self-confidence. Many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring which can cause pressure and stress. In a survey, 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.

Parent Carer

- Parent carers provide support to their children, including grown up children who could not manage without their help. The child/adult can be ill, disabled, or have mental health or substance misuse problems. As a parent carer, they are less likely to see themselves as a carer – and health and social care professionals are also less likely to see them as a carer.

Armed Forces Carer

- An Armed Forces Carer is someone who helps look after a friend or relative who is or has serviced in the Armed Forces and has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem. Additionally, an Armed Forces Carer may be caring for a member of their family – child/sibling or parent