

## GIVING TIME

Carer Support  
Wiltshire

## INSIDE ISSUE 4



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Communities Team Leader



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Hello from Judy Walker, Chief Executive for Carer Support Wiltshire

A Happy New Year to you all. 2021 may not be off to the start we might have hoped for, but it feels there is hope on the horizon at least once this lockdown is over with the Covid vaccination programme now well under way.

All the best for the coming year.  
Judy

Coronavirus, Vaccines and Recovery

One thing Lindsey, Vince and I share is that we all have birthdays in the first few weeks of April. I can't help wondering, will we all spend a second Birthday in a row during a lockdown? I truly hope not.

As I write this in mid-January we are being told that hospitals are under extreme pressure but also that the Covid vaccination programme has already vaccinated more than 4 million of our population.

These have been difficult times for our staff, carers and for many of you – the volunteers who are the lifeblood of Carer Support Wiltshire. Please keep in touch with Lindsey and Vince if there is anything we can do that might help.

We are excited and enthusiastic about returning to our face-to-face activities in this year but will only do so when it is safe to do so. We will keep in touch by email and by phone and I look forward to catching up with you or meeting for the first time in 2021.

With Very Best Wishes,

Alan Docherty

**Reaching Communities Team Leader**

## Connecting Carers – Continued Funding

All current volunteer roles, especially those, office based or out in the community, are now on hold as the pandemic continues to change the way we work. Many of you have been in contact to ask how you can help in other ways and we thank you.

A project that has had further funding and become integral as the national crisis continues is Connecting Carers and the befriending service. Thank you to all the volunteers who support befriending and well being calls. The befriending service seeks to reduce isolation and loneliness. The short wellbeing calls act to reconnect with carers which has led to many carers seeking further support.

Below are some of the numbers we have recorded up until the end of 2020

Carers referred to talk and Support	350
Carers receiving wellbeing check	2612
Carers accessing virtual cafes	70
Carers receiving extra support from online referral	131

Feedback from volunteers;

- “Carers I have spoken to have been very grateful of the regular contact without having to call first.”
- “the carer was in tears and the signposting to the Duty line helped them to access more support and a grant with a positive outcome.”
- “It has enabled me to develop my skills as a listener and at observing the needs of others as well as giving me the satisfaction of feeling like I have made a difference.”

Feedback from Carers ;

- “When I talk to my family I hear all their problems and I am unable to talk to anyone. The volunteer is someone for me to talk to. My husband has his hobbies, and this call is for me. We talk about all sorts of things, happy and sad. It has been a lifeline, I look forward to the phone call to come.”
- “calls are a lifeline”.



## Rosario – New Trustee at CSW

I was born and raised in Wiltshire and help care for my mum who suffers from mental illness. I want other carers to feel that they aren't alone and help is there. I am passionate about de-stigmatising mental illness.

I have also recently finished studying for Social Policy Masters at the University of York. Previously I studied History of Art for my undergraduate degree. Family always comes first for me. I would like to help other young people to see the positives in being a carer and to feel proud of how they help in whatever form it takes.



## Confidentiality Continues

Confidentiality is about privacy and ensuring information is only accessible to those with a legal right to see it. Everyone that works for CSW, in any capacity, including volunteers and trustees, owes a duty of confidentiality to our clients and staff.

Some volunteer roles have access to personal information about carers. This is usually in the form of:

- Name
- Address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Date of birth

Personal information should not be shared with anyone else other than the volunteer role it is intended. A few simple actions will ensure we keep personal information secure:

- Never share the personal details of a carer with anyone who it is not intended for.
- When communicating about a carer always use the CLOG ID if you have it, rather than their name
- If sending files with carer details, always password protect the file.
- When you have finished with a file i.e. a carer contact sheet, delete it from your computer.

## Volunteers of all ages and experiences support CSW

We have had an a surge in volunteering enquiries, from individuals who want to support carers due to the pandemic, those hoping for experience to help further their chosen career aspirations, to those on furlough and finding they have some more time on their hands.

**Ellie** is 17 years old, currently studying for her A'levels, and was keen to support and help carers due to the pandemic. She says 'I've been a volunteer at Carer Support Wiltshire for around a month now and am really enjoying my experience. The training I received was really useful and informative. It has really helped me in being confident in calling up carers. Calling up carers and listening to them and allowing them to feel comfortable in telling you about themselves is really rewarding. Each carer I have called has told me how much it means to them to have these fortnightly calls, especially during lockdown when things are much harder. It's a really great experience and I'm glad I'm a volunteer for Carer Support Wiltshire.

**Andrea** began her volunteer role with CSW in April 2020 in response to the pandemic. 'I had retired in 2019 to care for my elderly parents but sadly they had both passed away later that year and so it felt a good time to work as a volunteer with a charity I felt passionate about. I could use my own experience as a carer as well as some insight from my previous job working as a nurse. Befriending carers plus making well being calls is very rewarding, and the common response is of gratitude that someone was thinking of them, even if they were coping is always nice to hear. Volunteering is a wonderful way to explore possible new job opportunities, meet new people (unfortunately only virtually at the moment) and keep that self-motivation going to do something constructive when you are retired, pandemic or not!'

**Scott** is also 17 years and has embraced the experience to help others and give experience towards his CV and university application. He said: "Volunteering with CSW is a very rewarding and motivating experience. Not only does it develop your social skills, it also provides the ability to help people that really deserve it. I was really impressed by the training that was provided and believe this will translate over to my later life. Also, the training helped increase my confidence with my ability to help. The befriending service that CSW provide is extremely rewarding to both parties and also provides a personal touch. I believe it's especially important to carers in this current climate as loneliness is prominent during lockdowns."

**Jane**, Zurich Cares UK Manager, said: "Volunteering for Carer Support Wiltshire has brought home how many people are caring for loved ones so selflessly. Just having someone call and ask 'how are you today?' has meant so much to them." "It has been such an easy volunteer opportunity that has really made me feel I'm making a difference."

**Darren** has supported the befriending project since May 2020, he says "I've enjoyed talking with the carers. I've heard some interesting stories and also some difficult situations. I chose this role as I thought I could connect with the carers and they're sometimes the most isolated people. I thought the training was good and not too much information to overwhelm you, but enough to set you up with confidence. The service makes me feel that I'm connecting people, and they're not alone. I would like to say, perhaps they feel less isolated and I brought some joy and laughter while connecting."

## Zoom Cuppa and Catch Up

We are aware that some carers and volunteers alike have issues when trying to join a Ring Central meeting.

We are looking at other platforms but just as an experiment, we will be sending out a Zoom meeting invite for a 30 minute drop-in next on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan at 11am. Do try and join and let us know how easy/difficult it was.

Please do join us for an informal cuppa and catch up over Zoom, on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January . You, our volunteers are so valued and appreciated and we would love to just say hi and hope you find it supportive to meet other volunteers at CSW. This might well be the first time you would have seen Vince and Lindsey's face, as the pandemic continues to challenge the way we work day to day. See link below – just click on the link in the email invite and go ( no need to download the Zoom app)



## CSW response to carer isolation and vulnerability

Servies have had to adapt at this difficult time. We have strived to offer a variety of new opportunities delivered remotely to ensure carers still have contact and support from staff, volunteers and carer to carer. I

### Virtual Cafes Feedback

- The virtual cafes have been a godsend to escape the isolation of being a carer(particularly with day centres not being open) and taking part in conversation.

### Virtual Supporter Groups Feedback

- "Please do continue virtual supporter groups as I find it easier to attend rather than leaving the house."

### Welfare Calls Feedback

- Carer wanted to record her most grateful thanks for continuing to operate during time of Covid-19 pandemic. She said: "the relief of having someone pick up the telephone to speak to, and receive support was immense."

Counselling - - 67 carers receiving counselling for six weeks and 35 more currently on the waiting list. Funding ceases in January. Continuation funding is being sought.

BAME Communities - - A new project recently funded will work with Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to identify how we can adapt our services to make them more accessible to BAME communities and also identify more BAME carers in the process.

Young Adult Carers (YAC's) - - Young Adult Carers have been supported by the CSW team; gaining access to virtual cafes, resience workshops, help and support with home concerns and referral for counseling and professional support.

## Helpful Resources

**Carer Support Wiltshire – website is kept up to date with vital information for carers – see link**

[www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/news/coronavirus-faq-for-carers](http://www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/news/coronavirus-faq-for-carers)

Virtual cafes continue to be the main place that carers can receive peer to peer support. Please see link below for up to date information and links to on-line cuppa and catch up for carers .

[www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on/](http://www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on/)

### The Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub

remains in place for those who may need additional support. Those who require help with tasks such as picking up food and other essentials, should ask friends or family or order online. If they do not have family, friends or a support network that can help, please contact the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub and request help.

You can call the hub on 0300 003 4576 or email [wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk) . It's open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

The Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub staff can:

- Connect you with local community groups who can assist you with your support needs
- Resolve any issues with the delivery of medication from a pharmacy;
- Give your ideas for staying physically and mentally well.

### New website for vaccination queries

The NHS Clinical Commissioning Group has launched a new website for vaccination queries from the public.

Questions relating to the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine can be answered by visiting [www.bswccg.nhs.uk/latest-covid-19-updates](http://www.bswccg.nhs.uk/latest-covid-19-updates)

### Bereavement support group

CSW have recently resumed our monthly bereavement support group as an opportunity for carers to speak and support each other about how life was and what they hope it will become. At present the meetings are in a virtual format on the first Wednesday of the month from 11am – 12 noon. One carer commented 'I am so glad you have revived the 'group'.

If you would like to join us please contact Alison let me know and she will send you the link to the next meeting. Alison's e-mail address is [alisonm@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk](mailto:alisonm@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk)