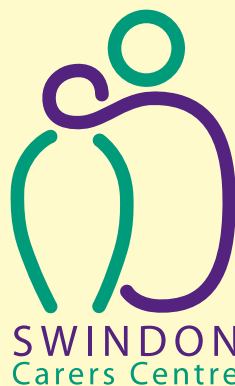


Caring Matters

Newsletter

Winter 2014



Change of address: From 6 November 2014

Swindon Carers Centre Swindon Advice and Support Centre
Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1QH. Tel: 01793 531133
carers@swindoncarers.org.uk www.swindoncarers.org.uk

SCC closes Wood Street office on 6th Nov 2014
and opens at SAASC on 14th Nov 2014

Our Big Move! page 2

Dementia Friendly Ward at GWH page 6

SCC Strategic Plan Pull-Out page 8

Supporting Family Carers of All Ages

“Perhaps I am a bear,
or some hibernating animal underneath,
for the instinct to be half asleep all winter
is so strong in me.”

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Well, no opportunity to be half asleep this winter as it's full steam ahead moving to our new home at the Swindon Advice and Support Centre (SAASC) in Sanford Street. I mentioned this in my last editorial and all of a sudden it's here! Whilst a little sad to be leaving the lovely ambience of Old Town we are all very excited to be relocating to the centre of Swindon town where we hope to be more accessible to carers looking for our support.

Swindon Advice and Support Centre has been successfully refurbished to provide an excellent resource for the residents of Swindon. There are many organisations based in the building and we are hoping to be able to work together to ensure you have the best service possible. The organisations who will be our fellow tenants include CAB, Richmond Fellowship, DHI, SAM, Wiltshire Law Centre, Health Watch, Mind and Derventio Housing. There will also be other voluntary sector

organisations using the hot desk facility. Look for an information pull out on all the organisations in our Spring newsletter.

I do hope you will join me, the staff team, our volunteers and Trustees in supporting this move and making it the next stepping stone in our continued growth and development as a successful organisation.

There are lots of exciting developments to report on partnership working which we will talk further about at Carers Rights Day (see article on facing page) and we are also delighted to be developing closer links with Prospect Hospice - you can read more about how they support carers opposite.

Cath Johnston
CEO



Carers Rights Day Friday 28 November 2014

CARERS
RIGHTS DAY

Our Carers Rights Day event takes place at Citifaith Church in Swindon and will include:

- Introduction and review from SCC CEO Cath Johnston
- Presentations from Janine Thomas (AWP), Andy Stevens (SBC) and Sue Wald, Care Act (SBC)
- Workshops
- Q&A panel to include guest speakers and other partners (Chaired by Robert Buckland MP)
- Swindon Carers Centre's AGM
- A range of stallholders

Please see the invitation letter you will have received with this edition of Caring Matters for more information and how to book your place at the event.

Prospect Hospice's support for carers in Swindon



As an organisation that cares for and supports more than 5,500 people each year, Prospect Hospice has for many years provided a range of services specifically for carers.

Central to our support for carers is our understanding that, when someone is very ill, it affects the whole family. It is often at these times that people find themselves facing a set of practical, financial and emotional difficulties.

Over many years we have listened carefully to the experiences of many hundreds of carers, and their input has led to the development of initiatives including our carers' course. The course includes practical advice and support on basic caring skills, managing medicines, welfare benefits and relaxation techniques – all areas carers have told us could boost their ability to cope.

We also offer a monthly carers cafe at the hospice, which is a time for carers to enjoy a coffee and a slice of cake with members of our Family Support Team. It is also an opportunity for carers to unwind in the company of other carers, which often leads to strengthened support through new friendships.

Additionally we offer carers' wellbeing events, with the opportunity to enjoy complementary therapies, manicures, hairdressing and more treatments.

To find out more about Prospect Hospice's support for carers call the Family Support Team on 01793 813355.

My first six months as a Trustee

I have been asked to write about my first six months as a Trustee for Swindon Carers Centre.

It has been an exciting journey and one I would thoroughly recommend. I cannot believe how much I have been involved with, in addition to the essential monthly Trustees meetings. There have been a wide variety of events, groups and social engagements. I would like to add there was no pressure to undertake extra commitments, but the wonderful enthusiasm of the SCC team sweeps you along! Most importantly everything you help with releases more time for the team to what they do best – supporting our carers. So, as an insight into what I've been up to, here is a brief synopsis.

One evening every month, I join the rest of the SCC Board of Trustees and enjoy a robust and mandatory meeting. Everyone pools his or her knowledge and experience to make sure the charity performs at its very best. Which of course it does, magnificently! I also meet with the Fundraising Group, again once a month, and try to be as creative as possible in coordinating events to raise much-needed funds. At the moment there is a Launch Event Group I participate in, that meets fortnightly, ready for the very exciting move to Swindon Advice and Support Centre. And last but by no means least; I head a new Special Event Fundraising Group, which is working on a major fundraising project for next September. It will be a fabulous evening event, with a sporting theme, that will hopefully make a significant financial contribution to the charity. Watch this space for more information and a date for your diary.



A key part of raising funds for the charity is raising SCC's profile, so the community is aware of our organisation and how vital it is to carers in Swindon. In May I introduced SCC to the Swindon Business Show. With help from Business West we were able to have a stand there, and this enabled us to chat to the local MPs, the business community and educational establishments. We had great feedback and support and this has definitely helped raise our profile.

My role, as Trustee, has been diverse. One minute I am helping host a visit to the Centre from the High Sheriff and his wife, and the next I'm popping into the office to help cut out articles about SCC from a stack of newspapers. Both equally as rewarding, as I know they help make a difference. One day I have been at Swindon STEAM, with our lovely carers, participating in the Carers Act Consultation (run by SBC) and the next I have been listening to a very informative report by a SCC student. I haven't even mentioned the wonderful social events representing SCC - such as the Swindon Cares dinner at Mario's, or lunch with the Rotary Club of Swindon. It's wonderful so many people support us.

I have found it quite amazing that as I have been investing in the SCC, the Centre has also been investing in me. I have had formal and informal induction meetings, participated in media training and I am about to take part in

safeguarding training. I am always included in the offers of professional development and I have taken this up wherever I can. The more knowledge I have, the more I can help. SCC really does care about everyone and that's part of what motivates me when a job needs doing.

The highlight of my time as a Trustee though has to be my interview with the Young Carers Media Group. I was quite nervous before I went in but the second I sat down I was put at ease – I'm sure it was nothing to do with the tray of biscuits and grapes I brought with me! What an amazing group of young people, so full of life and humour and incredibly articulate. It

was great fun and a privilege meeting them. Just remember that before you go to print YCMG! I am now really looking forward to the Young Carers Forum at the beginning of October.

Six months down the line SCC has become part of my life - a very fulfilling and rewarding part. I truly enjoy coming into the office and seeing the team. They are so cheerful, friendly and always welcoming. Seeing them at work and listening to them talk about their roles I feel complete admiration for their dedication to and passion for the Centre. Who wouldn't want to be part of the team!

Anita Larrard SCC Trustee

Swindon Carers Centre – Social Media



Don't forget that you can keep up to date with all the latest news from Swindon Carers Centre online at Facebook. You can search for Swindon Carers Centre and click on the 'Like' button or find us by using the following link:
www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre



You can now also find us on twitter too!
[@swindoncarers](https://twitter.com/swindoncarers)

Eye Tests at Home

VisionVisit is a local optician specialising in home eye tests. Their friendly optometrists use the latest optical equipment to help them conduct a thorough eye exam. They also have a large range of spectacles to choose from which are delivered and fitted at home too.

For more information contact VisionVisit on 01793 232588 or go to www.visionvisit.co.uk



(Mention of goods or services in this Newsletter does not represent endorsement from Swindon Carers Centre).

Fundraising Challenge

Ruth Mitchell reflects on her fundraising challenge for Swindon Carers Centre.

"A week later and if it wasn't for my finishers medal and t-shirt I'd think running the 86 miles of the Ridgeway had been a dream! I went to the start line nervous, apprehensive but confident. I had prepared as well as I could, I had a realistic race plan, my kit was all tried and tested! Most important - the weather forecast for the two days was pretty much perfect.

By 25 miles I was a little worried as I was feeling quite tired. Probably one of the hardest things about ultra-running is keeping to a steady pace from the beginning - much slower than I'd run a marathon. It wasn't until I left the Goring checkpoint - 43 miles and halfway - that I really believed I could do the full 86 miles. Teaming up with two lovely chaps got me through the much dreaded hours of darkness - it's scary up there at night! The sun came up as I left Fox Hill, with 'only' 16 miles to go I picked up the pace and was 30 minutes ahead of my schedule. Everything was brilliant until the final 2.5 mile section to Avebury. I just couldn't run any further, but knowing that Cath and Fiona from SCC (pictured) plus family were waiting for me kept me going to finish in 21 hours and 53 minutes. It was an incredible experience, and I was delighted to have been able to raise money at the same time. Thank you to everyone who so generously sponsored me."

Many congratulations Ruth, a fabulous achievement!



Dementia Friendly Ward at GWH

After a lot of research and off-site visits to other hospitals, the Great Western Hospital is making changes to one of its wards to help support patients who have dementia.

Jupiter ward is being emptied and completely revamped to become dementia friendly. The ward will be much more open and coloured appropriately to help patients find their way round. There will be more pictorial signs, bigger clocks and dementia friendly flooring. There will be areas for patients to walk around and seating areas where patients can sit and socialise. Activities such as memory boxes will also be available.

Each bay will have a nursing pod so staff will be nearer their patients and more available during the night which will help prevent falls. The trust will also implement a 'must answer the call bell' policy; this means any member of staff whether clinical, cleaning, or volunteers etc. on the ward must answer a call bell. This is to ensure patients are not left waiting. The member of staff answering the call can then assess who is the most appropriate person to help the patient, after all the patient might just need help reaching their glasses or a drink which anyone can do.

The work is expected to take a few months to complete.

It is hoped if this goes well it can be implemented on another ward too.

Blue Badge Parking Scheme and road tax exemption

We are often asked about parking for people with disabilities and whether you have to pay road tax. Here is some basic information – it is not a full guide.



Tim Saint, Welfare Benefits advisor writes...

The Blue Badge Scheme - The Blue Badge Scheme is run to national rules by Swindon Borough Council to provide easier parking for people with disabilities. A Blue Badge can be used as either the driver or passenger, but cannot be used to run errands for a disabled person, such as when someone is doing their shopping for them.

To automatically qualify for a Blue Badge, the disabled person must:

- receive the **Higher Rate of Disability Living Allowance mobility** or
- get a car through the **motability scheme** or
- have been awarded **8 Points or more** in the "moving around" part of **Personal Independence Payments (PIP)** or
- be on a **War Pensioners Mobility Supplement** or
- have received a lump sum payment from the **Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation scheme (within tariff levels 1 to 8)** or
- be registered blind

A Blue Badge may also be given to people who have a "permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or considerable difficulty in walking." This may include people who have a learning disability. In these cases, the council write to the GP for advice.

To apply visit www.swindon.gov.uk/bluebadge or contact the council on 01793 445506.

Exemption from road tax - A disabled person may be able to get a Certificate of Entitlement to avoid paying road tax on one car if they get:

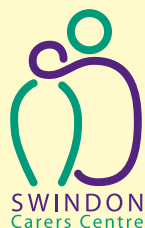
- **Higher Rate Disability Living Allowance mobility** or
- **Enhanced rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**
- **Armed forces independence payment**
- **War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.**

If they get the standard rate of mobility for PIP a 50 percent tax discount is awarded.

One vehicle may be nominated "which is being used, or kept for use, by or for the purposes of a disabled person". This could belong to the disabled person, a friend or relative or a company.

The vehicle can be used to run errands for the person with the disability, but it is unlawful for it to be used for journeys that have nothing to do with them.

Most people will get their certificate with their benefit award.



Swindon Carers Centre Strategic Plan 2014-2017

**We aspire to being the best service for carers;
professional, respected, and the first choice for funding
opportunities, grants and donations.**



Our vision: Creating a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported.
Our mission: To improve the wellbeing of people with caring responsibilities in and around Swindon.
Key message: Carers at the heart of everything we do.

Our overall strategic aim is to ensure Swindon Carers Centre is:

- An agent for carer involvement, irrespective of their individual circumstances and impact of their caring role, so carers can be involved in influencing service development at all levels
- An effective, well-governed and sustainable organisation
- A high quality experience for anybody who comes into contact with us, ensuring we offer a diverse range of personalised information, advice and support
- Known, recognised and approachable by those who live and work in the borough of Swindon

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing carer involvement opportunities
- Further developing our internal working practices and areas of work
- Delivering high quality services based on individual need, identified gaps and carer feedback and creatively and truthfully evaluating the core areas of our service
- Continuing to enhance our trustee board and governance structures and ensuring well-organised succession planning
- Continuously improving our profile, reputation and reach via a dynamic communications strategy
- Enhancing the way we plan and produce our annual financial and fundraising strategy

Free Entry for Carers? Yes, Really!

Been anywhere nice lately? Been somewhere that lets you in for free or at a reduced rate because you are a carer? If you have, then I'd like to know.

A few months ago I spent a pleasant long weekend down in Swanage, on the Dorset coast. I managed to convince my friend Andy that the break would be good for him too and he wouldn't be a gooseberry with me and my partner, Martyn. Andy has a mental health condition and I've been his carer for eight years.



Anyone who has visited Swanage will know that you have to drive past the beautiful Corfe Castle, a National Trust property and a must-see on any trip to the area. We parked and walked up to the castle. Whilst waiting for our tickets, I noticed a

leaflet for an Access for All card, a card which entitles carers/essential companions free entry. I enquired at the ticket desk, and while it wasn't necessary to have a card, it can just make things easier as we don't carry proof of Andy's disability. This got me thinking...

The following day, we went to Monkey World. An amazing place dedicated to rescuing abandoned and abused primates from all over the globe. On entry I again noticed a discount for a carer but also this time a reduction for a disabled person. Yet more thinking was being done...



By the time we reached the end of our break and were heading home, a detour into Dorchester convinced me that I ought to follow up with my thinking once we got home. We were going to visit the amazing Maiden Castle, another National Trust

property, but the access road was closed, so went around the museums. Again on several price lists was the carer discount and all you had to do was ask for it. The Dorset County Museum was very helpful.



By now my thinking was fully formed. Why isn't there a directory of organisations giving carers a discount or free entry? I find being a carer very satisfying but it costs me money I don't have,



accompanying Andy to places he won't go without me. Take the National Trust membership costs. With the Access for All card, two people can now have single membership for the disabled person and use the card for the other, a saving annually of £37. The card belongs to the person with the disability so anybody can accompany them. Another one is the cinema card,

again free entry for the carer/companion.

And with these cards comes a built-in proof that the person is disabled. Great for someone like me who cares for someone with an invisible illness. The cinema card is particularly good for this as it requires a photo to verify identity. This means we don't have to carry Andy's DLA form with us every time we go out and about.



There are two types of discount, one that is specifically for the carer and the other where the carer benefits from reduced entry, like the examples I've mentioned above. I'm interested in both sorts.

So, where have you been? Please pass on this valuable information. You can write to me, care of the Carers Centre or email editor@swindoncarers.org.uk and in future editions of the newsletter, I'll keep you posted. I'll include the contact details that you need to know to get these cards or whether you can just turn up and ask for the discount. Together, let's create a directory for the carers of Swindon. I can't do it alone.

Linda Brown

Carer and Trustee of Swindon Carers Centre



GP Coffee mornings (Carers Cuppa's)

Carers are welcome at the following sessions

Moredon Surgery 1st Wednesday of the month 1-3pm
Wroughton Surgery 1st Thursday of the month 10am-12pm
Priory Road Surgery 2nd Wednesday of the month 1pm-3pm
Old Town Surgery 3rd Wednesday of the month 1.30pm-3.30pm
Homeground Surgery, Haydon Wick 20th Nov 10am-12pm

For further information about the GP Coffee Mornings please contact Maxine O'Brien on 01793 531133.



Talks, Activities and Groups update

For further information about any of the below, please contact Heather Goldsmith, Groups and Breaks Co-ordinator on 01793 401095 Mon-Thurs or email Heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk

Swindon Mental Health Carer Rep Group & Swindon Learning Disability Carers Forum Need You!



Are you looking after someone experiencing mental ill-health or looking after an adult with a learning disability? Our two groups are friendly and welcoming with tea and biscuits available. They are not closed groups but prior notice of your attendance is required by calling Heather on 01793 401095.

Mental Health Carer Rep Group: (these meetings will now alternate between participating in the AWP Carer Champion meetings and the meetings at ASDA)

- 25 November, AWP Carer Champion meeting Sandalwood Court tbc
- 16 December, 10.30am-12.30pm at the Training Room, ASDA, West Swindon

Learning Disability Carers Forum: Civic Offices, Euclid Street

- 18 December, 10am-11.30am, Civic Offices

Open Minds Group This is a social/activity group for older carers to come on their own or with the person they care for - particularly if their loved one has dementia. 2 - 4pm at St Andrew's Church, Raleigh Avenue, Walcot:
Thurs 20th Nov, Thurs 18th Dec, Thurs 15th Jan



Group for 16-24 year old carers

A social/peer support group for Young Adult Carers. (Previous events have included an activity evening, a meal and bowling).



Caring and coping course for Mental Health Carers

This is a course delivered at Swindon Carers Centre by Donna Huff, Service Manager of Rethink. The course consists of a variety of topics and you can attend the sessions of interest to you.



Knitting/Crochet Group

Learners and experienced knitters welcome. Come and have a cuppa and a chat. Just pop in between **10.30am-12pm on Thursdays at Swindon Carers Centre.**



Highworth Carer Group

The group meets at The Community Centre (The Dormers) on a monthly basis, 10.30am-12pm. Next meetings are:

Thursday 13th Nov, Thursday 11th Dec, Thursday 8th Jan



Mental Health Carer Peer Support Group

These are meetings for carers of people with mental health conditions. (Please confirm with Heather your attendance at these sessions as the locations may change). The next sessions are 4pm-6pm at Swindon Carers Centre on:

Thursday 6th Nov, Thursday 4th Dec.



How about a bit of pampering?

Carers will be offered a choice of treatments e.g. manicure or pedicure; facial or massage, delivered by students training for a career in the beauty industry. Students will be supervised and assessed by their lecturers.



A hair cut can make you feel better

Carers can apply for a voucher enabling them to receive a free cut and blow dry by students at a local college, training for a career in the hairdressing industry. Students will be supervised and assessed by their lecturers.



Calling all male carers!

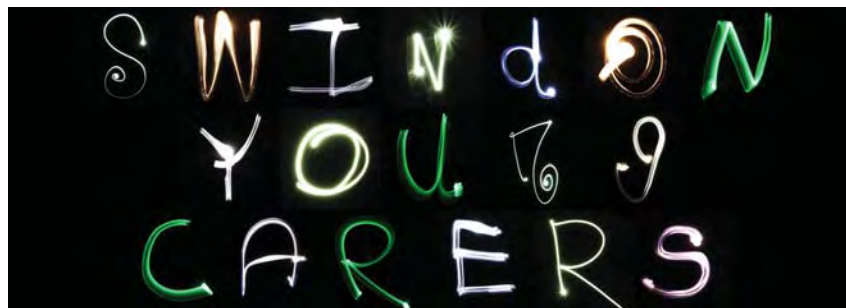
How about an evening out with other male carers? This is a social group that meets quarterly and is hosted by 2 male SCC staff members. Previous activities have included dog racing, a meal and Ten Pin bowling.



New Groups - Due to requests a social/support group has started and is facilitated by a counsellor for carers whose loved one is now in a care home. Carers have said 'I feel bereaved but do not yet have a body', 'I feel guilty, lonely', 'I have lost my reason for getting up in the morning'. We also have new Sewing and Meditation groups.



For further details of the above and the next Dementia Awareness, Basic First Aid Awareness, Safeguarding and Food Safety courses, please contact Heather on 01793 401095.



Young Carers Holiday Activities

Hi, I'm Naomi and I'm here to tell you what young carers got up to over the summer! Young carers ran 16 activities over the 5 week holiday ranging from cinema trips, sailing, 'Water Fun' day, art workshops, horse riding, Jungle Park, a photography workshop, PGL, rock climbing, ice skating and trips to Cadbury's World and Alton Towers; plus another two activities put on by Zurich Challenge (Go Ape) and Open Works (Roves farm).

I attended an Art workshop with young carers. It was on 28th July 2014 at the Croft Sports Centre. We made our own graffiti picture with our nicknames etc. using spray paint. Some pictures people made were for their friends or family. On my one I used black for the background and red for the writing (my favourite colours). Then we made a smaller picture of our heroes for a fundraising ball. There were 10 young carers and 4 volunteers. When we were there we had FOOD! My picture was FABULOUS!

Sailing and Water activities day

I went to the water activities day at Bowmoor Sailing club on Saturday 2nd August. In the first activity, we went out and had to either kick a football, throw a ball, frisbee or boomerang into a hoop to earn points so you could use them to buy different supplies to protect an egg you had from falling from a distance. In the second activity we went out onto sailing boats and we were taught how to sail. We would get to sail the boat across the water to different buoys. We had to even the weight and not sail into the

Tom's story...

Before I became a Young Carer, I felt as if I was the only person in Swindon who cared for someone in their family. I could never talk to anyone about it because I thought that it would make me seem as if I was attention seeking. However, when I was registered as a Young Carer, this all changed.

I quickly met many other Young Carers and made many friends while doing activities, such as visiting Techniquest in Cardiff, the Houses of Parliament and even going to a PGL centre near Bournemouth. I feel a lot more comfortable when talking about my caring role, and have even found out that some of my friends from before becoming a Young Carer were also registered.

I joined the Young Carers Forum, which addresses the issues that Young Carers in Swindon face. We have created many different schemes, such as the Young Carers award for schools and, probably my proudest achievement, the Young Carers Media group, which completely rejuvenated the Young Carers newsletter. I am nearly eighteen and soon I will leave Young Carers. I have really enjoyed my years with Young Carers, and am really grateful for all they've done.

wind. In the final activity we had to make a raft out of barrels, logs and string, and were then given paddles. When we were in the water we had to do different tests to see if it would stay together. The first was to sit onto it and get to the water successfully, second was to stand up, third was to jump, fourth was to swap positions with the person next to you, and fifth was for the raft to stay together through waves made by a speed boat. If our raft had survived those tests we would have to sail it to some boats across the lake. After all of that we were allowed to swim around in the water before we had a barbecue. We then tested the eggs and only one out of six survived the fall! The best part of that day for me was the sailing, it was so peaceful on a boat, there was no loud talking or screaming like there is at home; it was possibly the calmest I have ever been.



Go Ape

Go Ape has outdoor adventure courses that go around a big forest. There are five different courses for people to try and all of the different activities on the courses are rated (easy, medium, hard or expert) e.g. the balance bridges are medium and the zip wires are easy. To stay safe, the instructor secures you with a safety harness to attach yourself to the red wire around the tree so you can't fall off.

The first adventure course is a practice course to get you ready for the bigger courses that are around the forest, to help you complete the first course you have an instructor with you to show you how to do it. The second course you had to attach yourself to a rope that has metal rings on it then you have to climb a ladder. Once you get up there are little challenges to get to the other platform. The other three courses are pretty much the same apart from the platforms get higher and the zip line got longer.

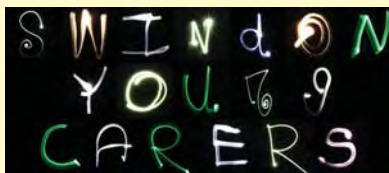
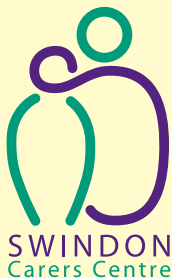


PGL

The activities we did at PGL were the giant swing, Survivor, zip wire, and an obstacle course. My favourite activity was either the giant swing or Survivor as they were really fun, even though I am terrified of heights, I enjoyed the giant swing as you looked straight forward and forget that you are so high. I loved going there and I would like to get back there sometime.

Rock-climbing

The last activity I went to was rock-climbing at the Link Centre and it's the first time I'd been! It was difficult, but really fun. Although I had trouble, I enjoyed every minute of it. All of the young carers activities and days out are great and I enjoyed every minute, there wasn't one time I was disappointed.



Swindon Carers Centre

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Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1QH
Tel: Swindon (01793) 531133*

*Office Hours:
9.30am - 4.45pm Monday to Thursday
and 9.30am - 12.30pm Friday*

Swindon Young Carers

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information at editor@swindoncarers.org.uk*

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www.swindoncarers.org.uk

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