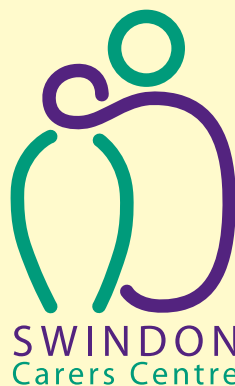


Caring Matters

Newsletter

Spring 2014



Carers Rights Day review *page 4*

Swindon Cares supports Swindon Carers *page 8*

Young Carer Update *page 12*

Supporting Family Carers of All Ages

Welcome one and all to the Spring Newsletter. This time of year sees us coming out of the grey and cold into a time of year for new life and new beginnings. Nature always shows us the way forward and provides us with the possibility of recovery and new growth.

This certainly appears to be the case for us at the Carers Centre. It's an opportunity to reflect on our achievements, challenge our performance, focus on what we do best and plan for the future. To do this we are currently developing our 3 year plan taking us to March 2017. We need a sound strategy to address some of the key changes for carers that might arise from the forthcoming Care Bill (due in April 2015) and the Children and Families Bill (due September 2014). We will be endeavouring to collect as many views as possible from carers, staff and volunteers to help us decide what our priorities will be. We will use the networks of our groups and activities to survey carers and it will also be available on our website. This is our first time in a long time that we've attempt to involve other voices in our planning so bear with us. We will improve year on year as we get our systems set up to involve more and more of you. So look out for the opportunities to get involved.

That's enough about looking forward, what about the exciting things that have happened at the Carers Centre between winter and spring? Well, in our last edition I mentioned I had joined the membership of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) Patient and Public Involvement Forum (PPI). I raised the fact that the CCG Board did not have a Lead Champion for Carers. I'm thrilled to say the CCG have addressed this and the role will be shared by Tony Ranzetta, the Accountable Officer, and Gill May,

Executive Nurse and Lead Director for the PPI. This really is a great step forward.

I also mentioned in the last edition about the events we were running in November for Carers Rights Day. We celebrated the day with a Corporate Event to engage more businesses in Swindon (see page 5 for a write up of this). We also held an event for carers at Citifaith Church (look out for a great article about this on page 4). 45 carers not only enjoyed a lovely lunch but had the opportunity to get up close and personal with key representatives from major health and social care organisations. A great day was had by all. I'm really looking forward to the next one already! Carers suggested we have more of these events and I'm currently talking to our partners about making this happen. We've also included many of the ideas and suggestions made by carers on the day in our development plans for the next 3 years.

Our fundraising news for this issue is really positive. You will find an article about the Open Minds Group on page 8. This is a group that has been funded by Swindon Cares and in November we attended a cheque presentation event (look out for the owl!). They've raised more than £7000 so far and are supporting us again this year which is great news. We also had wonderful news in December about our benefits advice line which has received continued funding from our Zurich Partnership. We are delighted. Thanks Zurich! Lastly we've secured funding

from St James Place which means we've appointed a Young Carers Development Worker, Fiona Prinzi, to work with schools and colleges. This has also helped us in our quest to further develop our family approach to support parent carers and young carers by appointing a Family Worker, Debbie Murphy-Myers. Just one new staff member to introduce you to, Abi Finegan will be joining us for 7 months to cover our very important 'first point of contact' position.

You may have heard on the grapevine about the Information and Advice Hub planned for the centre of town in Sanford Street. Swindon Carers Centre is currently in discussions about the possibility of moving in to the Hub with other voluntary sector organisations. We would continue to provide our support all over Swindon, as we do now, and would have our administrative base in the Hub. We will be talking to carers about the venture and I'll let you know more as the plans unfold. Watch this space!

Just before I finish I'd like to tell you about something to look out for in our Summer edition. Our Chair of Trustees, Ian Price and I are getting out and about in February to meet carers. We feel it's really important for us to learn first-hand from you about your daily life and how the Carers Centre might continue to support you. It's going to be an interesting couple of days which we are both looking forward to. Ian says:

"As Chairman of Swindon Carers Centre it is important I understand the real issues carers are facing - I am spending two days visiting a number of different carers and will listen to their experiences and find out how they cope with being a carer. I know it's not always easy being a carer and I hope spending some time with you will give me a better insight as to the different things/issues carers face which will help me in running Swindon Carers Centre - I have to say I am really looking forward to the two days".

I do hope you enjoy this newsletter as it's full of exciting stories and sound bites from many different contributors. A truly vibrant account of the festivities over Christmas and the start of this new year, what you enjoy most about being involved with our groups and activities and some exciting news about funding and partnership working.

If you have any ideas about what to include in future newsletters or would like to contribute yourself, just let us know by contacting either myself or Susanna Jones at SCC on 01793 531133 or email editor@swindoncarers.org.uk

Kind regards
Cath Johnston
CEO



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)

Carers Rights Day

It was the first time I had attended a Carers Rights Day and I was pleased to see so many representatives from most of the organisations involved with the caring community of Swindon and the surrounding area.

It was heartening to see Swindon Borough Council involved, as well as the Great Western Hospital. Each speaker had many interesting snippets of news and they did not go on for too long! Did you know the Care Bill is coming in during the spring of this year and that it will be law next year? Did you know the NHS had a "Think Care" website and would like your comments on it? Did you know the Carers Centre may move to The Hub (old Sandford Street building) together with other social welfare and adult health organisations from the voluntary sector I certainly did not know that I could have been claiming Carers' credit for 6 years, which, though it pays nothing out, would have ensured I received a full pension when the time came. I gleaned a lot of information in such a short space of time.

Cath Johnston spoke eloquently about the work done by Swindon Carers Centre and the service and support they provide for carers, whether those carers are 5 years old or 90 years old! I think no one quite realised the number of people the Carers Centre has helped, and is still helping, in very many diverse ways. They have a dedicated team of staff and volunteers and notwithstanding funding changes, still actively listen to carers, offer help & support and are happy to trial innovations. The need in the Swindon & surrounding area is great; indeed many people do not even consider themselves to be carers. One lady I spoke with had not had a break in more than 12 years!

During the day, there was a plentiful supply of tea, coffee & biscuits, which also meant an opportunity to speak on a person to person basis with the professionals, who can be a little remote behind their desks at times. I'm sure hearing from individuals made the problems carers face, on a daily basis, more real to them and also more acute. It certainly helped me to put my worries into perspective, as so many people were struggling with much worse situations and yet were totally unselfish in the work they did and the time they gave.

We broke off into smaller discussion groups, led by the professionals, with such searching questions as: How can health & social care services help you feel recognised, valued and included when caring for somebody? We talked about assessments with an actual outcome; advocacy when you run out of energy to do it yourself; greater continuity from the professional side; staff training days to include carers so they could see & hear our emotions; respite care for carers, even a weekend; the social isolation of mental health; use of Carers Centre; link with volunteer services; and we even talked about funding.

So, for all you carers out there: YOU do an amazing job! However, don't forget there are actually people who CARE about what you are going through, who do WANT to help you and CAN HELP you in so many ways. Not only do they work at Swindon Carers Centre, but they can put you in touch with other caring professionals in the Swindon area. Also think about joining a peer group for support; you are definitely not alone. And yes, you are worth it!

So, when the next Carers Rights Day comes along, think about attending. Better still, find your voice now.

Emilia Love attended 29th November, 2013



**CARERS
RIGHTS DAY**

Swindon Carers Centre Corporate Event Review



We held a highly successful Corporate Event at the Core Juice Bar on Devizes Road, Old Town on November 25th. Representatives from more than a dozen businesses which operate in the town attended to learn more about how they can recognise, acknowledge and value carers in the community and workplace.

Also present was Robert Buckland, MP for South Swindon, who spoke about carer awareness. Carers too often remain hidden, their responsibilities outside of work being unknown to their employers. Sometimes, they end up having to give up work, meaning they struggle financially and employers lose valued, skilled members of staff.

Tony Martin, Volunteer Development Manager for Zurich Community Trust, and Fiona Harpum, Adult Carer Support Worker for Swindon Carers Centre, related their own experiences as carers and the difference it made to have their employers recognise this burden and offer support. Tony also spoke about the social responsibility of businesses to members of their staff who provide care.

Next, Sarah Smith, a volunteer who joined the Carers Centre through SkillShare, discussed the value businesses can bring through employee volunteering. Sarah volunteers for the young carers team in an administrative capacity, and her work frees up time for support workers to help more young carers directly.

Finally, Cath Johnston, CEO of Swindon Carers Centre, spoke about the importance of corporate support for local charities. While charitable foundations and local authorities link funding to particular outcomes, businesses are more able to give unrestricted funds, which can be used to fund the core costs of an organisation – a significant challenge for the Carers Centre at present. Cath emphasised services for carers matter to businesses, as anyone can suddenly become a carer – one in ten people are carers at any given time, which means that one in ten employees and customers will have caring responsibilities.

Swindon Carers Centre would like to extend their special thanks to the Core Juice Bar, who allowed us to use their premises and also served us a healthy breakfast of porridge and a range of juices!

Russell Francis
Fundraising Officer SCC

Date for your diaries!

Carers Week this year takes place between Monday 9th and Sunday 15th June 2014. We will be organising several events to mark the week, including our AGM. More details to follow in the next edition of Caring Matters.



Quick Volunteer Q&A!



Name: Amy Gilbert

Volunteer Position:
Volunteer with Young Carers Team

How long have you been working with us:

Since autumn 2011

How did you decide to volunteer with Swindon Carers Centre: I'd

been looking for an opportunity to give back to the community, but was also keen to work with children. I guess the concept of being a young carer struck a chord with me as my mum had periods of being unwell when I was growing up.

What work do you do with us:

I started as a volunteer for groups on Monday nights. I usually found myself in the kitchen or the art and craft room, where I'd be having just as much fun as the young carers!

I no longer work on Mondays due to other demands on my time, but I work alongside Matt supporting the Young Carers Media Group.

What do you get out of volunteering with Swindon Carers Centre:

I get to work with a bright, fun group of young people and do something I enjoy. I like to see it as a win-win situation!

Would you recommend volunteering here to other people:

Absolutely!

Update from Swindon Trauma Group

5th Annual Conference is on Friday 6 June 2014 from 09.15 to 17.00 hours at Swindon Marriott Hotel. Title - Beyond the Mud, Filth, and Trauma of the 1st World War...Shellshock to Post Trauma Stress - treatment and support?

3rd Annual Draw at Swindon Basepoint "breakout area" will take place on Wednesday 19 March 2014 10.00 to 17.00 hours. The cost of draw tickets £2.50 with top class prizes. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available on the day. Thank you Swindon Basepoint for sponsoring use of their excellent facilities.

For more information about any of the above, please contact
info@SwindonTraumaGroup.org.uk

Minimum wage rise causes loss of income for carers



The national minimum wage rise in October has had a knock-on effect for many carers who are also earning a wage, as it means they will exceed the threshold for Carer's Allowance and will no longer be eligible to claim it.

Those affected are caught in a 'catch 22' - reducing their working hours to less than 16 per week will bring them back under the threshold, but they would then lose out on tax credits.

At the moment there are an estimated 40,000 people who earn a wage and receive Carer's Allowance.

This situation will be alleviated in April when the earnings threshold for Carer's Allowance is due to rise; meaning those affected will again be able to claim it. However, if the minimum wage rises again next year, carers will once more be placed in the position of losing Carer's Allowance in October and having to re-apply in April. As well as causing significant loss of income, this makes life very complicated.

There is a simple solution available; synchronising the time of raising the earnings threshold for Carer's Allowance with that of the minimum wage rise.

In Radio 4's Money Box programme, Emily Holzhausen of Carers UK said the current situation is largely due to a lack of co-ordination between government departments: 'One department has been working without talking to another department about what the knock-on effect would be'.

Please note this article first appeared on the Carers Trust website – www.carers.org.

For further help with appeals and bedroom tax -

www.carersuk.org/appealsguide and

www.carersuk.org/bedroomtaxtoolkit

Learning for life



Learning for Life offers education, training and personal development opportunities for disabled people and their carers. There is a £2 a week registration fee and then you can access courses of your choice. For more information Tel 01793 422964 or email info@L4LSwindon.co.uk. You can visit their website at www.L4LSwindon.co.uk.

Swindon Cares support for the Open Minds Group

The Open Minds Group has been set up thanks to funding from Swindon Cares. In November our CEO Cath Johnston accepted a cheque for £7,567.

This is such an important facility for carers of older people AND the people they care for (especially if they have dementia) to enjoy together.

Activities include Tea Dances, Coffee Mornings and a fabulous Christmas Party (see right).

Nicky Alberry, from Swindon Cares, says "It was a brilliant event. I was delighted to be able to attend the Open Minds Christmas party. It was lovely to see everyone having such a great time, lots of singing & dancing to songs old and new. It was especially nice to see how some of the money Swindon Cares had raised in 2013 for The Carers Centre is being used. We are looking forward to another successful year of fundraising in 2014 & will continue with our support for their Adult Carers Programmes."



Carers who use the Open Minds Group tell us it's very beneficial for them:

"I enjoy meeting up with friends and making new friends. The singing I always enjoy."

"There's always someone to talk to and something to look forward to. It keeps me active and gets mum out of the house and interested in outside life."

"As a carer it's just a great place to be able to come and take part. Everyone does a marvellous job."

"It's nice to meet other people and have a chat. Being part of a group doesn't make me feel so isolated all the time."

"It's a chance to communicate with others with similar issues and it's a break from normal routine at home. It's relaxing and means I'm stress free for a couple of hours."

DIRECTORY

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

We have introduced a new directory to make life easier for those of us looking for a phone number! These things tend to start small but will hopefully grow quite

quickly to become a real resource for you. If you would like to advertise your services in our directory, please contact editor@swindoncarers.org.uk

Legal

Will Writers and LPA Specialists
Foresight Wills

Foresight Wills
Will Writers and LPA Specialists
www.foresightwills.com

01793 433705

My Placement with Swindon Carers Centre



My name is Olly and I am a 25 year old student social worker. I have been on placement specifically working within the young carers team. My placement totalled 80 days and I fulfilled the role of a support worker. Once I had finished my induction and received adequate training, I was able to work within the team. As a support worker I completed initial assessments with newly referred young carers, provided one on one support sessions and had the opportunity to participate within group activities.

The group activities were amazing, the activities were set up and run for young carers, this meant I went on an incredible trip to Thorpe Park. The initial assessments led to me meeting a range of wonderful families as well as variety of awesome young carers. The 1:1 support sessions were great, I was lucky enough to go bowling on a few occasions.

Swindon Carers Centre provide support for young carers, parent carers and adult carers. All staff are based in one office in Wood Street. All staff within the environment bring something different, but together it is clear the centre has a great team. The staff I worked with are dedicated to supporting all carers within Swindon, the office environment is always friendly and calm.

I have learnt so much from my experience and I am very grateful to have come in contact with and worked with a range of amazing people. The carers I have supported have provided me with a valuable and true perspective on what it's like to be a carer. I would like to express in an empathetic manner to any carers who read this, I think you are doing a fantastic job, which is truly inspiring. I only hope Swindon Carers Centre continues to excel in providing well rounded and person-centred support, helping to improve the lives of many people.

Olly Saunders

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



Are you looking after someone experiencing mental ill-health?

Then the Swindon Mental Health Carer Rep Group

NEEDS YOU!



The Group is friendly and welcoming with tea and biscuits available. It is not a closed group but prior notice of your attendance is required by calling Heather on 01793 401095.

What do we do:

- ✓ Influence local, regional and national decision-making processes
- ✓ Shape the services available to carers and the people we care for
- ✓ Be a representative voice for others in a similar position
- ✓ Attend meetings and consultations

Dates and times of meetings at The Training Room, ASDA West Swindon

- Tuesday 25th February 10.30-1.30
- Tuesday 25th March 10.30-12.30
- Tuesday 22nd April 10.30-1.30



'I joined the Swindon Mental Health Carer Rep. Group to help myself, and other carers, negotiate Mental Health services.

We need more people/carers to help us shape the services available to carers and the people we care for. Come along and let us know how we can help you or vice versa. We're a friendly and welcoming group!' CS

'We need Carer Reps for all types of mental health condition and to hear from carers who have experienced different services/specialisms'.

'We want to gather the views and experiences of mental health carers and feed the information to those who can influence change'.

'I attend to influence change, helps me keep my brain active, I enjoy meeting other people and Swindon Carers Centre is an excellent charity to be involved with. I would like to motivate more carers to attend the meetings.' DH

What's On

For information on any of the activities below please contact Heather Goldsmith at Swindon Carers Centre on 01793 401095.

Manual Handling Course

Carers will learn how to support their loved one to move and the importance of looking after their back. The safe use of a variety of specialist equipment will be covered.



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.



Highworth Carer Group

The group meets at The Community Centre (The Dormers) on a monthly basis.



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.



Mental Health Carer Peer Support Group

These are meetings for carers of people with mental health conditions.



The Good Guide to Nutrition – Tuesday 15 April 2014

Do you worry about nutrition? Is eating or swallowing difficult for the person you care for? This interactive presentation covers:

- Healthy eating and keeping the body strong
- How to spot signs of malnutrition, managing swallowing difficulties

Practical hints and tips to improve the diet of the person you care for and yourself (12 places available)



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.



For details of the next **Dementia Awareness** and **Basic First Aid** Awareness courses, please contact Heather.



There are many Young Carers groups in Swindon, and they supply different activities for all Young Carers registered with Swindon Carers Centre. Each group has a specific age to suit the Young Carers. All young carers in these groups have to respect all the equipment and the other Young Carers.

Go For It's

Go for It's is a group that does a lot of fun activities for ages 5-8 years. You can get transport or your parents/carers can take you. At the start of the club you will get a safety talk and what activities you can do. There's cooking in the kitchen, if you feel like doodling you can go into the art room, there's soft play, outside games and there's a Nintendo Wii.

Getaways

Getaways is for carers from 9-11 years. You will get transport or your parent/carer can take you. When you first go you will get a talk on safety and what stuff you can do. If you like sports, outside you can play football or if you like to draw you can go to the art room, there's soft play and cooking.

Krazy Kids

The Krazy Kids is a group for ages 12-14. There are lots of cool activities to do. You can sit in the front room and watch TV and talk to mates. If you go upstairs and go in the first room you will find a pool table, a Xbox 360, PS2 and darts. In the second room there's a boom box so you can listen to music and have fun. When I went to my first young carers group it was strange because I didn't know anyone and I didn't know what I could do, but now I've met some people and I have a blast and I can't wait for the next session.

YC Drop In

The YC Drop In is a group for ages 15-18s. In group you will always have a laugh and you can just chill and enjoy yourself. It's a place where you can have a break from home and chill out with friends and have a good laugh by all joining in on an activity or just talking to each other. Whilst not everyone gets along all the time you can't expect them to can you because we are all individual people with different interests and hobbies.

Written by David Greenwood, Young Carer

Springtime poem by Kerry

Bunnies jumping

Bulbs opening

Eggs hatching

Days stretching

Easter egg hunting

Spring is coming

Leaves turning greener

Grass growing longer

Birds singing louder

Weather getting warmer

Sky getting bluer

Spring creeping closer



Questions for Councillor Maureen Penny



• What does your role as councillor involve and how long have you been doing it for?

I've been doing it for just under 2 years. It involves lots of meetings, talking to people, taking complaints (green waste). Chair of the Children's and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOS). We look at everything the young peoples' services do and praise or criticise so we can ensure they get better.

• How much work is involved in this role?

We have a meeting every quarter for CYPOS and before that meeting I have a meeting to make sure everything is ready. We have to do a lot of reading and research so that we know what we want to look at. We'd need to involve relevant people to make sure we have all the information we need.

• Why did you get involved/choose to be a councillor?

I've always been in business. I was thinking that my time in business was coming to an end and I wanted to do something to give back to the community that had supported me.

• What inspires you?

My dog! He's poorly at the moment. Seriously, making sure everyone's getting the best possible deal they can. I also hope to inspire people to do better.

• What's the most satisfying thing about your role as Councillor?

Helping people. It's ever so broad. For example, I can help an old person with mobility problems, or work with young people having a hard time. No two days are the same.

• What's the most difficult thing about the role?

Keeping my temper when things don't go the way I'd like them to! Trying to fit everything in can also be hard – there aren't enough hours in the day.

• Are you based in a certain area?

I come from Highworth. Though, I also help people from other areas of Swindon and I try to make sure their issues are resolved – sometimes I will refer them to the councillor for their area.

• How do you ensure the voices of young people in Swindon are heard?

Because I'm head of CYPOS I actually talk to the young people and invite them in to talk to us. This year I have worked with young people in foster care; I've also been to a group called Swindon Youth Parliament, which is a group of young people exploring current issues in Swindon.

• Have you had any involvement with Young Carers before? What did that involve?

I've been to a meeting where young carers joined the councillors (CYPOS). We listened to what they had to say and took some issues forward. I've also visited some local schools in Highworth to ensure they're aware of young carers and are doing what they can to support young carers.

• What does the Children and Young People's Overview Scrutiny Committee do to raise awareness of the young carers?

We have to be careful that we look at the needs of all young people in the community (including adopted, fostered, disabled etc.) It's on the agenda that next year the young carers will be on our agenda. We plan to speak with young carers themselves. We're in support of the Young Carer ID Card and we think more schools should use it. The passport helps teachers to understand the needs of young carers and make allowances for young carers circumstances.

• How do you like to spend your time when you're not working?

With my trainee guide dog puppy, Andi! Having a guide dog puppy is very different to owning your own dog – he comes everywhere with me! The only place he doesn't go to is the cinema. The training is a lot more involved than with pet dogs.

I'm training Andi so that he can go to his forever home as a guide dog. I've enjoyed having him, but I am going to be in floods of tears when he goes – I'll miss him a lot.

The Swindon Youth Offending Team



The Swindon Youth Offending Team (YOT) ran a week long workshop for young offenders in Swindon to produce graffiti canvases for both the Swindon Young Carer Media Group and the Swindon Young Carer Forum. Some of our Young Carers spoke to Cathy from YOT afterwards...

1: What is the youth offending team and what do you do?

The youth offending team works with young people that get into trouble with the police we also work with communities, parents and schools and once they have been to court they go to the Youth Offending Team via a court order and they are supervised whilst on bail and released from prison.

2: What do you do for young offenders?

Look at the reasons why they offend; we can sort out accommodation; work with their families and if they are older they can be helped with education, jobs and benefits. Helping them with constructive use of their leisure time and finding new interests. Also work with them to put something back into the community.

3: Do you think what you do is effective?

Some of the time it depends if the young person wants to stop what they are doing and change their lives. Some don't and become adult offenders. Sometimes it's effective in the way the seriousness of offending decreases.

4: Does your work help to improve the surrounding community?

Yes! If we can keep young people out of trouble and if we can stop them offending it means less victims and also they have to work in the community as part of their reparation.

5: What made you do this project for young carers?

First of all young carers are busy people! They give up time and don't have the same opportunities that others do and some young offenders are quite selfish and don't realise what other people go through, so it just makes them aware of how hard others' lives are. It's a good way to create awareness for them about the lives of others.

6: How long did it take the young people to do the project?

It was done over the October half term which was a maximum of four days in total.

7: How can you help change a young offender's life?

We can show them there are other opportunities and there is a different life if they want it. We can build some self-esteem and confidence to be able to go into education and we are trying to make them a productive member of society.

8: Have you ever been involved with young carers before?

Not young carers specifically, but we have worked with children who are in care who used to be young carers.

9: Is the youth offending team effective, if so why?

Yes I think it is because we do have young people that don't re-offend and we manage to keep young people out of custody and they manage to complete their orders without going to prison. I've been around long enough to see people who say that it has worked for them and they have restarted their lives getting jobs and families of their own.

10: What would you say was the best part about your job?

I get to work directly with young people which means taking them out and being able to see their progress from the beginning of their order to the end and seeing them move on and do well with their lives.

11: Do you enjoy being a part of the youth offending team?

Yes I do!

12: What is the hardest part of your job?

The victim part. Sometimes the victims are children, elderly or disabled people and knowing that they have suffered and been a victim of crime is not nice. Also when a young person has been given loads of opportunities and they don't take them and carry on offending and end up in prison anyway. We also work with some offenders that are serious drug users at the age of 16 and 17 so it's a horrible thing to see.

A Big Thank You from Swindon Young Carers

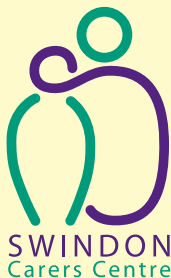
As we are nearing the end of the financial year, it made us think what a great year it has been. We have had a record number of young carers holiday activities. This is mostly due to all the hard work throughout the year that **Friends of Young Carers** does to raise money so young carers can experience these fantastic activities. This year young carers have had the opportunity to take part in three horse riding lessons, tennis coaching, two theatre trips, The Young Carers Festival, trips to the cinema, trips to Windsor Castle and Thorpe Park, along with many other activities and this is all down to the amazing efforts of all those involved with Friends Of Young Carers.

We would also like to thank **St. Margaret Prep School** in Calne for raising an amazing amount of money that paid for 12 young carers who care for siblings who are on the autistic spectrum to attend an ASD workshop and outside activities, four day residential at PGL Liddington, where the young carers who attended learnt about autism and how to manage their own health and emotional wellbeing when caring for someone with autism and of course they all had a fantastic time taking part in the outdoor pursuits as well.

We would also like to say a big thank you to **Zurich** and **Openworks** for the challenges they provided the young carers this year. We were lucky enough to have 3 challenges this year that were organised, paid for and run by Zurich and Openworks, one was a trip to Lego Land and another challenge was a day of rock climbing, football coaching and tenpin bowling. One of the teams also put on another activity for 12 young carers to go bowling and another team from Zurich did a festive challenge, in which they fund raised and bought Christmas presents for YC forum members for all their hard work this year. We would like to say a big thank you for your kindness and generosity and for thinking about young carers.

We would also like to thank the amazing team of **Young Carers Volunteers**, not just for the precious time they so very kindly give up so young carers are supported in groups and activities, but for also taking time to fundraise for young carers and raise fantastic amounts of money that go towards giving young carers a break from their caring roles. Thank you for hard work and your time.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported Swindon Young Carers this past year, we really appreciate the support you give.



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