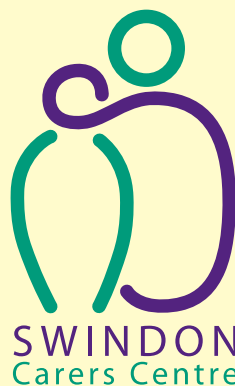


Caring Matters

Newsletter

Winter 2013



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Supporting Family Carers of All Ages

I'm hoping since my last editorial that you feel you know a little more about me. I have to say it's been a hectic 3 months since taking up the CEO post and I'm well and truly settling in.

Everyone has been fantastic in welcoming me into the role and the staff group have been working hard to set even firmer foundations for our future. We are looking carefully at our different strategies (e.g. fundraising, volunteering, communications and I.T.) to ensure all feed effectively into the overarching organisational approach for the benefit of carers.

We have some seen some staffing changes recently having welcomed back two members of staff from maternity leave, Dawn Lewis and Anne-Marie Young. We have managed to retain John Beale and Fiona Harpum, who had been covering their maternity leave. However, we were sad to say goodbye to a very valued member of staff, Trish Moroney, who is moving on to pastures new and we wish her all the best for the future.

I have been very busy developing and enhancing our partnership work. We have many supporters in the borough of Swindon and I will ensure they continue to flourish and evolve. For example, I now sit on the Clinical Commissioning

Group's Patient and Public Involvement Forum (CCG PPI). It's really important to get the carer voice heard in this forum so if you want to find out more and maybe attend yourself please read the article on page 8 in this newsletter.

Hard to believe but it's nearly a year since we started the new contract. We had a very positive contract monitoring meeting with our commissioners. We have seen a real rise in the numbers of carers being registered with us and we continue to provide a diverse programme of activities and support. I am delighted by the number of carers we are able to support whether it be for a pamper session, a horse riding lesson, counselling support, a listening ear on the phone or a cuppa and a chat at a carer gathering.

As I close I'd just like to highlight a couple of important events we have planned in conjunction with Carers' Rights Day. Firstly, on November 25th we will be inviting corporates and businesses in Swindon to come and find out more about carers issues so that they

can support carers more in the workplace. Secondly, we will be running a carer event on Friday 29th November – and you can find out more about those sessions below.

Kind regards
Cath Johnston
CEO



Carers Rights Day Friday 29th November 2013

**CARERS
RIGHTS DAY**

The theme for Carers Rights Day this year is 'rights, advice, support' focusing on ensuring carers understand their rights and get access to good quality advice that can support them to care.

We are holding 2 events to mark Carers Rights Day this year.

The first, a "Corporate Event", will take place on Monday 25th November from 08.30am - 10.30am and will focus on businesses in Swindon, explaining the importance of recognising, acknowledging and valuing carers in the community and workplace; and exploring new avenues for employee volunteering and fundraising. Robert Buckland MP (South Swindon) will be hosting this event with us and speaking alongside Tony Martin, Volunteer Development Manager at Zurich Community Trust. If you are a corporate/business and would like to register an interest in this event, please fill in this short form: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SCC_business_event

(If you can't come but would like someone else to attend from your business, please forward the link above to a colleague. If you can't come this time, but would like to be invited to a future event, please fill in your details, and tick the relevant box in the last question).

The second event (29th Nov, 10am-2pm, Citifaith Church, Regent Street) is for carers and will involve an update on the Carers' Strategy nationally and how it affects carers at a local level here. There will also be the opportunity of questioning health and social care leaders in Swindon, including Lyn McDermott from SBC, Rob Nicholls from GWH. We will also have free health checks and benefits advice.

Ridgeway Mindfulness Psychology



Mindfulness is an approach which encourages us to think outside of normal problem solving mode or automatic pilot mind states to notice what is happening moment to moment. Ridgeway Mindfulness Psychology is a non-profit organisation which offers:

- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy Courses
- Consultancy for health professionals using introductory or self-help materials with their clients
- Supervision for those taking a more formal approach to mindfulness interventions
- Internships for intending mindfulness teachers taking the apprenticeship route
- Consultancy for organisations seeking stress reduction programmes for staff
- Taster sessions
- Occasional sessions and retreat days for those who have completed a course, or those who already have some experience of their own mindfulness practice
- Yoga for mindfulness teachers, and mindfulness for yoga teachers

For more information contact enquiries@rmp-swindon.org

How Mindfulness has helped one Swindon carer

My husband survived a major stroke in January 2012. This was a life changing event for both of us and he has made an amazing physical recovery. However as time passed and things became more 'normal' I realised that I wasn't managing as well as I thought I might emotionally.

I had read a couple of books about mindfulness prior to this and was reminded of mindfulness by reading Finding Peace in A Frantic World by Mark Williams. The book really made sense to me but I didn't follow the recommended exercises. However, I decided to investigate further and discovered there were courses run in the Swindon area by Ridgeway Mindful Psychology – and there was a taster session the very next day!

So I went along and found it very interesting and quite unlike me I decided immediately that I would sign up. The 8 week course commenced on the following Monday and group members were encouraged to participate in the homework exercises and build on the practice.

I am not usually a group person but somehow this worked for me and I can honestly say that I feel able to deal with things in a much calmer way and also to deal with what comes up.

The practice is now a priority in my life. I would urge anyone struggling with life changing circumstances to try mindfulness - I have found it helps me to concentrate on the present and not to regret the past or fear the future as much as I used to. It has also made me aware of the fact that thoughts are just thoughts and we don't have to hook into them or descend into the spiral of depression.

The group sessions are very friendly and you can say as much or as little as you want to. It is non judgemental and a safe place to be.

Rosemarie Thompson

GP Coffee mornings

Carers are welcome to the following regular sessions at GP surgeries.



**Moredon Medical Centre –
Cuppa and drop in for carers**

Please come along on the first Wednesday of the month.

John Mouldon Hall, Penhill – Cuppa and drop in for carers

Please come along on the third Wednesday of the month.

Ridgeway View Surgery, Wroughton – Coffee Morning and drop in for carers

Please come along on the first Thursday of the month.

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)

Support with managing your energy supplies

Extra help with energy if you're vulnerable or on a low income

You may be classed as vulnerable if you are:

- a pensioner
- disabled
- chronically ill
- unable to look after your own welfare or living with someone who is unable to look after their own welfare

If you fall into one of these categories, or are on a low income, you may be able to get extra help with managing your gas and electricity services or paying the bills.



Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register is run by energy suppliers and offers free services for older people and those with disabilities. These include priority reconnection following a power cut, a service to take regular meter readings if you're unable to do it yourself, and bills tailored to your needs, including large print and Braille.

To ensure you receive additional services, you need to sign up to your supplier's Priority Services Register. If you have different suppliers for electricity and gas, you will need to register with each. Carers can register on behalf of the person they care for. There is no charge and you can register for all or some of the services.

Your supplier must take steps once a year to inform all its customers about the Priority Services Register, and how you can be listed on it.

Annual gas safety check

If you are a tenant, your landlord is responsible for sorting out gas safety checks. Otherwise, you can get a free annual gas safety check if you ask for one, if you get a means tested benefit such as Income Support or Universal Credit and if you:

- live with a least one other child under five, or
- are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick and either live alone or with others - all of who are either of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or under 18.

Extra help with bills in the Winter

There are several government schemes which offer extra help with higher bills during the winter months. These are:

The Winter Fuel Payment

If you are of the state pension age during the qualifying week (which always begins on the third Monday of September), or live with someone born on or before that date, you may be able to get the Winter Fuel Payment. It is also often known as the Winter Fuel Allowance.

The Warm Home Discount Scheme

Many pensioners and people on certain benefits can get an automatic rebate on their electricity bills.

Cold Weather Payments

Cold Weather Payments can help people who get certain benefits with their additional heating costs if it is very cold during the winter.

If you're eligible for any of these benefits you should get them automatically.

Grants and schemes for home insulation

You can reduce your energy bills by making sure your home is well insulated. There are a number of schemes from energy companies and the government to help pay for the costs. If you are a vulnerable customer or on a low income, you may even qualify for free or discounted insulation.

Help if you're in debt to your energy supplier

If you are a pensioner, have long-term ill health, are disabled or have severe financial problems you may also have extra protection from being disconnected. If you have been disconnected, or are threatened with disconnection, please call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 08454 04 05 06.

The helplines are open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.

If you're on certain benefits, you may also be eligible for the Fuel Direct scheme. This allows you to have your energy payments taken directly from your benefits. Contact your Jobcentre Plus or Pensions office to find out whether you are eligible.

- For help finding your local Jobcentre Plus or Pensions office, visit the GOV.UK website at www.gov.uk

More information about help with energy

The Home Heat Helpline

The Home Heat Helpline is a service for vulnerable customers struggling to pay their bills. It is funded by the energy suppliers, and provides information on grants, payment schemes and benefits that may be available as well as basic advice about energy efficiency.

Telephone: 0800 336699 (freephone) Website: www.homeheathelpline.org.uk

The Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust has a searchable database of grants and schemes, along with an online home energy check to find out where you could make savings on your bills. You can also contact your local Energy Saving Trust advice centre for help:

Telephone: 0300 123 1234 (freephone) Website: www.est.org.uk
(from Citizens Advice Bureau)

Patient and Public Involvement Forum



The PPI subcommittee brings together members of the public, patients, voluntary organisations, Healthwatch Swindon and senior members of the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), to hold the NHS to account for how it involves local people in the design and commissioning of health services.

They meet monthly immediately after the Governing Body of the CCG meetings. The next meeting is Thursday 28th November from 11.30am-1pm.

How can you get involved in the PPI forum – If you can commit to a meeting on the fourth Thursday of every month and have an interest in local healthcare improvement, please contact: enquiries@swindonccg.nhs.uk

For more information about the Patient and Public Involvement Forum: <http://www.swindonccg.nhs.uk/ppi-forum>

Swindon Survivors Of Bereavement By Suicide (Sobbs)

There is a new group being established in Swindon to support those who have been bereaved by suicide. Evidence shows those who are bereaved by suicide are more at risk of mental health problems and suicide themselves, so this group is a really welcome addition to the town. The group is open to those throughout Wiltshire and surrounding areas.

Swindon Sobbs will meet every 3rd Thursday of the month in West Swindon.

For more information contact Jacky:
jackyswindonsobbs@gmail.com 07543 242332 (9am-9pm)

Further information:
National Helpline: 0844 5616855 www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Swindon Sobbs is a self-help group supporting one another through trauma and grief and aftermath of suicide.

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



Foresight Wills
Will Writers and LPA Specialists
www.foresightwills.com 01793 433705

Opticians



VisionVisit
Home Visiting Optician 01793 232588
www.visionvisit.co.uk

Chiropody & Podiatry



Steven Ayre
D.Pod Med, D.S. Ch, MSSCh, MBChA
Home Visiting Chiropodist 07769 736364

Will Writers and LPA Specialists
Foresight Wills

01793 433705
www.foresightwills.com
32-33 Commercial Road
Swindon, SN1 5NS

Our services include:

- ✓ Will Writing
- ✓ Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA)
- ✓ Guardianship for children
- ✓ Protection Against Care Home Fees
- ✓ Pre-paid Funeral Plans

We offer fixed fees and FREE HOME VISITS if required.

Foresight Wills Ltd is an appointed representative of New Leaf Will Writers Federation Ltd. Company Registration No.7891401

Groups/Breaks/Courses/Talks and Activities Review (July-Sept 2013)

Many of the events below are repeated, if requested by carers, (places and funds permitting). Please see the 'What's On' flyer enclosed in this newsletter, indicate what is of interest to you and return to Heather at the Carers Centre, email heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk or ring 01793 531133.

July:

● Another 2 session Dementia awareness course was delivered by Jane Rachael (a trainer from the Alzheimer's Society and SEQOL) on 3rd and 10th July. Topics included: signs and symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, coping and caring, practical tips, support available.



● Melanie Powell returned to deliver another 4 session Yoga and relaxation course during July.



● 'Exploring issues around end of life that carers may benefit from knowing' was the title of the talk delivered by Jo Hyde from The Prospect Hospice.



● Rod Law from the Bobby Van service brought in lots of equipment to show carers and explained about this free home security/fire audit service for elderly, vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Equipment can be fitted to ensure the home is safe.

**The Wiltshire
Bobby Van Trust**



Registered Charity No 1073127

● July 16th was a lovely sunny day and carers met at Lydiard House and Gardens, explored the house and walled garden then had a cold drink and a chat in the grounds.



● West Swindon Carers Group: A community coffee morning has been set up at Toothill Community Centre, Bodiem Drive, sponsored by SBC and volunteers. Carers have been invited to join them. There is an optional walk at 10am for 40 minutes then back to the Community Centre for a drink, or carers can stay at the centre from 10am. The coffee mornings are on Tuesdays 10am-12pm. Please note this is a community group and a member of staff from Swindon Carers Centre will NOT be present at all meetings.

● Sara Brooks from Action for M.E. returned to deliver another presentation about M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis). Booklets were issued 'All about M.E.', 'Pacing', 'Caring for someone with M.E.'. See www.actionforme.org.uk for further information.



August:

● Carers from the Knitting and crochet group enjoyed a buffet lunch at the JRC Global restaurant.

● LUSH event -12 carers were given the chance to receive some pampering and free products thanks to LUSH cosmetics.



● There was a good turn-out for the quarterly held male carer event. The venue was the Swindon Dog Racing Stadium at Blunsdon. They enjoyed a bar meal, drink and one bet. John and David (staff members at Swindon Carers Centre) host this group.



● SOVA (Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults) - this course looked at 'Who is a vulnerable adult?', 'What is meant by the term abuse?' and 'What can be done about it?'

● On 27th August the 18-25 group met up to go ice-skating, however, as the rink was closed for re-icing the group went ten pin bowling instead!

September:

● A 6 session computer course for beginners started in September at Tech4D, Dorcan.



● 'Caring and Coping for Mental Health Carers' is the title of the 5 session course delivered by Donna Huff and Jamie Palfrey from Rethink Mental Illness.



● We were delighted to be able to offer another interactive group session by Counsellor Kate Woodhouse. The topics Kate explored with carers included feelings and emotions, boundary setting and looking after yourself.

● Basic First Aid Awareness courses were held on 16th and 25th September. Carers learned how to manage an emergency situation, place someone in the recovery position, check airway and breathing, perform CPR, manage shock and choking etc. and apply a pressure bandage and sling.



● On Saturday 28th September a Tea Dance was held at Meadowcroft Community Centre. Carers and their loved ones enjoyed a nostalgic afternoon (1940s style) with music, dancing and light refreshments. The afternoon ended with a sing-song and 'We'll meet again....' Many thanks to Erica and the Blitz Buddies for providing the entertainment, to colleagues and volunteers who came along to help and to Swindon Cares for funding the event.



Groups:

● The Open Minds Group meets monthly at St Andrew's Church Hall. In July there was music bingo and a sing-song, in August we had a vocalist/keyboard player with lots of singing and some dancing and in September we made Christmas cakes (and will marzipan and ice them during another session ready for the Open Minds Christmas Party).

This group (funded by Swindon Cares) is for carers over 65. Carers can come on their own or with the person they care for, particularly if their loved one has dementia.

● Carers meet monthly at the Highworth Coffee morning at The Community Centre, The Dormers, Highworth. It is a drop-in group on the 2nd Thursday of the month between 10.30am-12pm.



● Every Thursday at Swindon Carers Centre, our Knitting and Crochet group meets up for a chat and a cuppa. This is a drop in group between 10.30am and 12pm.



● Carers attend the Dementia Peer Support Group for mutual support and friendship. This group is held at Swindon Carers Centre on a monthly basis.

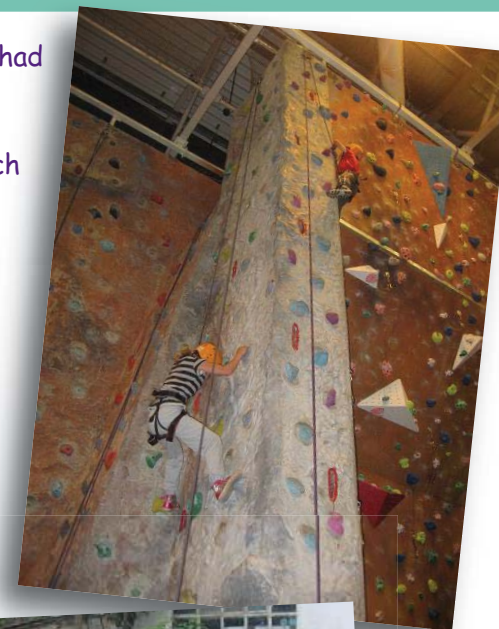
● The Peer Support Group for carers of those with mental health issues met at The Carers Centre on 4th July, 8th August and 5th September. This continues to be a monthly meeting facilitated by Emilia.

● Monthly Coffee Mornings are held regularly where carers come along to socialise, offer mutual support and bring any questions they may have about their caring role.



A taster of what we have done this summer

Wow... the young carers team had a very busy summer this year! We ran a total of 17 activities and trips over the summer which provided more than 100 young carers with a break. The activities this year included 3 cinema trips, a day of football coaching, rock climbing and tenpin bowling (with thanks to the Zurich Challenge Team), BBQ, laser quest session, 2 horse riding sessions and a trip to LEGOLAND (with thanks to the Openworks challenge team) to name but a few.



Jungle Parc

One of the activities the young carers took part in was a trip to Lydiard's Jungle Parc where they got to test their head for heights and balancing skills. They had to tackle high wire walks, zip wires and other challenges at the tree top adventure. All the young carers did really well and looked like they really challenged themselves. Alys, one of the



young carers who took part in the activity, said "I loved it until the bit where there were wobbly logs you had to walk across, sadly and funnily I fell off and twisted my ankle but I still enjoyed it and so did everybody else!"

Windsor Castle

Another event was a trip for 17 young carers to visit Windsor Castle. We saw the famous Queen Mary's Dolls House (that frankly was the size of a real house), a collection of guns that date back to the early 1600's and lots of very expensive and historic things. The young carers asked lots of questions to the guides and seemed to enjoy their castle visit on such a glorious day.

Butterfly World

Another great day was a trip for young carers aged 5-9 who went to visit Butterfly World. They got to see a variety of different butterflies (some of which were rather large), and they also got to see a lot of other animals as well. On the day the young carers got to hold snakes and lizards and fed goats and to finish they all chose a piece of pottery to paint as a reminder of the day.

So the summer is well and truly over but we hope those of you who attended activities have some good memories of Summer 2013!

Interview on Mental Health

Mental Health – Kris Deering (Intensive Team, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust)

Would you say your job is hard?

Yes it is very hard, trying to help people to get better, but it's very rewarding.

What type of people do you work with?

People from different areas and cultures and backgrounds. We work with people who have a variety of mental health conditions such as depression, bipolar and psychosis. Although there are lots more illnesses we could mention, those are the main three that we come across.

How does their illness affect their lives?

People with depression might feel really low, may not have much motivation and would struggle to get out of bed. They may want to stay in their room and not be around people. Someone with psychosis would experience things other people don't experience - for instance they might hear voices or see things that others might not see. Someone with bipolar may experience really high moods and have a lot of energy and then they might get really down and will feel really low. Some people might feel really low and they feel that they can't go on.

Why do you do your job?

I love working with people and I like the challenge of helping people.

What is the best thing about your job?

The best thing about my job is helping people to get better from their illness.

What signs are there for someone with mental health issues?

If they're depressed they might not have much motivation, they might not want to do anything, they might spend a lot of time in bed, or avoiding people. Some people might not talk very much, or some people might talk too much. With psychosis sometimes people talk to themselves, if they hear voices. There are lots of different signs, but these are just a few of them.

Has your work helped everyone that's needed help?

Not every story is a success, but we try our best to help everyone we can. The majority are successful, but I remember the ones that aren't.

How would you make someone feel better?

We have access to medications, but we find that talking therapies, such as counselling and group therapy can be a great help and lead to longer term recoveries.

If I was worried about a parent or family member and I thought that they had a mental health condition could I ring you?

I would say that it's best to call us if you're worried and we will talk to you about what's happening and the best things to do next.

If a young carer noticed symptoms in a family member what should they do?

If it's during the daytime please don't hesitate to contact your GP. If it's out of hours you should contact the SEQOL centre on 01793 646466 and they will be able to help.

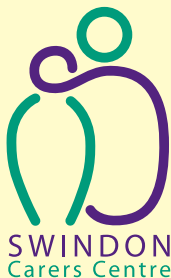
Swindon Young Carers Facebook



Swindon Young Carers have a Facebook account which is only open to Young Carers who have had a Young Carers assessment with us and that are still registered at Swindon Carers Centre.

To access it you will need to send a friend request to Swindon Young Carers, however if you are under 12 years old we will need permission from your parent or guardian before we add you.

If you need to talk to one of our Young Carers support workers (Julie and Helen) you can now just send us a personal message. We may not see it straight away as this page will only be checked once a day Monday to Friday. It will also be used to send out any updates about the Young Carers team, groups, activities and anything that may be happening with the Young Carers forum.



Swindon Carers Centre

1 Wood Street, Swindon SN1 4AN
Tel: Swindon (01793) 531133

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

Swindon Young Carers

Tel: Julie Collar 01793 401096
Helen Rankin 01793 401091
Matt Teale 01793 401092

Please contact the Editor Susanna Jones with your views/articles and information editor@swindoncarers.org.uk

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www.swindoncarers.org.uk

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