



Carers Support Centre Impact Report 2022/23

**If you care,
we care.**

Carers Support Centre
Bristol & South Gloucestershire

A Network Partner of
**CARERS
TRUST**



From our Chief Executive, Tim Poole

Here at Carers Support Centre we are driven by one simple goal:

“A better life for carers of all ages”.

What a ‘better life’ looks like is different for every carer. For some it’s feeling less lonely and isolated, for others it could be being financially better off, having better access to support for themselves and their loved ones, or it’s simply the comfort of knowing there is someone there for them in their time of need. For young carers it’s often being able to enjoy a childhood or succeed at school. Everything we do is driven by the individual needs of carers across Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

The Census 2021 results suggesting a reduction in the number of unpaid carers are not reflected in our day-to-day experience. Like most support services, be they voluntary or statutory, we are seeing an increase in demand across the board.

This is not just reflected by the numbers but also, worryingly, in the complexity of the caring responsibilities and the impact that has on carers’ health, wellbeing and personal aspirations. Overlaying all of this has been the cost-of-living crisis which has seen carers disproportionately affected, increasing their vulnerability and that of those they care for.

The support we provide has never been needed more, but we can’t do it alone. We are grateful for the collaborations we have with many other voluntary sector organisations and with our statutory partners.



As we move forward, we are working more at a local community level, developing relationships with trusted community groups, raising the awareness of carers and their needs and, through that, increasing the level of support available for carers in their local community.

Reading through this Impact Report you will see the many and varied ways in which we support carers, not only in their caring role but also, just as importantly, to live a better life of their own. It’s testament to our staff team that we have managed to achieve all that we have for carers against a backdrop of uncertainty as we tendered for all of our core statutory contracts throughout the year.

I continue to be humbled by the passion and dedication of our team of staff and volunteers. Their enthusiasm and commitment leave me in no doubt that we will continue to do our very best to achieve a better life for carers.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Tim".

Tim Poole
Chief Executive

Our vision

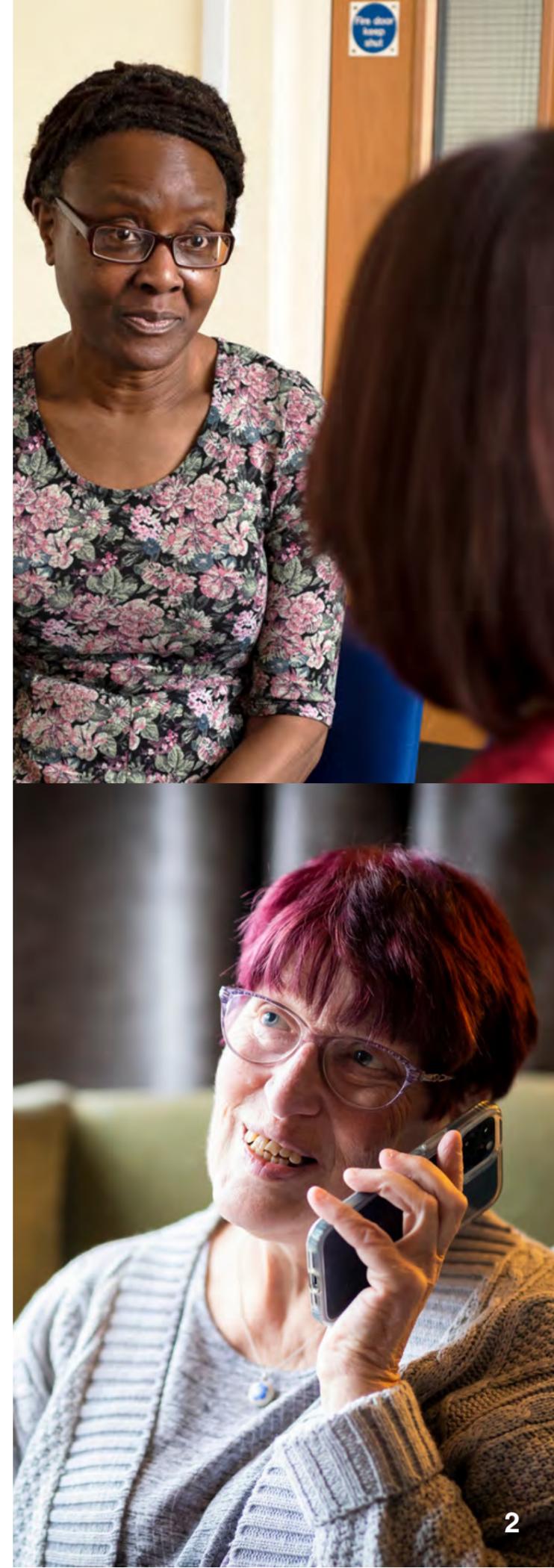
A better life for carers of all ages where they are recognised, valued and supported in their caring role and empowered to fulfil their own aspirations.

Our mission

- We will support carers’ emotional, physical and financial health and wellbeing, building their resilience and confidence
- We will listen to and amplify carers’ voices, enabling them to have a strong and independent influence on policy and services
- We will support carers to be free from inappropriate levels of care and able to live a life of their own
- We will raise awareness of carers and the issues they face, leading to communities and organisations where carers feel recognised, welcome and supported

Our values

- Co-producing– We will be led by carers’ needs involving them in service planning and development and encouraging other organisations to do the same
- Learning – We will constantly review and refine our services, developing and sharing good practice
- Collaborative and connected – We will be collaborative in our approach to supporting carers, working closely with partner organisations and communities to provide holistic, sustainable support
- Empowering – We will be enabling in our approach to supporting carers, building resilience and confidence, empowering them to achieve their own goals
- Valuing people – We will treat staff, volunteers and those we work with, with respect and kindness, valuing diversity and the contribution they make



What are the needs of carers?

We tailor our services to meet the needs of unpaid carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

It is mainly through the assessment process that we collate information on the needs of carers. Mirroring national findings¹, from the 1408 adult carers assessments we carried out during the year, the most common issues for carers were:

- financial difficulty
- struggling with the amount of care needed and not getting a break
- isolation and feeling they have been forgotten
- inadequate respite care, day service and home/personal care provision
- lack of family contact and support
- deteriorating physical and mental health of both carer and cared for
- not being able to get face-to-face appointments with GPs and other professionals
- long waits for services e.g. OT appointments
- reduction in hospital visiting and changes to hospital discharge
- delays in finding nursing home placements and home care packages
- carers without online skills being excluded from services

¹ (Carers UK, 2022)



Our Services 2022 – 2023

Our range of free services included:

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News for carers

We provide the latest news for carers through our website, regular eNewsletters and our three times a year printed publication, Carers News.

120,036 unique visitors to website, an over 9% rise on the previous year

3 editions of Carers News were printed, each edition was sent to an average of **5561** carers by post, and **4917** by email

“ You've been so helpful and I am so grateful for the time you spent talking to me. I was feeling overwhelmed and have been for such a long time, **I feel much more confident** and less 'alone' with it all thanks to you. ”

15,921 local carers registered with us

2,702 new carers we registered this year



CarersLine

A confidential phone and email information and support service for carers to ask questions or talk about any concerns about their caring role.

We make time for everyone who contacts us and understand the difficulties that carers face. We are here to listen to carers' concerns.

3248 carers contacted CarersLine by phone or email

“ Thank you for your time today. It was just what I needed - not sympathy or fluffy statements - someone to give me clear direction based on your **obvious experience and knowledge.** ”

Carers Emergency Card

If a carer has an accident or is taken seriously ill, carrying this card will ensure the person they care for will be kept safe.

We promote the use of Carers Emergency Cards in Bristol and South Gloucestershire and receive and process applications on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council. Carers carry the card and then if there is an accident or emergency it can be used to alert a 24-hour emergency call centre that the person cared for will need help. Steps are then taken to ensure the safety of the person they care for.

We issued **763** Carers Emergency Cards

“ Thanks once again for an outstanding level of support and much needed **peace of mind** your service provides. ”



Carer's Assessments

Help with accessing and completing a Carer's Assessment. Carer's Assessments look specifically at how caring affects a carer's life, whether support is needed to manage the caring role and the wellbeing of the carer.

If you care for someone, the Care Act gives you the right to a free assessment to see what might help make your life easier. We carry out Carer's Assessments for the local authorities, the main provider of services locally to carers. Completion of a Carer's Assessment can result in a Carer's Payment to be spent on something to improve a carer's wellbeing.

In Carer's Assessments, we have a conversation or series of conversations which focus on the carer and their caring role. Carer's Assessments explore the individual caring situation, how caring impacts the carer and whether there is any support needed to help them continue to care going forward. We talk about the carer's health, their caring role, how they're managing at home, whether they're able to make time for themselves, how they're feeling, and their financial situation.

We carried out **1408** adult Carer's Assessments

“ Wow! Thank you for all your help. It will give us so much to look forward to. My husband will be so happy we can go on a train holiday. ”



One-to-one support

Help to access support from our services and external organisations, to support a carer's wellbeing and quality of life, enabling them to continue caring.

Our Carers Support Officers provide tailored one-to-one support to carers based on their individual needs. One-to-one work includes emotional support, practical advice, information on a range of caring subjects and signposting to further, often specialised, support.

We provided one-to-one support (online, phone and face-to-face) to **805** carers

“ Thank you for emailing me so much helpful information, and for handling our phone call yesterday with such **sensitivity and compassion**. In the overwhelming role of carer for someone suffering from such a cruel disease as dementia, it is a great comfort to realise the help and support that is available. ”

Carers Breaks Service

In South Gloucestershire, a regular volunteer sitter keeps the looked-after person company so that the carer can take a break.

This service for carers living in South Gloucestershire is provided by volunteers, all of whom are trained, supported and managed by us. It enables carers to take a 2/3-hour break on a regular basis – usually weekly or fortnightly.

Our volunteers go through a robust recruitment and selection process and receive comprehensive induction and ongoing training. Our service coordinator carefully matches volunteers with the carer and cared for person. Many volunteers have been carers themselves.

360 sits were undertaken with the cared for person to give carers a break, totaling **755** hours. The service is indebted to the **17** volunteers who made such a difference to the lives of carers and those they care for across South Gloucestershire.

“ The sitting service is now a **central and crucial** part of my caring duties. Without it, the strain upon me would be much greater. ”

“ I like being a “sitter” as it provides valuable support to both the carer and cared for person. The carer can have some “me time”. It enables them to have a break from their full-time commitments as a carer for a short while. The cared for person can also benefit from having the company of the “sitter”. **I find the role rewarding.** ”

Carers support groups

A safe, confidential space to meet with other carers face-to-face and online – to share information and provide peer support.

We facilitate regular monthly support groups throughout Bristol and South Gloucestershire and online groups for those who can't leave the person they care for. Groups are a great way to get support and connect with other carers, sharing knowledge, and giving each other support. Often external speakers attend carers support groups to add to the information exchange.

We ran a total of **8** separate groups
There were **479** attendances at those carers support groups

“ I'm a carer for my mother. She has Lewy Body dementia and Parkinsonism, along with many other health issues. **Going to this group literally means the world to me.** It's something I can look forward to when I'm having a bad month. If I can hold on for a few more days, a couple of weeks, then I get a morning off and can sit in a room, drink coffee and not be judged when I need to have a moan. I go to this group knowing that for a short time I don't have to worry about what I say, that I won't be negatively judged and that **other people have the same emotions, struggles and fears as I do.** ”



Wellbeing Service

Regular support and guidance through befriending, mentoring, counselling and, new for 2022/2023, Walk and Talk.

We commissioned an external evaluation of our Wellbeing Service in 2022 to review the achievements of our National Lottery Community Fund award. It found the pandemic had 'changed the landscape of the need for wellbeing support' amongst carers, the service has developed strong pathways both internally and externally and provides a value for money intervention.

Nationally, **30%** of carers say their mental health is either bad or very bad and overall carers ranked their mental health as worse than their physical health. This service is focused on providing emotional support to carers and supporting them to improve their mental health, resilience, and social and community networks. It enables carers to feel more optimistic about the future and feel less isolated and overwhelmed.

The external evaluation found:

- **83%** of service users reported good improvement in levels of anxiety
- **77%** felt more optimistic about life
- **77%** had improved feelings of personal health and well-being



Befriending

We match carers with trained volunteers who provide conversation, companionship and emotional support, helping carers to cope with the sense of loneliness and isolation that many feel as a result of their caring role.

We provided befriending to **80** carers

“ I have absolutely loved the service. **It has made such a difference to me.** Things vary so much from week to week and some weeks I feel like I can manage whilst others feel like they're falling apart. Just having someone confidential to talk and offload to has made a real difference. It's been a life saver. I feel very grateful and very fortunate to have received this service. ”

Mentoring

We link up carers with a trained mentor who has experienced a similar caring situation. The mentor shares their own experience and helps the carer to understand what support is available.

19 carers received mentoring support

“ He is brilliant. He really listens and doesn't judge me. He has the ability to turn things around and can even make me laugh. He genuinely seems to care, and he is very encouraging. He is fantastic. He always remembers what was said from the previous call and asks me how things are. **I wish I'd asked for this support much sooner.** ”

Counselling

We provide professional counsellors to give carers a safe, independent and confidential space to talk about their concerns, feel listened to and respected and understood.

We provided six weekly sessions of counselling to **86** carers.

- 88% reported thinking more clearly
- 88% felt less isolated and more connected to people
- 89% felt more optimistic about their future

“ Excellent sessions provided me with the tools to get on and address and overcome problems. **Life changing!** ”

Most carers accessing counselling are experiencing a change or crisis in their caring role, or are recognising themselves as carers for the first time, for example:

- when a family member/friend becomes unexpectedly unwell, or starting to care for additional people too
- when the person they care for deteriorates and needs further support
- when the person they care for is coming to the end of their life, moves into nursing care, or dies

Walk and Talk

Our friendly support worker leads groups walks, offering a listening ear and providing information to help in a caring role.

Following a fundraising success, we've been delighted to offer this new service to carers, initially for two years, to run 23 Walk and Talk groups from March 2022 to March 2024.

Through consultation with carers, we found out that they would welcome a walking service. Of the over 200 respondents, 78% welcomed the idea of walking with other carers.

Building on this, and the success of two pilot walks with young adults, Walk and Talk was developed with the triple aims of:

- improving carer physical and mental health
- decreasing carer isolation
- increasing carer knowledge about help available to support them in their caring role

Each group runs for six consecutive weeks with six people per group. The walks take place in a local green space and an experienced Carers Support Officer leads the walks and provides information and advice that signpost attendees to relevant support services in their local area.

After the walks have ended, we continue to provide remote support for three months with the aim of building sustainability and encouraging carers to continue meeting for peer support and exercise. We're pleased that 55% of attendees have continued to walk with other carers on a weekly or fortnightly basis after their groups have ended.

The format of the Walk and Talk groups varies between each group - some for carers on their own; some for carers with the person they care for; some will be age-specific; some for carers of shared ethnic background, for instance, a walk with Chinese carers.

- We ran eight groups and a one-off taster session, attended by 54 people in total
- 20% were carers who were not known to us before and were identified through an outreach programme
- 34% were male, representing a higher than normal engagement rate in support services
- Walk and Talk engaged well with older people – over 88% of participants were 50 or over
- 63% have increased their physical activity levels
- 67% have reported an increase in their social connections and feeling less isolated

Walk and Talk has proved to be very impactful on the lives of carers.

“ I was feeling so sad and lonely since losing D. I was so happy to be offered a place on the walk and really enjoyed exploring local areas of nature. I now volunteer on other Walk and Talk groups at Carers Support Centre... and I have met other carers and we go out for walks independently. **I don't feel lonely anymore** and really enjoy being able to give something back to a service which has helped me. ”



Mr Smith's Story

“For many years I have cared for my wife Mary who has schizophrenia and many other health complications which cause many issues. I assist her with daily tasks, like getting washed and dressed, and other personal care. I have become extremely isolated since becoming a carer, some weeks I won't speak with anyone other than my wife. It is a huge challenge for me to consider my own wellbeing as I have limited time and space.

Before joining the 'walk and talk' group I felt hopeless about life and each day felt like a real struggle. I was desperate to connect with others and enjoy being outside walking.

It was a challenge for me to leave my wife each week to join the walk sessions, especially if she was feeling particularly unwell. Without a break from caring, I was becoming more downhearted and exhausted.

I decided to join the group to meet other people, feel less isolated and have a break from caring. I now feel more hopeful.

I don't like to think about what would have happened if I hadn't got support from Carers Support Centre as I was feeling so low.

As a result of joining the walks, I now have access to a regular walking group with a list of route options which is enabling me to feel better through exercising outdoors and speaking with other carers. I now have strategies to improve my wellbeing, like noticing changes in nature and practicing breathing exercises to reduce stress.

Thanks to the walk leader's support and information, I now know how to access services like CarersLine and support groups for carers. Knowing how to get in touch with these services has made me feel more able to cope in my caring role and feel less isolated. I also now attend a weekly drop-in at my local church for people feeling lonely and this is very beneficial to me.

I thought the 'walk and talk' service was extremely well thought out, the location was excellent and well varied. I feel so isolated as a carer so it is fantastic to be out chatting with other people who understand what it's like.”

Training and Workshops

Courses to help carers manage on a day-to-day basis.

73 carers attended a workshop or training session

We carried out 4 training courses, each one five weeks long, on:

- Caring and Understanding Dementia
- Caring with Confidence

We carried out workshops in:

- First Aid
- Mindfulness
- Adapt and Recover
- Stress management.

“ I am a carer for my mum, who has dementia and was in hospital with a stroke and COVID. Carers Support Centre helped me get through the initial period of adjusting to my mum's condition and accepting it. Thanks to one of the courses I attended, **I have learnt that I need to look after myself**, so that I can support and look after my mum. ”

“ It gives a host of information for anyone new to caring and will help them understand what they can/should apply for, but most importantly to use CarersLine and they will help people find their way around the system.” ”



West of England Works Project

Employment and skills support for unpaid carers.

The project funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, started in April 2017 and ended in March 2023. It aimed to support people with complex barriers into work, training or steps towards independent job searching. We aimed to support carers already registered with us and reach out to those who were not.

- 28 new starters on the project during the year
- 38 carers completed the programme during the year
- 8 participants into training/education
- 6 participants into employment
- 9 participants moved into job search from economically inactive

“ Abi has been amazing, always friendly with helpful advice on training and job opportunities and helping me to find something available to me that worked around my role as a carer for my son ... She didn't do it all for me and that really helped because **I built courage and confidence in doing things for myself.** ”

“ Kirsty has helped me to manage my caring role and identify my employment goals. I now have an up-to-date CV and **I have secured a job as a support worker.** ”

Carers Liaison Service

Information and support for carers in the hospital setting and in GP practices.

Hospitals

We provide help, support and advice to carers from admission to discharge as a carer and/or patient.

578 carers were supported in hospital

We ran information stalls throughout the year at Southmead Hospital for members of the public, carers and staff, and ran three Carers' Surgeries on Elgar Ward

“ Do you know what? **You've made my Christmas** by calling me today and telling me this; you've told me more useful things than anyone I've spoken to before. ”

“ Thank you, Alex, for highlighting concerns in a timely manner enabling us to prevent escalation and ensure care is as it should be. ”



GP surgeries

A dedicated team working with GP practices to help identify and support carers.

We worked with **50** GP practices across Bristol and South Gloucestershire

GP practices referred **891** carers to us for support

For our GP Award Scheme, we assessed **18** surgeries awarding **14** gold and **4** silver awards

“ I received in a matter of days a phone call from the Occupational Therapy Team and have an upcoming appointment for them to visit me and Dad for an assessment... **I just want to thank you for all your help at a time when me and Steve really needed it.** We were so confused with our situation with caring for my dad and didn't know which way to turn. But with your help and knowledge we now have a better understanding and feel a little bit more in control. Thank you so much. ”

“ Thank you for meeting me and thank you again for listening. It was a pleasure to meet you too, and **I wouldn't have had a clue about this helpful information if you hadn't told me.** ”

Carers Engagement and Involvement

Support for carers to get their voices heard, so they can influence health and social care provision and the services of Carers Support Centre.

Carers Voice and policy lobbying

As well as our role as advocates for carers, we enable carers to be heard by local policy makers to influence the development of policy and services.

We do this by:

- keeping up with the latest research, and national and local policy changes on social care
- organising large and small events to inform carers about these new developments and discuss the issues they experience in their everyday lives
- supporting a group of 15 carers to attend local partnership meetings with local council and NHS bodies to report these issues and suggest changes to local services

One event, our Carer's Rights Day event in November, focused on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on carers. Eighty carers, local policy makers and professionals attended. The event was part of our work to support carers in lobbying councils to identify and support those carers significantly affected by this crisis. The result of this work was that South Gloucestershire Council now identifies carers presenting at their One Stop Shop advice centres and has ringfenced money for those carers most affected by the cost-of-living crisis.



We also supported carers to take part in focus groups and partnership meetings aimed at improving the local implementation of the new hospital discharge process. Together with carers we made sure that they were involved in this improvement process. One of the main results was that NHS staff developed clear information for carers who might be eligible for the one-off discharge grant - the grant is for household tasks or other support needed when caring for someone who is being discharged to home.

In collaboration with Your Park Bristol and Bath, we engaged carers in workshops about making parks accessible and inclusive for carers and the people they care for. This has led to the development of a pilot tool to enable carers and disabled people to audit their local parks.

We submitted written and oral evidence to the South Gloucestershire Council Support for Carers Task and Finish Group. Our main recommendations for improving identification, support and information for carers were well received and included in the action plan for South Gloucestershire Carers' Strategy.

“ I enjoyed the day for the information I got but also for socialising with other people in the **same position as me**. ”

Young Carers Service

We work with young people to help them to feel positive about being a young carer, feel less isolated, reduce inappropriate care, enable them to plan for their future and seek support when they need it. We provide individual and family support, activities, groups and outings.

602 young carers are registered with us and are receiving support

314 young carers were referred to us during the year

We carried out **177** young carers assessments

We delivered **322** one-to-one support sessions (online, phone and face-to-face) providing information, support and advocacy for young people .

“ Thanks for showing that **you care.** ”



Amadou's story

Amadou* is 16 years old. He cares for his mother who has fibromyalgia and arthritis and suffers from severe depression. Her condition started to develop three years ago and has increased in severity. Amadou was providing a range of care for his mum - shopping, preparing meals and helping to get his two brothers to school.

Working with Amadou, we found that his main concern was that he wanted to find more care for his mum. This would not only help her be more comfortable but also to allow him some time for himself.

Our support worker collaborated with social care to get additional support for Amadou's mother, including a care package and adaptations for the house to help her do things for herself. This helped to reduce the level of care being provided by Amadou. and gave him more time for other pursuits. "That support for my mum is definitely needed ... so thanks for that.", he told us.

Amadou also wanted to explore employment options to get a part time job to help provide financially for the family. Through our knowledge, experience and contacts we were able to support Amadou in securing weekend and evening employment at a local shop, "I'm doing good, thanks for checking on me. Just yesterday I got employed in Bristol, thank God."

Amadou had told us that with the extra time freed up from caring for his mum that he'd like to pursue a physical activity, such as a martial art.

To meet this need, our support worker referred Amadou to Empire Fighting Chance.

Here, he was able to participate in a 20-week mentoring programme which supports young people to work through emotional issues whilst developing physical skills and confidence under the guidance of a boxing coach, who is also a trained mentor.

Amadou texted us to say "In terms of boxing I'm really enjoying it, my mentor is a really cool guy and it feels like I'm in a safe space when boxing with him, so, yeah 😊".

Amadou feels that the one-to-one support we provided has really helped. He feels empowered by being able to contribute to the household financially and through his boxing mentoring course. He also appreciates that our work with him has led to an easing of the pressure and stress he was feeling when we first saw him. Overall, this has allowed him to engage with a wider range of activities of benefit to him now and in the future.

Amadou's newfound confidence has led to him joining Young Carers Voice to advocate about young carers' issues and influence services working with children and young people to improve their support to young carers.

From a sense of isolation to advocating for his peers, Amadou has come a long way in a short time.

* Not his real name





Respite Activities

We offer a wide range of trips and activities each year to give young carers a break.

We provided **737** breaks to **229** young carers



Performing at Bristol Beacon

This was the culmination of a partnership project with Bath Philharmonia. A team of six professional musicians worked with young carers over five days to create three pieces of music called 'Inside', "Outside" and "Happy Places".

Young Carers in Schools

Increasing identification, improving outcomes and accredited awards for schools through the Young Carers in Schools (YCiS) programme run in partnership with Carers Trust and The Children's Society.

The pressure of caring impacts on young carers' schooling. According to our annual survey, 10% are missing school and 43% falling behind with schoolwork. Only 27% say that they are happy in school. Reports of bullying and inability to concentrate add to the picture.

116 local schools have registered as YCiS schools and as part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Young Carers School Leads Network:

73 in Bristol

43 in South Gloucestershire

19 schools have achieved a YCiS Bronze Award

1 school has received a YCiS Silver Award

143 young carers were referred to our service from schools, 17% more than the previous year

47 new schools referred young carers



Painting workshops

As part of our Easter holiday activities, in partnership with Create Arts, we ran four days of painting workshops where young carers tried out different styles of painting and created an amazing frieze of a meadow.



Wildpace Nature sessions

These sessions help young carers improve their wellbeing and learn new skills by reconnecting with nature. Activities included picking berries, toasting marshmallows and crafting with foraged materials.

Resilience Lab

During the year we conducted and published our annual survey on the state of young carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. The bottom line of the survey was that more children and young people were doing more caring than ever, with 60% saying they were providing more care than the year before.

And the pressure of that extra care was starting to tell, particularly in the mental health of young carers. The survey reports increased instances of depression, anxiety, stress and loneliness. But perhaps most worrying is the 21% of young carers who say they self-harm, a marked increase on the figures for the previous two years.

The downturn in mental health is across the board:

- 79% of young carers are now feeling low and depressed
- 92% are anxious
- 79% are stressed
- 75% feel lonely and isolated
- 36% even feel they can't go on

“ *I understand more about my thoughts and emotions and know the solutions to them.* ”

Resilience Lab was just one of the ways that we addressed young carers' mental health and wellbeing needs during the year.

Resilience Lab was a new initiative for the Young Carers Service. The team were trained to deliver the Resilience Lab programme, which was designed and developed by Off the Record, a mental health social movement by and for young people aged 11-25.

Adapted for the needs of young carers, Resilience Lab consists of a five-session programme of fun, interactive workshops for young carers to work together and with staff to build greater resilience into their lives.

We offered Resilience Lab to young carers struggling with low level mental health issues who we work with, aged 13+. Eleven young carers attended the two programmes we ran, exploring how to cope with stress, stay relaxed, discover strengths, reach out to others, and keep on top of things when life gets tough.

As a result of Resilience Lab, we saw vast improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of the young carers who attended. Specifically, evaluation revealed:

- 80% reported feeling less stressed
- 80% felt they had a better understanding of their feelings
- 80% felt more confident speaking to a family member or friend relating to issues
- 60% said they have learnt new techniques to manage stress and pressures

“ *I now know there are different ways and new ways to deal with stress.* ”



Young Carers Voice

Young Carers Voice (YCV) was set up to enable young carers to be seen, recognised and, importantly, heard. YCV is a group of young carers who meet monthly and act as representatives for young carers. They work hard to bring about change and make sure that local authorities and health providers include the needs of young carers and their families in service and policy development.

18 young carers are active members of YCV.

As part of their work, YCV members plan and deliver workshops to professionals working with children and young people. Hewa, Zara, Calum and Adam from YCV delivered one workshop about young carers and the impact caring has on their lives. It elicited a positive response from the over 50 professionals attending a multi-agency network meeting.

The session got the professionals thinking about how they can make sure young carers are identified and ways to improve the support they offer. Of those who attended, 93% said they gained a better understanding of who young carers are and what responsibilities they have because of the session.

As an outcome of the workshop, the professionals made a commitment to take positive action, for example:

- ensure that their service can identify young carers and to be aware of what support services are out there for them
- make more contacts with their special needs students' sibling's schools to make links and let them know they have a young carer at their school
- ensure that the young carers charter is regularly promoted in their centre

Thank you to...

Our volunteers

Our volunteers are an invaluable asset to Carers Support Centre, selflessly dedicating their time, energy, and skills to help others without expecting anything in return.

Like unpaid carers, the work of volunteers can often go unrecognised, but their impact is immeasurable, and we certainly wouldn't be able to do our work so well without the support of volunteers:

We received support from **75** volunteers
Volunteers contributed **1481** hours to help support carers
23% of volunteers are carers or former carers

Our funders

Our work is funded by Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund.

In addition, we want to thank all the trusts and community funders who have supported us in the last year. They include:

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Thank you to everyone who has made a donation or carried out fundraising for us. Your support makes a real difference to local carers.

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Thank you to Tina Gue for all other photographs in this document.
Read more about Tina's project to shine a spotlight on unpaid carers at invisiblearmy.org

Thank you for reading

If you have any questions or would like to know more about our work please get in touch.

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