Wandsworth Carers' Centre

Impact Report 2023 / 2024

Wandsworth Carers' Centre

Our vision...

Is a society where Carers are **recognised** and **valued** for their contribution and have choice and control that enables them to care, to stay healthy and to lead fulfilled lives.

Our mission...

is to improve the quality of life for Carers and people affected by caring responsibilities.

Trustees Report

A key theme for this year has been partnership, both developing new ones and continuing to strengthen and revitalise existing collaborations. We worked with Carers and our colleagues in Health, Social Care and the Youth Service to develop a new Carer and Young Carers Charter. This replaced an 80-page document with a one-page dynamic charter that all partners signed up to deliver from 2024-2027 to cover Working Together, Health & Wellbeing, Young Carers and Carers in the Wider Community.

We were delighted to come together for the first time with Sound Minds to develop and deliver a 10-month Mental Health Wellbeing Project to help improve the wellbeing of people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnicities living with or caring for someone with a mental health condition. As well as coming together to discuss mental health related topics, the project delivered some creative visual art workshops.

Our work with our friends at the Royal Trinity Hospice has enabled many Carers to visit and experience the wonderful world of the hospice and to feel the warmth and compassion of an organisation that is about living well as people approach the end of life, and to see the support they give to Carers and families.

We were sad to come to the end of our LGBT+ project but proud of the LGBT+ Awareness Training that we delivered to 450 people from 27 organisations, and reaching beyond our London remit, to deliver training in Wales and produce a recording that will be transcribed into the Welsh Language! However, working in partnership with the volunteers in this project has meant that the peer support group is continuing to meet, providing friendship and support to Carers from the LGBT+ community.

Many other partnerships continue to flourish and as we look forward to the coming year we are delighted to report that funding has been secured from the South London Integrated Care Board to fund a Young Carers Schools Link Worker, a new development not just for Wandsworth Carers' Centre but a first for Wandsworth as a whole.

Working with Health

Heathbridge Practice

To reach Carers across the Borough, we hold monthly GP outreach sessions at Heathbridge Practice, based in Putney, on the first Friday of each month.

The Practice identifies unpaid Carers who attend the surgery and offer them an appointment with our Support Worker. The sessions allow us to meet with Carers who might find it difficult to make their way to our office in Balham.

Having a strong working relationship with the Practice means that the sessions are fully booked each month with up to eight unpaid Carers being seen, with appointments available in-person or by telephone. This outreach gives Wandsworth Carers' Centre the opportunity to register new Carers or discuss available support with Carers already registered with us. The Carers who have attended the sessions have expressed their gratitude in having the chance to talk about their caring role without feeling like a burden and being made aware of the support available to them. The appointments allow the Support Worker to discuss the various types of support available with Carers including respite, grants, 1:1 support, benefits advice, peer support, etc, and support is allocated appropriately.

> **"I feel less alone knowing that WCC is there for me whenever I need to access support."**

Hospital Discharge Project

Wandsworth Carers' Centre and St. George's Hospital are working in partnership to provide support for family members and friends of patients who are ready to be discharged from hospital.

This service aims to reach Carers in the hospital setting who may be new to a caring role or perhaps their caring role has become more than it was. Our Hospital Discharge Team are present in the hospital every day, visiting wards and speaking to staff to identify as many Carers as possible. Engaging with Carers before the patient is discharged, ensures that they have access to the right support, advice and services exactly when they need it. All too often, Carers can become overwhelmed and confused about how and where they can get support once they have brought someone home from hospital. Our hospital team can be on hand to not only support Carers but also busy hospital staff who may be having to field lots of questions and queries from concerned family members or friends.

In addition to this, we are delivering Carer Awareness Training sessions across the hospital to various teams and departments. The aim of these sessions is to support hospital staff to identify Carers and give them the knowledge and confidence to signpost them to the appropriate support.

> "I had no idea this support was available until I found out about it at the hospital."

Dementia Cafés

As part of our support for Carers of someone with Dementia, we run two monthly Dementia Cafés. These sessions aim to bring together people with Dementia and their Carers for an afternoon where support for Carers is intertwined with an engaging session for the individuals with Dementia. We run one Café in Putney and one in Balham in an attempt to reach Carers in different ends of the borough.

We aim to create a warm and welcoming environment for attendees and our Dementia Support Worker facilitates a Carers support group while our Activity Worker and Volunteers run an activity with the attendees with Dementia.

The success of these Cafés has also been reliant on volunteer support. In the last year, we were able to recruit and onboard 5 new volunteers for the Dementia Cafés, which has allowed us to keep up with the growing number of attendees and continue to provide a welcoming and engaging session.

> **"Lovely to see you and all your kind & dedicated Team on Saturday afternoon! My husband enjoyed making a paper flower with help, and, we both very much enjoyed the exercise class. It's more fun doing silly, and practical, things together!"**

Eid & Diwali 2023

Christmas 2023

Carers Week 2023

Bake Off 2023

"This place is so fabulous. You are all so lovely and always smiling. I hope, one day, to be able to give back and volunteer for you."

"Your dedication and support at all levels is priceless!"

"The only consistent support I have experienced."

"I love the Carers' Centre. I have 4 children all on the spectrum and the Carers' Centre have always been informative and helpful, providing me with the right support. They have saved me many times. They are a phenomenal service and a godsend to me."

"Thank you for seeing me. Having this face to face meeting has lifted some of the anxiety and worry that has plagued me recently."

"I feel like a little piece of heaven opened up above me after speaking with you."

"The best support I have had, the respite was a lifesaver."

895 Advice appointments booked

65 Training sessions delivered

980 Back Care sessions delivered

29,500 Newsletters sent

195 Peer Support sessions held

555 New Carers registered

1,345 Respite Hours awarded

Carer Experience

Ms L is the primary Carer for her 8-year-old son who has a physical disability and requires constant care to support with his many medical needs. The Carer also has three other children and has her own health concerns meaning she is often in pain. Ms L came to Wandsworth Carers' Centre feeling very anxious and worried; her son had been out of school for over 2 years due to difficulties with finding the correct school to meet his needs. The Carer was struggling to communicate with Wandsworth Council to ensure her son was receiving an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) and she needed some support to communicate her concerns.

To assist Ms L, the support worker first reassured her we could advocate for her and followed up with the EHC plan coordinator at the council. The support worker directly emailed the coordinator to facilitate communication and confirm receipt of the necessary documents. The coordinator informed the support worker that Carer's son was on a waiting list and that the panel would be contacting her soon. The support worker updated the Carer which greatly reduced her anxiety knowing that there was a professional following up.

Having addressed the presenting needs of the Carer, the support worker then explored grant options with her and completed a grant application for a tablet to Carers Trust which was successful meaning the Carer could support her son to speak virtually to a speech and language therapist.

The tablet significantly benefited the Carer's son meaning he could engage with educational materials but also use the tablet for entertainment whilst he is away from his school friends. The Carer was extremely happy with the support she received and told us she felt much less stressed about her son's situation and hopeful that things were improving for them.

Black History Month 2023

Carers Week Royal Mews 2023

Carers Week Body Shop Pamper Day 2023

Volunteers

We are again exceedingly grateful to the volunteers who have continued to support and enhance the services we offer and applaud their commitment and flexibility to deliver services both on site and remotely. This year they have offered in excess of 954 hours that includes; counselling, complementary therapies, dementia cafés support, administration and mental health liaison work. The volunteers are invaluable to us.

In the last year we launched our Male Carers Social group which aims to provide a space for Male Carers to get together and take a break from their caring roles. Having spoken to Male Carers, we realised that the traditional format of peer support groups wasn't what they wanted and so the Male Carers Social was born! We developed this with two former Male Carers who were passionate about supporting men in caring roles. The group takes place on the last Friday of the month and has given Male Carers the opportunity to socialise with others in a similar situation.

George has been involved with the Carers' Centre for many years as both a Carer himself and as a volunteer facilitating our Male Carers Socials:

"As a Carer, parent and teacher, being of service is in my DNA and (by extension) so is volunteering. I genuinely enjoy helping and empowering people and having 'lived experience', I have practical knowledge surrounding many Carer issues. Put simply, I get a feeling of joy from volunteering and a sense of satisfaction that I have helped a fellow human being to (hopefully) improve their life in some small way. If I am able to make a small difference to somebody, that gives me fulfilment and contentedness."

WANDSWORTH CARERS' CENTRE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	3	136	–	136	1,846
Charitable activities	5				
Carers Support Service		825,289	–	825,289	771,398
Investment income	4	8,886	–	8,886	1,182
Total		834,311	–	834,311	774,426
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	29,150	–	29,150	28,100
Charitable activities	7				
Carers Support Service		751,805	–	751,805	686,405
Total		780,955	–	780,955	714,505
NET INCOME		53,356	–	53,356	59,921
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		655,411	–	655,411	595,490
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		708,767	–	708,767	655,411

Wandsworth Carers' Centre

How can you support Carers in Wandsworth?

- Identify a Carer
- Volunteer with us
- Refer a Carer
- Donate to us

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