



Annual Report 2020 - 2021

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Carers Link Lancashire

Our mission is to make a positive difference to the lives of carers and the people they care for by offering tailored support that is professional, respectful, non-judgemental and meets individual need.

10,216

REGISTERED ADULT CARERS

26%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE FROM ARE FROM BURNLEY

24%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE FROM ARE FROM PENDLE

23%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE FROM ARE FROM HYNDBURN

14%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE FROM ARE FROM ROSSENDALE

11%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE FROM ARE FROM RIBBLE VALLEY

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

This is my first annual report since being elected as Chair of Trustees in September 2020 following the retirement of Anne McCarthy who so ably undertook the role of Chair of Trustees for nine years.

My initial journey as a Trustee member of the Board of Carers Link Lancashire began in September 2019, joining at this time with our currently elected Treasurer Jeff Leahy who replaces Brian Birtle following his retirement as Trustee Treasurer.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian for his many years of expert and reliable commitment to the organisation and wish him well in any future ventures which will likely include his many travels.

Prior to my current role I had previously been employed by the organisation from 2013, initially in the role of Primary Care Development Facilitator and latterly as Services Manager until an illness resulted in my earlier than planned retirement.

Throughout this time, I was fortunate to work with an excellent team of people whose commitment was, and still remains to be, improving the lives of unpaid carers. Having spent the longest part of my working life within the NHS in a variety of Clinical and Managerial roles and latterly as a Lecturer in Health Leadership and Management across the Health and Social Care Sectors, I felt privileged to have the opportunity to share my experiences within a voluntary sector organisation. As a former Young Carer for my father from the age of 15 and later as an Adult carer for my elderly Mother, I could identify with the issues faced by unpaid Carers of all ages and the daily challenges this brings.

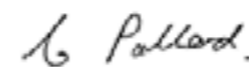
During this first year of tenure as Chair of Trustees, I have been assured by our excellent team of Trustees and Management that the Governance structures we have in place have greatly contributed to our ability to respond to the external challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic. This has enabled the organisation to continue its main function of supporting our Carers by having in place a system of Risk Management, underpinned by efficient practices and procedures and not least an efficient management team and our excellent and committed staff and volunteers who have risen to the challenge and exceeded all expectations.

I thank all of you very sincerely for keeping the show on the road throughout these unprecedented times. I would like to thank my Trustee colleagues for their ongoing involvement in the work of the board subgroups which provide essential information relating to finance governance and staff remuneration, ensuring that the board can demonstrate the assurances required within its scope of responsibilities and its constitution.

If anyone is interested in becoming a Trustee for the organisation, please contact Rebecca or the office directly. This is an extremely rewarding role, and we can tell you in more details about the role and the skills required of a Trustee. During the year, all Trustees have been involved in a review of our Strategic Plan which I am pleased to report has achieved its main aims of financial stability and the development of new opportunities provided by our charity shop project which are further outlined within the Treasurers and Chief Executive Reports.

On behalf of the organisation I offer my thanks to the organisations and individuals who continue to provide financial support either through contracts, or grants, especially Lancashire County Council, BBC Children in Need, Triangle Trust, Eric Wright Group, Carers Trust, and public donations received at the many events throughout the year

Finally, I thank once again our excellent committed staff and volunteers for their hard work and professionalism in supporting all our Carers across the Lancashire footprint.



Carol Pollard

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Carol Pollard (Vice Chair until 09/20 & Chair 09/20 to current)

Anne McCarthy (Chair until end of term in 2020)

Brian Ozenbrook - Vice Chair

Jeff Leahy - Treasurer

Brian Birtle (Treasurer until 09/2020)

Patricia Ahmed - Trustee

Mustafa Mohammed - Trustee

Shakil Salam - Trustee

Susan Bibby - Trustee

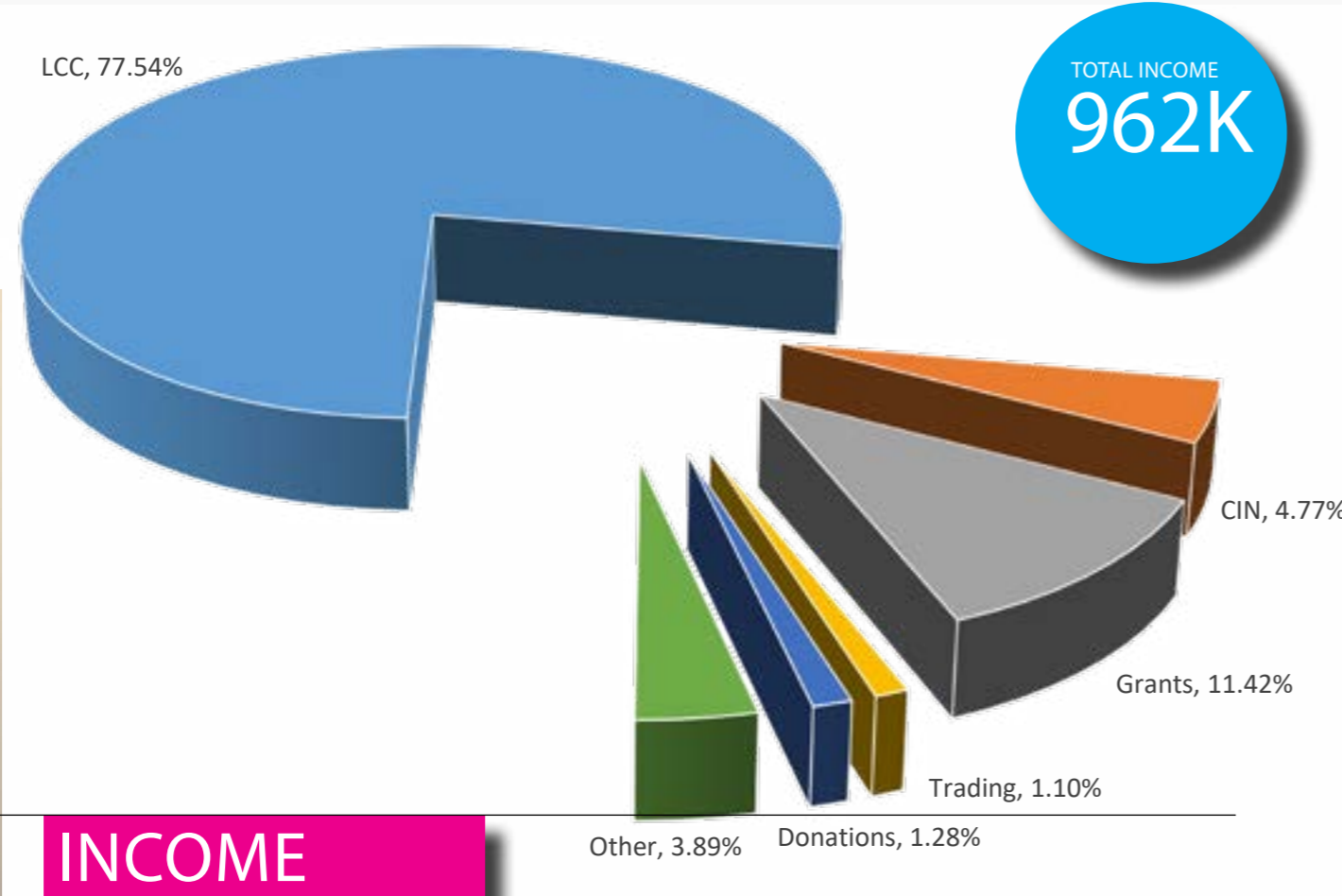
Melissa Fisher - Trustee

"I thank all of you very sincerely for keeping the show on the road throughout these unprecedented times."

TREASURERS REPORT

Over the course of the financial year the Charity's activities were inevitably impacted by the Covid 19 Pandemic. Adapting to new ways of working, and providing more remote support and services, the Charity was able to fulfil its statutory service requirements in line with Lancashire County Council expectations.

Given the high proportion of income from LCC (77% of the total) overall income at £962k was £30k below budget, with the main deficits being attributable to lower income from the holiday caravans, retail and café trading. Government support grants and the furlough scheme helped offset the lost income from the latter two activities. Furthermore, income from other charitable sources was largely in line with expectations.



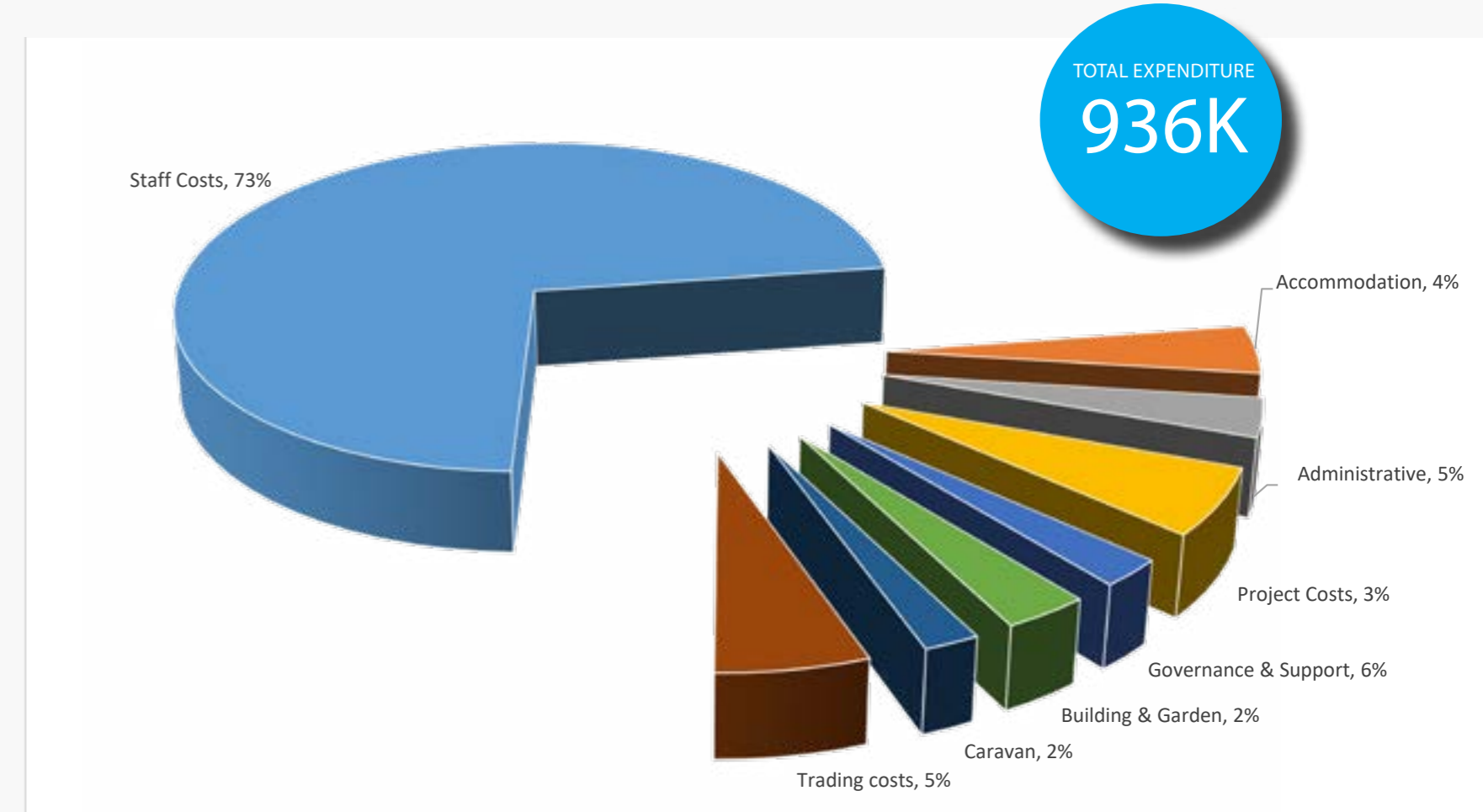
INCOME

APRIL 20 - MARCH 21 / SPLIT BY TYPE

Expenditure over the year at £936k was £20k lower than budget due to retail/café trading expenditure being lower and some efficiency gains. A key activity in the year has been the renovation of the Head Office funded predominantly via a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Charity has maintained a strong reserves and cash position of greater than 3 months operating cost.

Jeff Leahy

Jeff Leahy



EXPENDITURE

APRIL 20 - MARCH 21 / SPLIT BY TYPE

CEO REPORT

During this uncertain year, facing a national pandemic, I am extremely proud of our charity, at all times continuing to operate fully, demonstrating strong management and leadership, forward thinking and effective practices. The charity has been one step ahead of the guidance throughout, with strong decision making and rapid responses to whatever the crisis threw at us!

As we move forwards, we remain focused and determined to continue to adapt and learn as we respond to the existing and emerging needs facing carers and their families. As the world responds to the pandemic, the charity remains committed to carers, lobbying for their rights and uncovering the scale of increased pressures and responsibilities on carers which have increased due to the pandemic.

My focus in leading the charity forwards, still continues to be ensuring we are robust, sustainable and able to support unpaid carers and their families in the longer term, helping and supporting them in the best way we can.

In what has been a turbulent year, we have continued to seize all available opportunities including renovating our head office through installation of new staff welfare facilities, a conferencing suite and a community kitchen whilst continuing to finalise the restoration work to the front of our property as part of Blackburn Road's heritage lottery initiative. The charity has worked tirelessly to ensure unpaid carers were recognised as essential keyworkers (like paid care workers) in statutory guidance, being prioritised for free PPE and the vaccine. Another major achievement this year was being awarded the non-for-profit award at the Hyndburn Business Awards, a huge boost at being recognised for our outstanding work and effort throughout the pandemic.

The board and I have implemented our new 3-year strategic plan (2021-2024) which focuses heavily on meeting the emerging needs of carers whilst sustaining and growing the charity through implementation of more accessible, geographically spread charity shops which serve a dual purpose of diversified unrestricted income and accessible support and services.

On behalf of myself and the Trustees, I would like to recognise and thank our incredible team of staff and volunteers for all their hard work, commitment and compassion to carers, who have contributed towards overcoming the challenges and achieving the successes over the last 12 months.

We cannot wait to welcome you all back into our community facility, being able to once again open our doors and welcome carers, volunteers and the wider communities. I really hope that you will continue to support us on our journey to ensure a better life for carers.



Rebecca Hodgson



“The charity has been one step ahead of the guidance throughout, with strong decision making and rapid responses to whatever the crisis threw at us!”



THE LANCASHIRE CARER SERVICE

The Lancashire Carers Service works across the county providing support, guidance and information to adult carers. The service is delivered in partnership with n-compass who deliver in North and Central Lancashire with Carers Link Lancashire delivering in East Lancashire. The service supports people in their caring role, undertaking statutory carers assessments and supporting their emotional health and wellbeing. Throughout the year, the charity has undertaken a total of 4806 statutory carers assessments, of which 1324 new assessments and 3482 were reviewed assessments.

This year has seen an increase of +4% in the numbers of statutory assessments undertaken in comparison to last year. Of these Carers Assessments, both new and reviewed, 38% have been commissioned a monetary personal budget of between £200-300 and 62% of carers needs have been met by the charity and locally through universal services and support.

1324

CARERS ASSESSEMENTS

We have completed 1324 New Carers Assessments with carers

3482

REVIEWS

We have reviewed 3482 Carers Assessments with carers

595

EMERGENCY PLANS

We have implemented 595 POM4C emergency plans with carers

6028

1-2-1 SUPPORT SESSIONS

Provided 6028 1-2-1 support sessions for adult carers (an increase of +6% compared to one-to-ones delivered in 2019/20)

This year has seen an overall reduction in the numbers of carers requiring additional financial social care support to meet their needs. In comparison to last year (19/20) a further 8% of carers have found their needs have been met directly through the charity and other universal services. The numbers of carers also being in receipt of a statutory carers budget has also reduced, with the charity seeing a reduction of -22% of commissioned personal budgets in comparison to last year. This evidence demonstrates the impact that the charity has in being able to identify and meet carers needs through its services and support locally.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND SERVICES

"I care for my husband and at the beginning of the pandemic Carers Link Lancashire rang me to check if we needed anything. They helped me arrange vital food and medicine deliveries from local volunteers when we were isolating. It really reassured me knowing they were there to support us through such difficult times. They are all very kind" Carer

1583

WELFARE CALLS

Throughout the year we undertook 1583 additional welfare calls

71

AWARENESS SESSIONS

To a range of audiences with 834 professionals receiving the training throughout the year

61

VIRTUAL OUTREACH

To raise awareness of the services and support engaging with 1115 professionals and members of the public

100

MAX CARDS

Provided over 100 parent carers with a free Max Card enabling families to receive free and discounted access to recreational facilities

WELFARE & BENEFITS

Our dedicated worker secured £111,965.00 in unclaimed benefits for carers, assisting them with completing claim forms and ensuring carers receive the benefits they are entitled to.

FREE COUNSELLING SESSIONS

A team of 14 volunteer counsellors provided free counselling sessions to carers.

ADDITIONAL WELFARE SUPPORT

We identified carers who may be vulnerable and at risk due to Covid-19. Throughout the year we undertook 1583 welfare calls to this identified group helping to reduce poverty, isolation and loneliness.

CARERS STORY

Les cares for his wife Linda who suffered from two severe and life-threatening strokes. After several months in hospital, Linda was discharged home and was totally dependent on Les for all her care needs. *"This changed our life forever and I decided to give up my job as a Manufacturing Manager to look after Linda fulltime. I wanted to give her the best quality of life that she could have"*

Due to the chronic fatigue and medication Linda takes she sleeps around 14 hours a day, so the couple do everything between the hours of 12pm – 7pm. *"We go out every day and make the most of it"* Having experienced the devastating effects of his wife's stroke, Les understands the complexity of strokes and how important it is to connect with other people. Les now helps out at several Stroke Association groups including the allotment, choir and Fun 4 Stroke. He always tries to make sure everyone at the groups feels included. Les also enjoys volunteering at our charity shop in Accrington.

"Becoming a volunteer in the shop has helped in many ways. It is my respite; I can totally switch off from my caring role whilst providing a valuable service that gives me a great deal of satisfaction"

Les explained that the best part of caring for someone is the personal satisfaction of knowing you are helping in some way to improve their quality of life and that the worst thing is the constant worry of becoming ill yourself and not being able to look after the person you love dearly.

We asked Les how the Carers Service has supported him over the years *"When I first registered, I had a Carers Assessment which was an opportunity to talk about my caring role and the support that is available. Part of the assessment included planning for an emergency and setting up a Carers Peace of Mind Plan just in case something unexpectedly happened to me, and I was unable to care for Linda."*

"Being a part of the service has helped take away some of the 'What if' and replaced it with some reassurance if an emergency did occur. I always recommend the benefits of having an assessment to any carers I come across."

Les is one of the finalists for the Carer of the Year award at this years BBC Radio Lancashire Make a Difference Awards which recognises unsung heroes from across the county. It wasn't a surprise when we found out he was a finalist because as well as always going above and beyond to support his wife he also does the same for other Carers and anyone he has come into contact with over the years. We wish him lots of luck at the special awards night in September where the winners will be announced.

36%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE CARING FOR AN OLDER PERSON

17%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

11%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS

12%

OF REGISTERED CARERS ARE CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA



TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS FOR THE FUTURE

Carers Link Lancashire recognises the importance of supporting in the education and training of future social care workers, enabling them to have a better understanding of unpaid carers, how to recognise, identify and support them. To do this, the charity offers at least two student social carer placements each year and this year has supported by offering 1036 hours of placements. This is Sophie, one of our student social workers who was with us this year....



"During my 2nd year at UCLAN undertaking a degree in social work to become a trained social worker, I undertook my 2nd year placement at Carers Link Lancashire. My role included understanding and recognising who an unpaid carer was, including their rights and needs and conducting statutory carers assessments and reviews.

On taking up my placement, I immediately felt part of the team and was supported and guided through my social work placement and training journey. The placement provided me with valuable insight into the lives of carers, their barriers, challenges and needs and enabled me to understand their rights and how we can collectively support them.

Every member of the staff team shows compassion and dedication in their work, to ensure that they improve the lives of carers and their wider family at every opportunity. After my placement, whilst continuing to study, I was offered part time employment with the charity as a Review and Support Officer, which again, supported my training and development. I have now completed my degree and am a fully qualified social worker and have commenced my first role as a 'Social Worker for the Adult Community Team East' I feel so lucky to have had my a placement with such a passionate and innovative charity."

I am committed to keep working in partnership with the charity in the future to ensure that carers continue to be recognised, valued and supported."

VOLUNTEER LED SERVICES

As of the 31st March 2021, Carers Link Lancashire has 138 active volunteers who are assisting in supporting in the direct delivery of services and facilities.

Throughout the year 142 volunteers have provided the organisation with a total of 1785 volunteering hours. This is a reduction in support hours of - 55% from year 19/20 and is due to the national pandemic, with stringent restrictions in place on what volunteers were able to support us with.

If quantified into a paid salary at national minimum wage, this would work out as £15,904.35 in volunteering time. There has been an impact and reduction in volunteer hours since 19/20 which was quantified £16,311.69 in volunteering time.

"Volunteering here has helped me communicate with people a lot better and given me experience working on the till. I enjoy serving customers and interacting with them. I really like being part of the team."

Cara, Charity Shop Volunteer

142

REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS

1785

TOTAL VOLUNTEERING HOURS



CARERS COMMUNITY FACILITY

Due to the pandemic, the year was a turbulent one for the charity's newly opened community facility which houses a shop, café, garden and information and support hub and saw closures and intermittent opening in line with government guidance. However, the charity took the opportunity to seize the closure as something to enforce positive change and saw the development and installation of a new community kitchen which will enable expansion of the cafes facilities!

Our vision is that the community facility will bring carers and the wider community together providing an array of services, community events, drop in sessions, workshops, support groups, luncheon clubs, affordable home cooked food, a beautiful garden to enjoy, quality second hand items in our shop, carers resource library and the list goes on and on....!

Our colourful garden provides a peaceful haven for Carers and the person they care for to take time out to sit, enjoy a coffee, snack or a delicious homemade lunch in beautiful, friendly surroundings. Our Gardening Group meets up each month to learn how to encourage bees, butterflies and other pollinators into the garden. Our community cafe offers home cooked lunch specials, wonderful baked cakes, a childrens menu with popular milkshakes. We've had some fantastic feedback from our customers, especially about our award winning coffee and our delicious lunch time paninis.



"It was so good to be here in the community garden today, to listen and share experiences. Thank you to all the team for the welcome, the lovely food made with love, and the wonderful service"

HYNDBURN BUSINESS AWARDS

The charity were nominated and finalists for 2 awards at the Hyndburn Business Awards and were successfully awarded the non for profit award! This was awarded for the 2nd consecutive year running and is a fantastic achievement for the charity demonstrating the impact, support and services to carers and the wider communities across Hyndburn!



YOUNG CARERS SERVICE

As of the 31st March 2021 the Young Carers team were supporting 118 registered young carers from Hyndburn & Ribble Valley. During the pandemic, we have increased our amount of support offered to Young Carers and have implemented further support and services to address need including increasing young carers resilience's and coping mechanisms. Young Carers roles and responsibilities have also been heightened as a direct result of COVID 19 and this continues to have a detrimental and negative impact on our YC's including the following:

50%

OF CURRENT YC'S NOW
HAVE HEIGHTENED CARING
RESPONSIBILITIES

74%

NOW CARING ON AVERAGE
FOR MORE THAN 35 HOURS
PER WEEK

26%

NOW CARING ON AVERAGE
FOR MORE THAN 46 HOURS
PER WEEK

55%

OF YC'S NOW SUFFERING
FROM MENTAL HEALTH
DIFFICULTIES

45%

OF OUR FAMILIES NOW USING
FOODBANKS TO ENABLE
THEM TO EAT

As a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of children and young people undertaking caring roles and who have become young carers with a significant number of these being hidden and in receipt of no support. Since the pandemic, we have been working tirelessly with partners to ensure they are identified, seeing an increase of +36% of registered YC's over the past 12 months. Moving forwards the charity is searching for additional income to expand capacity and support in the young carers team.

YOUNG CARERS ACTION DAY

Being a young carer can be tough. You have extra chores, worries and responsibilities and can struggle to keep up at school, often missing out on a social life, and feeling isolated and stressed.

However, caring can also have a positive side, with young carers developing especially deep bonds with the person they care for, and great pride in the support they give. The caring role can also lead to them developing new skills, and a maturity, that can help them as they move on to further education and the workplace.

The theme for Young Carers Action Day this year was 'Protect Young Carers' Futures', highlighting the skills learned through being a Young Carer, like time-management, resilience and empathy. These skills are important not only for young people moving into higher education, but also for entering the workplace – they are highly valued by employers.

Sienna one of our Young Carers wrote about the valuable skills she has learnt through her caring role.

"Being a young carer can be tough but I feel I have learnt so many things and gained lots of skills. I now understand about Mental Health and how it can affect not just the person with the illness but all the family. When this affected my family I found I needed help and I was able to get support this has made me stronger and my confidence increased, I became interested in raising awareness about mental health and even did a presentation for my teachers in school something I didn't ever think I would be able to do before. Things are getting better for my family now and I have learnt to cook, I know about medication, I find I am good at listening to other people and think more about what others might be going through. Young Carers have lots to offer."

51%

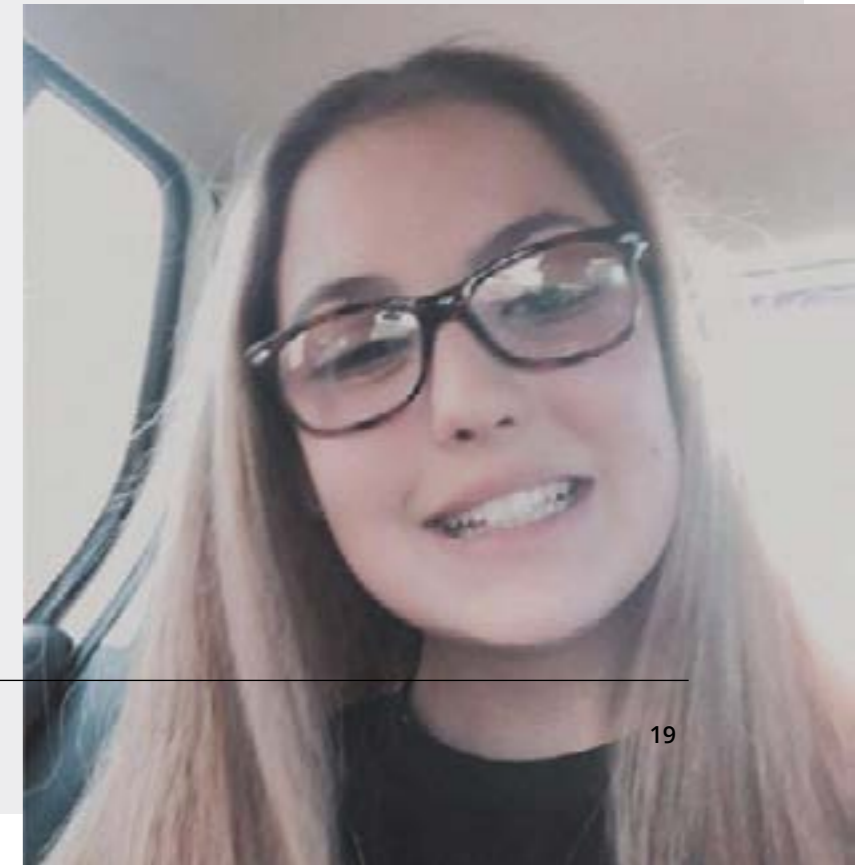
OF REGISTERED YOUNG CARERS
ARE CARING FOR MUM

25%

OF REGISTERED YOUNG CARERS
ARE CARING FOR BROTHER

13.5%

OF REGISTERED YOUNG CARERS
ARE AGED BETWEEN 6-8 YEARS OLD



CARING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Throughout the year and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the charity have still continued to fully deliver its contracts, support and service to unpaid carers working tirelessly as 'keyworkers' in the fight against COVID-19. The charity continued to follow government guidelines and at all times ensured that the charity's workforce and beneficiaries were kept safe from the virus. As a statutory deliverer of health and social care face to face work still continued where deemed absolutely necessary and new ways of working were introduced including remote support to ensure that we could continue to support carers and provide services. The charity swiftly adapted to the pandemic activating its business continuity plan, pandemic policy and implementing thorough risk assessments and action plans. Successful systems were implemented including building and office arrangements, partnered teams, scheduled rotas, social distancing, infection prevention and PPE.

The charity has always been one step ahead, implementing risk assessments, systems and processes for service delivery before any government guidance on the workplace were released demonstrating the charity's successful management, leadership, resilience's and forward planning in pro-actively making extremely rapid decision and responses during the crisis.

Like many other front-line services, the charity had to suspend all non-compulsory face to face work and quickly adapted our services virtually to provide virtual meetings, one to ones and group support via online platforms including zoom, skype, facebook, telephone and email. The charity also had to postpone all volunteer services which provided direct delivery to carers. The charity swiftly developed a range of innovative and digital platforms to ensure that carers were not isolated, preventing crisis, breakdown of roles and providing any support necessary including breaks and activities. In addition to virtual support, face to face support was still provided to those who it was deemed necessary and full screening tools were implemented to keep staff safe.



zoom

Regardless of COVID, the business has continued to thrive both in terms of meeting contractual agreements, Key Performance Indicators and also organisational milestones. The charity saw this period as an opportunity to improve the charity and undertake much needed improvements to assets. A range of renovation work has continued to take place including renovation to the front of the property through the heritage lottery funding and a full renovation of the properties top floor space to implement a new welfare area, offices and conference suite. The charity has also sourced funding to install a new community kitchen on the ground floor to ensure that the café can be as sustainable and profitable in preparation for relaunch.

"I am very grateful to you for teaching me how to use Zoom. Not only have I been able to attend your wonderful activities online I can go to my weekly church service and speak to my daughter who moved to Cyprus just before lockdown."

A VIRTUAL BREAK FROM CARING

The national pandemic and lockdowns saw carers being more isolated and lonely than ever before. Therefore, it was very important for the charity to ensure that regardless of restrictions that we were able to continue to offer a range of targeted support groups, training, events, activities and peer support opportunities remotely. A Carers Cafe, family quiz, crafts and cooking workshop ran weekly as well as an Understanding Dementia Courses, legal clinics, musical singalongs and reflexology to name a few ran virtually on Zoom.

73

SUPPORT GROUPS

73 support groups which have been held virtually attended by 135 carers

85

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

85 events / activities engaging with 341 carers

27

COURSES

27 virtual courses including an Understanding Dementia course engaging with 134 carers

610

FREE RESPITE OPPORTUNITIES

Supported & provided 610 carers with free respite opportunities

+ 1098

NEW FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

+ 428

NEW INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

+ 218

NEW TWITTER FOLLOWERS

"The online singalongs have given me something to look forward to and really uplifted my spirits. thank you so much"

CARER AWARENESS TRAINING

Throughout the year the charity has delivered 71 CAT sessions to a range of audiences with 834 professionals receiving the training throughout the year. This service enables professionals to become 'Carer Champions' for their teams. On average approx. 12 professionals have attended each Carers Awareness Training Session. This is an increase in +3% in CAT training sessions and +66% increase in the numbers of professionals trained in comparison to in 2019/20. The numbers attending the CAT sessions has more than doubled due to those now being able to attend remotely.



OUR PARTNERS



OUR FUNDERS



OUR AWARDS



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