

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23

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Swansea Carers Centre
Canolfan Gofalwyr Abertawe



Jane Davidson

Chair of Trustees

Welcome Message

I am very pleased to introduce the Annual Report for 2022/2023.

As I approach the end of my first year as Chair of the board of trustees, I can reflect that it has been a very busy, challenging year.

I would like to begin by offering my thanks to the CEO, our senior management team, all the staff and volunteers including my fellow trustees. They have shown such dedication to Swansea Carers Centre. I am immensely proud of the way they have all worked to support one another and our service users. By their dedication and commitment, they have assisted one another through the most difficult cost of living crisis and supported the continued development of this amazing organisation.

I would also like to thank our funders for their continued support. We are living in challenging times but with your help we are continuing to offer more support to more diverse groups of carers. We are extremely grateful for your support.

The pandemic had a considerable impact on us all, but the resulting cost of living crisis has brought its own pressures to carers, staff, volunteers and trustees. I am proud to report that we in Swansea Carers Centre have been able to offer support to service users, staff and volunteers while maintaining the integrity of the organisation as a whole.

CEO's Overview

22/23

All sections of society have been facing major challenges during the past few years, none more so than unpaid carers. They were hit exceptionally hard by the pandemic, with some still being affected daily, and the dire state of the economy has hit hard with fuel poverty and cost of living challenges making life even more difficult.

Throughout the past year, Swansea Carers Centre has engaged with even more carers in Swansea to hear what are their main worries and concerns, and how they feel the Centre and its staff can best support carers. The organisation has continued to see how Covid continues to impact carers both psychologically and physically but the added pressure of the increase in costs of living has made life so much more difficult for carers. Poverty is a real thing that is affecting many carers on a daily basis. Our staff has shown the advantages and strength of the third sector by coming up with innovative responses, creativity, responding quickly and working with partners to try and meet needs. Our health and social care services are facing unprecedented difficulties now, and there is no doubt that carers are turning to Swansea Carers Centre to seek help in a variety of ways. It is at times like this, that agencies like us, demonstrate our effectiveness, resilience and determination to help carers in need.

In every annual report I seem to be highlighting the increased demand upon our services, and the last year was no exception. We have more staff now than ever, more new projects than ever on top of core essential services that we have been offering for years.

We are extremely grateful to all our statutory funders but we would not be able to continue meeting the need without our own fundraising with independent charities and trusts. As an organisation, we are committed to working in partnership with others to ensure that carers in Swansea receive the best care and support and that our work embraces the regional and Welsh Government priorities:

- Priority One:** Identifying and valuing unpaid carers
- Priority Two:** Providing information, advice and assistance
- Priority Three:** Supporting life alongside caring
- Priority Four:** Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace

New Services

- Carers Assessment Pilot with Swansea Social Services
- Time for You – Sitting and Short Breaks project
- Mental Health Worker
- Grants and Short Breaks
- BAME – sewing club / badminton club
- Live and Learn Dementia
- Over 50's Activities
- "Warm Welcome" our weekly drop in session during the winter period
- Fuel Poverty Project
- Male Carers Breakfast meetings

Staff Update

- **Increase in staff and services.**
- **Restructure** – In response to the increasing pressure on the staff team, a restructure was undertaken during the year which resulted in the establishment of six teams. This has led to the appointment of new team leaders and a new post of Quality and Performance manager on our senior management team.
- **Charity Excellence** – we succeeded in achieving this quality award.
- Working with others. As an organisation we are committed to continue working with others to ensure a comprehensive and **holistic support** for carers in Swansea.
- **Environmental** – new working group established to review our environmental procedures and practices.
- Congratulations to Chris, our dedicated volunteer, on receiving the **High Sheriff award**.
- The past year has been a very difficult and often sad time for several of our staff due to serious illnesses. **These staff are highly valued** members of the team, and we all wish them well and hope that they will be back soon at the Carers Centre.



Thanks

Swansea Carers Centre is fortunate to have a Board of Trustees who are committed to developing quality services for carers in the city. They work tirelessly behind the scenes guiding the work of the organisation. They contribute so much time and effort in their role as trustees and I am very grateful for the support they give me and the staff.



I am fortunate to manage a team of dedicated and passionate workers who go above and beyond what is expected of them. They are committed to ensuring that carers' needs are identified and that services are appropriate and identified quickly. Many of our staff have, or have had, personal experience of caring. Without doubt our best asset is our staff team and I am so grateful for the way they have responded to the difficult challenges during the last year and before.

In the same respect, my appreciation goes to all the volunteers who form part of our workforce and who give their time and experience freely. In particular, it was good to see one of our longest serving volunteer, Chris Tribe, receiving an award by the High Sheriff. Well-deserved Chris. Unfortunately, our much-loved volunteer, Jeff Pople passed away during the year. No doubt a loss to his family, friends and his friends at the Carers Centre where he is still missed every week.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all our funders from statutory bodies and from various charities and trusts. As an organisation we would not be able to respond to the needs of carers in Swansea without your support. We appreciate you putting your faith in us and will continue to work creatively and innovatively to support carers in Swansea.

Finally, I would like to thank all the carers who have engaged with us during the past year and appreciate you putting your faith in us. We look forward to working collaboratively with you during the coming year.



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*Chief Executive
Officer*

Our Services

Welfare Benefits

The cost of living crisis continues to affect unpaid carers. They are particularly vulnerable to all types of rising costs due to their limited ability to earn an income, and due to the additional costs they face. This includes costs of taking the person they care for to hospital, keeping their home at a safe minimum temperature, doing extra laundry and buying special food items. The welfare benefit team offers an advice and form filling service to unpaid carers, this financial year they secured **£4,063,416 in benefits for carers in Swansea.**



Counselling

Unpaid carers who provide essential support to family or friends with physical or mental health needs, often experience significant stress and emotional challenges themselves. It is vital that a carer looks after their own mental wellbeing to enable them to continue caring. Counselling can help make sense of a new or ongoing life as a carer.

We currently have three part time Counsellors at the Carers Centre. **The service is FREE** to carers living in Swansea. The sessions can be via phone, Zoom or in-person appointments, whichever suits the carer.

Advice & Information

Swansea Carers Centre have an **experienced and dedicated staff** team who provide a comprehensive information and advice service for carers. Our **confidential service** ensures that carers have the right information, tailored to their individual needs whatever their circumstances. Some examples of regular queries we advise carers on day to day:

- Taking a break (respite)
- Carers employment rights
- Equipment for the home
- Accessing a care package
- Managing someone's affairs
- Hoarding
- Accessing food vouchers



Ty Conway Day Centre

This small day centre in Penlan, Swansea provides a happy and vibrant environment for older people.

During the year, **22** visitors enjoyed a variety of activities whilst being cared for and supported by qualified staff and trained volunteers; their carer could then enjoy some respite. All Staff and volunteers are fully trained and subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Hospital Outreach

Swansea Carers Hospital Outreach Project has worked within all hospitals to ensure that **carers, relatives, patients and hospital staff are able to access support and advice within a hospital setting.** Then, on leaving hospital are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to self-advocate and access the services they need. The project worker has the information needed to guide carers and their relatives through each process. From supporting or preparing them for meetings, referring or signposting to appropriate services, she will ensure that the support is continued following discharge from hospital to home.

GP Link worker

During this period we secured funding from the Waterloo Foundation for a GP Link Worker to work with health professionals within GP surgeries, to identify carers and refer them to the appropriate services. Health professionals are well placed to identify carers at an early stage and signpost them for support.

Investing in Volunteers Award



SCC was proud to announce its achievement of the Investing in Volunteers Status Award, **a recognition of our commitment to providing exceptional support and opportunities for volunteers.**

Our new Time 4 You volunteer companionship sitting-service was established during this period, and one of our Dementia Drop-In Volunteers received a High Sheriff of West Glamorgan Award for his services to Swansea Carers Centre. **We supported 51 volunteers during the year; 22 new volunteers.** We also introduced a volunteer online resource portal on our website.



Carers Dementia Support

The Carers Dementia Service provides **personalised, ongoing support for carers of someone living with dementia** or awaiting a diagnosis for dementia. The weekly drop-in session for carers and the person they are looking after continues to be a great success. The social interaction between carers, staff and the cared for has been such a positive experience for all involved; increasing self-esteem, confidence and improved mental health well being. For carers who cannot attend the drop-in we continue to offer a weekly virtual drop-in. Collaboration work with Dementia Friendly Swansea provides on-the-spot support at the Dementia Hwb in the Quadrant, for walk-in consultations with advice, information and signposting. A new outreach support service has been established at Tesco Llansamlet. This provides a vital service to the carers of someone with dementia living in East Swansea.

New development

Staff from the dementia team now operate an outreach service at Tesco Llansamlet and Tesco Fforestfach.



Mental Health Support

The support that this service offers helps **to improve carer's mental health & wellbeing** whilst increasing their ability, knowledge and resilience to cope better with their caring role. We connect them with crucial peer support networks via our Mental Health Carers support group to help combat loneliness and isolation. Carers are better equipped to deal with challenging situations when they have the right information, coping strategies, and ongoing support from a team of expert carer support staff.

B.A.M.E. Carers

Our BAME Carer Support Worker's role is to identify and engage with carers from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities and support them to access the many services available to them. During this period it has established weekly badminton sessions at the local Mosque and sewing classes at the Carers Cwtsh.



Training & Activities

One vital aspect of caring is to ensure that both the carer and the person receiving care have a balanced and fulfilling life. Engaging in a variety of activities can significantly enhance the well-being of the carer. The training team at Swansea Carers Centre explore a range of **activities specifically designed to benefit carers, promoting physical and mental health, strengthening relationships, and fostering a sense of purpose**, these training courses and activities aim to provide respite, relaxation, and enrichment to the carer. We are fortunate to have four projects, each with a different remit, but all linking together to form a comprehensive training and activity programme. Henry Smith, Mind, Body and Spirit; Carers Connect, Live & Learn Dementia Project and Older People's Connect for carers over the age of 50.



Young Adult Carers

Young Adult Carers (YAC) aged 16 - 25 provide unpaid care to a relative, family member or friend. This project ensures YACs have access to information and advice at a time when it is needed, enabling them to benefit from support at an earlier stage. By providing access to support and activities we hope to improve their mental health and wellbeing; improve their confidence and self esteem; reduce loneliness and isolation. They have access to youth club drop-ins and Feel Food Fridays, where they can have some fun whilst taking a break from their caring role. The project also provides 1-2-1 holistic and tailored support (Face to face, on the phone and via social media) as well as 1-2-1 support to improve education outcomes by liaising with schools, colleges and universities on their behalf.

Fuel Poverty Project

Some carers struggle to afford fuel bills due to depleted incomes or/and other significant costs associated with caring for someone with an illness (e.g. expensive equipment, home adaptations, special diets.) The person they care for is usually at home all day and therefore more energy is needed to keep their home warm for longer than average. This project workers assist carers to:

- maximise household income and reduce debts
- switch tariffs and provide energy efficiency advice
- apply for Locking Cooker valves if the person they care for has dementia,
- Register on the Priority Services Register (PSR)
- provide CO safety advice and access to free CO alarms

Helping Family Carers

Caring for a child with a disability or health condition brings many diverse challenges to families and is often a lifelong commitment. The HFC project is designed and co-produced by carers for carers and provides: tailored, 1-2-1 personal support and group sessions for parent carers to help them to network and reduce isolation. This year they have increased outreach work to ensure information and services are available to all individuals and groups in the community as well as bespoke training sessions so that families are more informed on issues that are important to them and will support them with their caring role.



Time 4 You

This project explore new ways of offering respite to carers. Respite is available in the form of direct replacement care via our volunteer led project and access to short breaks in partnership with 'Carefree Breaks'.

58 carers benefitted from this project during the year.

Male Carers Project

The project aims to raise awareness of the needs of male carers & provide personalised 1-2-1 support, group sessions, and regular drop in service/workshops supporting male carers in the community.

This year the project organised Tea & Toast drop ins, 'Meet & Eats', a trip to the South Wales Aviation Museum (SWAM) at St Athans, Formula 1 simulator, axe throwing and walks.



Our activities

during the year

- Understanding Autism, Sensory Differences, Challenging Behaviour, Co-existing conditions
- Planning for Tomorrow
- LA Direct Payments
- Dementia & Delirium
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Caring at Christmas
- Introduction to Dementia
- Marie Curie Respite Service
- Clutter Friends
- Dance to Health
- Direct Debit & Brokerage
- Mental Health First Aid, Financial Wellbeing
- Christmas Musical
- Memories through Music/Golden Oldies
- Perception & communication
- Changes in behaviour & a positive approach
- The Impact of Environment
- Wellness & Holistic Therapy Tasters
- Spring Flowers Bouquet Making
- Less Stress, More Joy
- Bouquet Workshops
- Monthly Art Workshops in the Glynn Vivian
- 'Not Just a Carer' photography course
- Theatre Trips
- 3 Principles Course
- Mindfulness Practice Group
- Winter Wonderland visit
- Walking Group, Basic IT Courses, Holistic Therapies.
- Drumming course, Kayaking, Line Dancing, Indoor Climbing
- Surfing
- Legal Surgeries,
- Demystifying Dementia
- Self Care Finding Peace
- The 3 Principles
- Anxiety Management
- Beach walk
- Caving
- Ceramics
- Choir
- Cinema trips
- First Aid
- Floristry
- Foot Golf
- Hanging Baskets
- Holistic Therapies
- Line Dancing
- Meet & Eats
- Tea & Toast
- Mini retreat
- Afternoon Tea @ Morgan's Hotel
- Mosaic Making
- Orienteering
- Rock Climbing
- Paint Along
- Pottery and Raku
- Rock Group
- Sea Swimming
- Sound healing
- Paddleboarding
- Tango Dance Course
- Trip to Tenby
- Willow Weaving
- Yoga



Key Achievements

Number of contacts
21,075

5,921
Numbers of individual carers

2,165
attendances at dementia support sessions



3 in 5 people are likely to become carers at some point in their lives



58 Carer I.D. Cards issued

1,033
Dementia carers supported

1,125
Contacts with hospital outreach worker

51
Volunteers





£
4,063,416
Benefits recouped

87
Male Carers supported by project

331
Groups and activities

£53,187
in grants given to
267
individuals in the form of supermarket vouchers and vouchers for white goods

450
Counselling appointments



7 New members of staff

12
monthly Book Clubs held

48
Young Adult Carers supported

627
Helping Family Carers contacts

Canolfan Gofalwyr Abertawe



Swansea Carers Centre

Gallery

South Wales Aviation Museum (SWAM)



Tenby Trip



Rock Climbing



Meet & Eats



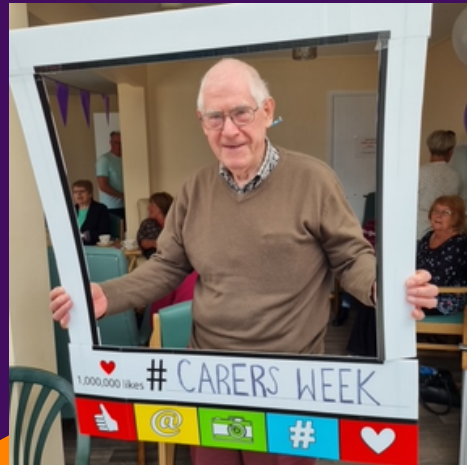
Formula 1



Climbing Wall



Launch of the Fuel Poverty project



YAC Youth Drop In



Carers' Week



Go outdoors!

Ty Conway

Feedback

It's an excellent service and I don't know where my family would be without out them . It's such a difficult role caring for someone and the support we have had is first class. They put you on the right path when dealing with organisations such as social services . The dementia drop in has made us feel less isolated and it's great on a Thursday meeting people.

I am very glad the service is available and that there is always someone just a phone call away if needed.

So very informative, very friendly and relaxed atmosphere and I felt that they really listened to my concerns and helped accordingly!

I have found all staff at the Carers Centre very helpful, knowledgeable and empathetic. You don't feel alone and abandoned. They are always there for you.

The staff and volunteers at Swansea Carers have been my lifeline. So helpful.

I think everyone in the Service works so hard to support Carers and make them feel valued. Each time I have felt the need to contact the Service I have been supported and advised immediately. Thank you so much.

Having the Swansea Carers Office to help me is my main support. I have turned to them for help over a period of 5 years and the staff have never let me down. I even have priority now in the Health Centre by being recognised as a Carer, which has been a boon. I would not have known how to go about anything. They have told me my rights and how to use them. They are also a great support when you feel you just can't go on. Lovely people.

The support and care that we have received from the Carers Centre, has made such a difference to us all, as a family. There is always a warm welcome from every member of staff, and the difference it's made has been incredible. I can't thank them enough for their kindness and patience.



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