

# OUR IMPACT

Every unpaid carer to be valued and empowered and to have access to personalised and high-quality support, living in carer friendly communities.



2023 - 2024

WORCESTERSHIRE  
ASSOCIATION OF  
CARERS

# A Year at a Glance

April 2023 to end March 2024

Of those asked, **100%** of carers would recommend our service to another carer.

Helped carers access support from other organisations **7758** times.

## Referrals and Support from Carer Advisors:

**180** Carers received Personal Budgets

**388** Statutory Reviews of Carers Assessments

**1505** Statutory Carers Assessments

**700** Carers referred for Household Support Fund  
Total amount awarded **£94,275**

Carers Helpline received **7535** calls in & made **10,320** calls out to carers.

**134** Carers enabled to register their caring role with their GP

**284** Carer Voice Hours for the year

**77,000** Website Hits

**Lifestyle Advisor Service:**  
Referrals received **453**

**Volunteer hours given** **788.7**

**Mental Health Link Workers:**  
**173** Total Referrals

**Peer Group Sessions** **7**

**Completed 104 MH Conversations** 1's

**83** Carers attended 1:1 guided self help sessions

**Top 3 referral reasons are:**

- General Advice/Support **94**
- Coping/Resilience Strategies **51**
- Stress Management **14**

**Mission Statement**  
To enable Carers to make informed choices through giving expert advice, information and support and to promote recognition of Carers by service providers and communities.



Total of **3819** Carer Emergency Cards issued

**2535** referrals into the Carers Hub. Of these, **1486** referrals were for NEW carers.

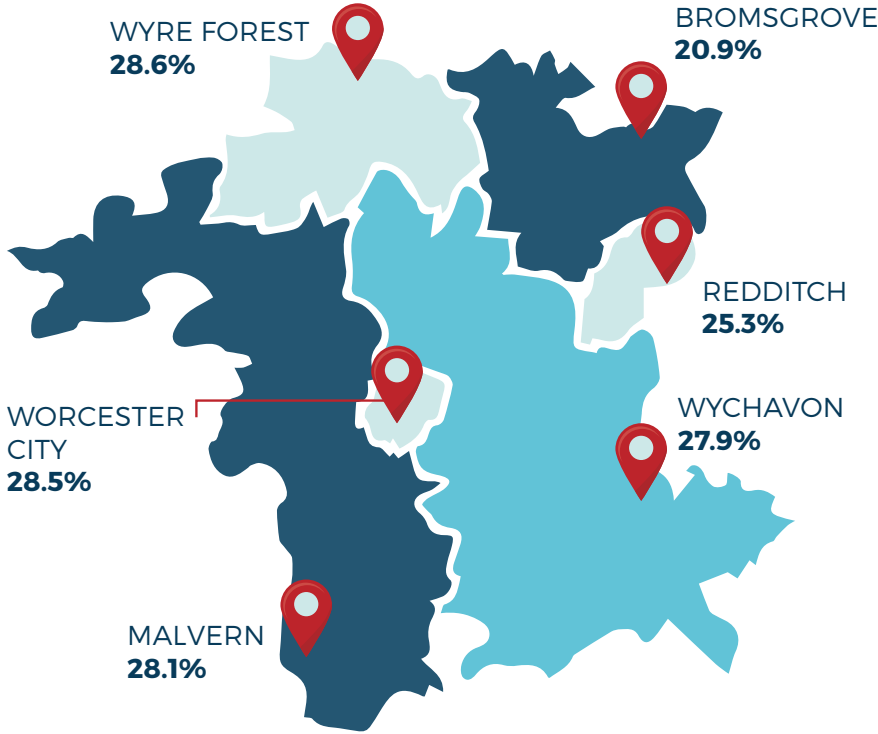
Urgent referrals from carers in crisis **353**

Carer Conversations **1501**

## Reach across county against Census 2021 figures for carers:

**25%** Total North Worcestershire

**28.1%** Total South Worcestershire



**Wellbeing:**

- 28** Carer Awareness Training sessions delivered to GP Surgeries, VCS & Employers
- 28** Peer Support Group sessions delivered
- 53** Events for Carers delivered

**27%**

Carers reached, Countywide \*Census 2021

**Carer Wellbeing Outcomes**  
**98%** felt the activity / event boosted their health and wellbeing.

**Carer Training:**  
**95.5%** of carers who attended sessions rated them as 'excellent'.

**192** Sessions Delivered

One on One Sessions enabling carers to increase their digital confidence

**134** Felt less isolated as a result of having attended

**92%** felt that the information and skills they gained made them more confident in their caring role

**Social Prescribing Service:**  
**1311** Referrals received

**2428** onward signposts/referrals into support services, agencies, networks or platforms which offer specialised advice and support for varying issues recognised across Social Prescribing such as housing, debt and talking therapy.



# Outcomes

### Carer Outcomes for HUB:

Our reviews are based on the outcomes in the All Age Carers Strategy [LINK HERE](#). These outcomes are being Recognised and Valued. Being Supported with Physical and Mental Wellbeing and Caring Safely. Following support and during review, the following outcomes for carers were recorded:

- 86% Felt confident that there is support available.
- 83% Felt able to care safely.
- 76% Felt the caring they do is appropriate to their age and capabilities.
- 81% Felt they understand how to access support.
- 83% Felt confident to fulfil my role as a carer.
- 92% Felt able to maintain a dignified relationship with the person I care for.
- 84% Felt recognised & respected in my role as a carer.
- 80% Felt treated as an expert care partner.
- 75% Felt they know how to make the most of income available & not forced into financial hardship.
- 85% Felt able to remain in (suitable) employment if I wish to.

\*always or most of the time

### Carer Mental Health Link Workers:

The following outcomes for carers were recorded:

- 82% Felt more able to manage their own mental wellbeing all or most of the time.
- 58% Felt better able to navigate health and social care systems and processes all or most of the time.
- 68% Felt better able to navigate health and social care systems and processes most or all of the time.
- 67% Felt better equipped to care for someone living with a mental health condition most or all of the time.

I would recommend this service to anyone, didn't really want to talk with anyone at first, very understanding, the best.

### Lifestyle Advisor Service Outcomes:

92.8% of patients having completed their personal journey with the service achieving improvement in at least one health measure.

- Just over two-thirds of patients reduced their BMI.
- 62.3 % improved their mental wellbeing.

Cant thank you enough for the sessions, I have recommended them to all the carers at my Church and half a dozen have joined the Carers Association. You are such a good resource.

### Social Prescribing Service:

Responses from a shared decision-making audit shows that:

- 81.4% of patients rated the social prescribing service 5 out of 5.
- 63% of patients said they had not returned to their GP or Health Professional about their mental health and wellbeing concern since using the SP service.
- 63% of patients felt the support they received from the SP service would help their mental health and wellbeing long term.

Listened to when I was upset, was very kind, lovely and helpful.

# Carer & Patient Experiences

A word cloud featuring various positive feedback phrases from carers and patients. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'COMPASSIONATE' and 'WARM' being the largest. Other prominent words include 'HELPFUL', 'Truly Appreciated', 'Caring', 'Understanding', 'Support', 'Uplifting', 'Kind', 'Relaxing', 'Sense of Direction', 'Valuable', 'Straightforward', 'Wonderful', 'Camaraderie', 'Guidance', 'Well Organised', 'COMING TOGETHER', 'Remarkable', 'FOCUSSED', 'CONFIDENCE', 'HEARTWARMING', 'Beneficial', 'INCLUSIVE', 'diverse', 'ENABLED', 'fantastic', 'LOVELY', 'WELCOME', 'detailed', 'Excellent', 'special time', 'Empowered', 'ssupnik', 'Felt Like Royalty', 'Good Fun', 'RECOMMEND', 'New Information', 'MAKING FRIENDS', 'Light Touch', 'A', 'Marvel', 'INFORMATIVE', 'JESUN NON-JARGONISTIC', 'SPELL BINDING', 'Relaxing', 'SHARING', 'Sense of Direction', 'Valuable', 'Straightforward', 'Wonderful', 'Camaraderie', 'Guidance', 'Well Organised', 'COMING TOGETHER', 'Remarkable', 'FOCUSSED', 'CONFIDENCE', 'HEARTWARMING', 'Beneficial', 'INCLUSIVE', 'diverse', 'ENABLED', 'fantastic', 'LOVELY', 'WELCOME', 'detailed', 'Excellent', 'special time', 'Empowered', 'ssupnik', 'Felt Like Royalty', 'Good Fun', 'RECOMMEND', 'New Information', 'MAKING FRIENDS', 'Light Touch', 'A', 'Marvel', 'INFORMATIVE', 'JESUN NON-JARGONISTIC', 'SPELL BINDING'.

Support & Advice

Physical & Mental Wellbeing

Knowledge & Information

Life of my Own

Recognised & Valued

4

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CARERS

5

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CARERS

# Key Achievements

## Integrated Carers Hub

The Integrated Carers Hub provided on behalf of [Worcestershire County Council](#) coordinates information, advice and support for adult carers across Worcestershire.

Support is provided in many areas including; carer assessments, practical support around the caring role, carer wellbeing, getting a break, and understanding legal and financial issues.

Carers in the community provide unpaid care for family, friends or neighbours. Often working long hours and providing round the clock care – many not realising that they are a carer.

While caring can be hugely rewarding it can also have a significant effect on carers. Accessing the support available is vital to help with carers' physical and mental health, finances and wellbeing, so that they can continue to care and have a life of their own. Carers UK state:

**“Unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute a staggering £445 million to the economy every day – that’s £162 billion per year.” (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023).**

The estimated unpaid carer contribution to Worcestershire is £1.62 billion.

In Worcestershire, there are 52,740 self-declared carers and many more who are yet to recognise that they are a carer. The Carers Hub is currently in touch with 14000 carers with many more accessing free resources from our website.

**Services include:**

### Carers Assessments

1505 carers assessments were completed and a further 388 carer assessment reviews.

Of these, 180 carers received Personal Budgets with a total value of £36,900.

Due to recent changes, all local authorities will be assessed by the Care Quality Commission under their quality standards. As the Carers Hub delivers the statutory carer assessments under the Care Act, our support work will be included in this assessment. We work closely with Worcestershire County Council to ensure these quality standards are met.

### Household Support Fund

The cost of living crisis continues to impact on carers and patients. The Household Support Fund offers support to those struggling with the cost of living. WAC enabled carers to access the fund, resulting in a total of £94,275 grants received.

### Working with GP Surgeries and Carer Awareness Training

A series of online Carer Awareness sessions were delivered to GP surgeries in Worcestershire with over 90 staff attending from over 60 local surgeries. A new Carer Champion Network for primary care partners was launched bringing together all of the nominated Carer Champions from across Worcestershire's surgeries to work together to increase carer identification, recognition, signposting and support.

### Carer engagement and Involvement

Supporting carers to have a voice, inform and influence strategy through carer representation and partnership working has enabled carers to be kept at the heart of the conversation through involvement at a variety of meetings and forums including; Carers Partnership, the All Age Carers Strategy Action Planning Group, the Learning Disability Partnership Board and its sub groups, LeDeR Steering Groups and Priority Action Groups, the Autism Partnership Board, Dementia Strategy Groups, Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Carer Reference Group as well as the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System Carer Reference Group.

### Volunteers

We are extremely grateful to the volunteers who dedicate their time to support us as an organisation in roles such as:

- Customer Experience
- Carer Talktime
- Group Facilitators

We also have 10 volunteers supporting us in different roles at the shop, with 54 years of service between them and a total average of 30 hours a week given.

We value all our volunteers who support us to raise awareness of the vital needs of carers across the county.

# More about our services

### Carer Mental Health Link Workers

Carers are supported with mental health education helping them to understand the mental health condition and needs of the person they care for. Recognising triggers and warning signs that they may be reaching a crisis point enables them to manage their caring role effectively.

Well-being retreats were offered to help carers relax and unwind from the daily stresses of caring. Retreats enable them to meet with other carers for peer support and to participate in activities such as crafting, massage therapy, yogalates and mindfulness sessions. Weekend coffee mornings bringing working carers together giving opportunities for peer support and mindfulness activities.

Mindfulness walking brought carers together to take a stroll and be mindful in nature, by listening to sounds, feeling the textures of trees and leaves and focusing on being in the moment.

Carer awareness induction sessions have been delivered for new NHS mental health staff joining neighbourhood teams across the county. Link Workers worked with NHS partners to co-deliver group activities including the Managing Emotions group.

### Carer Friendly Employer Network

Carer Friendly Employer Network (CFEN) is a membership scheme, set up for employers to help businesses identify and support carers across their workforce and develop more carer friendly places of work.

Three million people are juggling work and caring in the UK. This means one in seven people will be in a caring role as well as working. Research by Carers UK found that there was a general lack of awareness, support and understanding of the caring role at work. This makes it even harder for some working carers to cope with the extra pressure and demands they face on a day-to-day basis.

We currently have over 20 local employers signed up to the scheme including Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, the University of Worcester, West Merica Police, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Southco, and Worcester Bosch. The total number of employees working for these organisations is over 11,050.

Members can access a range of resources and opportunities to enable them to support staff in a care giving role more effectively.

Through the network we have been able to deliver essential legal and financial information directly to staff in the workplace, offer online sessions to staff to support them to care for someone with dementia and highlight new legislation to over 30 employers by working with the Chamber of Commerce team of experts.

This group of forward-thinking employers across West Merica are striving to support working carers. Being a member demonstrates an employer's positive attitude towards staff members with caring responsibilities outside of work.

### Social Prescribing Service/ Lifestyle Advisor Service

Working closely with GPs to achieve positive and long-lasting outcomes, the service continues to support patients in Redditch using a holistic approach to their health and wellbeing considering all aspects that can impact their life. This has included being involved with targeted initiatives such as cancer screening to ensure patients understand cancer screening, booked and attended their screening appointment. Due to the positive impact of this initiative, it has now become a regular part of the social prescribing offer.

### Worcestershire Association of Carers Retail Shop

Our shop in the heart of the community in Droitwich, boasts

some of the best window displays in town. With a dedicated and supportive volunteer base the shop is a wonderful place to visit. Follow them here.

[LINK HERE](#)

### Digital Marketing

Work has been undertaken to make the website and social media platforms more accessible and user-friendly offering more resources and information for carers, patients and professionals. Our social media platforms have increased in popularity and benchmark second locally for not-for-profit organisations.

Website hits for the year - 77,000

### Hosted Services Redditch District Collaborative (RDC)

Worcestershire Association of Carers hosts the RDC Programme Team.

The Collaborative aims to bring together the collective resources across all sectors to reduce health inequalities in Redditch.

The priorities for Redditch in 2023-24 were based on population health data and were identified as Frailty, Mental Health & Wellbeing and Obesity.

[LINK HERE](#)

### Families in Partnership (FiP)

Worcestershire Association of Carers are fiscal hosts for FiP. The Forum is led by Parent Carers and uses parental voice to influence change through events, discussion groups and working groups. We gather the views of local families and work with the council, educational settings, health providers and other agencies to highlight where local services are working well, or challenge when changes or improvements need to be made. The forum has rebranded as Worcestershire Parent Carer Forum. More information can be found here.

[LINK HERE](#)



# Meet some of our carers & patients

\*names have been changed

## An insight into the experiences of some carers, patients and the advisors supporting them.

Lucy found it difficult to switch off from caring. It had taken over her life and had become all - consuming.

*I lost a lot of myself during covid looking after my elderly parent and my sister with learning difficulties 24 hours a day for 16 months with no break. I became programmed for care of others. Following support, I was able to address my long-term well-being.*

The help and support I received from the first contact with my social prescriber was invaluable. It has helped me regain focus, purpose and a lot of sense of direction and has also taught me a lot about myself. To this day I still refer back to the support daily and use the mechanisms and pointers given to help and support me. A service and a person I'll truly never forget.

Having access to training just at the point where I needed to start thinking about paying for care was lifesaving for my peace of mind.

## Support from an advisor's perspective.

I supported a carer with multiple caring roles, one of which was for someone with poor mental health. The carer also had a number of their own health conditions which led to having to leave work.

I was able to support them emotionally and practically. This included mental health education and awareness work; ways to respond, awareness of triggers and early warning signs to help identify and manage developing mental ill health and when to seek professional help. We worked together on skills work to help the carer explore coping and crisis management strategies and to access community and professional support, all of which helped build self-confidence.

We also explored their own physical and mental health concerns and other factors impacting on their life and their caring role. I was able to offer some practical support and introduce them to a number of other services who can also offer support.

The support offered meant they have been able to maintain their mental wellbeing and successfully adjust to the various caring roles. They were able to put boundaries in place and use strategies we discussed to protect their own well-being and resilience for the longer term.

Carer was pleased with the support and said: ***"I felt so supported and empowered. I have not felt judged, and you have listened. I feel more confident in the caring role and making time for me."***

## Responding to patient's needs.

We became aware that several male patients were feeling isolated, lonely and struggling to find and connect with other men with similar interests.

We thought a men's walk at Arrow Valley Lake might help. Nine men attended on the day, the youngest being twenty-one and the eldest sixty-two.

Social prescribers who had all completed walk leader training ensured the group was facilitated safely. At the end of the walk there was a lot of enthusiasm and here are some of the comments received:

*"Was great! Spoke with some of the others and started talking about meeting up for a curry once a month and bringing a football next time to have a game."*

*"I was nervous to attend and felt silly doing it but glad I did. Really enjoyed talking to the group and I hope there will another walk."*

*"I didn't talk much but just being around others with similar problems has helped me feel so much better. Thank you very much."*

The team continued to host monthly walks and the number of people attending increased. Over time the men were able to develop and build relationships with each other and set up their own WhatsApp group. The group had such a positive impact that two people volunteered to take over the monthly walks.

Fred was referred to us in crisis. He was juggling work with multiple caring roles and a challenging family dynamic. Over time, a lack of trust in services had developed and he had become overwhelmed with the stress of caring with no support.

Time was spent building trust with Fred helping him to overcome his reluctance to engage with services. He went on to access services and work with them to establish a care plan. He was also enabled to access vital financial support that was needed.

Fred is gaining confidence in a range of other services. As a result, he now has regular support helping him to keep his home clean, cook meals and go for walks in the community with the person he cares for. Fred enjoys being in nature. Having learnt some breathing techniques, he is able to take

family members out and they now take some time practicing wellbeing by using their senses together. This has all helped relieve some of the pressure Fred had been experiencing and he now feels more positive about the future.

Sheila cares for her partner who is living with multiple physical and mental health conditions. She is feeling isolated, stressed and is receiving treatment for depression.

Sheila was supported with resources for low mood, depression, understanding triggers, introduced to self-help strategies and creating a crisis plan. Having experienced a family bereavement, Sheila was given details for bereavement counselling and encouraged to come along to carer events to help reduce isolation.

In order to support the person she cares for, Sheila was given information and signposts for understanding anxiety, PTSD and self-harm. We also discovered that a mindfulness colouring book shared by both carer and cared for helped them feel more relaxed and focused on something for a little while.

Sheila has become more aware of mental health conditions, finding and exploring self-help strategies, confidence building, being kind and believing in herself, and dealing with loss. She has registered for online counselling, and obtained additional support for the person she cares for. Together, they have been able to start setting goals and doing activities that bring them joy such as, going on days trips to the seaside and for walks in the countryside. Sheila also felt determined to get a better job and is now in employment doing a job she really enjoys



# A Message from Us

Carers fill huge gaps in the health and care system and without them, those systems would be overwhelmed. However, carers too often provide this care at a massive cost to themselves – to their finances, to their health and to their life opportunities. During another year of soaring costs and increasingly overstretched services, we have continued to see too many carers coming to us in crisis, exhausted and unable to continue without significant support.

Equally this impact report shows the difference that a relatively small investment can make to the wellbeing of carers and the sustainability of their caring role. For many, a

few simple things can make a massive difference; a truth illustrated in the testimonials included here. For that reason, we reserve special thanks for all those who have agreed to share their experiences. Important though the numbers are, they are only part of the picture and can't capture the full impact of what the right support at the right time can mean for an individual carer.

Building healthy, resilient communities is also important for our carers and cared for. So, while we are mindful of our core mission, we take a proactive approach to developing services that support our communities

and by extension, our carers. Our social prescribing team have an invaluable role to play, and through our Carer Friendly Employer Network, local organisations are also playing an important role in supporting carers in the workplace.

Finally, heartfelt thanks go to all our local partners without whom we could not achieve so much.

Karen Edwards  
CEO



We wish to say a huge thank you to all those organisations and individuals who support us so generously and who work in partnership with us to deliver support directly to those in need of help.



It is thanks to your support through your donations, your advocacy and your volunteering that together we can make such a significant impact on behalf of all our carers and patients.

This is just a selection of our funders and supporting organisations.

- Worcestershire County Council
- Redditch Borough Council (RDC)
- CMHLT Funders NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- St Stephens Surgery / Winyates Health Centre
- Worcestershire Community Foundation
- VSCE Mental Health Integration Funding
- Carers Trust
- Worcester City Parish Relief
- Worcester Childrens First
- VCSE Alliance Mental Health
- Carers Trust
- Sanctuary Group
- Community First
- ASDA Foundation

## Carer Friendly Employer Network

Becoming a CFEN member demonstrates a company's positive attitude towards staff members with caring responsibilities outside of work.

CFEN members are able to access a range of resources and opportunities designed to enable support to working carers. What makes us different from other national initiatives is our focus on local networking and bespoke targeted resources.

We can support to:

- Raise awareness of caring and caring issues across your workplace.
- Support your workplace to identify and engage with working carers more effectively.
- Signpost your employees to additional support and resources to support their caring role.

We are proud to be working with 20 members.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

## Fundraising

Fundraising plays a vital role in providing the urgent support carers and patients need.

As Karen, our CEO has expressed, carers fill huge gaps in systems that would otherwise be wholly overwhelmed. Yet carers themselves can also become overwhelmed and without support their caring roles would become unsustainable. In order to support carers to have a life of their own, feel valued, recognised and well and to get the breaks they need, we need support.

Every gesture of support of any size makes a difference.

If you would like to support us, you can do so in several ways:

- |                           |                           |                           |                                     |                                  |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Make a Donation           | In Memory Giving          | Donate to the shop        | Just Giving fundraise on our behalf | Contact Us to discuss your ideas |
| <a href="#">LINK HERE</a> | <a href="#">LINK HERE</a> | <a href="#">LINK HERE</a> | <a href="#">LINK HERE</a>           | <a href="#">LINK HERE</a>        |





# HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Here are ways you can  
keep connected with us.



Find out how to support our work :  
[www.carersworcs.org.uk/  
why-you-should-give](http://www.carersworcs.org.uk/why-you-should-give)



Email us at :  
[mail@carersworcs.org.uk](mailto:mail@carersworcs.org.uk)



**Worcestershire Association of Carers**  
Polysec House,  
Blackpole Trading Estate West,  
Hindlip Lane,  
Worcester, WR3 8TJ.

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We THANK YOU for your support.

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