



RENFREWSHIRE CARERS CENTRE
A Lifeline for Carers in Renfrewshire

Annual Report 2023 - 2025

Scottish Charity No: SC023986



Chairperson's report

April 2023- March 2025

I am Dougie Smith, Chairperson, and started on the Board on 28th February 2017 and Chair in September 2023. This report is a general overview of the work undertaken by Renfrewshire Carers Centre, reflecting on the years April 23- March 25.

We would like to start this report by thanking all staff members, Volunteers (With a capital V), RCC Members and The Board (Who are volunteers, with a small V), without whom we would be unable to deliver services to those who rely on RCC for the help & support they receive in their daily life challenges.

To get us back on track with our AGM cycle, my report will cover 2023-2025. COVID-19 and the challenges lockdown brought, knocked the AGM out of its stride too.

The year leading up to the 2024 General Election, was challenging and with an expected change of Government, that change brought hope, however it is not only local political decisions that affect us, but world events also, as we have seen with Ukraine, Gaza and change of Governments in America and Germany. With a new Government, we saw a budget that placed pressure on employers and local Governments. In turn these actions place continuing pressure on unpaid Carers and the services that RCC provide.

With the on-going cost of living crisis, and the ever-growing demands on health and social care services, there has never been a more important time for Renfrewshire Carers Centre to provide a lifeline for Carers in Renfrewshire.

Within the Centre we were sad to see the following team members leave for new challenges and well-earned retirement.

Susan (ASW), Lewis (ASW), Heather Pearson (Short Breaks Lead), Heather McIntyre (CAH Senior) and Evelyn (Short Breaks Administrator)

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I would like to wish them well on their new ventures and thank them for their dedication and commitment during their time with us.

Change is very much part of everyday life, and we would like to welcome the following new members to the team.

In 2023-2025 we welcomed Jane: Carers Support Manager, Melanie: Short Breaks Officer, Jean: Autism Carers Development Officer, Lorraine: Adult Carers Support Worker and Catriona: Short Breaks Lead.

New Services:

Felician: Ethnic Minority Information Development Advisor - new post which aims to identify and support Carers from Ethnic Minority communities.

Gurpreet: Self Directed Support (SDS) Advisor - new post which aims to provide information and support to Carers on Self Directed Support.

Maggie: Fundraising and Development Officer - new post to develop and fundraise for new and existing services for Carers.

The Board were also strengthened by the following new Members: Stephen McGinty, Ann Rowe, Jacqui Dinnie and Fiona Brown over the past 2 years and I'm pleased to say 3 new members Jim Duffy, Afia Evans and Laura Neil joined us in May 25.

Sadly, we said a final farewell to Norrie Mathieson – a Carer, Volunteer and Board member who was a great advocate of the Centre for over 15 years.



Chairperson's report

Key highlights over April 23- March 25

HSCP Contract

The Centre was successful in negotiating a three-year contract with the Health & Social Care Partnership which came into fruition in July 23 which has provided security and continuity for Carers and the Centre.

One of the major changes with the new contract was the way we would provide respite going forward with the development of a **Short Breaks Team** who would provide a diverse range of short breaks options including home based respite, Time to Live grants, Carefree and Respite. The Short Breaks Team also had the responsibility to develop a Renfrewshire Carers Discount Card. 450 Carers now have a Discount Card with 66 companies offering a discount in Renfrewshire.

Adult Support Team: Supported 1776 new Carers in 2023-2025 and a further 642 Carers already registered with the Centre. 781 Carers completed an Adult Carer Support plan, and 126 new Carers now have a Carers Emergency Plan in place.

Grants: We saw a substantial uplift in the grants we received from the Scottish Government through Shared Care Scotland with £232,264.37 awarded in grants to Carers.

Care at Home: Provided 27,096 hours of care and support to 132 families. The Registered Manager for this service is now Lorna Brodie.

Counselling: A service very much in demand with 140 Carers referred for counselling with 119 Carers receiving a service from our Counsellor and Volunteer Counsellors, however currently we have 30 Carers still waiting to access the service.

Chairperson's report

Support Groups: 232 Carers attended our condition specific support groups & Coffee & Cake Drop In with standing room only at some meetings. We saw the launch of 2 ASD Parent support groups- one during the day and one in the evening for Parent Carers looking after someone under 18.

Advocacy: Support is becoming more complex taking a greater amount of time and has an impact on the number of Carers that can be supported. 90 Carers were supported.

Volunteering: 56 Volunteers supported the work of the Centre through raising awareness of Carers in the area, assisting in support groups and short breaks, administration, counselling, telephone/befriending, and driving.

Young Carers: 364 new Young Carers were referred to the Centre with Young Carers Awareness Sessions delivered to 4,856 primary and secondary pupils. We provide 9 regular support groups to YC including weekly and monthly groups for junior and senior YC's, football group and 3 school lunchtime groups.

Highlights include fun filled residential breaks, Young Carers Action Day where YC were invited to the Scottish Parliament, YC newsletter, Duke of Edinburgh awards, presented with Football trophies from St Mirren, podcasting, Halloween and Sma Shot festivals.

Training: 428 Carers accessed a variety of training courses, ranging from well-being, First Aid, information/learning based sessions including POA, SDS, Carers Rights etc., condition-specific courses such as dementia and ASD.

Information: Our social media channels and e-bulletins/newsletter were essential in keeping Carers up to date. Recorded 59,579 views to the website in 23-25, as well as 12,649 Facebook engagements, 21 e-bulletins and 4 newsletters. We have been developing condition-specific informations booklets, available on our website, and are working on a translated webpage for Ethnic Minority Carers.



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Carers Community Champions: 96 Carers Champions have been trained and supported. We cannot identify and support Carers in our community by ourselves, and it is only by working in partnership with other organisations we can support Carers best and our work with Carer Community Champions is vital.

Other Partnership working undertaken includes: Citizens Advice Bureau with a surgery in the Centre, Create Paisley with our YC school groups, Street Stuff with our YC football group and a new partnership with Jonathan McNamara from MSM Solicitors to establish a legal surgery for Carers, and a new surgery with Tom Arthur MSP.

New initiatives partnered with Community Safety Team, Sewing2gether All Nations, Pachedu, Housing Associations, Riverbrae School and continued work with organisations such as We Are With You Renfrewshire, Active Communities, Alzheimer's, ROAR, RAMH and Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership to name but a few.

As always, our **Administration Team** are the backbone of what we do and instrumental in our Carer support.

In total our brilliant Centre staff, managed and supported by Maureen and Jane, have supported 4,783 Carers who have accessed at least one of our main Centre support services.



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As you can see a tremendous amount of work has been carried out by our dedicated staff, volunteers and Board operating in very difficult times to support Carers in Renfrewshire - a big thank you to everyone for all that you do.

Challenging times are ahead for Carers given the current financial difficulties facing the Local Authority and the effect this will have on statutory services.

This ever-growing demand on Carers means that there has never been a more important time for Renfrewshire Carers Centre to provide a lifeline for Carers in Renfrewshire. We want to ensure Carers in Renfrewshire are recognised and valued for that contribution, are supported and empowered.

- Dougie Smith and Diane Goodman



Dougie Smith
Chairperson



Diane Goodman
Centre Manager

Treasurer's report

Financial Report April 2023 - March 2024

The income for the Centre in 2023/24 was £1,445,142, an increase on the prior year's figure of £1,229,428 (£215,714 +17.5%). This was due to the successful negotiation of a new three-year contract with the Health & Social Care Partnership and increased provision of support services in the community through our Care at Home service. Expenditure increased in the year to £1,412,561 compared to £1,385,315 in the prior year (£27,246 +2%). This has resulted in an excess of £32,581.

Achievements and performance

Our principal funding source continues to be Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

New/extended funding this year included:

- **Health & Social Care Partnership** - We received £629,375 for our core Centre services and Carers.
- **Care at Home** - Our Social Enterprise, Care at Home which provides high quality personalised social care support brought in £607,786.
- **Shared Care Scotland** – Time to Live Funding of £143,544 an increase of £23,397 from last year for Breaks for Carers.
- **Shared Care Scotland** – Creative Breaks funding of £22,185 for respite breaks for Adults and Young Carers.
- **Shared Care Scotland** - Better Breaks funding of £16,800 for run activities throughout the summer holidays for parents and children with complex difficulties.

Treasurer's report

- **Carers Trust Grants for Carers** - funding of £3,375.
- **The Hospital Saturday Fund** - funding of £1,123.
- **Margaret's Fund** - funding of £500.

Future Plans

Priorities for the coming year are to develop/replacement of new funding streams to enable the expansion of the range of services that we provide to Carers and the identification of hidden Carers.



Treasurer's report

Financial Report April 2024 - March 2025

The income for the Centre in 2024/25 was £1,652,049 an increase on the prior year figure of £1,445,412 (£206,908 +14.3%%). This was due to the increased provision of support services in the community provided by Care at Home service coupled with an increase in Health & Social Care Partnership funding following a full year of the new contract now in place and an increase in grant funding. Expenditure increased in the year to £1,670,085 compared to £1,412,560 in the prior year (£257,525 +18.2%) mostly related costs arising from increased income. This has resulted in a deficit of £18,036.

The charity is committed to building up their reserves to safeguard the activities of the charity. At 31 March 2025, the charity had £78,942 (2024 - £76,898 in unrestricted reserves and £331,968 (2024 - £343,368) in restricted reserves.

Achievements and performance

New/extended funding this year included:

- **Care at Home** - Our Social Enterprise, Care at Home, which provides high quality personalised social care support brought in £748,295.
- **Health & Social Care Partnership** - We received £654,374 for our core Centre services and Carers.
- **Shared Care Scotland** – Time to Live Fund- We received £144,958 an increase of £1,414 from last year for Breaks for Carers.
- **Inspiring Scotland** - Self Direct Support funding of £24,208 to support and advice on the SDS process.
- **Voluntary Sector Development Fund** - Received £15,975 to provide SVQ 2 training for our Care at Home staff.

Treasurer's report

- **Carers Trust** – Study Buddy's funding of £11,200 to provide bespoke tutors to support Young Carers during secondary education.
- **Shared Care Scotland** – Creative Breaks funding of £10,070 for respite breaks for Adult and Young Carers.
- **Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund from Engage Renfrewshire** - to support Ethnic Minority Carers' mental health and wellbeing activities, funding of £8,124
- **Carers Trust Grants for Carers** - funding of £7,390.
- **Margaret's Fund** - funding of £921.
- **Carers Trust** - funding of £400 to help part fund the Young Carers Festival

Focus for next year

Priorities for the coming year are to develop new funding streams to enable the expansion of the range of services that we provide to Carers, the identification of hidden Carers and the focus is on tight control on costs as we face challenges due to HMRC increases to Employers National Insurance costs.



Achievements 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2025

90 Carers referred to our Advocacy service.

£232,264.37 awarded in grants to Carers.

781 adult Carers completed an Adult Carers Support Plan.

56 Volunteers supported the work of the Centre.

428 Carers accessed our training sessions.

140 Carers were referred to our Counselling service

1776 new Carers were referred to the Centre.

We have 96 Community Carers Champions in our community.

232 Carers attended our condition-specific support groups and monthly Coffee & Cake Drop In.

Young Carers awareness sessions delivered to 4,856 primary and secondary pupils.

4,783 Carers accessed at least one of our support services.

126 new Carers now have a Carers Emergency Plan in place.

642 Carers already registered with the Centre re-referred for support.

364 Young Carers were referred to the Carers Centre.

Care at Home service provided 27,096 hours of care and support to 132 families.

Feedback on Services

"The love and care I received from Renfrewshire Carers most certainly helped me to be where I am today. The service provided was incredible, and for that, I am eternally grateful. It's the only place on the planet, that you know every single person is in the same boat as you, and that creates great strength, courage and compassion. I really don't know where I would be today, without you all." - Alzheimer Carers Group

"My role as a volunteer has had a positive impact on my life and my future goals. I am using this opportunity to expand my skills and learn about communication, teamwork, problem solving, task management and organisation. I could not ask for a better place to be a volunteer." – Volunteer

**"I purchased the One Ren membership for the year. I'm actually so excited to try some new classes in the coming weeks and put some much-needed focus into my physical and mental well-being."
- After trying out our Yoga / Pilates taster session**

**"Thank you again to the Carers Centre for allowing me as a Carer to have access to full membership for a year... that is truly amazing"
– Short Breaks funding**

**"I would not know what to do if I hadn't had the support from RCC and I feel it was meant to be, I would like to thank everyone for all the help and support I have received and thankful that I have the Centre to turn to."
- Adult Support Worker**

"I'm at the beginning of this journey and have found the info invaluable thank you" - Training Courses



Feedback on Services

**"I am so grateful for your support. Everything you have done over this last year but mainly for being the one person I know I can talk to about this stuff and who understands. I genuinely wouldn't have coped if it wasn't for you."
- Advocacy**

"The course was fantastic, so informative, relatable, down to earth, and funny. I learnt so much today and has made such a significant difference to my life" - Training Courses

"After attending the wellbeing courses, I am now starting to see through the fog" - Training Courses

**"X has had a mixed end of term, lots of positives and some challenges continue for her. She has settled well during the transition days at school. Sincere thanks for all your support and assistance for X and her family over the last few years, it has been hugely beneficial to her and Mum. Your presence and input at meetings have been hugely valued."
- Young Carers Education Worker**

"It was a great pleasure to talk to you today and feel that Z and I have some support and we're not alone anymore. Thank you for all the information and support you've offered me. I'm almost overwhelmed with the kindness and understanding, you're like a lifeboat to me and I cannot tell you how much I appreciate it. Thank you again, you're a light in the darkness and we so badly needed your help." - Self-Directed Support Advisor



Feedback on Services

"The trip was great. It felt special because we took him out of school for it. He kept noticing there was very little other children around. The accommodation was good and the staff very welcoming. The area was lovely with all the amenities that you could need. We got the bus each day into the centre, and we did The Chocolateries tour, Camera Obscura, National Museum of Scotland, the cinema, Christmas market and ate in a great street food place. Camera Obscura offer back packs for those with additional support needs. They include ear defenders, sunglasses, fidget toys and now/next boards. It was refreshing to see somewhere provide people with items to help them be included in the experience they offer. Thank you very much.

- Young Carer's family who benefitted from a Respite break

"What a difference the Monday football club has made to J and his mood, as most weekends we can't do something or go out anywhere so knowing he has this activity after school on a Monday gives him something to look forward to. Thanks."

- Young Carer's mum

"I would like to say Val is wonderful she is clearly a very good match to my Dad and it was fantastic to get my mum out for a few hours on Tuesday safe in the knowledge that Dad was in good hands. Made such a difference to Mum and allowed me to actually enjoy my time out with her. Thank you so much" - Care at Home Service

"I can't believe I have had summer, autumn and winter at home with my wife thanks to you. I am so grateful for that" - Care at Home Service

"I think unless people are living in the situation you can't really appreciate what you all mean to people like me . You mean the world"

- Care at Home Service

"Thank you for everything. I really appreciate it. Lynn is my lifeline."

- Care at Home Service



Adult Carer's Case Study

I contacted Renfrewshire Carer's Centre back in February, at the start of what has turned out to be the hardest few months of my life. I am serious when I say I wouldn't have made it through without the support of Lorraine and the Centre.

I contacted the Centre, not knowing if I even qualified as a Carer as, although I was reaching out for help, I just saw what I was doing as my parenting responsibility. Lorraine quickly helped me to realise that my experiences went beyond "normal" parenting, and she offered support that has since turned into my lifeline.

In these past few months, I've attended Parent support groups, autism training, I've spoken to citizens advice, and I've even had my nails done. All of which helped support me by providing me with information, next steps and the comfort of knowing that I'm not alone. But I just want to take a moment to highlight three things that continue to support me.

I accessed counselling through the Centre which has helped give me a space to talk openly through my difficulties.

I started attending the wellbeing sessions offered in Bishopton Cornerstone which have just been incredible at giving me some breathing space as well as strategies to help my own wellbeing, and I have Lorraine, who I can call or email, and who has also checked in with me regularly.

We recently reached another crisis point in my house but, for the first time I feel like it didn't break me and I had the tools to handle it and that is undoubtedly because of the support I've received from the Carer's Centre, and I will be forever grateful that you were here when I needed support.



Young Carer's Case Study

Our Education Worker, Sheena, supported a Young Carer, K, to apply for her Young Carer Grant as she was turning 16. K cares for her mum who has Crohn's disease and poor mental health. To apply, you need a form of ID, proof of address and a bank account. Usually, Young Carers use their Young Scot Card. As K was not in receipt of a Young Scot Card, Sheena processed this for K and her younger brother. Sheena supported K to open a bank account.

As K's mum was only going out for essential trips to the pharmacy and for food, Sheena identified that a benefits check would be helpful for mum.

A referral was made which resulted in a successful application for Adult Disability Payment. In the meantime, school had referred K's younger brother to social work due to concerns around his school attendance.

The team effort with school, social work and Sheena led to gaining more trust with mum. She felt more confident in contacting the school when her son was absent and his attendance improved. The Carers Centre and social work were also able to provide financial support to mum to help improve their living standards. We also supported with food bank vouchers when required.

With support from the Carers Centre, it is a more positive picture moving forward for this family.





Respect

Caring

Integrity

Responsiveness

Open and Honest