

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



A Network Partner of
**CARERS
TRUST**

1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022



Message from the Chair of Trustees

A mixed year!

A gradual return to activity with restrictions to Covid regulations creating anxiety for some and joy for many with renewal of long ceased activity.

I cannot thank Debra, our Chief Executive, enough for the time and effort she commits to her role within the organisation with management and direction of the staff team, and negotiations with organisations linking with carers and their needs. As a board, she provides updates for us at each meeting based on progress against our Operational Plan.

The emergence of such quality Facebook communication has been an education - including Rea's recipes, young carers activities, information and signposting, I'm looking forward with anticipation to the next year.

We are extremely grateful for financial advice and support from our dedicated treasurer who provides us with detailed figures that enable us, as a board, to measure the 'value for money' for all our activity. We are also very grateful for all the funding streams, smaller and larger, that enable us to provide our services to carers across the county.

I would also like to thank my Trustee Board colleagues, some with their own 'portfolio' of responsibility, who give unstintingly, their time and energy (home alone!), to ensure that standards are met and consideration is given to issues relating to activity and practice. We had a very productive away day in November 2021, sharing ideas and plans with staff and volunteers that could be taken forward – watch this space!

We have welcomed two new Trustee Board members this year, Julie and Anne, and we are looking forward to the enthusiasm and new ideas that they can bring to the organisation.

Where would we be without our volunteers? Time and energy is offered freely and unstintingly, thank you very much. Without your support and dedication, we would not be able to reach the number of carers that we do.

We have also been sad to lose Kate Whitehead, who has been with Carers Northumberland since the very beginning, to her well-earned retirement. Kate has had a variety of roles within the organisation and has a wealth of knowledge and insight into the caring role and what it means. Kate loves to travel, and I know she will value every opportunity that the future brings her, we are trying to tempt her back as a volunteer.

We have had a few staff changes throughout the year too, with Rea, Hannah, Karen and Ethan joining the team and Tony also leaving his role as Carer Information and Advice Worker in early June 22. Ethan joined us on a short-term placement and has since gone on to a permanent role. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated staff team which is strong and supportive of each other and who go the extra mile to ensure that carers in Northumberland have access to the information, advice and support that they need.

Anne Arter

Chair of Trustees

Introducing Our Team

Carers Northumberland has a dedicated and hard working staff team



Debra Blakey
Chief Executive



Lisa Mordue
Service Delivery
Manager



Laurie Wilson
Finance and Admin
Assistant



**Anne-Marie
Johnstone**
Young Carers Support
Co-ordinator



Naomi Carr
Information and
Advice Worker



Hannah Manning
Information and
Advice Worker



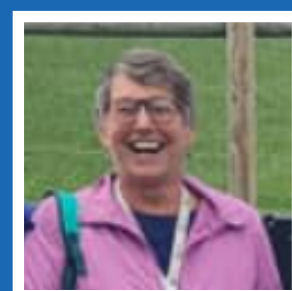
Karen Lightley
Young Carers Activity
Worker



Rea Rahman
Carers into Work
Advisor

Goodbye Kate

We would like to thank Kate for all her hard work and dedication over the past 14 years of Carers Northumberland and those years supporting carers with Carer Link prior. The staff, trustees and volunteers wish Kate a long and happy retirement. She will be greatly missed by everyone associated with Carers Northumberland.



2021/2022 Activity

Figures

At the end of March 2022 there were 4311 Carers registered on Charitylog, 213 are young carers, 156 are former carers and 386 are parent carers.

828 new carers registered in the year.

In 2021/2022 we supported 2639 people and undertook 10512 actions on their behalf.

This is a 28% increase in the number of carers supported and a 31% increase on actions completed compared to last year.

Year on year our numbers increase and demonstrate the need for our services in the County.

Carer Support Fund

203 carers have benefited from the Carers Support Fund (CSF). The cost of supporting carers via the fund for 2021-22 was £20,725. Carers have used the fund to pay for the cost of short breaks, day trips, sport/leisure activities, National Trust Memberships, afternoon teas and spa days. Carers have also been able to spend their CSF award on garden furniture, equipment for hobbies and books to enable them to take a break while staying close to home.

"The amount of money you are offering is very generous and I am so touched. It's a treat to be able to spend money on me! This feels like a bit of a hug, I need propping up and this feels like that. Thank you." - Carer Support Fund recipient

Information and Advice

The Information Service has provided support to carers in person, by telephone, social media, email and video chat throughout the year. They provide information and advice on a wide range of issues such as carers rights, accessing assessments, welfare rights, legal issues, housing, social care and local services. The Information Team are responsible for registering carers and also work alongside our other services and volunteers to deliver support groups, training and events. The Information Team pull all the relevant information for carers together to produce Caring Matters our regular newsletter which is published bi-monthly.





Grants and Benefits

Over the past year we have seen an increased demand for support with benefits and grant applications. This year benefit checks, and applications have resulted in £27,544.40 additional annual income for carers. £12,561 has been awarded in one off grants. We also secured 100 free mobile phone SIM Cards from Vodafone as part of their offer to charities, 55 have been distributed so far, with 42 to adult carers and 13 to young carers.

"Unbelievable care, I could not have coped without them. I would not have known what to do and where to go for certain things without their knowledge." Carer

Emergency Care Planning

The Carers Emergency Card scheme was withdrawn in April 2021 by the British Red Cross. In response, Carers Northumberland have been able to support carers with the new Emergency Care Planning Service.

Carers Northumberland are offering to support carers to complete an Emergency Care Plan which will help them document important information about the person they care and their usual routine and medication requirements. 69 forms have been sent to carers, 15 forms have been returned completed by carers and 15 forms have been completed with the carer supported by CN staff.

"Carers Northumberland is pretty awesome; they are there if you need advice or want to learn new things or improve on being a carer".

Advance Planning

Carers Northumberland have offered carers support to complete Lasting Power of Attorney paperwork since November 2020. Since April 21, 16 carers have accessed the Advance Planning Service which includes support to apply for Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) and are at various stages in the process, with 4 fully completed forms registered so far. There are 8 carers on the waiting list to be contacted regarding the service. 31 carers have utilised the service since it started in November 2020.

Bereavement Guide

Carers Northumberland have produced a Bereavement Guide for carers which can be accessed at any time. The guide has both practical and emotional guidance and has been publicised in the newsletter and on the website. 14 guides have been sent out since April 2021.

Groups and Events

Face to face groups have been running since September in Ponteland, Cramlington, Berwick, Alnwick, Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington. Attendances have been varied, with Cramlington, Berwick, Blyth and Ponteland being the most attended while Ashington, despite coming out as the top location request for a group in the survey, has not attracted many attendees. The venue of the Ashington group has moved to the community room at the Newcastle Building Society which is on the main high street from April 2022. Face-to-face groups were paused during December and January due to the rising cases of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and the government guidance. Face-to-face groups have been running again since February 2022

Our online Tuesday group has continued to run and our private carer Facebook group now has 265 members.

Carers Week 2021

For Carers Week this year we held a series of walks around the County, the carers who attended provided great feedback and were keen to attend more sessions like this. In addition to the walks, we held a creative writing session, a book folding craft session and a stress bucket workshop. We held a social media campaign and invited partners to show their support by sharing images and using the #VisibleandValued.

In response to the success of our walk programme in Carers Week we held many more walks throughout the year and they are now a regular feature in our calendars.



"Carers Northumberland give a sense of belonging and the lovely staff always listen and I am so grateful for their support. It's been lovely to meet other members of the group, people who totally understand what it's like to be a carer for a loved one. Your service is excellent!" - Carer

Carers Rights Day 2021

For Carers Rights Day this year we hosted our first big public event since the pandemic started. We based ourselves at the Cramlington Hub for the day and held a workshop on Carers Rights in the morning and a marketplace event in the afternoon.

We were delighted to be supported by so many partner organisations and the event was incredibly well attended. The marketplace event offered information stalls from a range of providers, a scavenger hunt and refreshments. Feedback on the day was excellent from both the stall holders and the event attendees.

Evaluations rated the venue on average 5 / 5 and the information provided 5/5

"It was great to see Carers Northumberland again, its been a tough 2 years" - Carer

"What a fantastic event, thank you for having us" – Age UK Northumberland



Carer Trips

In October we ran a series of trips for carers to Seaton Delaval Hall, Cragside, Paxton House and a Forest School. Everyone had a great time, despite the weather for some of the trips!



CN Elves

After the success of last years gift bag project, we decided to offer the same again this year. The CN Elves delivered 170 gift bags to carers all across the county and we received amazing feedback from the carers who received them.



"Thank you for my Gift today & my Mam for the nomination such a thoughtful thing to do, you all do such an AMAZING job! Hope you all have a lovely Christmas." Elf bag recipient

"Thank you so much for the lovely gift bag! I am so grateful for all that you do, your help and support has helped keep me going these past few months." Elf bag recipient



Return to Work Carers Project

The Carers into Work Project which is in partnership with Newcastle Carers and North Tyneside Carers Centre and funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority until 31 March 2023. The project aims are to support unpaid carers, aged 16 or over into employment, education or training, to maintain their current employment with support to implement strategies to balance their work and caring responsibilities and to assist carer who want to look for a change of employment which better suits their caring needs. Each carers centre has a dedicated Carers into Work Advisor (CIWA) who will work with carers on an individual basis to explore their needs and the barriers to achieving those objectives.

There are now 37 carers registered on the project, with the Rea, the CIWA for Carers Northumberland, actively working with 23 at present in a variety of ways including, supporting with CV updates, application forms, and interview techniques as well as advising on job searches, volunteering opportunities and education and skills training. Several carers have been supported into part-time and full-time employment. Carers have also been supported into volunteering roles and onto relevant courses and training opportunities.

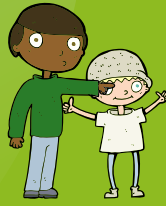
Rea has also been able to get in contact with carers who are due their 2-month follow-up and within their initial baseline had low scores against employment, education and skills. Where appropriate, she has made the follow-up call to discuss the offer from the project.

The project is funded up to 31 March 2023, however, discussion has already begun with the three carers organisations and the North of Tyne Combined Authority to explore how the project may evolve.

"I would like to thank you for the time you have put into helping me figure out my future and what role I would like to do and also helping me physically with the forms as I am Dyslexic and I really struggle with them. You have helped me to believe in myself and know my worth and I have gotten an amazing job, worth more than I had expected I would be doing at 17." Young carer



Young Carers



'My daughter loves being part of Young Carers Northumberland, she's made some lovely friends and the activities provided are fantastic.' Young carer's parent

This project began on 1 August 2020 with the appointment of a Young Carer Service Coordinator (YCSC), Anne-Marie, to support young carers and work closely with the Youth Service and Early Help and Prevention teams. The aim is to work with young carers up to 18 years both individually and in group settings to support them to have the same opportunities as other children and young people. Referrals come via the local authority and young carers will be offered tailored support with their families to ensure that their caring role is not having a negative impact on their aspirations and opportunities. The project is funded until 31 July 2022.

There are 213 young carers registered with 117 new young carers registered in the period. Support for young carers is a mixture of intensive one to one support for those young carers who are struggling with their caring role as well as opportunities for young carers to access other means of support to take a break and get involved in other activities such as an annual Active Northumberland Leisure Pass, funding for organised activities and the Young Carer Support Fund to provide financial support to access a break from their caring role.

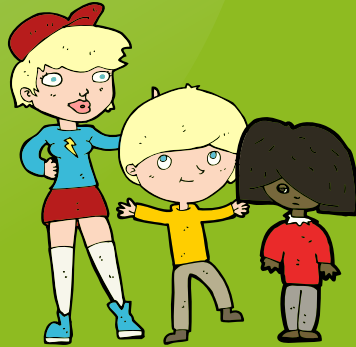
As a result of additional funding received from the Masonic Charitable Foundation via the Northumberland Freemason's we were able to recruit a Young Carers Activity Worker, Karen, who has worked with Anne-Marie to introduce a programme of activities for young carers since September 2021. Activities have included, Airbox Bounce, Northumberland Zoo, ice skating, pirate escape room, canoeing, and online activities such as calendar making, rocky road sweet treats, and Halloween make-up. There have been 231 attendances at young carer activities and events throughout the year.



'My daughter loves ice skating now and is hoping to go again in the future. She really enjoyed the pirate escape room and was so excited when telling us how they managed to work together and escape! The cooking events are also great as it encourages her to use her skills and to produce yummy treats which she is proud of! We made a fun calendar with cute animals which was another great activity!'. young carer's parent

Young Carers Action Day – 16 March 2022:

Young Carers Action Day (YCAD) took place on 16 March 2022 with the theme of tackling isolation. There was some great interaction with our social media campaign throughout the day with many parents commenting how the service has helped:



The Supporting Young Carers in Schools Toolkit was also launched and went out to all schools in Northumberland via the School Safeguarding Lead alongside an email informing schools what we can offer and how to refer into the service.

"We particularly find the free transport so beneficial because due to my disability I am un-able to drive and find public transport a nightmare to rely on! The opportunities available are always full of fun and adventure and we are really grateful to each and every one of the group!" Young carer's parent

Parent Carer Pilot

The vaccination programme prompted a rise in registrations from parent carers (caring for a child under 18 with additional support needs). In response, Carers Northumberland have secured some funding from the Edward Gosling Foundation to pilot a programme of tailored support for parent carers for 12 months. There are currently 386 parent carers registered with 107 new registrations in the period. So far parent carers have accessed grants totalling £8,141 to provide funds for flooring, white goods, gym membership, yoga classes, moving costs and to create a sensory room. The monthly parent carer online Zoom peer support group started in June and has had limited success with few attendees. Parent carers have contacted the service on a range of issues, but the most frequent issues are finance and benefits, carer support and social services.

Parent carer enquiries are often complex and relate to issues surrounding support for the child/children they care for, and this has impacted on the Information Service capacity and highlighted a gap in knowledge mainly around the procedures and referral routes within Children's Services. This has been discussed with the Early Help Team and they are going to try and put some information sessions together to help with this. The draft Commitment to Carers Strategy for Northumberland has also highlighted parent carers as one of the priority areas that needs to be addressed.

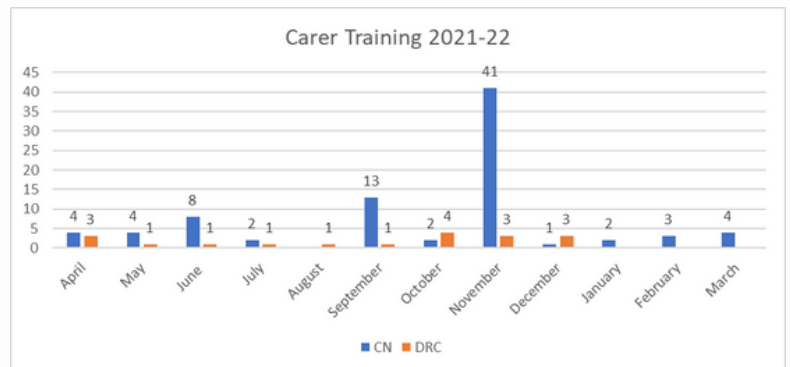
Training and Workshops

Training and workshops offered to carers over the period have had 84 carers attend. The sessions delivered have been How to Say No, Building Resilience. Stress Busting, Planning Ahead, Caring Day to Day, Making Guilt More Manageable, Carers Rights and Assessments, Jump into January (goal setting and reviewing) and Basic First Aid Awareness with all sessions adapted to remote delivery.



The Training Coordinator has delivered joint sessions of Carer Awareness, Rights and Assessments with Lynn Elliott, Carers Lead at NCC to social care staff and a Carer Awareness and Identification session for GP practice staff. GP work is slow to get started due to the ongoing demands on GP practices and their staff as a result of Covid-19 and the vaccination programme, however, some practices are starting to respond to training offers. We are also working with CNTW on a joint delivery programme of Carer Awareness training for all frontline staff. Training has been affected by staffing and priority issues during the surge of increased Covid cases in the last 8-10 weeks. Since 1 April 21 to 31 March 22, 108 professionals have access carer awareness training.

Carers Northumberland also have access to Carers UK's Digital Resource for Carers (DRC) online learning platform, which has had 18 visits since 1 April 2021. The Digital Resource for Carers has not been utilised as much as anticipated so it will not be renewed in June 2022. Carers UK have indicated that the online Digital Resource for Carers will be made available to GP's and carers will be able to access via their GP if interested.



Volunteers

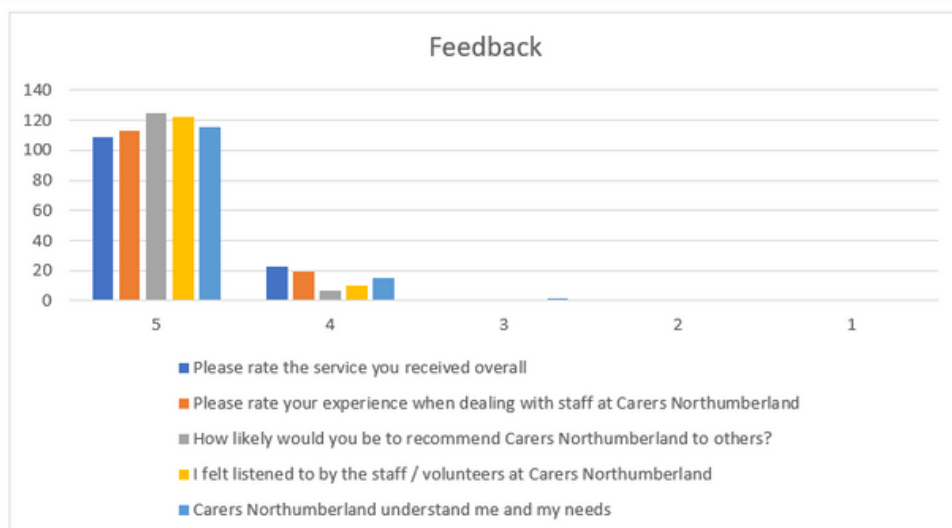
There are currently 16 active volunteers supporting the work of Carers Northumberland which includes 8 trustees. Without the support and dedication of our volunteers Carers Northumberland could not reach and support the number of carers across the county. Volunteers enable us to run the peer support groups at multiple locations across the county, help with events and activities, support the carer network in their local communities and provide feedback to help the Trustee Board to shape the services that are provided.

Since 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 volunteers have provided 236.5 hours of volunteering to support the organisation. Our volunteer materials have been reviewed recently and there are two new role descriptions for volunteer recruitment: Group Host – to support with carer groups and Carer Ambassador – to share information and promote carer awareness in their local area.

Feedback

We received 132 responses to our feedback questionnaire over the year, with overwhelmingly positive responses.

This chart shows responses to questions where carers are asked to rate out of 5. Responses were positive across the board, with no low scores at all.



In addition to this of the 132 people who returned a questionnaire:

- 90 told us they know more about their rights as a carer now
- 95 told us they feel more confident
- 92 told us they feel more in control
- 94 said they are less lonely / isolated
- 118 said they know where to go for advice and support



Going Forward

Throughout the year, Carers Northumberland has maintained and secured new links and partnerships with other organisations, both statutory and voluntary. The Northumberland Carers Partnership Board, which brings together statutory and voluntary organisations across the county who have an interest in supporting carers, have developed a Commitment to Carers Strategy which is currently in draft and expected to be approved in April 2022.

Carers Northumberland is now fully embedded in the Community Mental Health Transformation Funding agenda as a member of the Leadership Group and the VCSE Alliance and Asset Mapping working group. The aim of the group is to transform community mental health provision for severe mental health issues by working collaboratively across statutory health and social care services and voluntary and community organisations. CNTW and larger mental health charities, Mental Health Concern and Mental Health Matters are taking the lead with the programme, but it is expected that some financial support will come through to smaller organisations as the work continues.

Organisational membership of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board has strengthened partnership working and has enabled Carers Northumberland to support with Healthwatch's Home Care Report as well as providing carer focus groups to gather views for the CCG around End-of-Life Care and GP Access.

Ongoing work with CNTW, the mental health foundation trust that covers the county, has enabled us to secure some additional core funding to support the Older People's Pathway.

The referral pathway will see carers being automatically referred to Carers Northumberland by CNTW staff at the point of diagnosis on the Dementia Pathway. It is expected that this could be up to 900 carers per year offered a referral to Carers Northumberland. CNTW have also approved funding to Carers Northumberland for two additional Carer Information and Advice Worker posts, one of which will have a mental health remit. This will add capacity to do more outreach and community work as well as additional resilience to the Information Service. It is expected that these posts will be filled in April 2022. The funding is initially for 12 months; however, it is hoped that evidence and impact will enable this to be extended.

CNTW have also included Carers Northumberland in their focus group work for the review of their Carer's Charter in 2022.

The staff and trustees had an Away Day in November 2021 which was an opportunity to discuss future development opportunities and ways to add value and strengthen the Carers Northumberland offer. This followed a staff development session, where all staff were invited to put forward ideas, both big and small, for future development of the service. At the Away Day, it was agreed that Carers Northumberland would strive to become a service which supported all carers regardless of who they were caring for. Both staff and trustees felt that Carers Northumberland should be providing a service to all carers and as such have started work to plot out a Carer Journey. It is hoped that this will identify where there are gaps and where funding could be sought to address those gaps and add value to the current service.

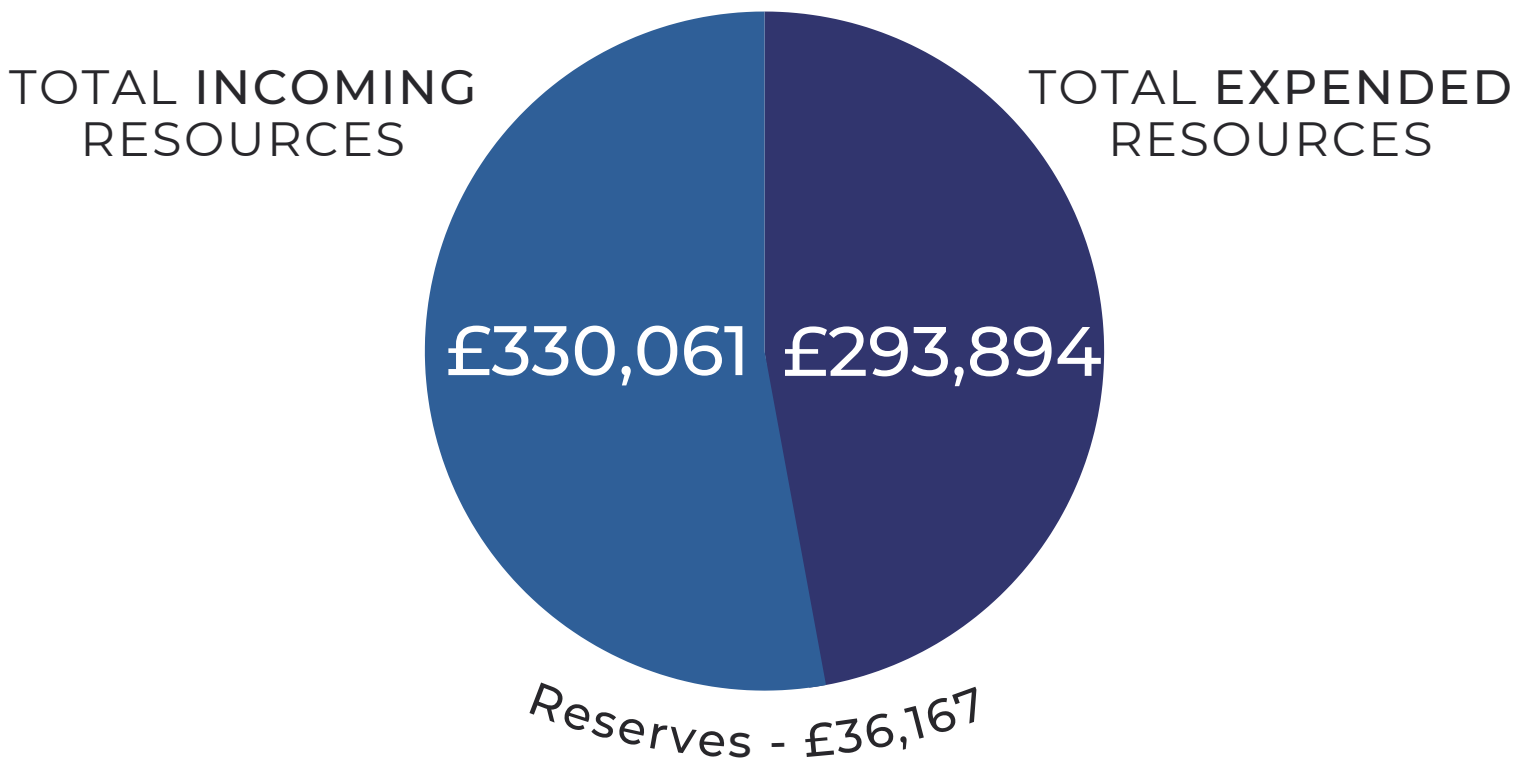
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While the current Business Plan, 2020 – 2024, remains valid and was created based on the core delivery of the service and the known budget amount for that core delivery, it is clear that with added funding from other sources, Carers Northumberland can achieve a service which supports all carers. The Operational Plan for 2022-23 will focus on core service delivery and opportunities to add value to the service through additional funding. Preparation will also be made for the tender processes for both adult and young carers services.

Debra Blakey
CEO



Statement of Accounts for period ending 31 March 2022



TO OUR SUPPORTERS, THANK YOU.

Northumberland County Council – Adult Services and Children’s Services

Northumberland NHS Clinical Commissioning Group

Community Foundation Tyne and Wear and Northumberland

North of Tyne Combined Authority

Masonic Charitable Foundation and Northumberland Freemason’s

The Edward Gostling Foundation

Carers Trust

Matfen Hall Hotel

Adapt NE

Healthwatch Northumberland

VONNE

Asda Foundation

Rotary Club of Blyth

Morpeth Lions Club

Blyth U3A

Players of the Northumberland Lottery and all our individual donors, fundraisers and supporters

Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland





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