



# Annual Report 2022 - 2023



1 APRIL 2022 - 31 MARCH 2023

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

I consider it a huge privilege to take over as Chair of the Board of Trustees for Carers Northumberland. This Annual Report provides a summary of some of the fantastic work the team have undertaken in the past year, and I am extremely grateful to all the staff for their dedication and support.

In particular, thank you to Debra, our Chief Executive, who has guided the team to deliver some outstanding achievements in the past 12 months. Two (of many) examples include:

- The level of support offered to young carers, including the Carers School offer (support and training to education staff to identify and support young carers); some intensive 1-1 support; and an extensive range of activities, including a residential trip to Ford Castle.
- Further development of services with colleagues in the mental health services - including the appointment of additional Carer Information and Advice Work posts; as well as work to ensure that all carers of someone given a diagnosis within the Older People Pathway are now automatically referred to Carers Northumberland.

In the past year, the team have actively increased the numbers of carers who have received support - with over 50% increase in attendees at groups and events; and a 25% increase in the number of new adult carers registered throughout the year. The feedback from carers demonstrates the exceptional support provided by the team, with 98% of carers agreeing they feel more confident, and less lonely / isolated after being registered as a carer.

I would like to thank every individual member of staff, who have all made a difference to carers in Northumberland. Special thanks also go to our team of volunteers and Trustees - who give their time and support voluntarily. We have welcomed two new Trustee Board members this year, Paula and Sheryle, who bring new experience and enthusiasm to the organisation.

Sadly, we learnt of the very sad news of the death of Lilian, one of our long standing and valued Trustees. Lilian gave her support and time so generously, not only to Carers Northumberland, but to a host of other charities, and is missed by all her colleagues.

Looking ahead to the next 12 months, I am confident that Debra and the team will continue to enhance the range and quality of service provision. A number of new developments have already started, including working to achieve the Improving Quality Standard Award for charities, as well as looking at how to improve support for carers in primary care.

I am delighted to be part of the team, and look forward to helping wherever possible in working to make life better for unpaid carers in Northumberland.

*Julie Danskin*  
Chair of Trustees



PETER STONELL, JULIE DANSKIN, DEBRA BLAKEY  
AND HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF  
NORTHUMBERLAND AT CARERS RIGHTS DAY 2022

# MEET THE TEAM



**DEBRA BLAKEY**  
CEO



**LISA MORDUE**  
Service Delivery Manager



**ANNE-MARIE JOHNSTONE**  
Young Carers Service  
Co-Ordinator



**KAREN LIGHTLEY**  
Young Carers Activity Worker  
& School Link Worker



**LAURIE WILSON**  
Administration & Finance  
Officer



**NAOMI CARR**  
Carer Information &  
Advice Worker



**HANNAH CORCORAN**  
Carer Information &  
Advice Worker



**DAN MACKAY**  
Carer Information &  
Advice Worker



**ALESHIA BURT**  
Business Admin  
Apprentice



**REA RAHMAN**  
Carers into Work Advisor



**HAYLEY MATHEWS**  
Carer Information &  
Advice Worker



**JULIE DANSKIN**  
Chair of the Board



**DORINDA JACK**  
Vice Chair of the Board



**STAN COOKE**  
Vice Chair of the Board



**PETER STONELL**  
Treasurer



**ANNE ARTER**  
Trustee



**VAL HODGSON**  
Trustee



**ANNE MOORE**  
Trustee



**ANGELA DE'TRAVERNENT**  
Trustee



**JULIE BIRKIN-NICHOLL**  
Trustee



**SHERYLE CLEAVE**  
Trustee



**PAULA ROBERTSON**  
Trustee

## Group Host Volunteers:

Kath Jameson, Kate Whitehead, Diana Hogg, Liz Taylor, Susan Thompson

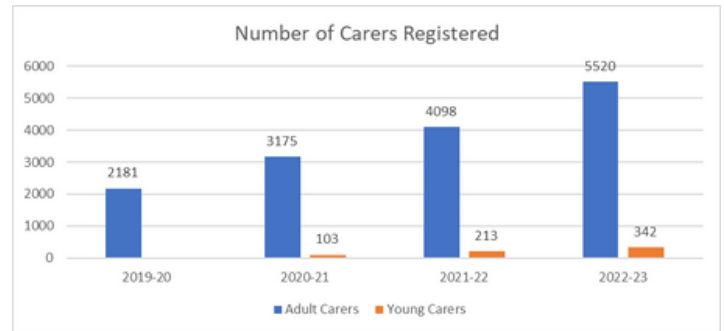
## Young Carers Volunteer:

Matthew Brennan

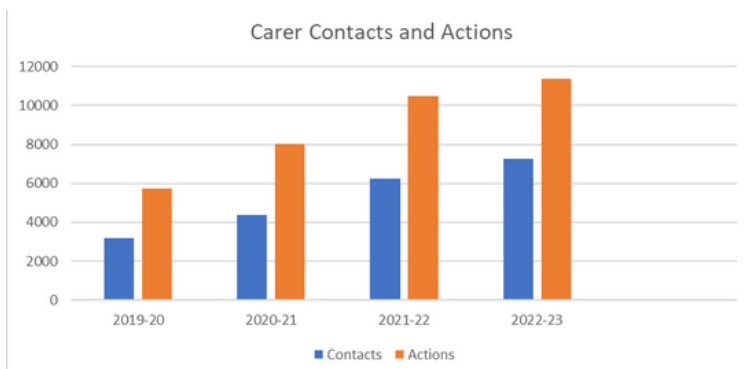
Countywide team of Carer Ambassador Volunteers

# 2022 - 2023 ACTIVITY

At the end of March 2023 there are 5862 carers registered on Charitylog, an increase of 1551 records in the last 12 months. 342 of those registered are young carers, 234 are former carers and 522 are parent carers. There are 781 anonymous records and an overall drop in registered numbers can be expected due to the annual cleanse due to happen in April. All anonymous records more than 12 months old are removed from our database each year. The number of carers registered with us has been increasing year on year since 2019-20.



In 2022/2023 we supported 2885 people and undertook 11486 actions on their behalf. This is a 9% increase in the number of carers supported and also a 9% increase on actions completed compared to last year. We registered 1035 new carers a 25% increase compared to last year. Since 2019-20 the number of contacts with carers and actions completed has also increased significantly.



## Carer Support Fund

202 carers have benefited from the Carers Support Fund (CSF) enabling them to take a break from their caring role. The cost of supporting carers via the fund for 2022-23 was £20,725. Carers have used the fund to pay for the cost of short breaks, day trips, access to sport/leisure activities, such as gym memberships, camping equipment, dance classes, swimming and personal care (haircuts, pedicure, manicure, massage therapy etc.), spa days, club memberships, theatre trips, cinema tickets and meals out. Carers have also been able to spend their CSF award on garden furniture, technology (laptops, tablets, smartphones, e-book readers), craft materials, photography equipment, garden equipment, home exercise equipment, equipment for hobbies (sewing machine, walking boots, jewellery kit) and books to enable them to take a break while staying close to home. Some feedback from CSF evaluations:

*"It was a total surprise getting the money, as I have not have had much help since I gave up my job to look after my mum and be her main carer. It made me feel that someone cared for me so thank you" - (garden furniture)*

*"Although I have wanted to do this for a long time, I would have deemed it an unnecessary expense but because you gave me the £95 grant I felt able to use it on a want not a need. Thank you so much." (trip to Fort William)*

*"I appreciate the allowance from Carers Northumberland. I was able to make a special trip to see my daughter in Cheltenham which really lifted my spirits. I was able to relax and unwind."*

*"I am so very grateful for this help - it really means a lot to me. It has helped 100% and enabled me to take a break from my caring role. It may sound selfish but it is nice to do something for myself. It has certainly made me feel more relaxed and a lot less stressed. Caring is hard work - I love my husband so much but I know by taking this time out it helps me to be able to give him more caring time." (craft supplies)*

## 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 received more requests for support with benefits and grant applications than ever before. We helped carers to claim £225,395.51 in annualised benefit income (47 successful awards) and £26,902 (35 successful awards) was awarded in one off grants. We supported 31 people to apply to the Blue Badge scheme. We also continued to distribute free mobile phone SIM Cards from Vodafone as part of their offer to charities, providing 6 months of free data, calls and texts.

*"I have turned to CN for help a couple of times now and all occasions have been listened to, supported and made to feel valued as a person/carer. The service is always impeccable and now I feel like I have somewhere to turn if I ever need help."*

*"I was pleased I contacted Carers Northumberland. They gave me good advice on different issues and they were very good to talk to. I know I can always contact them if I need advice. I think they do a very good job. Thanks."*



NAOMI FROM THE I&A TEAM AT A COMMUNITY EVENT

### Advance Planning

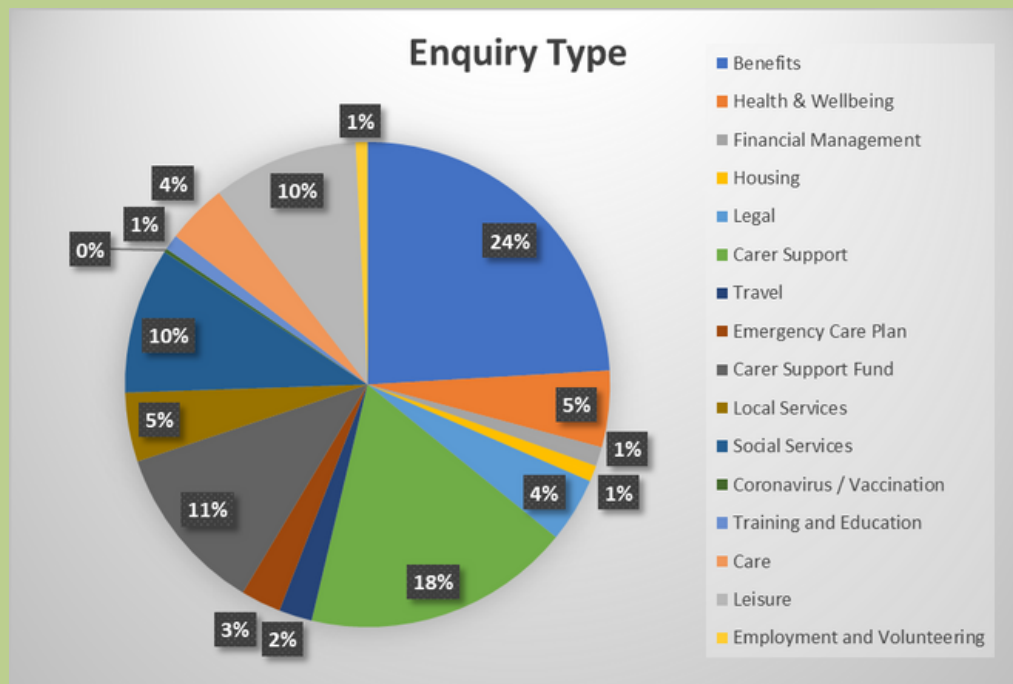
Carers Northumberland have offered carers support to complete Lasting Power of Attorney paperwork since November 2020. To date we have supported 51 carers to make a Lasting Power of Attorney for themselves and/or the person they care for. This valued service continues to have a waiting list of approximately 8 weeks, as advisors only work with one or two carers at a time, ensuring the continued high quality service is maintained for these complex pieces of work.

Advisors not only support with the form filling aspect of LPA, but also provide advice and guidance on the full process, factsheets and a form checking service. As part of this service carers are also supported with Advance Decisions to Refuse Treatment and Advance Statements to further support with their future planning.

*"From the very start the staff could not have been more supportive. They are always there when I need them and their advice is really helpful. I do not feel isolated anymore, the help and patience Lisa gave me whilst completing the LPA was invaluable. I could not have done it on my own. Thank you."*

*"Dan was a great help with our LPA forms. He was able to fill out the forms online, which was particularly helpful during a time of postal strikes. He was able to devote time to phoning for further information, which many carers would find difficult. It was good to be kept informed about the of the forms and a weight off our minds when they were finally complete."*

## Enquiries



This chart shows the types of enquiries we received during 2022/2023.

## Groups and Events

Our Face-to-Face carer groups currently run in Ashington, Alnwick, Amble, Blyth, Berwick, Cramlington, Morpeth, Prudhoe and Ponteland. Our online Tuesday group also continued to run throughout the year, although this will be moved to a monthly format for 2023/24. All of our groups have a steady cohort of members, with group sizes ranging from 3 – 15 regular members. We do not currently have any plans to introduce any new carer groups but continue to support groups run by our partners in the community. In addition to our regular groups the information team also run a series of carer walks and meals throughout the county.

Our private carer Facebook group now has 367 members.

*"CN over the years have been a great help to me supporting me through very difficult times, advising and listening to me when I need someone to talk to. I find the staff very reliable and always ready to help, nothing is too much, and if they don't know the answer they will find out for me. I find the group sessions once a month really invaluable because we can meet other people in similar situations. It is also a chance to chat and get to know other people outside of the home situation and be honest and say maybe things we cannot say to family. I don't know what i would do without CN as they are my only support. Also I am so thankful for the CSF which enables me to have a break away from my caring duties."*



SELECTION OF PHOTOS FROM CARERS WEEK

## Events

### Carers Week 2022

This year was the first year since the pandemic started that we were able to host larger scale events for Carer Week, so we went all out! This year the theme was “make caring visible, valued and supported”.

We hosted four afternoon teas, Blyth, Cramlington, Wooler and Corbridge. Each one had its own theme and activity including paper crafts, wellbeing, trivia and macrame. In addition to the afternoon teas we also held a walk each day, as our programme of carer walks continued to be popular throughout and past the pandemic. We walked Craster and Dunstanburgh, Whitley Bay, Newbiggin Promenade, Bolam Lake and Carlisle Park. Northumberland Fire and Rescue also opened their doors and provided fire station tours in West Hartford, Alnwick and Berwick. We held a cook along session online, learning to cook curry with Rea. Alnwick Garden also held a special day for carers, on Saturday 11th June, carers and their families were given free access to the garden. Active Northumberland gave away some free passes, which were given out as part of a prize draw.

Northumberland County Council also funded 180 carer gifts that were posted out to carers across the County. This was the busiest Carers Week we have held in many years, and we would like to pass on our thanks to the partner organisations who supported us, our hard working and dedicated volunteers and staff team and everyone who shared photos, liked and shared our social media content!



SELECTION OF PHOTOS FROM CARERS RIGHTS DAY

### Carers Rights Day 2022

Our Carers Rights Day event was held in Alnwick this year and we were delighted that Her Grace The Duchess of Northumberland was able to support us by opening the event. The event was held at St James Church and we were supported by a huge number of partner organisations who came to offer information and advice to carers. Stall holders included:

- Northumbria Police
- NHCT
- CNTW
- Northumberland Parent Carer Forum
- Toby Henderson Trust
- Northumberland Fire and Rescue
- Northumberland County Council
- Northumberland Communities Together
- Citizens Advice
- Northumberland Library Services
- Age UK Northumberland
- Alzheimers Society
- Healthwatch Northumberland
- Northumberland IASS
- Mind and Sole
- Alnwick Garden
- National Autistic Society
- Talking Matters Northumberland
- CAN
- Escape Family Support
- Alnwick Medical Group
- U3A
- PALS
- Parkinsons UK
- Northumberland Recovery College

Thank you to everyone who supported the event

## Carer Activities

Throughout the year we offered lots of different ways for carers to meet and take a break from their caring role including catch ups, walks, trips and other activities. Take a look at some of our photographs:



## CN Elves

Once again the CN elves were out delivering gifts to carers. This year we delivered 186 gift boxes across the County. We also held three afternoon festive-a-teas, a great opportunity for carers to get together, share some festive food, take part in the quiz and listen to some music.

*"Just got in from visiting my partner in hospital and had a knock on the door and given a lovely gift from Carers Northumberland. Can't say how much this meant to me right at this moment, along with a chat about how things are. Thank you so much. You have made me smile (and cry) but I desperately needed both x"*

*"I would like to say a big thank you for the Christmas card and gift. I must say that it hit my heart strings somewhat, that you took time out and effort in thinking of doing this. It has also brought back my faith in human nature in that when times were really bad people like yourself somehow are able to pick up the pieces and keep things going. I must admit that some days are still worse than others and this gift arrived on such a day, I would like to attend your meets again one day and I am sure I will be able to do this when things get back to routine, Thanks again for thought, and I hope you have a great Christmas break and a fantastic new year."*



## Young Carer Service

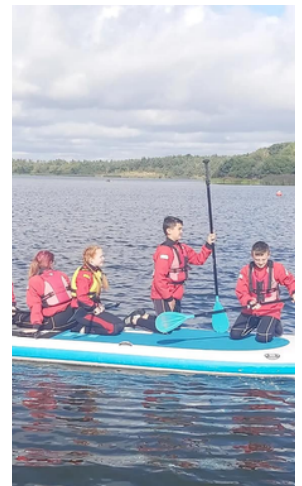
Carers Northumberland successfully re-tendered for the Young Carer Support Contract from NCC Children's Services and were awarded the contract initially up to 31 March 2025, but with the potential for extension to 31 March 2027. This has enabled Carers Northumberland to build on the success of the Young Carer Service which began on 1 August 2020. The service has grown, and as a result now has two full time members of staff, a Young Carer Service Coordinator and Young Carer Activity and Link Worker. The additional funding which was secured for one year from the Masonic Charitable Foundation for young carer activities came to an end in July 2022, however, funding has been secured from a private donor to allow this work to continue until 2024 in the first instance. As a result of the renewed funding, the Young Carer Service is now part of the overall carer offer from Carers Northumberland .

There were 342 young carers registered with the service up to 31 March 2023. 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 and the Young Carer Support Fund to provide financial support to access a break from their caring role.

### Young Carer Story

Faith is a young carer living in Corbridge. For Young Carers Action Day we asked if young carers could promote our service in their schools by showing them the Schools Offer and putting up Young Carers Action Day posters within school. Faith decided she would raise awareness of Young Carers Action Day in her school by wearing her Young Carers card / lanyard and by putting up the posters in school. Faith wore her Young Carer lanyard all day at school so she could tell everyone about what young carers do. The head teacher spoke highly of Faith being a young carer and about our young carers service and even presented Faith with a handwritten postcard recognising and appreciating her caring role.

Faith's efforts have prompted her school, Corbridge Middle School, to contact us about our Schools Offer and are booking teacher training sessions and a school assembly in order to educate and raise awareness of our service.



Young carers have enjoyed a programme of activities, events and trips throughout the year with a mix of online and in-person sessions including craft, cookery, paddleboarding, ice skating, pony riding, book club, golf and much more. Young Carers in Northumberland also took part in their first residential trip to celebrate Young Carers Action Day in March 2023, with 15 young carers enjoying a weekend of outdoor activities at Ford Castle .



A comprehensive School Offer has been put together which offers schools the support needed to implement the recommendations made in the Supporting Young Carers in Schools Toolkit which was rolled out to all schools in Northumberland in March 2022. The aim of the School Offer is to provide schools with support to identify and support young carers. The overall aim is to encourage schools to implement useful changes to support young carers in education and this will be rewarded with a Recognition of Excellence in Supporting Young Carers Award from Carers Northumberland. The School Offer has been distributed to schools via the school safeguarding lead who is a member of the Young Carer Steering Group. The Young Carer Team have been in contact with 13 individual schools so far, and although this work is still in the early stages, by March 2023 two schools, Malvins Road Primary and Croftway Primary in Blyth have achieved their Recognition of Excellence standard .



**MALVINS CLOSE (RIGHT) AND CROFTWAY (LEFT) SCHOOLS RECEIVING THEIR AWARDS**



Carers Northumberland are also supporting parent carers (caring for a child under 18 with additional needs) as the number registering has continued to increase. There are 522 parent carers currently registered. Although no specific funding is received to support parent carers, the Trustees took the decision, following the successful pilot in 2021-22 with funding from the Edward Gostling Foundation, that the support to access grants, information and support would continue. Since April 2022 we have secured individual grants totalling £10,888 for parent carers for short breaks, white goods, furniture and general household costs. Parent carers are able to attend any of our current carer groups, and any of our events, trips or workshops. The need to support parent carers has resulted in additional funding being identified to enable this support to continue from 1 April 2023.

# Return to Work Carers Project

The North of Tyne Carers into Work Project began on 1 April 2020 and funding was due to end on 31 March 2023. The initial project aims were to support carers who wanted to return to work and is a collaboration between the North of Tyne Combined Authority (the funder), Carers Northumberland, Newcastle Carers and North Tyneside Carers Centre. The project was available to unpaid carers aged 16 and over to support them into employment, education or training or to maintain their current employment with support to implement strategies to balance their work and caring responsibilities and to assist carers who wanted to look for a change of employment which better suits their caring needs. By January 2023, 63 carers had registered on the project in Northumberland, with the Carer into Work Advisor supporting them 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. The project overall has had 247 participants across the North of Tyne partnership. The Carers into Work Project Steering Group have secured an extension of funding by the North of Tyne Combined Authority until 31 March 2024, however the way the project is delivered will change slightly. From 1 April 2023 North Tyneside Carers' Centre will employ all three Carers into Work Advisors directly, although each advisor will still have a main responsibility for each locality.

## Feedback

We received 152 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 152 people who returned a questionnaire:

100 told us they know more about their rights as a carer now

101 told us they feel more confident

106 told us they feel more in control

102 said they are less lonely / isolated

143 said they know where to go for advice and support

*"I'd just like to say a special thank you to you, especially Hannah, for the Craster walk and the Wooler afternoon tea which you kindly organised this week.*

*These activities are real morale boosters for those of us who are or have been carers. It's great to meet other folk who are in the same boat and to share ideas and...fun.*

*Keep up your fantastic work. It's so appreciated!" - Carers Week feedback*

*"Meeting other carers on a regular basis has helped me make lots of friends. Although we are all carers for different reasons we all understand the need to have time away from our caring situation. Carers Northumberland had given us a place to meet once a month." - Group feedback*

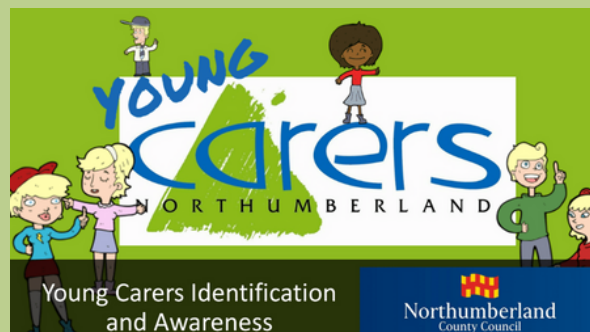
*"I just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of mine and my sons heart You will never know how much of a difference this will make to our lives. I still can't quite believe it !!*

*I can't express how much I'm grateful for this grant." - I&A feedback*

# TRAINING

Training and workshops offered to carers over the period have had 89 carers attend. The sessions delivered have been Less Stress, Planning Ahead, Carer Resources, Making Guilt More Manageable and Carers Rights Awareness. Sessions have been delivered face to face in the community and online. Carers have also accessed memory groups in partnership with CNTW across the county.

245 professionals have accessed training from Carers Northumberland. This has included Carer Awareness, Young Carer Awareness and information sessions delivered face to face and in person. We also work in partnership with CNTW to co-deliver their own carer awareness training.



# Volunteers

There are currently 20 active volunteers which includes 11 Trustees. Blyth, Morpeth, Amble, Berwick, Ashington, Alnwick and Ponteland groups are currently supported by one of our volunteer Group Hosts.

In late 2022 we also welcomed our first young carer volunteer to the team, who will be helping with young carer activities, trips and events. Carers Northumberland have also welcomed four new Trustees to the board this year. At the AGM in July 2022, the Board appointed a new Chair of Trustees, Julie Danskin, who took over the role from Anne Arter. 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. In the past year volunteers have provided 388 hours of volunteering to support the Charity.

# Going Forward

2022-23 was such a busy year and we're expecting 2023-24 to be just as busy, if not more so. Carers continue to be hit hard by the current cost of living crisis and as a result our Information and Advice Service remains the main point of contact for nearly all our carer enquiries. As a countywide service we are acutely aware that there are more unpaid carers living in Northumberland who may not be able to access our services and as a result we are planning to do more targeted community outreach work across the county in the coming year. Our Young Carer Service also continues to grow, and our work with schools has increased young carer awareness across the education system – this is something that we will continue working on throughout the coming year and beyond. Of course, identifying and supporting more carers also means that we need to be mindful of the limits of our own resources and capacity, therefore we will also be looking to source new funding streams and opportunities to work with other trusted partners to ensure that carer need can be met effectively.

*Debra Blakey*

CEO



## Statement of Accounts

TOTAL INCOMING  
RESOURCES

£406,795

TOTAL EXPENDED  
RESOURCES

£393,695

Add to reserves - £13,100



A Network Partner of  
**CARERS  
TRUST**

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Web: [www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk)

Registered Charity: 1122972 Registered Company: 6266972



@CarersNorthumb



@CarersNland



## To our supporters and funders, Thank You

Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland

-

Northumberland County Council – Adult and Children’s Services

NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (formerly Northumberland NHS Clinical Commissioning Group)

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

North of Tyne Combined Authority

Masonic Charitable Foundation and Northumberland Freemason’s

The Edward Gostling Foundation

Alnwick Town Council

Carers Trust

David and Paula George

Rothbury Women’s Institute

Bruce and Susan Dowson

Catherine Brayshaw

Jean Blair

Mel Christie

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