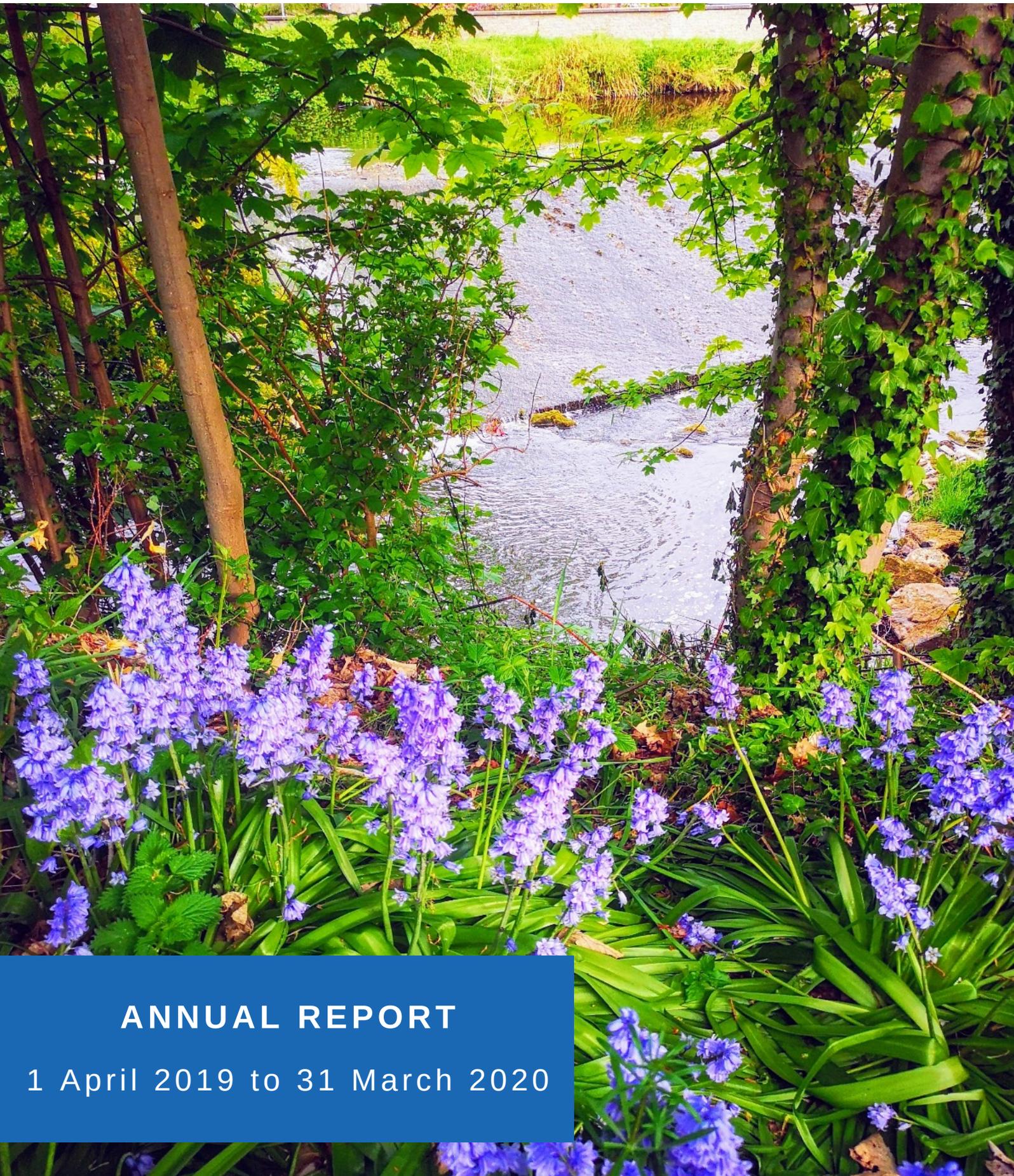


Morpeth Bluebells - L Nelson



## ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This year has been an exciting one, but not without its sadness and disappointments. As a charity we are always aware that funding is vulnerable. 2019 saw us go into our final year of funding from the National Lottery and we realised it was time for some big decisions. We had to ensure security for current core services and, as a Trustee Board, we had to agree a new structure for the organisation.

We currently have 2021 carers registered with us, all of whom have access to regular newsletters, one to one support, support groups and events as well as opportunities for training and development. The Carer Support Fund has enabled 184 carers to access short-term breaks, concert tickets, gym membership, alternative therapies, days out and equipment for hobbies (craft, photography, sport).

Our volunteer team have worked tirelessly in so many ways. Raising the profile of Carers Northumberland, fundraising, networking and supporting so many carers with commitment, reliability and good humour. Their tireless efforts are so much appreciated by both staff and carers. Our volunteer Support Group Facilitators have ensured that our Peer Support Groups have continued to offer carers a chance to get together with others, take a break and with the help of external advisors get some useful insight and advice.

Support groups sessions have included first aid skills with the British Red Cross, scam awareness with NatWest Bank and dementia support and information from a specialist care nurse. Our thanks and appreciation go to all those who have supported our groups over the past year.

Our work with GP practices continues, and we have seen an increase in carer identification and referrals from practice staff with our referral process made easier to encourage more engagement. The introduction of the Primary Care Networks and new Social Prescribing Link Worker within those networks is likely to encourage more partnership working between primary care and community and voluntary organisations to meet the needs of patients, and carers in Northumberland.

The Board of Trustees established a Roll of Honour to recognise the achievement of individuals who have gone over and above the standard provision to support and raise awareness of unpaid carers in the county. The first inductee into our Roll of Honour was Michele O'Brien. Michele worked as Carers Officer for Northumbria Healthcare for many years and was instrumental in establishing Carers Northumberland as it is today. Michele passed away in 2018 and but we welcomed her husband Peter to our last AGM to recognise Michele's huge contribution.

As previously mentioned, 2019 has been a year of consolidation and change for the organisation. Lorraine Burley, one of our key support workers, left us in June 2019. In November 2019, both Sarah Long and Anne-Marie Johnstone, our Information Officers also left the organisation for new roles.

Pauline Appleby and Gail Purvis also left the organisation in March 2020. We thank them all for the commitment and hard work they have shown as part of the Carers Northumberland team and wish them well for the future. As part of the new structure, we advertised for two Carer Information and Advice Worker positions and were delighted to welcome Tony Laverty and Naomi Carr to the team in January and March, respectively. We're also looking forward to exciting new projects in 2020 which will complement the work of the core team.

We appreciate the need to monitor our spending very closely and this will be one of the priorities over the coming months. Lockdown and continued uncertainty due to the coronavirus pandemic looks like making life very different for us all as we face the future and consider the challenges that will be ahead of us.

**- Anne Stonell, Chair of Trustees**

# 2019 - 2020 ACTIVITY

At the end of March 2020 we have 2181 carers registered on our database. 62 of these are former carers and 68 are parent carers. 606 new carers were registered during the year 1 April 19 to 31 March 20.

## 606 new Carers registered

Admin / Research	1086
Email	482
Referral	133
Social Media / Online	90
Text	121
Activity / Event / Group	24
Home Visit	2
Hospital Visit	4
Letter	898
Office Visit	78
Outreach / Community Visit	213
Telephone	1912
Other	411

In 2019 - 2020 we supported 1265 people and undertook 5748 actions on their behalf.

- There were 749 attendances at our groups and events throughout the year.
- 185 carers and 239 professionals accessed our workshops and training sessions
- Our increased social media presence resulted in our Facebook page being liked by 724 people and posts reaching over 81,000 people.
- 212 carers registered for the Carers Emergency Card this year taking the total number of carers who have a card to 1115.



Carers Northumberland staff September 2019



Events and workshops

## WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING A round up of our services



### CARER SUPPORT FUND

184 carer support fund applications were processed throughout the year to enable carers to take a break from their caring role with a total of £18,130 being awarded. Carers used the fund to pay for things like short breaks, gym memberships, spa days, hobby costs and even gliding like Martin:

## Carer's Story



As we all know, caring is a full-time job. Giving of your time, freely and unstintingly, to the person you love can be stressful and wearing, both physically and mentally. It is often, when problems occur, difficult to know where to get advice or even a friendly voice to talk to, but this is where Carers Northumberland really help.

I have been caring for my wife Kate, who has MS, full-time for the past ten years. While it naturally restricts what we can do, we are both determined that every day will be as full and productive as her condition will allow.

Sometimes, however, as a carer I need some 'me' time... something which is just for me and me alone. To this end, we have joined a local gliding club: Kate enjoys the flights whereas I am going to learn to fly. To this end, I have applied for, and been awarded, a Carers Support Fund grant which will help towards the costs of launching the glider and flying.

Perfect 'me' time... just me (and an instructor, of course), soaring over the Cheviot Hills, away from the preoccupations of everyday life for just a little while, enjoying the view and enjoying the almost perfect silence of unpowered flight. It also gives me a new mental challenge to keep my mind fully active.

Go on, apply for a Carers Support Fund grant and do something different! It'll do you both good.

### Martin Booth

## INFORMATION AND ADVICE SERVICE

The Information Service provides support to carers by telephone, social media, email and face to face. 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.

1106 carers accessed the information service throughout the year resulting in 3091 actions on their behalf, including over 1300 telephone calls. The Information Service assisted carers to apply for individual grants totalling £4130 which supported urgent needs such as costs for moving house, flooring and white goods.

**"Carers Northumberland have been extremely helpful to me in supporting me in my caring role. With their help I have been able to have a break from my caring responsibilities and has helped me enormously." - Jodie, Carer**

## Carer's Story

Mrs B got in touch for support with benefits and finance. She looks after her husband who has suffered a stroke resulting in a range of needs, she is also special guardian to her two grandchildren who live with them part time.

The property that they live in is too small for them, resulting in Mrs B having to sleep on the floor of the grandchildren's bedroom. She had been informed that they would be unable to bid for a new property due to historic rent arrears, Mrs B was not in a position to pay these off.

The information team got in touch with Turn2Us and supported her to submit a grant application, Turn2Us awarded Mrs B £1500 to cover rent arrears and moving costs once a new property was found.

This made a significant difference to Mrs B who told us, "I was reluctant at first to ask for help but am now so grateful and this enables me to ask elsewhere for help when I feel overwhelmed."



Tony at a community event in Prudhoe

# SUPPORT GROUPS

There were 603 attendances at our peer support groups accounting for 132 individuals through the year. The majority of our groups are run by trained support group facilitators and are an opportunity for carers to get together and chat about what matters to them in a supportive atmosphere. We also run a monthly craft group in Berwick which is a chance to take a break and learn a new skill. In addition to our own monthly groups, there are also several groups which are run by carers themselves such as the mental health carers groups in Hexham and Berwick, the former carers group in Ponteland, and peer support in Bellingham and Wooler. We also offer support to independent groups and partner organisation's groups that carers attend across the county.



Origami at Berwick Craft Group

**"I look forward each month to attending the Ponteland meeting in Merton Hall under the excellent chairmanship of Diana. It is interesting to learn of the problems of fellow carers and I always feel better after each visit." - Neil, Ponteland Group Member**

## KEY SUPPORT WORK

The Key Support Work Project has provided one to one support to 78 carers throughout the year.

Our Key Workers, Lorraine and Pauline have provided a listening ear, a non-judgemental and confidential support system, talking to carers about what matters to them offering tailored solutions to specific carer issues.

The Key Support Work was provided as part of the National Lottery Community Fund award which ended in January 2020. However, the Information Service are able to continue to support carers with complex issues on an individual basis.

### Carer's Story

**"I didn't have anyone to confide in until I came to Carers Northumberland. Now I feel a lot more in control." - Maureen, carer**

**"Pauline was brilliant and so easy to talk to. She always thought about me, making our appointments at times and places that were suitable to make it as easy for me as possible, yeah she was brilliant." - Rudy, carer**

I contacted Carers Northumberland to seek advice and support following my father's diagnosis of Alzheimers. Sharing the role of carer for him with my mother was both a challenging and rewarding experience. An experience that I had some natural ability to perform, but without any professional training or insights. The dementia awareness training day organised you was very valuable and provided an opportunity to meet staff and other carers.

The one to one support I received both over the phone and face to face with Pauline really helped me to cope with a period of significant change in the lives of our close knit family and the emotional impact it created. Knowing that there was help and support available made a real difference during particularly tough times offering reassurance and a listening ear. I think the work of Carers Northumberland is vitally important and should continue to be funded and supported.

## Carers Week

### Main Event

For Carers Week 2019 we hosted a celebration event in Blyth on the 13th June which was attended by over 30 carers.

The event consisted of a range of information stands from Age UK Northumberland, Healthwatch Northumberland, the Patient Involvement Team from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, the Ageing Well initiative, Bridge Project and Carers Northumberland.

There were workshops on weaving, balloon modelling and a techy tea party (support to get confident online). In addition, there were also two therapists delivering complimentary therapies, a yoga workshop, laughter therapy and an introduction to meditation. The event received great feedback with 100% of attendees saying that they would come to another event hosted by CN.

In addition to the main event we held several information stands throughout the county.



Carers Week celebration event

## Other Events

Throughout the year we have held a range of events for carers including two events for older carers which was funded by Carers Trust at Otterburn Village Hall and Haltwhistle Memorial Hall which provided an opportunity for carers from the local area to meet up and try out some new crafts. Other events included first aid sessions for carers delivered by the British Red Cross and Scam Awareness delivered by NatWest. Carers were also able to attend a range of Christmas meals at venues across the county.

For Carers Rights Day on 21 November 2019 we hosted an event at Merton Hall in Ponteland which was attended by over 30 carers. Carers were able to access information and advice from a wide range of providers including Adult Social Services, CNTW, Northumbria Police, Northumberland Fire and Rescue, Healthwatch Northumberland, Age UK Northumberland, BID Services, Talking Matters and more.

Information and advice was provided on issues such as staying healthy, finance and benefits, mental health services, scams awareness, aids and adaptations, social care, energy saving and more.

*"I really enjoyed every bit of the day. It really lifted my spirits. Good to get away for a time to have time for myself"*

*"what a lovely day, very relaxed and informative. Thank you!"*

*"Everything is just great; we have really enjoyed the time at Blyth. Many thanks"*



Carers Rights Day

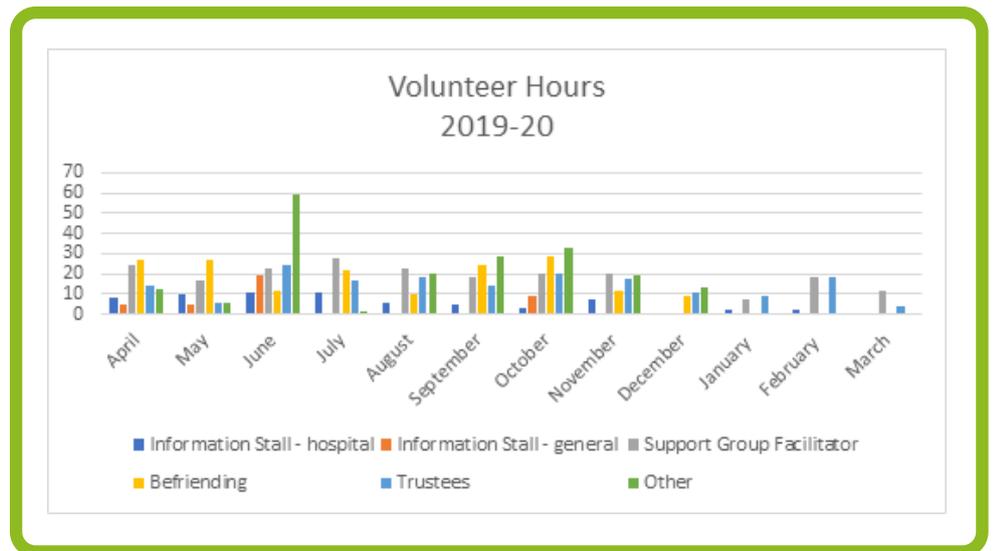
### Carer's Story

This was my first experience with Carers Northumberland. I have recently been attending a carers group at the GP practice in my local village and saw the poster for the event in Otterburn. Some of the group were planning to attend so I said I would go along too. I have met some of the staff members who were very friendly and helped me complete my registration form. Now that I am registered with Carers Northumberland, I will be able to access help and support when I need it. I moved to the area with my husband who I care for and have found it difficult to access support, although I am managing okay at the moment it is good to know where I can get information and support if I do need it in the future. I particularly enjoyed meeting other carers from the area, some of whom I know, but a few I don't so it has been nice to meet new people. A very positive experience, thank you.

# VOLUNTEERING

There are currently have 22 active volunteers supporting the work of Carers Northumberland which includes 7 trustees.

From 1 April 19 – 31 March 20 there have been 850.75 hours of volunteer engagement across the service, this equates to £10,387.66 worth of support:



Without the support and dedication of our volunteers Carers Northumberland could not reach and support the amount 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.

Our Volunteer Coordinator worked on a Befriending initiative throughout the year which has enabled several carers to get personalised support to continue doing the things they did before caring became part of their routine. Although the befriending initiative has ended, many of the carers and their volunteer befriender have arranged to continue meeting which is a success story in itself.

## Our volunteers gave over 850 hours of support equivalent to £10,387.66



Allen winning his Extra Smiles Award

One of our longstanding volunteers was recognised at the Ageing Well Northumberland Extra Smiles Awards 2019.

These awards recognise and celebrate the enthusiasm, commitment and positive contributions that are made to help people stay active, connected and well in the community.

*Well done Allen - we are very grateful for your commitment, reliability and ongoing support as a volunteer with Carers Northumberland.*



CN Volunteers get together

# TRAINING

Carers Northumberland provide training workshops for carers as well as carer awareness and identification training for health and social care professionals.

## Carer Training

185 carers have engaged in training workshops which included Making Guilt Manageable, Good Life, Good Death and Contingency Planning. Training has been delivered either as standalone workshops or in partnership with other organisations and groups including The MS Society in Morpeth, Northern Spirit, Berwick and Weavers Court, Alnwick.

*“The bite-size approach was very effective from the carer’s perspective - lots of information given in the limited time available.”*



Carers provided a snapshot of their confidence and knowledge about the subject prior to the training and then following the session to enable us to evaluate the effectiveness.

The MS Society, whose group of carers had 6 bite-sized sessions with our Training Coordinator including managing guilt, contingency planning and caring day to day said that overall their confidence and knowledge had increased 74%.

The Berwick carers group who had the contingency planning session said their confidence and knowledge had increased 78% following the session.

*‘An enjoyable session with a small enough group which made communication with others easy’*

## Professional Training

239 health and social care professionals have had carer awareness training since April 2019. This includes training for care managers and social workers which will be repeated later this year and training for mental health professionals with further sessions to be planned.

Training has also been carried out with various GP practices as they become Primary Care Networks including practice reviews and refresher training for staff around carers awareness and identification and suggestions on how GP surgeries can help support carers.

*‘The quality markers help to pick out what we’re doing as a practice & what we should look to do in future’*

GP practices in Blyth, Morpeth, and Guide Post all had practice reviews to look at how their practices and procedures could help support carers and how their staff could help identify carers and ensure that they are referred to the relevant carers organisation and signposted to other services. The sessions also helped inform the practices how they could support their own staff who may have caring responsibilities at home. Following the session the staff who participated said their knowledge of carers and awareness of services had increased by 46 – 71% respectively.

*‘Clear & informal. Really helpful. Taking away a lot of ideas for our practice’*

*‘Well presented. Helped us to think about the things we were doing right but also what needed to be changed & improved.’*



# FUNDRAISING

This year we were incredibly lucky to be chosen as Matfen Hall Hotel's Charity of the Year and from benefited from the money raised by their fabulous staff, members and guests. Gym member Robert and his team of supporters raised an astonishing £3000 with their Over the Border Bike Ride, while the kitchen team led by Head Chef Paul, raised £300 with a charity football match.

Alongside Matfen Hall Hotel, we have also been supported by lots of generous fundraising by some fabulous people:

- Amy completed the Great North Run in 2 hours 46 mins and raised £430
- Lillian raised an amazing £325 for us through her Facebook Birthday Fundraiser!
- Our team of volunteers raised nearly £300 collecting in Morrisons Morpeth in October 2019
- Hays Travel raised over £500 with their charity coach trip to Edinburgh in December



We received 117 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 one scoring 1 or 2 and a very small number of responses at 3.



# FEEDBACK

In addition to this of the 117 people who returned a questionnaire:

- **75% told us they know more about their rights as a carer now.**
- **68% told us they feel more confident.**
- **69% told us they feel more in control.**
- **76% said they are less lonely or isolated.**
- **98% said they know where to go for advice and support.**

# GOING FORWARD

As we go into our new financial year we are faced with the uncertainty of how the national lockdown and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic will affect our services. As a staff team we have adapted very quickly to the changing situation and thankfully we already have the technical capabilities to facilitate an easy transition to working from home.

Naturally, like most of the population we are unsure how long the restrictions will last, however, we are confident that our new (hopefully temporary) way of working will enable carers to still receive the support they need.

We also have a new project which will be starting on 1 April 2020. In partnership with Newcastle Carers and North Tyneside Carers Centre and funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority, the Carers Into Work Project aims to support carers who want to return to work to do so.

Each carers centre will employ a Carers into Work Advisor who will support carers who feel they are ready to start looking for work. Support will include help with CV's, application forms, interview technique as well as sourcing relevant training courses. The Carers into Work Advisor will look at the needs of each carer who engages

with the project on an individual basis to negotiate the barriers to returning to work, education or training and help to address these with tailored support around finance, benefits, social care support and assistive technology.

Carers Northumberland have also submitted a bid to Northumberland County Council to provide a dedicated service for young carers. If successful, this will enable us to provide information, advice and support to carers under the age of 18. We should know whether we are successful in the next few weeks.

We will continue our working with primary care and have plans to have our Information Team attending GP surgeries across Northumberland on a rolling basis. Working with primary care has been identified as one of the best ways to reach carers, especially those in rural communities where it is more difficult for them to engage with our usual groups and activities.

Following the recent publication of the NICE guidelines for supporting adult carers we will be working through the recommendations to identify ways in which we can enhance our core services to meet the guidance but also increase our support. The guidelines will also allow us to focus the design of our future services and make plans for sourcing additional funding, resources and capacity to do so.

**- Debra Blakey, Chief Executive**

## Statement of Accounts for period ended 31 March 2020

**TOTAL INCOMING  
RESOURCES**

**£292,025**

**£278,791**

**TOTAL EXPENDED  
RESOURCES**

Increase to reserves: £13,234 (£11,654 unrestricted, £1,580 restricted)

# TO OUR SUPPORTERS, THANK YOU.



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust



**Northumberland**  
County Council



**Northumberland**  
Clinical Commissioning Group



**Northumberland County Council – Adult Services**

**Northumberland NHS Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

**National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities**

**Joicey Trust**

**Carers Trust**

**The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund**

**The Lions Club of Morpeth**

**Matfen Hall Hotel**

**Waitrose Ponteland**

**Hays Travel Ashington**

**St Lawrence Church, Warkworth**

**Adapt NE**

**Ovingham Parish Council**

**Community Foundation Tyne and Wear and Northumberland**

**The Linden Family Fund**

**Morrison's Morpeth**

**Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland and The Alwick Garden Trust**

**All our individual donors, fundraisers and supporters.**



Alnwick Moor - N Eckersley



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