

Important Information

This document contains background information on:

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About Carers Link

For every eight people living in East Dunbartonshire, one person is a carer. A carer is a person who, without payment, provides regular help and support to a partner, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help because of an illness (including mental health), addiction, frailty or disability. This includes parents of children with a disability or additional needs.

Carers Link began service delivery in September 2004 after several years of development. A history of our development can be found on our website www.carerslink.org.uk - our most recent Annual Report is also available to download. Since starting, we have supported over 5000 carers. During the course of the last year over 1,489 carers received support through at least one of our services. These services comprise of Advocacy, Information, Training and Support (both 1-1 and through a range of Groups) for any Carer. We also work with Young Adult Carers and Young Carers from age 5 upwards.

A Board of Management manages Carers Link through the Chief Executive Officer. The current Board comprises of 10 members and three-quarters of our Board Members are either carers or former carers in their own right. At time of writing there are 16 members of staff and almost all have current or former experience of caring. We are also supported by a team of over 50 volunteers.

Further information on Carers Link, our staffing structure, services and caring can be obtained from our website – www.carerslink.org.uk

Young Carers

Carers Link's Linked Up Service offers support to young carers throughout East Dunbartonshire up to the age of 25. Our core services include 1:1 emotional support, wellbeing, information and advocacy including Young Carer Statements. We also work closely with the schools regarding access to all of these supports.

If the young Carer is over the age of 8, they can also access weekly group supports, school holiday day trips and occasional residential breaks (including sailing trips). Older young adult carers are also supported regarding further education and employability.

Alongside focusing on individual needs and outcomes, we also promote professional and public awareness of young carers' issues and offer young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services for all young carers.

Our Location

Carers Link is located in Milngavie Enterprise Centre on Ellangowan Road. The offices are less than five minutes' walk from the pedestrian precinct of Milngavie centre and less than a ten-minute walk from the Railway Station and main bus stop. Milngavie itself is north of Glasgow and less than 5 miles from Glasgow's Anniesland Cross.

Very limited parking is available at the Enterprise Centre; however, there is a large pay and display car park immediately opposite the offices. The rail service runs through Glasgow (including Partick, Anniesland, Westerton) and operates 3-4 times per hour. A train timetable is available from: www.scotrail.co.uk

The Enterprise Centre comprises 3 floors connected by lift, the upper 2 consisting of office space. Carers Link is based within 3 rooms on the first floor, consisting of the main open plan office, the CEO's office and our own meeting room. The rest of the ground floor features further offices as well as washrooms (including wheelchair access) and reception area.

Given current Pandemic Restrictions, our actual offices are closed and staff are required to work from home. We will discuss any individual needs that you may have to enable this. Moving forward, we envisage that all staff will have the choice between working entirely in the office or working partly at home (Hybrid Working).

Equalities

The Enterprise Centre and Carers Link's own offices are accessible to wheelchair users. There is a lift to all floors and wheel-chair accessible washroom on the ground floor.

Carers Link endeavours to hold all events in public buildings that are accessible to people with mobility problems or who use wheel chairs. However, our services are offered on an outreach basis and sometimes require visits to other venues or homes that may not be fully accessible.

Should the successful candidates have other requirements related to a disability or further mobility issues, we will work with them and the Access to Work/Disability Employment Advisor to improve accessibility.

Key Terms and Conditions

A full staff handbook is available for staff. The following is a summary of key terms:

Hours of work:	35 hours per week.
Holidays:	The leave year runs January – December. Within a full year, full-time staff receive 32 days comprising 28 flexible days (Annual Leave & Public Holiday Allowances) and 4 fixed days (Christmas & New Year). A pro-rata equivalent is provided for part years.
Salary Payments:	Salaries are paid on a 4-weekly basis
Pension:	5% pension of salary paid direct to personal pension (see policy for full details)
Probationary Period:	6 months with formal reviews after 4 weeks, 3 months and 6 months
Travel:	Mileage is currently reimbursed at 45p per mile.
Screening:	The post is subject to two satisfactory references and Disclosure/PVG Membership.

Coronavirus/Pandemic Response

Carers Link started moving to remote working from Monday 16th March so that all staff and volunteers were working from home by the end of the week (20th), just a few days before 'lockdown' was officially announced. Previously Carers Link provided support in a range of traditional ways tailored to the individual but usually via telephone or home/office visits for 1-1 support and via social groups/training sessions. Naturally this has changed following restrictions and social distancing.

Luckily our database had been moved to the cloud in 2018 and fortunately also, our staff team was supported by around 25 volunteers who provided telephone support. We were therefore quickly able to

make contact with all our regular carers. Volunteers are contacting their usual carers and also those wanting more frequent calls due to isolation. This has freed staff time to focus on new carers, carers at risk (protection issues or risk of breakdown in ability to care), and the newly bereaved.

However once the initial couple of weeks had passed, we turned attention back to group support options – albeit online. We have now reintroduced some training course such as Mindfulness via Zoom and also providing a range of social groups for young carers and adult carers via Zoom, What's App and Facebook. One exciting aspect due to all these changes has been our move from monthly 'podcast' to weekly. Giving carers access to information in a completely different and more user-friendly means. As well as our website, these are also available via Spotify, iTunes and our local radio station.

We were fortunate to have a small project called 'Switched On' funded through a private donor to help older carers get online (10 hrs per week). Although computer classes are widely available in libraries etc., carers even before lockdown were not able to leave the home to attend. Through this project we provided Volunteer Tech Buddies to visit the carer to assist. This has obviously changed to support via telephone! There is so much activity available online but too many are being left behind and made even more isolated in terms of socialising and accessing information. We are therefore 'stepping up' our support and have introduced a Tech Helpline for carers so that they can access our online activities.

In essence, our support is continuing and indeed expanding - however it is all being done via digital means or by telephone. Amazingly, we are also sustaining the high level demand for our services that we were already providing – the difference between April/May this year and last year are negligible in terms of contacts made and new referrals. The key difference is in the complexity of support and high level of grief and trauma shared by Covid-19 bereaved carers. Amazing because our normal routes of referral (social work, GP, community health workers) are occupied elsewhere and the team of staff/volunteers are still adjusting to our new way of life. We have all been part of a catastrophic event - everything went up in the air and is still coming down – so to be delivering business as usual we consider to be high achievement.

Since Summer 2021, we have been introducing more face-to-face supports for carers namely home visits, groups and wellbeing activities for adult carers and groups, school or home visits, school holiday fun activities and outings for young and young adult carers.