

# 2022 Annual Report

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**York Carers Centre Annual Report and  
Financial Statements for year ending 31 March 2023**

# Welcome



**Rosemarie Temple, Chair of Trustees  
(on behalf of the Trustees)**

I would like to start by thanking the CEO, Deputy CEO, and all staff for their commitment and performance over the year. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis as one of the major factors affecting carers during the year 2022/23, has made extra work for all our staff.

I would like to say a special thank you to Carole for her commitment to York Carers Centre in her role as CEO over approximately 11 years, especially her dedication and support to both the staff and the Trustees. Carole brought a lot of knowledge and experience to the role, which in turn has taken York Carers Centre into the future. We wish her well in her retirement.



**Carole Zagrovic, Retired CEO |  
York Carers Centre**

The Trustees also extend grateful thanks to all our volunteers, who support the charitable work of York Carers Centre; their help and commitment is greatly appreciated.

I wish to thank the Board of Trustees for their support throughout the year. The Trustees continue to enhance the governance of York Carers Centre through regular Board Meetings throughout the year, either face to face or via Zoom, and through progressing quality improvements and developments. The Trustees held an away-day last October, which also included the CEO, the DCEO and the Office Manager. It was a very productive day, which allowed us to identify weaknesses, to improve on our strengths, and enhance our team abilities.

Charity number: 1127644  
Company number: 06760783

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# Thank you!

We also appreciate our relationship with City of York Council, their officers, and councillors, who have worked alongside us to support carers over many years.

York Carers Centre has sustained itself through these very difficult times, and our motivation and passion remains to ensure that carers of all ages throughout York are recognised and supported.

We extend our thanks to the generosity of funders - local individuals, businesses, and statutory bodies - alongside funding from national trusts and foundations.

I would like to pay tribute to our late Patron Harry Gratton, who sadly passed away in June 2022. Although Harry was our Patron for only a year, in that time he made a big difference with his support and increasing awareness of York Carers Centre.



# CEO Report

I would like to add my thanks to Carole who saw us through two tendering processes with the local authority and leaves us in a good position with four years remaining on our current local authority contract (with a possible extension), and several other successful funding arrangements in place.

I learned a great deal under Carole's management and after 22 years of working at York Carers Centre, I am pleased to be taking up the role of CEO.

This Annual Report will showcase our work with carers during this year and highlight some of our achievements throughout 2022/3. It is, however, an important reminder that behind the services we provide, there are unpaid carers often at breaking point.

We have seen an increase in the level of need by those who contact us for support and are acutely aware of the impact this is having on carers' own health, finances, employment and overall wellbeing.



**Sharron Smith, CEO | York Carers Centre**

*York Carers Centre have been an invaluable source of information, assisting me with so many things that I was unaware of as well as regular check ins with me and a friendly listening ear.*

*I am extremely grateful for the support they have given me and continued support."*



# CEO Report

Our Annual Report highlights our dedication to carers and our efforts to always put carers at the heart of everything we do, where staff and volunteers are considerate of and committed to respecting and responding to the individual circumstances of every carer.

“  
We have  
provided  
information  
and support  
to **4863**  
unpaid carers  
”

We will continue to raise awareness of the needs of carers, as well as the value of the care they provide. Through our contract and fantastic working relationship with City of York Council, financial support from foundations, trusts and donors, our statutory and voluntary sector partners and the trust and engagement of carers, we believe we are in a strong position to maintain a quality, dedicated carer support service into the future.

# Our Mission

**Challenging the inequalities unpaid carers face, and ensuring carers have access to support and services that reflect their needs and interests.**



We have provided **909** one-to-one carer support sessions with **263** carers, responding to individual needs



We sent out **18,080** newsletters to carers and professionals

*"Thank you for the newsletters, they always give me useful info. I look forward to receiving them"*



We ran **99** group activities for adult carers aimed at reducing isolation, helping **678** carers to maintain a life of their own and stay connected to other carers



We supported **275** carers to access benefits advice, raising **£220,700** in extra welfare benefits to increase their family income



We answered **3,692** calls and enquiries from carers, providing information, advice and signposting

# Our Mission



We completed **136** Carers Assessments of Need ensuring carers received early information and advice, and the right support for their individual needs



**699** Carers hold our Carers Emergency Card, with **85%** saying it provides them with peace of mind



We received **165** responses to our annual survey, with **91%** saying our support helped them to cope with their caring role. The survey helps us to better understand the needs of carers and shape our services accordingly



**170** people completed our online training and **57** professionals attended our Carer Awareness Training sessions



# Carers Stories

## Judith's story (name changed)

Judith was struggling with caring for her husband who had cocaine dependence. Judith was feeling as though she'd had enough and didn't know what to do next, and was considering separation, but due to the complicated circumstances including financial, she felt trapped in the situation.

## How we helped

We supported Judith to access some legal advice and provided information on support available for her husband. We informed her of the opportunity to attend our regular groups, but she was reluctant to join these so instead we provided one to one support with a volunteer who had experience of recovery themselves.

## The difference this made

With support, Judith felt empowered to implement boundaries at home and stick to these. Her husband has started to access some support for his addiction, though this remains sporadic. Judith feels as though she has the support she needs to remain in the situation and to keep herself and her child mentally well, despite ongoing difficulties.





# Carers Stories

## Elizabeth's story (name changed)

Elizabeth was carer for their mother in a mis-functioning household. Elizabeth had become very isolated and had inadequate living conditions, however was required to provide for the needs of the household and as a result suffered from poor mental health.

## How we helped

We supported Elizabeth with regular wellbeing door-step packs, which allowed us to form a trusted relationship for when the Carers Assessment of Need was due. Around this time we were actively delivering the YACstars Employability Project. Although Elizabeth was unable to access group peer support sessions, she was open to help with her employment situation. We did some visualisation work and connected her with a local employer. Elizabeth secured regular employment to supplement her income. Elizabeth also accessed CBT Therapy through the National Lottery Funded project and as a result has been able to make some significant decisions to maintain her independence and wellbeing.

## The difference this made

***"I just wanted to say thank you to everyone, for all you have done for me during my time as a carer. Without the support I wouldn't be where I am today - working a good job, mentally healthier and living in a happy home. I am eternally grateful.***

***My time caring for Mum (unfortunately) made me very unhappy and kept me isolated, but the Young Adult Carer Service was always there for me when I needed. I'll never be able to thank you enough for everything."***



# Helping Carers Stay Well

## One to One Support

This year we have provided **909** one-to-one carer support sessions with **263** carers responding to what each individual needs. This includes carers of people with mental health conditions though our work in Foss Park Hospital.

*Having these calls means I have space to reflect on how I am*

## Wellbeing sessions

We delivered **21** sessions, aimed at improving carers wellbeing including:

- Journaling for wellbeing
- Spring walk at St Nicks
- Garden centre visit
- Wreathmaking
- CreateArts photography and mixed arts sessions



Sessions support carers' wellbeing, and help carers develop social contacts, while knowledgeable staff provide information and advice.

*From doing the journaling session today, I realise that I'm not on my own*

## Carefree Breaks

Following our sign-up as a Community Partner with Carefree Breaks we have referred **26** carers for a break. Breaks comprise of 2 – 3 days free hotel accommodation and breakfast for up to 2 people. The accommodation is provided by hospitality partners who donate vacant rooms in hotels across the UK.



## Telephone Listening Service

We made **140** contacts with carers through the telephone listening service, providing regular or one-off contacts with a volunteer, helping carers to keep in touch and signposting to other support where needed.

## Counselling Service

Due to the reduction in our funding this year, we had to bring the carers counselling service in-house. **23** carers started counselling sessions during the year. Additional funding from Rethink – York branch and Benenden supported this, and we are hoping to expand further through grants and donations.



# Groups & Activities

## Keeping carers connected through groups and activities

We helped **678** adult carers to maintain a life of their own and stay connected to other carers through 99 group activities

## Hubs in the community

We hosted **27** hubs in and around the city aimed at providing space for carers to come together in a relaxed environment. Carers can chat to each other, build up networks and obtain essential advice and information from knowledgeable staff.

Ward funding helped us to provide hot meals during the winter months and give out **40** 'keep warm, keep well' packs containing blankets, thermal socks, soup and items to aid with the cost-of-living crisis.

*" It's nice to talk to different people, very helpful "*

## Families affected by addiction

We ran 2 monthly groups for carers of people who have an addiction. Sessions include peer support, guest speakers and targeted work with facilitated sessions for example **'Managing difficult and Traumatic Relationships'**, providing carers with space to validate their feelings about their role in supporting an addict and share coping strategies with each other.

*"The extra support of the group enables me to feel like everyone is backing me and I can do it"*

## Workshops, trips and events

Along with other organisations we have facilitated workshops around art and bereavement, the journey after loss, how to communicate with professionals and mindfulness.

Our successful trip to Lotherton Hall, including afternoon tea, provided carers with the opportunity for a break and time with other carers. A tour of York Minster was greatly appreciated with carers commenting that they otherwise would not find time to enjoy the city they live in.

## Care home carers

After listening to carers at the Carers Action Group, we facilitated a session for carers of those living in care homes. Carers shared the emotional impact and feelings of guilt involved when your partner or parent moves into a care home. Our Advice worker provided tailored information and advice including regarding paying for care.

## Supporting carers of someone with mental ill-health

We facilitated 2 monthly groups for carers of those with a mental health condition. Sessions included the opportunity to share stories and support each other, listen to guest speakers such as the Head of Nursing, a Pharmacist and the Police. Carers shared their stories helping to raise awareness of the issues they face with professionals.

We also held focus groups hearing from carers about their experience of the person they care for being discharged from Foss Park Hospital.

“  
**157** carers are  
 members of our  
 mental health  
 group, receiving  
 regular mental-  
 health-specific  
 news and support  
 ”

# Carers' Rights

## Advice work

We provided **664** carer advice sessions. **90%** of carers said the advice they received has helped them.

*"I am appreciative of the help to get a blue badge, and the thoroughness of your response. It means a lot to reach out and be offered such a wealth of information, thank you."*

After receiving information and advice from our specialist carer advice worker, carers said that:

- There has been a positive impact on their mental health
- They appreciate the advice on how to deal with the current situation and what to do next
- They could not provide care without this help and support
- Made them feel more comfortable with their situation

## Carers Assessments of Need

We completed **136** Carers Assessments of Need this year. The Assessments are undertaken by experienced staff who help carers access information and advice at a point when they first seek support, outlining what services are available as well as their rights and entitlements, alongside supporting with the emotional impact of caring.

*"Previously I didn't like being called a carer as I was supporting a close family member and it felt 'wrong' being a carer, our relationship was more than that. But after the CcAN I realised it was ok to be registered as her carer, and it didn't detract from our relationship."*



## Information sessions

Our **Carers Rights Day** event was planned in response to the high number of enquiries we receive about legal & financial planning, adult social care assessments, and paying for care.

We invited 4 speakers with specific knowledge in these areas to provide information and advice. Our team were on hand to advise and support carers, and there was also time for a nice lunch, Q&A session and opportunity to access individual advice.

In partnership with Crombie Wilkinson, we offered **legal clinics** for carers to obtain free advice on power of attorney, wills and probate.

**Communicating with Professionals** workshops and groups aimed to empower carers to use their rights to challenge decisions and communicate effectively.

## Maximising carers' income

This year our specialist welfare benefits worker helped **275** carers with benefits entitlements checks and support through the entire application process, generating **£220,700** extra income for carers and their families.

“ We provided **275** benefits advice sessions and generated **£220,700** extra income for carers. ”

# Carers' Needs

## Raising Awareness of Carers' Needs

### Families affected by addiction

We completed work with NHS Mind the Gap highlighting the importance of involving carers in the development of services for those with addictions. We presented this work at several forums including National Carers Conference to over **200** professionals, and shared a carer digital story film and our newly created carer flyer 'it could happen to you'.

We held a marketplace event for all services involved in addiction support to come together and for carers to access support in one place.

### Carers Action Group

The Carers Action Group was set up to ensure carers voices are heard and carers are acknowledged as experts by experience. The group meet regularly with staff and statutory services and members represent carers through City of York Council Carers Strategy meetings.

Through this group, carers have influenced the setting up of a new group for carers who care for someone living in a care home, input into Healthwatch's report into the mental health crisis line and discussed carers breaks. They are an active group who represent carers on various forums across the city.



# Media Coverage

## Raising awareness through the media

Throughout the year we have raised awareness of caring in our community and issues affecting carers, as well as reaching out to 'hidden' carers who may not be accessing any support. From regional television to local press, radio and social media, we have made caring visible in our community.

One of our substance misuse Carer Champions (who initiated the Stitch Away the Stigma campaign) was mentioned in a Channel 4 documentary "Losing my Twin Rupert" with Will Young. This has further raised awareness of the impact of addiction and signposted more carers to the centre.



## Carers Week 2022

- Stall in Parliament Street in York, providing goodie bags, massages and information as well as raising funds and awareness
- Supported launch of staff carer passport for York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. Stall in the hospital foyer with information aimed at reaching carers visiting patients
- Stall in Foss Park Hospital



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## Training for health and social care staff

We facilitated Carer Awareness Training to **57** professionals from local health, social care and voluntary organisations.

Our training aims to highlight the challenges carers face, particularly around navigating statutory services and co-ordinating health and social care support. Professionals leave with a better understanding of identifying and supporting carers, where other help is available and carers health and wellbeing.

*"Reflecting on the 'hidden' life of caring, really considering who is an unpaid carer was particularly useful"*

*"For me it was powerful to hear the carer experiences and what I'll take away to share with the team is the importance of involving carers".*

## Work with Carer Champions

Many carers are passionate about raising awareness of carers' needs and reducing the stigma around conditions. We support those carers to make a difference, to represent the voice of carers and to help shape local services.

This year **26** volunteer Carer Champions represented York Carers Centre and carers through attending meetings, conferences and strategic forums and shared their experience at our training sessions for health and social care professionals.



# Valuing Volunteers

Our committed group of volunteers are an important part of our work with carers, and we are proud to have **39** volunteers this year. Total number of volunteer hours: **3,575**. Volunteers are involved in many areas of our work and use their skills and experience to support carers in a range of ways, including helping in groups and with activities for both adults and young carers, supporting fundraising and awareness-raising events, making one-to-one welfare and befriending calls and assisting with office/admin work.

This year, in addition to our regular volunteers, we were joined by several Health and Social Care and Psychology students on placements offering us support across the centre. Examples of their involvement include administrative tasks / research, assisting in updating records for the carers emergency card scheme, providing support at young carer youth groups, supporting staff in completing carers assessments / reviews, helping at carer hubs / stalls / events and support with our telephone listening service.

*"I have had the most amazing experience working with you all during my time at YCC! Just wanted to say a huge thank you for 'showing me the ropes' and for answering all of my questions (even though there were like a million of them)! I have gained so much confidence and passion working with you and the young carers and this is an experience I know I'll treasure forever."*





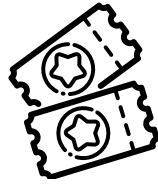
# Young Adult Carers

Our work this year with 18 to 25 year old carers focused on our YACstars project, building up the service after difficult engagements following the pandemic and consolidating the support available.



We supported **129** Young Adult Carers through our service

We maintained our Instagram Channel **@yacsyork** to maintain contact, continuity, familiarity, peer support and project momentum.



We provided **87** breaks through events, activities and one-to-one meet ups

Young Adult Carers directly benefitted from creative sessions, social events, one to one support and lots of opportunities to have a say in things that matter to them.



Our Reels of the **YACSYORK** Instagram Channel have been viewed **27,760** times

We ran a **YACstars** project as part of some funding to increase employability skills. Part of this project saw former Young Adult Carers talking to the group about their experiences, and highlighted how the skills gained from being a carer are transferable and valuable in employment and life in general.

*"I believe that without the service of York Carers Centre I would not be in the position I am in now. The support has been frequent and had a lasting impact"*





*"I really enjoyed the YACstars session and it made me think about how I can use my hardships to my advantage in life. I will definitely attend again"*

We visited the Food Circle project where Young Adult Carers met with local organic food producers. The Food Circle team then cooked a wonderful meal for the carers whilst they socialised and had a break from their caring roles. We provided **10** carers with a slow cooker to enable them to cook healthy, low-energy and low-cost food to tackle emerging cost of living problems. The Food Circle provided a box of wonderful fresh, dried and preserved ingredients and a recipe card for the YACs to take away.





*"I feel like with all the other support I've had in the past, I didn't get the chance to speak for myself and they just kept jumping to conclusions about how I'm feeling. Talking to you feels like it actually helps."*

Young Carers and Young Adult Carers attended a Mental Health Service feedback and co-production event with Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership.

Alongside some fantastic group sessions, we've provided **49** one-to-one support sessions, providing a safe space for Young Adult Carers to talk openly and honestly.



# Young Carers

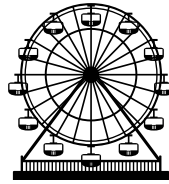
Our continued National Lottery funded project, now in year 2 has built on the work of the Family Worker and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist to meet the increasing needs of Young Carers experiencing mental health problems.

Funding from BBC Children in Need and Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) provided **24** Summer Fun experiences, with a focus on food and nutrition and improving emotional and physical wellbeing.

Successful funding from York Children's Trust provided **65** families with school uniforms, helping to address the cost-of-living crisis.



This year we supported **194** Young Carers through our service



We provided **67** breaks through trips, activities and youth clubs



Provided **65** families with help towards the cost of school uniforms



**208** one-to-one conversations and meetups

Activities and support focusses on building positive relationships, improving mental and emotional health as well as getting outside and having experiences that many children and young people take for granted.

We facilitated 2 sessions for Young Carers Action Day, enabling young carers to have a voice about things that are important to them, as well as having fun.

*"This is absolutely wonderful – I was worried how we were going to afford some new shoes, now I know I can get a pair that he will wear. Thank you so much."*

## Schools

We have supported Young Carers through school drop-ins, raised awareness through school assemblies and developed a short film and presentation for schools.

## Youth Clubs

Regular youth groups, called LAFFS provide a fun safe space for Young Carers to come together, share stories and have a break from caring. We have seen an increase in youth club engagement.

*"She's hardly been managing to do anything without me for a long time and this is huge progress. It's a huge relief for me and it's done her so much good!"*

## One-to-One Support

Tailored to individuals this support can be crucial for many young people.

### Topics have included:

- Confidence, independence and self-esteem
- Recognising/reflecting on caring role and family dynamics
- Preparing for change
- Mental health crisis and safety planning
- Bereavement
- Anxiety, managing emotions, navigating feelings of guilt
- Exam stress, puberty
- Issues with school, behaviour, homework, GCSE choices
- Unwanted thoughts, cared for worries, understanding behaviour related to condition of cared for person

## Trips and events

Events help to address the negative impacts children face through extended periods of isolation, loneliness and lack of participation in normal activities. Bowling, mini-golf, trampolining, ice skating, Go Ape, Flamingoland trip are just some of the exciting and varied programmes we have offered.

In addition educational and wellbeing sessions such as attending the cookery school and creative art therapy sessions, all enhance support for Young Carers.

# Helping Young Carers to stay well

## Family Support and CBT

Successful funding from the National Lottery provided **97** individuals with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and / or Family Support.

This early intervention project was developed in response to the increasing needs of Young Carers aged 11 to 24, struggling with their mental health, and who often face months of waiting for diagnosis or support.

*" That was brilliant actually. I've talked about loads of stuff I wanted to get out of my head."*

**298** therapy sessions have been delivered, focusing on coping skills and techniques, alongside providing practical support for the whole family, including an essentials fund, emotional support, family holidays, foodbank vouchers, liaising with schools and statutory services. The therapeutic work has covered a range of conditions and situations, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, self-harm, grief and anger management.

The essentials fund has enabled families to access items such as beds, laptops, transport, all helping to improve outcomes for families and Young Carers.

*" 100% of the families who attended an activity said it had positively impacted their mental health."*





# Future Plans

With a new CEO in post, it is a good time to reflect on our activities and look to the future. There are challenges simply in maintaining the current level of provision and managing the increasing demands on the service. However, we want to strive to develop and constantly improve our service. We will build on our past achievements and reputation to maintain and develop a quality service.

## Key areas we will be focussing on in the future are:

- Maintaining positive relationships with the carers we serve, our funders and partner organisations, not least through the Carer Support Service Contract commissioned by City of York Council
- Working within York Hospital, alongside project partners and a range of health and social care professionals to identify carers requiring support
- Continuing to raise awareness of carers and the issues they face, including involvement in the development of a Resource Pack for GP's and Primary Care
- Aim to reach more carers ensuring that carers in York are identified and have access to responsive and flexible support that is appropriate to their needs, helping to prevent the breakdown of caring arrangements
- Building on the work with Community Mental Health Transformation, through the Pathway to Recovery Team and Mental Health Hub, supporting carers of people with mental ill health. This will continue to open new opportunities for partnership working with other agencies and support services across York
- Funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to continue our Mental Health Support Programme for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers and their families
- Exploring opportunities which build on our successful Carers Trust Quilter Project to assist Young Adult Carers to identify future goals and plans that will help their transition into adulthood
- Sourcing a range of financial support for mental health, addiction work, counselling, carers activities and school uniforms for Young Carers
- Volunteer participation opportunities and support for more Carer Champions to make a difference, to represent the voice of carers and help shape local services



- Using our newsletter to remind carers who do not attend groups or events, that they are not forgotten by focussing mailings on themes or top tips around specific topics

Our dedicated committed staff team are our greatest asset, and we will continue to maintain and develop family and carer-friendly policies to help staff maintain a good work-life balance.

All these plans support our Aims and Objectives as outlined under Objectives and Activities.

## **Trustees report on plans**

The Trustees recognise the impact on staff of the increasing demands on the service and the pressures faced by those working across the whole of the health and social care sector. We know that the key to being able to provide quality services is maintaining a consistent and dedicated staff team.

The impact of pressures across the system and the cost of living crisis severely impact carers and it is more important than ever to focus our work on supporting carers own health and wellbeing, and help them to access any benefits or services that they are entitled to.

Funding streams such as the Mental Health Community Transformation Fund and the Lottery have shown the opportunities this brings to enhance support for carers who need it most, ensure their voices are heard when developing services and building strong working relationships with a wide range of partners. We would like to develop both of these areas of work further with extensions of current funding arrangements and enhanced provision for carers. Maintaining and increasing the funding into the service to enable the provision of crucial support for carers is essential to meet their emerging needs. Areas including counselling, addiction, mental health and carer activities are all priority areas.

We have learned that even small efforts can make such a huge difference to carers for example the keep warm, keep well packs provided to support carers during winter months, or summer activities for Young Carers, but also the importance of having carers voices at the heart of decision making for example through our mental health work.

We have learned the value of having a Patron to assist in raising awareness and will seek to find a suitable Patron going forward.

# Summary of Financial Statements

The following summarised financial statements are derived from the full accounts which were approved on 23 September 2022 and which have been independently examined and an unqualified accountant report has been issued. The full accounts can be obtained by contacting the office or viewed on our website.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

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**Mrs R J Temple - Chair**

# Thank you

Thank you to carers, staff, volunteers, and trustees for your support and hard work over the past 12 months, and our funders including:

A Network Partner of

**CARERS TRUST**



CITY OF  
**YORK**  
COUNCIL



**COMMUNITY FUND**



**BBC**  
**Children in Need**

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**Vale of York**  
Clinical Commissioning Group



**Humber and North Yorkshire**  
Health and Care Partnership

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