

**CARERS'  
SUPPORT  
(BEXLEY)  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020/21**

# Carers' Support (Bexley) Annual Report 2020/21

*Carers' Support (Bexley) is managed by a Management Committee consisting of volunteers who are directors of the company and trustees of the charity. They are responsible for the overall management of the organisation, determining policy and ensuring that it is implemented by the staff through the Chief Executive. They regularly review potential risks to the organisation and ensure that mitigating actions are undertaken and contingency plans are in place.*

## Management Committee

Chair	Nicola Fry
Vice Chair	Sally Ellis
Members	Iris Benjafield Alison Cutting Vivien Hill Elisabeth Petchey

## Staff Team

Chief Executive	Alison Baker
Respite Team	Margaret Arnold Maria Jenkins Victoria Baker
Information and Support Team :	Felicity Packard Claire Hunt Teresa Parkinson Joanne Flitton Victoria Baker
Office Assistant	Jenny Miller
Support Workers	Kathleen Aje, Stacey Arnold, Lisa Baker, Victoria Baker, Janice Clark, Sarah Collett, Christine Conti, Susan Davenport, Natalie Downs, Tracey Hale, Danita Hooker, James Jenkins, Samantha McMullen, Lynne McVicar, Elaine Meyer, Emma Middlemass, Maureen Puttock, Oscar Lizalda Restrepo, Nicola Wedge, Maxine Weston, Julia Yandle.

## Incorporation

Carers' Support (Bexley) is a company limited by guarantee, registration number 3709684 and a registered charity number 1075801.

## Governing Document

The organisation is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association in which our objects are stated as: "To relieve physical, mental and material distress amongst the carers of persons who are frail, elderly, disabled, or adults and children with special needs, who live in the London Borough of Bexley and London Borough of Greenwich, by providing flexible home-based respite care, support and information for such carers to assist the carers and their dependents."

## Carers' Support (Bexley)

Crayford Manor House, Mayplace Road East, Barnehurst, DA1 4HB

How to contact us: Telephone: 020 8302 8011 Email: [info@carerssupport.org](mailto:info@carerssupport.org)

Fax: 020 8300 3002

# Carers' Support (Bexley)

## Our Vision

At Carers Support (Bexley) our vision is simple; we want to make a real difference to the lives of carers in Bexley and Greenwich. We are committed to tackling the isolation and loneliness that many carers feel by providing information, advice, support, respite and other services to those who dedicate their lives to caring for their loved ones. We pride ourselves in working with carers young and old, and their families, in a positive, responsive, professional and creative way to improve their lives.

## ...Putting Carers First

### Our Values

**People First** – We recognise and value people as individuals with individual needs and feelings and we are committed to providing flexible and creative services in response. Our focus is on putting people first and treating people how we would wish to be treated. We will be compassionate, warm, polite, empathetic, understanding and approachable at all times.

**Respect** – We aim to treat everyone with dignity, understanding and respect at all times. We value diversity and embrace peoples differences in the way we work.

**Honesty and integrity** – We believe that acting with integrity and honesty is integral to our reputation; this means we do what we say we will and deliver our promises. We are open, honest and transparent in the way we work.

**Professional** – We have a skilled and experienced team of staff and volunteers who are committed to working in a professional way and delivering excellence within all our services. We pride ourselves in having a “can do” attitude where we aim to say “yes” rather than “no” as much as we can.

**Valuing Our Staff** – We aim to be a good employer, ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive adequate training and support and opportunities for personal development.

**Valuing Our Volunteers** – We have a dedicated and enthusiastic team of local volunteers who support our work. We are led by a voluntary board who provide direction and leadership to Carers Support (Bexley). We also use volunteers from all over the world within our respite service and we believe that this adds real value, making this service truly unique.

**Independence** – We value our independence as an organisation whilst recognising that partnership working is essential to our success. We will work in partnership where this enables us to achieve our vision and deliver better services to carers.

**Free** – We believe that our services should be free to carers wherever possible.

# Chair's Foreword

## Chair's Foreword

During the last financial year, April 2020 to March 2021, we have all lived through the unimaginable. A time of great trial during this worldwide Pandemic of Covid-19, a truly life-changing experience, that few of us would ever have believed could happen during our lifetime. Our new reality became Lockdowns, mask wearing, staying at home and keeping our distance from one another, constant handwashing and buckets of hand sanitizer, birthdays and Christmas celebrated through windows; all measures to keep us safe but which were alien to our way of life and social interactions.



For those able to use modern technology Zoom became the new way of meeting. I personally had never heard of Zoom prior to lockdown! But it soon became the new norm. Human beings are very adaptable fortunately.

The emergence of the virus Covid 19 raged through the people of our nation and the world causing death and devastation in its wake. A modern plague which radically altered our way of life forever.

The first Lockdown which began in March 2020, with its attendant rules and legal regulations obviously impacted greatly upon the services which Carers Support were able to offer to our clients. At the beginning of the first Lockdown, it was sadly necessary to suspend our Respite Services, where our volunteers go into people's homes, and our Face to Face Support Groups where people meet and socialize.

It was a time of great turmoil for our staff and CEO Alison Baker, who had to think on their feet and find new and creative ways to offer help and support to Carers. Three of our German respite volunteers decided to return back home (on their government's advice) at the beginning of lockdown, leaving us with nine volunteers. Six of these young people were new to CS(B) and so during this time of closure, their induction and training was undertaken on-line. Three of these nine remaining volunteers reached the end of their time with us during the first few months of lockdown, so returned home.

In June the Respite Service re-opened, but offering a more limited service, abiding by all the Covid regulations in place at the time. Unfortunately, this meant we were unable to offer personal care to clients and so the decision was made to suspend our CQC registration. Staff worked creatively within the guidelines and weekly half day breaks (instead of fortnightly whole day breaks) were offered to those who wanted them. Understandably, many people were unwilling to have a person not of their household to visit, for fear of infection.

Our Information and Advice Service was inundated during this time, with Carers calling for advice and support. Many were finding life even more difficult, than they could ever have imagined, without the welcome respite of their regular break. Staff were able to offer a telephone befriending service, which proved invaluable to those struggling to cope. Staff from our Respite Service moved over to help with this demand, whilst their work was reduced. Everyone pulled together and were extremely flexible in their working pattern. Likewise, our Counselling Service was able to offer fifty-minute counselling sessions over the telephone, to Carers who were really struggling with life, and this proved to be an absolute lifeline. One Carer commented that our service, 'made me feel cared for and supported and worthwhile as a human being'

Welfare Benefits advice continued to be provided, and benefit claim forms completed over the telephone. Staff also delivered fifty "Wellbeing Boxes" full of goodies (provided by Reinstat) to people who were shielding and their Carers, which were very gratefully received.

Some staff on our Support Worker Service had to be furloughed temporarily because their clients cancelled the service, but others continued working throughout, for families who needed them. We are very grateful to all our staff and volunteers who continued to provide support for Carers and the people they care for, even though they had to put themselves at risk to do so.

Our In Touch service offered a telephone befriending service during lockdown and resumed face to face appointments as soon as it was safe to do so. Volunteers held their appointments outside where possible and wore masks and kept the 2m distance. Staff and volunteers also contacted all the people who attended our groups and provided emotional support until such time as groups could open again. In Touch also provided telephone befriending support to people referred to them by Bexley Council, who were having to 'shield' for medical/age reasons, and were feeling extremely lonely and isolated. Whilst not necessarily Carers, it was felt important to be flexible during this time of Pandemic, to offer support where we could.

During a break in lockdowns before Christmas 2020 we were able to trial a meeting of our Dementia Group at Blackfen Library which had enough space to hold the meeting safely. Even so, this proved a great challenge to organise in light of all the Covid regulations and so numbers had to be limited. People who attended these two sessions were very grateful at being able to be with people again and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We also trialled a support group meeting by Zoom, but this medium obviously doesn't suit everybody.

In October 2020, Bexley Council began trialling the 'Adult Social Care (ASC) Pathways (Trusted Assessor) Project, initially for a six month period. This project aims to 'transform Adult Social Care in Bexley'. A consortium of local Voluntary Organisations ("One Bexley") has been formed, which includes Carers Support (Bexley) and is headed by the Greenwich and Bexley Hospice. Our fellow partners are Age UK, BVSC, Mind in Bexley, Bexley Mencap and Crossroads Care South East London. The aim of this initiative is to train staff from voluntary organisations to carry out Adult Social Care Needs Assessments and Carers Assessments and reviews on behalf of the council for families who need them, ideally families already known to the voluntary organisation. It is hoped that this initiative will be extremely beneficial to

Carers as they will be assessed by someone who already knows and understands their needs.

The Pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to our staff team. The pressure has been immense on each person, to deliver the best available help to Carers (and others) I have always known that Carers' Support is blessed with staff and volunteer team of extraordinarily dedicated and compassionate people, who will always go the extra mile to help. This past year has cemented that knowledge

Many of our staff, volunteers and their families suffered from the Covid infection themselves and this obviously placed an extra burden on staff as they covered for a sick colleague. I really don't have sufficient words to describe my admiration and gratitude for how staff rose to the challenge in this fast-paced, surreal, and ever- changing world that we are all living in, and provided the help they did. The emotional pressure was immense. We were fortunate that with the experience and wisdom of Alison Baker at the helm, Carer's Support was steered through this sea of chaos to calmer waters as life began to open up again.

I'd also like to thank all of our Funders who supported us through this time and were flexible with regard to our meeting service targets.



***A big Thank You to all the organisations who have supported us this year:***

***The London Borough of Bexley  
Bexley Community Housing Association  
The William Hatcliffe Foundation  
Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group  
The William Kendall Foundation  
West Kent Provincial Grand Lodge  
Bexley Rotary Club***

***The Royal Borough of Greenwich  
The Mercer's Company  
The City Bridge Trust  
Sidcup Rotary Club  
Bexley Mayor's "Lets Make a Difference" fund  
The Masonic Charitable Foundation  
The Greenwich Charitable Trust***

***As well as the organisations, our grateful thanks go to all the many individuals, too numerous to mention, who have made personal donations and raised funds for us during the year. Your support is greatly appreciated and not taken for granted.***



### ***In Memorium***

***We would particularly like to thank all the friends and relatives who made donations to Carers' Support (Bexley) in memory of:***

***Roger Chase, June Curry,  
Jessie Angela Forsdyke, Geoffrey Hayden,  
Kathy Poulton***

## *Our Carers Breaks Service*

We unfortunately had to close our Carers Breaks Service for 2 and a half months from April until the middle of June 2020 due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, our volunteers were able to provide support for families in other ways, for example, by getting shopping for them so that they didn't have to risk going out, or by providing emotional support and a listening ear online, or over the telephone.

Some of our volunteers chose to go home to their families at this time, and we were unable to recruit any to replace them immediately as most of our volunteers come from overseas. So we had a reduced service for much of this year. Fortunately our funders, the City Bridge Trust, the London Borough of Bexley and the Royal Borough of Greenwich, were very understanding and allowed us to use some of their funding to provide different types of support for Carers during the year.

We decided to allow our volunteers to start providing breaks for Carers again in June 2020 in response to the demand from some of our clients. They felt that their mental health and that of the person they were caring for was seriously at risk otherwise. Some families still chose not to accept a volunteer into their home because of the risk of infection, and for those families we were able to continue to provide telephone/online support. However, we were able to provide "in person" support for a total of **73** families (**47** in Bexley and **26** in Greenwich). We adapted the service to provide half day, rather than full day breaks, but on a more frequent basis. This enabled the Carer to get some food shopping, or go for a walk/take some exercise, or just to have a lie down in another room and enjoy some of their own space. Most Carers said they could not utilise a full day break at this time as there was nowhere to go and nothing open. A total of **2014** half day breaks were provided in all (**1251** in Bexley and **763** in Greenwich)

We wish to record our thanks to our wonderful staff team and to all the volunteers who worked for us this year

Hwain Song

Juan Sebastian Giraldo Pedroza

Annemei Puschel

Elizabeth Mani

Nilson Morales

Catalina Rengifo

Paula Ortiz Saenz

Hyeku Kim

Emely Matthes

Daniel Cabellero Villapando

Laura Sofia Alfaro Arias

Sthefanny Ruiz

Sooji Jeon

We sent anonymous questionnaires to everyone who used our service this year. Here are some of the responses we received:

**83%** of carers said that having a break from caring had helped to reduce or prevent feelings of stress.

**82%** said it had improved their health, wellbeing and quality of life

**81%** said the service had enabled them to continue to care or helped them to cope better with their caring role.

**75%** said it had helped to improve the quality of life of the person they care for

**86%** said it had enabled them to access more leisure activities.

**100%** said the volunteers' visits were beneficial for the person they care for.  
**71% described the service as "outstanding" and 29% as "very good"**

Comments included:

"Before my husband was diagnosed with dementia, I had a full and active life. It is difficult at times not to feel frustrated that I am unable to continue with hobbies and interests, due to my role as a carer. The volunteers allow me a feeling of freedom to do some activities without the feeling of guilt."

*"Enables me to go for more exercise which I think makes me fitter and makes me less stressed, which makes a better quality of life for me. My step-daughter also feels that going out with the volunteer makes her feel better and happier."*

"One volunteer encouraged him to start an old hobby of water colouring again. Another volunteer reminded him how to do Sudoku, a puzzle he had loved from earlier times and recently forgotten."

*"It is an excellent charitable service, everyone is so considerate and understanding. Very professional from start to finish and the volunteer is an lovely, happy, positive person who has certainly made a difference to our lives."*

"We look forward to the volunteers' visits, hearing about their 'adventures' in our country, their traditions etc as well as explaining things to them about our different ways and foods etc. Volunteers have enhanced our lives and given us great memories of their times with us."

*"Absolutely outstanding service. Always on time, always happy and respectful."*

"I feel the service has always provided a wonderful experience and it's a privilege to build or see a relationship forming between volunteer and cared for person"

**The service this year has been funded by the London Borough of Bexley, the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and The City Bridge Trust.**



## *Information, Advice and Support*

During the early months of lockdown, we experienced a huge increase in the number of Carers contacting us for information, advice and support. Because our Carers Breaks service was closed at the beginning of the period, the staff employed on that service were able to help out on our Information and Support service in order to meet the demand.

By far the biggest need was for emotional support and someone to talk to. We were unable to hold our support groups Between April and December 2020 but we made sure that we contacted everyone who would normally attend in order to provide support over the telephone where we could. Volunteers helped out as well as staff, contacting the Carers they were usually in touch with as well as additional Carers in need of a listening ear. Plus, we worked with Bexley council to support additional people who were “shielding” and lived alone and were therefore particularly isolated.

In addition, during the first 6 months of the year (April-September 2020) some of our staff were redeployed to assist Bexley Council with a “settle at home” project. The project was aimed at supporting people who were discharged from hospital during lockdown and whose family members were unable to visit to help them with things like shopping and picking up prescriptions (due to Government Covid restrictions).

In October 2020, we were able to take on a new Information and Support Worker, Joanne Flitton, to help with our increased workload. Joanne has concentrated on supporting Carers’ mental health and is managing our “In Touch” volunteer support service (volunteers who provide one to one emotional support for Carers) and our Carers Counselling Service, which we have been able to expand this year thanks to additional grants provided by Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group.

By the time that lockdown restrictions were eased in December 2020, Carers were very keen to get together again. Joanne organised some Christmas “get togethers” for Carers and the people they care for at Blackfen library in early December, but unfortunately we were unable to continue with face to face meetings in the New Year due to lockdown 3. However, Joanne organised some online meetings via “Zoom” in the meantime which were much appreciated by those who were able to benefit from them.

During the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021:

- More than **400** carers have requested and received an information pack and/or a first time subscription to our newsletter for carers, Carers Voice.
- More than 3,500 copies of our newsletter, Carers Voice, have been posted to individual Carers.
- More than **1000** carers have received “one-to-one” information and/or support, via the telephone or a home visit
- **5,024** information and/or support sessions have been provided.
- **325** carers have received welfare benefits advice
- We have actively assisted **106** people to submit benefit claims.

As a direct result of our welfare benefits service, **£348,731** has been raised in additional annual income for carers between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, and **over £11 million** has been raised since the project started.



“I lost my wife in August this year and my life just fell apart. If I hadn’t had the support from Bexley Carers Support I don’t know what I would have done. Thank you.”

*“Thank you so much, I couldn't have got by the past few months without your support, you were the only one who was there for me constantly, I honestly don't feel I would have managed without your help.”*

“I tell everyone that Carers' Support phone me; you're the only people that regularly check to see how I am.”

*“I am so grateful to Carers Support for your help, It enabled me to continue caring for my husband at home right up until he died. I really didn't want him to go into a care home, and nor did he, but without your support I am not sure that I would have been able to carry on looking after him at home.”*

“Thank you so much for all your support, Carers Support has been a 'Rock' to me. A has been an angel. I feel like the waves have parted and the storm has disappeared and now I'm on a calm sea.”

*“You have been so helpful; I am so glad you just listened to me.”*

#### **Quotes about the counselling service:**

*“S was great, his counselling methods helped me to rethink about who I am and remember my self-worth. He truly helped and I am grateful.”*

"I gained insight into my issues. I learnt a great deal from K and it all added value to my life. She was amazing."

*"P was brilliant. He was easy to talk to, which i thought I would have problems with, as I don't like talking about myself."*

"Very grateful for S's help and support, he made me feel more positive about life and I am more able to look after the person I care for."

*"I just want to pass on my thanks for all the support I was given. I really appreciated it. The service was excellent from the outset."*

"I just wanted to say how wonderful S is. He has really got me through lockdown."

### **We would like to thank our volunteers:**

Gabby Grant	Ian Pardoe
Kay West	Vivien O'Neil
Lita Tyler	Julia Nagle
Elizabeth Miller	Tatiana Graham
Bernadette O'Connor	Barbara Cooper
Wendy Ashdown	Nikki Oberman
Chris Dunne	Fiona Verge
Samantha Sollas	Martin Luxford
Vincent Pace	Vivien Hill
Pat Brasier	Pam Sloan
Pat Guard	Gillian Moulton
Della Cremin	Jan Welch
Lesley Snashfold	Ian Mitchell
Chris Copping	Sally Ellis
Debbie Gearey	Sue Burnby
Kathy Aje	Steve Peters
Shelley Bowden	Savio Rodrigues
Alison Harmer	Kremi Smith
Angela Smith	Marissa Miller
Caroline Lewis	Elisabeth Petchey
Rob Rice	

**Without whom we could not provide this very valuable service.**

## Independent Living Scheme

Over the past year, Carers' Support (Bexley) has been able to provide advice, information and support for carers and those they care for to enable them to understand what an Individual budget is, apply for one if they are eligible, and to make the most of their Individual Budget when they get one.

We have also been able to provide “hands on” practical help this year for **11** people (**7** carers and **4** disabled people) to manage their budget and employ their own Personal Assistants (PAs) if they wish to do so.

Our help includes providing a payroll service, HR advice and help, supervision and training for workers, help with interviewing, references, DBS checks, and whatever else the carer or cared for person feels they need.



## Who is a Carer?

*A carer is someone who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability. The term carer should not be confused with a care worker, or care assistant, who receives payment for looking after someone. A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would normally be taken by an adult.*

*Anyone can become a carer; carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be of any age.*

*Many carers do not consider themselves to be a carer, they are just looking after their mother, son, or best friend, just getting on with it and doing what anyone else would in the same situation.*

*Carers don't choose to become carers: it just happens and they have to get on with it – if they did not do it, who would and what would happen to the person they care for? (The Carers Trust)*

## *Support Worker Service*

We started our Support Worker Service in response to demand from Carers and people with care needs.

The service provides flexible help with things like:

- shopping (either shopping for someone or going shopping with them)
- light housework, laundry, ironing, preparing and serving meals
- company, companionship and ensuring the safety of the person with care needs
- taking the cared for person out and about
- Accompanying them to appointments (eg. with the GP, hospital, optician, etc.)

They do not provide help with personal care, but apart from that they can be flexible around the needs of the carer and person they care for.

All our support workers have been checked by us and have enhanced disclosures from the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service).

We make a charge for the service, and any surplus we make goes back into funding our free services for carers.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, **21** Support Workers supported more than **100** families.



**If you would like to donate to Carers' Support (Bexley) Here's how:**

**You can donate direct into our bank account using the details below:**

**Carers' Support (Bexley)**

**Sort Code: 40-42-01**

**Account number: 31435531**

**By Standing Order or cheque:**

**Download a standing order form and a gift aid form here. If you are a UK taxpayer, we can reclaim the tax if you fill in the gift aid form. Send them or a cheque to us at:**

**Carers' Support Bexley,  
Crayford Manor House Centre,  
Mayplace Road East,  
Crayford,  
DA1 4HB**

**If you would like to leave a gift in your will, please contact us for more information on 0208 302 8011 or email [info@carerssupport.org](mailto:info@carerssupport.org)**

**Carers' Support (Bexley)**

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