

Carers' Support (Bexley)

**CARERS' SUPPORT (BEXLEY) INCORPORATING
GREENWICH VOLCARE**

**CARERS' SUPPORT
(BEXLEY)**

ANNUAL REPORT

2021/22

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	Iris Benjafield
Treasurer	Elisabeth Petchey
Members	Tim Delee Alison Cutting S Ellis (resigned 21/9/21)

Staff Team

Chief Executive	Alison Baker until November 21 Vikki Wilkinson from November 21
Respite Team	Maria Jenkins Margaret Arnold
Information and Support Team	Felicity Packard Claire Hunt Joanne Flitton
Office Assistant	Jenny Miller
Support Worker team	Vicky Baker Kathleen Aje, Paul Akerman, Stacey Arnold, Lisa Baker, Victoria Baker, Amanda Bishop, Janice Clark, Sarah Collett, Karen Davies, Natalie Downs, Margaret Doherty, Julie Draycott, Kathy Fade, Rebecca Flitton, Shirley Fisher, Tracey Hale, Danita Hooker, Samantha McMullen, Lynne

McVicar, Chelsie Meyer, Elaine Meyer, Emma Middlemas, Maureen Puttock, Oscar Lizalda Restrepo, Luke Sturt, Eileen Walsh, Nicola Wedge, Maxine Weston and 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

Find us on

Twitter @CSBex

Facebook search Carers' Support Bexley

Website: carerssupport.org

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 people's 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 Annual Report - April 2021-
March 2022

As the country continued its journey through mass inoculation to the eventual relaxation of Covid-19 regulations, Carers Support (Bexley) continued to offer their first-class services, support and vital help to Carers in Bexley and Greenwich. The early part of the year was still very much dominated by restrictions such as social distancing, regular testing and limits on the number of people who could attend funerals. The latter, in particular, having a great emotional toll on families. From May 2021 onwards there began a relaxing of rules and in July 2022, all restrictions were finally lifted.



The last year has been a time of great change for Carers' Support (Bexley), firstly our move to Crayford Manor House in July 2021, and the decision of Alison Baker, our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to step down from that role, and take on the role of Operations Manager. The Committee appointed Vikki Wilkinson in post of CEO and she began with us in November 2021. Vikki has settled in well at Carers' Support (Bexley) and we look forward to working with her for many years ahead.

From small beginnings, Alison cared for and nurtured Carers' Support (Bexley) to become the wide-ranging organisation that it is today. Alison's vision and pioneering work developed unique services, such as our Respite Service, which has had an immeasurable impact upon the lives and well-being of carers in Bexley and Greenwich. Alison's leadership and inspiration over 25 years created staff and volunteer teams of incredible dedication and exceptional talent.

Our move to Crayford Manor House gave us more space and the ability to offer more Support Groups 'in house'. Sadly, because of our new location, we lost two of our Committee Members due to transport issues, Sally Ellis and Vivian Hill. We greatly miss them as they were very active in assisting with our various groups and were leading lights in our Friends Committee, helping to organise and conduct outside events. I would like to extend my grateful

thanks for all their hard work and wish them every happiness in their future lives. Then in November 2021, we were fortunate to welcome a new Committee Member, Mr Tim Delee

Our staff continued with a mixture of home and office working, whilst adapting to the ever-changing Covid regulations, in order to meet the needs of our clients. We are grateful to our funders The London Borough of Bexley and The Royal Borough of Greenwich, The City Bridge Trust, Wax Chandlers and The Mercers Company for their understanding and flexibility during this time.

As restrictions began to ease, our Respite service, run by Maria Jenkins and Margaret Arnold, which covers both Bexley and Greenwich, were able to resume offering Carers' a complete break from their caring role. Our Volunteers from overseas have always been a group of exceptional young people, but to travel to England in this time of Pandemic, to help other people in great need and improve their quality of life, was a truly selfless and altruistic act. Remarkable. And we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your duty and service to Carers' Support (Bexley). Indeed, many of our Volunteers contracted Covid themselves whilst with us and had to isolate. Fortunately, none became extremely unwell. This impacted on the Service we could offer, but the safety of our clients was paramount. Complying with whatever the Covid regulations were at the time, our Volunteers undertook socially distanced visits whilst mask-wearing. This enabled the carer to take a walk, find their own 'space'; or have some much-needed rest. With our Greenwich Volcare Service, the Volunteer's activities have included baking, walks to parks or hairdresser visiting. And for one client, she has been able to learn some German from her Volunteer, which has delighted her as her son lives in Germany.

The aim of The Pathways (Trusted Partner) Project is to provide a smoother and more holistic approach to helping carers in Bexley. We are now able to carry out Care Act and Care Needs Assessments (123 in total) and reviews of clients' Support Plans, which were previously undertaken by Bexley (45 in total). Also, we have been able to link people into our other services or to other voluntary organisations. To deliver this service a consortium of local charities was created and we formed partnerships with Age UK (Bexley), Bexley Mencap, Bexley Voluntary Services Council, Crossroads Care Southeast London, Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice, Inspire Community Trust and Mind in Bexley.

During a six-month pilot of the scheme, issues which arose (mainly from the technology used) were worked through and smoothed out. Consequently, the decision was made to apply for a three-year contract from October 2021 alongside our partners. Now known as One Bexley, the process of finding the help that is needed by carers seems to move quicker and be focused on what the carer wants. Staff have noticed that post-Covid cases referred for assessments have become more complex and therefore more time-consuming for staff.

Our very much appreciated In Touch Service, which offers a properly-trained, empathetic and kind volunteer to befriend by telephone or in person, has been a lifeline to many carers over the year. Knowing there is this support for them has helped to ease the stress and isolation caused by being a carer during a pandemic. A client fed back that “the lady who helped me was such a caring person. So kind and became a friend to me. It made me feel cared for, supported and worthwhile as a human being.” Running alongside this, our counselling service has also provided immeasurable help and support to those in very difficult times. The demand for counselling has grown sharply, following the pandemic, as the nation’s mental health deteriorated.

Our Support Groups proved to be very popular as life opened up again, we have delivered over 100 groups this year. Operating at Crayford Manor House we host our monthly Monday Club for adults with Learning Disabilities and their carers and Art Group. Our Music and Singing Club led by talented musician Carol Anne Wells and Memory Support Group. A very popular Memory Support Group is hosted fortnightly at Blackfen Library alongside a monthly Coffee Morning for Carers and former Carers. At Christchurch, in Erith two Support Groups are held and finally, our only evening event is the Carers’ Support (Bexley) Pub Group which is held at Falconwood Club, Welling. I’d like to extend our grateful thanks to these three locations, which allow us to extend our reach to Carers in Bexley. The companionship offered and friendships made are special.

As usual, our Information and Advice Service has been extremely busy over the past year, providing a lifeline for many Carers. Headed by Felicity Packard and assisted by Claire Hunt, Joanne Flitton and Jenny Miller they were able to resume face-to-face meetings and home visits, alongside the existing telephone support. Assisting Carers with benefits advice including benefit

form filling can be a daunting and frightening task for many people, so this service has been invaluable. Staff have also helped clients to navigate the various care options and to advocate for people when necessary. I'd like to give a big thank you to our volunteers who have trained as Welfare Benefits advisers, and those who help with our groups. These services make a real difference to the quality of people's lives and mental well-being.

Our Support Worker service has gone from strength to strength and we employ 18 people who have supported 55 clients over the past year. The Service has been grown by Vicky Baker and demand continues to rise. The Support Workers are greatly valued and appreciated by our clients. They can undertake any work that the client wishes (except for personal care). This is our only chargeable service, which goes back into the running of our many free services at Carers' Support (Bexley).

To my fellow carers here today, please take strength from each other. Our work is undervalued in society but it is priceless. During this time of Covid, I think that most of us dug deep inside, to levels of strength and resilience we didn't know we possessed. Carers do an amazing job and we save the government a fortune!

And of course, none of this work would be possible without the funding we most gratefully receive from The London Borough of Bexley and the Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group, The Royal Borough of Greenwich, The City Bridge Trust, Wax Chandlers, The Greenwich Charitable Trust and The Mercers Company. Also, the many donations and generous monthly giving orders from our supporters. We thank you so much. The work that you fund, makes such a difference to the lives of carers in Bexley and Greenwich.

And again, none of this work would be possible were it not for our supremely talented, committed and dedicated staff team. Again, this year, they have adapted and risen to all challenges, as we began treading the path back to 'normal' life. Whatever that is! Many of you in the room here today will have had personal experience of the exceptional quality of care you have received from a member of our staff. And the difference it has made to your lives. We have a genuinely caring and empathetic team who always do their very best.

Feedback from a client summed it up "Staff at Carers' Support (Bexley) are professional, approachable, compassionate and well-informed. I felt genuinely cared for."

Whilst not in this reporting period I have to mention the wonderful tea party we held for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee celebrations in June. We had an excellent time and tea. Our first event together since Covid. It was very, very special. Joyous. This was funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. Then in September, the nation was shocked and greatly saddened by Her Majesty's death. Our Queen was a great servant to her people and was dearly loved around the world. She was wise, humble, and forgiving. Rest in Peace Your Majesty. And Long Live The King.

Thank you

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 (Wax Chandlers)
The Greenwich Charitable Trust*

*The Royal Borough of Greenwich
The Mercer's Company
The City Bridge 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 is 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:

**Edwin Lewis, Roger Chase, Ron Baldry, Mrs Bhoday, Elsie Hudson,
Keith Harrison, Kathy Poulton, June Curry, Jessie Angela Forsdyke,
Connie Prior, Geoff Hayden**



We continued to navigate providing support in an ever-changing environment due to Covid restrictions and guidance to ensure that our clients were safe and also our staff and volunteers were. Over the year we gradually moved to offer our support in person with options to access support over the phone if helpful.

At the beginning of the year as some restrictions were in place some of our volunteers had to isolate before starting with us and the restrictions, and volunteers contracting Covid did mean that we had fewer volunteers. We were so thankful that William Hatcliffe Foundation supported us in paying for the isolation hotels for two volunteers from “red” list countries. As we moved into September we were experiencing less of these issues and fewer incidences of Covid meaning our wonderful volunteers could support even more families. We continued to offer half day breaks which many carers told us they prefer, and our Breaks service provided support to over 80 families, a total of 3146 half-day breaks.

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

Maria Jenkins
Margaret Arnold
Emely Matthes
Annimei Puschel
Daniel Cabellero Villarpando
Pia Muller
Yenny Maritza Ossa Henao
Eric Fabian Ramos Cardenas
Jona-serafina Roessler
Ami Nagano
Paula Ortiz Saenz
Catalina Rengifo
Joosung Park
Maria Angelica Sanchez Ossa
Mathilda Engel
Daniela Granados Rivera
Leng Ling (karen)
Alejandro Gonzalez Rojas
Aura Paola Pai Gomez
Camila Molano
Leoni Kosch

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

91% of carers said that having a break from caring had helped to reduce or prevent feelings of stress.
79% said it had improved their health, wellbeing and quality of life
89% said the service had enabled them to continue to care or helped them to cope better with their caring role.
78% said it had helped to improve the health and wellbeing of the person they care for
54% said it had enabled them to access more leisure activities.
73% said it had reduced feelings of isolation/loneliness for the person I care for
100% said the volunteers' visits were beneficial for the person they care for.
100% said that we respected their and the cared for persons, dignity at all times.

Comments included:

"I have health issues and the breaks help me so much to relieve the stress and help me to recharge my batteries and help me to be able to continue to care."

"Everything this service provides is totally for the 'cared for and carer' – they are very thorough and caring in providing the package."

"My Mum loves the visits and the chats they have."

Clients shared their views on the impact if they did not receive the service:

If the service stopped, I would become more isolated which would inevitably impact my mental health.

It's difficult to say exactly what impact it would have. The last 2 years have tested my resilience! Once we resumed having a Volcare volunteer, it's certainly been something we both look forward to each week and which lifts our spirits.

The service is invaluable. The stress would escalate which has a knock-on effect with ill health. There would be no help from GP or Social Services – they cannot cope with the workload they have.

I also found that having another person responding to and engaging with my mother made me more receptive to and aware of her imagination and hopes

I would be more harried and stressed, more of my life outside of being a carer would slide and I would be a worse carer as a consequence.

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

Information, Advice and Support

We continued to experience an increase in the number of carers contacting us for information, advice and support. We continued to provide support in a variety of ways from support and social groups to welfare benefits advice to signposting.

We have expanded our group offer to include activities in the North of the borough and our group's programme continues to be popular with over 100 groups provided this year.

During the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022:

- Over **5000** information and/or support sessions have been provided.
- With **938** provided by volunteers
- Supported **1425** carers
- 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
- **383** carers have received welfare benefits advice

As a direct result of our welfare benefits service, **£3298** has been raised in additional annual income for carers between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, and **over £11 million** has been raised since the project started.

The service was also successfully assessed by Advice Quality Standard (AQS) in June 2021 with their summary being:

“Despite the challenges of the past year with staff and volunteers working from home and home visits being put on hold and replaced with telephone calls, there were no non-compliances found at the assessment which is a testament to the commitment of Carers’ Support to provide a quality service.”



Examples of our work:

SC and his mum were delighted when he was awarded the higher rate of attendance allowance. She could not believe it when her Blue Badge application was successful, it will make such a difference to her.

SC and his family are extremely grateful for the support from Carers’ Support (Bexey), he said they just would not have applied for any of the benefits or Blue Badge without our help. It will help them all immensely and relieve a lot of their anxieties and concerns.

We established that Leslie’s dad’s needs are high enough to apply for an attendance allowance, so I arranged an appointment to help her complete the application and also the financial assessment for her dad’s care.

Leslie’s dad’s Attendance Allowance was awarded at a higher rate and she has found a wonderful Cantonese speaking care agency who are now supporting her parents. Leslie feels reassured that she can call Carers’ Support (Bexley) at any time for help and support which is helping her cope better in her caring role.

The outcome of the carer's assessment was that Social Care has agreed direct payments to enable a carer to look after Bob whilst his daughter, Sarah, has a break. Sarah is also now having counselling with Carers' Support, which should help her emotionally to manage her caring role. They both feel that both of these interventions will make a huge difference not only to Bob's wellbeing but also to Sarah's.

**names/initials have been changed*

We would like to thank our volunteers without whom we could not provide this very valuable service.

Gabby Grant
Elizabeth Miller
Barbara Cooper
Chris Dunne
Jo Dart
Vincent Pace
Pam Sloan
Della Cremin
Ian Mitchell
Savio Rodrigues
Julie Knight
Alison Harmer
Steve Peters
Marisa Miller

Ian Pardoe
Tatiyana Graham
Wendy Ashdown
Fiona Verge
Karen Davies
Vivien Hill
Pat Guard
Jan Welch
Chris Copping
Patricia Carroll
Anushri Prasad
Kremi Smith
Angela Smith
Elisabeth Petchey

Kay West
Bernadette 'Connor
Nikki Oberman
Samantha Sollas
Martin Luxford
Pat Brasier
Gillian Moulton
Lesley Snashfold
Iris Stevens
Bunmi Odulaja
Debbie Setter
Louise Giles
Caroline Lewis
Tim Delee

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 **10** people (**6** carers and **4** cared for) to manage their budget and employ their own Personal Assistants 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.

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 2021 and March 2022, **18** Support Workers supported more than **55** families.



Pathways service

The Pathways project is a collaborative approach to Adult Social Care. Care Act assessments are completed through day-to-day conversations using existing relationships. Conversations founded in relationships, taking time to know & understand a person, their interests, values and strengths. A consortium of local charities has come together, with Bexley Adult Social Care, to deliver this vision.

The vision:



Carers' Support (Bexley) has undertaken 123 Care Act and Care Need Assessments and 45 reviews. We believe that the new collaborative approach offers a service that puts people at the centre of decision-making and seeks to build on people's strengths and wishes and connect people to the support and assets in their community.

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)

Thank you

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