



# Impact Report

2023–2024



## Message from our CEO

I am pleased to present the Impact Report for Carers Support West Sussex which highlights the great work that our staff and volunteers have done to support unpaid family carers in West Sussex during 2023/24. I am constantly amazed by the commitment, passion, skills, and knowledge of our teams, over 60% of whom have lived experience of caring. As well as many of us of being carers ourselves, one of our strengths is we work alongside and listen to what carers tell us, so that we can understand the barriers, challenges, and the joys that they experience.

Many carers are immensely proud of the caring they do, and carers tell us that it is vital for them to be recognised and valued by those in the health, social care, and other support systems that they meet on their caring journey. The financial value of the care that unpaid carers provide in England and Wales is a huge £445 million each day, equivalent to the cost of another NHS in England and Wales.

Caring will have an impact on many areas of a carer's life, such as wellbeing, work and education, finances, time for themselves and the ability to manage at home. In April 2023,

we consulted with 841 carers, asking them what they felt were the biggest barriers or challenges.

We have focused this report on carer-identified priorities so that we can demonstrate where our services have made a difference to the lives of carers in West Sussex. The top three priority areas that carers highlighted were:

- Feelings of stress
- Managing their own physical or mental health
- Missing out on socialisation because of caring

It is important to recognise that, at Carers Support, we are part of a diverse network of organisations in West Sussex that aim to make a difference to local communities. We work closely with partners across the voluntary sector and health and social care to provide help to carers when, how and where they need it to achieve positive outcomes. We are delighted that 99% of carers tell us they would recommend our services to friends or family.

Thank you to all our staff and volunteers, and to colleagues in partner organisations, who have contributed to making a difference in the lives of carers this year.

**Caroline Pope, CEO**

We directly supported **11,345 carers**. 'Directly supported' is defined as direct contact by staff or volunteers by phone, email, remotely or face to face.



Phone Calls supported **8,096** Unique Carers.  
Emails supported **5,575** Unique Carers.  
Online Chat supported **254** Unique Carers.



## Social value

measures the positive value an organisation creates for the economy, communities, and society. The social return on investment (SROI) for Carers Support is for **every pound invested, £10.38 of value is generated**.

The SROI is a metric to capture the multifaceted impact of Carers Support into one numerical figure, i.e. how much social value Carers Support generates per pound invested into Carers Support.

## Carers Support making a difference



There are over **29,000** carers registered with our charity. This year saw an average of **433** carers registering a month, through referral from our professional network, or self-referral by the carer.

## Demographic breakdown of carers supported in West Sussex

### Sexual orientation of those who contacted our service



Straight / Heterosexual **7,292**,  
Gay / lesbian **103**,  
Bisexual **76**,  
Identified in another way **37**.

### Age range of carers in contact with Carers Support

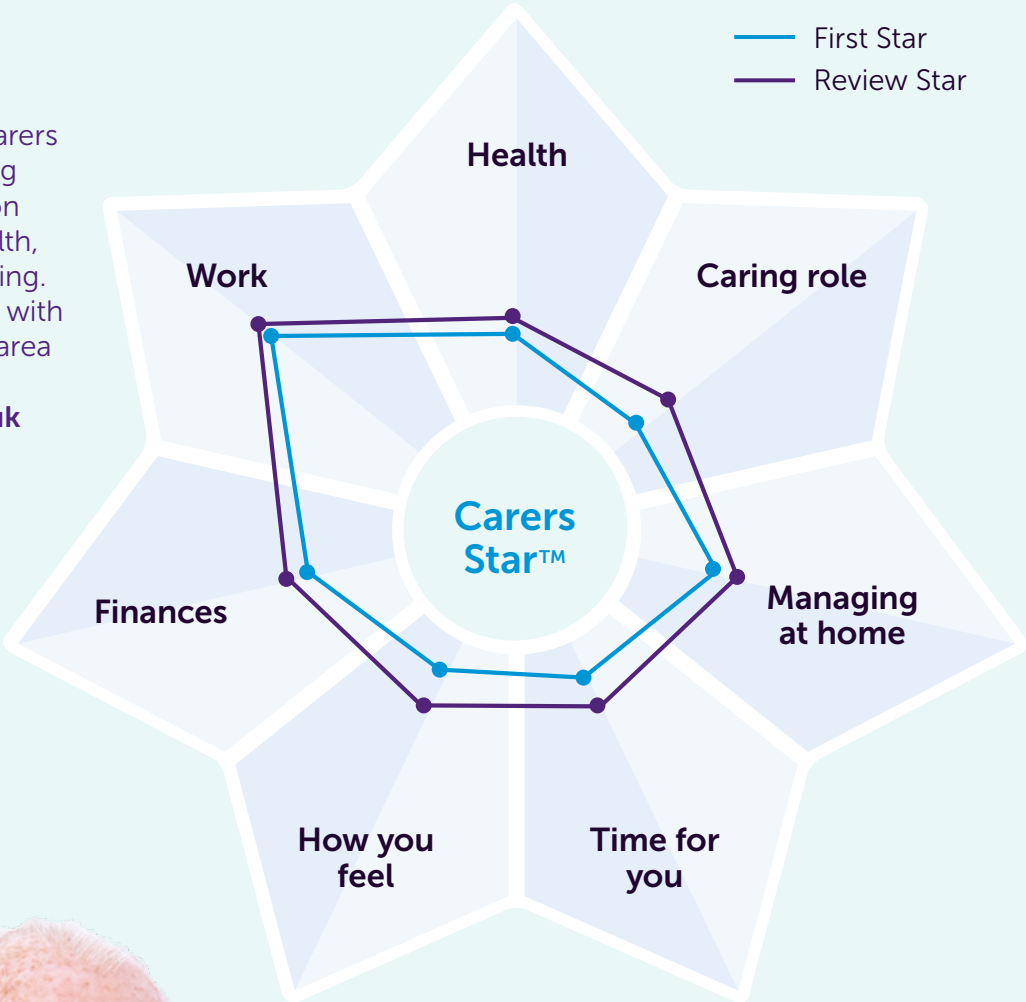


Young adult carers (18-24) **120**,  
Adult carers (25-44) **1,469**,  
Adult Carers (45-64) **3,376**,  
Older carers (65-80) **2,488**,  
Older carers (81+) **1119**.



Carers Star

The Carers Star™ is a framework which helps carers to explore how their caring role might be impacting on certain areas, such as health, work or how they are feeling. A personal plan is created with the carer to focus on the area they want to improve. [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)



There were **1,688** Carers Star conversations with carers, with **534 reviews** completed.

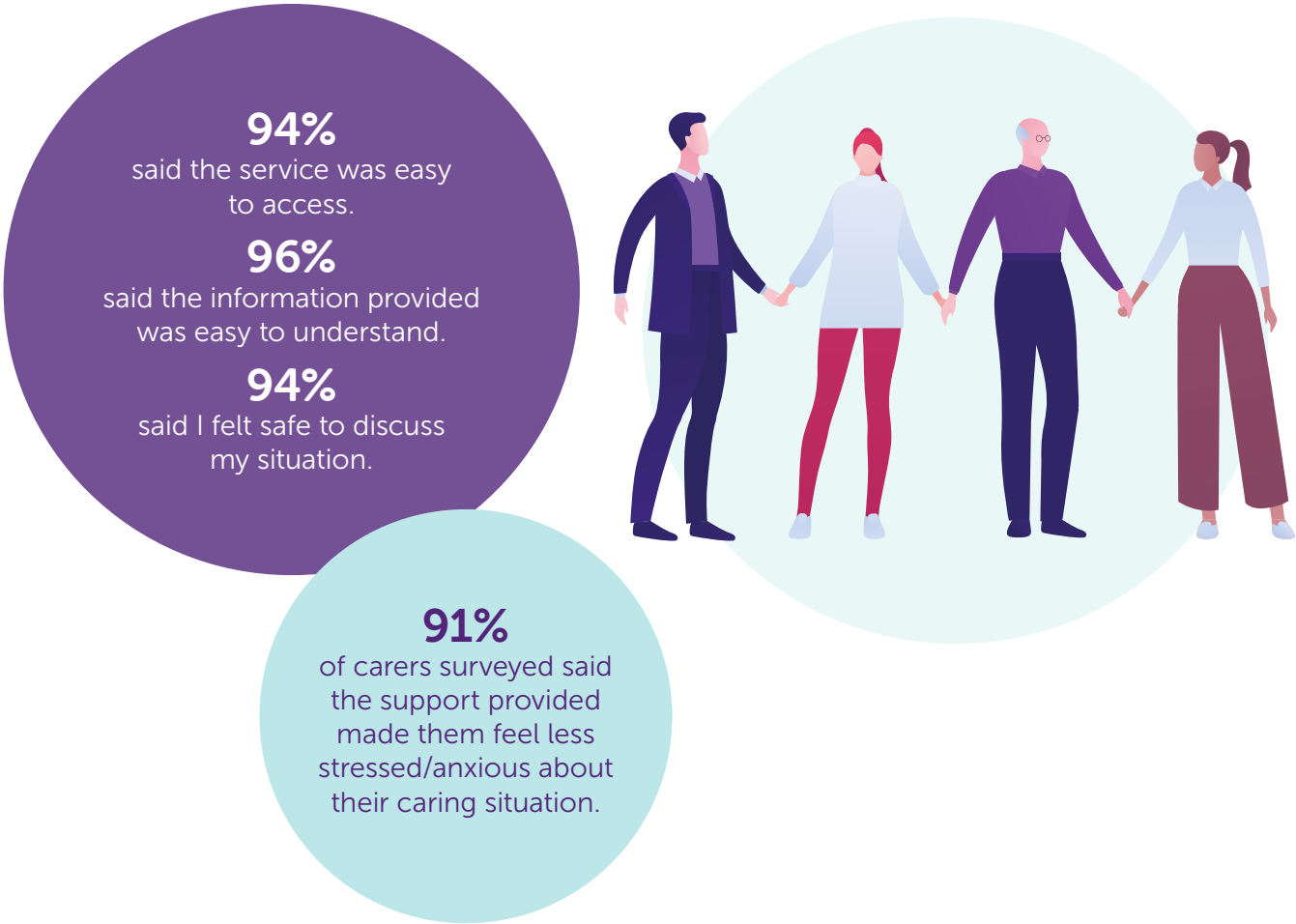
**86% of carers** who did the review reported an increased reading in at least 1 area of the Star and **68% carers** reported an increased reading in at least 2 areas of the Star.

Cared for condition

A breakdown of carers supporting people with specific conditions.

2,802	Dementia	229	Substance use issues, or other addiction/recovery issues
1,514	A mental health condition	4,060	A neurodevelopmental condition (e.g. autism, ADHD)
2,236	A physical disability	995	Frail/elderly needs
596	A learning disability	585	A sensory impairment
6,154	A long-term health condition	1,324	Parent carers of someone under 18 years

Carers Support making a difference





## Carer's assessment

We conducted **477 Statutory Assessments** with carers to ascertain how their caring role affected their life.

We completed a further **1,300 Light Touch Carer Wellbeing Reviews**, which looks to help carers recognise what would support them best in their own health and wellbeing.

**84% carers** who had a carers assessment said that the support provided has helped me to feel more able to continue in my caring role.

## Work with primary care partners

Carers Support was funded by the Integrated Care Board to work with primary care partners to improve how carers are identified and supported. Since project inception, 17 surgeries have been supported on a 1:1 basis to improve carer identification. 15 websites added links to Carers Support and in a survey of carers, 49% had noted an improvement from their GP surgery.

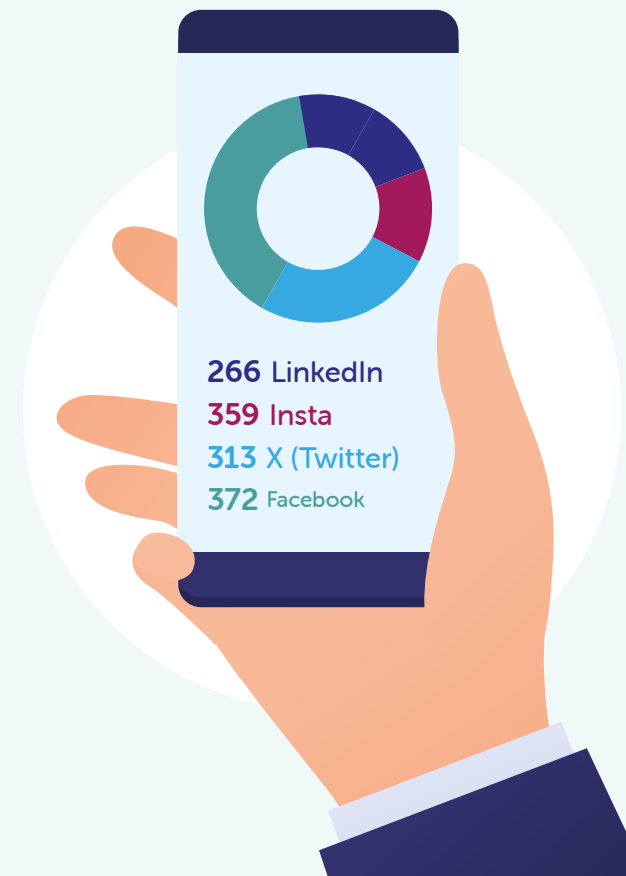
This work has resulted in a **95% referral increase** on year-on-year figures, which translates to an **extra 598 carers being supported**.



## Carers voice network

**52 active members** – aged 21 to 82 years old.

**These 52 members contributed to 18 carer related initiatives**, such as co-designing training, social worker recruitment, and participation in carer events.



## Supportive presence at every turn

Throughout the year, **110 emails** were sent to carers registered with Carers Support to keep them informed with the latest carer news.

In total **1,310 social posts**, were posted on our channels, containing content about Carers Support. There is regular sharing of partnership posts, giving information which would be helpful to carers.

We communicate, using a **monthly e-bulletin**, with **1,400 professional counterparts**, to keep them up to date with information on carer services.

## Winter campaign

For the 2023 Winter campaign, we worked in partnership with University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, The Carers Centre Brighton and Hove and Care for the Carers to reach carers throughout Sussex. **The aim was to increase take up of the winter vaccinations and increase awareness of contingency planning.**



## The campaign involved





# Benefits' advisors

## Financial support

Advising on  
**£1,660,998.35**  
additional annual welfare  
benefits that can be gained  
following an appointment with  
one of our benefits advisors.

The advisors were able to help  
carers claim what they were  
entitled to in their individual  
caring situation.

Carers Support  
awarded  
**£659,852.37**  
in various grants and  
fund to carers, broken  
down by the following:  
**Carer Health and Wellbeing Grant = £287,352.37**  
**Household Support Fund (Government funded) = £372,500**



## Help with mindfulness

Various studies have shown that **mindfulness**  
can help with **stress, anxiety and depression**.

Carers Support hosted  
**5 Mindfulness**  
**online courses**,  
which were attended by  
**59 carers**.

### Following the course:

**81%**  
said they felt  
optimistic about  
the future more  
often.

**75%**  
said they felt good  
about themselves  
more often.

**88%**  
carers said that  
they had  
benefited from  
the mindfulness  
practice.



“The value of the Mindfulness course was immeasurable. Just the regular weekly 2 hours commitment, and learning to practice the different support, the settling, grounding and breathing and discussions with other carers gave me time for myself and tools to manage my stress and anxiety, along with my caring responsibilities.”

Carer who attended the mindfulness course



**850** carers were  
helped to navigate the  
benefits system following  
support from one of our  
benefit advisors.



**94% carers**  
said the carer health and  
wellbeing grant helped  
them to participate in  
some activities / have  
some social life where  
that was their goal.

## Carer Emergency Card

The Carer Emergency Card provides a  
level of support during an emergency  
or accident. Those applying for the  
card are encouraged to make a  
contingency plan.

**1,379**  
cards were  
issued to  
carers.



# Managing own physical/mental health

The hospital service worked with 1,801 unique carers, implementing carer-led support and working with professionals to ensure carers were identified and supported during a hospital admission. Working with carers and professionals in the hospital setting supported safer discharges, reduced carer breakdown and helped to prevent avoidable readmission to hospitals.



**74% carers** felt supported to manage their caring role during and following a hospital stay.

“Because I had so much going on already in my own caring situation, I did initially think that I did not want to sign up to something where I hear about other people’s problems. However, the smaller group allowed everyone enough time to share their situation and gave a wider picture of what people deal with and how they cope. This allowed for more of a reflective conversation, rather than just offloading, and allowed each of us to learn from one another’s experiences.”

Female carer who attended an online coaching group

The carer equipment service provided 1,420 pieces of equipment to 1,078 carers to assist in their caring role, which equated to the value of **£55,838.48.**



**189 carers** were supported by our counselling service.



“Sometimes it means the WORLD to have a person out there that is on ‘your side’ when everything else seems against you.”

Susan, a carer who accessed our services

## Carer coaching

50 unique carers took part in a carer coaching pilot project which delivered over 50 hours of group coaching. The programme helped carers to redevelop positive self-belief, re-enforce resilience and recognise resourcefulness, whilst taking steps towards re-prioritising their own wellbeing.



**9 group coaching workshops,** 3 in-person and 6 online.

Additional Male Carer Coaching Focused workshops, **9 carers attended.**

### 49 carers attended

one of our taster sessions with 44 carers going on to attend one of the 5-week workshops. The themes included: **Setting Healthy Boundaries, Managing Stress, Time for You.**



“Had I not attended this course, I would not have thought about being kinder to myself.”

Male carer who attended a face-to-face coaching group



# Missing out on socialisation because of caring

## Peer-to-peer support

This year we hosted:

- 24 monthly groups for carers based within the community.
- 24 in-person wellbeing and social activities.
- 25 Carer Learning and Wellbeing Workshops
- 12 Carer Consultation Events.



“Carers Support is a compassionate organisation that looks at each carer’s needs holistically, tries to understand the needs and anxieties that they are carrying personally and consequently be totally supportive in a quiet and positive way. I am incredibly grateful, as I now know I can fearlessly share the burdens and uncertainties that I carry and I am so relieved. The life of a carer can otherwise be a very, very lonely and anxious journey.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your understanding of the need to be discreet about your support. Without this skill, I could not be involved and would be even more in need.”

Alice, a carer who accessed our services

“It made me feel happier and lighter, nice to discuss things which other people don’t understand.”

Gill, carer who attended a group

**All group events:**

Received **3,470** attendance by 1,108 unique carers.

**Carer Learning and Wellbeing:**

Achieved **687** attendances by 229 unique carers.

**Locality groups/events:**

Achieved **1,888** attendances by 815 unique carers.

**Specialist Groups:**

Achieved **851** attendances by 299 unique carers.

**Feedback from attending groups:**

**93%** said attending helped improve overall health and wellbeing.

**96%** said attending helped to reduced feelings of isolation.

## Check in and chat service

15,954 minutes on phone calls for the Check in and chat service, which supported 35 carers who were potentially feeling isolated due to their caring role.



“I found being able to talk to people who know what I’m going through, mentally and psychically when caring for a family member with dementia was a relief. Being listened to and not being ignored was a very grateful thing.

Knowing there is help out there, no matter what age you are, is a game changer when you are a carer. The feeling of isolation and loneliness can affect you more than you think with your well-being and mental health.

If I can say these words and it can help carers realise they aren’t alone, then I will be happy in that knowledge. Caring can be very challenging, but getting the help you need is very important. Be that chatting to another carer, or attending group sessions.”

Carer who accessed the Check in and chat service

<sup>i</sup>The CSWS data was cleansed during this year, which involved removing 5,000 out of date records. These included those who were no longer carers.

<sup>ii</sup> This number excluded Home after Hospital service

## How to keep in touch

Visit [www.carerssupport.org.uk](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk)  
Email [info@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:info@carerssupport.org.uk)  
Call **0300 028 8888**

Registered Charity No. 1123359  
Company No. 6418743

Follow our social media channels to stay up to date with wellbeing information and groups:



[facebook.com/CarersWSussex](https://facebook.com/CarersWSussex)



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