



CARERS FEEDBACK
ON
BRIDGEND CARERS CENTRE

February 2019

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

If you care for someone who is affected by cancer or other life limiting illnesses we can offer:

- One to one support
- Information
- Home visits
- Emotional support and listening
- Signposting for services
- Knowing your rights
- Health and well-being sessions
- Days out
- Advice and help with welfare benefits issues
- What you are entitled to and help applying.

For more information on our Macmillan support service please contact Paula Hall on 01656 658479 or email: macmillansupport@bridgendcarers.co.uk

WE OFFER A WIDE VARIETY OF TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES TO CARERS THROUGHOUT BRIDGEND. ACTIVITIES INCLUDE OUR COMMUNITY CAFE, BOOK CWTCH AND TAI CHI.

PRINCES OF WALES HOSPITAL SUPPORT WORKER

The aim of the service is to target Carers of patients at Princess of Wales Hospital, and hospital discharge and to ensure that they are given the right information at the right time to support them in their caring role.

For more information please contact Bridgend Carers Centre on 01656 658479 or contact Lindsey on 017876 872235.

YOUNG ADULT CARERS

R.O.O.T.S
Recognising Our Opportunities To Succeed
We support Young Adult Carers in Education and Employment.

COMMUNITY CAFE FOR CARERS & CARED FOR

Friendly fun weekly group sessions offering you a chance to meet up with other carers and learn new skills. Each week we cover different topics such as:

- Cooking
- Crafts
- Armchair exercises
- Gardening
- Plus much more!

CARERS CARD

If you were unable to provide your usual care due to an emergency, you (or someone on your behalf) could call the control centre, who would then put measures in place to ensure the safety and welfare of the person you care for.

Get your carers card today FREE!



BRIDGEND CARERS CENTRE

- One to one support
- Information
- Training
- Emotional support & listening
- Exercise including walks & Tai Chi
- Carers Assessments
- Carers counselling
- Carers events
- Carers Advice
- Carers Care

3 CARERS LINK WORKERS

Identifying HIDDEN CARERS at GPs

AVAILABLE IN ALL SURGERIES ACROSS BRIDGEND COUNTY

- Carers information sessions
- One to one advice at all GP Surgeries
- Offering training to GPs to help them become more carer aware and identify which of their patients are carers

YOUNG CARERS EDUCATION PROJECT

We support young aged 5 to 25 through and group work in schools. We provide education and resources to ensure necessary skills and resources to manage their education.

BRIDGEND CARERS CENTRE OFFERS A RANGE OF SERVICES INCLUDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP CARERS IN THEIR

Contact Keeping in touch with carers

- Special Points of Interest:
- Theatre Trip
 - Parent Carer Group
 - Community Café
 - Carers Link Workers
 - Parent Carer Training
 - Young Adult Carer Group
 - Songs from the Musicals Evening
 - Prostate Cymru Talk
 - Gwili Railway Visit

Million £ Benefits Carers in Bridgend
Paul Daley has been in post since 2014 and has supported many carers to maximise their income. He has helped them improve physical and mental health and sustain their caring role. Many carers have had to leave work and their income has been decreased and their child with a disability. This month has seen Paul achieve a record for carers in Bridgend County Borough. This staggering amount has made carers.

'I don't know how I would have managed if it hadn't been for you encouraging me to appeal the decision. Many thanks for the fabulous support.'

Over the past few months Paul has been asking for support with an appeal. Paul will give them the chance to represent themselves. Because of the sheer amount of decisions, the current wait is 15 minutes, invariably 15 minutes, invariably 15 minutes. Well done Paul! Remember we are here to support you in your caring role.

Bridgend Carers Centre
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www.bridgendcarers.co.uk
Find us on Facebook

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01656 658479

Are you a carer?

Do you look after someone?
Do you worry about leaving that person on their own?
Does someone need your help with personal care, washing and dressing?
Do you never have enough time for yourself?
Do you help them with shopping, cleaning or cooking?
Are you concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of someone?

If you answer YES to any of these questions, then YOU are a carer.

We support people caring for others.

Carers Link Worker Service

Identifying Hidden Carers in GP Surgeries

Emergency Carers Card

I am a Carer. Someone depends on me.
IN AN EMERGENCY, please ring the number on the front of this card IMMEDIATELY, and quote the ID reference:

YOUNG CARERS IN SCHOOLS

Young Carers in Schools Project Termly Newsletter

- In this issue:
- Carers Rights Day
 - Achievements
 - Young Carers Awareness Day

As you all know the young carers schools project started in September 2017. Since then there has been an increase in the support provided by schools for young carers. This will make a huge difference to the attendance and attainment. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support so far you have a lovely Christmas break.

Big Lottery Funds Schools Project

Bridgend Carers Centre have been lucky enough to receive three years funding from the Big Lottery to continue the work with schools. This means we are now able to expand the project and make it even bigger and better! This funding will employ another member of staff to support the project as well as develop a Young Carers Schools Award that can be used to go above and beyond to support young carers. More information about the award will be given early next year.

What has the project been doing?

- Since September 2018, we have been providing a lot of one to one support to young carers in schools. This term we provided one to one support to young carers in:
- Bryntrion Comprehensive School
 - Brynag Comprehensive School
 - YCG Llanywdd
 - Maesteg Comprehensive School
 - Bridgend College

We were invited to attend Bridgend College Freshers Fayre where we gave out lots of information and spoke to a lot of students.

CARERS RIGHTS DAY
Friday 30th November was Carers Rights Day. This year's theme was 'Caring for My Future' which fits in really well with the importance of supporting young carers in school. Penrised Comprehensive School were kind enough to invite us in to hold a workshop with their highly attended Young Carers Group. We looked at their right to an education, to a social life and to a future as well as learning some mindfulness and relaxation techniques.

Welsh Young Carers Council

Four young carers from Bridgend have been elected to sit on the Welsh Young Carers Council. In addition to this, Oliver Davies, from Bryntrion Comprehensive School was chosen to represent the Young Carers of Wales as a member of the Welsh Youth Parliament.

YOUNG CARERS AWARENESS DAY

Young Carers Awareness Day was held on Thursday 31st November. Next year's theme is 'We are all carers too'. We were very lucky to have a group of young carers from Penrised Comprehensive School who came to the event.

We held a 10 week, after school, mindfulness group in Bridgend Carers Centre which was attended by pupils from Bryntrion Comprehensive School, Penrised Comprehensive School, YCG Llanywdd and Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School. Young Carers commented that it taught them useful techniques they can use to manage their caring role more effectively.

In our summer newsletter we told you about the young carers in Bridgend. The aim of the newsletter was to give you an insight into what it is like to be a young carer and so we gave every primary school in the area a copy. We were thrilled when we were contacted by The Valleys Library who had purchased 110 books so they too could give a copy to the children in their care. We are so glad to see the message of young carers.

A big thank you to all of the schools who have made a difference to the lives, achievements and aspirations of young carers. To get involved contact us on 01656 658479

ACTIVITY FEEDBACK

Life Coaching

'It has been a really positive experience. As a Carer I have certainly had my ups and downs and focussing on my future and personal plans for myself have at times seemed unreasonable. Life coaching hasn't changed my circumstances but it has given me time and allowed me the head space to think about what I want and need. It has been terrific to have the sessions at the Carers Centre where I always feel welcomed and understood. Julia Davies was professional, warm, encouraging and open and I felt comfortable in her company to explore options and ideas. I am really grateful for the chance to have these sessions and would recommend them to other Carers.'

Julia is professional and patient, her coaching has enabled me to reorient my life around my values and establish boundaries that support me. Julia has taught me to process the problems and challenging periods, create clarity on what I really want in my life. - how to identify situations that I cannot change and how to deal with them.

'I have just completed a six week Life Coaching Course with Julia at The Carers Centre Bridgend. This course has been so beneficial to me personally and as a carer.'

Counselling

'Overall an incredible positive experience in a safe environment to discuss feelings and enable me to carry on caring and to carry on.'

Great to be able to talk about your problems with somebody that will listen to you.

'It has been helpful with dealing with my issues and being able to talk to someone who doesn't know me and talk about how I feel, without being judged.'

'Helpful, reassuring, validating, through to provoking, challenging, tiring and uplifting.'

'Helpful, because I am now feeling more comfortable talking about my problems than I was in the beginning.'

Yoga

'In the six weeks I have been coming there has been a great improvement in my stress levels. I use my breathing outside of the class to help with everyday life.'

Love the friendliness of the class. I never felt I was the outsider when I started a few weeks ago. Being in a group has given me a lot of confidence.

'I am sleeping much better.'

'The muscles in my back are loosening. I noticed when I didn't come last week, how much yoga benefits me.'

'Looking forward to the Retreat, wonderful to be given the opportunity to have that offered. The Centre is very forward thinking for us.'

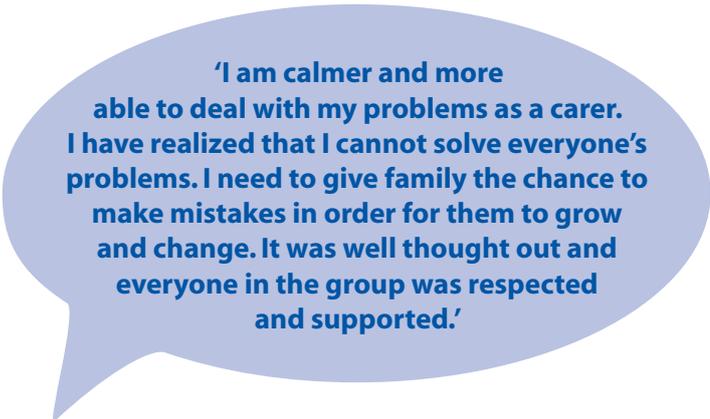
Mindfulness

'I feel calm and more relaxed. I feel better equipped to put problems into perspective and deal with issues as they arise. I feel privileged to have been part of such a supportive environment and am grateful to the Carers Centre for giving me the opportunity to take part.'

'This helps me to learn techniques to decrease my stress, and I can use them every day, wherever I am.'



'Calming of thoughts which were previously chaotic. Enjoyed the course and looked forward each week to coming.'



'I am calmer and more able to deal with my problems as a carer. I have realized that I cannot solve everyone's problems. I need to give family the chance to make mistakes in order for them to grow and change. It was well thought out and everyone in the group was respected and supported.'

'Being able not to react to unpleasant events but respond and breath to be calmer and take control of the thoughts and emotions. This has helped me with dealing with my partner with his problems after his stroke. Gareth has been an asset in this course with teaching me. He has explained a lot and made me realise that I need to be more mindful in my life.'

Holistic Therapies

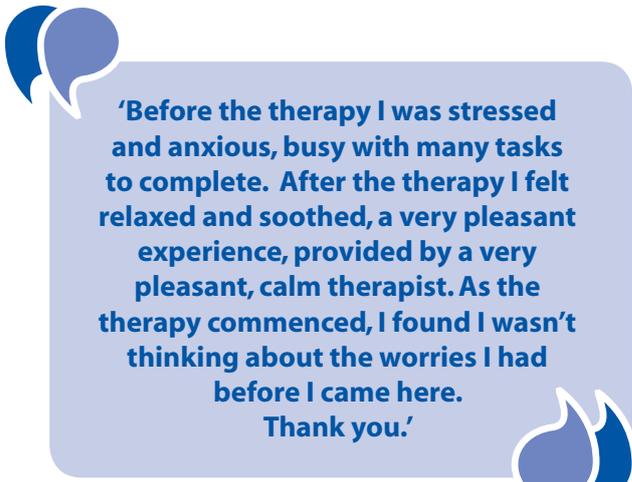
'Amazing, I felt so much better.'

'Very calming and relaxing and now I feel ready to face the day.'

'Before, I had a stiff back. After the therapy I felt relaxed and back feels so much better, fantastic service.'

'I felt anxious and up-tight before ... amazing, I felt so much better.'

'Felt OK beforehand less stressed and comfortable.'



'Before the therapy I was stressed and anxious, busy with many tasks to complete. After the therapy I felt relaxed and soothed, a very pleasant experience, provided by a very pleasant, calm therapist. As the therapy commenced, I found I wasn't thinking about the worries I had before I came here. Thank you.'



'For once, I felt like I was being looked after for a change, thank you, thank you thank you.'

'I was anxious and stressed before the treatment, I felt a weight has been lifted from my shoulders.'

'Before I was anxious and stressed. After I felt very relaxed and really enjoyed it, was amazing and thank you for offering me this service.'



SUPPORTING PARENT CARERS

Davina Marsland

Interview with a carer:-

Bridgend Carers Centre supports carers throughout the county. Carers Wellbeing Worker, Davina Marsland works with and supports parent carers who have children with additional needs, or disabilities, up to the age of 19 yrs.

Davina has been supporting C, whose 14 year old daughter M has autism. M was diagnosed at four years old and attends Heronsbridge School. Here C tells us about her caring role and what the Centre means to her.

C says, 'M loves swimming, going on the trampoline, doing puzzles and all arts and crafts. However, because she has autism I need to have a very structured routine. M needs prompting and supporting to complete most tasks such as brushing her teeth and getting dressed'.

How did you find out about Bridgend Carers Centre?

I picked up a leaflet in the GP and rang the Centre. I was a little lost at the time. Davina met me for a coffee. We talked about my caring role and what my needs were as a carer. Davina just listened to me and encouraged me to meet other parents at the parent carer group which is held every month.

How has it helped?

It has helped me massively. I have met new friends and it helps you feel like you're not on your own. Over the past three years I have been on theatre trips, attended the parent carer group regularly, had therapies, supported fundraising events and been awarded a grant for a night away. It's just so reassuring to know that there are staff there at Bridgend Carers Centre who understand and will take time to listen when things get tough.

What would you say to a carer who is thinking of ringing the Centre?

Just push yourself forward and join. They are there to help carers. The Carers Centre has been an absolute godsend for me.

Maesteg Special Families Parent Carer Group

'Relaxing treatments and exercise classes.
Excellent.'

'Relaxing, time for me. Really enjoyed this
time to myself, was brilliant'

'Total, relaxed, enjoyed a wonderful day,
very much appreciated'

'To socialise and join a group of lovely like-minded
people/carers. Had a good laugh. Thank you so
much for a lovely day. Loved willow weaving.'

Parent Carers Health Day and Lunch

'Relaxing , beautiful lunch and relaxing day.
Thank you'

'Got to chill, got to swim, catch up with
other parent carers and also treated to
lunch too. Thoroughly enjoyed it.
Davina is always fab to us all.'

Princess of Wales Hospital Integrated Carers Support – Lindsey Woosnam

Case Study 1

Referral received from Ward 4 Princes of Wales Hospital re Carers Assessment for LD caring for his mother LP who has cancer and is under the Palliative team.

LD shared in his Carers assessment that his mother is being fast tracked and under Continuing Health Care Funding. LD said that his mother will require 24 hour care at home and that he has no family/social network to provide respite. LD advised that there will be a package of care under the NHS of three calls a day but that there is no respite during the night. LD was concerned that his mother needed constant turning /reassurance through the night and he wasn't sleeping at present. LD stated that although it was his best hope to have his mother home to die in her own surroundings, he was worried about how he would manage physically and emotionally.

LD felt he was socially isolated, as he is no longer able to access "what matters too him" such as attending the gym. LD also stated that he has been suffering carer strain and was due to see Mental Health Services in a few weeks' time but has had to cancel two appointments. LD advised he will have to cancel his upcoming appointment due to his caring role for his mother.

LD raised he is ex Army and that he is currently on paid leave but is concerned re Employment and if he has to give up work how he will manage financially. LD also stated he is living in his mother's property and is concerned as he will be homeless after his mother is deceased.

Outcome

The Carers Support Worker referred LD to Macmillan Benefits worker re entitlement to benefits. LD advised to contact ACAS and also signposted to Shelter drop in at Pyle Life Centre re legal rights re housing. LD referred to Saffa re emotional support.

Carers Support Worker also advised of Counselling Service at Bridgend Carers Centre and after care support, as LD raised issues of how he would cope after his mother died.

LD advised to discuss concerns re night time care of mother with District Nurse he was meeting that day and Carers Support Worker also advised that they would raise this concern re respite at Night with Social Services at the Hospital/ LD appointment with Mental Health Services/ being able to have a break.

Carers Support Worker kept closely in contact with LD through the next couple of weeks. LD advised after his meeting with the District Nurse that he would be referred to Marie Curie Services re Night sits, but this would be dependent on their capacity.

Carers Support Worker again raised this issue with Social Services who advised that LD could be referred to them re this potential unmet need.

LD advised although he feared the road ahead, he was very thankful to the Carers Support Worker for being 'consistent' and giving him accurate information and communicating with the agencies involved about his Carer Needs.

Case Study 3

Referral received from Carers Centre staff for a carer (RC) who carers for his brother who has been taken into intensive care with kidney failure.

In RC Carers Assessment he advised that his brother was morbidly obese, and had complications linked to these issues (breathing and mobility issues) .

RC advised that his brother had been admitted to hospital 10 times in the last year. RC felt he would not be able to assist brother out of bed or with any of his personal care. RC said brother was currently managing but had concerns with his future care.

Carers Support Worker was able to pass RC's concerns to the Ward. The Ward advised that as RC's brother had capacity to make this decision (they had been offered support at home) but brother had refused a package of care from the hospital, which had caused RC considerable distress.

RC stated that his caring role involved assisting his brother in shopping/ cleaning his brothers property/ and managing his brothers bills and prompting to address personal care.

RC stated that he had been in an accident in work, which left RC with restricted movement.

Carers Support Worker discussed with RC how he would manage his brother's refusal to accept support with his care. RC said that he was struggling greatly to accept this.

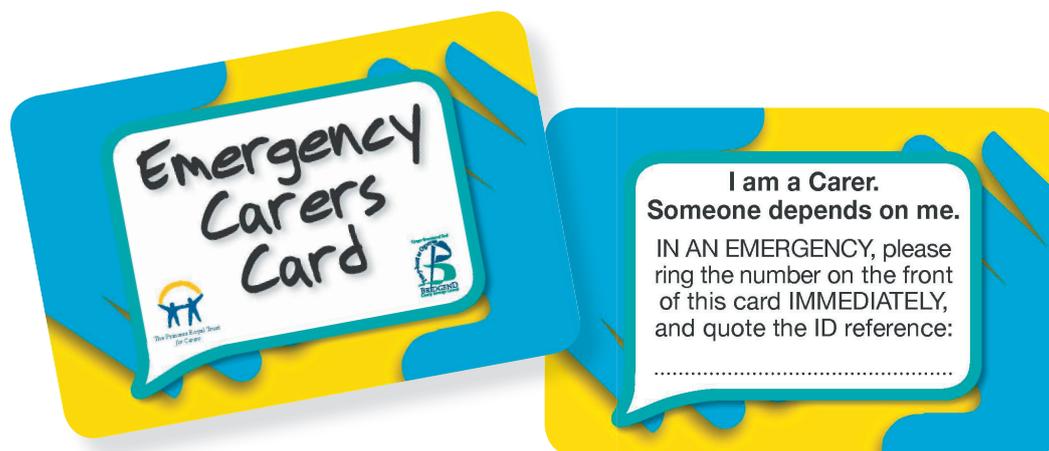
Referral was made to Social Care and Recovery Team(SCART) for RC to get support with his mental health. Discussed Anticipatory Care plans with RC in that if his brother changed his mind and wanted an intervention.

Carers Emergency Card applied for and RC signposted to Carers Centre for support. RC felt reassured, that even though his brother didn't want assistance at the moment, if anything were to happen to RC, the local authority would be aware he was a Carer.

RC advised although the situation with his brother remained unchanged, knowing where to access emotional / practical support and having the Carers Centre to support did ease the carer strain.



Emergency Cards - 918 cards issued



Over a £Million for Carers in Bridgend Welfare Benefits Advisor - Paul Daley

Case Example 1

The Welfare Benefits Adviser applied for DLA for Mrs T's child and was successful in getting the high rate care component and low mobility rate. The mobility component award seemed wrong given the severity of the child's behavioural issues and a reconsideration was submitted.

This was refused and an appeal was made.

The tribunal agreed with our contentions and Mrs T's evidence and the high rate mobility component was awarded with a 6 month backdate.

A blue speech bubble containing a testimonial from a carer.

'Staff were compassionate, caring & sympathetic. I did not know that I could apply for help looking after my father's welfare.'

Case Example 2

Mrs G was previously in receipt of DLA but had to transfer to Personal Independence Payments.

After completing the application and medical assessment, she failed to amass enough points for any component of PIP.

A review proved to be fruitless and so an appeal was lodged.

Mrs G's mental condition was so fragile that she could not countenance attending an appeal.

The only option was to submit a written appeal submission, which have a tendency to be less successful. However, this time it was successful and Mrs G was awarded standard mobility and standard care which she was happy with.

Case Example 3

Mr S lives alone and started to show visible signs of physical and mental deterioration, which alarmed and alerted his immediate family.

An initial claim for PIP was declined, likewise a mandatory reconsideration.

When the question of appeal came up Mr S seemed too frail to attend a hearing. In this case we can submit a 'paper hearing' request where the panel decide on documentation and a prepared submission from the Carers Centre.

After deliberation, the panel found in Mr S' favour and awarded standard day and mobility component which means an extra £72 p/w.

This shows that you have to persevere when it comes to negative decisions and (where applicable) challenge them with appropriate advice.

Macmillan Family Information & Support Service – Paula Hall

Avril Bredenkamp - Testimony Enquiry into Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014

Hello, my name is Avril Bredenkamp, I am 43 and live in Bridgend. I would just like to start by sharing my experiences with the Carers Centre in Bridgend.

**I strongly feel
that without the carers centre,
I would be a very different
lady today.**

I didn't think of myself as a carer as it was my husband I was looking after/helping. Not until everything else that I used to do stopped and my world became very small and all about someone else, did I truly feel like a carer. It is something you naturally do but it swallows you up and leaves you lifeless and forgetting who you are. I was not aware of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and also did not initially class myself as a carer.

When my late husband was diagnosed with cancer we were not given any direction or support. We rang the Macmillan helpline from the carrier bag which was received when collecting his medication from the pharmacy. Although there was a very nice lady on the end of the phone, she apologised and told me that there were no support workers in my area for me to meet. However, she advised that I could call the helpline any time. This was not what I needed, at that time.

I then muddled through for months. At this point my husband's condition was well. However, his and my mental state was being tested as we knew this was terminal. Many months passed with me frequently calling on friends for support as the demands on me grew. Not so much physically, but mentally. I was lost and had to deal with my dying husband's anger, towards the cards that he had been dealt.

One day, after crying in a driveway opposite the carers centre, I called in and asked if I could clean my tears up before continuing into town. That was a bad day, but, also a very good one. The staff were instantly warm and friendly, kind and interested in why I would be so sad. On telling them all of the above alongside many other things, they were very disappointed that I had not been given direction to them through Macmillan. They listened and told me of their services and made me aware that I am a carer as well as a wife and a mother. The carers centre identified that I would benefit from some counselling and a space where I could just go to, sit or talk.

Following that day, I had a meeting with Paula, who's support was invaluable. I was then given a counsellor. I was anxious, sad and grieving. I feel like in my case alone, the carers centre saved the local authority money in GP appointments and medication.

The support I received from the carer's centre meant that I was able to support my two children through a very difficult time. I was able to support them through the death of their step-father, my grief, GCSEs and A-Levels. They have both now gone to university to become a doctor and a dentist. This may not have happened if their mother was not in a fit state of mind to guide them. This again, is all down to the carer's centre. Both my children are so very grateful to the support that the carer's centre gave me.

I resumed my work just 6 months after the death of my late husband and I am a serving firefighter, giving back to society and the economy. This is down to the support I had from the carer's centre. I can honestly say I was a broken person and all I became was a carer and a verbal punch bag for somebody that I loved. If it wasn't for this centre, I am sure that I would still be broken and not living and loving my life as a new improved me. Please support this centre. I needed them. I was lucky enough to have lots of supportive friends but I still needed the centre.

**If it wasn't for this centre,
I am sure that I would still
be broken and not living
and loving my life as a new
improved me.**

Thank you for reading my testimonial. I hope you can appreciate the outstanding work that everyone at the carer's centre provides.

Case Study 1

JP has been known to us for some time as she carers for her 13 year old son with learning disabilities which puts extreme pressure on her and his elder sibling who is 17 years. J is a lone parent.

Previous support has ranged from a break to Butlins for her and her Dad to go on a short holiday to give the whole family break through to a Carers Trust to give driving lessons to the elder sibling as he is classed as a Young Carer.

Recently J's Dad was diagnosed with stomach cancer and Macmillan Family Information and Support Worker became involved. PH gave emotion support and accompanied her to a consultant appointment to take notes as J found it difficult to concentrate and absorb this awful news.

During this time the Centre had accessed a grant for a Pamper Experience at the Towers Hotel for those carers experiencing extreme stress and crisis. Many parents of children with disabilities were identified and J was one of a group 12 carers who benefited.

PH visited her at home and supported both J and her Dad speaking at length regarding emotional support, Macmillan grants, Macmillan Welfare Benefits Support and counselling. Dad's main concern was that PH supported J throughout this time and after his passing.

After listening to J's Dad his one last wish was that they could have a family weekend in Western Supermare as they had spent many a happy holiday there together. He had a wish to have fish and chips on the pier with J and her 2 sisters and brother. J made respite arrangements for her son to enable her to go.

PH also supported J to visit Dad at Y Bwythin Newydd where he eventually passed away with J at his side.

Throughout all this time J has had support over the telephone and through Drop Ins and events organised through the Centre. However she has always been keen to support the Centre too and has often donated gifts and done crafts to raise money for the Centre.

J has been offered bereavement counselling. She has lost her Dad but also her main family support to her and her sons.

Case Study 2

I am sole carer for my husband who has terminal prostate cancer. Because of the stress of caring for him I was diagnosed with acute anxiety and clinical depression, I was lonely and frightened.

Because I have no family support I contacted Bridgend Carers Centre in Bridgend for advice. Paula immediately arranged for me to have counselling with Lyn Thomas Macmillan Relate who helped me enormously. Paula then arranged courses for me to attend i.e. Looking after myself, where I met ladies in the same situation as myself. Four of us have bonded and meet regularly we support each other.

In June my husband was taken seriously ill whilst on holiday in Spain. On our return home, I was concerned that if I should become unwell who would care for my husband.

Paula arranged an Emergency Carers card which I carry at all times. Social Services then contacted me ensuring me that in the event of an emergency they will help me.

A blue speech bubble containing a testimonial quote.

'Without the help, advice and support from Paula, Steve, Davina and staff at Carers Bridgend I could not have coped they are a comfort blanket that are always there for me.'

Carers Links – GPs and 3 Cluster Teams

Rhiannon Bowden, Laura Austin & Bev Jones

Good Practice with GP's - Laura Austin

- One practice has sent me a steady stream of referrals, ensuring that the carers are getting the advice and support that they may need.
- A number of the practices have allowed me to come in for a drop-in and offered me a room if anyone wanted to talk privately.
- I have been invited to talk in one of the surgeries when they hold medical evenings from March 2019.
- My posters are on the walls in all surgeries in my area and also the TV screens - this has generated phone enquiries from carers.
- Identifying considerable numbers of carers from Flu Clinics.
- Additional visits to pharmacies to deliver information.
- Signposting carers for:-

Carers assessments	Anticipatory Care Plans	Carers Emergency Cards
Welfare Benefits Advice	Carers Counselling	To other organisations for specific support.

Case Study 1

I received a referral from a GP's practice for Mrs X who cares for her daughter who is living with learning disabilities and epilepsy. The reason Mrs X was referred on to me was because she was feeling very worried about her daughter's future who wouldn't be able to manage living independently. Mrs X was feeling very isolated from people. After meeting with Mrs X and her daughter we came to the conclusion we could put a contingency care plan in place and this would give some piece of mind as it would allow both Mrs X and her daughter to share the wishes they had for the future.

I spoke to Mrs X about coming to the Carers Centre Community Café as she felt isolated and lonely, and she explained she didn't know how to get there and didn't have access to a car only a bus. I offered to meet Mrs X at Bridgend bus station and walk to the Carers Centre with her. Mrs X was very keen to do this and we met the following week. I stayed in the Community Café with Mrs X. It didn't take long for her to introduce herself to others attending the café. When walking back to the bus station with Mrs X, she was really pleased and thankful that she went to Café and has begun to create a new network of friends and support.

Case Study 2

Mrs D rang the social worker for her husband, she was at the end of her tether. I called her and arranged to meet her at the Carers Centre for a coffee at the Community Café. After speaking with her I put her on the list for Carers Counselling.

Carers Link Worker - West Bev Jones

'When you first make contact with me, I was thinking here we go again, someone calling and asking more questions, so I was a little anxious.'

'When you arrived, I was very emotional hadn't slept the night before, even the smallest of things seemed out of control. You offered to call at another time, but we went ahead as arranged. Your advice and support made me feel valued as a carer, and helped me understand that my feelings were perfectly normal for someone under such pressure. By the time you left, J was a different man, we both felt we could cope with support. Thank you.'

'What a breath of fresh air you are, you have been so considerate and understanding.'

'Are you able to call again as you have such a calming manner, thank you, have made my day just by talking to you.'

'Thank you for making me feel so relaxed when talking to you, have been so helpful and have given me a chance to consider my needs, when every else has talked about my husband. I had no idea that there was support out there for me as a wife and a carer.'

Carers Link Worker - East Rhiannon Bowden

Having spoken to a gentleman carer about his situation his parting words were 'Thank you for existing'

Mr H - 'Thank you so much for listening.'

'It's lovely to be able to talk to someone who knows what the situation is. It's difficult to speak to other services.'

Mrs F - 'I feel so isolated and don't get much chance to talk to anyone, I really appreciate you listening.'

Mrs J - 'We've never had anything to do with social care or help in anyway. I'm so grateful for your help.'

Good news

Mrs S had her mother in law sleeping on her settee. GP referral and signposted to Care and Repair. Mum is now at home.

Mrs S has dementia. Rehoused her dog for her to join her husband in a care home

Miss W was signposted to Sycamore services. 'Great to be reminded of my goals and I'm getting round to making a doctor's appointment!'

'I have been in contact with the centre and had more help and support within a week than I have in 10 years. Thank you.'

What carers thought about carers assessments

'Wonderful caring advice given.'

'Didn't realise how many support services there are to help carers'

'It's good to know that there is help when I need it.'

'Feel relief. Been keeping stuff inside for so long.'

'Amazing - never thought so much support available.'

'Knowing that there is a service available with help and support if needed.'

'The interviewer was top class.'

'Knowing that I may find help and respite.'

'Fantastic - easy to talk to.'

'Someone taking the time to explain and listen.'

'It was lovely to have someone listen to my concerns and problems with no judgement.'

'An exceptional, professional objective perspective.'

'Clarifying and identifying aspects of my carers role. I may not have thought of myself, and signposting to other services.'

'Couldn't have done it on my own.'

Young Carers Education Project Manager Rhian Bennett

The Young Carers Education Project

In November 2018, Bridgend Carers Centre was successful in receiving funding from Big Lottery Community Fund to run a three year Young Carers in Schools Project. This allows us to expand the current work we are doing with schools through the ROOTS project and ICF Funding. The Young Carers Education Project will allow us to work with Young Carers aged 5 – 25 to support them in managing their caring role alongside their education or employment. We will provide one to one and group support and support primary and secondary schools to achieve a Young Carer Friendly Award. This award will mirror the Carer Friendly Award we will support GPs to achieve, building overall recognition and support for carers of all ages in Bridgend.



The ROOTS/ Young Carers in Schools Project

The ROOTS Project is funded through the Waterloo Foundation and the Young Carers in Schools Project is funded through ICF. By putting both lots of funding together, from September 2017, we have been able to support young carers to stay engaged in their education or employment and worked with schools to help them better support young carers. As a result we have:

- Identified Young Carers Champions in all nine comprehensive schools
- Supported 5 comprehensive schools to start an in-school young carers support group
- Delivered assemblies or PSE raising awareness sessions in 7 comprehensive schools and 7 Primary Schools
- Delivered one to one support to 57 young carers aged 5 – 25
- Delivered 3 training opportunities to 26 young adult carers. Training opportunities included Adverse Childhood Experiences where 7 YACs attended. 11 attended Anxiety and Stress Management training and 8 attended an in-school 5 week emotional well-being workshop
- We have also delivered a mindfulness course to 10 young carers aged 7 – 13
- Strong links have been made with Bridgend Job Centre and Careers Wales



Young Adult Carers Group

- We run a monthly Young Adult Carers Group for those aged 16 – 25
- We have been able to take our Young Adult Carers on trips that they may never have experienced without the service. We have visited Harry Potter Studios, Longleat, Cadbury World, London, Cheddar Gorge and Nottingham. We have also offered activities such as gorge walking, go karting, theatre trips, spa days, quad biking, cinema, bowling, surfing, abseiling and coasteering
- We have delivered a wide range of training opportunities including Communication Skills, Peer Mentoring, Public Speaking, Self Defence, Knowing your Rights, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and First Aid.

Our achievements

- We have four young carers sitting on the Welsh Young Carers Council
- One of our young carers sits on the Welsh Youth Parliament representing the views of young carers across Wales
- In May 2018, we launched a young carers book 'The Bear Who Struggled to Care' which was written by young carers in Bridgend to raise awareness of young carers issues. Every primary school in Bridgend has a copy of the book. Books have also been purchased by The Vale of Glamorgan Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff Council and is now in every primary school in their local authority. Caerphilly council purchased 30 books to be placed in their libraries. We have now sold over 300 copies of the book across Wales, England, Scotland and Germany. The money raised from the book goes to support young carers in Bridgend
- Two of our Young Adult Carers were part of Carers Trust Programme Guiders where they met with other Young Carers regularly over a two year period to assess applications made by Carers Trust partners
- One of our Young Adult Carers was previously elected as the Deputy Youth Mayor of Bridgend
- One of our Young Adult Carers sat on the British and Irish Parliamentary Assembly and shared the views of Young Carers to influence services across the UK
- Many of our Young Adult Carers have received awards such as Youth of the Year Award, Young Volunteer of the Year Award, Young Carer of the Year Award and the High Sheriff Award
- The Young Adult Carers Group was instrumental in campaigning for a Young Carers ID Card to be delivered in Bridgend. Bridgend County Borough Council listened to this request and now a Young Carers ID Card is recognised in schools





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