



ANNUAL REVIEW April 2020- March 2021

The Princess Royal Trust Borders Carers Centre
known as The Borders Carers Centre



IF SOMEONE RELIES ON YOU -

THIS YEAR WE COPEd WITH COVID - AND *EVERYONE* CAREd

04.2020 - 03.2021

Caring for Carers in the Scottish Borders

The Borders Carers Centre is an independent expert charity dedicated to supporting young adult and adult carers in the Scottish Borders since 1995. Through engagement in a Carers Support Plan, carers are recognised, enabled and sustained in their caring role, as well as supported to have a life outside caring. In addition to emotional and practical help, the Carers Centre offers intensive support whilst going through hospital admissions, discharge and palliative care and beyond, as well as access to support groups, workshops, funding, counselling, therapies, respite, and advocacy. Carers tell us repeatedly that our holistic approach, which places carers at the centre of everything we do, really does make a positive difference to their lives. We hope that this year, if nothing else, has proven that we will always strive to continue to deliver a robust service, even when faced with enormous challenges and that we firmly believe in the importance of recognising, listening to and valuing all carers throughout the Scottish Borders.

WELCOME to the 2020-2021 Annual Report

and Chair's comments. I did not imagine whilst writing my report last year that the Covid19 pandemic would continue to have such a huge impact on all our lives a year later. Here at the Borders Carers Centre, because of that pandemic, we have been busier than ever. The stresses and challenges facing unpaid carers have never been as great and we recognise the huge impact this is having on the mental health and well-being of carers throughout the Scottish Borders. As an organisation we are committed, now more than ever, to ensuring that the needs of unpaid carers are recognised and prioritised, particularly at this time when so many have been coping with the demands of heavy caring roles without breaks or respite.

The pandemic has undoubtedly been a difficult time for many and I and the Board of Trustees would like to pay particular tribute to the hard work and dedication of our staff and manager throughout and their continued commitment and dedication to supporting carers. All have gone above and beyond and have continued to deliver a robust service without interruption or delays.

In response to the pandemic, we, like many

Our Chair's Report

others have had to move to remote working. Moving away from home visits and face-to-face contact, carers have been contacted by telephone

and online which has worked surprisingly well, and carer's feedback about our service during this time has been very positive. We have continued to complete Carers Support Plans and our referral rate has increased by 35%, with many carers having reached crisis point, primarily due to lack of respite.

There are lessons to be learned and working from home has brought some additional benefits in increasing capacity within the organisation to meet demand but also in staff well-being with an improved work/life balance. It may well be that when there are little or no restrictions and life returns to a more recognisable normal that we do not return to full office working. As an organisation, going forward, we are considering a blend of home and office working, with the majority of our contacts continuing to be carried out remotely. Many of the meetings that staff attend may also continue to be held remotely, which helps free up time, in terms of reduced travel.

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to work very hard in partnership with NHS

Borders, Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and other Third Sector organisations. We enjoy a good relationship with our partners, but do not hesitate to raise issues and challenges where we see them, and as reported to us by carers themselves.

Once again, I am in awe of the amazing job that unpaid carers do for their family, friends and loved ones, and I am proud of the role that the Carers Centre plays in supporting the

people who work so hard to support their loved ones in the community.

Community Care services would collapse under the strain without these carers, a point we raise often at meetings with social care and health services staff.

I hope fervently that the next Annual Report is able to be written in a world that has moved beyond Covid, and that finds us able to live more normal lives once again.

Linda Jackson



Our
Year
2020-21



Keeping things going

...in the pandemic

Like so many other organisations, this year has brought enormous challenges for the Carers Centre – moving from office to remote and on-line working, managing enormous workloads and adapting our service to create capacity to manage an ever-increasing number of referrals – it is certainly a year that will not be quickly forgotten!

Without a doubt unpaid carers have been and continue to be hit disproportionately hard as a result of the pandemic. Many carers have

reported to us increased hours of caring due to a reduction in or cessation of services, little or no respite, and a decline in the condition of loved ones and for many being thrown into a caring role for the first time.

Throughout this difficult year, it was a priority to us as an organisation that no carers felt disadvantaged in terms of our service delivery, so we made the decision to move our services seamlessly online in mid-March 2020 and all staff apart from the central administration team

(continued overleaf)

Keeping things going in the pandemic *(continued)*

commenced working from home. After a few technical glitches getting staff set up working from home, we were full steam ahead and all of our work continued as usual, thanks to our investment in improved technology in 2018. Like other organisations, we had to close our door to face-to-face groups and one-to-one home visits but we found that many carers embraced the opportunity to take part in on-line groups and carers reported that our increased telephone support, virtual support plans and on-going support have been a lifesaver.

We have worked tirelessly with our statutory and third sector partners throughout the year to try to find creative solutions for respite. Supported by the Health and Social Care Partnership we worked together to set up the RVS sitting service and Red Cross Chit Chat service to try to give carers a break both within and out of the home, even just to get out for a walk or to have a moment's peace within the home. We have also seen increased numbers of carers accessing replacement care to give them time out from the demands of caring and to support them to maintain health and well-being.

We welcomed additional funding from Scottish

Government, which enabled us to top up our Time to Live Fund, thereby increasing access to creative respite opportunities within the home setting with carers accessing funding for anything from garden furniture and hot tubs to jigsaws and craft materials both to benefit them and those they care for. This funding was vital in enabling many carers to get through the restrictions of lockdown.



We also received funding to enable carers to access grants for essential items such as food, utilities and equipment, which provided a lifeline for many carers impacted on by loss of income, the additional

cost of keeping homes heated for longer and increased power usage as well as the cost of food and essential equipment.

We made every effort to ensure that any funds awarded to carers were paid to them swiftly, with an average three-day turnaround, alleviating any further anxiety carers may be feeling during this time.

We were also successful in our grant application to the Life Changes Trust to set up and deliver a dementia specific counselling service to carers, providing carers with coping strategies to deal with the challenges that come with caring for

someone living with dementia as well as the opportunity to explore emotions such as loss, frustration and guilt. Feedback from carers has been extremely positive.



This year we have also managed to continue with our Carers First meetings online – this is a focus group and platform for sharing information, raising issues, recognising good practice and finding solutions. Elected representatives from this group attend the newly established Carers Work stream, which sits directly under the Integrated Joint Board and has a remit for all things carers related

in terms of strategy, legislation and the direction of travel for ensuring that carers throughout the Scottish Borders have access to the right support and services.

Carers First is open to all carers in the Scottish Borders and plays a vital role in enabling carers to have a strong voice and influence the design and delivery of services. We welcome new members and if you would like further information please contact our Information and Group Development officer Debbie Rutherford debbie@borderscarers.co.uk or telephone 01896 808206



This year our Fundraising

Committee has continued to raise vital funds in spite of the challenges presented by the pandemic. We are very grateful that although the annual Kelso Races Fundraiser had to be cancelled much of the money raised from preliminary ticket sales was donated to the organisation. Thank you to the Fundraising Committee and all of our supporters for their continued efforts and on-going support.

Our Volunteers

We would also like to thank those volunteers who give up their time to attend Carers First and the Carers Workstream to ensure that carers have a strong voice in the design and delivery of services. This is vital to ensure that limited resources are allocated appropriately and that services meet the needs of carers and their loved ones, as well as the opportunity to identify issues, seek solutions and work collaboratively with statutory partners.

The team has worked tirelessly throughout the year to support carers.

The difference we've made

We know that we are getting it right when we received direct feedback from them.

Carers have given feedback on the direct support they receive from us:

"I want to say a huge thank you to all of the support workers who do such a fabulous job. You really do change lives by supporting us to support our loved ones. Please don't ever underestimate the value of the work you do"

"They've given me loads of advice. I know when the time comes they'll hold my hand and that's a massive comfort"

"The intense and far reaching support has really changed my life"

"They really listen"

"I literally wouldn't be here if not for the Carers Centre"



Carers have told us that our regular support groups are important to them:

"Our catch ups are a lifeline"

"It's good to know that you are not alone"

"We have a laugh and joke - it's a chance to be me"

Carers have benefited from our counselling service

"My family are back on track again. I feel so proud"

"I'm actually looking forward to the future"

"I look at things differently now"

"I had forgotten how important it is to care for me too"

"It's ok to take time for me"



Feedback on additional support as a result of the pandemic:

"Just a little note to say thanks for sending the information about booking a vaccine on Monday. Came just at the right time - I was just getting the energy up to make my case to the GP...now I don't need to. Really appreciate the support you give us all."

"Thanks for dropping off the PPE - I couldn't get out to collect it"

"Thank you for getting the crisis funds to me so quickly - I don't know what we would have done without it"

"The food voucher was a lifesaver - we were really struggling and I was so worried"

"It's great to have the hot tub - it helps my son to keep moving - so important at this time of reduced services"

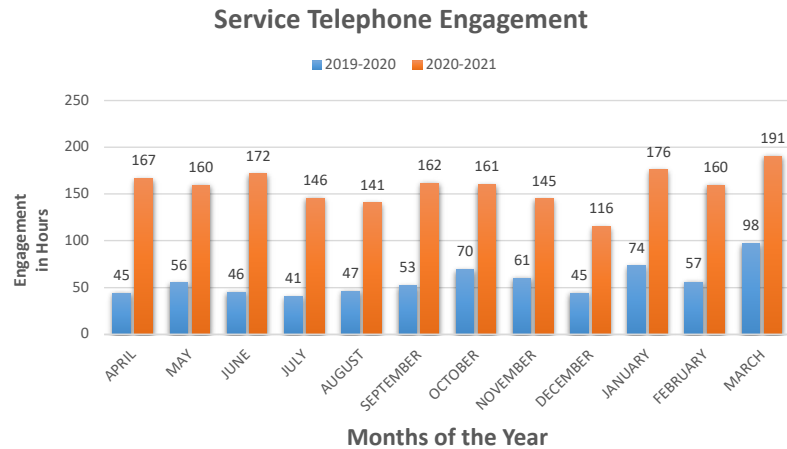
"The sitting service has been such a help - we both get something out of it"



Our Year – The Stats

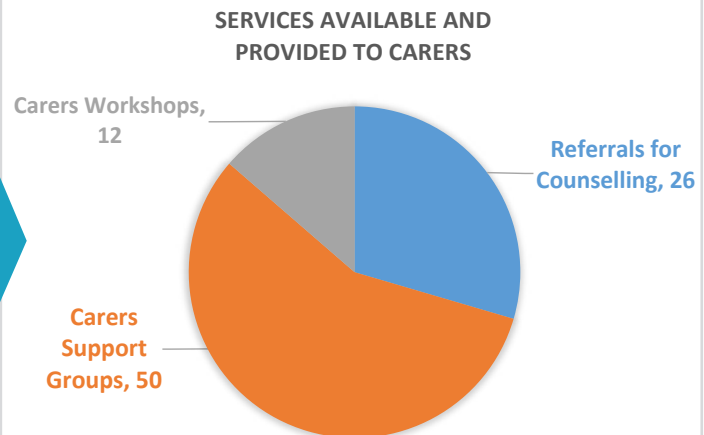
The move to working from home and cessation of face-to-face visits and drop-in from mid March 2020, meant that we had to quickly adopt other means of connection with our carers and vary our types of contact, while maintaining the service provided.

The chart below demonstrates the influx in telephone communication that we experienced in comparison to the previous year.

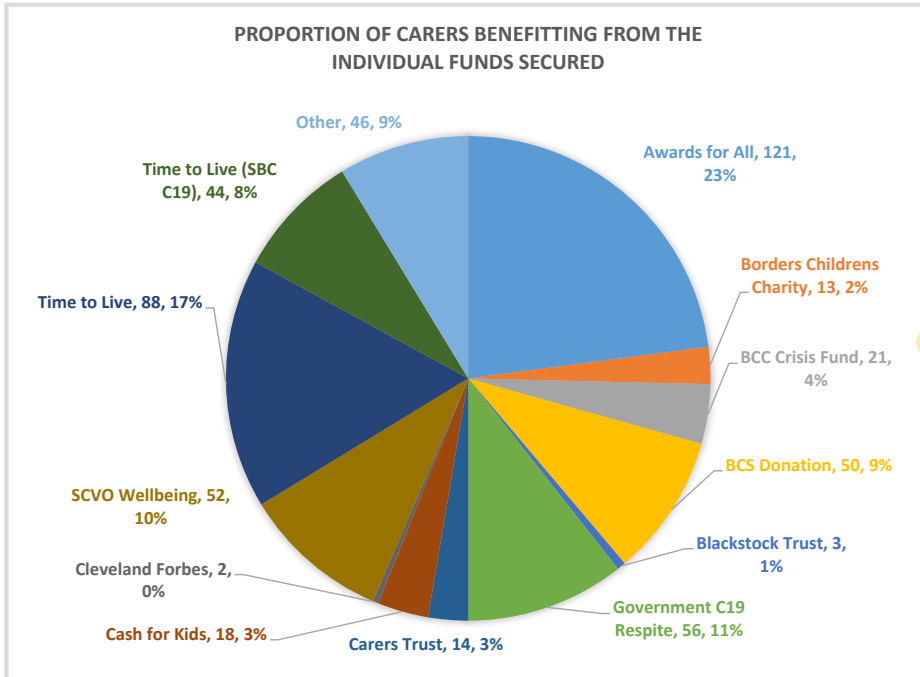
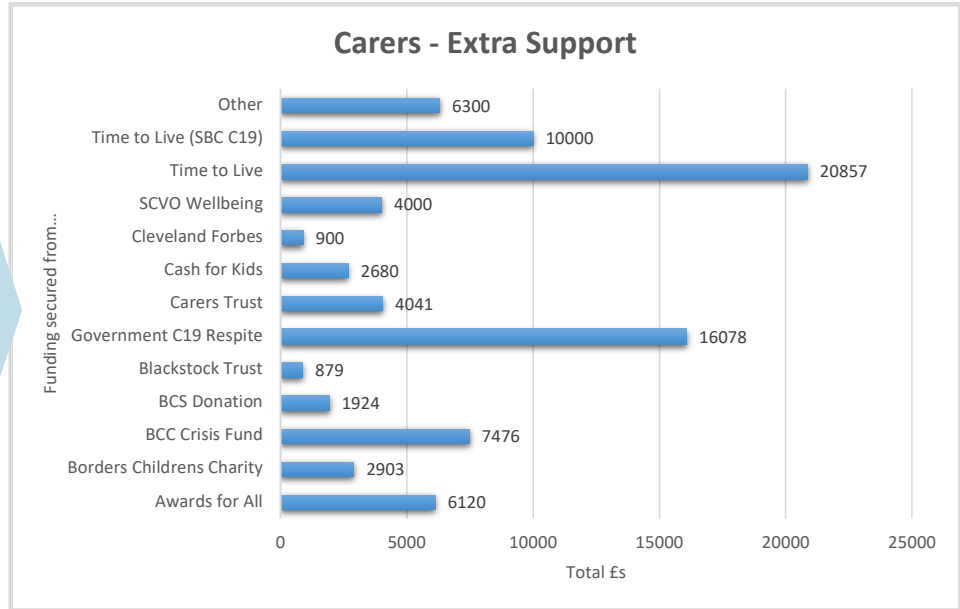


Services provided by us have continued at strength, co-ordinated online and remotely, rather than face to face sessions. The chart below shows the services available and the numbers conducted during the period.

Service	Average Regularity
Carers Workshops	1 session per month
Carers Support Groups	1 hour per week
Counselling sessions	8 sessions per referral



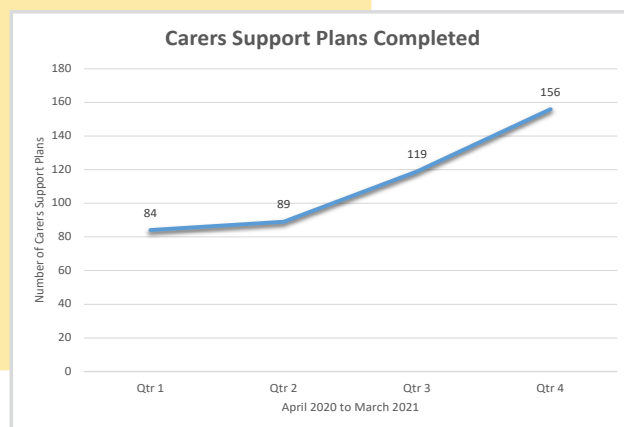
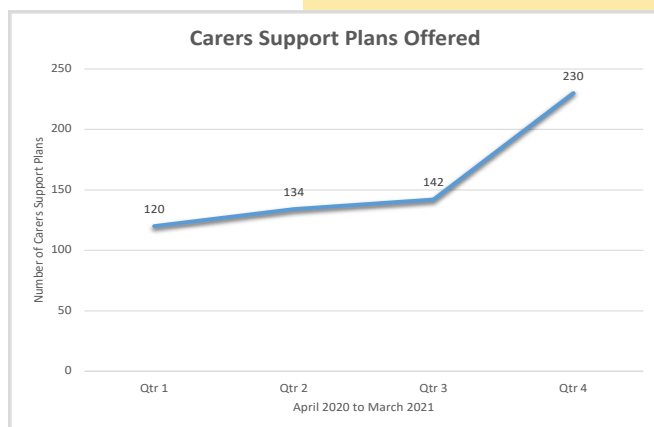
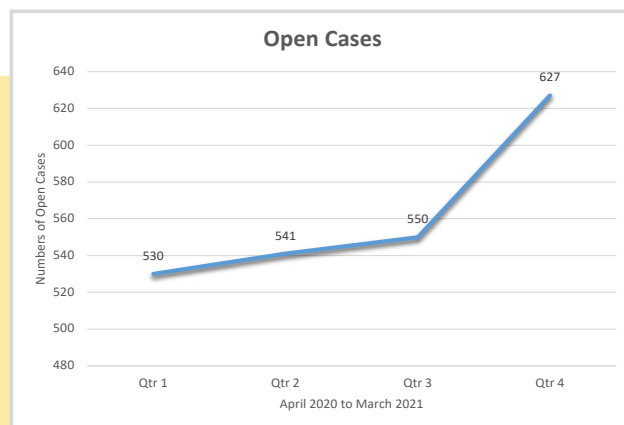
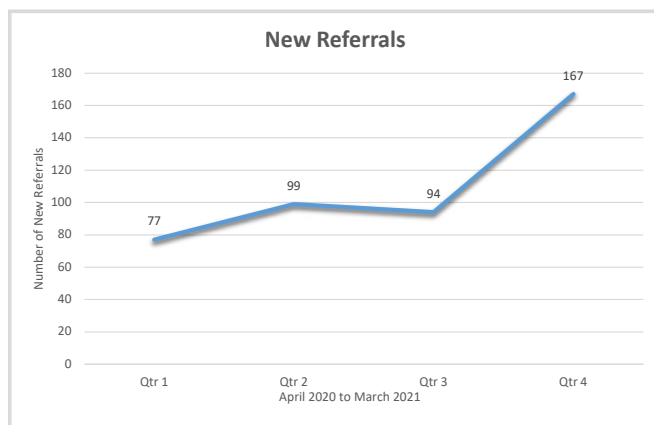
The chart on right displays the 'Extra Support' for Carers. The amount of money secured from individual funding streams. The Total amount being £84158 in additional funds.



The chart on left shows the total numbers and percentage of Carers that were supported from the additional funds secured. This equated to 528 individual carers in receipt of a payment.

Statistics for 2020-2021	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Months of the Year	A, M, J	J, A, S	O, N, D	J, F, M
1. Open CASES Total (Active)	530	541	550	627
2. Closed CASES Total (Inactive)	87	112	113	119
3. New Referrals	77	99	94	167
4. Carers Support Plan (CSP) Offered	120	134	142	230
5. Carers Support Plan (CSP) Completed	84	89	119	156

This chart is a sample of the data we present to our funders on a quarterly basis. Over the course of the year you can clearly see the rise in demand. Each chart displaying a significant increase of carers requiring support and advice from our service.



Our Wonderful Team

Not only has the team coped

throughout the pandemic with an ever increasing number of referrals, they have also coped with the change to home working and the ever increasing demands in supporting carers to access the variety of grant schemes and services on offer. The team have also taken on additional work as a direct result of the pandemic including: PPE equipment referrals, and the Government Vaccine mailing.

This all takes time and the team has worked tirelessly and without complaint throughout. Not only have we worked to support carers, worked in partnership with statutory and third sector agencies, improved our social media and worked at national and local level to ensure that carers have a strong voice, the team have also supported each other.

From regular coffee and a chat to team challenges and team meetings, the team have been there for one another and without them the Carers Centre would not be what it is. Therefore, this year more than ever we recognise and value their contribution.

We have maintained our Healthy Working Lives Gold Award.

A collection of photographs displaying staff participation in the competitions and quizzes we held throughout the pandemic to help maintain our morale.

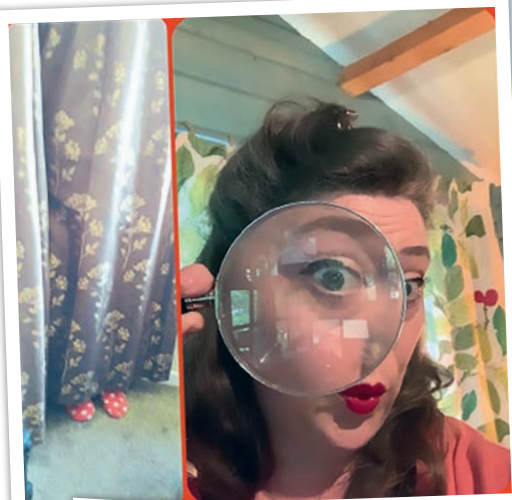
Pass and Paddle

◀ Alix, rugby enthusiast even in lockdown

▼ Catriona keeping active in splendid isolation



Fun and Games



◀ Hide and Seek

▶ Snakes and Ladders

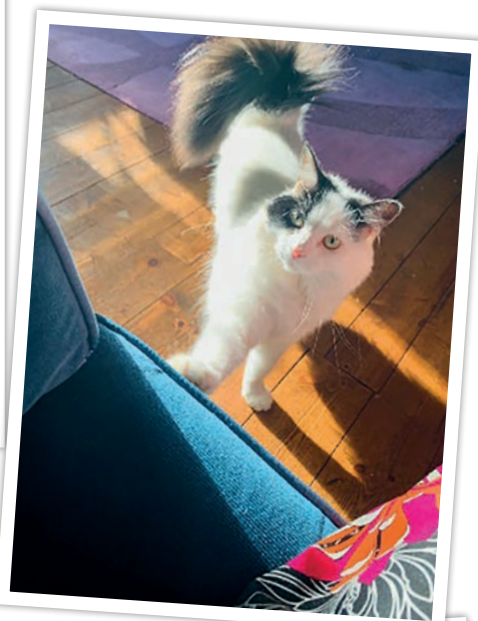


◀ Lynn chilling at the barn door.



◀ Angela taking in the summer views at The Haining, Selkirk

Rest and Relaxation



Pet Therapy



Competition Week: Impersonations



▲ Sanchia is the double of Uma Thurman in Pulp Fiction

Kirsty **IS** Elliott in ET!



▲ Debbie channelling Dawn French in The Vicar of Dibley

Fun and Games for Carers

Put your feet up,
have a cuppa...



...and
stay safe.



**Feet up for Carers' Week:
June 2020**

*(but it didn't stop
creativity
and
inventiveness!)*



THE PRINCESS ROYAL TRUST
BORDERS CARERS CENTRE

known as

THE BORDERS CARERS CENTRE
Brewerybrig
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2020-2021 **ANNUAL REVIEW**

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