

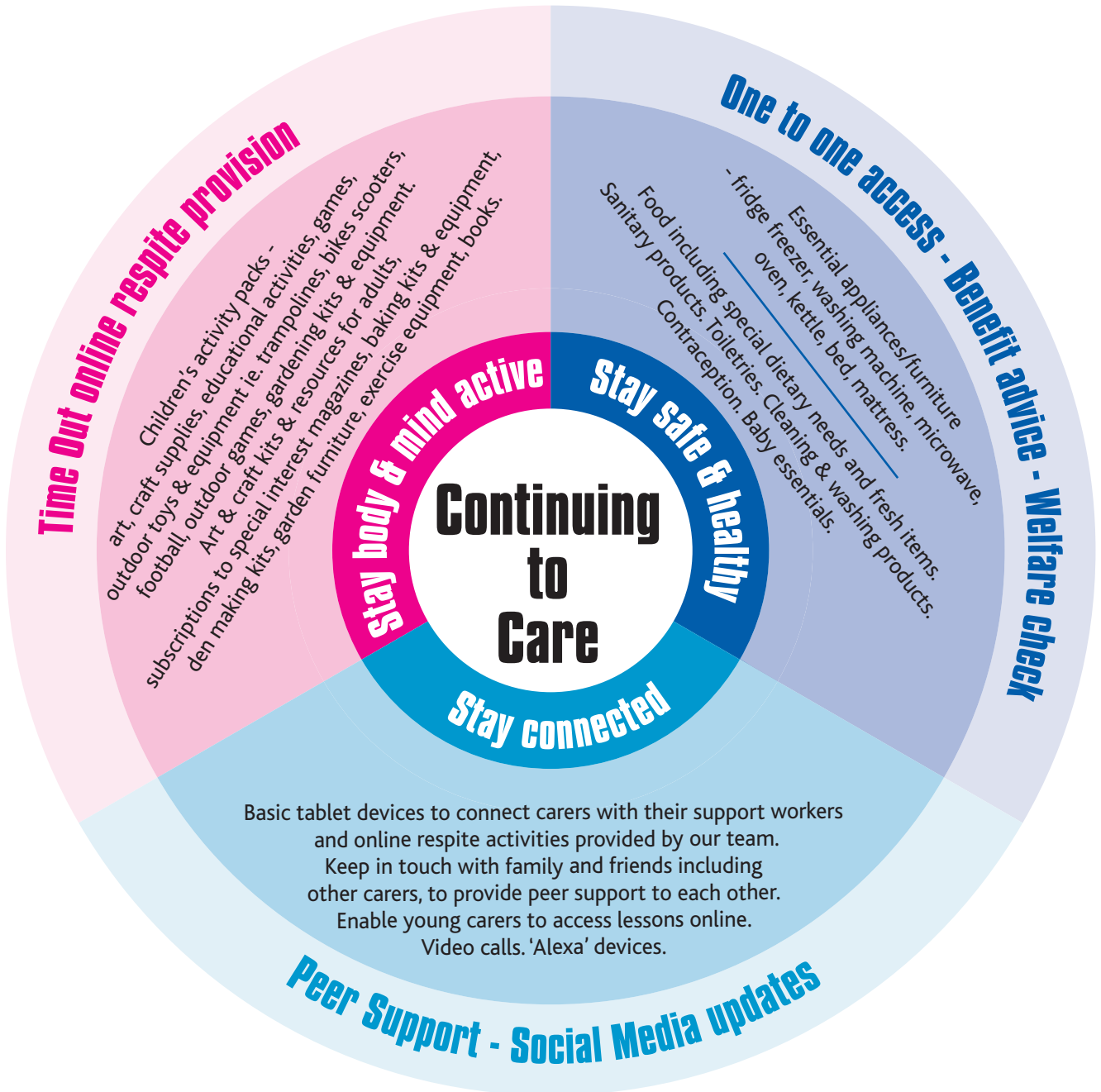
Blackpool Carers Centre

Quality • Passion • Respect

Charity No. 1114558



Annual Review 2020-2021
Continuing to Care



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Introduction

A year like no other! As 2020 dawned and the winds of Covid blew, like everyone else we were disorientated, wondering how on earth we could deliver a service given the new landscape that was appearing. In the knowledge that we support some of Blackpool's most vulnerable households, our agility in reconfiguring the delivery of support was vital in preventing carer crisis and keeping families 'on track'. Also, key to our vision of delivering services within the pandemic world has been maintaining acute focus on safeguarding issues which became more difficult to identify as doors started to close.

We made brave decisions early in the pandemic to continue to keep contact with carers as directly as we could, including: doorstep welfare visits; essential deliveries of food in conjunction with Blackpool Council; and crisis support on-site where carers needed immediate help. In response to the changing needs of carers and the imposed restrictions, we swiftly mobilised digital delivery of support and respite sessions to ensure that no carer missed out on what they needed from Blackpool Carers.

We are proud of our team for achieving enormous success in the most challenging of times; reaching carers in new ways, being open to creative solutions and riding the wave with passion for what is more than just a job.

With fundraising options significantly reduced for the majority of the year, we have spent time reflecting on how to move forward, post-Covid, with fresh ideas and approaches for engaging supporters and funders. We are looking forward to once again getting together with our

community, corporate supporters and funders to light the fire of fundraising events as restrictions fall away.

Despite the disruption and turmoil of the pandemic, we have taken opportunities to regroup and reflect. When quietness descended as lockdown was announced, we rolled up our sleeves and refreshed our lovely building. With a new coat of paint, furniture updates and a garden refresh, Blackpool Carers has emerged ready to take on the increased demand for support from the many people who have become carers during the pandemic.

We have learnt so much throughout this year, from each other, from our volunteers and, of course, most importantly, from our carers. It is with this learning that we look to the future of Blackpool Carers and all that lies ahead as we evolve to meet the legacy of needs left behind by the pandemic.

We are pleased to be able to present the 2020-2021 annual report, telling the story of all that Blackpool Carers has accomplished and the impact that our projects have had on carers of all ages throughout the most difficult of times.

We also extend our thanks to everyone who has cheered us on, be that quietly from the sidelines, as a supporter, a fundraiser, a funder or within our growing team of volunteers and trustees. We hope that you will continue to be with us in making a better life for carers.



Paul Jebb,
Chair of Trustees



Faye Atherton,
Quality Director



Steve Shepherd and his sons kindly donated baking kits to keep our carers stocked up with lovely cakes during lockdown



Young carers enjoying their dinner during a respite session



Socially distanced Dementia Awareness training

Knowing I could turn to someone - be listened to and supported, has meant the world to me and my family

Denise
Family Focus parent



Young carers throwing sponges at soggy Respite Worker, Andy



Mental health support group (HUGS) on a welcome visit to The Parks Cafe at Stanley Park

Stay body & mind active

With everyday freedoms removed and no end in sight, access to physical and mental challenge outside of caring became in short supply for carers.

Carers of all ages found that their usual coping mechanisms through access to sport, exercise, learning and being around others were so limited that the impact quickly became huge on their own physical and mental health, taking its toll on their ability to continue to provide care and also putting them at risk of their own health complications.

Our response became a range of provision to meet the unique needs and circumstances of carers. Through finding creative ways to stay body and mind active within the parameters of restrictions, we helped to maintain carer health and to continue to be there to care.

Young carer enjoying a well-deserved treat during a one to one with Support Worker, Sam



Paul Howlett with supporters during his fundraising cycle ride on Blackpool Promenade



Adult Carers enjoying some leisure time



“Young children need to have somewhere like Blackpool Carers, somewhere that does what you do. They have so much going on in their lives.”

Paula
Family Focus mum



Young carers' craft session in the garden

In the eye of the Covid storm, we quickly realised that we needed to shift and simplify our strategy to meet the immediate and very basic needs of carers.

Carers told us that the priorities for them in keeping themselves and their loved ones safe and sane in the unknown of 2020 were focused on themes of staying active in both body and mind, remaining protected and healthy and keeping connected with the outside world.



Young Adult Carer 'reaching new heights' on a visit to Clip 'n Climb



Supporters climbing the equivalent of Everest, during our Climbing for Carers fundraising event

"It's my happy place now, where I can be 'me', get lost in nature and benefit from some exercise and distraction."

Debbie
Adult carer, benefitted from a 'Time for Me' grant



Young carer having fun making Christmas Decorations



'Bang the Drum' African drumming session in the gardens



Active Minds group creating Memory Boxes

Adult Carers

Over £10,000 was distributed via 'Time for Me' grants which allowed 281 carers to indulge in interests, hobbies and exercise whilst being isolated.

Debbie, carer for her adult son who has learning difficulties, was delighted to be granted funding to enable her to complete her garden project which made being able to be outside in lovely surroundings a way of keeping active and busy whilst also providing a haven for relaxation too.

"It's my happy place now, where I can be 'me', get lost in nature and benefit from some exercise and distraction."

Young Adult Carers

Laura (17) cares for her mum with dementia. Laura's mental wellbeing declined due to being at home and caring for Mum full time during the pandemic.

In the past Laura had enjoyed drawing, writing and cooking as ways to feel good about herself, but as caring took hold, these activities fell away.

Through a small grant and funding from a supporter, Laura was able to have art resources, a well-being journalling box, cooking ingredients and equipment delivered to her door. This helped her to once again be able to have the escapism of respite as and when she needed it during lockdown.

Laura continues to 'escape into cookery' when she feels stressed and is also working with her support worker through one to one 'walk and talk' sessions, getting her back out into the world, keeping active and talking through her worries.

Laura tells us that the wellbeing box has *"relaxed me when I am stressed with my caring role and it helped when I was stressed with other things"*.

Bang the Drum

The provision of Tai Chi and yoga sessions, in small groups and also via Zoom, helped carers to learn new ways of keeping physically and mentally healthy.

These activities also encouraged carers to use these techniques outside of our support in order to maintain time for themselves.

Family Focus

We completed visits to families outside, safely following risk assessments and Government guidelines. For our young carers who suddenly lost their respite, these outdoor one to one sessions became invaluable.

We worked creatively to ensure safety and to keep children active... we played football in the pouring rain, bike rides in the scorching sun, forestry and bird-house making in the garden - whatever it took to help our young carers and families to stay body and mind active.

Paula (Family Focus mum) says *"Young children need to have somewhere like Blackpool Carers, somewhere that does what you do. They have so much going on in their lives."*

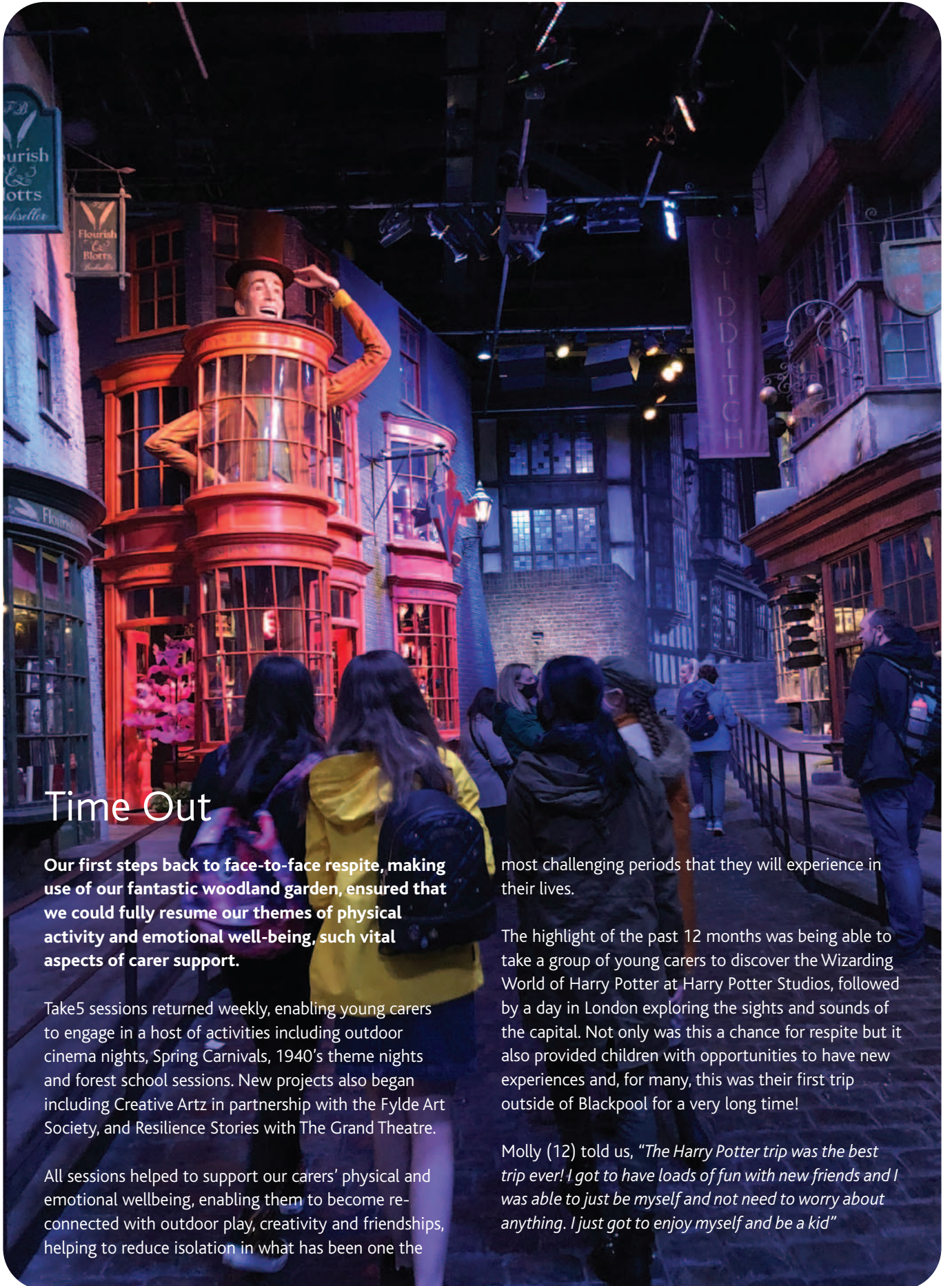
Young Carers

Ollie (7) helps to care for his brother Aaron who has Autism, ADHD and associated learning and behavioural difficulties.

Ollie was very shy at first and found it difficult to talk about his life as a young carer, particularly as he had had no social interaction outside of family members for months during lockdown.

On finding out that Ollie was interested in volcanoes, we sent out some related craft activities and resources that we then worked with him on through video calls. After a few weeks, Ollie said that he felt ready to meet in person and get involved in activities. He enjoyed art and crafts on a one to one basis and has worked up to small group sessions, making friends along the way!

Ollie's mum told us, *"He looks forward to his time with Blackpool Carers and is so excited to tell us about what he's been up to when he gets home! He really needs that time away to relax and be himself, free of the worries about Aaron, even if just for a short time, it makes all the difference."*



Time Out

Our first steps back to face-to-face respite, making use of our fantastic woodland garden, ensured that we could fully resume our themes of physical activity and emotional well-being, such vital aspects of carer support.

Take5 sessions returned weekly, enabling young carers to engage in a host of activities including outdoor cinema nights, Spring Carnivals, 1940's theme nights and forest school sessions. New projects also began including Creative Artz in partnership with the Fylde Art Society, and Resilience Stories with The Grand Theatre.

All sessions helped to support our carers' physical and emotional wellbeing, enabling them to become re-connected with outdoor play, creativity and friendships, helping to reduce isolation in what has been one the

most challenging periods that they will experience in their lives.

The highlight of the past 12 months was being able to take a group of young carers to discover the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Harry Potter Studios, followed by a day in London exploring the sights and sounds of the capital. Not only was this a chance for respite but it also provided children with opportunities to have new experiences and, for many, this was their first trip outside of Blackpool for a very long time!

Molly (12) told us, *"The Harry Potter trip was the best trip ever! I got to have loads of fun with new friends and I was able to just be myself and not need to worry about anything. I just got to enjoy myself and be a kid"*

Stay safe & healthy

Access to the very basics in life became perilous for many carers as they were limited in being able to safely go shopping, delivery slots were hard to come by and many did not have the digital skills to shop online. During the year we awarded 37 Carers Trust Emergency Grants to support our most vulnerable carers.

Combined with family worries around finance and employment, increasing instances of mental ill health, substance misuse and domestic abuse, many carers were in positions that put theirs and their loved ones' health at risk.

Our partnerships with local foodbank provision and the Local Authority response team meant that vulnerable carers and their families within our community were able to quickly access vital food, household essentials and toiletries to keep people fed and clean. Regular risk assessments, early intervention and crisis support also ensured that carers were responded to quickly when needed.



North Fylde Rotary and Morrisons kindly donated essential items for our carers

“I missed school and felt worried about everything being on my shoulders but having my support worker meant that I could talk through things and she also helped me to understand what was going on. Having food parcels also meant that it was one less thing for me to worry about.”

Josh
Young carer



Adult carers feeling relaxed during a Zoom, Yoga Session



Young carers letting off steam during Take5 outdoor respite session



A young carer completing her assessment forms whilst enjoying the sunshine



Blackpool Foodbank kindly donated many food hampers for our carers and their families



Carers at the Over 65s Afternoon Tea in September 2020

“Being able to turn to a service who walked through all of this with me and Diane has helped us to face the future with hope.”

Joe
Adult carer



This young carer was thrilled with her new bike that was kindly donated from the Bikes for Heroes project



Rocco with face masks made by staff member, Pat to raise funds.



We created and delivered 'Take a Break' bags for our carers during lockdown

Adult Carers

We adapted, diversified and perfected new skills in order to continue to support our carers and maintain professional links within health and social care services. Ensuring that families had all that they needed, both support and resources, in order to stay safe and healthy throughout the pandemic was a top priority.

Working in partnership with the Corona Kindness scheme delivered by Blackpool Council, we remained out in the community responding to carers most in need during the very darkest of times for many.

From food parcels, household essentials, medication ordering and collecting, to making provision for dogs to be walked, our team rose to the challenge.

Joe, carer for his wife Diane, was particularly concerned about Diane's discharge from hospital during early lockdown. We supported both to input into planning a safe discharge with hospital staff, looking at, not only Diane's health needs but also Joe's anxieties, limitations and concerns as a new carer learning to provide care in a pandemic.

We helped Joe to navigate the services available and to reassure him in his first steps taking on a caring role.

"Becoming a carer was scary enough, but add into that the worry about this new virus and all the potential for something going very wrong and everything felt unmanageable. Being able to turn to a service who walked through all of this with me and Diane has helped us to face the future with hope."

Family Focus

Josh (12) and his three younger siblings provide care for their mum who has long term mental ill health. Following the closure of schools and the uncertainty about the future, mum became even more withdrawn and unwell.

We supported mum to access enhanced mental health support and scheduled a medication review whilst also carrying out regular 'doorstep visits' to check in and deliver food parcels to ensure that the family were managing. We also worked closely with school to link the children with learning and keep them informed of mum's progress and how the children were coping.

"It really helped me to know that I wasn't alone dealing with everything going on in my family. I missed school and felt worried about everything being on my shoulders but having my support worker meant that I could talk through things. She helped me to understand what was going on. Having food parcels also meant that it was one less thing for me to worry about."



Bang the Drum

As restrictions tightened and carers became more withdrawn from view, we were determined to continue to 'see' carers, be available and respond to their needs.

Our Bang the Drum team were very active in doorstep check-ins with carers, providing a listening ear, a musical instrument or two and access to food parcels and household essentials!

Young Adult Carers

Connor (17) cares for his dad following several strokes. During the pandemic the family began to struggle without a cooker and had no funds to be able to access a replacement.

They were relying on takeaway food and microwave meals meaning a lack of fresh and healthy meals and also an impact on finances, which in turn created problems in affording transport for Connor to attend college.

We were able to source emergency funding to provide the family with a new cooker and supermarket vouchers, ensuring that they were able to prepare healthy meals. We also worked with the family to create a healthy and budget friendly recipe collection to encourage a balanced diet. Dad has been very happy to have been able to have his favourite meal once again....corned beef hash!

Since the family have been accessing our support, college have commented that Connor is *"attending college more regularly and is like a different person"*.

Time Out

During 2020 our team got out and about into the community, delivering food and household essentials parcels to children and families alongside the activity packs to keep children entertained in the long weeks of lockdown! This work gave us the unique opportunity to see families face to face, albeit on doorsteps and in gardens.

Being face to face with families ensured that we were able to respond to immediate needs and gave families the chance to talk about their worries and anxieties as we got deeper into the pandemic.

Following these visits we became aware of families needing access to PPE and cleaning resources in order to keep themselves safe. We were able to provide the equipment that they needed and also to help them to understand restrictions and local updates as things started to change.

Young Carers

Emma (15) cares for her twin brothers (age 5) who have severe Autism and a chronic respiratory condition. During the pandemic, Emma took on a secondary parenting role, alongside her mum, for her brothers.

With schools closed, all of the children were also being home educated. Emma became very anxious during lockdown due to the fears around Covid and the family became extremely isolated, mum only leaving the house to put the bins at the end of the drive each week.

Welfare phone and video calls were made to Emma every other day to support her with her anxiety and food parcels were delivered to the family's doorstep every two weeks over an 8-week period to ensure the family kept safe by not having to leave the house for food. Support calls to Emma were centred around her anxiety.

We discussed the importance of Emma having fresh air and some time to herself alone each day, even if this meant walking to the end of her street. Emma eventually agreed to go outside for a walk with our support. During this first walk, Emma told us that, although she found it difficult, she really valued the 15 minutes outside of the house to herself and encouraged her mum to do the same thing. These walks encouraged Emma and her mum to stay healthy both physically and mentally whilst keeping themselves as safe as possible.

Emma stated that she felt her and her mum's relationship also improved which enabled them to better care for her brothers.

"Without support from Blackpool Carers I think that we would have carried on just being isolated at home and found it even more difficult to get back out and about when lockdown ended. Caring for my brothers is so hard at times but I know that I can rely on help from my support worker whenever I need to let off steam."

Stay connected

With the fast move for many to start working, schooling, shopping and socialising online as the pandemic took hold, we were acutely aware of substantial limitations faced by our carers in being able to join this new 'normal'.

Carers already tell us of their feelings of isolation in society, that they are often unable to find where they 'belong' and that the impact of isolation can be intensely damaging. With the prospect of being unable to access vital contact with services, respite provision and peer support, staying connected meant something visceral to many of our carers.

We quickly took up the mantle to keep carers connected with support in whatever way worked for them...whether that be garden wall chats or providing technology and 'doorstep challenge digital support' to get carers online to join groups, support and activities.

“The one constant connection that kept me going and maintained my sanity was the support that I received from Blackpool Carers. Initially, my support worker called every week. She cannot possibly know how much I looked forward to that call.”

Elaine
Adult carer



Support Worker, Helena getting ready for Dementia Awareness Training



Having fun, playing games at Beaverbrooks House



Carers' Kitchen remained open for carers to access support during the pandemic



Young carer brought along her best friend, Bobby to her one to one



Adult Carer, Helen showing off her skills during a pancake making session (with help from Pat)



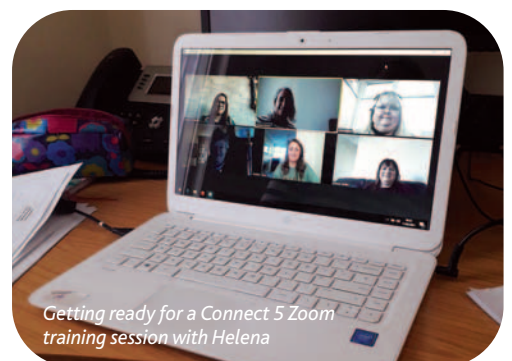
Carla with 'Elf' helper, Beth, delivering Christmas hampers to carers and their families



Young carers with Brownies they made during a Take5 Lockdown Live online baking session

“Being able to connect with friends has really helped me to feel more confident, in real life, not just on-screen! It has also helped me to feel happier and less stressed.”

Ellie
Young carer



Getting ready for a Connect 5 Zoom training session with Helena

Adult Carers

Elaine, carer for her husband, valued the connection and contact with the service whilst unable to leave the house during lockdown.

"The one constant connection that kept me going and maintained my sanity was the support that I received from Blackpool Carers. Initially, my support worker checked in with me on a weekly basis, she cannot possibly know how much I looked forward to her call or the relief that I felt just having someone to talk to.

She listened without judging me and supported me throughout the really difficult times when all I wanted to do was cry. She taught me how to be realistic and that there were only so many things that I could control and deal with, and for this and her support I will be eternally grateful."

Young Adult Carers

At the forefront of technology use have been our young adult carers! They quickly adapted to our offer of online support and groups with many helping us to understand the new world of Zoom!

Once we were able to, small face to face groups resumed with many of our young people being eager to ditch the screens and get back together in 'real life'!

Natalie (18) who cares for mum due to physical difficulties, told us that being able to have that precious and dedicated time in her week when she could log on and see familiar faces was a lifeline in the most difficult of times.

Friendships formed online with others who understand how caring can limit life as a young person, helped Natalie to feel that she wasn't alone. Being able to then pursue those friendships in person once the groups opened back up on-site have created a positive network that Natalie tells us will last forever!

Natalie regularly attends groups now and tells us, *"when I joined Blackpool Carers I found that I was making more friends and I could talk to people who understood what I was saying which helped me a lot. Blackpool Carers has given me a place where I feel relaxed, and I am a lot more calm."*

Bang the Drum

Our Bang the Drum project was a unique opportunity, thanks to the flexibility of the funder (Spirit of 2012), in allowing us to move quickly in meeting new presenting needs of carers during the pandemic.

Being able to provide transport for sessions meant that carers and young carers were able to access face to face sessions safely, bringing them together for much needed time away from caring to explore music activities using instruments, dance and song writing together.

Time Out

Facebook Live and Zoom became the 'new norm' with the team posting a daily host of activities including art and craft, physical activity and Friday fun challenges, taking our digital respite to a new level.

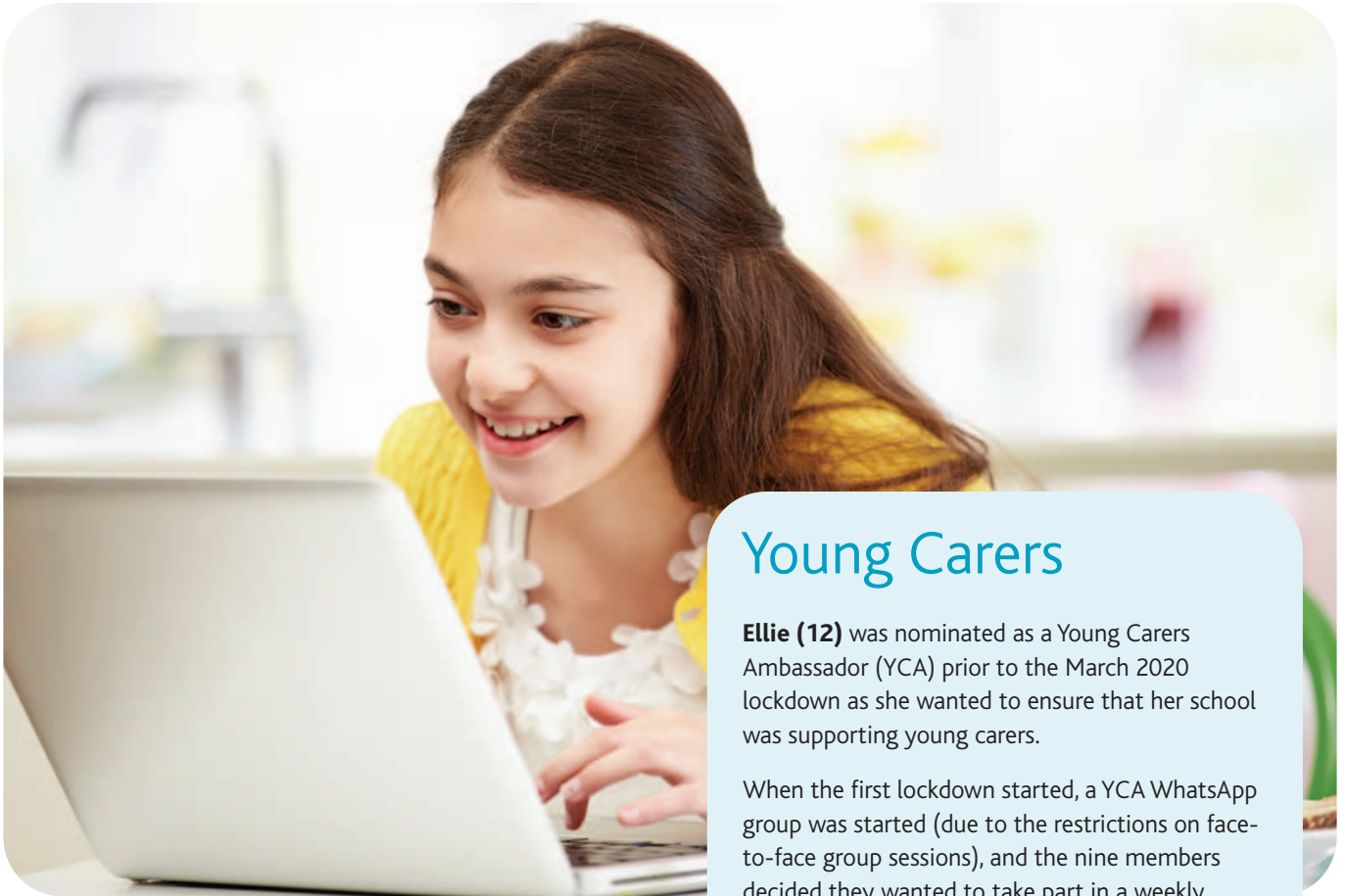
Soon, young carers were scrambling around their homes whilst taking part in 'Go Fetch' scavenger hunts, testing their knowledge in fun quizzes and creating a baking bonanza in their homes along with others online!

Jordan (7) joined Take5 respite for the first time during lockdown when only digital access was offered at the time.

He struggled being at home during the lockdown, being unable to take up his place at school as a vulnerable child due to his mum having a compromised immune system.

Jordan really missed out on friendships and time to just be a child, but being able to log on each week to see new friends who were also carers helped him to feel less alone. He enjoyed the variety of fun and activities during the Zoom sessions.

Being able to finally join groups in person as restrictions eased meant so much to both Jordan and his mum as, at last, he could 'meet' his friends in real life! He's now a regular at Take5, the first in the door telling us all his news from the week!



Family Focus

Family activities were adapted virtually, keeping families connected with our team and each other for support.

We created huge hampers containing everything needed to participate in online challenges, quizzes and games; safely sanitised and delivered on doorsteps. There were indoor scavenger hunts, dancing, riddles, and that feeling of being 'in it together'.

Having time to be in the moment and share it with others meant so much to families who were particularly hard hit by the storm of the pandemic.

Lily (9) who cares for her mum with long term mental ill health fully threw herself into all of the online activities, telling us *"I feel supported and safe."*

Young Carers

Ellie (12) was nominated as a Young Carers Ambassador (YCA) prior to the March 2020 lockdown as she wanted to ensure that her school was supporting young carers.

When the first lockdown started, a YCA WhatsApp group was started (due to the restrictions on face-to-face group sessions), and the nine members decided they wanted to take part in a weekly Zoom quiz. Ellie didn't have access to a device to be able to access this quiz.

We applied for a grant to purchase a laptop to keep her connected with the group for support, and also to be able to access the quiz, staying connected with other young people whilst at home.

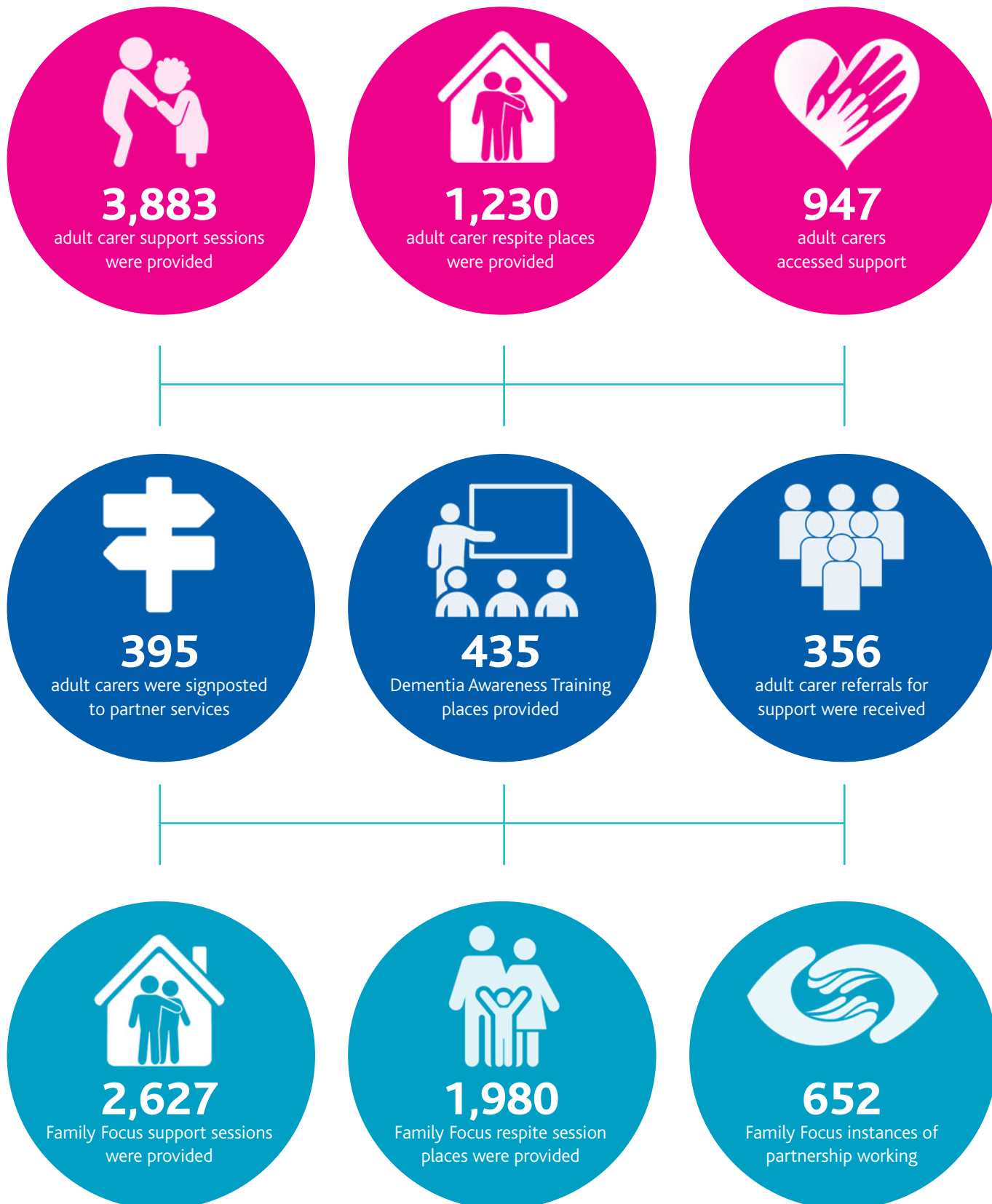
Ellie has developed close friendships with the other members, creating a positive network of support with other young people who understand how challenging being a carer can be.

Having a laptop has also enabled Ellie to access schoolwork online and saved her parents from having to travel to and from school to collect paper copies of work whilst both struggling with anxiety about leaving the house.

Before the weekly quiz, Ellie presented as quiet and shy, however, week by week, Ellie has become more vocal and has even hosted her own quiz!

Ellie tells us, *"Being able to connect with friends has really helped me to feel more confident, in real life, not just on-screen! It has also helped me to feel happier and less stressed."*

Our impact





Benefit Advice

Robert (59) was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2019 and had to give up work due to his health. At the time, Robert was informed that his condition was terminal and told that his life expectancy was just 6 months.

His wife, Jane, became his full time carer and due to the huge changes in their lives, for the first time, they had to apply for benefits.

Following further treatment, Robert underwent major surgery to remove his kidney and, although successful in removing the cancer, the operation left him with significant nerve damage and subsequently impacted on his mental health.

This year, Robert received a review form to complete for his Personal Independence Payment. We assisted Robert and Jane to complete the information and supported them through the telephone assessment.

The renewal claim was disallowed as Robert was no longer deemed to be terminally ill. We worked with Robert and Jane to appeal this decision given the clear difficulties caused by the legacy of the cancer treatment, physical challenges following nerve damage and the impact on Robert's mental health.

We supported them to escalate the case to an appeal tribunal and assisted them in completing the relevant paperwork. The appeal was heard by phone and, following Robert's discussion about his circumstances and significant health challenges, we were also given the opportunity to outline why the initial disallowance required reconsideration.



Following the hearing, the tribunal awarded Robert with the enhanced rate of both components of Personal Independence Payment.

In challenging the initial decision and supporting Robert and Jane through the process, the outcome has significantly improved life for the couple as they are now able to live in the knowledge that their basis needs can be met financially and that support is available as Jane continues her caring role for Robert.

'We feel that the pressure has gone now. We are able to continue to afford the basics that we need and to be able to plan for the future, whatever that may hold. Thank you for being there when we needed you the most.'

Robert & Jane
Benefit Advice clients



Managing Challenging Behaviour (MCB)

Our Managing Challenging Behaviour course offers support to parents and carers who have a child / young person who displays challenging behaviour. The course relies on the interaction of parents within the group setting to best bring together experiences, support and connections in order for families to move forward positively.

The acute challenges of children being home schooled and online provision with limited access to devices meant that offering the course digitally wasn't viable. We quickly moved to brief interventions and one to one support for families referred into the course. This meant that we could provide tailored and timely support by phone and create individual resources and support plans for families during what became a particularly intense time for many.

As soon as we were able to restart the course, we welcomed parents/carers back to on-site courses. Whilst many were apprehensive about coming together with others, they felt that we offered a safe environment in which to share their experiences, both positive and negative, and form supportive friendships with other parents in similar situations. The course not only offers advice and support around behaviours but also looks at the impact on everyone involved.



Alison, planning the next MCB session, whilst working from home



Parents during an MCB workshop

“The course is insightful and well set out. It’s good to talk to others in same situation and know that I am not the only parent of a child with challenging behaviour.”

Paul
Parent

Volunteers

Following on from the success of the Annual Ball our wonderful volunteers were ready and raring to get going on a busy year of awareness raising, fundraising and the many other roles and experiences that we offer to our volunteers. Then the pandemic hit and life changed in so many ways for all of us, however, amongst the uncertain times, there were opportunities to celebrate our amazing volunteers.



Volunteers' Virtual Coffee Morning

During 2020 our focus was on staying connected, safe and healthy and mind and body active. This applied not only to our work with carers, but also in our approach to volunteers. We were humbled and grateful that our volunteers remained committed to supporting Blackpool Carers in whatever way they could, despite whatever personal challenges they themselves were experiencing in the storm of the pandemic.

Volunteers were open to regular check ins, both with us here at the Centre and also with each other, keeping the camaraderie and spirit of what they enjoyed together when able to be with us in person. Weekly phone calls, newsletters and doorstep visits, along with weekly Zoom coffee mornings (once we had all been inducted into the digital age!) became our ways of keeping connected. Check ins also helped us to provide additional support to our volunteers where needed as many were vulnerable and shielding for prolonged periods. We provided food parcels and access to additional support to volunteers where needed.

We learnt so much about the hidden skills, talents and knowledge of our volunteer team through sharing with each other on Zoom catch ups...from Makaton signing and origami to outstanding cooking and baking skills that kept our team going through some gruelling months!



Our volunteers found creative ways of continuing to support Blackpool Carers despite lockdowns and restrictions as they gave their time to hand make products for us to sell once events were able to resume.

Once able to return to the building, our volunteers have been welcomed back with open arms! Retention of volunteers has been high, with many highlighting that the support from us that they received during the dark lockdown months has helped them to keep going and feel positive about the future.

Our volunteers ensure that Blackpool Carers continues to make a better life for carers, providing additional capacity and expertly complementing the work of the staff team.



Volunteers enjoying a game of Bingo, during their first socially distanced coffee morning

It is so lovely to be part of Blackpool Carers. I feel very appreciated and valued. Through volunteering at Beaverbrooks House, I feel I've gained far more than I could ever give!

Steffi
Volunteer

Fundraising, Community & Corporate Partners

Fundraising took on a whole new guise this year as we moved quickly to develop creative ways of engaging supporters as society shut down and people retreated.

In the face of a pandemic, our carers needed us to be there for them more than ever and this meant looking at fundraising differently to enable vital work to continue.

Climbing for Carers

A number of teams signed up in the first lockdown to keep themselves active by climbing their stairs to the equivalent distance of climbing the world's tallest mountains, gathering sponsorship and fame along the way!...albeit without the weather and terrain challenges!

Our very own Andy Gunn (Time Out Lead) climbed his stairs with his wife and sons to the equivalent of climbing Kilimanjaro to raise funds. They even included a base camp in their back garden, camping out for the week to add to the fun!



Andy Gunn and family at 'base camp' in their garden

Our partnerships with businesses have also been key to our fundraising success through 2020. Thanks to the many corporate supporters continuing to be committed to making a better life for carers, over £15,000 was donated to keep vital services running.



Beaverbrooks organise staff days to help out at Beaverbrooks House

Not only have businesses raised funds for carers, but they have also become more aware of the many carers within their workforces and endeavoured to provide the right support for them, including linking them with our service.



An intrepid supporter of Blackpool Carers, Paul Howlett, completed a number of personal challenge experiences throughout the year, along with his best friend, Everest the Bear. He even met a very famous face on the way!

He raised an amazing £3,000 by taking on the following challenges:

- **Cycling the height of Mount Everest**
- **Completing an Ironman Triathlon**
- **Completing Big Ted's 3 Peaks challenge**
- **Took on a 12 activities of Christmas adventure**



Paul Howlett and Everest the Bear met comedian, Steve Coogan on a fundraising climb in the Lake District

Future plans

After a year of immense challenges for carers and their families, we have been privileged to be able to continue to work alongside them in finding ways through difficult times, listening to them, understanding them and developing new ways to make a better life for carers.

Despite the complexities of the pandemic, as an organisation, we have framed much of the year as an opportunity for learning, developing and re-positioning Blackpool Carers to be agile rather than fragile in the face of adversity. With our staff team as strong as ever; in numbers, skills and mindset, we are ready to see the next year take shape with developments in services and within our Centre.

Our long-awaited development of the disused annexe building to the rear of the Centre is now nearing fruition. With funding in place following a number of successful grant applications, coupled with donations from steadfast supporters, we are now able to move forward with creating a new play and event space in the footprint of the existing annexe. Alongside the works to develop the new outdoor space will be a re-configuration of the ground floor of our main building. This will incorporate a new, purpose built and welcoming reception space receiving visitors directly from the car park.

Following the legacy of the pandemic and the impact that is likely to be keenly felt by carers in the long term, we are mindful of strengthening our work streams responding to complex caring situations. We are starting to see an upturn in caring roles around mental ill health and/or substance misuse and will be focussing on sourcing distinct funding to respond to increasing need.

We are also looking to expand and strengthen our work with young adult carers (16-25) as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Being a carer at any age brings its obstacles, challenges and worries; couple this with life changes and decisions in moving towards adulthood and this can impact heavily on aspirations and potential.

We will continue to focus on awareness raising with partner agencies as they begin to emerge from the pandemic, helping to identify carers early in their caring roles in order to offer support before crisis point.



Young carers enjoy exploring and playing outdoors in our garden



The Annexe will be demolished to make way for a super new outdoor space



Young carers with their 'Worry Monsters' enjoying a craft session outdoors

The difference your donations can make



Report of the Trustees

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2021. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2015.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Name

Blackpool Carers Centre Ltd

Registered Company number

05633524 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1114558

Registered office

Blackpool Carers Centre
Beaverbrooks House
147 Newton Drive
Blackpool
FY3 8LZ

Trustees

P Jebb, Chair
S Lambert, Vice Chair
A Gilmore, Treasurer
H Lewis
J Topping
C van Deurs Goss (resigned 22.07.20)
D Capper (resigned 19.11.20)
A Ward
T Jackson (appointed 9.11.20)
S Howarth (appointed 9.11.20)

Company Secretary

Mr T W McMurdo

Auditors

Champion Accountants LLP
Statutory Auditors
7-9 Station Road Hesketh Bank Preston
Lancashire
PR4 6SN

Bankers

HSBC
Victoria Square Thornton Cleveleys
Lancashire
FY5 1AY

President: Professor Saul Becker

Patrons:

Mr John Barnett DL MBE
Mrs Danielle Barnett
Miss Hayley Kay
Mr Clive Hirst

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

The Trustees delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity to the following senior employees:

- Nigel McMurdo - Director of Operations
- Faye Atherton - Director of Quality
- Tom McMurdo - Director of Resources

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Charitable Company (hereafter referred to as "the Charity") is controlled by its governing document, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

As set out in the Articles of Association, the board of trustees comprises not less than three trustees but not more than 12 trustees.

The Board is responsible for the recruitment and appointment of new Trustees. Each year a skills audit is undertaken and if gaps are identified, a recruitment process takes place. The recruitment process has been developed in order to attract a diverse

group of trustees with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience.

Occasionally potential trustees register an interest in the organisation. Following this, a meeting is arranged with the Chair and a Director and the trustee is held on a waiting list until an appropriate vacancy arises.

Induction and training of new trustees

Once a decision has been made to take up a Board position, Trustees receive an induction pack containing the annual report, strategy and business plan and detailed information about the organisation and the personal commitment required. Trustees are invited to visit Beaverbrooks House and shadow workers in order to ensure a detailed understanding of the work carried out.

Each year a Board Development Day is held, when trustees, supported by senior staff, take part in governance training and review the strategy, developing new ideas and learning about each other's roles.

Organisational structure

The activities of the organisation are governed by the board of trustees, all of whom are directors. The board has established an Audit and Governance Sub-Committee, which continues to operate successfully.

Board meetings are held quarterly, and a board assurance framework has been established in order to guide the board and sub-committee agenda.

The Treasurer works closely with the finance team to provide assurance to the board around organisational finance. The board of trustees appoints the Directors who report to the Board on the operational running of the organisation.

Report of the Trustees

Trustees' attendance at board meetings

Trustee	11.05.20	10.08.20	09.11.20	08.02.21
Paul Jebb (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sarah Lambert (Vice Chair)	✓	x	✓	✓
Alison Gilmore (Treasurer)	✓	x	✓	✓
Howard Lewis	✓	x	✓	✓
John Topping	✓	✓	✓	✓
Claire Van Deurs Goss	x	x	N/A	N/A
Tony Ward	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daniel Capper	x	x	N/A	N/A
Tracy Jackson	N/A	N/A	✓	✓
Sian Howarth	N/A	N/A	✓	✓

Related parties

None of the trustees receives remuneration or other benefits from their work with the charity. Trustees are invited to declare any relevant interests at each board meeting, and formally requested to submit an annual register of interests form. Blackpool Carers' Centre Ltd is a network partner of Carers Trust.

Remuneration policy

The board is responsible for considering the remuneration of all staff, taking account of the skills and experience required, as well as the sector norms for charities of this size. Staff pay is reviewed annually by the board of trustees and salaries continue to conform to the wholesale pay review conducted in the financial year 19/20.

Risk management

The board follows a comprehensive risk management policy which clearly defines the roles of the board, audit committee and staff in identifying and managing risks, and how the register of risks should be used as a live document.

The board has a risk matrix to identify all major risks. Each risk is scheduled for attention according to the severity of its potential impact and the Audit and Governance Sub-Committee manages the risk process.

MarkSafety Limited has been employed to manage Health and Safety.

Relationships with funders are maintained and regarded as high priority in order to develop sustainable and diverse funding streams.

Quality

Blackpool Carers Centre holds the Trusted Charity Level 1 Quality Mark and is a Carers Trust Centre of Excellence.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Charity's objects as set out in the objects contained in the company's memorandum of association are:

- a) For the public benefit, to relieve the stresses experienced by carers and the families of people with physical, mental, sensory impairment or substance misuse problems, within the family or home, through the provision of support services and the promotion of the needs of carers on the Fylde Coast and surrounding areas.
- b) To advance public education concerning carers.
- c) To undertake any other charitable activity in connection with the above.

Purpose

The charity has a clear and easily understandable purpose which is to make 'A Better Life for Carers'.

Public Benefit

The trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in setting its strategy and when planning for the future. The charity supports carers from age of 5 who live, attend school/college or have a GP in Blackpool. A wide variety of support is offered to carers, families and professionals without charge.

We provide:

- One to one intensive support plans;
- Respite activities including youth clubs, trips and activities- age specific
- Beaverbrooks House as a venue for respite and ad hoc support
- Benefits advice
- School liaison
- Information and advice
- Volunteering opportunities
- Counselling;
- Dementia training
- Substance Misuse project
- Mental Health support
- Sensory room
- Emergency and small grants
- Whole family support
- Hospital based service
- Magazine

In order to ensure that resources are allocated effectively and to reduce dependency on services, initial assessments identify carers who are in the highest need according to a 'red/amber/green' status. The most complex families receive time limited, intensive packages of support intended to improve the quality of their lives. At the end of the support plan, carers are able to access peer or volunteer led support alongside organised events and activities.

Report of the Trustees

Throughout 2020 and into 2021 our carers told us that what they missed the most was being able to be here, in person, with their friends and our support team. For us, being able to move back to face to face delivery, in line with government guidelines and following many revisions of risk assessments with our health and safety consultant, was our priority. Working hard to remove the many barriers that the pandemic presented meant that carers of all ages felt assured that we had taken all steps possible to bring our respite and support provision alive once again, creating opportunities for meaningful respite, direct support and a range of practical services.

Throughout our planning this year, as always, we put carers and their families in the lead, consulting with them in whatever way we could to find out what they needed and working to put in place those aspects of life that were being so sorely missed. In the initial phase of coming back together in person, we operated capacity numbers on group sessions to allow for safe social distancing and introduced a booking system to manage expected numbers. This provided a welcome structure for carers in safely accessing the amount of respite time needed to help them to continue to care.

Outline of COVID activities.

Charitable activities

In order to deliver our purpose, we have developed a strategy focusing on three key areas, namely; carers, people and resources and this is reviewed annually. With the use of an operational plan, we review how our activities have performed against outputs and outcomes. We report on impact and ensure that all planned activities will achieve our purpose. Regular reviews allow trustees to build on the successes and learn when things go wrong in order to feed into a cycle of continuous development. In response to the

COVID-19 pandemic however, the board passed a temporary strategy to better meet the immediate needs being experienced by our carers. This focused on three key areas:

Stay Safe & Healthy

This aim sought to ensure that access to one to one provision and benefit advice was protected for our carers. In addition to this, workers proactively made welfare checks to maintain a high level of support for people on our caseload.

Moreover, a central tenet to this strategic aim was to meet the most essential needs of our carers. This included the sourcing of funding to provide grants to carers to enable the purchase of essential appliances and furniture; as well as the provision of food, sanitary products, toiletries, cleaning and washing products and baby essentials.

Stay Connected

The next focus sought to keep carers connected to a social group and enable effective peer support. This included the provision of basic tablet devices and tech support.

Stay Body & Mind Active

The final focus saw the carers centre deliver a variety of online respite sessions as well as providing a variety of outdoor toys and equipment, arts and craft activities, baking kits and equipment. All aimed at allowing carers to stay active throughout lockdown.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Over 20/21:

For adult carers:

- 395 carers were signposted to partner services;
- 3,883 support sessions were provided;
- 947 adult carers accessed support;
- 356 referrals for support;
- 1,230 respite places provided;
- 435 training places provided for carers caring for those suffering from dementia;
- 167 carers have accessed dementia support;
- 375 instances of benefits support sessions;
- 382 instances of partnership working.

For young carers:

- 139 referrals for support;
- 353 assessments conducted;
- 2,458 intensive 1:1 sessions provided;
- 2,475 places at respite sessions provided;
- 300 signposting instances

For young adult carers

- 251 intensive 1:1 sessions provided;
- 53 young adult carers supported;
- 96 instances of partnership working
- 180 places at young adult carers respite provided.

Family Focus:

- 120 assessments conducted;
- 2,627 support sessions held;
- 652 instances of partnership working;
- 1,980 places at respite sessions have been provided.

Report of the Trustees

Resources

We are particularly grateful to the many funders who have provided vital support this year. We are indebted to The Beaverbrooks Charitable Trust, who have not only provided Beaverbrooks House at a peppercorn rent for 20 years, but also provide the funding for the vital role of Volunteer Coordinator.

In addition to monetary support we have been fortunate to benefit from many pro bono supporters who provide professional guidance and corporate resources.

We very much appreciate the kindness of all our supporters who so generously fundraise and volunteer to make a better life for carers.

Passion, Quality, Respect

As part of our commitment to our staff, students and volunteers, we have introduced a values-based performance management system. This has continued through this financial year and is now truly lived through everything we do.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial review and reserves

The results of the Group are summarised on the Statement of Financial Activities.

The closing reserves are shown on the Balance Sheet.

The Group has reserves of £1,075,677 at the year end. £30,886 of this total is restricted for specific future costs.

Of the remaining £1,044,791, there are £778,955 of designated funds: £348,955 is a designated fund which represents the net book value (after depreciation) of fixed assets held in the Group (including the leasehold improvements donated in 2017); a further £180,000 is designated for the Annexe development and £250,000 is designated for specific elements of the

Young Carers programme. This leaves a balance of £265,836 constituting general / free reserves.

The Charity's reserves policy is to hold a level of 3-6 months free reserves equating to the unrestricted direct charitable costs for the year, being approximately £660,000.

The free reserves of £265,836 currently represent just under five months' worth of those costs. The Trustees will endeavour to build this level nearer six months in the future.

Investment policy and objectives

The Charity is holding £100,000 in a deposit Bond for safekeeping and allocates other balances between different accounts when not required for immediate cashflow purposes.

Future Developments

During 2021 we will be focusing on:

- developing our work on support to young adult carers, enabling a long term project to be established;
- identifying more carers at an early stage in their caring role by improving our external communications with professionals, families, businesses and the public generally;
- improving the financial position of carers by increasing provision of benefits advice;
- securing long term funding for a project focusing on adult mental ill health and substance misuse support

Importantly, as the Health and Social Care landscape shifts, we will develop new ways of working that align with the priorities of our statutory partners.

OUR FUNDRAISING PRACTICE

Blackpool Carers Centre Ltd has moved away from a heavy reliance on statutory funding from the local authority. Instead, the Charity is developing and widening its income streams to ensure a sustainable future.

Our approach to fundraising is based on building and maintaining key relationships. We take this approach seriously, ensuring that donors feel fully involved in our work and able to see clearly why their donations are making a better life for carers. Whilst we accept single donations, we do not actively seek them. Our best fundraisers are the service delivery team who deliver excellence in their daily work.

Passionate, committed donors who understand the value of unpaid carers will often become our ambassadors. We aim to connect with donors and help them to understand why donations are important and how their money will be used. We offer our donors choice and focus on the impact of their donations. We consult with donors regularly. Many donors accept recognition whereas some of our donors request anonymity.

Our Head of Fundraising holds the MInstF (Cert) qualification from the Institute of Fundraising (IoF). We have subscribed to the IoF's Code of Fundraising Practice and pro-actively adhere to the code by training all staff and volunteers in its contents.

As a result of our relationship approach, we do not approach individuals for donations and we have not received any fundraising complaints. There is a clear process to deal with complaints.

Report of the Trustees

GOING CONCERN

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis, which the Trustees consider to be appropriate having considered the foreseeable future. The Charitable Company holds reserves which are sufficiently in line with its reserves policy.

All employees, students and volunteers are treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training and any other benefits is on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees are helped and encouraged to further develop to their full potential and the talents and the resources of the workforce are fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

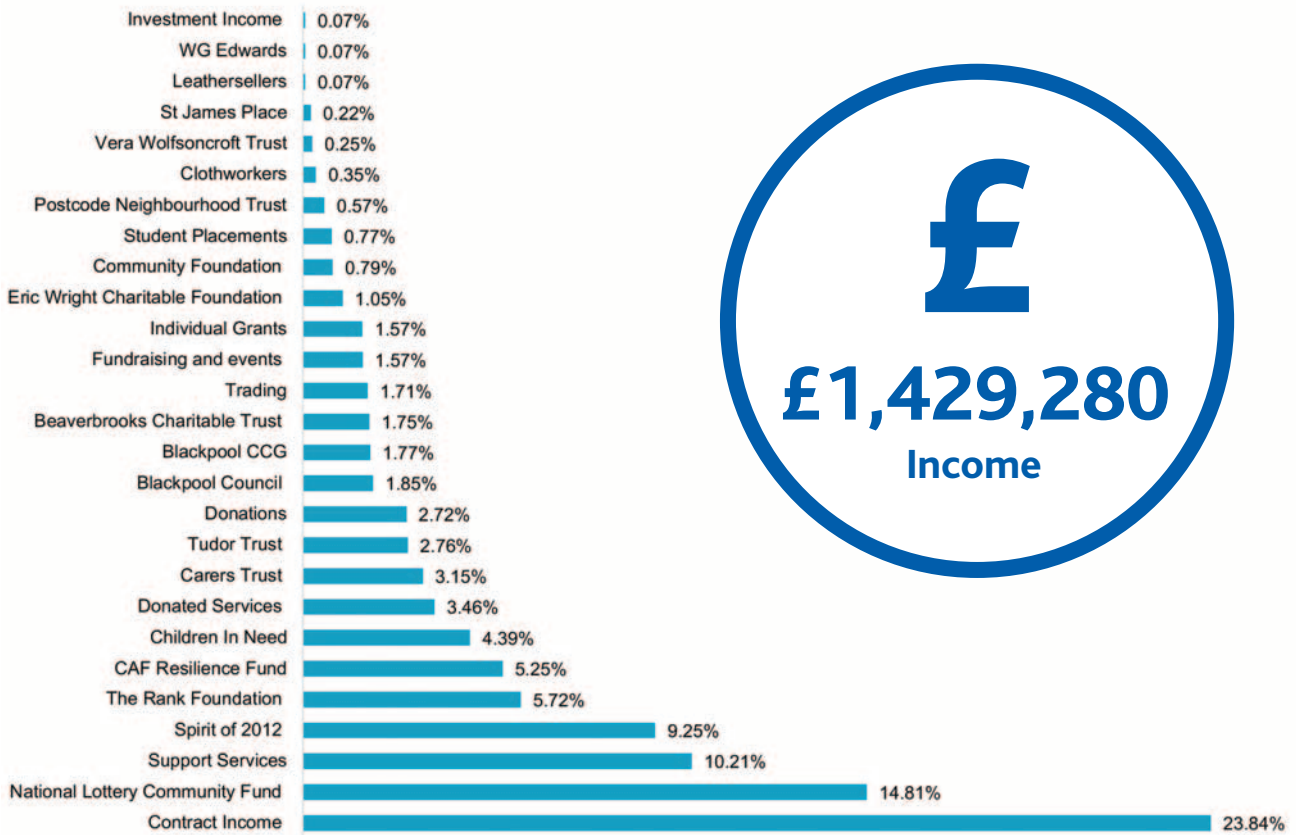
The charity employs a number of tools to measure the performance of each of its projects. All carers across the service receive a pre and post intervention assessment, enabling a measure to be taken of the impact achieved by each project, both collectively and individually with carers and their families.

Quantitative information is generated through each contact made, with a range of key performance indicators, including referral numbers, instances of 1:1 support and activity attendances, all being regularly assessed to ensure quality throughout the service. Qualitative information, most frequently communicated through case studies, is used to give a holistic picture of a case, both internally to measure performance and externally to inform our partners.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The charity's policy is to promote equality of opportunity to all in employment and throughout the selection process, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, sexuality, marital status and social class. Blackpool Carers oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

Charity Income and Expenditure



£
£1,429,280
Income

£
£1,047,877
Expenditure





To make a donation to provide
respite for our carers

Text **BLACKPOOLCARERS to 70085**
to give **£5***

*Texts charged at your standard network rate

OR



JustGiving™



Blackpool Carers Centre

Quality • Passion • Respect

Charity No. 1114558

Blackpool Carers

Beaverbrooks House, 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ

Tel: 01253 393748

Email: admin@blackpoolcarers.org

www.blackpoolcarers.org



blackpoolcarers



@BlackpoolCarers



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Blackpool Carers Centre Limited

Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 5633524.

A Network Partner of

**CARERS
TRUST**