

Helensburgh and Lomond Carers SCIO

The Charity's Constitution sets out its Charitable Purpose in the form of Objects as follows:

The objects of the Charity are to promote, for the benefit of carers:

- (a) the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage by providing information, advice and support services within Helensburgh and Lomond;
- (b) the advancement of the education of the general public, influential individuals and relevant organisations on matters relating to the social welfare of carers;
- (c) the advancement of citizenship through volunteering in the delivery of services; and
- (d) any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding objects.

Its **Mission** is:

"To make a positive difference to the lives of unpaid carers."

Background

Charting the history of services for unpaid carers in Helensburgh and Lomond

Prior to 2000 there were no statutory or voluntary services in Argyll & Bute offering support to unpaid carers as their primary function, however, that year the Scottish Government made funding available to local authorities to be used firstly to determine what services carers living in their respective areas required and then contribute to the costs of providing those services. Within Helensburgh and Lomond a Steering Group was formed and questionnaires were distributed to carers inviting their comments and suggestions. This confirmed the need for an advice and information support service as well as the demand for a Carers' Centre to be established in Helensburgh.

The Steering Group initially set up an office within a room in the Royal Sailors Rest, Braeholm, Helensburgh, and later employed a Project Co-ordinator and Administrator to take matters forward. A voluntary Management Committee was formed in November 2000 to oversee the development of what was then called the South East Argyll Carer's Project. At that time, carers were largely invisible to the statutory agencies and one of the first tasks was to identify who they were and begin to provide the level of advice and support that could be afforded with the limited resources available.

In 2001, the Project joined other local carers' organisations to form the Argyll & Bute Carers Networking Board to share experience and best practice, as well as create a forum for discussing

carers' issues with statutory agencies and other interested parties. At the end of that year, the Project became a member of the Network of Carers Centres across the UK operating under the umbrella of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, which had its Scottish Headquarters in Glasgow.

As the organisation grew and developed, more formal arrangements and structures were put in place. In 2002, a written Constitution was agreed and the Project became a Registered Scottish Charity, with the legal form of a Charitable Association. In 2004, the name was changed to Helensburgh and Lomond Carers' Project and it relocated from Braeholm to offices in East King Street, Helensburgh. However, increasing demands meant larger premises were soon required and in 2006 the Charity took occupancy of leased accommodation at 17E East King Street. This provided more space and facilities to allow the Carers Centre to be properly established and for the services offered to carers to be expanded.

Following a review of the governance arrangement by the Charity's trustees, a number of amendments to its Constitution were passed at its AGM in 2010, including dropping the word 'Project' from its name. This was a prelude to an agreement at the 2011 AGM to seek approval from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to change the legal form of the Charity to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This meant establishing a new and separate legal entity, which would replace the existing Charitable Association on the Scottish Charity Register. OSCR approval was secured and on 30 March 2012 the Charitable Association was removed from the Charities Register and formally wound up on 5 April 2012.

Quality Assurance Accreditation

The Carers Trust has adopted the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO), which was developed, and is accredited by the independent Charities Evaluation Service (CES). Building on the 12 quality areas that make up the System, the Carers Trust has also introduced its own Quality Mark by adding 2 further quality areas designed for carers organisations providing services to adult and young carers.

There is a requirement placed on all members of the Carers Trust Network to firstly secure Level 1 PQASSO accreditation from the CES and then the Trust's Quality Mark, which is assessed separately by the Trust. The Charity achieved the CES accreditation in March 2013 and the Trust's Quality Mark in August 2013 and both are valid for 3 years



Detail

Impact of Caring on Adult and Young Carers

Carers are a very diverse group. Their situations vary according to the age and gender of the carer and the person receiving care; the family and generational relationship between carer and the care receiver; the health and prognosis of the care recipient; the health of the carer; the financial status of the carer; whether or not they are in employment; and the availability

and accessibility of formal health and social care services. Some carers are likely to have heavier care obligations than others, including:

- socially or geographically isolated carers who have sole responsibility for supporting a disabled/older person;
- carers who are caring for people with complex needs;
- carers who do not know about potential sources of services/support, or where the person they are caring for refuses to use these;
- the care recipient has behavioural problems;
- there is a history of conflict between the carer and the care recipient;
- carers of people who are assessed as not being eligible for services;
- carers from ethnic minority groups, who may be unaware of services/support; be unable to access these; or find them culturally inappropriate.
- carers who are themselves very old or who have health problems of their own.

Adult Carers

- difficulties combining caring with paid work and resulting financial problems which can be exacerbated by extra costs of caring;
- feeling sidelined by 'professionals' who fail to involve them in decisions about the person they care for;
- the high risk of psychological problems because of the emotional stresses of the role, including panic attacks, sleep deprivation, poor concentration, feeling anxious, guilty insecure or depressed;
- finding the role too demanding and feeling exhausted and unable to cope;
- feeling socially isolated and trapped by their caring responsibilities;
- difficulties keeping in touch with friends and feelings of loneliness;
- conflicts with spouses or children because of lack of time for them; and
- unable or cannot afford to take a break from their caring responsibilities;

Young Carers

- isolation from other children of the same age and from other family members;
- lack of time for play, sport or leisure activities;
- conflict between the needs of the person they are helping and their own needs leading to feelings of guilt and resentment;
- feeling that there is nobody there for them, that professionals are only working with the adult and do not listen to them;
- lack of recognition, praise or respect for their contribution;
- feeling that they are different from other children and are unable to be part of the group;
- feeling that no one else understands his or her experience; and
- problems moving into adulthood, especially with finding work, further education and training opportunities, finding their own home and establishing relationships.

Population growing older

The majority of carers in Argyll & Bute are middle-aged or older. As the population of the area is steadily growing older, it is projected that older carers will provide more very intense care in the years ahead, mainly looking after a spouse in the same household. The General Register Office for Scotland has used 2010 statistics to profile the population of Scotland in 2033. This projects that by then:

- the population of Scotland will increase by 7.25%
- the number of people aged 60 and above will increase by 50% to 1,752,000
- the number of under 16s is expected to decrease by 4%.

There is a strong urban/rural dimension to the ageing population with a disproportionate number of older people living in the rural parts of Scotland. In this set of statistics, the population of Argyll & Bute is projected to decrease by 5.7% by 2033 rather than increase, but the 75+ age group is expected to grow by 84.1% and the population aged under 16 to decline by 13.7%.

The age profile of a community has an effect on the type and sustainability of services they require and the availability of economically active people to deliver them. Argyll & Bute Council's population projections in its 'Main Issues Report Monitoring Statement' of May 2011 reflected the picture presented in the Registrar General's statistics. This is attributed to the lack of young adults in the population profile, which has a significant effect on the birth rates applied, while the generally higher levels of older age groups have a similar affect on the projected mortality rates.

Improving Carers' Lives

There has been a considerable amount of research over the years on how to improve carers' lives and whilst the wording may differ, there is a generally accepted set of 5 outcomes most organisations that support unpaid carers are striving to achieve. These are:

- carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role;
- carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role;
- carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role;
- carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity, and
- children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive and to enjoy positive childhoods.

The approach adopted by individual carers organisations will vary dependent upon their own circumstances, priorities, capacity, expertise and resources. Those that operate in the voluntary sector may also be affiliated in some way to an umbrella organisation where separate independent bodies are working collectively or collaboratively to pursue common goals.

The number of people aged 75+ in Argyll & Bute is expected to grow by 84.1% by 2033

There are 4,500 unpaid carers living in Helensburgh & Lomond

Adult and Young Carers resident in Helensburgh and Lomond

The new analysis does not assist establish where carers live and there remains a reliance on the 2011 Census to identify the distribution. The Census indicated that the percentage of the population of Argyll & Bute providing unpaid care was 1.0% higher than the national average. There is nothing to suggest the current number will be lower than the 17% produced in the new analysis and, by applying this percentage to the most recent population figures, it would indicate there are around 15,000 unpaid carers resident in Argyll & Bute, with 4,500 living in Helensburgh and Lomond.

It is important for the Charity to have an understanding of the number of young carers and young adult carers there are in Helensburgh and Lomond who are supported by the Young Carers Initiative, and this spans the 5-24 age group. The Charity has analysed the data available and this estimates there are 140 young carers under the age of 16 and a further 260 aged 16 - 24. It is recognised that these estimates are very uncertain. Nevertheless the figures in the following table indicate the likely orders of magnitude of the numbers of carers in the specified age ranges in Helensburgh and Lomond.

Ages	5-11	12-15	16 - 19	20 - 24	25 +	Total
No. of carers	30	110	120	140	4,100	4,500

Transitioning

The carer population is not static, but is constantly changing with a proportion transitioning in and out of caring each year. The statistics available provide a snapshot of the population in Scotland that are acting as unpaid carers at a particular time. Whilst this stood at 17% for adult carers and 4% for younger carers, the number of people who will be carers during their lifetime will be far higher. Caring intensity is on a spectrum; with most carers providing care for up to 20 hours; a quarter 20-49 hours and almost 20% over 50 hours. Studies have shown that around a third of adult carers take up or relinquish their caring role each year.

Adult Carers Register

The Charity has maintained a confidential Adult Carers Register for many years to record the personal details and circumstances of carers who turn to the organisation seeking information, advice and support. If a carer does not wish their details registered, they will not be denied services. Former carers remain on the Register for a period (normally 12 months) after they cease to be a carer, which is usually on the death of the cared for person. During that period they will receive 'transitional' support as appropriate to their individual needs and circumstances. Some former carers can find themselves acting as carers again at later stages of their life and they are reinstated on the Carers Register.

At 31 March 2015, there were 603 carers and 134 former carers on the Adult Carers Register.

Young Carers Register

The Charity introduced the Young Carers Initiative in August 2012 and was then in a position to accept referrals of young people and record their details on a separate Young Carers Register.

At 31 March 2015 there were 127 carers on the Young Carers Register.

Carers can be of all ages and come from all walks of life and the demands placed on them will differ, dependent on their personal situation and circumstance, the complexity of the cared for person's needs and the number of hours they have to commit to the role. The type of care required by the cared for person can mean the level of support that has to be provided is initially low and gradually increases. However, for some carers this starts off high and does not ease during his or her lifetime.

***There were
around 3,500
visitors to the
Carers Centre in
2014/15***

Research has shown that the early stages of caring are the most difficult and stressful for new carers to deal with and early identification and intervention can prove beneficial and cost effective. However, a carer's journey is unlikely to be smooth, but constantly changing. There will be periods when the demands placed on them reach excessive levels and this can prove harmful to their own health and wellbeing. The Charity has designed the delivery of the services it offers to respond to these variations and provide carers with the confidence to turn to the Carers Centre whenever they need help to cope with their caring responsibilities.

Carers Centre

The Carers' Centre continued to provide the 'hub' for arranging the delivery of a wide range of free services to unpaid carers during 2014/15, including:

- a drop-in facility, which is available for carers from Tuesday – Friday each week;
- an information and advice service providing relevant information on a variety of topics (e.g. benefits, carers' rights, local services etc), and signposting to other agencies for additional or more specific assistance;
- informal advocacy for carers in helping to secure their rights and entitlements from statutory bodies;
- a one to one support service offering a listening ear and emotional support from staff trained in appropriate listening skills;
- a Friendship Support Group, which is run in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland for carers who provide care for someone with dementia;
- a Parent Carer Support Group for carers who provide care for young people;
- a Carers and Ex-carers Coffee Morning and Drop-in;
- a stress management service utilising a range of holistic therapies to help carers to deal with stressful situations that they may encounter;
- a counselling service;
- training programmes designed to meet a wide range of carers' needs;
- a walking group;
- a social programme based on accessible social activities and opportunities for carers to gain informal support and share experiences while taking a break from their caring roles;
- subject to funding, short breaks for carers to give them some relief from caring for a few days;
- limited respite for carers who wish to attend any Centre organised activities or to attend local

- training courses, and
- regular Newsletters sent to all carers, as well as other publications with information and advice.

Whilst most of the services are provided by the staff and volunteers of the Charity, qualified therapists are contracted on a sessional basis to provide holistic therapies on a weekly basis and, when considered appropriate, adult and young carers are referred to professional counselling services which are also contracted on a sessional basis.

Information and Advice

Carers regularly drop-in to the Carers Centre seeking information and advice on a range of topics. It is important staff keep themselves up to date and are in a position to respond to any queries and that leaflets and other reference sources are reviewed regularly to ensure these are also current. In 2014/15, the average number of visitors each month was recorded as 289 which equates to 3,468 over the year. This is higher than the figures for the previous 5 years and is attributed to an increased use of the Centre for small training events, drop-in social events, group activities and carers assessments. From the number that dropped-in to the Centre in 2014/15, there were 845 occasions when carers were provided with personalised advice and guidance that addressed their specific needs, 713 were given emotional support and 96 were signposted to partnership organisations for services or support.

A core function of the Charity is to assist carers address the day-to-day problems they will inevitably encounter in their role and, in particular, to help them secure the services and welfare support they are entitled to receive from statutory bodies. This can cover a wide range of topics, including matters relating to housing, benefits, income tax, power of attorney, how to fill in forms, access to facilities, health care services etc. While some carers only need to be advised on what steps to take, others require further assistance and this can involve the staff intervening on their behalf in ongoing disputes or representing the carer's interests by making direct contact with the statutory agencies to try and secure some form of resolution.

The Charity is well placed to do this because of the regular contact and good working relationship it has with these other organisations. This support is described as informal 'advocacy' as it falls short of representing a carer in a legal environment, such as a tribunal or formal hearing of their 'case'. There were 102 occasions in 2014/15 when carers were provided with this form of support.

Newsletters/Website

The Charity aims to keep carers updated on issues that impact on their caring responsibilities, as well as drawing their attention to forthcoming events and activities that may be of interest. Within the Carers Centre, visitors will find a wide range of notices, publications and leaflets on services provided by the Charity and other organisations that are relevant to carers. At 31 March 2015, there were 98 outlets across Helensburgh and Lomond being used for the distribution of posters and leaflets. Most of these were produced and printed in-house, as was the Charity's Newsletter, which remains the main means of keeping in touch with all carers and former carers registered with the organisation.

Nine editions of the Newsletter were published during 2014/15 and circulated to all carers and former carers registered, local elected members and organisations, with additional copies made available at some of the outlets mentioned earlier. This equates to around 7,000 copies printed over the course of the year and, while the Newsletters are available on-line, most recipients have indicated they still



prefer to receive the paper version. The Newsletter attracts consistently high approval ratings in the Annual Carers' Surveys. The Newsletters contained 26 articles about carers rights and entitlements and this is likely to have contributed to the increase recorded in the number of carers who indicated that they had a better understanding of these as a result of information or training provided by the Charity.

The Charity's website is another valuable means of communicating with carers, but it remains a challenge to keep the site updated and it has not reached the level of interaction with carers that was originally planned. Whilst it is regarded by the Management Committee as being adequate, there is still much development work required and the main barrier to this is the limitations of the resources and skills available. One of the trustees kept the site up to date in 2014/15, but

efforts to attract a volunteer with the design and technical skills to assist with maintaining and developing the site during the year were unsuccessful. The Young Carers Initiative has had greater success in communicating with young carers who are registered through the social media and it has its own Facebook page, which can be found on the internet through Helensburgh and Lomond Young Carers Initiative. Part of this can be accessed by the public, but there are sections that are restricted to young carers. During 2014/15, the Management Committee canvassed adult carers views on using Facebook as a means of keeping them updated and the majority were in favour of this option. This is again an area where the lack of skills and the means to keep the system updated is proving a barrier to progress. It is hoped this can be taken forward in 2015/16. In the meantime, the website can be viewed at www.helensburgh-carer-support.org

Counselling Services

When it is identified by staff that adult carers would benefit from professional counselling to help them cope with the stresses and strains of their responsibilities, they are referred to a confidential counselling service which the Charity has been using for a number of years. The costs involved are met by the Charity and the level of demand varies from year to year. In 2014/15, 67 such sessions were arranged. Separate counselling arrangements are made for young carers and 30 sessions were arranged during the year, including some with their families.

Short Breaks

In recently years the Charity has secured funds from different sources to allow carers to have access to short breaks away from home over a weekend or for a few days mid-week. During 2014/15, 17 adult carers were provided with funding to meet the costs of personalised short breaks to suit their circumstances. These averaged out at 5 overnight stays away from home for each carer.

Providing young carers with short respite breaks is a feature of the work of the Young Carers Initiative and during 2014/15 arrangements were made for breaks away from home for 52 young carers. This included 4 nights at Broomlee Outdoor Centre for 21 young carers, 2 nights for 22 young carers attending the Scottish Young Carers Festival, 7 young carers participated in a 5 day sailing adventure organised by the Ocean Youth Trust and 2 young carers and their families benefitted from a Short Break.

Respite Service

The Charity has a small budget to offer carers respite support for the person they care for, which was boosted in 2014/15 by additional funding received from the Change Fund for the Carers Assessment Project. This is mainly to allow the carer to participate in the events and activities that are available through the Carers Centre, but it is also available when they have a need to leave the person they care for to keep a medical appointment, attend a funeral or some other short term commitment. The Charity arranges for a local care service to visit the cared for person during the absence of the carer to attend to their needs. Arrangements can also be put in place to cover emergencies or when carers find themselves at crisis points.

***Over 600
Holistic
Therapy
sessions were
provided for
carers in
2014/15***

In 2014/15 a total of 70 respite sessions were provided, which was much higher than in previous years and can be attributed to the work of the Carers Assessment Support Worker developing individual support plans for carers.

Holistic Therapies

For many carers, a few hours break is their preferred option as this is less disruptive for the person they care for, compared to being separated for a longer period. For some, it is their only option. Many carers suffer stress-related conditions and at times feel ill, anxious or exhausted because of their caring role. The Charity can offer them a range of holistic therapy treatments to provide some relief from their day-to-day responsibilities, allowing them to relax and ease their aches and pains in a comfortable and soothing environment. This 'recharges their batteries' and assists them cope with their role.

Importantly, the sessions bring carers into contact with the staff, who are able to listen to their problems and concerns and offer advice, access to other services or signpost them to organisations that may be better placed to address their needs. In the annual carers surveys carried out by the Charity, the provision of more therapy sessions has always emerged as the top priority for carers if additional funding became available. In total 608 individual therapy sessions were delivered to carers in 2014/15, which is an increase over the previous year. However, it is proving more difficult to secure funding for this service and the Charity is reviewing how best to address this 2015/16.

Social Events/Activities

Securing funding for Social Events and Activities during 2014/15 was also a problem, but the Charity was able to maintain a programme for carers, which involved 72 separate events. Most of these were low cost gatherings held at the carers centres, but some were open to a wider audience, particularly older people, and others were arranged in part to raise funds. These included a Family Spring Fling event, Tea Dances, Carers Cafes, Quiz Nights, Afternoon Teas, Christmas Lunch, Fashions Shows, coffee mornings etc. In the 2014/15 Annual Carers Survey, a number of carers expressed disappointment that the options available were not as wide ranging as in previous years and the Charity is endeavouring to secure additional funding to increase choice in the 2015/16 Programme.

Outreach Service

The Charity employs 2 part-time Outreach Support Workers to improve the support available to carers in the remote parts of Helensburgh and Lomond and strengthen existing links with GP Practices, healthcare staff and social care services. This has resulted in close relationships being formed with

all the Practices and the community nursing staff make regular referrals to the Charity. The Charity's promotional leaflets and Newsletters are placed in the surgeries and there are designated display areas for news stories and information that may be of interest to carers. The 2 part-time Outreach Carer Support Workers carry out home visits to carers who have difficulty leaving the person they care for unattended and look for ways to deliver services to carers living in the more rural parts of the operational area. They also meet with carers privately away from their home at different venues. In total there were 225 such face to face visit carried out in 2014/15. Holistic Therapy sessions have been delivered at the Health Centres at Kilcreggan, Arrochar and Garelochhead in recent years and this continued throughout 2014/15. Carers Cafes were held each month in Rosneath and Kilcreggan and, when other activities delivered at rural venues are included, this meant there were 39 outreach events organised over the year.

Carers Befriending Service

The Carers Befriending Service was introduced as a pilot in 2011/12 and aims to provide respite and companionship for carers, to reduce isolation and improve their general well-being, as well as allowing them some time on their own to have a break from their caring responsibilities. This involved introducing a volunteer visiting service for the person they care for in their own homes or assisting the carer and the person they care for to access local amenities or participate in recreational activities in their community. The evaluation of the pilot was extremely positive and the Charity decided to continue the initiative. Initially one of the Outreach Workers acted as the Befriending Co-ordinator, but a dedicated part-time Carers Befriending Service Support Worker was recruited in 2013, which put the Service on a much firmer footing.

The process of recruiting, securing Disclosure Scotland clearance, training and then matching a befriender to a befriended is a protracted one, but at 31 March 2015, there were 11 bendifenders who had been through this and were successfully matched. Another 2 bendifenders had completed the process and were awaiting a match and there were 5 potential bendifenders waiting to start the process. The demand for this Service is high and at the end of the year there were 23 people waiting to be matched to a befriender. This includes both carers and people who are cared for and a number of the referrals for this Service have originated from the work of the Carers Support Plan and Outreach Support staff. The Co-ordinator works closely with Argyll Voluntary Action to try and identify, recruit and train new bendifenders.

At the beginning of 2014/15, the Charity received £2,000, which represented the first payment of a 2 year grant from the Hugh Fraser Foundation to support the Service. The second £2,000 payment was received in March 2015. This is used to contribute to the travel and incidental expenses incurred by bendifenders. Unfortunately, during the year the Co-ordinator of the Service suffered a health problem, which kept him off work. The role was covered by the Volunteer Co-ordinator and sessional staff to ensure the bendifenders continued to be supported.

Carers Support Plans

A high level outcome for the Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership's Plan for taking forward the Scottish Government's Reshaping Care for Older People Programme, is that "*Carers should be supported to continue in their caring role.*" At the end of 2012/13, the Charity was successful in securing monies from the Change Fund to meet the two year costs of employing a Support Worker to carry out carers assessments (now called carers support plans) in the Helensburgh and Lomond and Cowal and Bute areas. Although the Charity is acting as the employer, and manages the post holder,

99 Support Plans for carers were completed

it is working with Crossroads Caring for Carers (Cowal and Bute) and Argyll & Bute Council to monitor referral processes and related procedures and ensure there is equity of access to carer's assessments across Helensburgh & Lomond and Cowal and Bute. A similar post was established for the north west part of Argyll & Bute and this is managed by the Dochas Centre in Lochgilphead.

The Support Worker visits carers at their home or other suitable location to discuss their circumstances and needs. They have adopted the 'Talking Points' approach, which enables them to record their conversation with the carer in an informal, narrative format, rather than using a tick box form, which provides a fuller picture of each carer's situation. This helps:

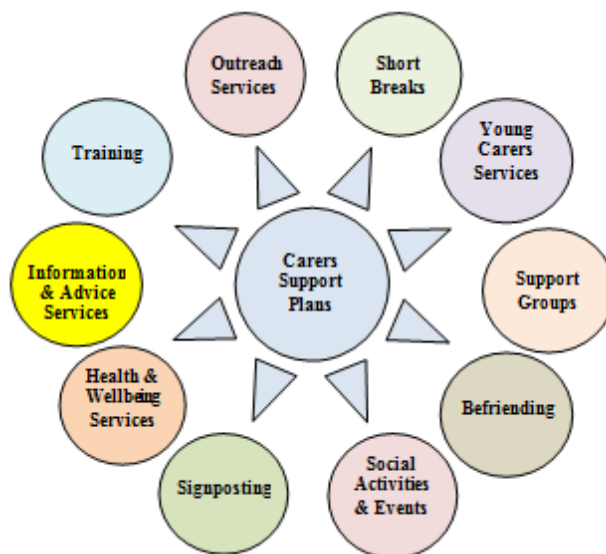
- identify the types and levels of care provided by the carer;
- establish what types and levels of care the carer is willing and able to provide;
- identify current and potential risks to the carer's health and wellbeing as a result of the caring role, and
- judge whether their caring role is sustainable.

Possible outcomes can then be discussed with the carer, in terms of:

- the support required to assist them in their caring role;
- enabling them to have a life of their own, and
- maintaining and improving their own health and wellbeing.

This information is used to complete the support plan, which provides the basis for recommending an appropriate information and/or support package to be put in place to meet the carer's needs. Carers are sent a copy of the plan and outcomes and can amend these if necessary and decide if they want to share this with another agency or individual. The Support Worker will follow up on the agreed outcomes where possible.

In 2013/14, the first year of the Project, a total of 44 support plans were completed and 27 were for carers living in Helensburgh and Lomond and 17 for carers living in Cowal and Bute. Last year a further 99 plans were completed, with 68 in Helensburgh and Lomond and 31 in Cowal and Bute. A further £20,000 was secured from the Change Fund by the Charity last year to provide the Support Worker with a Respite Budget and, following discussions with Crossroads, it was agreed that £8,000 should be utilised by carers in Cowal and Bute and £12,000 in Helensburgh and Lomond. This allowed the support worker to offer flexible, imaginative respite opportunities to carers when it was required, including crisis situations. She was also involved in a 4 month pilot project with the Life Change Trust, which offered individual grants of up to £500 to people with Dementia and/or their



carers. This additional funding has added significant value to the service and helped support those in greatest need with their caring role.

A Carers Assessment Monitoring Group was established to oversee the progress being made by this new service and a full evaluation was conducted at the end of 2014/15. This included a survey of carers and other stakeholders and feedback was very positive with 59% of carers feeling that something positive had changed for them and 100% of stakeholders indicating that the role of the Support worker had made a difference for carers.

It is not always straight forward to measure outcomes from the support plans as these are often dependent on another agency fulfilling an action required for a carer (e.g. a referral to Social Work or Health for additional assistance). Another agency may not be able to give this assistance, so this will be seen as a negative outcome by carers. However, Carers Centres are often able to offer support without statutory organisations intervention at all. Carers reported the following positive outcomes:

- Access to breaks – especially being able to arrange breaks when they require them
- Information specifically for Carers which makes a difference
- Time to talk and take stock of their situation
- Referrals to other agencies and following up on the referrals
- Emotional support
- Financial information

For a number of carers the support plans made no material difference to the situation, but several commented that they found it valuable to be able to talk about their situation and felt that their contribution was being valued.

Such has been the success of this project that the Community Health Partnership has agreed to mainstream the funding involved, which has allowed the Support Worker's post to be made permanent.

Carers Training

A key transition point for any carer is when they first take up their caring role. Early intervention has proved to be the most effective means of reducing the adverse physical, emotional and financial aspects often associated with this change in their life. Towards the end of 2012/13, the Management Committee utilised grant funding from NHS Highland's Carer Information Strategy to recruit a Carers Training Co-ordinator on a part-time basis. The postholder took up the position in February 2013 and made an immediate impact. She designed a training needs analysis tool, carried out evaluations and created a Training Programme. This comprised core and ancillary options (such as ad hoc information events and/or emerging issues sessions) for adult carers that could be delivered on a one-to-one basis at home or to small groups at venues in rural and remote parts of Helensburgh and Lomond. This follows a training framework which groups the training needs under the headings of the Caring Role, Outside the Caring Role, Peer Support, Sustainability and Finances.

During 2014/15 the Training Co-ordinator ran a series of 7 training courses, which each ran for between 3 to 20 weeks, and 5 x 1-day workshops which benefited 93 carers and included Tia-Chi, Mindfulness, Stress and Anxiety, First Aid, Caring with Confidence and Acceptance & Commitment. The evaluations were all positive with participants indicating these had helped them focus on their own health and well-being, had given them strategies for managing stress and encouraged them to have a social life outside caring. The training was also a break away from their caring roles and again highlighted the benefits of peer support when groups of carers are brought together and have an opportunity to discuss the challenges they are facing and possible solutions.

The Co-ordinator continues to develop the 'menu' of options within the Training Programme in discussion with carers and partner organisations. In particular she is exploring the options of introducing support for carers looking after people with mental health problems and plans to add this to the Training Programme. Efforts were made to secure funding to increase the hours worked by the Co-ordinator and to extend her role to reach more carers living in rural areas. While this was not possible in 2014/15, her hours have been increased from 25 to 28 per week, with effect from 1 April 2015.

**93 carers
participated in
the 2014/15
Carers
Training**

Young Carers Initiative

Services for young carers in Helensburgh and Lomond were first introduced by the Charity in April 2012 with the employment of a Young Carers Development Co-ordinator and Young Carers Support Worker. In addition to the management and supervision provided by the Charity, a multi-agency Strategic Partnership was formed to oversee the development of the Initiative and this now has an Independent Chairperson. The Initiative has largely been funded by the BIG Lottery's Investing In Communities Supporting 21st Century Life Fund, which is providing grant funding of £389,727, staged over 4 years. This had to be matched by funding secured separately by the Charity of £8,400 to provide a total of £398,127.

At 31 March 2015, the BIG Lottery had contributed £284,019 of its grant and the payment of the remaining £105,708 of the grant, for the 4th and final year, will be made quarterly in 2015/16. During the year, separate grants were received from other funders for the Initiative totalling £42,418. The largest contributors were the Carers Trust/Co-operative Partnership, which provided £26,591 for the Education, Training and Employment project, the Armed Forces Covenant (Libor Fund), which contributed £10,000 for furnishing and equipping the young carers room in Lomond House and KPMG, which contributed £2,800 towards the costs of 7 young carers participating in one of the Ocean Youth Trust's sailing trips.



The Charity has adopted a holistic approach to supporting young carers and the programme of service delivery is flexible, ensuring they are consulted, involved and encouraged to participate at all times. During 2014/15 a further 34 young carers were registered, which increased the total to 127 and 8 others were undergoing the registration process. When a young carer is identified either through a direct approach or referral, he/she is offered an early appointment with a staff member before a full assessment is undertaken. This helps to gain their trust and provide an understanding of the issues they are facing. Thereafter:

- a comprehensive assessment of each young carer is undertaken in collaboration with relevant partners to identify their needs, aspirations and a personal plan developed for each which will be reviewed quarterly or as appropriate;
- if appropriate, the 'cared for' person will be referred for a community care assessment, and
- working in collaboration with partners, the staff of the Initiative will follow-up the progress of personal plans to ensure the young carers' needs are being fully met.

Based on assessed need, the following services are offered to enable young carers to access support in their caring role, allowing them to be children first and supporting them through their development into adulthood:

Mentoring	Counselling	Information	Self Confidence Courses
Weekend Respite Breaks	Family Fun Nights	Study/Homework Groups	Access to young Carers Forum
Scottish Parliament Visits	Participation in Scottish Young Carers Festival	Young Carers Workshops	A range of age related young carers activities
Group Project Work	Education, Training and Employment Support.	Healthy Futures programmes	Training and Learning events.

An additional part-time Support Worker was employed in April 2014 to deliver the Education, Training and Employment Project mentioned above. This is primarily targeted at young adult carers in the 14-24 years age group and offers them assistance to explore options for further education, training or employment. She works closely with school guidance and transition teachers to assist the carers make the best choices and helps them with the completion of college, university and job applications. For those still at school, she has been working to develop a structured homework study group to ensure they have time to study and achieve the best possible exam results. For those who have already left education, she works with them on a one-to-one basis to support them make decision about pursuing a career. This includes preparing a c.v., interview training, meeting travelling and interview costs and identifying work experience opportunities.

The Project also addresses healthy lifestyles and, during 2014/15, 8 young adult carers participated in a 10 week health and wellbeing programme to build on their confidence, physical and mental health. This included completing a certificated food hygiene course, involving a 5 week healthy eating programme, to raise awareness of cooking healthy nutritious foods on a budget and developing their knowledge and skills in cooking and shopping for healthy family meals.

Using funding secured from the Carers Trust Recruitment and Employment Initiative, 5 young carers accessed 13 week paid work placements and 3 secured permanent jobs. Working with the Charity's Training Co-ordinator, the Support Worker developed and co-facilitated a workshop for adult and young adult carers wishing to increase their confidence to apply for college and employment opportunities. Those attending included 9 young carers and the Support worker is supporting them fulfil their ambitions.

The Initiative also worked with local primary schools during the year and 3 x 6 week pilot homework after school study groups were organised in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council's Early Years Worker. These proved to be hugely popular and are being continued in 2015/16. Another successful pilot was with Hermitage Academy when agreement was reached to deliver the PX2 confidence building and personal goal setting programme during school hours. This was still being evaluated at 31 March 2015, but the feedback from participants and the Academy staff has been very positive.

There is an increasing demand for the mentoring programme offered to young carers. This was initially only available to 5-11 year olds, however, the programme has been widened to include all young carers. It has proved difficult to recruit additional volunteers to fulfil this role, but efforts to do this are continuing. In 2014/15 and additional 3 successful matches were made between volunteer mentors and older young carers.

The Initiative launched its Facebook page in April 2014 and this is used not only as a means of communicating with young carers, but also a resource for awareness raising and promotion of events and activities. Its weekly audience is averaging at 500 views and likes. The 'Wee Care Media Group,' comprising of young carers, produced and circulated 4 Newsletters during 2014/15 and those participating a developing a range of valuable skills. Giving young carers a voice is an important facet of the work of the Initiative and, with training and support, they can become successful advocates/lobbyists in their own right. The Carers Trust



has coached a number to act as champions and speak on camera and radio. Some have met with senior officials and politicians to debate public policy on caring and another was recently elected as a local representative on the Scottish Youth Parliament.

**48 articles
were
published
about the
Charity in
2014/15**

The departure of the Young Carers Development Co-ordinator to other employment during the year provided an opportunity for the Charity to review the staffing structure. As described in Section 3 - Staffing and Volunteers, this resulted in the post title being changed to Carer Services Team Leader and an addition part-time Young Carers post being added to the establishment. One of the aims of this change is to achieve greater integration of service delivery between adult and young carers staff.

Raising the Profile of the Charity

The Management Committee has acknowledged that “*profile, image and awareness*” are key components in service development. A Communications and Marketing Strategy for the Charity has been put in place and this was updated in 2013/14. The Strategy does not stand in isolation and any communications activity is not regarded as an end in itself. Its purpose is to help the organisation fulfil its aspirations, therefore it has been aligned with the Charity’s Aims and Objectives, set out in the Business Plan.

The benefits of the planned approach to raising the profile can be demonstrated by the fact that during 2014/15 a total of 37 events were organised that provided an opportunity to highlight carers issues, 33 awareness raising talks were delivered to community groups and staff and volunteers from other organisations and 48 articles were published in local newspapers and magazines about the work of the Charity. There were 12 visits to GP practices to discuss carers issues and all the Health Centres in

Helensburgh and Lomond are included in the 67 outlets the Charity uses for the distribution of posters and leaflets about its activities.

The visibility and reputation of the Charity continues to grow and efforts will be made in 2015/16 to maintain and improve upon the current position.

Securing the views of Carers

The Charity prides itself on being carer led and there are various opportunities for ensuring that the views of carers helped shape the aims and objectives set out in the annual updates of the Business Plan, including:

- the majority of **the trustees** are carers or former carers and are therefore well placed to represent the views of carers in developing the strategies, policies and objectives;
- the **staff** have day-to-day contact with carers and, through this regular dialogue and working for carers, they develop a knowledge and understanding of what carers need and the services they find to be of greatest value; and
- the views of **partner organisations** are fed into the Management Committee directly or indirectly and there are good lines of communication with others who provide services to carers, including Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland.

Adult Carers Survey 2014/15

The Carers Survey is conducted annually by the Charity to collect information directly from adult carers about a range of issues. It is primarily used to validate and measure satisfaction levels with the quality of services and to provide an opportunity for carers to identify needs that are not being addressed. In recent years the annual survey has played an important role in evidencing whether or not the Charity's Objectives and Outcomes have been achieved, as well as canvassing carers' views about the services they receive from other providers.

The 2014/15 Survey identified a 99% satisfaction level with the quality of the services provided and 90% of those who participated indicated that their personal needs were being met. In response to a question about carers rights and entitlements 90% of responders indicated that they had a better understanding of these as a result of information provided by the Charity. Carers described the main benefits of using the services as assisting them to carry on in their caring role, giving them a feeling of being less isolated, less stressed or anxious, helping them to have a life outside caring, and improving their general health and wellbeing. Carers also highlighted the benefits of being able to interact with and share experiences with other carers in similar situations.

The top five responses to a question about what additional services carers would wish to see introduced if funding was available were for more:

- therapy sessions;
- social events/activities;
- evening events and activities;
- learning/training events, and
- advice about their health/wellbeing.

The responses were consistent with the previous surveys conducted by the Charity, with high satisfaction levels with the services provided. However, the top five responses to the question about additional services carers wish to see introduced have, changed as the Charity has endeavoured to address the issues raised.

Views of Young Carers

The Young Carers Initiative collects data and feedback from young carers in various forms, but particularly through the evaluation process in relation to their participation in activities it has organised. During 2014/15 a Young Carers Survey questionnaire was developed and piloted to collect views from young carers to assist the Charity to determine in the Objectives and Outcomes were being achieved. It transpired that most of the targets underpinning the Objectives were met and all 3 Young Carer Outcomes were exceeded.

The following quotes have been extracted from the 2014/15 Survey:

“No matter when or why I come in there is always a warm welcome and a good listening ear”.

“Always met with a smile and offer of coffee or tea”.

“Yes, love being greeted by Mary and all the other staff and volunteers”.

“Comfortable and relaxing surroundings, staff cheerful and hospitable, good atmosphere, provides good venue for social chit chat”.

“Everyone is very friendly and talks to you, never in a rush for you to go”.

“Always feel valued and listened to by staff and volunteers”.

“Staff and volunteers understand my needs very well. I appreciate this very much as I have issues with trust and the centre feels like the home of a friend”.

Volunteers

The Charity relies on the informal support of volunteers and individual carers have been willing to help as and when required. In 2012/13 the Management Committee formalised the arrangements for the recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers and developed a Volunteer Strategy, which is reviewed and updated annually. This approach has proved very successful and the number of volunteers registered has been steadily increasing. At 31 March 2015, there were 57 regular volunteers supporting the work of the Charity.

Volunteers act as receptionists to ‘meet and greet’ carers when they drop into the Centre; assist with a wide range of administrative tasks; provide graphic artist services; help produce the Newsletter; undertake the annual Carers Survey; support staff at social events and activities; manage Gift Aid administration; organise fundraising events and one has taken on the role of Volunteer Co-ordinator. The introduction of the Young Carers Initiative has seen volunteers taking on a number of roles including assisting staff at outings, events, weekend breaks etc, as well as acting as mentors. The Carers Befriending Service utilises volunteers to carry out home visits and providing carers with different forms of respite from their responsibilities.

The development of volunteering in the work of the Charity has been significant and engaging them in different areas activities has delivered tangible benefits for carers and staff, as well as the individuals themselves. They have had the opportunity to be part of a team, operating within a vibrant organisation that is providing vital services to a vulnerable sector of the community. The Charity aims to continue to build on this past experience, particularly in relation to supporting the Young Carers Initiative and Befriending Service.

Partnerships

One of the Charity's Operating Principles includes a commitment to promote partnership and joint working arrangements within Argyll and Bute. The following are 2 examples of the application of this Principle in 2014/15:

Young Carers Strategic Partnership - This is a multi-agency oversight body, which was established by the Charity when it first introduced services for young carers in 2012 with the launch of its Young Carers Initiative. The membership comprises local representatives from statutory and third sector organisations that have duties or responsibilities in relation to supporting young people. The Partnership's aim is to achieve and maintain a collaborative approach to the development and delivery of services for young carers in the area through joint planning and working, mutual support and sharing of lead responsibilities. The Partnership meets on a quarterly basis to review progress and consider any new developments. It was initially chaired by Louise Morgan, the Scottish Young Carers' Development Manager for the Carers Trust, however, this was a short term arrangement and in 2014, Andrew Nisbet, was appointed as the Partnership's Independent Chairperson.

The Young Carers Initiative has succeeded in raising the profile, needs and support available to young carers and the Strategic Partnership has played a key role in promoting the interests of this vulnerable group and opening up pathways for agencies to work together with a shared vision and common purpose.

Lomond House Joint Implementation Team - In preparation of the planned relocation of the Carers Centre to Lomond House in Helensburgh, where services will be co-located with NHS Highland's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Children 1st, the Management Committee initially formed a cross-cutting Project Team. This was subsequently reconstituted into a Joint Implementation Team, comprising representatives of the Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership, the Charity, CAMHS and Children 1st, which met on a monthly basis. The first joint meeting was held on 12 May 2014, under the Chairmanship of Lawrence Bidwell, one of the Charity's trustees, and its members developed a detailed workplan. This was vigorously pursued over the following months, both collectively and by individual members of the Team. By 31 March 2015, agreement had been reached on all the key issues, including the plans to refurbish Lomond House, how the new facility would operate and the working practices to be adopted. A model had been designed to show how facilities, equipment, services and costs would be shared and members have explored options to use the co-location of services as a basis for developing a closer working relationship and the co-production of new services. The Team will continue to meet monthly in 2015/16 until the relocation has been completed.

Future Developments

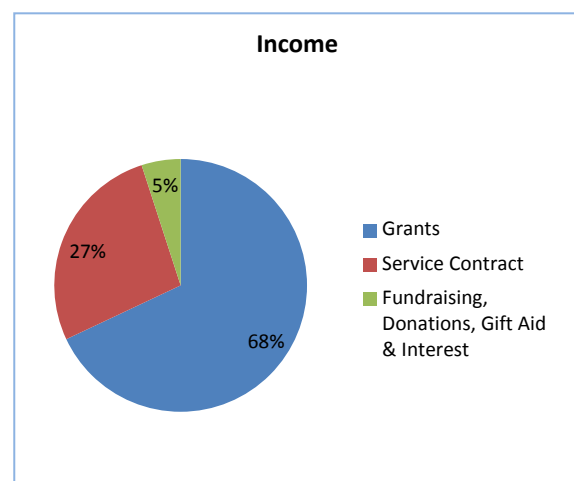
It is worth noting the following targets which will be taken forward to best meet the needs of carers in Helensburgh & Lomond as set out in the Business Plan, Organisational Objectives 2013/14 – 2015/16. This is not an exhaustive list; however, these continue to be a priority for the Charity.

- Continue to develop the Outreach Service to extend support provided to older carers and those living in rural areas.
- Sustain the posts of Carers Training Co-ordinator, Carers Support Plan Worker, Carers Befriending Support Worker and continue to develop and expand these services.
- Recruit an Office Junior/Receptionist
- Explore opportunities for volunteers to play a greater operational role in the delivery of services to carers and subject to funding being raised, employ a dedicated Volunteer Co-ordinator to carry out this role.
- Identify and pursue viable options to meet the Charity's future accommodation requirements

In partnership with the 3 other Carers Centres in Argyll & Bute and Crossroads Caring for Carers, the Charity has secured funding to develop and introduce a bespoke data capturing system known as Carers Impact Shared System (CISS) to respond to the self-directed support and personalised outcomes agenda.

FINANCES - Incoming Resources

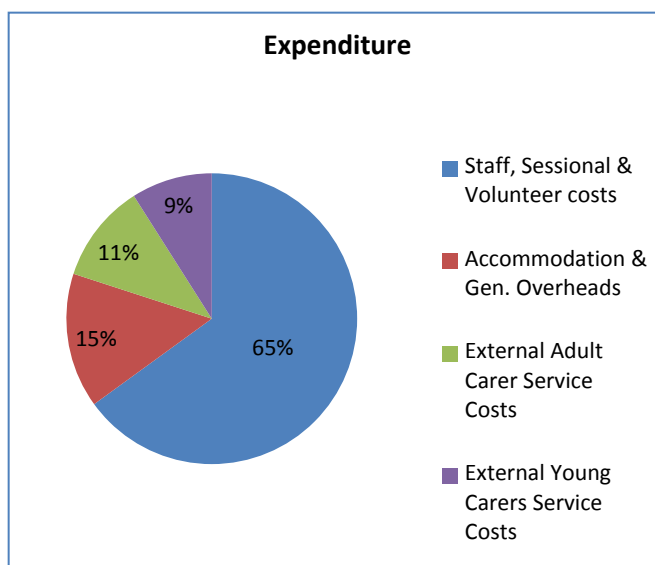
The Charity secured funding from a range of sources in 2014/15 and the largest proportion came from grants, which represented 68% of the total. The grants were received directly and indirectly from funders, with 29% of the funds provided by statutory and 71% by non-statutory bodies. The Joint Service Contract the Charity has with Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland provided 29% of the total income. Fundraising events and activities, donations from supporters, the consequent recovery of funds from HMRC through the Gift Aid and Small Donations Scheme, plus the final component of Bank Interest, represented the other 5%. The income totalled £365,301 and came from the following sources:



Grants	Service Contract	Fundraising Activities	Donations	Gift Aid/ Small Donations Scheme	Bank Interest	Total
£248,490	£97,300	£7,305	£9,736	£2,150	£320	£365,301

Expended Resources

After adjustments, expenditure in 2014/15 totalled £304,226. The Charity delivers services to adult and young carers through its staff, paid sessional workers and volunteers and the costs involved in this represented 68% of the total spend in 2014/15. The second largest outlay related to the overheads for leasing and running the Carers Centre and general administration of the organisation, which represented 16% of the costs incurred. The external costs associated with payments the Charity made to others for services, activities and facilities for adult and young carers represented 9% and 7% respectively.



Staff, Sessional Workers & Volunteers	Accommodation and General Overheads	External costs for Adult Carers Services	External costs for Young Carers Services	Total
£222,416	£50,653	£36,271	£30,143	£339,483

Reserves

The Charity earmarks some of the unrestricted funds it holds as Reserves and the level held is reviewed annually as part of the budget setting exercise. Of the £77,137 in unrestricted funds brought forward from 2013/14, a total of £28,500 was earmarked as Reserves. The trustees decided to increase this by £2,500 over the course of 2014/15 and of the £58,080 in unrestricted funds in the closing balance at 31 March 2015, £31,000 was earmarked as Reserves.

(The accounts are currently with the Independent Examiner for auditing; however, these can be made available if required)

Eileen McCrory
Manager