



# **Care for the Carers**

## **Strategic Plan 2013-16**

### **Mission**

To improve the quality of carers' lives by helping the local community recognise and value the role of carers, and by enabling carers to have a voice and access the services and support they require.

## Care for the Carers Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016

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## **1. Introduction**

This is Care for the Carers' Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016. The timeframe extends beyond our current core contract with East Sussex County Council and NHS on the basis that whilst it is impossible to foresee what things might be like beyond that time, we expect our core service to be centrally funded. We will develop business and fundraising opportunities to enable us to maintain and develop our capacity to meet carers' needs and aspirations and achieve a greater degree of independent sustainability.

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Care for the Carers is the Carers' Centre for East Sussex, affiliated to the Carers Trust national network of Carers' Centres.

Care for the Carers exists to support and empower carers in East Sussex by maintaining interrelated projects and services that are values-led and have been developed to meet the expressed needs of East Sussex carers. Services also reflect National legislation, research and best practice from among others: Carers Trust, the Kings Fund, Carers UK, Central and Local Government, and particularly the policy direction outlined in:

- 'Our Health Our Care Our Say'
- 'Putting People First'
- The National Carers' Strategy, 'Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities', 2008 and
- East Sussex Joint Commissioning Strategy for Carers 2010-15.
- Every Child Matters

These services include:

- Direct support services to adult and young carers
- Carer involvement
- Information
- Carer awareness
- Partnerships and representation
- Individual projects to meet specific identified needs.

We work in partnership with statutory agencies such as Health and Education, and particularly Social Care (who have the main statutory responsibility for carers) and we are committed to sharing our expertise and knowledge with voluntary sector partners.

All of the services provided by Care for the Carers are detailed in comprehensive documents which explain what we do, why and how we do it and what we want to do in the future.

We have brought the key points of each of these documents together in this Strategic Plan with the aims of:

- Informing annual priorities for the organisation.
- Ensuring that we maintain a focus on the developments we wish to pursue.
- Sharing our work with partners, funders and carers.
- Discussing and refining our plans and reflecting the views of carers.
- Raising awareness of carers in East Sussex and the role of Care for the Carers.
- Ensuring that we offer consistently high quality services.
- Identifying and addressing unmet needs.

This document will continue to develop in response to the views and needs of carers, and National and Local policy.

Care for the Carers has received funding to October 2014 from ESCC to deliver services to meet the following objectives:

- Advice and information to ensure carers recognise their own role and their need for support
- Provision of support to enable carers to stay mentally and physically well
- Carers to be treated as equal partners in care and involved in all aspects of service planning
- Young carers services

This funding provides CftC with security until 2014, but it is not sufficient to enable us to meet all the expressed needs of carers.

This Strategy will enable Care for the Carers to raise funds to meet gaps in current provision and to develop new business models that will meet changing and unmet needs and to promote our independence. The strategy also looks forward, to address reduced public spending and identify new sources of income.

### **Definitions:**

A carer is someone, who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability. Anyone can become a carer; carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be of any age.

Young carers are children and young people under the age of eighteen who provide assistance or support to a family member. The family member may be a parent, sibling, grandparent or any other family member and will usually, although not necessarily, live in the same home as the young carer. The nature of the caring task involves significant and substantial responsibilities - often on a regular basis - which would be usually associated with an adult, and more than would normally be expected of a child of their age, so could become inappropriate for that child/young person.

Carers of every age are likely to face hardship arising from their caring role, financially, emotionally, physically and socially. Carers are often additionally disadvantaged by their own and society's unawareness of their value and rights.

## **2. Vision**

### **2.1 Our Vision for Carers in East Sussex**

Carers are recognised and valued by the community at large for their important role. They are supported, informed and involved in the care of the person they care for and in the planning and development of services. Carers have a quality life outside of caring.

### **2.2 Our Vision for Care for the Carers**

Care for the Carers is the independent Carers' hub for East Sussex, respected and recognised by the carers and the community; a key strategic partner and provider of high quality services to meet the expressed needs of carers.

## **3. Mission**

To improve the quality of carers' lives by helping the local community recognise and value the role of carers, and by enabling carers to have a voice and access the services and support they require.

## **4. Values:**

We believe that:

- Carers should be recognised and valued for the important role they carry out
- Carers have a right to a choice, including the choice not to act in a caring role
- Carers have a right to a good quality of life and a life outside and beyond caring
- The pressures carers are under should be acknowledged and addressed
- Carers should be empowered and involved to influence decisions that affect their lives
- Carers should be able to access services appropriate to their needs without facing discrimination or prejudice
- In carrying out its role Care for the Carers will follow principles of good governance, management, service provision and employment.

## **5. Strategic Objectives**

### **Overarching Strategic Objectives for 2012-2015**

1. To maintain and improve the quality and range of existing services tailored to the needs of a diverse range of carers. By the end of the period covered by this strategy our core services and Young Carers Clubs and activities will be funded, and we will have additional services to meet specific carers needs – eg carers of people with cancer, parent carers, carers of people with mental health needs, and Young Adult Carers.
2. To develop appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation to ensure the continued relevance of the services we provide and demonstrate the business case for their value to carers and funders.
3. To increase our independence by broadening and strengthening our resources to enable our organisation to grow and be financially sustainable and provide services that carers want and need.
4. To increase the number of carers who are in contact with us and accessing our services by raising our profile, and extending our reach so that Care for the Carers has a local visible presence in at least 50 community settings in East Sussex.
5. To support and work alongside carers and professionals to influence policy and practice for the benefit of carers in East Sussex and contribute to national policy and practice through our relationship with Carers Trust, so that support to carers is prioritized in spending reviews, and carers' views demonstrably affect policy formation.
6. To raise awareness of carers and their caring role with service providers, the general public and with carers themselves, so that carers are aware of the role they play and have access to appropriate advice and information at every stage of their caring journey. All major organisations that interact with carers will receive carer awareness training and identify Partner Champions.
7. To increase the openness and willingness of ordinary people (e.g. Community Champions) to include and support carers in their communities. Carers Champions aim to develop networks of support to carers in 30 community settings.
8. To work for and with carers to identify ways in which unmet needs might be addressed and new services developed.

## **6. To improve the quality of carers' lives by helping the local community recognise and value the role of carers...**

### 6.1 Raising Awareness of Carers and Caring

Awareness of carers' needs will be raised among professionals, community networks and the public. The aim is increasing:

- Appropriate response to carers
- Identification of new carers
- Levels of support to carers in their settings, including promotion of strategies to increase resilience.
- Timely and appropriate referrals

Current work includes:

- A programme of press releases and media events will raise awareness of carers and sources of support
- Organising a wide range of awareness raising events and outreach events, including the Carers Challenge, at key times such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.
- Our schools work ensures that young carers' educational needs are understood. We deliver assemblies in schools to raise awareness with both staff and pupils and then assess the young people who identify as young carers. However this work is currently funded through reserves with a very limited budget and we are only currently working with schools already accessing our service.

#### Strategic Objective:

- We will seek funding for a full time schools worker to develop our work with schools by working in partnership with key stakeholders including school nurses and support staff. We hope to develop a sustainable model for supporting young carers in a school setting

### 6.2 Professional training

- Bespoke carer-awareness training sessions will be offered to business-unit teams in primary, secondary and intermediate health and community settings.
- Carer Support Workers give presentations to professionals from statutory organisations about carers and the services available to them in East Sussex.

Strategic Objective:

- We will seek funding to expand our work in health settings, particularly within the Eastbourne District General Hospital and the Hastings Conquest Hospital.

### 6.3 Partner Champions

Partner Champions will be recruited from local voluntary sector organisations and receive one training session every two quarters plus on-going support to:

- Be partners' focal point for carers
- Make Carer leaflets and other publications available
- Support staff to implement the Carers' Charter
- Encourage use of the Carer Aware eLearning Course.
- Develop bespoke carer-appropriate systems and practices in their operations and as employers
- Improve recognition and referral of carers

The aim is to have Champions in every GP surgery and health team plus more in a range of community health settings.

### 6.4 Community Champions

The purpose of a network of Community Champions is to support the identification of under-reached carers, to raise the awareness of carer services in local communities, and to act as 'ambassadors' for Care for the Carers.

Community Champions will work locally to raise awareness among networks, groups and organisations including:

- Community centres and Hubs
- Churches
- Farmers' markets
- BME networks
- Residents' associations

The community Champions will also build capacity in these communities to support carers in practical ways that make a difference to their wellbeing and health. This activity will contribute to CFTC's overarching strategy by increasing social capital and adding value to the network of support and services available to carers.

By supporting the identification of seldom-heard carers and raising awareness, this will contribute to improving the quality of lives by helping their local community to recognise and value the role of carers.

### 6.5 Information

Care for the Carers offers a wide range of source material on caring and carers in East Sussex. Professionals may access information via the cftc website, directly in person or by telephone and by receiving the Hub e-newsletter.

## **7. ... and by enabling carers to have a voice....**

## 7.1 Carers Forum

Public meetings enabling consultation with local carers, as described in the *Structure for Monitoring the Implementation of the East Sussex Joint Commissioning Strategy for Carers 2010-15*. Measures ensure accessibility and effective engagement, including:

- Carer-led consultation
- Wide publicity attracts new /diverse carers
- Accessible venues, cross-County
- Forum reports circulated to decision-makers, and all carers involved.
- Carers' questions answered,
- Issues taken forward.

## 7.2 Ad Hoc Focus Groups

Focus Groups enable carers to discuss issues relevant to specific care groups, issues or geography. Carer-led agendas respond to trends in carer feedback, local consultations and HealthWatch initiatives. Widely promoted, they are held in community venues at times convenient for carers. Results feed into the Carers Forum, other relevant groups, and the Carers Voices Network.

## 7.3 Carers Voices Network

This Network enables consultation, debate and information on carers' issues via a series of communication tools:

- Online: Facebook, Twitter, website
- Newsletter
- Email
- Post
- Telephone

Carers use their preferred tool/s, networking whenever and wherever they choose, facilitating peer support. CftC initiates debate on key issues, mirroring Forum and Focus Group agendas, maximising accessibility of carer involvement in East Sussex. CftC shares views from the different communication streams across the Network, and into the Forum, Carers Strategy Implementation Group and Carers Partnership Board.

## 7.4 Daily contact with staff and volunteers

Carers' views and experiences are gathered through our network of volunteers, carers' champions and staff, and inform involvement work. Community Champions promote opportunities locally and at carers' groups, bringing face-to-face involvement to localities, supporting carers to join the Network and attend Forums.

## 7.5 Steering Group

A steering group will monitor CftC's involvement work, how it serves carers, commissioners and providers.

- Reviews responses to carers' questions.
- Results shared with carers and Commissioners.

## 7.6 Supporting carer engagement in the County Involvement model

- Maintaining Carers Partnership Board, Carers Strategy Implementation Group and Information, Advice and Training Action Plan Sub-Group membership
- Providing a secretariat function across the model
- Carers supported:
  - and encouraged to become involved. Involvement opportunities are publicised as outlined above.
  - To understand the function of Carers Forum, CPB, and CSIG, and the commitments and benefits of Membership.
  - With nomination processes
  - Elections facilitated according to the agreed model
  - Membership reviewed annually ensuring balanced representation.
  - quality, diversity, geographic, care group or other imbalances monitored and addressed.

### Strategic objective:

To review Care for the Carers' role in the County Model, support ESCC to review how it engages with carers, and work with carers and partners to implement any developments.

## 7.7 Supporting partner organisations to consult and listen to carers

We will foster local carer-engagement by offering specialist advice and support to partners on consulting with carers and promoting carer involvement activities on behalf of partner organisations

## 7.8 Supporting carers to participate in Involvement activities

### i. Induction

Carers are offered initial information and one-to-one Induction, including:

- Involvement Induction Pack
- Overview of opportunities – guidance to identify the most appropriate
- Potential challenges of involvement
- Identification of training/support requirements
- Sign up to commitments set out in each group's Terms of Reference

### ii. Involvement training

Carers will be informed of the opportunities to undertake formal training from Carers UK and may choose to spend a Personal Budget on this, or access external funding through local partners and fundraising activities. This training underpins carers' understanding of public participation, supporting them to build skills, including:

- Contributing positively to meetings

- Representation
- Handling conflicts of interest
- Understanding decision making

In addition, carers will be supported to access external training in specialist areas as requested.

### iii Workshops

Monthly workshops support carers participating in the spectrum of involvement activities, consolidating training and encouraging peer support. Agendas are carer-led, enabling carers to request information as needed and strengthening the Network.

### iv Provision of information on involvement

CftC's website and publicity material is available to everyone in East Sussex, including carers and professionals, and will promote carer engagement and share feedback.

### v. Recognition

We value carers' contribution and expertise, and recognise that their time is precious. Travel expenses are reimbursed, and carers supported to:

- Understand and apply the joint Adult Social Care and NHS Reward and Recognition Policy
- Claim respite costs from Adult Social Care, where available (e.g. training)
- Understand the potential impact of R&R payments on benefits

## 7.9 Young Carers

Young carers are currently involved in:

- Shaping their individual actions plans in their intensive one-to-one sessions
- Suggesting activities they would like to be offered during the year
- Applying for small funding grants to enable these activities to happen
- Inviting young carers to forum meetings that are scheduled during school holidays
- Attendance at East Sussex County Council participation events
- Taking a leading role in the recruitment of young carers team personnel
- Taking part in writing the quarterly newsletter

### Strategic Objective:

To extend the current range of involvement support to young carers, utilising existing resources and seeking additional funding.

## 7.10 Representation

Care for the Carers is committed to ensuring that carers' feedback is shared with voluntary and statutory partners to inform the planning and development of services. Where appropriate, key messages will be shared with the wider public through Carer Awareness work. A carer focus is promoted by maintaining active CftC membership on all statutory partnerships and planning groups which have relevance to carers and, wherever possible, to identify and support carer representatives as set out in the Involvement section of this strategy.

Feedback from carers will be gathered through a variety of consultation mechanisms, seeking to gain views from as wide a pool of carers as possible and feedback provided via consultation, information and involvement mechanisms.

## **8. ....and access the services and support they require.**

### 8.1 Adult Carer Services

The Adult Carer Support Team aims to identify with and support carers in East Sussex. Adult carers' needs are met in a variety of ways depending on their preferences, the difficulties they may be facing and the level of care they are providing. The information and support we provide is intended to enable carers pro-actively to address the issues relating to their caring role and that affect their wellbeing, lifestyle and choices.

We work in partnership with statutory organisations such as Health, and Social Care and other voluntary organisations.

The Team operates in a triage system implemented through the Hub Helpline which is manned by Hub Helpline operators. They help carers interpret and apply information to personal situations, providing:

- Responses to initial questions where possible
- Signposting to internal and external services based on criteria that target carers at greatest need.

This system allows us to ensure that carers receive person-centred and appropriate levels of support relevant to their needs, and that the most resource intensive outreach is targeted at those most in need.

The intensive outreach service is delivered by Carers Support Workers, who each cover the whole of the county. In addition, each Support Worker maintains an area of specialist knowledge, for example, long term illness, life-limiting conditions, parent carers and mental health.

Flexible, accessible and person-centred support is available in varying degrees of intensity depending on each carer's needs through:

- Telephone information

- Home visits
- Telephone Twilight service
- Tailored information packs initiated through triage process
- One to one support in the settings in which they present - e.g. case conferences, flu clinics.
- Hub Helpline.

The Adult Carer Support Team will achieve its aims by:

- Maintaining a good geographical knowledge of local services for carers in East Sussex and nationally.
- Maintaining an area of expert knowledge and sharing information and best practice relating to these areas with CFTC staff members.
- Keeping up to date on local and national legislation to inform and empower carers to make appropriate and informed choices about their rights.

### Strategic Objectives:

- We aim to increase our team capacity to support more carers across East Sussex – and to offer specialist support to particular groups. Most especially we aim to secure funding to employ two additional full-time Carer Support workers, to support carers of people with mental health issues and parent carers of children with mild to moderate learning difficulties or behaviour issues such as ADHD, and to reach seldom heard carers.
- In 2013-14 we shall review the mechanisms for providing support to ensure that the model continues to meet carer demand in the most efficient and effective way.
- We shall review the workload of the current support workers to enable intensive support to be targeted at those most at need.
- We aim to ensure that current gaps in local advocacy and back care services to carers are addressed.

#### 8.1.1 Counselling

The counselling service is delivered in partnership with Sussex Downs College and Wealden Institute of Psychotherapy, using Volunteer senior student counsellors.

The aim of the counselling service is to provide free counselling sessions to adult carers as appropriate through internal referrals. This service is accessible across the county by matching carers with counsellors at a time and venue of their choice.

The counselling service contributes to CFTC strategic aims by supporting carers to maintain their quality of life by giving to consideration to their own emotional wellbeing and self esteem/confidence.

#### Strategic objective:

- To seek opportunities to extend this service to include Co –Counselling for carers and those they care for

#### 8.1.2 Befriending

The befriending service aims to support adult carers to address their own health and wellbeing by building friendships, developing peer support and increasing social opportunities. This service is delivered either in person or via the telephone.

Carers are matched with a befriending volunteer for a period of up to 9 months, or for 8 weeks' telephone befriending following the completion of formal counselling.

#### Strategic Objective:

To consider extending the role of befrienders to offer practical support.

#### 8.1.3 Carers Emergency Alert Cards

Alert Cards operates on two levels to help carers feel more confident about leaving home for short periods knowing if something happens to them the emergency services will be alerted that a person needing care is at home alone and as a gateway to accessing East Sussex County Council's CRESS service. The service is offered in partnership with Wealden and Eastbourne Lifeline, who provide 24/7 access to a tailored emergency plan.

#### 8.1.4 Volunteer Champions

Volunteer Community Champions are supported to:

- Provide a link to specialist support
- Help carers create coping strategies and options to increase support and promote resilience
- Offer a listening ear and put carers in touch with other services, including Befriending and Support Groups.
- Seek feedback to monitor services.
- Contact carers who have not been in contact recently.

#### 8.2 Young Carers Service

The Young Carers Service strategy focuses on the key areas which impact on a child's life, as referred to in Every Child Matters: Education, Health, Social, Emotional and Financial.

### **Referral and Assessment**

The Young Carers Support Team aims to identify and support young carers in East Sussex. Young carers needs vary greatly depending on age and time of referral in relation to the onset of care needs. Early intervention enables families to access support and potentially avoid crisis and prevent young people accepting an inappropriate caring role as part of family life.

Referrals are made to the service by anybody identifying a young person as a potential young carer. These sources range from self referrals to education and children's and adult services.

Referrals are assessed, generally in the home setting, and the decision as to appropriate tiering and support is made by the support worker and the manager. Young carer referrals are tiered according to their need:

Tier 3 – High level caring role -Intensive one to one support required to address issues and reduce caring role.

Tier 2 – High to moderate caring role, young carer and family coping quite well - Time out and social inter-action required to address isolation and low level emotional and mental wellbeing.

Tier 1 – Low level caring – access to school groups where available. We would like to offer more to this group.

Care for the Carers Young Carers Service referral criteria is as follows:

“Young Carers are children/young people aged between 8 and 18 years who provide **substantial** practical and/or emotional support to a family member who would be unable to manage without their help. The nature of the caring task involves **significant** responsibilities, often on a regular basis, more than would normally be expected of a child of their age. The person being cared for may have a physical disability or chronic illness, learning difficulty, sensory impairment, problems with their mental health, or substance misuse.”

### **Intensive 1-2-1 support to Young Carers**

This is offered to young people who are involved in substantial care and are perhaps struggling to cope. The support worker will identify with the young person areas of their life they need help with. The support may be:-

- Working with the family and other agencies to reduce their caring role.
- Working with the school to increase understanding of the young carer's needs.

- Giving the young person time to talk through any worries and concerns and to look at possible solutions

Typically one worker will support 15 young carers and their families at any one time. The support worker assesses a young carer and tiers them according to their need.

### **Clubs and Activities**

#### Strategic Objectives:

- We will review the workload of the current support workers to enable them to concentrate on supporting those in greatest need.
- In order to provide this intensive support across the 4 localities of East Sussex, we aim to raise funds to recruit 2 additional support workers

### 8.3 Young Adult Carers

'YAC' provides transition work for young carers age 15 – 24. Working with the young people and other agencies to ensure the young person has every opportunity to pursue their own future. Work with this age group is currently led by the young carers team.

#### Strategic Objective:

- We plan to further develop a service model for supporting this age group through transition from full time education to college, university or work and build connections with the adult support team in order to support them in their caring role.

### 8.4 Information

#### 8.4.1 Ad hoc telephone support

At any time, carers can raise queries 1:1 via the Hub from a location that suits them.

#### 8.4.2 Website

The Website provides written/audiovisual information and specialist resources and publications developed specifically for East Sussex carers concerning the services provided by Care for the Carers and partner organisations.

It is updated regularly to inform carers of changes to legislation, local services and issues affecting them and publicise opportunities to participate in consultations and social events.

Website documents are accessible in hardcopy, including large print, and key documents can be translated into community languages on request

We offer a safe space online for young carers to interact with each other and with staff. We offer an online support session once a week for an hour. We aim to increase this availability of online support.

#### Strategic Objective:

- We plan to actively involve young carers in the development of a more interactive space on the website and the development of social network support

#### 8.4.3 Published information

- Materials/leaflets are prepared/distributed to answer carers' initial questions about their rights, local services and coping with their caring role.
- A data resource of relevant information, including voluntary and statutory partners' services, is routinely updated and supports staff and volunteers when advising carers.
- Champions and Support Workers distribute information in a range of partner venues across the County.
- The 4,000 carers CftC is in contact with also receive the bi-monthly magazine 'Careline', while Young Carers receive the quarterly 'Youth Yap' via e-mail and published on the website. These publications are not currently funded.
- Care for the Carers monthly e-newsletter provides updates on carers' services, policy and legislation to carers and professionals.

#### Strategic objective:

To achieve sustainable funding for CareLine, and pilot a new distribution model to widen the magazine' reach

#### 8.5 Carer Training

CftC is pro-active in signposting carers to specialist agencies who provide appropriate training.

We will also ensure that carers are aware of opportunities to spend their Personal Budgets on relevant training that can support them in their caring role.

CftC will help partners above make their training more carer-appropriate; advising on content and access and will market partners training.

#### Strategic Objective

- To raise additional funds to provide tailored in-house training for carers

## 8.6 Groups

### 8.6.1 Adult Support Groups

Ten existing local support groups will be maintained, and extended as appropriate, in response to consultation and feedback, around general or special interests. Groups may want to use the opportunity to:

- Improve local facilities and services
- Provide mutual support e.g. discussing coping strategies
- Creative and leisure activities delivered by an external provider
- Receive information from Carer Support Workers and others.

Groups are carer-led and may choose any mix of these. Examples of activities that groups may pursue are: book club; painting, yoga, cookery for men, creative writing, photography, IT skills. Befrienders and champions will support the most isolated carers to join a group e.g. by going along with them for the first few times.

#### Strategic Objective:

- To increase the number of groups by three per year, to respond to increased demand from carers

### 8.6.3 School Support Groups

The schools workers assist the school to set up young carers support groups within the school.

### 8.6.4 Young Carer Clubs

The clubs provide young people with the opportunities to have fun, and make new friends in a safe and supportive environment. Typically around 35 young people attend each session and there is a waiting list for each club.

- Laughton and Eastbourne clubs one session a month each
- Hastings two sessions per month

These clubs are not funded by the local authority.

#### Strategic Objectives:

- We will seek funds for a club leader, sessional workers, volunteers and associated running costs to deliver the existing 3 clubs and an additional club in the Heathfield/Uckfield area.
- We will increase the volunteer base to include additional volunteer drivers in order to reduce travel costs.

## 8.7 Events and Activities

### 8.7.1 Trips, activities and residential short breaks for Young Carers

Time out from the caring role is highly valued by young carers. We endeavour to arrange 6-8 small activities and 2 residentials per year. These are currently not funded and we are reliant on fundraising efforts to enable these activities to take place.

#### Strategic Objective:

- We will seek funds for an activity worker and associated resources to provide these activities.

### 8.7.2 Activities and events for Adult Carers

Social events for carers support the development of peer networks, provide respite from caring and celebrate the contribution that carers make to the local community. We seek to hold 3 – 4 local social events throughout the year, provided through fundraising efforts and partnerships with voluntary sector partners. We aim to hold one event per year to enable carers from across East Sussex to come together, usually to mark Carers Week or Carers Rights Day.

#### Strategic objective:

We will pilot a new approach to providing social opportunities, by working with local communities to support them to recognise and support carers.

## **9. Structure and management**

Care for the Carers is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, who are also the Trustees of the Charity. They in turn employ a Chief Executive and staff team to carry out the strategic direction set by the Board.

All aspects of the organisation's Governance are regularly reviewed to ensure that an effective Board is in place, including:

- A planned recruitment process
- A structured induction process
- A Board Handbook that outlines the roles, responsibilities and rights of Directors, as well as the Governance timetable for the year.
- A Trustee Folder, including Strategic Plans, Policies, staff Job Descriptions and information about East Sussex carers.
- Documentation includes a Board role description and person specification, an application form, a Skills Audit form, a Conflicts of Interest Policy, a Code of Conduct and a Register of Interests.

The majority of Trustees, including the Chair, are carers and 150 of our 160 members are carers or former-carers.

To provide an overall Quality Standards system for the organisation, we have been externally accredited Level 1 of the latest version of PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance Systems for Small Organisations), and are planning to achieve Level 2. We are also a Carers Trust accredited Carers' Centre. Policies and procedures have been developed for all areas of the organisation's operations, including, Employment, Equal Opportunities, Service Delivery, Financial Management, Health and Safety and Governance. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed by the Management, Staff and Board of Trustees.

All Staff and Trustees are subject to Criminal Records Bureau Checks and references and all necessary insurances are in place.

Care for the Carers is compliant with best practice in Human Resources management. Robust recruitment practices are in place and all staff are offered support and supervision, including a comprehensive induction and probation period; core training in key issues such as Child Protection and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. A range of employment policies have been developed and Operational Guidance Manuals have been produced for all staff teams.

A rigorous system of Monitoring & Evaluation is in place to comply with the requirements of funders and to inform planning and management.

All of our staff teams are supported by comprehensive Service Strategies which inform an overall Three-Year Strategic Plan. Strategic Plans guide the organisation, set and measure targets, share information and create involvement opportunities. The

Strategic Plan informs Annual Organisational Priorities and reflects National and Local priorities, such as the East Sussex Carers Commissioning Strategy

#### Strategic Objectives:

- Governance—review the skills of the Trustees to ensure the organisation has the range of skills and experience to guide it through the uncertain economic climate and to develop its business plan.
- Quality Standards—to achieve PQASSO level 2 and level 2 Carers Trust accreditation.
- Increase Fundraising and Business Development capacity to diversify our funding base, develop new business opportunities, access funds from trusts and statutory agencies, and increase community fundraising.
- Role of Senior Management Team—develop training programme to improve project management and change management.
- Review management structure in light of the new business model and fundraising strategy.
- Embed volunteers into the organisation and develop and implement volunteer strategy