

## Carers Together Wiltshire - New partnership to support unpaid carers



Community First is proud to be working in partnership with Age UK Wiltshire and other organisations to offer respite and support to adult unpaid carers as part of a new project called Carers Together Wiltshire. The support offered through the partnership will include training, carers cafes and raising awareness of the role unpaid carers play in the community. Charity partners involved in Carers Together Wiltshire will continue to work closely with hospitals and GP's to ensure unpaid carers are supported and carry out assessments for unpaid carers

Carers Together Wiltshire is jointly funded by Wiltshire Council and the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) and includes a range of local partners including Age UK Wiltshire, Community First, Alzheimer's Support, Wiltshire Service Users Network, Citizens Advice Wiltshire and Wessex Community Action.

The Carers Together partnership brings together and builds on the strengths of the partner organisations to support carers aged 18+ years. The partnership will help ensure there is no wrong door for Carers when they most need support. It provides support for families, including parent carers. Community First was also delighted to be awarded the young carers and young adult carers service. This will support younger adults and young carers aged 5-25. Support will focus on outreach and engagement in local primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. Community First will help younger adult carers and young carers understand their rights, what support is available for them and offer opportunities for respite and skills development.

It gives an opportunity to bring together the work Community First has been doing for many years to support young carers and make the seamless link between the services and organisations

More information about the service can be found on our website:

<https://www.communityfirst.org.uk/carers-together-wiltshire/>



Funded by



**Bath and North East Somerset,  
Swindon and Wiltshire**  
Integrated Care Board

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## Forward Carers



Forward Carers provides a range of online resources to assist you in your caring role via their Carer Friendly Wiltshire website. If you're caring for someone in Wiltshire, you can access our Benefits Calculator to see what you may be entitled to, register for a Carers ID Card, access online support groups and self-refer for help from local services.

[www.carerfriendlywiltshire.org.uk](http://www.carerfriendlywiltshire.org.uk)

The Carer ID Card offers a form of verified identification, recognised nationally, it acknowledges your caring role and provides access to various benefits, offers and services. The card, issued by Forward Carers includes your photograph and your In Case of Emergency (ICE) contact details.

<https://carerfriendlywiltshire.org.uk/carers-id-card/>

Please see the blog post for more information:

<https://carerfriendlywiltshire.org.uk/2024/04/08/hello-and-welcome-to-wiltshire-carers/>

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## Building Bridges and Inspire Swindon Programmes

The Building Bridges and Inspire Swindon Programmes continues to support people in Wiltshire and Swindon to access personalised support to help them achieve and sustain ongoing employment and education outcomes. The Building Bridges Programme team recently worked with participant Lorraine, please see below for Lorraine's story and a summary of the support she received.

When Lorraine joined the programme, she was experiencing money worries and family problems. Lorraine was seeking help and guidance with employment. Lorraine felt she was not up to date with being able to complete job applications and wanted to access support with this. Lorraine received practical and skills-based support from Building Bridges including:

- Confidence building and strengths self-awareness activities which were support worker-guided
- Employability Toolkit - CV writing, Cover and Spec letter, careers IAG
- Tools for Success course
- Referral to local Food Bank
- Referral to local charity Rucksack45218 for clothing and household essentials
- Support to get free Library membership and digital skills learning at the library
- Household Support Fund money allocated to help with utility bill debts and food
- Multiply Maths life skills learning for time management and learning how to use her mobile phone for planning and reminders in her calendar
- Support with housing environmental health issues and signposting to Wilts Citizens Advice.
- Signposting to Warm & Safe Wilts for housing assistance during the winter period
- Support job searching
- Interview preparation and practice for Q&A

Lorraine said:

*"I felt the support was very valuable and has definitely given me stepping stones to believe in myself and not listen to people that want to bring me down and don't believe in me. I now have a much more*

*positive mindset and refuse to be dragged down by others again. It has been fantastic to have the support and now have a job offer outcome as an MDSA at a local primary school. I would 100% recommend Building Bridges as it is very valuable and brought me out of myself and has had a positive outcome. I hope the programme carries on benefiting and helping others.”*

For more information about The Building Bridges and Inspire Swindon Programme, please visit:

[www.buildingbridgessw.org.uk](http://www.buildingbridgessw.org.uk), call 01380 732821 or email: [hello@buildingbridgessw.org.uk](mailto:hello@buildingbridgessw.org.uk)

## New website for Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre

Community First is currently developing a new website for Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre which launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. The website highlights our outdoor education offer for schools, clubs, groups and organisations, as well as the facilities on offer at Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre.

Oxenwood and Linkenholt Centres offer the perfect location for school and group residentials, day visits and curriculum enrichment days.

[www.oxenwood.org.uk](http://www.oxenwood.org.uk)



## New Services and Clubs at Oxenwood

We will also be offering corporate away days, corporate residentials and exciting offsite adventures including mountain days and climbing days. Stay tuned for more information about our Spring, Summer and Autumn holiday clubs or keep an eye on our website.

## Link Schemes Audit 2023

Each year, Community First gathers data from Link Schemes to prepare the annual Link Schemes Audit. The Link Audit is important because it demonstrates how vital local transport groups are to the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire residents, particularly those who live in rural areas. As well as collecting information about the number of miles travelled, tasks undertaken and volunteer hours given, each Link Scheme also collects data on the type of journeys carried out e.g. trips to local doctors surgeries, community hospitals and dentists. This helps us build up a picture of the important role Link Schemes play in helping people to access healthcare and other services that help them live fulfilling and independent lives, reduce isolation, manage health conditions and keep active.

### Summary of findings:

- There are 1,592 volunteers involved in supporting local Link Schemes in Wiltshire, with an average of 38 volunteers per Link Scheme.
- The number of volunteers for Link Schemes decreased by 2% in 2023.

- In 2023 Link Schemes travelled 743,413 miles, which is an 8% increase from 2022.
- There was an 18% increase in everyday tasks (40,299) completed by Link volunteers in 2023.
- Volunteers for local Link Schemes gave over 100,000 hours of their time in 2023. This is a 7% increase from the previous audit.
- 29,761 health related journeys were completed in 2023, which is a 13% increase from 2022.
- The economic value of Link Schemes is £1,352,232 based on ONS South West Average hourly pay (£12.48 per hour). This is a 7% increase from 2022.

Once again, we hope you will join us in congratulating Link Schemes for their fantastic achievements and their commitment to supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the county.

A PDF copy of the audit is included with this briefing document.

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## MiDAS - Minibus Driver Awareness Training

Community First offers accredited MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness) Training for organisations and groups. MiDAS is a membership-based scheme designed to enhance both driving and safety standards for drivers of minibuses. MiDAS is a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers. Community First is now taking bookings for MiDAS training for Summer/Autumn 2024.

Community First is now offering the **new national MiDAS training programme**. The big change is that the theory module is now completed individually by drivers prior to undertaking their driving assessments. Upon application drivers will be allocated a 'learner pass' to access the Community Transport Association (CTA) learning portal.

Once this module has been completed our Driver Assessor, will arrange to visit clients to complete a theory follow up followed by the driving assessment. On successful completion of both elements drivers will be able to log on the CTA portal to print off their personal MiDAS certificates.

Pricing is based on a minimum group size of 3 drivers per booking and starts at £165.00 per person (+VAT).

Please contact [mcarter@communityfirst.org.uk](mailto:mcarter@communityfirst.org.uk) for more information and how to book training.

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