

**South Tees Carers Forum**  
**9.30-11.00, Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (on zoom)**  
**Minutes**

**DECISIONS AND ACTIONS**

- Pt14 South Tees Carers Strategy and Action Plan agreed by the Forum (with some amendments pts5-7)
- Pt15 Final Strategy 2021-26 and Action Plan 2021-22 to be considered by local authorities and Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group and presented for adoption to South Tees Health and Wellbeing Board
- Pt11 Forum members to send any comments or amendments relating to the Recognising and Identifying Carers document to the Chair by 1<sup>st</sup> April, if possible
- Pt16 Task Groups to meet in late April/Early May to update, review and prioritize Action Plans and identify leads and next steps to implement actions (note: promotion of integrated working all TGs pt8; impact of long covid TG1 pt9, Teesworks Skills Academy TG2 pt20)
- Pt18 Commissioned services for Carers will be introduced to the October meeting of the Forum
- Pt26 Next full Forum meeting 10-12 on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

Forum members asked to consider actions relating to the presentations by Forum members (Appendices 1-5):

1. Sign up to ST Wellbeing Network; encourage frontline staff/volunteers to engage in the Network
2. Read about Health Watch South Tees' work in relation to engaging Carers and promoting their voice
3. Sign up to We Care You Care ebulletin and share any partner information for the website
4. Refer in to Step Forward Tees Valley where appropriate
5. Identify any Kinship Carers and refer into Kinship Active

**Attendance:**

Richie	Andrew	Middlesbrough Council (Public Health) and South Tees Wellbeing Network
Declan	Baharini	South Tees Carers Forum Chair
Julie	Bailey	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (Partnership and Health Inequalities)
Ruth	Barnes	Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (Volunteer Development)
Kelly	Baxter	MVDA - Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (We Care You Care)
Paula	Briggs	NHS - South Tees Integration Programme
Jo	Cole	Tees Valley Durham and North Yorkshire Neurological Alliance (TVDNY) Neuro Key
John	Cooke	Carer
Emma	Cooper	Carers Together
Eileen	Cowle	The Junction Foundation (Youth Employment)
Gill	Cree	Alzheimers Society
Andrew	Crowe	Libraries Middlesbrough
Maureen	Dodsworth	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)
Gill	Durdan	Healthwatch South Tees PCP (Engagement and Development)
Hannah	Erdem	Redcar and Cleveland Mind
Diane	Fleet	Libraries Middlesbrough
Carolyn	Granthier	Skills for People
Nicola	Hall	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Partnerships and Prevention - Early Help)

Gareth	Harding	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Commissioning)
Jane	Harmer	Grandparents Plus Kinship Active programme (Mbro)
Lyndsey	Henry	Triage Central Limited
Michael	Janes	1600 Systems Ltd and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
Denise	Jennings	Redcar and Cleveland Mind (Mental Health Services)
Andrea	Johnson	Step Forward Tees Valley and Human Kind
Tom	Jones	Middlesbrough Sportability Club
Marie	Kerr	Age UK Teesside (Time Out Project)
Beth	Major	The Junction Foundation
Emma	McInnes	Middlesbrough Council (Public Health)
Campbell	McNeill	NHS England and NHS Improvement
Sue	Morgan	Step Forward Tees Valley (Groundwork)
Lee	O'Brien	Carers Together
Hayley	O'Shea	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Social Work)
Anne	Richards	RCVDA - Redcar & Cleveland Voluntary Development Association
Sue	Rowe	
Hazel	Robinson	Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind
Mike	Sharman	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care)
Sue	Wadwell	Grandparents Plus Kinship Active programme
Chris	Walker	Middlesbrough Council (Commissioning)
Kelly-Anne	Westwick	Beyond Housing
Melissa	Wilkinson	Middlesbrough College (Student Engagement)
Emily	Young	

**Apologies:**

Elspeth	Alexander	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care)
Douglas	Bowes	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)
Daniel	Emmerson	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)
Anna	Jackson	NHS - South Tees Integration Programme
Jo	Johnson	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Education - Virtual School)
Jason	Lowe	Beyond Housing
Anthea	Motson	Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
Debbie	Smith	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)
Pam	Wilson	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)

## MINUTES

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION

1. The Chair welcomed Forum members to the session and thanked everyone for their input since the last meeting in November. A huge amount of work had been undertaken by the members of the five task groups relating to the five strategy themes, across 10 sessions from December to February. The focus of this meeting of the Forum was:
  - to provide a platform for Forum members to update others on key developments, new activities and opportunities around services for Carers
  - to discuss and agree the South Tees Carers Strategy 2021-26 and Action Plan 2021-22 and recommend its approval and adoption by statutory partners and key stakeholders
  - to agree next steps in taking forward the Action Plan

### FORUM MEMBERS PLATFORM

2. Forum members were invited to share information about their services and activities and five presented to the Forum. Summaries of their presentations are appended to the Minutes, with further information circulated with the Minutes or shared via the We Care You Care Website:
  - i. **South Tees Wellbeing Network – Richie Andrew:** Richie outlined the purpose and aspirations of the Network, which is an asset-based community network for frontline workers and volunteers network delivering wellbeing services. Its aim is to encourage good practice, collaboration, innovation and wellbeing campaigns. Forum members were recommended to [register for updates](#) and links to events coming up and to offer the opportunity for any frontline workers and volunteers to get involved in the Network. See Appendix 1 for more information, links and contact details.
  - ii. **Healthwatch South Tees – Gill Durdan:** Gill provided a briefing note after the meeting, as the sound failed during the presentation. It outlines HWST's role as an independent champion for people using health and social care services and how they have engaged and involved Carers to gather views and intelligence and feed into policy and decision-making fora and key networks, as well as their plans moving forward. See Appendix 2 for more information.
  - iii. **We Care You Care – Kelly Baxter:** Kelly explained that We Care You Care is the communications brand and campaign relating to Carers and professionals and will cover South Tees from 1<sup>st</sup> April, with Redcar & Cleveland information added. Forum members were encouraged to [sign up to the WCYC ebulletin](#) and send any Carer related information or updates to add to the website and bulletins, as well as case studies (template to be shared) directly to Kelly. She also outlined a new strand of work on Carers' Voices to reflect their experiences and a review of the website. See Appendix 3 for more information.
  - iv. **Kinship Active – Sue Rowe and Jane Harmer:** Sue and Jane provided information on Kinship Carers, who take on responsibility for caring for children, when their parents are not able to, including their needs and the support available for them through Kinship Active (activities for families to do together, online activities and support during Covid and low cost fun activities, which will resume when it is safe to do so. They asked partners to refer any Kinship Carers to them, so that they can follow up to see how they can support families. See Appendix 4 for more information, contact details and referral links.
  - v. **Step Forward Tees Valley – Sue Morgan:** Sue explained the programme and partnership of 17 organisations providing support to people aged 29+ across Tees Valley to overcome multiple barriers to enable them to move into education, employment or training, as well as achieving soft outcomes. She outlined the eligibility and referral process and contact details, as well as achievements to date and how they are working during the pandemic. See Appendix 5 for more information.

## SOUTH TEES CARERS STRATEGY 2021-26 AND ACTION PLAN 2021-22

3. The Strategy and Action Plan were circulated with the papers in advance of the Forum meeting. The Chair gave an overview of the process of developing the documents and a summary of the contents. She thanked the Forum members and task groups for the work they had done from December to feed into these.

### Amendments

4. Following feedback from Lee O'Brien, the wording in the Strategy was changed, with 'informal' changed to 'unpaid' Carers throughout and this will be used in all documents going forward.
5. Wording in the Action plan was changed from 'interrogate' data to 'synthesise' data, based on a suggestion from Jo Cole.
6. Following a comment by Jo Cole, the indicators in the Action Plan around the number of case studies (relating to building the evidence base under the different Strategy themes) were amended to include these 'as part of a learning resource'. The Forum agreed that case studies are an important part of the shared learning resource and evidence that is being collated in South Tees, in addition to the need for better data, statistics and survey information about Carers. These may relate to lived experience of different types of Carers and Carers of different age, background and with varied caring roles and challenges, as well as case studies on good practice, different types of support and services and their impact and different approaches. These will all be shared as part of the We Care You Care information and evidence resource online and can then be used to share more widely.

### Comments and discussion

7. **Integrated working and collaboration** across all services and support, as well as the need to bridge the transition between Children's and Adult Services was raised by Lee as an essential requirement. This is reflected as a priority in both the Strategy and Action Plan and work is underway internally within both local authorities to address this. Chris and Gareth from Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils reported that there are now operational leads' meeting across Children's and Adults Services and both Local Authorities have appointed a Carers lead to ensure the integration work is taken forward. Chris also said that the work done by The Junction and Carers Together was very positive and has been shared within the local authorities and with the regional group of Social Services leads (ADASS NE). This will be a significant step forward if progress can be made in this area and the Action Plan implementation will help maintain the momentum. It will also be reflected in both the commissioning of Carers services and wider commissioning and service planning going forward.
8. **Pandemic impacts and long Covid:** Jo raised the issue of the pandemic and its impact on the disabled community. There will be a range of people who also have long-Covid, who will either find it challenging to continue caring roles or will need care themselves. She also raised the issue of those with neurodiverse conditions struggling to access support. These issues will be picked up as part of the implementation of the Action Plan, under the theme of Services and Systems that support Carers and partners can ensure that these and other issues are addressed in a partnership context.
9. **Recognising and Identifying Carers:** There were a couple of comments about Parent Carers and the fact that the Strategy document does not identify them specifically, rather mentions all Carers of all ages and backgrounds. The Chair said that there was an additional document on recognising and identifying Carers, which had been prepared based on task group input and recommendations. This was shared on screen and will be circulated after the meeting to the Forum for any amendments or additions.

10. The Chair had compiled this, based on input at the task group meetings where different types of Carers and circumstances were highlighted and stressed it was a draft for amending. It was originally intended as an appendix to the Strategy, but it could also be a standalone briefing and awareness raising document to be shared with partners and stakeholders to increase awareness and understanding about who Carers are, the range of Carers and cared for people, the fact that some have multiple caring roles and may not come into contact with services and support, or be 'hidden' for a range of reasons. The Chair will share the document after the meeting for comment and suggested amendments. This will be updated so that it can be appended to the Strategy and also shared through We Care You Care. There is a significant need to broaden the understanding of who Carers are and why they may be hidden within organisations and for those providing support and services, to raise public awareness, as well as awareness of Carers themselves in order to recognise them and provide referral and support as relevant.
11. **Direct payments:** John Cooke raised two issues around specific issues. The first was about direct payments and how these are paid and who holds the purse strings. Mike Sharman said that these are worked out individually on a case-by-case basis, but this can be followed up with the local authority.
12. **Carers' Assessments:** John's second point was a concern that Carers' assessments had been suspended under the Coronavirus Act and there had been an announcement by Government that this was going to be extended. Hayley, Mike and Gareth for the local authorities, as well as Lee from Carers Together reassured John that in South Tees, although there had been some minor disruption at the beginning of the pandemic and some delays, Carers Assessments had and are being carried out. John can contact Carers Together or the local authority to follow this up directly. The Chair said that if there is a perception that these assessments have been suspended, that is something which the Forum can help provide information and reassurance to people about.

#### **Agreement of the Strategy and Action Plan**

13. With the amendments suggested taken into account, the Forum agreed both the Strategy and Action Plan.
14. The Strategy and Action Plan will now be taken through Middlesbrough Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group decision making structures and then taken for final approval by the South Tees Health and Wellbeing Board in April. Partner organisations will be encouraged to adopt the Strategy.

#### **MOVING FORWARD – WORKING TOGETHER TO PROGRESS THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

15. Partners will be asked to come together again in their task groups to review and update the Action Plan and to identify priorities moving forward, with leads for different actions. The Chair suggested meetings at the end of April and early May for the 5 task groups, which may then agree specific tasks and smaller groups working on actions. These can feed into the next Forum meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. In the meantime, the Strategy and Action Plan can be shared across partner organisations for consideration and adoption, where relevant.
16. The Chair thanked the Forum members for their hard work and commitment over the last 3-4 months and for agreeing the Strategy and Action Plan, which can now form the basis of future Forum work and activities.

#### **COMMISSIONING CARERS SERVICES**

17. Gareth, Chris and Julie are responsible for the commissioning of Carers services in South Tees, which will commence in mid-May to early June and advertised on the NEPO portal. The Strategy and Action Plan will inform the commissioning intentions and services will be sought, which address the issues, needs and gaps

identified. Commissioned services will begin in October 2021 and the October Forum meeting will introduce these to the Forum.

18. Gareth stressed that these commissioned services will operate in partnership with and add value to the wider infrastructure and delivery of services and support in South Tees. Partnership and integrated working and collaboration across statutory and wider partner organisations and groups will be essential to ensure that Carers can access all the services and support they need in a manner relevant to their requirements. He said that the Forum will be a key part of how this will work into the future and the level of engagement and involvement to date, bodes well for the future.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND MEMBER UPDATES**

19. **Teesworks Skills Academy:** Michael Janes said that there is an opportunity to link with the [Teesworks Skills Academy](#), which forms a major part of Teesworks (formerly the South Tees Development Corporation site, the UK's largest industrial zone). Operating as a one-stop-shop, the academy will link investors, contractors, end users, employment hubs, skills providers, jobseekers and apprentices to create a world-class workforce for the future, equipped with the expertise businesses at the site will need to grow and succeed. There is a consortium of organisations who are operating as an Education Training Collective and are developing a skills plan to coordinate training and recruitment across the region and work with organisations to match employers with potential employees for the site.
20. Michael said there is an opportunity to build relationships with Teesworks Skills Academy and influence how Carers can access skills, training and employment opportunities. This will be considered by Task Group 2 on Financial Wellbeing and Employment at the meeting in late April/early May.
21. **Carers Together:** Lee O'Brien said that Carers Together have been helping co-ordinate Carers access to vaccination, working alongside NHS England and the local authorities. In addition, their work on campaigning is continuing, to promote Carers registering as such with GPs and health care providers. They are also doing a lot of work on Parent Carers in South Tees and with the Junction on the transition of Young Carers to Young Adult Carers.
22. Lee also said that there is a Carers UK campaign to promote [Make caring the 10th protected characteristic - Carers UK](#) and recommended that partners find out more and support the campaign.
23. Lee said that there is a lot of momentum around the issue of Carers and employment and that Carers Together are supporting Employers for Carers Passports and Charters.
24. **Vaccination commercial on local TV for unpaid Carers:** Emma McInnes said that a 40 second commercial has been prepared about Carers and vaccinations, as discussed in the task groups. This is aimed at unpaid Carers and is airing across Teesside and Tyne and Wear through the North East Live channel. It includes an infographic and is a good opportunity for reaching a wider audience. This is being shared free of charge. Emma will ensure that is available on the We Care You Care website.

#### **DATE OF THE NEXT FULL FORUM MEETING**

25. The date of the next full forum meeting: **10-12, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021** – this will be on zoom and a link will be shared with the Minutes of the meeting.

## Appendix 1: South Tees Wellbeing Network

### Richie Andrew's presentation to South Tees Carers Forum

[richie\\_andrew@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:richie_andrew@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

Richie works in Public Health South Tees Mental Health team. He is a Health Improvement Specialist and runs a range of mental health and wellbeing initiatives, such as Boro Man Can, Feel Good Communities and most recently has been involved with developing and launching the South Tees Wellbeing Network. He gave an overview of the intentions of network, which had a soft launch with a webinar on 4<sup>th</sup> February after two years of intelligence gathering and consultation.

Richie outlined the 10 key factors that impact on wellbeing: What we do (jobs, activities, beliefs); Education and Skills, Personal Wellbeing; Personal Finance; Where we live; Governance; Health; Environment; Our relationships; and the Economy. He explained that, despite all the great work that is going on across the area and the local expertise and activities, there are still gaps in wellbeing support, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic and there is a mental health crisis.

There are at least 35 different forums or networks across South Tees which relate to wellbeing, each with a different focus. The idea was to set up a practical network of volunteers and frontline workers across all local services and organisations to address the gaps, share good practice and encourage more organisations to promote early intervention and put in place wellbeing measures to support people at the right time, in the right place, in a way that meets their needs.

The South Tees Wellbeing Network:

- is a network of local services, organisations and groups that bring together people working in the frontline of wellbeing
- is not a strategic or decision-making body, but will seek to influence those who are by providing real life solutions from the front line
- will improve development of wellbeing activities, promote innovation and increase cross referral between partners
- is a fully connected community asset-based approach to wellbeing that integrates planning, measuring and evaluation

Membership is open to anyone to attend who has a role in wellbeing and will be community facing, responsive to need and support the 'Organising of Wellbeing'. 500 people have already signed up and frontline staff and volunteers can opt-in to emails, there will be calls to action and look at funding and policy development, as well as a range of topic-led webinars and events and learning and networking opportunities. Ground-up innovation and collaboration encouraged and there will be mental wellbeing oriented campaigning and a centralisation of wellbeing data (ONS).

There will be a formal launch in the coming weeks and webinar recordings will be available on youtube. Formal sign up will be called for and Forum members were encouraged to share the details of the Network and encourage any frontline employees and volunteers are given the opportunity to sign up. Richie said that members were encouraged to register all activities on their local Middlesbrough Matters, Redcar PIN or Make Every Contact Count directories (as they want to avoid a proliferation of directories).

**Further info and contact details:** If members would like to be informed directly about the formal launch and other events and activities, please register [at this link](#). Contact: [richie\\_andrew@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:richie_andrew@middlesbrough.gov.uk) 01642 728772 or [sharon.chappell@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.chappell@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk) 07966 625156

*The presentations related to the Network will be shared on the We Care You Care website and the webinar recording links, resources and contacts will be circulated with the Forum minutes.*

## Appendix 2: Healthwatch South Tees

Briefing for South Tees Carers Forum - 24.03.21(provided by Gill Durdan after the meeting)

[gill.durdan@pcp.uk.net](mailto:gill.durdan@pcp.uk.net)

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. Our engagement work, based on experiences of service users, helps us to understand needs and prioritise our work to focus on supporting improvements.

[What we do | Healthwatch Redcar And Cleveland\\*](#)

[What we do | Healthwatch Middlesbrough\\*](#)

\*Healthwatch England require us to separate South Tees into the two authorities. We therefore host two websites and both links are here. For ease, all hyperlinks from here are connected to the Middlesbrough Website but everything is duplicated on the Redcar & Cleveland site also.

Our service is for everybody, but I will focus on our work with carers here.

In 2019 we liaised with carers as part of local implementation of the [NHS Long Term Plan, specifically carers of children and young adults with autism and learning disability](#). During that year, we contributed to the national [Core Capabilities Framework consultation](#), representing carers views on training and awareness for people with autism and learning disability. We have attended conferences and events specifically for carers, conversing about personal experiences and [showcasing good practice](#).

Over the past year, we continued engaging with carers widening the scope of our work, with data and community intelligence coming from a variety of sources:

- [Our Information and Signposting service](#)
- [Have Your Say](#)
- [Experiences of Lockdown Report and Recommendations](#)
- [How Services Have Adapted the Covid-19 Pandemic Report](#)
- Neurodevelopmental Pathway (children aged 5-18) Report and Recommendations (soon to be published)
- GP's, Treatments and Wellbeing Report and Recommendations (soon to be published)
- [How it is For Us - a parent carers experience](#)

We use many forms of engagement, including, Have Your Say, face to face (when we can) surveys, video conferencing, HWST Community Champions etc. We host regular meetings with parent carers and can invite guests that offer information and take up issues and concerns on an individual or issue-based concern.



We are also bearing in mind those not digitally connected now and are rolling out initiatives to extend our reach in this area. We have recruited [Community Champions](#) to overcome barriers to getting involved. A new initiative is our partnership with libraries that have regular book deliveries to people who are very isolated. We have provided reusable cloth bags and bookmarks, advertising our Information & Signposting service, and encouraging them to get in touch. We have also developed a text only service for everyone, but in response to issues raised by the deaf and hearing loss community, for user friendly ways to engage with us.

**What do we know about carers within the context of health and social care and what will be our priorities moving into 2021/22?**

We know that the caring role has an impact on both physical and mental health and carers often put their own wellbeing secondary to that of those they care for. Our community intelligence tells us that access to primary health care, particularly GP's, for themselves and those they care for, can be a challenge. We want to better understand why this is so, and how we can support improvements. With this in mind, we have been working with a range of cross sector partners to build a bigger picture. Although, much of our work with partners has been on hold due to the vaccination programme priority, we have in place a preliminary strategy to support developments in this area. We are also working within the area of mental health to improve, develop and extend provision across wider networks, building on lower level access to services and prevention of crisis intervention. In addition to this, we have an opportunity to:

- Influence the development of the TEWV (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley) Community Mental Health Framework model
- Provide qualitative evidence to inform the Middlesbrough Health & Wellbeing Recovery Group.
- Raise awareness of local issues to inform the South Tees Health & Wellbeing Executive and the South Tees Live Well Board
- Influence the Middlesbrough Mental Health Partnership and the South Tees Care Concordat priorities
- Key stakeholder of the South Tees Mental Health and Wellbeing Network

As we move into the new financial year, we are exploring our priorities and how we can have the maximum impact on health and social care services. We will continue to engage with carers and extending our reach, and following up recommendations from our reporting. We are also developing our strategy for supporting improvements in primary care and access to GP's.

Bringing together the ST Carers Forum and the amazing work on developing the strategy and action plan, provides a framework for extending collaboration and improving outcomes for carers. HWST is looking forward to working together during these challenging times, to make a difference to the lives of carers, and those they care for, across South Tees.

## Appendix 3: We Care You Care

### Presentation by Kelly Baxter

[kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk](mailto:kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk)

We Care You Care (WCYC) is the coordinated brand aimed to reach Carers (whether known to services or not) and professionals to provide relevant, accessible information and support.

MVDA was commissioned to host this communication and campaigns project.

**WCYC South Tees:** Previously WCYC only covered Middlesbrough, but it will cover South Tees from 1 April. The website is being updated for the launch to ensure all pages have information about signposting and resources for Carers and professionals across South Tees and are updated with Redcar & Cleveland information. The website has information for Carers and local services, as well as information for professionals. Since last year WCYC has also hosted information and documents relating to the [South Tees Carers Forum](#).

- [We Care You Care website](#)

**Share your information:** WCYC is designed to enable access to relevant information for both professionals and Carers. Any Forum members can send information through to Kelly to be added to the website, as well as contacting Kelly to discuss how WCYC can work with Forum members to support their involvement.

- Email: [kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk](mailto:kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk)

**Sign up to WCYC ebulletin:** There is currently a monthly ebulletin, which goes to all who register to receive these. The bulletin has the latest information on campaigns, research, resources, calls to action and activities relating to Carers and professionals. It is proposed that this will increase to fortnightly to be able to share information more frequently. All members of the Forum are asked to sign up to the ebulletin, as news about Forum members and Forum activities will be shared through the bulletin and on the website. Forum member updates and services and activities should be directed to Kelly to add to the website and ebulletin.

- [Click here to subscribe to the We Care You Care ebulletin](#)

**Carers' Voices:** WCYC is organising Carers' Voices, working with local partners to highlight the voices, views, issues and experiences of Carers across South Tees. Organisations have been asked to share case studies and have been doing this, but they are all in different formats and styles. Kelly is preparing a template so they are consistent. There may be a variety of formats such as Carers blogs, pieces to camera, quotes and images. Kelly has met with local Carers and they have talked about isolation and loneliness and their experiences, which can be challenging. Forum members can feed in case studies for wider circulation.

**Website review and feedback:** Kelly is creating a sounding board for WCYC, recognising Carers as experts by experience. This will be very informal, flexible and inclusive. Kelly has spoken to organisations who will help get Carers' feedback into how that looks and what information is held. Kelly is contacting people to do a website review of the content, as she wants to make sure it is useful, easy to use and has helpful information for Carers.

## Appendix 4: Kinship Active

### Presentation by Sue Rowe and Jane Harmer

[sue.rowe@kinship.org.uk](mailto:sue.rowe@kinship.org.uk) and [jane.harmer@kinship.org.uk](mailto:jane.harmer@kinship.org.uk)

**Kinship** (formerly Grandparents Plus) is a kinship care charity operating in England and Wales supporting, informing and advising all kinship carers. Kinship Carers are the grandparents and siblings, the aunts, uncles, and family friends who step up to raise children when their parents aren't able to. Locally the charity has been delivering its ground-breaking Sport England funded Kinship Active Programme for the past two years. In Teesside, the programme is delivered in partnership with [Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation](#) and [Teesside University](#).

Sue runs Kinship Active activities in Redcar, East Cleveland and Greater Eston and Jane in Middlesbrough. Kinship Active provides a supportive environment allowing kinship families to get more active together. Prior to the Covid pandemic, this programme supported 85 families through face-to-face activities and peer support. The service is currently offering an online programme of physical activity and virtual support groups.

Project workers also provide one-to-one support for families – discussing the specific challenges they face, developing activity plans together, supporting participants to access specialist health services if required and working towards achievable outcomes. Through building strong local partnerships the project has been able to organize low-cost activities including low-cost swim sessions, free table tennis, walking groups, community café sessions, dance classes and over 130 kinship carers and their children come on day trips for fun activities. Activities are as local as possible to avoid transport costs.

The team can support all kinship families irrelevant of legal order and work closely to support families to make even the smallest of changes to increase their physical activity levels.

### About Kinship Carers in South Tees

- There is often a high level of mental health, drug and alcohol challenges for parents which has led to kinship carers taking on children
- There is little statutory support for kinship carers and only 1 in 10 get support
- 472 kinship carers were identified in South Tees at the start of the project, many are not known
- There are an estimated 1110 children with Kinship carers, but the reality is likely to be far higher
- More than 50% are grandparents, who may be older, have their own health conditions and 80% of kinship carers have a disability or longterm condition.
- Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland have a higher prevalence of Carers than the national average and Middlesbrough has the highest level outside London

Parents will neglect themselves and many children are traumatised, with high levels of need. Many have a special guardianship order (similar to adoption, but that comes with support training and financial package, Kinship Carers don't receive this). Many will take on children if the parents have died, which comes with additional mental health issues. The Carers may struggle to bring the children up, but are often afraid to ask for help, as they are worried children will be taken away.

Covid has had a significant impact on them. Normally Kinship Active supports their mental and physical health and wellbeing, but activities had to go online due to covid. There is a closed facebook page and a weekly calendar of events, such as Zumba and bonkers bingo. There is more focus on mental health and if people are not in right place to do activities, they help people help themselves. The project has funded local activities, which are low cost, such as swimming.

The project has enabled them to do activities as family and they are getting support without realising it. The project workers can refer them into services and they can access small grants. Identifying themselves as a Carer

is important, as it is a step in accepting that there is support for them. Often people don't know how to access this support or lack confidence to access it.

Kinship Active works closely with We Care You Care, Age UK and others and are keen to link into with others and raise awareness of what is available.

Prior to Covid, peer support was a key area, as children need to meet other kinship children, so that they don't feel isolated or strange. It is more secure for them and they feel more included in society and not the only ones in that situation.

There is a need to identify hidden families and Sue and Jane asked that partners should let them know if there are any kinship families they are working with. Jane or Sue will follow up and contact the families.

The calendar of events will be posted weekly on We Care You Care. There are also online KINCHAT support groups for Carers and Sue and Jane asked partners to encourage people to engage with this. Attending something simple like an online support group can reduce isolation and Sue and Jane want to build on this when it is possible to have face to face activities again.

### Further information

- [Kinship Active article on We Care You Care](#) (March 2021)
- [Kinship Active Website Page](#)
- You can refer a kinship carer to the Kinship Active programme by contacting [Sue Rowe](#) 07943 865586 or [Jane Harmer](#) 07943 865601 or by [completing a referral form](#).
- [Download Kinship Active leaflet](#)

## Appendix 5: Step Forward Tees Valley (SFTV)

### Presentation by Sue Morgan on SFTW Building Better Opportunities Programme (BBO) 2016-2023

[sue.morgan@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:sue.morgan@groundwork.org.uk)

Sue is a Navigator in Redcar Navigator in Redcar, but the programme runs across Tees Valley, supporting people back into education and training. They may have challenges or gaps, they may have been Carers and don't know where to start. Everyone supported has one or more barriers, which may relate to mental health, financial or digital inclusion, substance and alcohol issues, housing, Domestic Violence, disabilities or long term health conditions. SFTV looks at the person as a whole and that any support is tailored to the individual and their barriers, providing help on each of these to help them move forward, as part of their bespoke action plan. This seeks to help them achieve both soft and outcomes.

#### What is Step Forward Tees Valley?

- Step Forward Tees Valley is a BBO programme funded by European Social Fund & National Lottery Community Fund - it is led by Humankind Charity and also delivered by ourselves Groundwork North East and Cumbria - we started in 2016 and have funding currently until 2023
- We are a voluntary service and support people across the Tees Valley to overcome multiple barriers which they have to education, employment or training so they can move forward with their lives.
- We are a partnership approach programme, with 17 delivery partners working collaboratively and holistically together to achieve great things.

#### Eligibility and Suitability

To access the SFTV programme, participants need to meet the following eligibility and suitability criteria:

- Aged 29+ or have already accessed YEI provision
- Out of work (including self employment) Zero hours workers *may* be eligible
- Are able to access support in one of the 5 Tees Valley areas
- Have 2+ barriers, 1 of which includes: Health/Mental Health; Digital Inclusion; Financial Inclusion

#### Achievements

- Over 3300 Commencements (Starts) onto the SFTV programme from Sept 2016 – Jan 2021.  
Out of these:
  - Over 450 participants have moved into training upon exit
  - Over 360 participants have moved into employment upon exit
  - Over 2500 participants have improved their stability and motivation and/or Health and Wellbeing
  - Over 1500 participants have improved their digital and/or financial skills
  - Over 1500 participants have improved their job specific/job search and social skills
  - Over 380 participants have moved into volunteering placements

#### How are we working during the COVID pandemic

- We have still been able to continue supporting SFTV Participants during the pandemic, which has been amazing 😊
- All partners have adapted their ways of working to remote working models
- We are using Online meeting platforms such as Teams, Zoom and Skype for 1-1 and group work (where applicable).
- We are developing our digital support further to reduce the digital divide gap in delivery with opportunities for devices and data to be purchased for participants (where eligible)

#### Referrals

- Easiest way to refer is online <https://sfteesvalley.co.uk/join>
- Or within each local navigator hubs via phone: Middlesbrough - 01642 245895 Redcar - 01642 681785