



Caring for Carers Policy

Swindon SEND Families Voice are a 'Carer Friendly Organisation', we are working with Swindon Carers Centre to obtain the Carers Award accreditation.

Introduction

This policy applies to all our Committee members, Parent representatives, Employees and Volunteers.

Swindon SEND Families Voice

1. The Basics of the Carers Act 2015

- 1.1 The Carers Act came into force in 2015. It gives carers additional rights, and it is deemed appropriate that Swindon SEND Families Voice recognises the caring role of its members as they are all carers of children with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities, amongst other caring roles they have.
- 1.2 Swindon SEND Families Voice recognises that all those working for the organisation each has an individual set of needs and has rights under the Carers Act.
- 1.3 Swindon Carers Centre is recognised as providing Swindon SEND Families Voice with the Carers Award which must meet strict criteria to be awarded. Criteria for meeting the award are set locally, so that carers across the locality are treated the same.

2. Definitions

Carer: A carer is anyone who provides unpaid care for a family member or friend, who has a long-term illness, disability, mental health problem or drug or alcohol dependency issue and cannot cope without their support.

Carer Lead (CL): At Swindon SEND Families Voice, we have a designated team member who takes the Carer Lead role. They identify other members of the organisation who have a caring role and make the opportunity to discuss that team member's work life balance; or if they need a work break and any extra support to return to the workplace with their caring role.

Carer Representative (CR): A nominated member of Swindon SEND Families Voice who works alongside the Carer Lead to take responsibility of carers and their wellbeing and rights in the organisation.

3. Responsibilities of the Carer Lead and Carer Representative;

- a) Flexible working practices - such as flexitime, home working, self-rostering, term-time working and part time working can be discussed with the CL/CR and agreed with by the Chair of Swindon SEND Families Voice;

- b) In-house networking/support groups – the CL will allow access to the Swindon SEND Families Voice WhatsApp and Facebook closed/private peer support groups (SSFV parent representatives and volunteers);
- c) Employee training programmes and access to self-improvement;
- d) Details of our Carer policy. Carers needs and plans for organisational improvements will be discussed including carer breaks, flexible working hours, term-time only working, welcome back interviews following a carer break and staggered return to work.
- e) CL/CR will undergo 'Carer Awareness' review by SCC to ensure all practices are in accordance with the Carers Act and with the Caring for Carers Policy.

4. Policy statement

As an organisation we need to support our carers in their caring roles. We will:

- Arrange meetings between carers and key staff (CL/CR) to have a documented awareness of each carer's needs, to be assessed termly during one to ones, on an individual basis.
- Ensure all new staff have an induction programme, to include awareness of carer's needs and this policy document.
- Make sure the organisation provides training and support for the CL/CR and the chair of Swindon SEND Families Voice to help them support carers.
- Invite Swindon Carers Centre to attend carers representatives' meetings and events to support the organisation.
- Ensure all carers are identified and supported and relevant information will be shared with Swindon Carers Centre.
- Ensure disclosure is sensitively encouraged through organisational processes and confidentiality maintained, e.g., induction and carers are clear about whom they can share difficulties with and provide training, support and supervision for our team who manage personal data, so that they can act legally, confidently and consistently.
- Enable key staff (CL/CR) to be aware of how to identify (if not known initially or caring role increases) and take appropriate action i.e. inform the chair of the organisation of the changing nature of the carer's role;
- Ensure carers are made aware of their rights to receive an assessment of their needs and know who to access for assessment and support (encourage the carers to contact Swindon Carers Centre who carry out carers assessments).
- Be able to identify and be aware of the needs of carers and their value to our organisation and the community as a whole.

5. Responsibilities of Swindon SEND Families Voice

- 5.1 We take a proactive approach and can be flexible and create a culture of trust and loyalty for carers.
- 5.2 We are supportive, all our members feel supported and are not isolated at work.
- 5.3 We allow our carers to take time off and are able to offer a flexible approach to working hours;
- 5.4 Work can be a safe space where carers can engage and support each other, and create better peer engagement;
- 5.5 We support our carer workers and appreciate that our representatives have a diverse and adaptable skill set that ultimately benefits our organisation.
- 5.6 The Carer Lead and the Carer Representative will hold termly one to ones with all parent representatives and team members.
- 5.7 A summary of all one to ones will be written and shared with the chair and committee members to discuss with each representatives caring role and highlight any concerns such as an increase in their caring role; request for a carer break; or any training need identified to further the carer's knowledge to support them in their parent representative role for the organisation;
- 5.8 All staff are asked to read and review our policies, before confirming that they agree with them.

6. Staff training and the Care for Carers policy

- 6.1 Induction Training and Participation Training are written by and delivered in-house by members of staff who themselves are carers. All members are mandatorily required to attend the Induction and Participation Training.
- 6.2 Staff are asked to complete a post-training feedback form, held on the one drive > Participation Training > Handouts
- 6.3 Induction training is carried out by members of staff who are themselves carers. When a new member of staff attends a meeting, they are supported by a more experienced member of the team through our doubling up system.
- 6.4 The doubling up system means that after each meeting the 2 members of staff discuss how the meeting went and this can be used as an opportunity to raise any concerns that the carer may have.

7. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, and good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

In case of any queries in relation to this policy please contact the Carer Lead at:
swindonsendfamiliesvoice@outlook.com

Policy Written: 13 October 2021

Responsibility of: Committee

Policy Review Due: 13 October 2022