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At Blackpool Carers Centre, we respect everyone who comes to us for help. So while their stories are true, client names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy.
What an exciting year we have had! We all feel privileged to have been selected as the beneficiaries of the DIYSOS and BBC Children in Need Big Build Special. We hope this inspirational programme, that turned Blenheim House into Beaverbrooks House, has made a difference to the lives of young carers across the country by putting them on a national stage.

Thanks to the efforts of those families who agreed to be filmed, we hope that professionals, and the community as a whole, will have a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by young carers, so that they can be supported at the earliest possible stage in their caring role.

Thank you to our fabulous team of staff and volunteers for continuing to work through the chaos and mayhem - they are a passionate, hardworking, close ‘family’ and they really care about the quality of their work. A special mention to: the ‘behind the scenes’ team for their negotiating skills and patience; Jacqui for managing the PR; John and Danielle for their Ambassadorial support, and the inspiring, ambitious and tenacious team at the BBC who made it all happen.

Thanks to our families and young people for agreeing to be filmed even though the cameras may have intruded into their private lives. We recognise and thank every single volunteer for giving their time, skills, experience and sheer hard work. Thank you also to those who preferred to stay behind the scenes, providing materials, donations, advice and refreshments.

We have achieved so much over the last 12 years but this year has been a real milestone for Blackpool Carers. We have a great resource filled with the best facilities that any support service could wish for.

Thanks to the ongoing support of so many individuals, companies, trusts and community groups, we will continue to work towards a better life for carers.

Paul Jebb, Chair

Michelle Smith, Chief Executive
Our dreams came true on the 28th June 2016 when Nick Knowles and his army of volunteers began the mammoth task of turning a derelict building into a fully functioning and welcoming centre for carers young and old.

As part of 2016 Children in Need campaign, Young Carers became the focus and the spotlight was on us here in Blackpool.

The building, previously known as ‘Blenheim House’, was donated by The Beaverbrooks Charitable Trust in 2015 and was soon to be a haven for carers of all ages.

After weeks of planning, designing, hard work, donations, and lots of food to keep the troops of dedicated volunteers going, the building was complete and on Reveal Day there wasn’t a dry eye in (or outside of!) the house. We moved into our new home in October 2016 and since then there has been no looking back.

We have continued to receive support from local tradesmen and businesses to complete the upstairs of the building so that our workers have an office base and they also continue to provide support and advice in helping us to maintain our wonderful building.

Following the airing of the show in November, referrals for carers desperately needing our support have increased. With a growing awareness, local schools, health workers, and other key agencies are identifying more and more carers to access the support that we provide.

Our involvement with DIY SOS not only provided a fantastic platform for young carers on a local level, but also brought into sharp focus the resilience and tenacity of young carers and the need to support them in their caring roles to a national audience.

Partnership working with local businesses and services has increased, and awareness of carers is developing as more people now understand what carers do. People are keen to get involved and support in any way they can.

The services we deliver have expanded and we are now providing more respite sessions, training and family activities than ever before. Our centre is now the ‘one stop shop’ for carers of all ages in Blackpool offering; advice, information, support or some well needed respite. The creative and vibrant design of our centre allows carers to feel that they have a ‘home from home’. Whether it’s a confidential chat or a craft activity, we have the space to accommodate. Our beautiful garden has already been host to events and activities including; teddy bears picnics, family fun days, camp outs, young carers free time and much more. We would like to thank all of the people involved for making this happen, for their kindness, time and dedication.

We look forward to continued growth in our new home thanks to DIY SOS, BBC Children in Need and The Beaverbrooks Charitable Trust.
This is one of the most challenging projects the team has ever taken on. It’s been one of the most rewarding too. I’ve met fantastic young people, strong, resilient, who just need a hand, and others more than willing to help.”

Nick Knowles, TV presenter

“My early life was overshadowed by my mother’s illness and I remember the crushing anxiety. I never wanted pity and these young people don’t either. Blackpool matters to me, deeply, and Beaverbrooks House does too. We have made it beautiful but it is also functional and I hope it will be used and enjoyed for many years to come.”

Laurence Llewelyn Bowen, Designer

872
Individuals and organisations donated time, services and products to transform Beaverbrooks House, which equates to a value of

£905,275
Supporting Adult Carers

Our Adult Carer team provide support and information to carers aged 19+. We offer an holistic approach to cater for the needs of carers and their families. Our services include emotional support, counselling, liaising with professionals, advocating on the carer’s behalf, support groups, training, whole family events and activities/events specifically for carers.

Between April 2016 and March 2017, counselling provision extended to 1 qualified counsellor and 5 trainees.

We hold regular awareness raising stands in all GP surgeries across Blackpool, targeting previously unidentified carers and those who are new to their caring role.

Our ‘working carers’ group was launched in March 2017, aimed at carers who are unable to attend groups during the day due to work commitments or caring responsibilities, providing much needed peer support and respite.

The move to Beaverbrooks House in October 2016 has given us a focal point within the community and one location for staff to work from. Carers have found our service more accessible with a bus stop outside and being able to attend for one to one sessions and activities all in one place. Carers can now meet with workers in a relaxed, safe and confidential environment, with or without the person they care for.

Beaverbrooks House has provided a great opportunity to develop the range of events that we offer to carers. We have organised large social events for both carers and the wider community to come and enjoy the building and gardens whilst also raising much needed funds for the service.

Due to an increased number of volunteers, we also have more dedicated and skilled individuals who give their time to support our events.

We have developed new links with organisations that can help carers and their families including the Memory Assessment Clinic who have held clinics at our new building.

“Prisha cares for her daughter Kalpana, diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy for 39 years. The family have no external support. Prisha’s own health is deteriorating and her husband Zak has taken on caring roles for both Prisha and Kalpana. Zak is also in poor health following open heart surgery last year.

Following financial concerns, an initial referral was made to our Benefits Advisor where the family were given support around benefits and debts. They are now in a better financial position and feeling more positive.

Prisha has been admitted to hospital a number of times recently. The family have accessed advice and information about who to speak to following discharge to ensure the correct care package is in place. They have attended one to one sessions, groups and events.

The family feel they have been able to talk through problems and gain support during difficult times. This has given them confidence in being able to make arrangements for care. Prisha is now successfully back at home and able to once again share in providing care for Kalpana.

3,762
One to one support sessions

1,998
Carers accessed support

1,267
Signposted to other partners

991
Referrals received

242
Counselling sessions

“Prisha has been invaluable to me. I cannot thank you enough for this experience. I dread to think where or how I would be without this.”

Graham (34)

“Blackpool Carers Centre has given me confidence in myself and my abilities. It has helped me appreciate what I have.”

Susan (68)
Blackpool Carers Centre is fortunate to have a passionate, dedicated and diligent team of professionals, working hard to provide that special support that makes a better life for carers.

Carers’ Support Workers are funded by a wide range of grant making trusts, statutory agencies and donations. But! behind our successful team of support workers is another important team that don’t often make the front pages. From marketing to cleaning; arranging insurance to paying the bills; monitoring to dealing with the media and all the jobs in between, we are grateful to our administration team. They have been working together for many years. They are essential to the running of Blackpool Carers Centre but, like many charities, their salaries are difficult to fund.

We are grateful to a number of individuals and important grant making trusts who recognise that excellent administration is vital to any successful organisation. They provide unrestricted funding so that we can employ our highly skilled team. Throughout 2016, this team has worked tirelessly to include the involvement of the BBC in their day to day work.

Special thanks to Jacqui Morley who managed the outstanding Public Relations element of the DIYSOS Big Build with her trademark tenacity, professionalism and experience.

Thank you to The Tudor Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation and The Rank Foundation whose trustees have all recognised this specific challenge.

Jim, one of our students, had this to say about his time working with us:

I have enjoyed every moment of placement and I feel that it has given me the confidence and experience to go into practice. I have been able to draw upon the knowledge and experience of other workers as well as finding inspiration in the passion that they all bring to their job roles.

I have had the opportunity to use my own professional judgement and develop new and existing skills. One of the main areas I have developed at Blackpool Carers Centre is my confidence.

I have been in a supportive environment which has allowed me to push the limits of my comfort zone and has given me confidence in my own abilities, I could not have asked for a better placement.
Reassuring Dementia Project

This year our Dementia workers, with the support of funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation, have continued to break down the barriers and reduce the stigma surrounding dementia. Our Dementia Awareness Training course is available to carers in order to develop understanding and knowledge of dementia, as well as to promote confidence, independence and self-esteem, helping carers learn coping strategies. Our training course encourages carers to think about the future and to make important and necessary decisions.

We understand that a dementia caring role can be extremely intense and challenging and so we aim to provide a named support worker to educate carers in order to remove the fear that might be felt surrounding their caring role. The course continues to be in high demand and carers provide positive feedback regarding the impact that it has on helping them to manage better, making a real difference to their lives. Our 1:1 sessions go hand-in-hand with the training and have provided consistent emotional and practical help. This intensive support prevents carers from reaching crisis point as well as allowing them to see a way through a particular phase in their caring journey.

The monthly peer group helps to sustain the friendships forged at the training sessions and helps to prevent carers from becoming lonely. We also continue our involvement with the Dementia Action Alliance and have been involved in the setting up of the Fylde Coast Dementia Hub held on a monthly basis at Trinity Hospice and Clifton Hospital. This provides advice and information from many dementia related services across the Fylde Coast. Alongside this, a visit to Lancaster University highlighted how much important research is being done to help prevent the progression of dementia in younger people and we continue to keep up to date with developments at the university through contacts made. This helps us to be at the forefront of new information and research outcomes.

Marian came to the Carers Centre in a distressed state trying to cope alone in a very intense caring situation. She cares for her husband, Frank, who had been diagnosed with dementia and unfortunately, she had very little family support.

We were able to offer Marian a place on our ‘Dementia Awareness Course’ for 2 hours per week, delivered over 4 weeks in small groups, with an option to bring Frank with her if he couldn’t be left at home alone. We provide a separate room where loved ones can enjoy a chat or activities with support volunteers whilst carers attend our course. Starting with ‘What is Dementia?’, the course provides a safe environment where carers can learn and openly share their experiences and the challenges they face daily whilst caring for a loved one with dementia.

Following the course, Marian felt ready to be able to tackle her biggest worry of looking to the future and planning ahead. She sought advice on wills and a lasting power of attorney and had those difficult conversations, facing her initial fears.

She has contacted us to enrol on further courses and activities. Our Mindfulness and Relaxation sessions have helped her to continue to deal with her caring role in a much more positive and controlled manner. This also helped to reduce the social isolation she was facing by allowing her to take some comfort in the knowledge that she is not the only one going through this experience. She has had the opportunity to develop new friendships, learn new skills and enjoy life, whilst caring for Frank.

“The course was a lesson in perspective as it enabled me to see things from another point of view”.
Marian (79)

“I feel less anxious and better equipped to meet my mother’s care needs.”
Martin (58)

Annual Review 2016-17

993
Dementia project volunteer hours

206
Dementia carers supported

122
One to one sessions for dementia carers

50
Carers attended Dementia Training

18
Dementia Hub partner organisations
Encouraging Family Focus

The Family Focus Project, funded by The Big Lottery, works with families where parental substance misuse and/or mental ill health is impacting on family life. Workers support the whole family to focus on the positives and work to reduce the problems that are affecting both parents and children. For some children, the work that we do with them is around helping them to understand about drugs and alcohol and the physical and emotional problems that these can cause, giving them sound knowledge and information about addiction.

We work with parents to make sure that they know where to get help and accompany them in their first steps towards recovery. Every family is different, with success being measured individually, taking small achievements and building on these to bring about positive and lasting change.

The project is very ‘hands on’, with workers helping in practical ways to develop good routines, improve home conditions, create emergency plans and work out coping strategies with parents and children.

We work alongside families, taking our direction from them around what they want to achieve and then planning the next steps with them. This can include one to one work, mediation between parents and children to foster better communication, planning family activities and working with other services to make sure that the right support is in place.

For many of the families that the project works with, life focussed around addiction is very limiting and isolating. The project works hard to engage families in their communities, accessing local activities such as leisure centres and parks, peer support and helping them to gain confidence to be involved in all of the things that other families take for granted.

Casey (aged 13) had worked with the project previously and came back to us as she was going through a difficult time as her mum, Karen’s mental ill health had worsened and Casey had been involved in an unhealthy relationship with an older male and there were concerns around risky behaviour.

We worked with the family to support Karen to access her mental health appointments and guided her and Casey through information about her mental health diagnosis. This helped them both to understand things more clearly, recognise symptoms and coping strategies and know when to ask for help. Karen also started to gain confidence through talking to us and felt able to access courses through the Women’s Centre.

We worked with Casey around relationship advice and behaviour in conjunction with the social worker involved. This gave Casey the time and space to feel safe to talk about what had happened to her and helped her. Casey enjoyed accessing respite through the project which gave her a positive and understanding network of friends who she could identify with.

Karen is now attending mental health appointments on her own, sometimes Casey attends with her. Both Karen and Casey are now involved in activities where they are making new friends and getting out into the community. Casey is managing her caring role well and knows how to access support if needed.

“I don’t think I could have got through all of this without all your support so thank you... just knowing I’ve got support makes me feel better.”
Carol (44)

“Today has been really lovely. I loved seeing the children working together and with me so well. Thank you for this time.” Jason (29)
Enriching Hand in Hand

The Parent Carer (Hand in Hand Project), funded by The Big Lottery, supports parents of children with additional needs, challenging behaviour and disabilities. We support the whole family, offering emotional and practical support, one to one sessions, assistance with forms, peer support, coffee mornings, identifying respite opportunities for our families and trips and activities where the whole family can enjoy quality time together.

Many of the children who access the project have benefitted from work with animal assisted therapy. Archie is a wonderful dog who interacts with the children and we have had lovely experiences at these sessions with children showing improvement in their social interaction and coping skills. Within the therapy sessions, we have covered emotions, sharing, confidence building and understanding others. One parent stated ‘it made him (son) realise it’s not just him that goes through all these different emotions’.

We deliver our Managing Challenging Behaviour course which is delivered over four weeks. It is specifically designed for parents of children with additional needs and covers topics on understanding your child’s behaviour, communication, confidence, stress management and de-escalation of aggression.

Our families have likened the course to a toolbox of advice; if one thing doesn’t work, try something else. They have also developed support networks with each other through joining the course which have continued outside of the project. This has helped parents to feel supported in their community as families join together for activities in the evenings and at weekends.

A Bugs and Bonfire event was held to coincide with Halloween. Children searched for bugs in the woodland area of the garden, collected bugs and examined them through a magnifying glass. We had plenty of squeals and screams as they found the bugs and spiders!

Anne is a carer for her granddaughter, Lauren. Lauren has long standing and significant mental health issues. They have no family support in the local area which resulted in both feeling isolated and nowhere to turn when life became unmanageable. Anne was trying to manage her own health needs which impacted on her mobility as well as managing an intense caring role.

Anne was referred to the project through Lauren’s school. We supported Anne to visit her GP in relation to her own health and this prompted her to also discuss that she had been suffering with underlying depression and anxiety for some time. Anne was prescribed medication and referred into counselling to help her to address historical experiences.

Both Anne and Lauren were supported to plan family time together, even small things like pamper time and film nights. This helped both of them share positive experiences and give them something to look forward to each week.

Following support from the project, Anne has reported feeling more able to cope and that she has a little more direction and positivity in her life. Her mobility has improved through having appropriate health care which is helping her to feel able to engage in her community and get out of the house a bit more.
The Hospital Project provides support to carers of patients. Often the carers who we work with are new to their caring role and need practical and emotional support around adjusting to being a carer.

The service we provide ranges from one to one support, often through crisis situations, meeting with hospital staff to help carers to understand diagnosis, treatment and prognosis and also liaising with other professionals to ensure a smooth transition back into the home with good support in place.

We are an extra pair of ears, helping to relay information back to the carer after meetings where they may feel overwhelmed with new information. Our support doesn’t stop at the hospital; we continue support once patients are discharged, for example, applying for financial support, signposting to relevant agencies and encouraging carers to engage in community based support as many carers can feel isolated due to their caring role. Our service aims to help move patients out of hospital and prevent readmission by ensuring that the right support is in place within the home for the carer.

The Hospital Project benefits from Social Work students completing their placements with us. This has enabled the project to generate more referrals and expand provision offering more support to people in need. Students have also enabled the project to raise awareness and understanding of the project through more presence on the wards, awareness stands, presentations and networking. We nominated Ward 35 for our Hospital Team of the Year award at our annual fundraising Ball, as a result of the positive working relationship that has developed.

A regular Bereavement Support Group has been established which provides regular peer support to recently bereaved carers.

Jenny was a carer for her husband, Clive who was in hospital when they came to us for support. From our first contact with Jenny it became clear that she was having significant difficulties in adapting to her caring role and finding things unmanageable. Clive had a diagnosis of Dementia, which had considerably worsened over the previous few months.

Initially Jenny was reluctant to accept that she needed help but once she gained confidence and trust in us she began to open up and accept support.

Through our involvement we were able to develop a trusting relationship which enabled Jenny to approach us with any concerns or if she just wanted reassurance and someone to talk to.

As a result of our work with Jenny we helped her to prevent Clive being readmitted to hospital. Jenny regularly approached her worker when she felt unable to manage and we were able to provide her with appropriate information and advice. We guided Jenny to consult her GP who acted swiftly and appropriately when needed and this resulted in Clive being able to stay at home safely and this was where he wanted to be.

Jenny reported that she felt much more confident and competent in her caring role following time spent with her worker – this helped her to understand Dementia and ways of coping and looking after herself.

“Those who don’t smile need one the most, and you have always got one for everybody.” 
Doreen (77)

“I couldn’t have got through this day without your support and guidance. You’re my angel.” 
Phillip (81)
Effective

Keeping Carers Warm

Keeping Carers Warm funded by Scottish Power Energy People Trust works with carers who have young adults up to the age of twenty-six in the household and who are experiencing fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty is defined as more than ten per cent of household income being spent on energy bills.

Fuel poverty is generally a result of three elements: low household income, low energy efficiency standard of a property and high energy costs. The project has worked across all of these areas. The project also signposts service users to other services in Blackpool where appropriate.

This project worked with Care and Repair, part of Blackpool Coastal Housing, to offer free replacement boilers and servicing. 29 families benefitted from this support. A grant was awarded to the project by National Energy Action, a national charity, to purchase draft excluders, radiator heat reflector panels and energy saving light bulbs, all of which were fitted in carers’ homes free of charge by our volunteers.

Other work carried out with families has included providing families with extra warm duvets and replacing inefficient fan heaters with safer, more efficient oil filled radiators. Food and fuel vouchers have been supplied to families in crisis. Funding was also gained for vital items such as washing machines and fridge-freezers to replace, in some cases, dangerous appliances.

As part of the project remit, over £400,000 of unclaimed benefits have been recovered for carers, increasing household income for many families. Fuel and other debts have been written off or reduced by tens of thousands through our worker supporting families through the administration processes. Users of the project have also been encouraged to save on household energy costs just by switching tariff or suppliers, again saving hundreds of pounds, per household each year.

Home safety checks have been carried out by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service following referrals from the project.

We worked with the Barnes family who have one child with severe additional needs. Household expenditure on home energy was 16% due to gas and electricity being billed on a standard tariff and this was compounded by the family’s income being limited by the benefit cap.

The family were provided with winter duvets, radiator reflector panels, draft excluders and energy saving light bulbs.

Gas and electricity tariffs were switched to a cheaper provider – saving over £400 per year.

Benefit advice and support was provided and the family was awarded Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance and the correct level of Employment Support Allowance.

Household income increased by over £8,000 annually and household fuel now costs 8.9% of household income.

902
individuals have benefitted from the service

309
Keeping Carers Warm referrals

“Thank you so much for your help. It has really lifted a weight off my shoulders”
Alison (29)

“Blackpool Keeping Carers Warm has made a huge difference in my house. It doesn’t take as long to warm my house up and stays warm for longer. My bills have come down. I’d recommend this service to all carers.”
Peter (66)
Accepting Mental Health

Thanks to funding from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, we continue to provide intensive support and guidance to carers looking after someone with a mental health condition, including peer support groups, carers’ mental health awareness training and mental health and wellbeing clinics. Support is tailored to the needs of the carer and led by them.

We continue to be heavily involved in various networking events and actively seek out opportunities for partnership working. We are members of The Mental Health Partnership Board, the Harbour Improvement and Information Project, the Time to Change Project, World Mental Health Day and have an active presence on all local mental health related steering groups.

Throughout this year we have been active in raising awareness and championing the rights of mental health carers through presentations and workshops at multiple teams including The Early Intervention Service, The Crisis Resolution/Home Treatment Team, The Recovery Team, Primary Intermediate Mental Health Teams and also at The Harbour Mental Health in-patient unit. This has led to an increase in referrals and early intervention support for many families.

The launch of Carers’ Mental Health Awareness Training has seen the joining of forces between various Health and Social Care professionals from Blackpool Council and Lancashire Care, to design a bespoke course targeted at unpaid carers. The feedback from the course has been extremely positive and we plan to continue offering this well received course to carers of those with mental ill health.

We will continue to offer a ‘mental health and wellbeing clinic’ for carers where they are able to speak to a mental health practitioner regarding their own mental health and discuss strategies on how to improve their own emotional wellbeing and resilience.

The HUGS (Help, Understanding & Group Support) Peer Support Group for mental health carers has now blossomed from what was a support worker led service to the now very successfully carer led group.

Fiona cares for her 18 year old son, Rhys, who has Psychosis and spent the last 18 months in a secure psychiatric unit. She also cares for her 15 year old daughter, Molly, who suffers from anxiety, depression and has a history of self-harming and attempting suicide. Her youngest daughter, Jessica, aged 10, was referred into our Young Carers service. Fiona has also suffered with severe anxiety and depression and has attempted suicide in the past. At the time of her referral, she lacked confidence and was very low in mood and tearful.

We provided regular one to one emotional support whilst liaising with Fiona’s mental health worker which involved suicide intervention work. We supported Fiona in liaising with Mental Health services regarding support for Rhys and Molly as this was something that Fiona has felt unable to tackle on her own.

We helped Fiona access funding for a respite break – this was the first time in years that she had been away from home. It gave her some positive time out to think about things and gain a new perspective. Fiona has joined our Mental Health Awareness Training and peer support group which is helping her to connect with people and make friends.

Fiona reports that she feels that she is coping with life much better now and no longer feels suicidal. Care is now in place for Molly and Rhys has returned home. Jessica is enjoying respite sessions with our Young Carers service and Fiona is looking at volunteering opportunities within the organisation as she plans for her future.

“The Mental Health Awareness training course was excellent. The course opened up the world of mental health to me and other carers.”
Graham (48)

“The service and care provided by Blackpool Carers Centre is second to none. My support worker has lightened my load in such a short space of time with no delays or deliberation on any issue”.
Sharon (53)

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Positive Volunteering

The Beaverbrooks Charitable Trust generously funded the post of Volunteer Co-ordinator which re-launched our Volunteer Project in September 2016.

The project has worked hard to recruit, train and retain volunteers who come to us with a variety of backgrounds, skills and experience. It has helped the organisation expand provision and widen our offer to carers and their families.

Volunteers now run the ground floor of the Centre, carrying out reception duties, welcoming guests and ensuring that safeguarding procedures are met by signing in and issuing visitor passes.

Volunteers are also on hand for maintenance tasks. This is a vital role for us within the centre as we have been given an amazing building but, as with any property, general maintenance is still required.

Administration across all projects is now supported by volunteers. Those with professional backgrounds and those wanting to gain experience and new skills, help our teams to plan, organise and deliver events and also respond to initial calls from new carers.

Volunteers enjoy supporting the Young Carers’ team in ensuring that the children have a fun time whilst they attend the centre for respite sessions. They volunteer alongside our support staff to help the children make the most of their free time away from their responsibilities at home.

Volunteer drivers transport our most isolated carers. This role helps children to attend respite at the centre and also enables more trips to take place out of the local area to events such as Southport Flower show.

Our beautiful gardens are tended by a team of dedicated volunteers who have regular ‘garden tidy up’ events to make sure that our outdoor space continues to be a lovely place to visit.

We can’t thank our wonderful volunteers enough for their skills, motivation and passion in helping us to deliver ‘A Better Life for Carers’.

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8,052
Volunteer hours

£508,000
Value of volunteer hours (as per ASHE)

145
Volunteers

106
New volunteers during the year

12
Volunteer roles

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My name is Dom and you could trace my journey to Blackpool Carers Centre all the way back to 2008 when I had a life changing accident. I was on holiday in Thailand and fell over a wall and broke my neck. This resulted in some spinal cord damage and me becoming a wheelchair user.

I am telling you this because at that point of my life everything I had known and planned had suddenly changed, I was a new person, a different person. In a way I had to start life again. I could no longer do things that I had taken for granted.

Simple tasks became very difficult and I had to learn new ways to live life. Over the years since I have adapted to my new life very well. I can drive, live alone and I play wheelchair rugby. My life was good but I felt there was still something missing. I wanted to be a bit more social and maybe look for a job, but I was scared and lacked confidence as I hadn’t worked for a long time.

A close friend of mine suggested I should maybe do some volunteering. He had some connections at Blackpool Carers Centre and I arranged a meeting with Terry, the Volunteer Coordinator. She made it very easy for me and offered lots of volunteering avenues I could go down.

I have been helping out at Beaverbrooks House for about 6 months now and I absolutely love it. The people here are all very friendly and it’s a great place to come and help out. I feel that even though I am supposed to be the one helping the Carers Centre by volunteering, they have just as equally helped me, by giving me confidence and new skills that I can use in the future.

It’s a friendly, fun environment to be involved in and I would recommend it to anyone!
We have just completed the third year of our Work Experience Project which was a legacy from Progress Recruitment in 2014. The project co-ordinates work experience placements for 16-19 year old students, who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, from Highfurlong, Park and Red Marsh School.

The students work one day a week from either 10am-12pm or 10am-2pm for either 4 or 6 weeks.

We initially spend time observing students in school to see how they interact in their familiar surroundings as this shows their true characteristics and abilities. After assessing each student and discussing aspirations we source them a suitable placement within a local business. We ensure that we match each student with the most appropriate employer to develop their skills, confidence and awareness of work opportunities. Everyone has skills and potential, it’s just about being in the most suitable environment where they can thrive and develop.

We met with Oscar at Red Marsh School. He was quite shy, low in confidence and had very limited speech. School told me that he helped in a bar, collecting glasses on a Saturday whilst his parents stayed as he didn’t want to be left on his own. Oscar has a very caring nature and likes being around people. I arranged for him to go to Warren Manor (a day care centre for the elderly and people with learning difficulties) for his placement.

We discussed the different job opportunities for him and decided that he would enjoy helping with serving drinks and kitchen duties. After a few hours on placement Oscar was confidently approaching the service users and chatting with them. He used his own initiative and was comfortable in his role. When I went to visit him on his last day he was helping with the bingo calling and communicating really well. Warren Manor have offered him a volunteering role in the holidays and his parents are happy that he will feel confident enough to be there without their support.

Helen Hay, Work Experience Project Coordinator

“The service is really good. Care and support is offered and suitable work placements are sourced for the students’ needs and requirements”
Highfurlong School

“Well planned and informative, excellent communication. Great service – brilliantly delivered”
Blackpool Council Adult Services

41
Individual placements

29
Local businesses involved

9
Class visits

6
Extended placements

3
Students now volunteer

We have received tremendous support from local businesses including:
• Blackpool Community Trust
• Blackpool Transport
• Devon Hair
• Imperial Hotel
• Morrisons
• Palatine Leisure Centre
• Pizza Hut
• Sainsbury’s
• Sandcastle Waterpark

Students also had placements at Beaverbrooks House, where they are welcomed as part of the team.
Young Adult Carers

This Project, kindly funded by The Henry Smith Charity and Carers Trust, supports young people aged 16-25.

We work closely with local colleges and universities to ensure that transitions in education are smooth. Young people are given appropriate support to continue their education alongside their caring role.

The transition from childhood into adult life can be challenging for any young person and the added dimension of being a carer can present difficult decisions and worries about their future plans. Young adult carers are encouraged to explore opportunities around education, employment and independence and to look at their aspirations as achievable goals.

We have supported young people into volunteering opportunities and work experience placements at Blackpool Transport and Blackpool Zoo. We also provide practical support with CV writing, job applications and interview skills.

Families have benefitted from successful grant application for continuing education, beds and household white goods.

The project runs a weekly peer support group where young people learn new skills, socialise and relax together in a safe and supportive environment.

Groups and activities are led by the young people and they have enjoyed improving their cooking skills, making crafts, spending time together and studying for the Driving Theory Test together. Trips to Blackpool Zoo and The Grand Theatre also offered some well deserved respite for the group.

Over the past year the group have attended open days at Liverpool Hope and Lancaster University to support their educational aspirations. Young adult carers’ needs and concerns when moving away to university require extra consideration.

The Residential in Scotland challenged the young people to step out of their comfort zones, forge new friendships and build their confidence and self-esteem. It was an amazing experience and one they will never forget!

Gemma cares for her mum who is terminally ill with cancer. At our first meeting Gemma was feeling very low, she just couldn’t see any point to her life other than caring for her mum. Gemma was encouraged to consider her own future and what she wanted through one to one support. She was supported to develop a CV and complete job applications. She secured a work experience placement, a part time job and even undertakes some voluntary work.

We were successful in applying for funding to purchase a washing machine as the family didn’t have one. We also helped Gemma to apply for appropriate benefits.

She now attends respite groups and also attended the residential to Scotland which was a huge decision for her.

Gemma is now more confident and developing a positive attitude to life as a result of the good things that are happening for her. Her financial situation has improved as well as her emotional wellbeing and she has become less socially isolated.

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“...We got a grant through Blackpool Carers Centre. We got another bed which meant my brother could move in and help me care for my mum. This had made my life easier and I don’t feel like I’m living in crisis anymore.”

Emma (17)

‘...When I moved to this area, I didn’t know anyone and I was struggling with caring for my mum. Now I am better able to cope thanks to the support sessions. I have someone to talk to that I trust.”

Adam (18)
Enthusiastic
Young Carers and ‘Time Out’

Time Out, funded by Children in Need, provides respite support for young carers aged 5-16. Young carers who access respite may be caring for someone with an illness, disability, mental health or substance abuse issue. Our project allows them to come to a safe and comfortable place to have a break, meet new people and learn new skills.

We currently deliver a respite session every night of the week during school term time to ensure that young carers are able to access the support when they need to. With so much space and vibrancy in our new building, we are able to provide more specialised sessions and variety of activities than when the project was based out in community venues.

Jasmine and Hannah, twin sisters aged 12, were accessing support through our young carers’ project because of their mum, Jo’s ill health. Unpredictable seizures had impacted on family life and their ability to go out and do things together and the girls also worried about leaving mum. When they first started to attend respite sessions, the girls would often stay together and not engage with other young people, lacking confidence and being unsure about joining in.

Jasmine and Hannah have continued to attend respite sessions and activities, they also joined some trips over the school holidays.

Both girls are now excited to come here every week having developed new friendships and confidence during their time with us. We now see them socialising as individuals within the group rather than as a pair. We have been able to watch the girls grow in confidence and they now play a key role in the sessions, helping new children to settle in.

We have received several generous donations over the past 12 months from a wide range of supporters which have made a huge difference to the daily running of sessions. We were able to purchase a car and offer transport to our most socially isolated young carers. We have also purchased outdoor equipment and games to use in our beautiful garden, and arts and crafts resources to encourage children to explore creative play and artistic expression.

One of our young carers’ favourite activities has been camping out in the garden. This activity saw some of our youngest carers spending their first night away from home. Not much sleep was had!

Alongside the Time Out project, young carers and their families continue to be supported on a one to one basis. Individual family needs are assessed and support plans created to address issues in order to make positive changes to family life. We have supported families through crisis situations, putting emergency plans in place, housing issues, debt and benefit support and parenting guidance.

We encourage families to develop better ways of coping and communicating, gathering the right support around them so that they can manage daily life more positively. Children benefit from respite provision, developing confidence and bringing home new experiences to share with their family.

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“I liked the Fun Day because I made lots of friends and I met by best friend that I lost contact with when I left school. I’m glad I came today or I would never have found my friend. I liked the water fight. I liked painting my ladybug rock. I loved getting to know everyone and I can’t wait for tomorrow.” Ben (9)

1,267
One to one support sessions

1,225
Youth Club places provided

215
Referrals

199
Young carers attending respite sessions

46
Respite trips provided
Every year, thanks to funds raised from our annual Cash Quest for Carers Challenge, we provide a 12 month job opportunity for a young carer to work alongside teams within the organisation.

This year we had the privilege of welcoming 2 Young Carers’ Champions, Tara and Liam, to the team, both working part time to combine employment alongside studying. Tara and Liam had both been supported by our service in the past and were keen to share their wisdom whilst also learning about the world of work.

Their experience has made a huge impact on the work that we do, demonstrating to professionals, fellow carers and our supporters just how resilient and positive young people can be, despite huge challenges in their lives.

The role is designed to discover new skills and build on experience, giving them the confidence to develop themselves both personally and professionally. This unique opportunity helps to nurture potential and gives space and time to establish confidence and independence in the early stages of their careers.

Prior to taking on this role Tara, a full-time carer for her two sisters, was already a volunteer with the charity. Liam had just left school and was interested in becoming involved in work with young carers following his own experience of support from the team. He had also sadly just lost his mum whom he cared for.

Tara and Liam have been involved in many different events, highlighting the needs of Young Carers in our local community. Tara has been part of a ministerial visit to Blackpool, advising on how young carers can be better identified and supported within schools. Public speaking has become second nature to our Champions as they are regularly asked to present at conferences, professional meetings and community groups, speaking eloquently and from the heart about their lives and also flying the flag for young carers, yet to be found and supported.

Important ‘decision makers’ from a range of vital services that support young people across Blackpool attended, from the NHS, Education Diversity, Blackpool and the Fylde College, Adult and Children Social Care, Counselling services and local employers. Their aim was to answer young carers’ questions and help make vital changes to their organisation to better support young carers in the future.

Challenging questions were asked by our young carers and useful discussions were brought forward. Everyone left the event with a heightened awareness of young carers and the support that is available to them. The lasting message that emerged from the event is that young carers can achieve anything, all they need is that support and guidance to enable them to do this.
We have been overwhelmed by the many individuals, businesses and community groups who have carried out fundraising for us. The money from fundraising is used to pay for the wide range of respite trips and activities offered to young and older carers, to give them a break from their caring roles. These breaks give carers valuable ‘me’ time to socialise with others, make new friends and stop them feeling alone.

We dedicated our annual fundraising ball to the army of volunteers who helped with the DIY SOS Big Build. Our Purple Ball (named after the colour of the DIY SOS team shirts) paid tribute to the wonderful work of our new ‘purple family’ of volunteers and we are thankful to all of those who donated prizes or gifts for this event, with a total value of £14,982. These generous donations made it possible for us to raise £20,000 on the night - a record amount!

As a result of the DIY SOS Big Build Children in Need programme, which aired in November, we received £3,576.11 in donations. £1,509 of which was raised by James Shelliker, one of our dedicated supporters. He completed a 12 hour ‘carve-a-thon’ fundraiser in the garden whilst Beaverbrooks House was filled with carers and the public, to celebrate the DIY SOS programme being aired. From balls and bingo, to skydiving and swimming, our supporters have enjoyed taking on a wide range of challenges whilst raising large amounts for carers.

We are grateful to the hundreds of trustees across the country, who provide funding from a number of trusts to secure our workers.

Thank you to everyone - every single penny makes a difference and helps to make a better life for carers.

For every £1 spent on fundraising, we return £10.55.

93% of donations go directly to supporting carers.
Sisters Charlotte, Molly and Lauren (aged 10, 9 and 7) were carers for their mum Anita, who had significant mental health issues. Anita was supported by us to access the right treatment services and was engaging well. She was starting to feel more like ‘mum’ again and wanted to focus on making their house more of a home following a long period of being unable to manage home conditions well. All of the girls had broken beds and no storage for their clothes. We applied for a ‘Smile’, a grant from Miles of Smiles, to enable the family to decorate and furnish the girls’ bedrooms.

The home improvements became a project for Anita and the girls. They spent their evenings planning, making shopping lists and designing. This really engaged them as a family and helped them to bond again following a long period of time where Anita struggled to engage in family life. We supported them to buy the items that they needed and took them on shopping trips together so that they could choose just the right shade of paint and bedding to match! They got so much out of painting, putting flat pack furniture together and working as a team to make the bedrooms lovely.

The change that we saw in the family was positive, they shared the experience and made memories, something that they can look back on as a turning point, when Anita became ‘mum’ again. Anita told us that she felt a sense of achievement for completing what she had previously thought would not be possible and this has given her the motivation to start making changes to the rest of the house. The girls have a sense of pride now about themselves and about their own space that they have at home.
Help to create a 'Better Life for Carers' by making a Donation!

Your kind donation will help to provide a programme of age appropriate respite activities for our carers and give them a well deserved break. All donations are much appreciated - thank you.

Please return this completed slip to:
Blackpool Carers Centre, Beaverbrooks House,
147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ

Your Details

Title .................................. Forename .................................. Surname ..................................
Address ..............................................................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................................................. Postcode ..................................
Telephone ..............................................................................................................................................
Email* ...............................................................................................................................................  
*By providing your email address you are confirming you are happy for us to contact you this way.

I would like to make a donation to Blackpool Carers Centre of £ ..................................

Below are 5 easy ways to make your donation:

1 By cheque made payable to 'Blackpool Carers Centre’

2 Via BACS to Blackpool Carers Centre (Account No. 81422111 Sort Code 40-17-31)
Reference: .............................................................

3 By Debit/Credit Card

Card Number: .................................. .................................. ..................................
Postcode where card is registered if different from above ..................................
Start Date: ............................. Expiry Date: ............................. Security No. ..........................
(I/We authorise the above transaction (please sign below):
Signature .......................................................... Date .............................

4 Text BLAC16 £5 to 70070 to donate £5 by text - it is a quick, easy, free to use service.

5 Go to www.justgiving.com/blackpoolcarers to donate online

Please TICK this Gift Aid box and make your donations go further!

I am a UK taxpayer, please claim back the tax I have paid against all charitable gifts made in the last four years and any future gifts I may make including those to Blackpool Carers Centre. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Please notify the charity if you: want to cancel this declaration; change your name or home address; no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. Please date and sign below.

Date .................................. Signature ..................................
### Amazing things your donations have made possible this year

| 10 | Weekly Health and Wellbeing Sessions for adult carers |
| 9  | Gardening Activities for Parent Carers and their children with additional needs |
| 8  | Mental Health Awareness Training Courses |
| 7  | Sessions with Archie the Therapy Dog |
| 6  | Weekly Men’s Cookery Workshops |
| 5  | Craft Workshops for adult carers |
| 4  | Respite trips to the Theatre for young and young adult carers |
| 3  | Teddy Bears Picnics for parent carers and their children |
| 2  | educational visits to Universities for a group of Young Adult Carers |
| 1  | Fantastic new building thanks to DIY SOS Volunteers and BBC Children in Need |

*Images: Growing their own vegetables, Mental Health Awareness Training Session, Rocco hats, scarves and clothes knitted by the craft group, Young adult carers’ trip to Liverpool Hope University, Beaverbrooks House after DIY SOS.*
Exciting Plans for the Future

Last year we pledged to focus on:

- **Working carers**
  We now have a regular peer support group for working carers and seek to develop this into a more substantive project;

- **Income generation and sustainability to develop a secure base at Beaverbrooks House**
  The building is now complete and we have continued to diversify our income, becoming less reliant on statutory sources;

- **Family Focus project**
  During 2016/17 we were successful in our Big Lottery Fund application for a 4 year project supporting young carers living with parental substance misuse and/or mental ill health;

- **Partnerships with all sectors locally**
  We have developed robust relationships with a number of private sector supports; with all areas of the public sector in Blackpool and we are now active in our membership of the Third Sector Leaders Group.

With the transformation of Beaverbrooks House complete, our focus is now on developing the Annexe into a respite lodge. This building was used by the film crew as a base during the filming of the DIY SOS programme.

It will offer the best of both worlds. Ground floor respite facilities for dementia carers and upstairs accommodation for young carers.

Young carers will be welcomed from all over the country to stay and have a Seaside Sleepover!

Our service delivery model will be reviewed during 2017/18 to ensure that we align carers’ support with the new models of care currently being developed by health and social care.

In response to requests from carers, we are planning a wider range of volunteer led respite activities for 2017/18. Alongside this we will develop a more robust consultation framework to ensure that carers are fully involved in future plans.

“The Lodge will provide carers with a warm, welcoming space of their own where they will feel secure, safe and not ‘judged’.”

“Respite goes much deeper than time out.”

Artist’s impression of our new Respite Lodge

Front of the Centre before DIY SOS

Just one of the vandalised rooms before DIY SOS

The garden before

The garden after the transformation

The front terrace after DIY SOS

The annex at present
The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2017. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) ‘Accounting and Reporting by Charities’ issued in March 2015.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
Registered Company number 05633524 (England and Wales)
Registered Charity number 1114558
Registered office
Blackpool Carers Centre
Beaverbrooks House
147 Newton Drive
Blackpool
FY3 8LZ

Trustees
Mrs L Endicott - appointed 14.8.2017
B Cummings - appointed 14.8.2017
A Ward
S Cassidy
P Wild
J Carney
P Jebb, Chair - appointed 20.9.16
Mrs S Lambert, Vice Chair - appointed 12.12.16
J Child - resigned 15.8.2017
Miss A Gilmore

Company Secretary
Mrs M Smith

Auditors
TLL Accountants Ltd
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors
7-9 Station Road
Heskeh Bank
Preston
Lancashire
PR4 6SN

Bankers
HSBC
Victoria Square
Thornton Cleveleys
Lancashire
FY5 1AY

President: Professor Saul Becker
Patrons: Mr John Barnett DL MBE, Miss Hayley Kay, Mr Clive Hirst

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL
The Trustees delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity to the following senior employees:
- Michelle Smith - Chief Executive Officer
- Nigel McMurdo - Operations Director
- Jim Cross - Corporate Services Manager

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT
Governing document
The Charitable Company (hereafter referred to as “the Charity”) is controlled by its governing document, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees
The Board is responsible for the recruitment and appointment of new Trustees. Each year a skills audit is undertaken and if gaps are identified, a recruitment process takes place. The recruitment process has been developed in order to attract a diverse group of trustees with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience.

Occasionally potential trustees register an interest in the organisation. Following this, a meeting is arranged with the Chair and CEO and the trustee is held on a waiting list until an appropriate vacancy arises.

The year has seen some turnover at board level, with the chairman retiring and a new trustee joining the organisation.

Induction and training of new trustees
Once a decision has been made to take up a Board position, Trustees receive an induction pack containing the annual report, strategy and business plan and detailed information about the organisation and the personal commitment required. Trustees are invited to visit Beaverbrooks House and shadow workers in order to ensure a detailed understanding of the work carried out.

Each year a Development Day is held, when staff and Trustees work through the strategy, developing new ideas and generally learning about each other’s roles within the organisational framework.

Since the last annual review was published, there has been a Development Day held with a specific focus on Governance and the work of the trustees.

Organisational structure
The activities of the organisation are governed by the Board of Trustees, all of whom are Directors.

Governance and management structure has been strengthened throughout the year to ensure a solid foundation for future service development and succession planning. A governance subcommittee exists to develop and improve a robust governance framework and work through an action plan for improvement.

The appointment of a new chair has seen a new system of governance implemented. Bi-monthly board meetings are now supplemented through the work of sub committees focusing on Finance and Fundraising, Strategy and Governance. The detailed scrutiny provided by these groups has
afforded the trustees an increased level of assurance and information to inform the discussions at board meeting. The Strategy Group has conducted a comprehensive review of the organisation’s strategy, submitting a recommendation to the full board. Finance and Fundraising has provided an ongoing scrutiny to both the finances and the fundraising plan of the charity. This has aided the trustees and the officers in their decision making throughout the year.

The Governance Group has completed work on membership, statistical reporting and has embarked on a redraft of the Blackpool Carers Centre board policy documents.

The Board of Trustees appoints the Chief Executive who reports to the Board on the operational running of the organisation.

Related parties
Blackpool Carers’ Centre Ltd is a network partner of Carers Trust.

Risk management
The Board has a risk matrix to identify all major risks. Each risk is scheduled for attention according to the severity of its potential impact and each Board meeting focuses on assessing the set of risks scheduled for that meeting.

Ellis Whittam has been employed to manage Health and Safety.

Relationships with funders are maintained and regarded as high priority in order to develop sustainable and diverse funding streams.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
Objectives and aims
The Charity’s objects are to relieve poverty, sickness and mental suffering amongst persons who are caring full time at home for people who are elderly, disabled or chronically sick (hereinafter called the carers) and the relief of such elderly, disabled or chronically sick persons by the provision of information and support for those responsible for their care, and the establishment of a carers centre. Also to advance public education concerning the care and treatment of those requiring such full time care and treatment because of age, disability or sickness.

Purpose
A better life for carers.

Public benefit
The Charity supports carers and former carers of all ages. A wide variety of support is offered to carers and professionals without charge.

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission guidelines regarding public benefit and are satisfied that the Charity’s activities meet this criteria.

FINANCIAL REVIEW
Financial review and reserves
The results of the Group are summarised on the Statement of Financial Activities.

The closing reserves are shown on the Balance Sheet.

The Group has reserves of £514,937 at the year end. £45,584 of this total is restricted for specific future costs. Of the remaining £476,528 some £332,500 is a designated fund which represents the net book value (after depreciation) of donated assets received in respect of leasehold improvements. This leaves a balance of £136,853 constituting free reserves.

The Charity’s reserves policy is to hold a level of 3 months free reserves equating to the unrestricted direct charitable costs for the year, being approximately £145,000.

The free reserves of £136,853 currently represent around 3 months worth of those costs.

The Trustees will endeavour to retain this level in the future.

Investment policy and objectives
The Charity is holding £100,000 in a deposit Bond for safekeeping.
Our Income

- Blackpool Council - 17%
- NHS - 12%
- Donations and fundraising - 12%
- Big Lottery Fund - Hand in hand - 8%
- Big Lottery Fund - Family Focus - 1%
- Games Aid - 6%
- Smaller grants - 5%
- Garfield Weston - 4%
- Tudor Trust - 4%
- Children in Need - 3%
- Henry Smith - 3%
- Chargeable services and other income - 3%
- Carers Trust - various - 3%
- Triangle Trust - 2%
- Pilgrim Trust - 2%
- Student placements - 2%
- Scottish Power - 2%
- Comic relief - 2%
- Beaverbrooks Charitable Trust - 2%
- Esmee Fairbairn - 2%
- Lloyds Bank Foundation - 2%
- Rank Foundation - Time to Shine - 1%
- Soroptimist Int-Blackpool & Fylde - 1%
- St James Place Foundation - 1%

Our Expenditure

- Carers Support Service - 85%
- Trips, activities & grants for carers - 8%
- Fundraising activities - 5%
- Administration & governance - 2%
Our Funders and Awards

Blackpool Carers Centre
Quality • Passion • Respect

Blackpool Carers Centre
Beaverbrooks House, 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ
Tel: 01253 393748  Fax: 01253 393450
Email: admin@blackpoolcarers.org
www.blackpoolcarers.org

facebook.com/blackpoolcarers  twitter @BlackpoolCarers

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Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 5633524.