

1978 – 1981: Getting going

1978

Wirral Association for the Disabled (now Wirral Association for Disability) discussed respite care for carers following information gathered about an organisation called the Association of Crossroads Care Attendant Schemes established in Rugby in 1974.

1979

Steering Committee set up on 1st May at a meeting at the Postgraduate Centre Clatterbridge Hospital, which was addressed by the Chief Officer of Crossroads, Mrs. Pat Osborne. This followed discussions with both Health and Social Service Departments together with the voluntary sector especially Wirral Branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Founder members included Dora Dawson, MBE and Diane Morley.

1981: We're off!

OUR AIM IS TO MEET CARERS NEEDS AND EXCEED THEIR EXPECTATIONS.

1981

Having raised £4,500 through funding raising efforts and attracting grants of £25,000 for a 2 year pilot study from the Association of Crossroads Care Attendant Schemes and the EEC, Wirral Crossroads set up a registered charity to start providing respite for carers in the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral. The aim of the pilot study was to see if care could be extended to carers of people with a mental handicap in addition to original aim of assisting carers of people with a physical disability. On 2th May, the first Co-ordinator, Angela Owen and her team of 6 Care Attendants, including Liz Walmsley who worked for Crossroads for 18 years in 1999, set up office in the basement of the Birkenhead Council for Voluntary Service and the provision of respite care for carers started. Managed by a voluntary Management Committee, Wirral Crossroads was the 27th Crossroads Scheme in England and Wales. The Mayor of Wirral kindly agreed to be the President. Fifty-one families helped during the first year, receiving 2,568 hours of respite care.

1982

Additional funding from the Department of Health was received to give extra support for carers of people with a mental handicap. A clerical assistant was taken on together with more care staff. A promotional video entitled "Freedom Regained" was made with Glenda Jackson kindly providing the voice-over.

1983

Pilot study evaluation proved that the aim of the 2-year project had been successful and the Association for other schemes to consider adopted the concept. Office moved to a small room within the headquarters of Social Services in Birkenhead. The first local statutory support came in the shape of Urban Aid Grants. However in-house fund raising continued to bring in more money than was received from local statutory sources. Seventy-three families helped, receiving 4,504 hours of respite care.

1984

Angela Owen left to become the first Regional Officer for the Association in the Northwest and Betty Lince took on the role of co-ordinator. 7 care staff, supporting 107 families provided a total of 5,022 hours of respite care. To celebrate the Association's tenth birthday, Wirral Crossroads joined in with a walk linking all the schemes, culminating with a tea party in West Kirby for clients.

1985

An increase in care hours resulted in 7,011 hours of respite being provided.

1986

Ongoing support from Joint Finance, Social Services and fund raising initiatives enabled the charity to achieve a small increase in care. 96 families were being supported with a further 37 on the waiting list and 7,689 hours of respite care were provided during the year.

1987

The team of 10 care staff provided 8,742 hours of respite care to 93 families. The waiting list had 38 families awaiting support.

1988

Mrs Dora Dawson, MBE, became a Vice President. First photocopier was purchased! Co-ordinator invited to sit on the preliminary committee to look into setting up NVQs in care. 13 care staff employed, with 110 families receiving support. Agency Grant received from Social Services of £58,400.

1989

Care team consisted of 13 care staff, with 110 families being supported. However a waiting list of more than 40 families showed up the need for additional financial support to meet demands.

1990

Care team still consisted of 13 staff, 154 clients and 55 families on the waiting list. *Ellesmere Port & Neston Crossroads scheme was inaugurated in November.* 5year Joint Finance project agreed.

1991

A Flower Festival "Let's Celebrate!" arranged by Wirral Flower Club raised not only awareness about Crossroads but over £2,000 to note the tenth anniversary of the charity. Strawberry and Bubbly were served after the AGM to celebrate the tenth birthday as well. Number of clients had risen to 140 with a waiting list of 55 families, with 13 care staff and 2 administrative staff employed. EC regulations on Manual Handling and Moving were introduced. Sadly, Noel Crane, the inspiration for the concept of Crossroads, died in Rugby.

1992

Moved to larger premises in Hoylake which were opened by David Hunt, MBE, MP for West Wirral. Barry Port, MP and Frank Field, MP also visited the office. 17 Care staff employed assisting 162 families. Serious cutbacks in local authority spending caused the waiting list of 55 to be closed and restrictions put on services provided to current clients causing great hardship. Complaints Panel set up.

1993

Preparations began for Care in the Community and a Service Level Agreement was negotiated with a grant of £197,000 being given for 16 months service. More staff were taken on and a large increase in care hours noted with 11,027 hours of respite given.

1994

Service registered with Social Services as a Provider of Domiciliary Care for Adults. Uniforms were introduced for care staff. 184 families received support that led to staff driving over 45,000 miles during the year to care in clients' homes. A pay roll giving consortium with 7 other Wirral charities was set under the name of Wirral Don8ate. The Carefree Club was started at Tranmere Methodist Community Centre, supporting carers of younger people and children with disabilities. First computer purchased.

1995

Carefree Club registered as a crèche with Social Services Inspection Unit, leading to 2 separate clubs for different age groups.. Betty Lince left, having made a tremendous contribution to the scheme. Office moved to accommodation within West Kirby Residential School. Number of clients being supported was 267 and staff mileage increased to 118,001 miles.

1996

Charity also became a Company Limited by Guarantee changing the name to Crossroads in Wirral, Caring for Carers, Limited. Changes to the administrative structure included the appointment of a Business Manager. Successfully tendered for a rolling contract with Social Services Department to provide domiciliary care, together with a 3 year project to provide weekend respite for cares of adults with personal care needs funded by Joint Finance. Care staff encouraged to consider undertaking NVQ in Care qualification. Frank Field MP became a Vice President. The Right Hon. Lord Hunt of Hoylake MBE kindly agreed to become a Patron. The first Annual Raft Race took place on the Marine Lake, West Kirby raising over £1,000 through sponsorship.

1997

Gained Investor in People award. Charitable funding for the Happy Holiday Club, a school holiday respite club for carers of children with disabilities, was raised and this facility started at the Hoylake Community Centre in the Special Needs Club's Sensory and Soft Play Room. Again this was registered with Social Services Inspection Unit as a Crèche. Funding raising group called the Friends of Crossroads was set up by Carole Ellis undertaking to put on 2 events each

year. 33,335 hours of respite were provided to 280 service users. Team Leaders were introduced to support the Care Attendants.

1998

Crossroads Caring for Carers in Wirral joins up with Ellesmere Port & Neston

Another office move, but remained in West Kirby. Following negotiations, amalgamation with Crossroads in Ellesmere Port & Neston was agreed under the direction of the Board of Trustees of Crossroads in Wirral. The Mayor of Ellesmere Port & Neston agreed to be Co-President with the Mayor of Wirral. Within both branches, over 50 staff were employed and provided nearly 41,000 of respite care during the year. Care Attendants job titles were changed to Care Support Workers with those of Team Leaders being altered to Service Assessors. Grant from Northern Rock to fund the Lanceley Fund (Palliative Care Project) for three years was received and additional training programme started. Now known as [Crossroads in Ellesmere Port, Neston and Wirral Caring for Carers](#).

1999

Weekend respite care project renewed for another 3 years, with Palliative Care Service starting to provide support. Winners of the Best Dressed Raft in the Annual Raft Race were the staff from Ellesmere Port & Neston Crossroads. Office computers networked and new programme (CARAS) introduced to assist with organising the delivery of care.

2000

Started to work more closely with the other Crossroads schemes in Cheshire as regards negotiating together with Social Services. Staff encouraged to undertake NVQ qualifications.

2001

Management support services were offered to Warrington Crossroads who were experiencing some operational difficulties. 2 of the Trustees also gave time and support by becoming trustees of their scheme.

2002

Celebrated the 21st birthday during the year but the manager left, leading to the scheme being without a manager for 5 months leading to greater input by the Chairman and the Treasurer during a period of uncertainty for all the staff. All care work continued as normal. A successful Bereavement Counselling Service was set up [funded for 3 years] known as KeyStone. The Quality Assurance programme, CROQUET, was introduced.

2003

Amalgamated Ellesmere Port and Wirral offices in West Kirby. Karen Urmston appointed as Scheme Manager. We registered with National Care Standards and was successful in achieving CROQUET Level 1. [Crossroads quality assurance programme] The charity changed its operational name to Crossroads Caring for Carers in Ellesmere Port, Neston and Wirral. Carer Support Workers got a new look with new uniforms being issued. Support for Warrington Crossroads was discontinued as things had improved for that scheme. Decision taken not to re-apply for IIP status for the third time as the cost [c£1,400] was too high in addition to the registration fees for NCS.

2004

Had a very difficult year trying to maintain the charity's viability but came through and relocated to Bromborough within the Head Quarters of Wirral Autistic Society. Very short of admin staff but the remaining office staff worked extremely hard to maintain all the vital activities, ably supported by the Trustees. Some services were cut, i.e. unsocial hours reduced and clubs closed, and some staff were made redundant. During the year, we provided only 26,956 hours of care. The end of the year saw a small improvement in the financial situation. Keystone Counselling Service was unable to attract additional funding and closed in March. We were delighted to help the Association celebrate 30 years of Crossroads Care in England and Wales.

2005

Had the first inspection by the Inspection for Social Care Inspection, which was most successful. The inspection fee was £900. The Trustees and senior staff held 2 Away Days for training and strategic planning. However, the expected re-tendering exercise for Wirral ground to a halt as Social Services realised that the outcomes were not going to benefit either the department or service users. New admin and support staff started in April bringing the office structure back on course. Uniforms were introduced for the care admin team. We provided 34,714 hours of care to carers during the year, with the increase mainly due to increase group care in Ellesmere Port and Neston, the re-introduction of Children's Weekend Clubs in Wirral in the latter part of the year as well as the start of our first CAMEO Club, in Neston.

2006

On 4th May, we reached the vast old age of 25 but very sadly we also learnt of the death of one of our founder members, Dora Dawson MBE and the schemes hopes to commemorate her achievements later. On 1st June, we moved from our temporary but much appreciated offices within Wirral Autistic Society to new premises at Candy Park, just around the corner, in Bromborough. We continued our close liaison with neighbouring Crossroads schemes and plan to set up another CAMEO Club in Upton, Wirral. Despite being short of staff, both care and admin, respite care delivered amounted to 40,407 hours; other services to support carers in employment and involved carers in consultation were introduced, through the ACE project and with the management of the North West Carers Development Officer. Encouraging development in children's service, with the continuing good work being carried out in the Penbsy Wood Children Weekend Clubs and a summer holiday club. The care staff updated their uniforms and the office staff developed a corporate look. During the year, 3 new Trustees were recruited.

2007

Started off with recruitment of 10 new care staff to meet increasing demand as well as the launch of the new CAMEO Club in Upton and a Carers' Group, both in Carers' Week. So the year has started off positively but demands on admin. staff time are increasing but plans are in place to address this issue. Although the care hours provided continues to rise [50,000 hours] , some care staff moved on to other jobs. The scheme was delighted to achieve CROQUET Level 3 [highest level] from the Association of Crossroads for its range of services and high standard of governance. A decision was made by the Trustees not to consider merging with other Crossroads schemes in Cheshire, at this time, which by the end of the year, we heard was to be split into 2 unitary authorities. This enabled the charity to pursue other areas of potential development.

2008 so far.....

Still continuing to recruit staff and the ratio of NVQ qualified staff continues to rise and is now well above the required level prescribed by Commission for Social Care Inspection who have awarded us a 2 star rating. A complete review of the Strategic Plan was undertaken, as well as a revised governance structure and strategic objectives. In July, three more Trustees were co-opted to the Board, bringing the number to ten members. They will bring a wide range of skills to complement those already on the board.

And finally...

Since its inception in 1981, [Crossroads Caring for Carers in Ellesmere Port, Neston and Wirral](#) has raised a significant amount from charitable sources, in addition to statutory funding, through fund raising events, tremendous support from other organisations, community groups, individuals and charitable trusts, thus enabling carers to access much needed respite care and support, whilst providing employment and training for our excellent Carer Support Workers, under the leadership of Karen Urmston, Scheme Manager, Sheila Logan, Care Manager and the care administration team.

Crossroads Caring for Carers.....

.....in safe hands