

DUDLEY CROSSROADS



SINCE 1982

ANNUAL REPORT

From

01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

A local caring service

Charity Registration Number 1054168

Dudley Crossroads is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England Number 3172554

SERVICE PROVISION

The demand for our services continued to increase during this financial year with 67 referrals received during the period April 2024 – March 2025. We provided 12,670 hours of care and support this year.

Our funding for the Carer Support Service mainly comes from NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board. Their motto is “community where possible, hospital when necessary” and we look forward to carrying on the good relationship we have. The funding for year 2025 – 2026 has been agreed at £78,345. This continues to be our main source of funds.

For anyone in receipt of Attendance allowance or PIP we are obliged to charge our not for profit rate. If someone does not receive either of these benefits we try and provide some free hours for them. Many people “top up” the free hours by purchasing extra hours at a not for profit rate.

We do provide extra free respite care by drawing on our charity reserves, and looking forward to year 2025 – 2026 we expect to use more of our free reserves to keep up with demand for such a valuable service whilst actively exploring new funding opportunities.

We continue to provide our self- funded “Home Support” service for the elderly, again on a not for profit basis. This service includes housework, shopping, transport to appointments and company.

We appreciate the numerous small donations which we receive regularly from grateful clients.

We continue to look for funding options, Our free reserves have remained stable during this financial year however we do expect to have to draw on these reserves in year 2025-2026.

We have received grants as follows for which we are really grateful.

The Eveson Trust	£15,000.00
Carnbrea Trust	£10,000.00
St James’ Place	£2,184.00
Woodroffe Benton	£1,750.00
Baron Davenport	£700.00

Assessment of the service we provided shows positive outcomes for the well-being of both carers and those they care for. We sent out our annual survey in January 2025 and a selection of the comments received can be found on pages 4 and 5 of the report.

We have not had an inspection this year for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) but they continue to monitor us remotely and they rate us as “good”

Due to financial constraints, we have not been able to do as many social activities as we would like. However thanks to a grant from St James’ Place we did hold our post Christmas lunch at the Lodge in Dudley on the 17th January which was very much enjoyed by all who attended. We have a summer meal, also at the Lodge arranged for June.

All our clients received a box of biscuits and a card for Christmas from our social fund of money raised by raffles and tombola.

We were very pleased during the year to have visits from Sonia Kumar, the Labour MP for Dudley, and look forward to building a relationship with Sonia and her team.

Our ‘Time to Talk’ telephone befriending service which is run by a volunteer is still really popular, and we are eager to encourage more volunteers to take part. We run a bi-monthly Carers Walk Group, meeting at Himley Hall and Mary Stevens Park. These walks are attended by current and bereaved carers and provide opportunities for new friendships and support.

Summarised from PIR Report to CQC 2025.

Dudley Crossroads continues to provide high-quality respite care for carers of adults with physical disabilities or sensory impairments. This enables carers to take a break, while the people they care for benefit from one-to-one support that promotes independence, helps them pursue personal interests, and reduces the risk of isolation.

The organisation has recently improved its **quality assurance processes** by introducing a new survey in April 2025. This provides structured feedback that feeds into analysis and action planning, allowing the service to demonstrate quality, identify areas for improvement, and act on user experiences. Responses so far have been very positive. A Dementia Champion has been appointed to strengthen the service's capacity to support those living with dementia

There have been **barriers and challenges**. The most significant barrier to providing good quality care is funding. The main source of income comes through the Dudley IHIC, which is limited to respite for carers of adults with physical or sensory impairments. This funding excludes carers of disabled children and individuals with mental health needs, which restricts the range of support that can be provided.

Charity funds are frequently used to cover shortfalls and some services are charged at a not-for-profit rate. Rising staff wages, national insurance contributions and the increased cost of specialist training add further financial pressures, while grant funding opportunities tend to favour new initiatives rather than sustaining existing services.

The costs of providing care have led to increases in charges for service users, which can affect families' ability to access support. At the same time, demand is growing as service users present with more complex needs. Although we continue to work closely with social prescribers, social workers and partner agencies, referral systems are not always used effectively, and this can delay access to timely care.

Equality, diversity and inclusion remain central to our service delivery. Each care plan is person-centred and reflects the cultural, religious, physical and emotional needs of the individual. Religious observances are respected, dietary requirements are supported, and social venues are chosen to be accessible and inclusive. Training in equality and diversity is provided to staff with examples drawn from real-life situations, ensuring that inclusive practice is embedded in day-to-day work. Within our workforce, updated equality, diversity and inclusion training has recently been completed, alongside the introduction of a revised Code of Conduct and compliance through the QCS digital system.

Staffing levels are monitored carefully and increased where necessary. All staff undergo full recruitment checks including DBS clearance, Health and Social Care qualifications, references and full employment histories staff, and rotas are planned to avoid rushed visits. Staff are supported with supervision, training and spot checks, and are paid for travel time to allow safe and effective delivery. Training includes human rights principles under the FREDa model of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy. Care is delivered with choice, respect and privacy at its heart, ensuring that people remain in control of their own care decisions.

Partnerships - we work closely with a wide range of health and social care professionals, including social prescribers, GPs, outreach workers, physiotherapists and the local hospice. Strong links are maintained with the Dudley Carers Alliance, and we support the Information Hub at Russells Hall Hospital. As part of this work, we have appointed a Dementia Champion, set up a dementia information library, and ensured that both staff and carers can access specialist guidance. By working collaboratively with external partners, we are able to share expertise, respond quickly to needs and deliver more effective support for service users and carers.

Infection prevention and control remain a priority. Staff are trained in infection control and food hygiene at induction and receive regular refresher training. All policies and procedures are available through the QCS digital system, which updates automatically. Staff are provided with PPE and are subject to spot checks to ensure compliance

Report of the Chair

We have worked very hard this year to stick to our core operating values and principles, which are to provide an outstanding level of respite care to those who really need us in their own homes and to offer a range of much needed services to elderly people in the local area.

Our only regular income continues to come from NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board who provided funding of £76,468 in the year to March 2025. This represents 27.5% of our total expenditure. Our contract with them is renegotiated each year but there are no guarantees. We are very reliant on the financial support that we are awarded by the trust and have a very good relationship with them. Additional income comes from grants that we are successful in obtaining. These grants were higher this year than in previous years at £29,050 and we also received other donations of £10,969 during the year as detailed in the accounts. We are always searching for any new funding opportunities and a considerable amount of time and effort goes in to this.

Our income from the provision of care services has increased to £229,634, an increase of 31.7%. This is due to more people purchasing extra care from us at our not for profit rate, and also us widening our remit to include dementia and other services. Our contract with NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board only allows us to spend their money on respite care for adults with a physical disability who are not in receipt of attendance allowance or personal independence payments. All paid care continues to be provided at our not for profit rate and is much lower than other providers in the area. This paid rate is as low as it can be, whilst still being commercially viable.

We continue to earmark funds (£80,000 designated as restricted reserves) to cover staff redundancies and other costs which would be incurred if the charity was not able to continue trading. Our general unrestricted funds are broadly at around the same level as they were last year - £68,464. We are able to keep our annual expenditure under control by strict and critical monitoring.

We have taken on one new employee this year and increased wages by 9.2%. We strive to keep the salaries of all our care staff competitive and above comparable employment. We really value our staff and are fortunate that we are able to retain them. Many of them have worked for us for many years, their loyalty and commitment underpins the charity.

My thanks go to Julie Weeks, Scheme Manager and all the office staff who run things so professionally on a day to day basis. I'd also like to thank our team of amazing care and support workers who are truly dedicated to our clients and who go above and beyond.

We have been fortunate during the latter part of this year to find two new trustees who will be joining the board, taking the number of trustees to seven. I would like to thank all our trustees who have supported the charity so well during this last year. They bring a wealth of practical relevant experience to our operations.

Janet Head

Treasurer's Report

The seven short paragraphs in our Chair's report above make every needed point clearly. I can add little, and the comments coming from families in this year's survey tell us how appreciated our service is.

As treasurer, reduction in resources are now an increasing concern. My thanks go to the generous grant providers and also to those whose help comes "in memory of". I am very grateful to Julie and the office staff for all their efforts and efficiency together, sharing in the excellent relationships that exist throughout our scheme. We do now have to charge for some services but always with a charitable heart.

I have been involved with Dudley Crossroads since its conception in 1982. However it is now time for me to relinquish position of Treasurer, and hand this position over to another trustee, with more thanks than I can express to all those involved in Dudley Crossroads, I am happy to remain a trustee.

Mike Carpenter

Survey 2024-2025 Comments Received

Very pleased with service I receive from ****. Very friendly and nothing is too much trouble.

I have been very happy with the service. **** is always willing to do whatever I need.

**** is always on time, she does a good job. Pleasant person.

I am perfectly happy with the service Crossroads supply. **** is an excellent, caring support worker. I look forward to every Tuesday.

I am very happy with the service I receive.

The service I receive from Crossroads is excellent. Keep it up!

We have always been treated very well and we admire the help we have with ****

I have had one carer for over two years. She does her service very well and checks on my health at every visit.

I am very happy with the service I receive. **** is a very caring person who is very helpful and nothing is too much for her to do.

**** is always reliable as regards listening, caring and understanding my needs and especially when my mood is low.

I have always received a very good service from Dudley Crossroads. Their weekly visits provide me with support, assistance and companionship. I feel fully supported and all workers who have visited me have been very polite, keen to engage with me and support any needs I have. Continuity of staff also beneficial. I always look forward to my visit.

Excellent and competent staff, always do what is needed and more.

**** is the light of my week. She is hard working and completes within the time allotted. Our house has never been so clean.

Very happy with Crossroads.

I value the service my mum gets and the additional visits. It provides valuable company for her and enables me to have a little bit of time.

The person provided for my dad is of a very high standard. If there are any concerns I am contacted straight away so I can help.

We are happy with the service we receive.

Crossroads, with others, kept my wife out of a private nursing home. Crossroads with others gave my wife some of the best times in her final years. Thanks again to all at Crossroads, I will always be in their debt.

Very satisfied.

Since the first time I had a carer my wishes and needs have been totally met.

Staff have been a great help in getting me out of the house, which in turn has improved my health and wellbeing.

I have had nothing but 100% satisfaction with the care and attention from day one, and always look forward to my time spent with my carer.

Dudley Crossroads is the best care for me, always reliable and always very caring. Makes my life much easier to manage.

Service is excellent in every way.

We have been very happy with the service. Always on time and cheerful. We are very pleased with the care and work provided. Such an asset to our routine.

I am happy with the service. Has been doing any tasks that was asked (where appropriate)

I am more than satisfied. My usual carer **** is very helpful and when I have had replacements they have also been very good. I recommend Crossroads to everyone, and persuaded my Quaker Meeting to have a collection for Crossroads.

I feel safe and I like going to the park, and we have a cup of tea. I get ready quickly when I know **** is coming. She is kind. She has a car and we go out. She is my friend.

We are more than satisfied with the service provided by Crossroads and we look forward to weekly visits to give family members a break and provide a different face to interact with.

I really like the help I get. It gives me freedom and happiness I did not have before.

I am very grateful of the excellent service I receive. I look forward to the planned weekly visits. Reliability is excellent, it is so important for someone in my vulnerable position. All goes so well. My carer offers welcomed advice, I cannot ask for better than this.

Who are we?

We are a small local charity operating in the Dudley Borough. Our office is on the Pensnett Trading Estate in Kingswinford.

We were founded in 1982

We are run by a board of Trustees.

We have 18 care and support staff who are all trained, insured and DBS checked and 4 office staff. We all work part time.

What do we do?

We provide respite care to informal (unpaid) carers in the Dudley borough. This can be anyone looking after a relative or friend in their own home who has a physical disability. This can include heart problems, Stroke, Sensory impairments (like deafness), Parkinson's disease, MS and many other conditions. We can help by visiting the home for a 2-3 hour call a week and staying with the person with the disability while their carer goes out. While we are there, as well as looking after the cared for, we can do some housework, prepare meals and drinks, or other things that help the carer. Sometimes this is the only time the carer is able to leave the house as their caring responsibilities are so extensive.

We also run an elderly support service. This can involve taking people shopping, helping them with housework and meal preparation or just a bit of company. This is for people who live on their own and have no one to care for them. Often they are very lonely and unable to get out of the house.

We like to arrange trips – sometimes out for a meal, sometimes even to the sea!

We also have a telephone befriending service. This is run by volunteers who will call carers and elderly clients for a chat every week or so.

What about money?

We get some funding from the local health body (NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board) and we can only spend this money on providing respite care to adults 18+.

We rely on donations, grants, direct payments and our reserves to fund the rest of our service.

People are able to buy extra care from us if they would like more time than we can afford to give them. As we are a not for profit organisation this is much cheaper than normal care agencies.

Our service is not very well known. People often say they wish they had found out about us sooner. We really need to make people more aware of our charity and what it is we do.

We always need fundraising! Any money we receive goes directly into the charity. We especially would like to have more funds to do social activities for our clients, and sometimes give them treats like cakes and boxes of biscuits.

Case Study 1

Mary looks after her husband George. They have been married for 60 years and their children live a long way away.

George has Parkinson's disease and Mary cannot leave him on his own.

They have a neighbour who will pop in occasionally and sit with George while Mary goes shopping but when this happens Mary has to rush round the shops as she doesn't want to take up too much of the neighbour's time.

Mary contacted Dudley Crossroads, and it was arranged that Elaine, one of Dudley Crossroads' support workers would visit every Wednesday morning between 9 and 12. She will stay with George, keep him company and make him drinks and a snack. While she is there, she will do any little jobs like washing up or ironing that will help Mary.

Mary can now take her time while she is out, maybe meet a friend for coffee, go to the hairdresser or even arrange a doctor's appointment for herself knowing that every Wednesday morning George will be safe.

George is really happy too – he worries that Mary doesn't have any time for herself and he really enjoys the time that he spends with Elaine.

Case Study 2

Maureen lives on her own. She doesn't have any family and although she used to be able to go into town to do a bit of shopping or have a coffee, she hasn't got the confidence anymore to do it. She doesn't drive and needs a stick to get around.

Someone from the doctors realised how isolated Maureen was feeling and contacted Dudley Crossroads for her.

Jean, one of the support workers, now goes to see Maureen every Tuesday afternoon. Sometimes they go out for a coffee or to the shops, sometimes Jean helps Maureen in the house, or takes her to health appointments.

Sometimes they just stay in and have a good chat.

Maureen thinks of Jean as her friend, they have built up a lovely relationship.

A couple of times a month our telephone befriender rings Maureen and they enjoy chatting on the phone.

Case study 3

Amanda looks after her mum Denise. They do not live together but Amanda really worries about her and has to go round every day. Denise has slight dementia caused by a stroke and sometimes she forgets things.

Amanda has a job, and a young family and she finds it hard trying to cope with everything.

She phoned Dudley Crossroads and it was arranged that Pat, a Crossroads support worker would visit every Tuesday from 11 – 2. She makes Denise some lunch, helps her with anything she needs doing and checks that she is OK.

Although it is only for one day a week, Amanda knows that on that day she doesn't have to worry. Denise really enjoys having the company and looks forward to Pat's visits.

*Names have been changed

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Scheme Manager	Mrs Julie Weeks
Registered Manager	Mrs Julieanne Norman
Finance Officer	Mrs Anna Wood
Service Support Officer	Mrs Lorraine White

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair	Mrs Janet Head
Vice Chair	Mr Harry Freisner
Hon Treasurer	Mr Mike Carpenter
Secretary	Mrs Beverly Ingram
	Mr A Miller

Our 2024 – 2025 AGM will be held at 6 Watt House on
Friday 10th October 2025 at 10.00

Copies of Audited Accounts will be available at the AGM or after that time on application to the office.

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