

The Care Collective Closure Statement 11 March 2024

The Care Collective (TCC) will close in March after 3 decades due to long-standing financial challenges, its Trustees have said.

Building on the legacy of the Crossroads initiative which began in 1974, The Care Collective (previously known as Carers Trust South East Wales-CTSEW) operated for over 30 years as the organisation grew and consolidated with other smaller charities. The independent charity provided advice and support to unpaid carers and also delivered commissioned and private respite, care, and tailored support services in the home.

The Board announced the decision on 11 March 2024, making all 87 staff redundant and saying “all possibilities had been considered” to secure the financial future of the organisation.

Challenging financial position

TCC’s most recent accounts, for the year to 31 March 2023, noted “the Trustees acknowledge there is a material uncertainty as to whether The Care Collective will be able to continue to operate as a going concern for the foreseeable future”. The charity’s reserves had been depleted over recent years in order to prioritise service delivery to unpaid carers across South Wales.

The Trustees’ statement said: “This has been an incredibly difficult and sad decision for the Board and its staff. It has not been taken lightly, but following a full review and assessment with the Senior Leadership Team to urgently address the long-standing challenges facing the charity. These challenges included increasing costs, late confirmation, awarding and payment of contracts, and difficulties in recruiting staff across the health and social care sector.

Having considered all possibilities to secure the financial future of the organisation with expert financial and legal advice, our aim is to now oversee a controlled closure of The Care Collective, leaving a legacy of which we can be proud. All services will cease by 31st March 2024.”

The Board of Trustees expressed their pride and appreciation toward all staff for the outstanding professional care they have delivered to those needing support, and the real difference this has made to so many unpaid carers' lives over so many years. The Trustees also thanked funders and supporters for their work with the organisation.

Karen Robson, Chief Executive of TCC, said "Our priority has been to ensure the continuity of services to unpaid carers and their families, and we have been working with commissioners to this end. We're also doing all we can to ensure unpaid carers are aware of other sources of support."

She added: "On appointment last summer, my plan was to build on the reputation and success of The Care Collective and to continue to deliver the quality services we have provided for over 30 years.

Sadly, this was simply not the direction I was able to take. Instead, my focus has been on working with the Trustees and my Senior Leadership Team to clarify the current and future financial position and to investigate all possible avenues in order to continue the charity's operations. Regrettably this assessment has not been positive and has led to where we are today, unable to prevail in this difficult financial environment."

Concern about what's happening to the sector

Ms Robson continued: "Despite the challenges we faced, I have ensured we continued to deliver services to unpaid carers and to secure new opportunities to strengthen the support. Many other charities and businesses have met the same fate due to the harsh economic realities of the last few years. Knowing we are not alone in this position is of no comfort and I fear for the future of other third sector organisations, particularly in the health and social care sector.

Unfortunately, unpaid carers have long been underappreciated and support for them underfunded and I see no improvement in this situation when organisations such as ourselves are no longer able to deliver vital services to vulnerable people and their carers. We advise unpaid carers to contact their local authority who can advise what support they can offer, usually through their social services department."

Notes for editors:

1. The Care Collective is an independent charity which provides advice and support to unpaid carers. The charity also delivers commissioned and private respite, care and individually tailored support services in the home and other community settings.
2. Understanding your care and support rights as you get older <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/carers-rights-a5-leaflet.pdf> provides links to all local authorities in Wales and to national organisations such as Carers Wales and All Wales Forum.