

Second issue of 2025

www.carersinherts.org.uk

Carewaves

A Newsletter for Family Carers and Caring Friends



We've been supporting carers for

30 years

We plan to be there for many years to come.
Explore this issue to learn more about our
services and how we can support you.


Carers
in Hertfordshire
charity registration number 1085491
Making carers count

Contents

4 - 5	Our services
6 - 7	News
8 - 9	Carers' rights
10 - 12	Spotlight on... caring from a distance
13	Travel advice
14 - 17	Celebrating our 30 th anniversary, including carer stories
18 - 19	Support groups
20 - 21	Young Carers
22	Health update
23	Have your say: Carer engagement
24 - 25	Hertfordshire County Council update
26 - 27	Fundraising
28 - 29	Volunteering
30 - 31	Free courses and workshops
Back	About us and our contact details

Disclaimer

Every effort is made to ensure the information in Carewaves is correct at the time of publication. However, Carers in Hertfordshire is not liable for any errors or how you interpret or use the information. The material is general and does not substitute personalised, professional advice.

Don't forget you can receive regular updates via email.

Please call 01992 58 69 69 or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk if you would like to be added to our mailing list.

Welcome

It was wonderful to connect with so many carers at our Annual Event for Carers in September. Hearing your experiences and ideas continues to shape the work we do.

As we mark 30 years of supporting family and friend carers across Hertfordshire, we're proud of how the charity has grown into a trusted source of guidance, advocacy, and connection for thousands of carers.

We are so grateful for all the support we've received over the years, particularly from Hertfordshire County Council, our volunteers, and most importantly from carers.

This year has brought both progress and challenges. We've launched new groups in South Oxhey and Hitchin, helping carers access local peer support and information. At the same time, rising costs continue to affect our services.

Carers Week in June was another highlight, with events across Hertfordshire and online, some of them are pictured. From relaxing activities like meditation and face yoga to practical sessions on sleep and stress, it was great that so many carers benefited from them. We also joined Hertfordshire County Council's CareFest and had information stands in libraries, which helped us reach new carers.



If you are a carer in need of support or information, or you want to help us in any way, please get in touch.



Michèle Stokes
Chief Executive

Our services

Whether you are currently caring for someone or your caring role ended within the last three years, we are here to support you, if you or the person you care(d) for lives (or lived) in Hertfordshire. Our free services include:

Information and advice: If you have a question or need help related to your current or former caring role our Advisors are available 9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4pm on Fridays (except bank holidays), please call or email us. If you can't get in touch during the day, we have some appointments until 7.30pm on Wednesdays.

One to one and group support: We offer mentoring over the phone or face to face, and we have carers' groups. Find out more about our carers' groups on pages 18 and 19.

Carers' Passport: A photo ID card that can be used to show you are a carer and give you access to discounts or offers from businesses.

Have your say (carer engagement): Opportunities to share your experiences and shape health and social care that you or the person you look after use.

Workshops and learning:

Events take place online and in community venues around Hertfordshire. Details of some of our upcoming workshops and events are on pages 30 and 31.



Keep in Touch calls: Volunteers call carers to check how you are. Specialist **Admiral Nurses** that support dementia carers.

Chances to be involved in the recruitment or training of health and social care professionals or students on nursing courses at the University of Hertfordshire as a **Carer Trainer**.

Bereavement support: Provided over the phone or at two groups that meet monthly in Ware and Watford. Contact us for details.

We also have a **Young Carers Service** providing activities and support for young people aged up to 19 with caring responsibilities and their families. There is an update about our Young Carers Service on pages 20 and 21.

How we've been supporting carers

"I only recently realised I'm a carer for my dad, who has dementia. His condition can change from day to day, some days are better than others, and I'm struggling with this. The stress is affecting my health, and I feel overwhelmed about arranging the best care for him, without upsetting him.

When I called Carers in Hertfordshire, the Advisor was brilliant, she told me about some specific dementia training courses I could attend and the Admiral Nurses who support dementia carers.

I was also referred for a Carer's Assessment, and when I felt anxious about it, the Advisor talked me through what to expect. That call really helped me feel calmer and more prepared."
Maria.

Parent carer Jamie said: "Taking part in the cooking workshops you organised gave me the confidence to start learning again and I'm now doing a college course. I'm hopeful that it will help me to get back into work as I had to give up my job due to the unpredictability of my caring role, although it seems to be more settled now.

Everyone was so welcoming and I made some lifelong friends, who I meet up with regularly, and I learnt some new recipes."

To contact us at Carers in Hertfordshire:

Call 01992 58 69 69 or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk

Website: www.carersinherts.org.uk

Changes ahead for young carer support in Hertfordshire

Support for young carers in Hertfordshire is set to change in 2026, when our current contract from Hertfordshire County Council to identify and support young carers comes to an end.

From April 2026, the Council plans to deliver services itself as part of a government programme to transform children's social care in England with the rollout of Family Hubs focused on whole-family support.

The details of the new service are still being developed by the Council.

What the decision means

- Carers in Hertfordshire will have to reduce or stop some activities and support for young carers without Council funding.
- Nothing is changing immediately. We will continue to provide the full service until March 2026. We remain committed to ensuring young carers are heard and involved in shaping future services - just as we have done for the past 30 years.
- The support we provide adult and bereaved carers is not affected.

Our Young Carers' Council have raised concerns about not being involved in the decision and fear losing the personalised support they value.

Have a say

If you'd like to share your views or get involved, complete our form at <https://carersinherts.tfaforms.net/61> or contact us.



The Council is also seeking input in shaping the new service – sign up at <https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/W68CIH/>

You could also write to your Hertfordshire County Councillor or the Executive Member for Children's Social Care, Councillor Anthony Rowlands - or your MP. For councillor details visit <https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx> or for your MP use <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

Stay updated at www.carersinherts.org.uk/young-carers/changes-young-carer-support

New carers group in Hitchin offers support and connection

Unpaid carers in the Hitchin area now have a new place to connect and find support as we launched a monthly Hub in the town in August 2025.

The group offers a welcoming space for those caring for a relative, partner or friend who is elderly, disabled, or living with illness or addiction. It meets on the first Monday of each month (excluding bank holidays), 1pm - 2.30pm, at Christchurch, Bedford Road, Hitchin.

This is our eighteenth area-based group and initial funding for it has come from North Herts Council and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Contact us to book to attend this or any of our groups.



"I have been caring for my wife for about two years. She was recovering from a breast cancer operation when she had a stroke, which has left her with serious mobility and balance issues.

I have attended a couple of the Hitchin Hub meetings, which are local to me so easy to attend. It is a friendly environment to share my experiences and listen to other carers' situations. You soon realise you are not alone and this helps." Warwick.



Do you have an eye for detail and a passion for clear communication?

We are looking to create a panel of family and friend carers who we can contact by email when we are reviewing or creating our leaflets and other information materials.

If you'd like to be involved when we update or develop resources, we'd love to hear from you!

Express your interest by emailing comms@carersinherts.org.uk or calling 01992 58 69 69.

carers' rights



If you have a caring role, it is important to understand your rights. This helps you access the support you're entitled to and feel more confident advocating for yourself or the person you care for, especially in challenging situations.

Each year Carers Rights Day raises awareness about carers' rights. For 2025, the Day is on Thursday 20th November. The theme is 'Know your Rights, Use your Rights'. We have two events planned to support carers.

Employment Rights Webinar for carers

Thursday 20th November 2025, 2pm - 3pm.

An expert from Longmores Solicitors will cover issues of interest to carers including requests for flexible working and taking time off for dependants.



Information Event

20th November 2025, 10am - 2.30pm.

Find out how local organisations can help you!
Stevenage Football Club, Lamex Stadium,
Broadhall Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 8RH.

Contact us to book your place:

Call: 01992 58 69 69 or sign up via the listing at
www.carersinherts.org.uk/events

General support

You have a right to be involved in decision-making around your care or that of a dependant. If you or the person you care for is being **discharged from hospital**, you should be consulted and involved in the planning of their care, where possible.

There is also **Martha's Rule**, a safety measure that you can use in hospitals in England. If you notice a significant change or deterioration in the person you care for whilst they are in hospital and you feel their condition is not being addressed, you can request an urgent medical review by a health professional not directly involved in their care.

No matter the type or amount of care you provide you have the right to a **Carer's Assessment**. It is an opportunity to discuss the help you need as an unpaid carer. You can also request a needs assessment for the person you care for.

Employment rights: If you are juggling work with a caring role, there are some rights that can help make things easier to manage. These include the right to:

- **Request flexible working** from the first day of employment. This could be a request related to the hours or days you work and your place of work. You can ask for a change twice a year.
- **Unpaid Carer's Leave:** Working carers in England, Scotland and Wales, can request up to five days of unpaid carer's leave each year (it is dependent on the hours worked).

Complaining about care or other services

You have the right to complain if you or someone you look after receives poor care or is unhappy with a decision or treatment. It is advisable to try and resolve issues informally first by speaking to the service directly.

However, if this doesn't work, you can make a formal complaint – ask for a copy of the organisation's complaints procedure and follow the process. For NHS or healthcare services, you may be directed to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

PALS offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters.

You can also report concerns about a health or social care service to the Care Quality Commission or your local council, especially if the issue involves abuse or neglect.



For advice on your rights and how to complain, you can contact organisations like Citizens Advice. www.citizensadvice.org.uk or for the England Helpline call 0800 144 8848.

Spotlight on... Caring from a distance

Providing care or help for someone you don't live with can be challenging, but whether they are just around the corner or further away, there are ways to stay involved and offer support, such as doing paperwork or online shopping. This guide shares tips from carers and our Advisors, who have visited our carer groups this year to talk about caring from afar. Some suggestions may involve costs, but we've included free options too.

If the person you care for lives outside Hertfordshire, you may find it helpful to contact the local organisation or service that supports carers. You can find details through Carers UK by calling 0808 808 7777 or at www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/support-where-you-live or contact the council in the area that is responsible for social care.

Freya, who alternated living with her late mum for a month and then at home a month, shared how important it was to **build a local support network**. "Having a neighbour or two we trusted, who could contact me if they were concerned gave me peace of mind," she said.

She also said that a **doorbell camera** was essential as it helped her keep track of visitors and deliveries.

For Regina, **staying informed** and **communication** is key. She said: "The updates I get from the Social Worker involved in my relative's care - by text, email or WhatsApp - are essential. They let me know if anything is needed, like when I had to buy and arrange delivery of a new fridge because my relative's had broken and they hadn't told me."

There are helpful tools to make **co-ordinating care** easier, like the Jointly app (www.jointlyapp.com) from Carers UK. It allows carers to manage appointments, create to-do lists, and share notes. Hertfordshire residents can access the app for free by getting a code from Hertfordshire County Council. Contact details for the Council are on page 25.

Other practical tips include:

- **Keep key information handy:** Maintain a file of contacts and local services for yourself and to stay in the home of the person you care for.

- **Use delivery services:** Online shopping, pharmacy deliveries, and visiting services can help meet daily needs.

- **Explore home-based care:** Check if dental, optical, or hearing services offer home visits.

- **Set up GP Proxy access:**

The person you care for can authorise you to help manage their healthcare, including prescriptions and appointments.



- **Cleaning support:** Organise services from trusted sources such as Age UK's Home Help. You can learn more at www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/home-help or if you are in Hertfordshire, call Age UK Hertfordshire on 0300 345 3446.

- **Check the home** is safe or if any equipment or home adaptations are needed. During visits you can check for trip hazards, broken furniture, or unsafe appliances. You can also request a fire safety check from the local fire service.

There may be grants available for equipment or adaptations, such as a Disabled Facilities Grant. You can learn more at www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants or call 0300 123 4042 if you're in Hertfordshire.

- Consider signing up to the **Priority Services Register** that utility companies have to identify the customers who may need help with meter readings or during interruptions to service.

For further advice based on your caring situation contact us as our Advisors are here to help.

Carer's Story

Helen has been supporting her mum, who has Alzheimer's disease, for over two years. Living an hour away, she shares how she manages her caring role from afar.

"In the early stages, I was coping alone, juggling my part-time job with regular visits to check on Mum and helping with household tasks. But last year, I was exhausted and realised I needed help. I reached out to family, and now we share the responsibility of looking after Mum. Some relatives live closer to Mum, while others are further away, but we co-ordinate together.

As a result of an assessment I arranged, Mum now has Care Workers visit twice daily to help her get up, dressed, and then ready for bed.

The support has eased the pressure and given me time to recharge and do things I enjoy such as reading, cycling, or meeting friends.

I still visit Mum regularly, how often depends on her needs. It could be once or twice a week when I take her out for lunch or sit and chat, or more often as she has appointments or paperwork that needs sorting out. It's a lot to think about as I'm running two households.



To co-ordinate the care, everyone involved stays in touch through phone calls and messages, and we keep key information written down at Mum's.

The Care Workers also share updates via an app, which helps us stay informed.

Getting the Lasting Powers of Attorney in place was a big help. I'd recommend doing this early.

I also really value the updates and support from Carers in Hertfordshire. Knowing I can join workshops or ask for advice makes me feel less alone. I know the road ahead will be tough as Mum's condition worsens, but having support makes all the difference."

Travel Advice

Whether you are going on holiday, an outing or visiting family or friends, travelling with someone you care for with a disability, dementia or other need, can require extra planning. Our Admiral Nurses, who support dementia carers, often hear about travel concerns, so they've shared some tips to help you feel more confident and prepared for a successful trip,

Plan ahead: Research your destination for necessary facilities like parking and disabled access, and have a backup plan if arrangements need to change.

Carry an itinerary with key details and share it with emergency contacts at home or those you are visiting.

Pack essentials: Bring medication, important documents, an emergency contacts list, spare clothing, continence products, and entertainment like audiobooks.

Notify services: Contact transport services or venues in advance to arrange support or special assistance.

Use a **Sunflower Lanyard**: This discreet symbol shows someone has a health condition or disability and may need help. Free lanyards are often available at supermarkets or airports. Learn more at www.hdsunflower.com

Consider getting a **RADAR key to access disabled public toilets** (available at <https://shop.disabilityrightsuk.org/> or call 0203 687 0790).

Support comfort: If new environments or routine changes cause distress, explain plans clearly or involve the person in planning, and offer reassurance. You can also bring familiar items and stick to routines and travel at the best time of day for the person, if possible.



If travelling abroad:

Ensure **travel insurance** covers health needs.

Plan for security checks and assistance.

Pre-book seats to ensure you can sit together, and consider how the person will cope with the journey, wandering, or jet lag.

If you are travelling soon, we hope it's enjoyable and manageable.

30 years of supporting carers

Carers in Hertfordshire was created following conversations in the 1990s between carers and health and social care professionals who saw the need for an organisation to provide dedicated support to carers in the county. Hertfordshire County Council staff, including Sue Reeve who was a Social Worker at the time, helped make the charity a reality and we were founded in 1995. Sue was our first Chief Executive.

We started with funding for three years and offices in Hitchin and Ware and offered information and advice, support for young carers and people looking after someone with a mental illness.

Over the last three decades we have developed our services to ensure carers and bereaved carers are identified, informed, supported and heard. We hope to continue to be there when needed for many more years.

1990s

A Linkline phone support service was set up in **1996**.

In **December 1997**: HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne visited the Ware office and met carers at a reception.



June 1998: The Key for Carers Project was launched. It was a resource to help primary healthcare staff identify and support carers.

2000s

In **2001**, we held our first Young Carers' Conference and in **2002**, the Young Carers' Council was formed to give young carers a voice.

2007: Our Carer Trainer Service launched to involve carers in training professionals.

2008: We began organising workshops and learning opportunities for carers and we launched a group for bereaved carers.

2009: The Make a Difference Carers Breaks Service was launched to support carers' wellbeing.

2010s

The Mentoring Service began in **2012** and continues to support carers.

2013: Our Carers' Passport discount card was introduced, an ID card that gives carers access to savings and offers at a range of businesses. It was available countywide by April 2015.

2015: A Digital Inclusion Project was launched to provide tablets and training to carers.

In **2016**, we started providing some Care Services, including home care in Hertsmere and Carers' Breaks in Hertsmere, Watford, and Three Rivers.



In **March 2017**, Hertfordshire's Dementia Service relaunched with the introduction of a team of four Admiral Nurses that we hosted. We now have seven nurses.

In **2019**, we received a grant from The National Lottery Community Fund to help us develop more Carers' Hubs and support volunteers.

2020s

March 2020 – March 2022: The COVID-19 lockdowns led to some of our services such as support groups and workshops being moved online. Our Keep in Touch service expanded to make more welfare calls to carers.

In **February 2021**, we held our first online Young Carers' Conference. A month later, we launched the Urgent Carers' Breaks Service to provide short-term support, which ran until 2024.

In **January 2024**, a new support group for carers of people with suicidal thoughts was introduced in partnership with Hector's House, funded by Hertfordshire County Council.

We started two new Hubs **this year** - our 17th and 18th - in South Oxhey and Hitchin.

You can find more key moments and photos from our history at www.carersinherts.org.uk/timeline

Carers' stories

Dai cares for his wife Denise, who was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a variant of Motor Neurone Disease, in 2023. They have been together since school - 47 years, have three children, and lived in the US for two decades before returning to the UK in 2020.

"We first noticed something was wrong in 2019. Denise began tripping and tiring easily, which was unusual for her as she used to cycle long distances and had raced triathlons. After seeking medical advice, she was given her diagnosis. Our world fell apart. We knew her symptoms would only get worse, and there is no cure.



My day starts around 8am. I get Denise her medication and breakfast. Care Workers visit mid-morning and evening to help her get ready for the day or for bed. I use that time to go for a walk or run. I also get about 10 hours a week of respite when Care Workers stay longer. I use it to exercise, drive our motorhome, or catch up on shopping or other chores.



I found out about Carers in Hertfordshire through a Carer's Assessment. It's reassuring to speak to someone who is there to help. I've joined in some online group discussions such as the one for male carers, they are great for talking to others and sharing information – I don't know many people locally.

Earlier this year, I received funding from the charity for some weights and a training mat. I used to go to the gym, but now I can't leave Denise home alone, so having the equipment means I can still exercise, which helps me stay strong and healthy."

Helen is a parent carer for her autistic son, who also has a mild learning disability. Caring has been a lifelong role for her, and while her son is now nearly 22 and more independent, Helen still supports him.

“There has never really been a time when I wasn’t caring for my son. Although, he’s more independent as he’s getting older, I still help with things like washing, cooking, and making sure he looks presentable. There’s always life admin too – forms to complete, meetings to attend, and support to provide around his work and care.

Once a week, I drive him to a horticultural project for people with learning disabilities. He gets the bus home thanks to college travel training, but I’m always on standby.

We’ve faced many challenges. Getting a diagnosis took nearly four years of endless meetings and assessments. Transitions like moving to secondary school or college were stressful and we have experienced communication difficulties.

There has also been some sadness when I’ve seen other young people reach milestones he may not, but there are proud moments too, like the close bond he has with his younger brother and GCSE results day. He got five GCSEs. He had some fantastic teachers at his mainstream school with a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) hub.

From my first call to Carers in Hertfordshire, I’ve felt seen and supported. I’ve attended courses, meetings, and other events, and it’s been great to connect with other carers. The Young Carers Service also supported my younger son, which meant a lot.

Support like this is vital. Caring can be isolating and tough on mental health. Sharing our voices and experiences really matters.”



Support groups

Our groups for adults who provide unpaid care or support to someone close to them, offer a friendly space to connect with other carers, share support, and learn about helpful services.

If you are looking for somewhere to go with the person you look after, our Advisors could help you identify suitable places.



Online groups that meet on Zoom

Men's Group, meets the third Tuesday of the month, 10.30am - 11.30am.

Evening Carers' Group, second Wednesday of the month, 7pm - 8pm.

Morning Carers' Group, second Friday of the month, 10.30am - 11.30am.

Reading Group, second Thursday of the month, 10.30am - 11.30am.

For those interested in photography a **Carers' Camera Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm.

A **Pudding Club** meets in Bishop's Stortford, the third Monday of each month, 8pm - 9.30pm. Contact Tricia on 07935 277039 if you want to attend.

Groups that meet in community venues

Hub group	Meeting details
Berkhamsted	Second Tuesday of the month, 11.15am - 12.45pm, at The Vyne Theatre, Northbridge Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 1EH.
Bishop's Stortford	First Wednesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church, Twyford Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3LJ.
Borehamwood	First Wednesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Allum Manor House & Hall, 2 Allum Lane, Elstree, WD6 3PJ.
Buntingford	Last Tuesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at The Manor House, High Street, Buntingford, SG9 9AB.
Chorleywood & Rickmansworth	Third Monday of the month 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Christ Church, The Common, Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood, WD3 5SG.
Harpenden	Third Thursday of the month, 11.30am - 1pm, at Harpenden Trust, 130a Southdown Road, Harpenden, AL5 1PU.

Hub group	Meeting details
Hemel Hempstead	Second Wednesday of the month, 10am - 11.45am, at The South Hill Centre, Cemetery Hill, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1JF.
Hitchin	First Monday of the month, 1pm - 2.30pm, at Christchurch, Bedford Road, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1HF.
Hoddesdon	Last Friday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Hoddesdon Baptist Church, Burford Street, Hoddesdon, EN11 8HX.
Letchworth	Third Wednesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Garden House Hospice, Gillison Close, Letchworth, SG6 1QU.
Potters Bar	Last Wednesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at King Charles The Martyr Church, 368 Mutton Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 3AS.
Royston	First Thursday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Royston Town Hall (Heritage Hall), Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7DA.
South Oxhey	Second Thursday of the month, 1pm - 2.30pm, at Oxhey Library, Bridlington Road, South Oxhey, WD19 7AG.
St Albans	Third Tuesday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at St Paul's Church, Blandford Road, St Albans, AL1 4JP.
Stevenage	Last Thursday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Stevenage Leisure Centre, Lytton Road, Stevenage, SG1 1LZ.
Ware	Third Friday of the month, 11.15am - 1pm, at Allenburys Sports & Social Club, Harris's Lane, Ware, SG12 0DJ.
Watford	Second Monday of the month, 10.30am - 12.30pm, at Peace Hospice, Peace Drive, Watford, WD17 3PH. Then from December 2025, at St Luke's Church, Langley Way, Watford, WD17 3EG.
Welwyn Garden City	Third Wednesday of the month, 12pm noon - 2pm, at United Reformed Church, Church Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6PS.

If you want to attend any group, you need to book a place. We advise checking meeting details with us before attending as the arrangements can change. Keep updated about our meetings on the Meet Other Carers and Events pages on our website www.carersinherts.org.uk or call us on 01992 58 69 69.

Thank you for a summer to remember

We'd like to begin with a heartfelt thank you to our funders, staff, volunteers, families, and the venues who helped make our Young Carers Summer Programme such a success. Your continued generosity means that we can offer activities that give young carers a much-needed break from their responsibilities.

This summer, 130 young carers took part in a wide range of activities, from skiing and lawn bowls to football, karate, music-making, and whole-family triage days. These experiences don't just offer enjoyment, they can help build connections, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

"Going to the activities made me happy!
I laughed loads and made some friends."
Sienna, 9.



"It was our first time at one of your events, and we learned so much in just one afternoon, especially about the help available to us. Seeing my son enjoy the craft activities and realise he's not the only young carer was moving." Selina.



Looking ahead

We are already planning our next big event, the Young Carers' Conference, taking place on the Thursday of the February half-term. Please look out for more details in our upcoming communications.

Fundraising highlights

We rely on donations to provide valuable opportunities for young carers across Hertfordshire to relax, have fun, be heard and just be children.

One of our youngest fundraisers Jasmine, 9, has been making and selling bracelets. She has already raised £120, doubling her original target, with more orders coming in!

Jasmine helps care for a family member who is autistic and has additional needs. She joined our bowls sessions this summer and her mum Louise, shared: “She enjoys the activities you organise as they give her a break, a chance to have some fun, and just be a child.”



We also extend our sincere thanks to:

- Cllr Sherrie McDaid, the 2024/2025 Mayor of Broxbourne, who raised a fantastic £7,160 through events including a quiz night.
- Cllr Alpha Bird Collins, The Mayor of Hertsmere, for his support this year.

Tell someone you're a young carer – it matters!

Did you know that schools, colleges, universities, and GP practices should record if a young person is a carer? By letting them know, you may be able to get extra help with work, flexible appointments, or someone to talk to.

While many schools may know some students have caring responsibilities, this isn't always recorded, as revealed by our 2025 Young Carers Survey and the 2025 Schools Census. Over 60% of Hertfordshire schools reported having no young carers in the Census.

You can ask a parent or guardian to speak to someone at your place of learning or GP practice to ensure your caring role is recorded, so you won't miss out on help.

If you are a young carer under 19, or know someone who is, we're here to help. Email young.carers@carersinherts.org.uk or call us.

Health update

A flu vaccination could help you and others stay well this winter

As an unpaid carer, your health matters - not just for you, but for the person you support. That's why the NHS offers a free flu vaccine to carers. It's quick, easy to arrange, and helps protect you and those in your care.

Flu can leave you unwell for days or weeks, and if you have a caring role it may not be easy to take time off to rest and recover. Flu can be life threatening, especially to older people or those with long-term health conditions or weakened immune systems. Getting vaccinated reduces your risk of serious illness and helps prevent you passing flu on to any vulnerable people you support.

Carers and people aged 65+, can get their flu vaccination between October 2025 and 31st March 2026. It's best to book as soon as it is offered, so your protection is strongest when flu starts circulating when it gets colder.

You can get your vaccination at your GP practice or a local pharmacy – tell them you are a carer, and you'll receive it for free! More information is available at www.nhs.uk/flu vaccine



Could you use your caring experience to help improve health and other services?

Become a Carer Trainer and help in the training or recruitment of health and social care workers and students. We especially need people with experience of supporting someone with mental health challenges or addiction.



We offer training, ongoing support, and payment for your time.

Interested?

Email contact@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69.



Have your say

Our Engagement Team works with carers to make sure their voices are heard by health and social care services in Hertfordshire, helping shape improvement in these services. Since the last issue of Carewaves the team has been:

- Meeting with parents and carers of adults with a neurodiversity or learning disability to talk about challenges to finding work, such as limited support, and how to address them.
- Refreshing some of our representation groups, including one for people who support someone with a drug or alcohol dependency. Led by Engagement Manager Steve Probyn, the group helps carers share their experiences and work with services to find solutions. A key concern is access to mental health assessments for people still using drugs or alcohol.

Funding boost to improve support for veterans and their carers

We have received one-year funding from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, via The Bridge for Heroes Veterans Voice Project, to support veterans and their carers in Hertfordshire.

Led by Engagement Worker Ian Pearce, the project will tackle mental health stigma, raise awareness of the challenges carers experience, and expand peer-led support, including mentoring. We will also work with GP practices and support services to involve carers in shaping the help available.

If you've served in the UK armed forces (regular or reserve), or care for someone who has, and would like to get involved or access support, please contact us.



Hertfordshire County Council

Following the May 2025 elections, Hertfordshire County Council has a new political landscape. The Conservative Party has lost its overall majority and the Liberal Democrats now hold the most seats (32 of 78). However, no party has full control.

This change brings new leadership which includes the following people, who are responsible for services relevant to family and friend carers in Hertfordshire:



Cllr Sally Symington
(Executive Member for
Adult Care Services).



Cllr Anthony Rowlands
(Executive Member for
Children's Social Care).



Cllr Mark Watkin
(Executive Member
for Education, SEND
and Inclusion).

Slipper Swap: Helping Hertfordshire residents stay safe from falls

Worn-out slippers can lead to falls and hospital stays. If you or someone you support in Hertfordshire is older or has mobility issues or a disability, visit a Slipper Swap event at your local library. Exchange old slippers for a free anti-slip pair and get safety advice from occupational therapists and community partners. Carers in Hertfordshire will also be there to offer support and information.

No booking needed, just drop in between 10am and 1pm, on event days, which include those at the following libraries:

Radlett: Thursday 20th November 2025.

Hitchin: Friday 28th November 2025.

Waltham Cross: Tuesday 2nd December 2025.



Learn more at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/slipperswap or call 0300 123 4049.

Assistive Technology supporting safe living and giving reassurance

Assistive technology can help people live safely and independently at home and offer peace of mind to relatives and carers. From medication reminders to emergency alarms, these devices or equipment support daily routines and reduce risks like falls.

Most care technology is available to purchase online, or from specialist shops such as Living Made Easy.

In Hertfordshire, Herts Careline, provides telecare and community alarm support 24/7 and Hertfordshire County Council also offers a Data Inspired Living Service, which uses discreet sensors in the home to track routines, sharing data on a dashboard, this information can then flag up changes to routines, or concerns.

To learn more, visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/assistenttechnology or email assistenttechnology@hertfordshire.gov.uk and for Herts Careline visit www.care-line.co.uk/home.aspx or call 0300 999 2 999.

To contact Hertfordshire County Council about care services, call 0300 123 4042 for adult care services or 0300 123 4043 for children's services. If you live elsewhere, contact your local council.

*Last chance to stay on
our Carewaves mailing list*

Do you still want to receive Carewaves?

If you do, please let us know, and if you're happy to get it by email instead of post (if you don't already), that's a greener, more cost-effective, and quicker option, especially with fewer second-class mail delivery days now.

Thank you to everyone who has already responded. If you haven't yet, this is your final chance to confirm whether you'd like to keep receiving Carewaves and how.

To let us know your preferences, complete the form at www.carersinherts.org.uk/carewaves-subscription or scan the QR code. If you need help, get in touch. Please let us know by the end of December 2025.



Fundraising

There are many ways to support us, and not all of them involve making a donation. Here are some options for how to help.

Vote for us!

If you are shopping at Waitrose in Harpenden until the end of December 2025, pick up a green token and vote for us in the Community Matters scheme. The number of votes influence the size of the donation we receive to support young carers and their families. Help spread the word to friends and family who shop there too!

Organise or take part in a fundraising activity. For example two Carers in Hertfordshire workers are doing a sponsored swimathon.



Jane & Julie's Swimathon

Jane, from our Administration team, and Hub and Volunteer Co-ordinator, Julie, are aiming to swim 60-100 lengths on Friday 5th December 2025 at John Warner Sports Centre, Hoddesdon, to raise money for us!

Fancy donating?

Whether 10p, 50p, or £1 per length, or a set total – your contribution will help drive them to the finish line. You can donate at <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/jjswim> or contact us.



We are looking for **30 businesses or organisations** to each raise **£1,000** and challenging **people** to raise **£30** during our 30th year.

Do you know anyone who can help?

Let us know by getting in touch. For more information or tips visit www.carersinherts.org.uk/fundraise-for-us

Festive fundraising

We are selling Christmas cards to boost our funds. The cards feature six designs donated by Jane, a registered carer and owner of Doodleshoe Paper Goods. Each £5 pack includes 12 cards, envelopes and a warm seasonal greeting inside. To buy a pack shop online at www.carersinherts.org.uk/christmas-cards or contact us.

We will also be selling them at community events. We will share details of where we'll be on our website and social media pages.

A festive raffle poster with a dark blue background. At the top, there are Christmas decorations including a garland, baubles, and a small gift box. On the left, a red and white starburst graphic says "ENTER! to WIN!". In the center, the text "Festive Raffle" is in large white letters, with "£1 per ticket" below it. On the right, a yellow starburst graphic says "Draw on 11th December 2025". At the bottom left, white text says "Buy at our Hubs, events, by contacting us or online by scanning the QR code or at www.carersinherts.org.uk/shop". Below this, it says "Prizes include Amazon and One4all gift cards." On the bottom right, there is a QR code.

**ENTER!
to WIN!**

Festive Raffle
£1 per ticket

Draw on
11th December
2025

Buy at our Hubs, events, by contacting
us or online by scanning the QR code
or at www.carersinherts.org.uk/shop

Prizes include Amazon and One4all gift cards.

A poster for a gift wrapping service. On the left, there are several wrapped gifts in various colors (blue, green, pink, yellow) with colorful ribbons, and a large red and white striped candy cane. The background is a light orange color with yellow starburst graphics. On the right, the text "Gift Wrapping Service" is in large, stylized red and blue letters. Below this, it says "Harlequin Watford Shopping Centre" and "Tuesday 16th December 2025 9am - 8pm" in a dark blue rounded rectangle. At the bottom, it says "Donations welcome. Card donations include fees - more details at www.carersinherts.org.uk/fees". On the bottom right, there is a small green Christmas tree with yellow and red ornaments.

**Gift
Wrapping
Service**

Harlequin Watford Shopping Centre

Tuesday 16th December 2025
9am - 8pm

Donations welcome.
Card donations include fees -
more details at
www.carersinherts.org.uk/fees

Your support helps to ensure we can be there when carers need us most. If you want to help us in any way, email fundraising@carersinherts.org.uk or call us.

Volunteering

Welcome to all the volunteers who have joined us since our last issue of Carewaves and farewell to people who have stepped away from volunteering. Among the new volunteers is Trustee Sally Newton, a former councillor, scientist and healthcare worker, who has had a caring role since 2017 when her husband was diagnosed with dementia.



Farewell to a long-serving Hub Leader

Thank you and farewell to Corinne, who stepped down from her volunteer role running our Stevenage Carers Support Hub in July 2025, after 13 years of dedicated service.

Corinne, who supports her husband who has multiple health conditions, said: “I decided to step down to focus on family, my wellbeing, and other commitments.

Volunteering with Carers in Hertfordshire was a rewarding experience - I felt valued, enjoyed helping others, and made lasting friendships.”

Help us support current and former carers - volunteer with us!

Whether you have a few hours a week, month or now and then spare, you could make a difference to the lives of current and former carers and we'd welcome your help.

We provide our volunteers with training and support and hopefully you'll have fun and develop your skills along the way. Here are some of the roles we have:

Hub Leaders: We are looking for passionate, organised people to lead or co-lead some of our carers' groups. The role involves welcoming carers and speakers to the monthly meetings, ensuring the meetings run smoothly and that carers have a chance to talk if they want to. We need Leaders or Co-Leaders for our Berkhamsted, Hitchin, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City groups.

Keep in Touch callers: Sometimes, a simple phone call can brighten someone's day or week. Our Keep in Touch volunteers make calls to carers who may be isolated or perhaps have not engaged with our services for a while. They offer a listening ear and emotional support. Calls can be made during office hours and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings (not bank holidays).

Bereavement Support Volunteers: Caring doesn't end when someone passes away. We're seeking more volunteers to offer telephone-based bereavement support or help at our Watford group.

Events Assistant: To help at fundraising or charity events in Hertfordshire. You could be helping set up or clear away a stand, collecting donations, speaking to people about our work, handing out leaflets and more!



Charlotte said: "I have been volunteering with Carers in Hertfordshire for just over a year, providing administration support in the office. I help out for about four hours each week. I am enjoying volunteering as it gives me independence and boosts my IT skills and confidence. The office has a friendly atmosphere and the staff are always welcoming."

Interested in volunteering?

Find out more by visiting the volunteer pages on our website
www.carersinherts.org.uk/help-us-help-carers/volunteer
or contacting our Volunteer Team.

Email: volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69.

Free courses and workshops

Our courses, workshops and events are for unpaid family and friend carers registered with us. Some are held online, usually on Zoom, and others in community venues around Hertfordshire. Listed are a selection of the activities planned.

We regularly update the events page on our website with details of our workshops, so if the event date has passed or to find out what else is going on, visit www.carersinherts.org.uk/events or call us.

Online activities

Dealing with Stress Workshop, Wednesday 10th December 2025, 12.30pm - 2.30pm. Learn more about stress and its causes and effective strategies to manage and reduce it.

Probate Talk, Thursday 11th December 2025, 10.30am - 12pm noon.

A Chartered Legal Executive from Setfords Solicitors will be helping unpaid carers understand probate - the legal process of dealing with someone's property, money and possessions after they die.



Festive Quiz, Wednesday 17th December 2025, 7pm - 8.30pm. Get into the festive spirit with our fun quiz for family and friend carers.

First Steps in Family History Workshop, Wednesday 14th January 2026, 1pm - 2.30pm. Discover tools and tips to start your family history journey, including archives and resources relevant to people in England.

Self-Compassion Meditation, Friday 6th February 2026, 10am - 10.45am. Take time to pause and relax. You will be guided through a calming breathing exercise and a soothing meditation.

Understanding Headaches and Migraines Talk, Thursday 5th March 2026, 1pm - 2.30pm. Discover the different types of headache, triggers for migraines and how to relieve the pain naturally. Brian Isbell a Lecturer in Complementary Therapies will deliver the talk.

Around Hertfordshire

COURSE DESCRIPTION	DATE(S), TIMES AND VENUE
Card Crafting Workshop Make some handmade cards, including seasonal ones.	Tuesday 2nd December 2025. 12.30pm - 2.30pm. Ware Priory, High Street, Ware , Herts, SG12 9AL.
Cooking Together Workshop Prepare some tasty, low cost, easy to make recipes whilst socialising with other carers.	Mondays 15th December 2025. & 12th January, 23rd February & 16th March 2026. 10.30am - 12pm noon. The Old Schoolhouse, 4 Market Hill, Royston , Herts, SG8 9JL.
Looking After Your Emotional Wellbeing Course This three-week course explores ways to manage stress, build resilience, and improve communication.	Tuesdays 27th January - 10th February 2026. 10.30am - 1pm. Allum Manor House & Hall, 2 Allum Lane, Elstree , WD6 3PJ.
Observatory Tour Enjoy a planetarium show, telescope tour, and stargazing, (weather permitting) with the University of Hertfordshire.	Tuesday 3rd March 2026. 6pm - 8pm. Bayfordbury Observatory, Lower Hatfield Road, Bayfordbury, Hertford , Herts, SG13 8LD.

"The photography courses were amazing and I met some lovely people. I didn't have much time to try things while caring for my dad, who had lung cancer and other conditions, and raising my family, but I appreciated the information I received. Even now, after my dad has passed away, I still feel supported. It's reassuring to know I haven't been forgotten." Amy.



To book a place on any of our courses visit the events section of our website www.carersinherts.org.uk/events or contact us by emailing learning@carersinherts.org.uk or calling 01992 58 69 69.

Making Carers Count

About Us

Carers in Hertfordshire is the leading countywide charity for unpaid carers looking after a partner, relative, friend or neighbour, due to physical or mental illness, disability, addiction, or other care need.

We support all carers - children and adults - living, working or caring in Hertfordshire, and bereaved carers for three years after the death of the person they cared for.

Carers do not have to live with the person they are looking after to receive help and advice.

For more information about our services or how you can support our work, see the contact details below.

Join the online conversation!

Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/carersinherts

X [@CarersinHerts](https://twitter.com/CarersinHerts) Instagram [@carersinhertfordshire](https://www.instagram.com/carersinhertfordshire)

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/carers-in-hertfordshire

and our Carers in Hertfordshire YouTube Channel

www.youtube.com/@carersinhertfordshire



YouTube

To contact Carers in Hertfordshire

Write to: Carers in Hertfordshire, The Red House,
119 Fore Street, Hertford, Herts, SG14 1AX.

Call: 01992 58 69 69.

Email: contact@carersinherts.org.uk

Visit: www.carersinherts.org.uk

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registration number 4131036 (England and Wales)

Our standards and partnerships:



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

A Network Partner of

**CARERS
TRUST**