

First issue of 2026

www.carersinherts.org.uk

Carewaves

A Newsletter for Family Carers and Caring Friends



**A royal moment to remember!
Carers enjoyed a reception
hosted by The King to celebrate
family carers and those working
in the care sector.**

Discover more inside.

Carers
in Hertfordshire

charity registration number 1085491

Making Carers Count

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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

We are so pleased to be welcoming you to this edition of Carewaves. Already 2026 has been a time of pride and celebration. Recently, four of our carers represented the charity at a royal reception hosted by The King and Queen, to recognise the extraordinary contribution carers make every single day. Seeing local carers honoured in this way was incredibly moving, and a reminder of just how vital your role is.

Over the past few weeks, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you at some of our events. Hearing your experiences, sharing conversations, and seeing how much difference just a little time for yourself can make is truly inspiring. Your honesty and feedback continue to guide our work.

While Carers in Hertfordshire is an independent charity, we are grateful to receive funding from Hertfordshire County Council and the NHS in Hertfordshire, in order to provide support for unpaid carers. Their commitment helps us offer the advice, information and activities that so many carers across the county rely on.

As always, we are here for you. If you need support with anything related to your caring role, please reach out. And if you'd like to get involved - whether by volunteering, fundraising, or sharing your story - we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for everything you do, and for being part of our caring community.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michèle".

Michèle Stokes
Chief Executive

Our services - how we can help

Whether you are new to Carers in Hertfordshire or need a refresher about what we do, our focus is on supporting unpaid carers by providing information, advice and other useful services.

Our free support is available to current carers and to those whose caring role ended within the last three years. It includes:



Information and advice: If you have a question or need help related to your caring role our Advisors are available 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 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 available until 7.30pm on Wednesdays - ask us about these.

Keep in Touch calls: Volunteers call carers to check how you are.

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

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

One to one and group support: We offer mentoring over the phone or face to face, and we have carers' groups (details on pages 9 to 11).

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

Specialist support for dementia carers provided by our **Admiral Nurses** and activities and evolving **support for young carers**.

Bereavement support: Provided over the phone or at two groups that meet monthly in Ware and Watford. There is more information about this on pages 22 and 23.

How we've been helping carers

“Caring for my wife since her brain injury in 2015, means being there for her from morning to night - helping her with her mobility, preparing meals, and the many little things the injury and other health conditions have made harder. It’s a role that never really ends. At first, the weight of responsibility felt overwhelming, and I struggled not knowing who to turn to. Then I got in touch with Carers in Hertfordshire and they have provided support and guidance when I’ve needed it.

Attending and helping to run one your carers’ groups has given me a place where I can meet with people who understand. Where I can talk, listen, and breathe. It reminds me that although caring can be lonely, I don’t have to face it alone.” Lee, from Buntingford.

“Thank you so much for the funding for the oil painting course. It has reignited my long-lost passion for art. Since the course, I have joined an Art Society, exhibited in their show, and I even sold my first painting!

I have joined a life drawing class, and I’m planning to enter more exhibitions.

My confidence and abilities have soared. Mindful art has played a huge part in calming my nervous system after long COVID and more than a decade of stressful caring. I finally feel more balanced and relaxed.” Parent carer Kayla, from East Herts.



To contact us at Carers in Hertfordshire:
Call 01992 58 69 69 or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk
Website: www.carersinherts.org.uk

Spotlight on... Choosing care

Choosing care for yourself, a relative or someone you support can be overwhelming, but a clear plan can make it easier. Here are tips from carers and our Advisors to help you navigate your options and know what to look for.

Start with considering the person's needs and what matters to them and the family. Think about location, transport links, and the services offered. If their needs change, will they be able to stay and still receive the right level of care?

There are organisations that can guide you to local options, such as HertsHelp and Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care Services in Hertfordshire.

Explore types of care. Options include:

- Homecare – care workers, Personal Assistants or live-in carers.
- Care homes – residential or with nursing support.
- Flexi-care – people live in a self-contained home, but care staff are usually on site or on call if needed.
- Supported living – independent living units with on-site or tailored care support.
- Respite care – short-term care, which can give the family carer a break.

Your local social care team can help you understand what's available in your area.

Jayne and Bob, carers from Broxbourne, said it is important to

visit homes and to go at different times to get a feel for the care provided.



Jayne said: "If you can, try a **short trial stay**. We did this for my mum at three homes, and it was clear where she felt happiest.

If visiting the person after they have moved in, go at different times, and if they need any medication, ask to see their **Medication Administration Record**. If everything is as it should be, this can offer reassurance. If you have any concerns, you can raise them with staff and make sure they are addressed."

Parent carer Bonita, from Hertsmere, whose young adult son has severe autism and limited communication and has been in seven residential facilities in eight years, has a couple of tips.

“**Get to know the manager** - notice how they interact with staff - trust starts there. Do staff feel comfortable raising concerns?

Also, **ask whether you can visit anytime or if you need to book**, an open door approach always feels more reassuring.

I struggled with the idea of my son going into a care setting, but we weren't coping at home and it felt like the right step.

Having someone to talk things through with, such as a Carers in Hertfordshire Mentor, can help when making care decisions.

My son is currently settled. We helped him through each move by making a picture book of the place he was going into.”

Check Quality and Inspection Reports

All care services in England are inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and local authorities also do inspections. For a CQC report, search a provider's name at www.cqc.org.uk to see their ratings, any concerns raised, and feedback from families. In addition, ask what changes they've made since their last inspection.

Understanding Costs and Financial Help

Care can be expensive, but support is available, including:

- A local authority financial assessment to work out what the person with the care need must pay.
- Attendance Allowance or other non-means-tested benefits.
- Carer's Allowance, if you're eligible.
- NHS Continuing Healthcare for people with high, ongoing health needs.

We can help connect you to information and resources for assessments and financial support.



Other questions to ask or points to consider

- What training do staff receive?
- How will you communicate with me as a carer?
- Can you meet specific cultural, dietary, or medical needs?

A carer's story

Carer fulfils dream of writing and publishing a book

For years Elaine dreamed of writing a book, and around her job, knitting business, and caring role, she has achieved that ambition. Here Elaine, from Hoddesdon, shares more about the book, her caring journey and her experience of Carers in Hertfordshire.

“The book – Juggling Balls While Riding a Unicycle – took me seven months to complete. It’s a narrative non-fiction, sharing my thoughts and reflections, mainly from January 2024, when my husband was diagnosed with Parkinson’s. He also has other health conditions and is under four clinics.

My caring role mainly involves supporting my husband at appointments, checking he’s taken his medications, and phoning him during the day when I’m at work to ensure he’s OK. He takes everything in his stride!

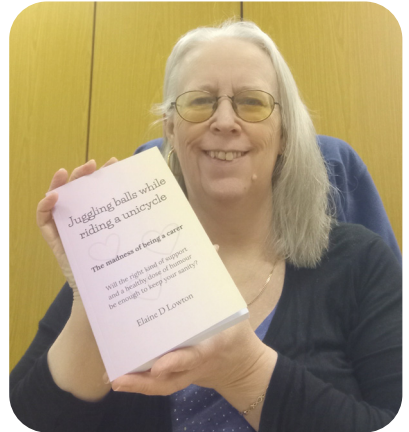
I’m proud to have self-published the book, especially as I’m a shy person. I hope carers may find some useful tips in my reflections. I wanted to give an honest voice to what caring for someone looks like - the moments of exhaustion, the unexpected humour, and the resilience you discover along the way.

My main tips would be:

- You’ll get lots of opinions and advice, do what’s best for you.
- Ask for help, even if you don’t find that easy. It’s how you learn about support. A good place to start is your local council as they can signpost you to services.

I discovered Carers in Hertfordshire through my GP. I haven’t needed to access support yet, but I appreciate the information you send and the check-in calls, they remind me I’m not doing this alone. Knowing help is there if things change gives me peace of mind.”

You can buy the book on Amazon or at <https://elainedlowton.com/> and discover Elaine’s blog at <https://theshakyreality.com/>



Our Groups

Our Carer Support Hubs continue to grow and evolve, offering somewhere welcoming where carers can meet, share experiences, and access information and support. Since the last issue of Carewaves, we have introduced new venues in Stevenage, Letchworth and Watford, and the Stevenage Hub now meets at a new time (see the updated list on the next two pages for details).

In December 2025, we also launched a dedicated group for carers who have served in the armed forces or are caring for someone who has. This helps carers connect through shared understanding.

December also brought plenty of festive spirit. Our Harpenden group enjoyed a card making session, *pictured*.

“The group means a lot to me. It’s a place where I feel supported. The card making was a fun activity, something I can share with the person I care for.”
Les, from Harpenden.



This year at the groups there will be talks on choosing care, and estate planning such as making a will.

Three hubs will have been supporting carers for a decade this year - Letchworth, Potters Bar, and Chorleywood and Rickmansworth.

Carers’ comments about our groups

“From the Hub meetings I get fellowship, information, and most importantly, I don’t feel alone.” Abi, from London, who supports an elderly relative.

“The group has been a great source of support. It has given me knowledge, encouragement, and friends.” David, from North Herts, who has been caring for two relatives for over 10 years.

Our Groups continued

Our support groups are for adults who provide unpaid care to someone who depends on them. Held online and across Hertfordshire, they offer a friendly space to connect with other carers, share support, and learn about helpful services.



Online groups that meet on Zoom

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

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

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

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

Armed Forces Community, a group for carers who support someone who has served in the armed forces, or who are veterans themselves. It usually meets once a month on a Thursday from 10am to 11am. As the date varies, please contact us for details or check our website.

Groups that meet in community venues

A **Carers' Camera Club** for those interested in photography that meets the second Wednesday of the month, 10.30am to 12.30pm, usually in the Welwyn Hatfield area.

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

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.

Hub group	Meeting details
Harpenden	Third Thursday of the month, 11.30am – 1pm, at Harpenden Trust, 130a Southdown Road, Harpenden, AL5 1PU.
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 Hertfordshire Football Association, The County Ground, Baldock Road, Letchworth, SG6 2EN.
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, 10am - 12pm noon, at The Oval Community Centre, Vardon Road, Stevenage, SG1 5RD.
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 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.

Hospital support for carers

The two NHS Trusts that run Hertfordshire's hospitals recognise carers as essential partners in care. The Trusts provide support to help make the hospital experience easier for carers. The Trusts are West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (West Herts) and East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust (EN Herts). Here's an overview of what's available.

West Herts manages Watford General Hospital, Hemel Hempstead Hospital, St Albans Hospital, and West Hertfordshire Therapy Unit in Abbots Langley.

How does West Herts identify carers?

Carers are encouraged to identify their caring role during admission or appointments. Staff and volunteers also identify carers, and the Trust's dedicated Caring for Carers Service reaches out to offer support. It also refers carers to us for further help.

What support is available for carers?

West Herts offers a wide range of help, including:

- A **Caring for Carers Service** offering emotional and practical support throughout your hospital journey, help navigating hospital systems, and being your voice when needed. The team are **by your side during your hospital journey**. They work closely with ward staff and discharge teams and can attend meetings with you.
- Support for carers who are patients.
- Guidance before planned procedures, support with reasonable adjustments, and troubleshooting outpatient's appointments.
- A tailored Carer's Resource Pack.
- A Carer's Agreement for people visiting a patient for over six hours a day. This formalises the carer's involvement and gives access to extra support, such as a £5 daily meal voucher, free parking, and a Carer Card for visibility.
- A follow up call after discharge or procedures.
- Extended visiting hours and overnight stays – depending on the site, ward, and situation.
- Volunteers that provide companionship to patients.
- Additional parking concessions (check with staff).



EN Herts: manages Lister Hospital in Stevenage, QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City, Hertford County Hospital in Hertford, and Mount Vernon Cancer Centre in Northwood, near Rickmansworth.

How does EN Herts identify carers?

At admission, staff identify whether the person or someone accompanying them has a caring role. Carers are added to the Carer Experience Service for follow up support.

This support includes a Carers' Passport, which can be used to access benefits in the hospitals. The Trust also refers carers to us, Carers in Hertfordshire, for support.

What support is available for carers?

Support varies across the sites, but generally includes:

- Parking concessions (ask staff for site specific details).
- Extended visiting hours or overnight stays (ask staff for details).
- Involvement in discussions and planning for the patient's discharge.
- Volunteers who offer companionship to patients.
- 10% off food and drink at selected outlets at Lister, QEII and Hertford County Hospitals. Ward staff can also arrange a snack bag to be delivered with a patient's evening meal.
- 10% off items (excluding NHS prescriptions) at Lister and QEII pharmacy shops with the Carers in Hertfordshire Carers' Passport.

How can carers give feedback?

For both Trusts carers and patients can share feedback through surveys, by email, phone, or in person with staff or volunteers, and at carers' groups.

Where do I go for support or information?

EN Herts: Carers can speak to the Carer Experience Manager (Jan-Axle Enabore, *pictured*), or the Carer Experience Volunteers, who offer guidance and work closely with ward and department staff. Email enh-tr.carerexperience@nhs.net or call 01438 286965.

www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/patient-visitors/carers-support-team

West Herts: For the Caring for Carers team (Emma, Maria and Carers Lead Nurse Andrea Hone, *pictured*) email westherts.caringforcarers@nhs.net or call 07977 069888 (usually available Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm). More details are at

www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/advice-and-support/support-carers



Every year Carers Week provides an opportunity to put the spotlight on unpaid carers – people looking after a relative, partner or friend, who is disabled, ill, elderly, or has another care need.

Carers Week 2026 takes place from 8th to 14th June. The theme is Building Carer Friendly Communities – places or organisations that value people with a caring role and provide practical support by identifying carers and listening and responding to their experiences.

During the week we will be holding events around Hertfordshire and online, to help carers connect with each other, and offer information and support and a break from caring.

Details of some of our events follow. You can stay updated about what else is planned on our website and in the communications that we send you. Get in touch to book onto any of our events.

Annual Event for Carers

Thursday 11th June 2026, 10am to 4pm.
In Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

Family carers and caring friends join us to:

- Obtain information from us and other local organisations that could help you in your caring role.
- Meet other carers.
- Take part in workshops.



Places must be booked by contacting us or signing up via the listing on our website www.carersinherts.org.uk/events

Online events

A **Cooking for Summer Workshop** on Monday 8th June 2026, 11am to 12.30pm.

Support groups:

Evening on Wednesday 10th June 2026, 7pm to 8pm.

Reading group on Thursday 11th June, 10.30am to 11.30am. Discussing Vera Wong's *Unsolicited Advice for Murderers* by Jesse Sutanto.

Morning on Friday 12th June, 10.30am to 11.30am. Stress and sleep talk.

Events around Hertfordshire

Choosing Care Talk at our **Watford Hub** on Monday 8th June, 10.30am to 12.30pm.

Berkhamsted Hub on Tuesday 9th June, 11.15am to 12.45pm.

Ware Bereavement Group on Tuesday 9th June, 10am to 12pm noon.

Craft Activity at our **Hemel Hempstead Hub** on Wednesday 10th June 2026, 10am to 11.45am.

Second week of our three-week **Looking after your Emotional Wellbeing Course** in Chorleywood. The course is on Wednesdays 3rd, 10th and 17th June, 11am to 1.30pm.

For details of the events in Hertfordshire visit www.carersinherts.org.uk/carers-week or call us on 01992 58 69 69.

Find out more about the week, organised by national charity Carers UK, at www.carersweek.org

Carers enjoy royal reception

Four family carers from Hertfordshire represented us, Carers in Hertfordshire, and the county's carers at a reception for carers hosted by The King and Queen at Windsor Castle.

The reception in February 2026, celebrated the contribution of unpaid carers, and organisations and professionals working in health and social care across the UK, which provide vital support to people. The carers, *pictured*, said they felt honoured to have been invited. They were:

Bonita, from Hertsmere, who is a parent carer of a young adult with severe autism.

Matthew, from Stevenage, who has been caring for his wife through her mental health challenges for the past 10 years.

Rohan, from North Herts, who cares for her son who has mental health issues.

Rhian, who lives on the Hertfordshire/Essex border in Broxbourne, and supports a relative who has several health issues.

Ahead of the reception, King Charles III, shared a message:

“To those who provide care please know that the great love you show in small ways every day is an example and an inspiration to us all.” King Charles III.



Bonita's experience

“Attending the reception was a privilege and an incredible experience. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming.

I met King Charles, shook his hand, told him I was a carer who mentors other carers, and that I'm supported by Carers in Hertfordshire. I also thanked him for holding the event to recognise carers.

I also met Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh, the Duke of Gloucester, and celebrities including TV doctor Ranj Singh.”

Bonita explained: “Although my son is now in supported living, I'm always at the end of the phone if he needs me. I check in on him, manage paperwork, go to health appointments with him, and provide other support.

Carers in Hertfordshire and the parents from the special school my son attended have got me through my caring journey. I love your courses, there is no judgement and everyone understands because they're carers too.”



Matthew's experience

“It was an honour to represent Hertfordshire's carers at the reception. It was a wonderful experience, and meeting other carers to discuss everyday challenges was a special opportunity.

I met and shook hands with The King, who said he was immensely proud of the work carers do and thanked us for our dedication.”

Matthew has supported his wife through her mental health challenges for nearly a decade. He said “I first contacted your Advisors for help and have since attended workshops and valued the check in calls asking how I was, something other services don't usually do. The emotional and practical support you have provided over the last eight years, whilst we battled to get a diagnosis and suitable care in place has kept me going.”

Carers' stories and royal event reflections continued

Rohan's story

"I was touched to be invited to the royal reception. It was inspiring to meet other carers and people working in care. I even had the chance to speak with the Duke of Gloucester. We invited him to visit Carers in Hertfordshire, although he didn't commit to this.

I have supported my son through mental health challenges for seven years. I'm always alert to changes in him, help him manage money and bills, and advocate for him so his needs are heard across health and other services.

I discovered Carers in Hertfordshire in 2021 while looking for support. I have particularly valued being a Carer Trainer for the past two years, using my experience to help health and social care students better understand what caring really involves."



Rhian's story

"Although it was difficult to leave the person I care for, attending the royal event was uplifting. It meant a lot to see carers being recognised, and I enjoyed speaking with as many carers as I could. I also had the chance to talk briefly with the Duke of Gloucester and Coleen Rooney.

My caring role involves keeping my relative safe, giving medication, and keeping on top of medical appointments and finances.

I discovered Carers in Hertfordshire a couple of years ago and have really benefited from the online and in person workshops and information sessions. The online options are especially helpful because I work full-time as a teacher, and they are easier to fit around my day. I've learnt so much, from understanding my relative's condition to finding services and developing useful coping strategies."

Hertfordshire County Council

In November 2025, Adult Care Services in partnership with Carers in Hertfordshire and Debenhams Ottaway Solicitors delivered a webinar about Deputyship.



A Deputyship is a court order that allows an adult to manage someone's affairs when they can't do so themselves. It may be appropriate when a person lacks the mental capacity to make decisions about their property, finances, health or welfare.

Over 50 individuals attended the online event and you can find out more about the process of applying for a Deputyship by watching the webinar at www.carersinherts.org.uk/legal-workshops

Parent carer Shabana, from Three Rivers, said: "The webinar was helpful and made my understanding of deputyship clearer. Since then, I have supported my relative to set up Lasting Powers of Attorney, as this was the better option for us."

Information available at your fingertips!

Hertfordshire County Council provides information and practical support for unpaid carers in a range of ways. It has factsheets and leaflets covering topics including assessment, safeguarding, paying for care, and choosing housing or care homes. They can be viewed online or printed, enlarged, read with a screen reader or auto-translated. They can be found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/factsheets and many are available in Easy Read and large print.

The Hertfordshire Directory www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/directory is another source of support. You can use this to connect with



local and national services, groups and activities. The Directory is regularly reviewed. If you don't have internet access, or prefer to speak to someone for advice, contact HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.

Printed leaflets are also available at Social Care Hubs in Hertfordshire libraries, where staff can also help carers access further support.



Since April 2026, our support for young carers has looked a little different - but we want to reassure you that we are still here, continuing to support both adults and young carers.

Our focus is firmly on what matters to young carers: supporting wellbeing, giving young people a strong voice, offering time away from caring, and helping to build a warm and supportive community. We continue to:

- Run activities where young carers can meet up, enjoy time away from their caring role and develop their skills.
- Send newsletters and share useful wellbeing and self-care information for young adult carers.
- Make sure young carers' voices are heard through surveys, the Young Carers' Council, and our Young Carers' Conference.
- Provide the Carers' Passport, which offers discounts at local businesses.

Hertfordshire County Council now completes assessments and provides information for young carers, just as they do for adult carers. You can contact the Council on 01992 658469 (Monday to Thursday: 9am to 5.30pm, Friday: 9am to 4.30pm), or 0300 123 4043 outside these hours. Learn more at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/youngcarers

Highlights from our 2026 Young Carers' Conference

We welcomed 116 young carers aged 5 to 17 to an uplifting and energetic 2026 Young Carers' Conference.

This year's theme, chosen by our Young Carers' Council, was *Uniting our Voices: Telling our Stories*, celebrating the importance of young carers being heard.



Since 2012, the conference has evolved. What began as a small gathering has grown into a vibrant event bringing together more than 100 young carers to share experiences, express creativity and connect with others who understand what it is like to be a young carer.

Workshops at this year's event included art, creative writing, sculpting, puppetry, music production, and leadership. The under eights enjoyed crafts, games, a nature walk, and calming yoga. Thank you to everyone who made the day a success!

Watch the conference video

This year's conference video was created by young carers in the leadership workshop, who worked together to explain why identifying young carers matters and how being recognised can make a difference. It is on our YouTube channel, in the Shorts section - www.youtube.com/@carersinhertfordshire

Young carers' comments about the conference



"It was nice to meet other young carers. My favourite part of the day was the art activities." Phoebe, 10.

"The workshop helped me to feel good about my writing. I liked sharing our ideas and making friends." Maya, 10.

"The best thing about the event was meeting up with friends and working together. I enjoyed the music workshop and gained skills to work with music applications and learnt how to make beats." Josh, 16.



Bereavement support

When a caring role ends, many carers face a profound sense of loss and a sudden change in daily life. Our Bereavement Support Service is here to help former carers feel understood and supported as they move through grief at their own pace.

Our trained bereavement volunteers offer one to one telephone support, and group sessions in Ware and Watford.

Who can attend the groups?

Our groups are open to carers who have been bereaved for at least two months. Whether you want companionship, a safe place to talk, or reassurance that you are not alone, you are warmly welcome.

When and where do the groups meet?

Ware: Second Tuesday of every month, 10am to 12pm noon.
At King's Mead, Hertford Road, Ware, Herts, SG12 9LE.

Thank you to King's Mead for providing the venue for free.

The group is led by volunteers Roz and Nina, *pictured*, who offer a thoughtful programme of discussions and gentle activities in a warm, supportive atmosphere.



Watford: Fourth Tuesday of every month, 1pm to 3pm.
At St Luke's Church, Langley Way, Watford, Herts, WD17 3EG.
Alongside conversation and peer support, we are introducing occasional speakers and structured activities to the meetings.

Bereaved carers' comments on the groups

“The group has helped me enormously. It has shown me that I am not alone and that there is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is never any pressure to speak, listening can be just as helpful, and we even manage to find things that make us smile or laugh. The group is sensitively organised, and the speakers and activities have been brilliant.” Debi, who found out about the group from a friend and decided to give it a go after she had lost both parents in a short space of time and then her brother.

Ann said: “I felt anxious ahead of my first meeting, but I received a warm welcome. Everyone was able to talk if they wanted and were listened to respectfully. Friendships have formed over the months, and there has been so much companionship. My attempts at crafts during one of the activities caused plenty of laughter!”

Please contact us for support or to book onto a group. We are also looking for volunteers, particularly to provide support over the phone, please get in touch if you are interested to learn more.



Prizes up to a £25,000 jackpot!

50p per ticket is donated to us if we are a chosen charity.

We are part of community lotteries in **Broxbourne**, **East Herts**, **Hertsmere**, **North Herts**, **St Albans**, **Watford** and **Welwyn Hatfield**.

Search for your community lottery, scan the QR code or visit our website to find out more.

www.carersinherts.org.uk/lottery



Volunteer update

Ever wondered about volunteering? Why not join us at one of our Volunteer Recruitment events or contact us to find out how a little of your time can make a big difference!

Since January 2026, we have organised monthly sessions offering a chance to find out about volunteering at Carers in Hertfordshire – the roles, support provided, and a chance to meet the team and ask questions. Details of the upcoming sessions follow. If the dates have passed, please check the volunteer or events pages on our website for more sessions or get in touch.

Online event on Friday 29th May 2026, 12pm noon to 1pm.

In person drop-in event at our Hertford office, during Volunteers' Week 2026 on Wednesday 3rd June, 5.30pm to 7.30pm.

What our volunteers say about volunteering at Carers in Hertfordshire

“As a Trustee, I’m committed to helping Carers in Hertfordshire shape services that meet the changing needs of carers across Hertfordshire. I find the role rewarding and a good way share my expertise and passion to make a positive difference to carers’ lives.” Cheryl Marr, a Trustee since October 2025, who has over 25 years experience of working in the health and social care sector.

“I wanted to use my extra time to do something meaningful, so volunteering felt like the perfect fit. I enjoy supporting the admin team, meeting new people, and learning new things, and the flexible hours mean I can easily fit it around my working life.” Farai, who has volunteered with us since September 2024.



“I set aside a couple of hours each week to call carers and check how they are. Taking the time to listen and support them is rewarding. I volunteer because after caring for my parents I want to help other carers, so they feel less alone.” Stuart, a volunteer since August 2025.

Some of our volunteer roles - can you help?

Hub Leaders and Helpers: To support the smooth running of our monthly carers' groups. Leaders plan meetings, record attendance and welcome carers and speakers, while Helpers assist with refreshments, and setting up or tidying after. We need Leaders or Co-Leaders for our Hubs in Berkhamsted, Borehamwood, South Oxhey, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City.



Keep in Touch Callers who phone carers to check on their wellbeing and remind them of services to help. It is a home or office-based role done during office hours Monday to Friday or on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings.



Receptionist and admin support: To answer and deal with incoming calls, greet visitors and assist with admin tasks. You need to be reliable, confident in talking to people and have good computer and IT skills. We particularly need someone to help in the office on Fridays.

Fundraising Volunteer:

Help us raise vital funds to support family carers!
We are looking for friendly people to assist us with a range of tasks, such as preparing for fundraising events or helping at them.



Interested in volunteering?

Visit the volunteer pages on our website
www.carersinherts.org.uk/help-us-help-carers/volunteer
or contact our Volunteer Team.

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

Fundraising

Many carers are surprised to learn that although we receive some funding from organisations like Hertfordshire County Council, it doesn't cover the full cost of the services that carers rely on.

To keep our groups, workshops, phone support and other services running, we also depend on income from fundraising, grants, investments, and gifts in Wills.

This mix of funding helps us stay independent, flexible and able to support carers at every stage of their journey. Your generosity plays a vital role in ensuring carers in Hertfordshire always have somewhere to turn.

How can you help?

Nominate us for charity of the year at a place of work, club or organisation, or for any grants or fundraising

A carer registered with us, Amar, from East Herts, recently nominated us for a workplace grant from Barings, and we were delighted to be awarded a £15,000 Microgrant.

Amar, who supports a relative with dementia, said: "It was straightforward to make the nomination, I just had to complete a letter of recommendation and the charity did the rest.

I nominated the charity because I have been impressed by its positive impact on the lives of many people in the community, including myself.

You empower carers by providing advice, opportunities to build connections, and support us to have our voices heard. I've particularly found the support from the dementia Admiral Nurse a great help. With the groups and workshops, it has made my caring role feel a little less overwhelming."



Amar (centre) with Michèle and Donna from Carers in Hertfordshire.

Leave us a gift in your Will

After providing for your family and loved ones, would you consider leaving Carers in Hertfordshire a gift in your Will?

Your legacy could ensure that unpaid carers across Hertfordshire continue to receive the advice, support and recognition they need, now and in the future.

Even a small gift can make a lasting difference. Get in touch with the fundraising team to learn more.



Fundraise for us or ask someone you know to

*Help us mark 30 years of
supporting carers by raising £30*

Could you or your place of work or any community group you belong to **hold an event** such as a coffee morning, bake sale, quiz night, walk or other activity?

Share a photo of the fundraiser with us.

Make the donation via our 30 for 30 campaign page by scanning the QR code or online at <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/30years>

Let us know what you're planning!

Get some ideas at
www.carersinherts.org.uk/fundraising



Please note some donations may include a transaction fee - details at www.carersinherts.org.uk/fees or contact us.

To contact the fundraising team email fundraising@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69.

Thank You

We are grateful to the organisations, groups and individuals who support our fundraising efforts by donating goods, services and their time. Your generosity helps us make a meaningful difference to family carers and caring friends across Hertfordshire. We'd like to extend our thanks to:

Jane and Julie, who took part in a sponsored swimming challenge in December, and raised an incredible £1,075. They beat their targets for the number of lengths completed in an hour and amount raised.

They swam 70 lengths – over the mile (64.4 lengths) they were aiming for.

Thank you also to John Warner Sports Centre in Hoddesdon for providing two lanes for free, and to everyone who sponsored the duo.



Jane said: “Through working at the charity and being carers ourselves, we’ve seen how the right support can transform carers’ lives. The swimathon was a great way to challenge ourselves while raising money to help make sure carers are identified, supported, and heard.”

Julie, who has worked at the charity for 11 years, said: “We were thrilled with how the event went. Since we both enjoy swimming, it was the perfect challenge to support Carers in Hertfordshire during its 30th year.”



- Women’s group Soroptimist International of Hertford and District for their wonderful donation of £550 raised through a quiz night.
- The National Funk Service Band, *pictured*, and Cock o’ the North Pub near Hatfield, for raising over £300 from quiz nights and the band’s charity gig.

Useful Contacts

Age UK Hertfordshire

01707 323272 / 0300 345 3446
www.ageuk.org.uk/hertfordshire
Advice, info and practical support for older people and carers.

Citizens Advice

0800 144 8848
www.citizensadvice.org.uk or
<https://hertscitizensadvice.org.uk/>
if you are in Hertfordshire.
Provides confidential information and advice to assist people in the UK with legal, debt, consumer, housing and other problems.

HertsHelp

0300 123 4044
www.hertshelp.net
A service to help you find the right support or group near you.

Hertfordshire Mind Network

020 3727 3600
www.hertsmindnetwork.org
Provides mental health and wellbeing support to Hertfordshire residents aged five and above.

Memory Support Hertfordshire

0300 131 3946
www.memorysupportherts.org.uk
Offers a wide range of help and support for people with memory problems or dementia in Hertfordshire, including family carers.

The Samaritans

Freephone number 116 123
www.samaritans.org
Provides confidential 24/7 emotional support.

Our Carer Support Advisors have details of many more organisations, so please get in touch for help.

Carers wanted for our refreshed Carer Reference Group

We want to expand the work our Carer Representation Group does and need more carers to get involved. By joining, you can help co-produce Carers in Hertfordshire policies and information leaflets, and help us gather carer input for ad hoc consultations.

The Group has been meeting quarterly to discuss carers' issues and feed back common themes and questions to Hertfordshire's Carers Co-production Board, now the Carers Strategy Steering Group. This work will continue, but the refreshed Group will meet every two months, alternating between online and face to face sessions.

**Interested? Contact roma.mills@carersinherts.org.uk
or call 01992 58 69 69.**

Free courses and workshops

Our courses, workshops and events are for unpaid 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.

For details of all our upcoming workshops and events, visit www.carersinherts.org.uk/events or call us.

Online activities

Meditation Workshops, guided relaxation sessions on various dates, including a Loving-Kindness Meditation on Thursday 4th June 2026, 1pm to 1.45pm, a Sitting Meditation on Friday 10th July, 10am to 10.45am, and a Sound Meditation on Thursday 27th August, 1pm to 1.30pm.



Understanding Anxiety Workshop, Tuesday 23rd June 2026, 10.30am to 12.30pm.

Learn about what anxiety is, why it happens, and how to navigate it with confidence.

Healthy Ageing Workshop, Friday 26th June, 1.30pm to 2.30pm.

A Nutritional Therapist from Healthy Herts will cover topics including key nutrients and habits that can influence healthy ageing beyond mid-life, and managing healthy blood pressure and cholesterol.

Help shape early dementia support have your say sessions:

Our Year of Caring Dementia roadshows aim to help us understand carers' experiences during the first 12 months after a dementia diagnosis.

We are inviting carers who have recently been through this period, or can reflect on it, to share what helped, what didn't, and what could be improved. This will help us plan better support.

We are planning sessions throughout the year. One of the upcoming sessions is in Chorleywood on Tuesday 16th June 2026, 11.30am to 2pm. To book or check for other dates and locations, please visit www.carersinherts.org.uk/dementia-events or contact us.

Around Hertfordshire

COURSE DESCRIPTION	DATE(S) AND OTHER DETAILS
First Aid Workshop Learn essential first aid skills and how to respond safely in an emergency at this free British Red Cross workshop.	Thursday 28th May 2026. 10.30am to 12pm noon. The Shephall Centre, Shephall Green, Stevenage , Herts, SG2 9XR.
Seat Pad Making and Scene Felting Workshop Create 2D or 3D landscapes, seascapes, and scenes using wool fibres.	Tuesday 2nd June 2026. 10.30am to 12.30pm. Mrs Howard Memorial Hall, Norton Way South, Letchworth , Herts, SG6 1NX.
Forest Bathing Step into nature for a peaceful guided relaxation session that helps you de-stress and feel refreshed.	Fridays 19th June and 17th July 2026. 10am to 12pm noon. Carpenters Wood, Whitelands Avenue, Chorleywood , Herts, WD3 5RQ.

Cate, from North Herts, who has been caring for a relative since 2019, said: "I find it difficult to make time for myself, even more so now as my caring role has increased. However, joining in the online art workshop for an hour was time so well spent. I found drawing relaxing and I was able to stop thinking about all the to-do lists. The relaxed feeling lasted a lot longer than the hour on Zoom."



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 a 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.

We are an independent charity, and we receive some funding from Hertfordshire County Council and the NHS in Hertfordshire, in order to provide support for carers.

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



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

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