



We are
Caring Together Charity

Welcome

Caring Together is a registered charity supporting unpaid carers¹ of all ages across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk.

We celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2022. Over the past 40 years, we have dedicated ourselves to helping unpaid carers access the support they have needed to make their caring role easier.

We are proud of all we have achieved. But being an unpaid carer remains extremely challenging.

The environment we are working in has shifted extraordinarily since 2020 with the pressures on unpaid carers becoming greater than ever before.

In recent years we have witnessed the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Brexit, unparalleled pressures on our health and social care system, and very real cost of living burdens.

These have all hit unpaid carers hard.

People who look after a family member or friend are critical to the health and social care system. This 'system' is in crisis. As we speak to unpaid carers, they give examples of failure on a daily basis.

The urgency of finding a solution to this crisis includes needing to ensure unpaid carers are recognised, valued and supported.

At Caring Together Charity we play a vital role in addressing this situation in our area. But we cannot do this alone.

¹ See 'What is an unpaid carer?' section.



What is an unpaid carer?

An unpaid carer is any of us, including children and adults, who look after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, and would struggle to cope without their support.

In the 2021 Census, more than 150,000 people identified themselves as unpaid carers in the area where we work, with over 60,000 of them caring for more than 50 hours per week.

Based on the number of carers we currently support, we know there are many more who could benefit from our help, but who may not realise they are a carer, and may not know what's available or how to access it.

We are determined to reach and help more people – preventing isolation and crisis. No unpaid carer should be struggling alone.

According to Carers UK data (2022):

- There is a 50:50 chance of becoming an unpaid carer by the time you are 50 years old.
- One in seven people in the workforce are also caring.
- 51% said it took over a year to identify themselves as an unpaid carer.
- 34% of unpaid carers have been waiting over a year for health treatment.
- One in five unpaid carers took over one month to get a GP appointment.

The Valuing Carers report in 2023 valued the economic contributions made by unpaid carers in England and Wales at £162 billion a year – the equivalent of a second NHS, without which the current health and social care system would collapse.

These findings reflect what we hear. Every day we hear from unpaid carers who are struggling. They use words like 'ignored,' 'forgotten,' and 'unsupported' to describe how they are feeling.



What unpaid carers tell us

Unpaid carers tell us caring continues to have a huge negative impact on their health and wellbeing.

“It was only as I became hopelessly exposed to the emotional, financial and physical challenges of looking after my wife that I accepted I was a carer. I needed support in every respect, yet the process for achieving any financial support, for example, is at least as draining as caring itself.”

Steve

“I've been getting detentions at school because I haven't got the right equipment I need. I'd rather get in trouble than ask mum or dad for money I know they don't have.”

Sarah (young carer)

Unpaid carers don't feel recognised or valued for the vital role they play, often giving up a career and their expertise ignored.

“I often feel there is a barrier between me and the professionals. They do not see me as a member of the team at all and it becomes very frustrating.”

Joy

“I'm angry at being dismissed as unimportant while I'm saving the country about £2,000 per week in care home fees.”

Susan

Unpaid carers tell us communication between themselves and other professionals needs to improve.

“When mum was in hospital, no-one was listening to me... She called me at midnight on a school night in floods of tears because no-one was listening to her – I lost all faith in the hospital. No matter how many times I said I was the main carers, nothing happened. I now worry about if she has to go in again.”

James (young carer)

“When discharge takes place the discharge teams should be able to check that everything they have put into place is actually happening. If there is little or no contact post discharge, carers can be left in the lurch with no-one to talk to. Yes, we may complain, but dealing with poor plans, poor communication can be disastrous for carers to cope with.”

Joyce

Our vision and purpose

Our vision is a world where:

no unpaid carer is in crisis, isolated or struggling alone

This new vision expresses our determination to support unpaid carers with the immense pressures and demands they are experiencing.

Too many unpaid carers are already at crisis point when they make contact with us for the first time.

Too many are just one step away from feeling they cannot cope.

And too many have struggled for months or years on their own without support.

We want to support unpaid carers early on, so they don't feel isolated, don't struggle on alone, and never reach crisis point. We want to equip them with the support they need - vital breaks from caring, support and friendship from other carers, expert advice, and peace of mind that if they fall ill the person they look after will be OK.

Our values

We are inclusive

We put people first. This means unpaid carers, our employees and volunteers. We will go out of our way to provide the service and support that is needed through our people who are well trained, valued and put the needs of unpaid carers first.

We are informed

We are knowledgeable and consistent, ensuring the information, advice and practical support we provide is current, relevant and easy to access.

We are effective

We aim for the greatest positive impact for unpaid carers of all ages, enabling them to live their own life alongside their caring role.

How we will make this happen

We will support more unpaid carers, and in the ways that help them the most

- We will bring carers together, whether in person or online, one-to-one or in groups, so they can support each other. Former carers will play an especially valuable role in this.
- We will provide in-depth one-to-one support for carers with complex problems who need us to resolve difficulties on their behalf.
- We will work to get rid of the postcode lottery across our services so that no matter where a carer lives in our region, the same help and support is available.



We will make sure unpaid carers are valued for the huge contribution they make and recognised as people deserving of specialist support



- We will increase the involvement of unpaid carers in our work (including through our Carer council) and amplify their voices to speak loudly to policy makers in the light of their lived experiences.
- We will support national campaigns for increasing and protecting rights and entitlements for unpaid carers.
- We will raise awareness of unpaid carers, reaching out to Primary Care Networks and GPs, the integrated care system, schools, colleges and employers, so more and more people know who carers are and how to support them.

We will grow our numbers of volunteers, income and services, so we can help more people



- We will welcome more volunteers into the charity and make sure volunteering is a rewarding experience for everyone.
- We will partner with other organisations and try doing new things in new ways to provide the best support for carers across our region.
- We will grow our income from fundraising and the number of people and organisations supporting our work, so we can help more people.

We will increase awareness of unpaid carers, the challenges of caring, and of how we can help. We will help more and more people who are already caring for a family member or friend to realise they are unpaid carers, and that there is support available to them

- We will work with other organisations and the media so people across our region have a clear understanding of our charity, what we do, and how we can help them.
- We will increase our profile online and especially using social media, so more and more people are aware of us, the support we can provide, and how they can help us.



We need you to stand with us

The task is huge, but with your help we can start to tackle a major social injustice. For too long unpaid carers have been ignored, taken for granted and overlooked. Without the hours and hours of work contributed by unpaid carers the health and social care systems in the UK would collapse overnight.

Are you ready to join us in improving the lives of the 150,000 unpaid carers across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk?

The difference you can make

Give

£50 could enable an unpaid carer who is at the end of their tether to receive expert and compassionate counselling

£20 could enable a child who is a carer for a disabled parent to enjoy a special trip out to a waterpark

£10 could enable a carer who is exhausted and has only just heard of Caring Together to be listened to by one of our helpline advisers and reassured for the first time they are not alone, and there is help available to them

Perhaps you could give in memory of a loved one or hold a funeral collection. You may like to leave a gift in your Will, a long-lasting legacy to help unpaid carers into the future.



Raise funds

By taking part in one of our fundraising campaigns you could do something amazing to help unpaid carers living in your community. You could:

- Buy our Christmas cards
- Take part in a raffle or Caring Together lottery
- Run, walk, cycle or swim for Caring Together
- Hold a bake off at your workplace or school
- Or come up with your own idea!



Partner with us as a company

Forward-thinking businesses across our region are realising that some of their staff may be carers now or in future, and supporting them makes good business-sense.



Partner with us to ensure you are informed about unpaid carers as an employer, and are ready to implement the Carers Leave Act 2023 across your business.

Partner with us as a health, community or education organisation

Whether you are from a GP surgery, hospital department, library, charity, school or college, your organisation has a vital part to play in ensuring unpaid carers are identified and supported.



Partner with us to increase your awareness of carers, and become a holder of the Carer Friendly Tick Award.

Volunteer

Whether you have been an unpaid carer or not, we need your skills and time to help us reach and support more people across our region. You may be good at administration and able to join our customer services team, you may be good at photography and could join with our communications team to help us get more photos for our publications, or you may be great at talking to people and putting them at ease and could join our communities team helping at support groups.



Whether you could help out for half a day a week or much more, we want to hear from you.

Join our Carer Council

Could you join this friendly group of carers and former carers who help shape our services and the support we provide? Meetings are held once every three months and will be your opportunity to help the charity make this strategy a reality.



How to find out more



Give

caringtogether.org/donate
or make cheques payable to 'Caring Together'



Remember a loved one

caringtogether.org/remember-a-loved-one



Leave a gift in your will

caringtogether.org/leave-a-legacy



Raise funds

caringtogether.org/fundraise-for-carers



Companies

caringtogether.org/companies



Health, community and education organisations

caringtogether.org/organisations



Volunteer

caringtogether.org/volunteer



Carer council

caringtogether.org/carers-council



We are a Network Partner of Carers Trust and a member of Carers UK.

Our homecare services are currently rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and our fundraising activities by the fundraising regulator.

We employ around 130 members of staff, with 70 of those being members of our homecare team. This equates to just under 100 full-time equivalents.

Our work is also supported by around 40 volunteers who carry out a variety of important roles.

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A Network Partner of
**CARERS
TRUST**

Caring Together Charity
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Company registration number 4379948

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