

Issue 39  
Dec 2025-Mar 2026

# Caring

For everyone looking after a family member or friend



**New Year,  
New Connections**  
Try volunteering in 2026

**Caring for  
someone with  
autism**

 **Caring  
Together  
Charity**

# Looking after yourself this winter



Winter can be a challenging season for those of us in a caring role. There are often fewer opportunities to get out and about, and we can easily find ourselves lonely and isolated. On top of this we have the festive season to manage, with changes to our usual routines which can be confusing and disruptive for those we care for, as well as ourselves. This edition of our magazine includes helpful tips for caring in winter (see page 12) and information about groups or hubs for carers – including those you can join from home (see page 19). Groups are a way to stay connected, pick up ideas and make new friends.

I'm pleased to share some exciting news! We have launched a new weekly lottery to support our charity. You can play for just £1 a week with the chance of winning the top prize of £25,000! Every ticket purchased will help us provide support to local families, and those in a caring role whether aged five or 95. Just visit our web page at [caringtogether.org/lottery-sign-up](https://caringtogether.org/lottery-sign-up) to sign up! Our lottery is open to anyone aged 18 or over.

Miriam Martin  
Chief Executive  
Caring Together Charity

For practical help and support on problem gambling, visit [begambleaware.org](https://begambleaware.org) or contact GAMCARE on 0808 802 0133.

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### About Caring Together Charity

Caring Together Charity is a registered charity supporting unpaid carers (those who are looking after a family member or friend) across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk.

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# Supporting young carers in schools

**Andy McGowan, Policy and Practice Manager at Carers Trust, talks about changes to Ofsted inspections**



**Young carers are 38% less likely to get a degree**

**Ofsted, the organisation responsible for inspecting and regulating schools and colleges, has published its new inspection framework and toolkit for education providers. The toolkits help providers to understand the areas inspectors will be evaluating during an inspection.**

Following the addition of young carers to the children's social care common inspection framework last year, young carers are specifically mentioned multiple times in the toolkits in both the inclusion and attendance sections, as well as in relation to case sampling.

"In gathering evidence about attendance, inspectors consider the extent to which ... pupils attend well, including... those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, such as young carers ..."

This is something which Carers Trust and Young Carers Alliance members across the country have been pushing and calling for over a number of years.

Before summer, young carers themselves were challenging Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver, directly to make sure young carers were included.

**Young carers miss over a month of school a year**

## But why does this matter?

This might seem like a small change - but it is one which could be a game changer - it shows schools that Ofsted want to know how they are supporting their young carers. Young carers being specifically mentioned in the Ofsted toolkits will provide the hook for school staff and local carer services to ensure young carers are a priority with senior leadership, and in time should help lead to better support for young carers in all schools.

Ensuring support for young carers in every school could not be more important because young carers:

- Miss over a month of school a year
- Are twice as likely to be suspended or excluded
- Are 38% less likely to go on and get a degree.

It is vital that we are all doing whatever we can do to ensure young carers are identified and supported to have the same educational opportunities as other young people.

## How we support young carers

Visit [caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/young-carers](https://caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/young-carers)



## *A lifetime of caring*

**Mum, Tracey had been caring for her adult son since he was a toddler. Then she had a stroke.**

**Tracey's caring journey began when her young son, Callum, exhibited signs of autism and was later diagnosed with this in the late-90s.**

Callum was a pre-school child at the time and Tracey was mum to a new baby daughter, as well as her son. Thinking back to those days, Tracey reflects on how she felt at the time, "when your child's diagnosed with something like autism, you almost go through a grief process. You've lost the life you wanted. You've also gained something, but life's never going to be the same."

*I think he was  
about 15 the  
first time we ever  
got respite*

Although initially everything seemed to be going smoothly once Callum became a toddler, his parents soon realised he wasn't developing like other children of his age. He struggled with speech, concentrating and potty training. As he grew older, he also had seizures and became hyperactive. "We ended up driving around for hours just to get him to sleep," remembers Tracey, "And then he could survive on four hours sleep in 72 hours." He was diagnosed with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), as well as autism.

At the time the family had support from friends and family, but what they lacked was a complete break. "Nobody wanted to take Callum because he was too much like hard work. So, we never had respite until... gosh, I think he was about 15 the first time we ever got respite."

Tracey and her husband, Phil cared for Callum as well as their daughter through school years and into adulthood. Callum attended a school for children with special educational needs and disabilities, that catered for his complex needs. In addition to learning difficulties, Callum had very poor speech and was partially incontinent. He has always needed help to wash, get dressed, and manage the tasks of day-to-day life.

Tracey remembers the attitudes of other people being distressing at times. Someone told her she wasn't a carer because the person she was looking after was her child. "I wore two hats as a parent," she reflects, "the carer bit was all the things that were over and above normal parenting, like being up in the middle of the night changing nappies when they're 14 years old. And then you've got the parent part of you that does the things that you know every child needs you to do for them."

Today, Callum is 29-years-old and living in a supported living flat, with help from care workers. He attends a local training centre for adults with disabilities four days a week. It was Callum's choice to move out of the family home having seen his younger sister move out. However, Tracey and Phil are still very much Callum's carers.

## More about autism

**Autism is not an illness or disease. Autistic people's brains work in a different way other people.**

**Signs of autism may be noticed in very young children or it may not be diagnosed until well into adulthood.**

**Often autistic people have other conditions such as ADHD, anxiety, dyslexia, epilepsy or depression.**

**Some autistic people need support with every day tasks ranging from help with washing, cooking, or cleaning through to help getting a job.**

“  
*I wore two hats  
as a parent*  
”

"Some people assume because Callum's gone into supported living, we've just sort of handed him over and relinquished responsibility for him. They don't realise that we're actually still caring for him, even though it's remote. We still have to do all the forms, you know, PIP forms and everything, liaise with social workers and care workers, and sort out problems. Run over in the evenings, cause he says his television's broken but then you find the batteries have gone in the remote control - that was yesterday! So, it's a different sort of caring."

Tracey was just beginning to feel that life may become a little easier, as her son would in future no longer be living at home, when she suffered a stroke. Returning from holiday in 2019, Tracey became unwell with a severe headache that turned out to be symptoms of a stroke. It has left her partially sighted and with nerve damage that causes intense pain in her right leg. She suffers from vertigo, and prickling or stinging sensations to the left side of her face.

Although she was initially unable to walk more than a few steps, she has now recovered some of her mobility. It was the loss of her driving licence that hit Tracey particularly hard after her stroke, as she lives in a rural area and relied on driving. It also means she can't drive the hour-long journey to help Callum, or take him out on her own.

The damage to Tracey's vision is permanent but she has found tactics to cope with it since the stroke. "My sight has not really changed, but I've learned to live with it. I've worked out now when I've got three objects in front of me, which one is probably the real one. It doesn't always work. I did fill up a cup that didn't exist with boiling water the other day, which is not a good thing! I very much do work around my eyesight."

Before her stroke, Tracey felt like life was starting to fall into place. "It was as if we'd got a jigsaw puzzle half-finished. I was thinking I'm getting to the point now where I can see Callum may live in supported living and it's going to be easier because he's older. And then somebody came along and threw the jigsaw up in the air. My stroke changed everything. It got to the point that I was caring for Callum, but Phil was caring for me. And now Phil has health problems too."

For many years Tracey has attended one of our carers' hubs. It is chatting to other carers that she has found most helpful, "I find that going in and chatting and finding that somebody else out there is struggling just as much as you are, and coming across the same brick walls, you realise actually, I'm not doing something wrong. It's the system that doesn't work! Or, if they can get by, then I can get by."



▲ Tracey had a stroke in 2019

And I just think sometimes you just need to say to somebody 'hi, I'm here and yes, it's a struggle, but I'm going to do it.' So, I do find them very, very good. Like a big hug."

### *You can help carers like Tracey*

This winter we are asking for donations to our Christmas appeal to enable us to support more people like Tracey and her family. Sadly, too many families face challenge upon challenge because of ill-health and we want to continue to be able to support them.

“  
*I was caring for Callum, but Phil was caring for me. And now Phil has health problems too*  
”

Amazingly, this Christmas thanks to two generous supporters, your gift will be doubled!\* You can make a donation safely and quickly at **[caringtogether.org/christmas-appeal](https://caringtogether.org/christmas-appeal)** or simply fill out the form on pages 17-18 and send that with your cheque to us at

Caring Together Charity,  
L D H House, Parsons Green,  
St Ives PE27 4AA using the enclosed  
freepost envelope.

\* Donations to our Christmas appeal will be doubled up to the total value of £6,000. Donations must be received before 25 December 2025.

# Caring for someone with autism

Caring for someone with Autism can be rewarding and challenging. Parents and carers often face similar questions about how best to support a loved one with autism while also looking after themselves.



## Everyday challenges

Carers find themselves problem-solving daily. Here are some common hurdles and tips that may help:

- **Anxiety:** Prepare your loved one for changes in routine, create calm spaces. Respond calmly to emotional expression.
- **Meltdowns and behaviours:** Recognise these as coping strategies. Stay calm, keep them safe, and track triggers.
- **Eating:** A food diary can reveal helpful patterns if you have a selective eater.
- **Sleep:** Consistent routines and reduced screen time can help. Seek advice from your GP if needed.
- **Health checks:** Make visits manageable by asking professionals to adjust appointments to reduce triggers.
- **Friendships:** Encourage social opportunities through school, peer support and autism-friendly activities.



## Communication challenges

Autistic people have individual communication styles and may use few or no words. The following may help:

- Keep it simple. Use their name, speak slowly, clearly, using literal language and gestures.
- Introduce alternative visual communication tools like PECS, Makaton or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) apps.
- Give them extra time to process information. Try the 'six-second rule', waiting six seconds after speaking before repeating yourself.
- Be aware of body language, the environment and repetitive phrases to help understand what they're communicating.

## The carer's challenge

Balancing care with other responsibilities can leave carers drained. You may feel exhausted, isolated, worried about money or struggling to navigate services. As a carer, it's easy to put your own needs last. Remember, you matter too and asking for help is essential. Try to:

- Build friendships with fellow carers.
- Take a short breather whenever you can.
- Ask us about a carer's assessment.
- Contact support networks - see below.

## Find out more

Visit [caringtogether.org/autism](https://caringtogether.org/autism) for more information about caring for someone with autism, including useful organisations.

# Young carers transitioning into adulthood



Caring is important and rewarding at any age, but it can be tough, especially when you're also trying to finish school, plan your future, and enjoy time with friends.

If you are a carer who is younger than 16, you are known as a young carer, and between the ages of 16 and 24, you are a young adult carer. Moving into adulthood while caring can bring new pressures, and when you turn 18, you will go through a formal transition into adult services. Here are some ideas to help you navigate that change.

## Challenges you may face as a young adult carer

**Support changes:** Adult services are not always the same as when you were a child.

**More responsibility:** You may need to organise care yourself or speak on behalf of your family.

**Feeling isolated:** Caring can make it harder to socialise or feel understood.

**Balancing your own life:** Education, jobs, relationships, and housing decisions can be difficult when you're also a carer.

**Money worries:** Juggling caring with part-time work or managing benefits can be tough.

**Health impacts:** You may experience stress, feel low and exhausted and a whole host of mixed emotions.

## What is 'Transitions'?

Most young people experience several transitions - significant life changes, like leaving school, starting work, and becoming independent.

As a young carer, a major transition happens when you turn 18, when any support you receive moves from children's to adult services.

This often means the support you had as a child changes or even stops, which can be confusing and overwhelming.

The good news is that this all happens within a legal framework. You have rights, and you're entitled to support through this transition.

As a young carer, you will have had a Young Carers' Needs Assessment. Before you turn 18, you're entitled to a Transition Assessment. This is to look at the impact of your caring role on your goals and wellbeing, and to help you plan.

This assessment should also trigger a review of the care needs of the person you look after, as your transition impacts both of you.

## Tips to get ready for Transitions

- **Start early:** Talk to your teachers, college staff, and organisations like those listed below before you turn 18.
- **Keep a diary:** Write down what you do as a carer to help you with assessments.
- **Ask about education and job help:** Colleges, universities, and employers should offer carer-specific support.
- **Ask about entitlements:** At 18, you can ask for a Carer's Assessment to find out if you're eligible for Carer's Allowance or other benefits.
- **Look after yourself:** Your hopes, goals and wellbeing matter just as much as your caring role.
- **Find local support:** If you don't know where to turn, struggle with confidence or your mental health, or want to find out about groups to meet others in your situation, the organisations below can help.

## Local support organisations

**Caring Together** - Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk  
Emily is our dedicated young carer lead for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and we have the Norfolk Young Carers Forum  
0345 241 0954  
hello@caringtogether.org

**Centre 33** - Cambridgeshire  
0333 4141 809  
youngcarers@centre33.org.uk

**Making Space** - Peterborough  
01480 211006  
peterboroughcws@makingspace.co.uk

**Carers Matter Norfolk** - Norfolk  
0800 083 1148  
info@carersmatternorfolk.org.uk

**The Benjamin Foundation** - Norfolk  
01603 615670  
boom@benjaminfoundation.co.uk

# New State of Caring Report

The new State of Caring report 2025 has been published by Carers UK. Over 10,000 unpaid carers took part in the survey earlier in the year and shared their views and experiences.

The resulting report reveals that carers are continuing to struggle with the financial costs of caring with nearly half having cut back on essentials such as food and heating. It is clear that benefits such as Carers Allowance are not sufficient, as over a third of carers who receive this are still struggling financially.

Caring is also having a negative effect on the physical and mental health of carers. A fifth of carers have been physically injured by caring (perhaps by lifting or physically supporting another adult) and 65% said they found it hard to get a good nights' sleep.

Many carers lose out on friendships and close relationships with family members. Almost 60% said that their caring role has led to disagreements with family or friends.

Carers UK is calling for a new social contract for carers which recognises the immense contribution carers make. This would include an increase to Carers Allowance, paid Carers Leave for carers in employment, and additional financial support for carers of State Pension age.

Visit [carersuk.org](https://carersuk.org) to read or download the report. You can share your views about how caring affects you at [caringtogether.org/carers-speak-out](https://caringtogether.org/carers-speak-out)

# New Year, New Connections

## Why not try volunteering in 2026?

**Volunteering doesn't just help others, it helps you feel good too. So, if you've been thinking about doing something new in 2026, volunteering could be the small change that makes a big difference to you.**

### *Our team*

Our team of volunteers has grown steadily over the last few years and is a highly valued part of our charity, overseen by Maddy, our Volunteer Coordinator. She says, "Every volunteer brings something special. Their willingness to give their time and support others is incredible. I feel so lucky to work with such amazing people."

Our volunteering opportunities are many and varied, from office-based administrative roles to supporting with young carers activities or helping with fundraising and events across Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

Adults of all ages volunteer with us, bringing a wide range of experience and skills which are invaluable to our charity and the people we support.

### *Spotlight on befriending*

If you're looking for something rewarding, people-focused and flexible, volunteering with our Norfolk Befriending Service could be just the thing for you.

Befriending is all about offering companionship and conversation.

It's a simple yet powerful way to support people who may be lonely, socially isolated, or just in need of a friendly face and a listening ear.

Being a Volunteer Befriender could mean a regular phone call to a carer, meeting up for a cuppa and a chat, or a regular, short visit - the kind of small action that can make a huge difference.

### *Why volunteering can be great for carers*

As a carer or former carer you already know the importance of empathy and companionship, and volunteering for our befriending service can feel like a natural extension of that. It's flexible and rewarding, offering opportunities to:

- Find new friendships within your community.
- Build up confidence.
- Do something for you that can fit around your routine.
- Build transferable skills to help you get back into work.
- Be part of a great charity with caring at its heart.
- Change someone's life, and your own.

As someone who already gives so much to others, you may not feel you have time or energy to spare. However, many carers have found befriending to be a refreshing and uplifting experience.

Here's a flavour of what volunteers say about their role:

"It gives me great satisfaction... I think my visits are valued almost like a breath of fresh air coming into their home."

"I know my visits are really appreciated... This gives me a sense of wellbeing and achievement."

Of course, you don't have to have been a carer to volunteer with us! Everyone is welcome.

### *What's involved?*

You don't need any special qualifications or experience to get started as a volunteer, and it doesn't have to take up lots of time; many of our team volunteer for as little as an hour a week, and often say they get as much out of it as the person they're supporting.

“  
*I know  
my visits  
are really  
appreciated.*  
”

You'll receive training, support, and, if you choose to volunteer directly supporting carers, you'll be matched with someone with similar interests and availability.

### *Ready to get involved?*

We'd love to welcome you to our volunteering community. For more information or a chat about how it works, call or email Maddy, or see the opportunities on our website.

If you have particular skills or experience not listed and feel you have something to offer, do get in touch. Maddy would love to hear from you.

## Contact Maddy

Call 0345 241 0954

Visit [caringtogether.org/volunteer](http://caringtogether.org/volunteer)

Email [volunteers@caringtogether.org](mailto:volunteers@caringtogether.org)



If you would like to find out more about any of the support mentioned here, please contact us.

“

*Taking care  
of yourself is  
part of caring  
for others*

”

# Winter wellbeing for carers

**Winter can bring crisp mornings and cosy evenings, but the darker days and cold can increase pressure on wellbeing, especially for carers.**

That's why this winter, our focus is on you and we have some ideas to help you navigate the season.

## Look after your mental health

Shorter days and grey skies can take their toll. If you feel low or tired, even a few minutes of downtime can help.

- Step outside or sit by the window for fresh air and natural light.
- Keep a cosy blanket and book nearby for a 10-minute reset.
- Try a calming app or talking book (many are free and short!).
- Chair and breathing exercises can ease tension and boost mood.

If you're struggling, seek help:  
Contact Mind on 0300 123 3393 or  
Samaritans free 24/7 on 116 123.

## Stay connected

Winter can feel isolating, especially when you have caring responsibilities or you're missing a loved one.

**Virtual get-togethers.** Even a short video chat with family or friends can lift spirits.

**Letter writing or voice notes.** Sending cards or messages can bring warmth without the pressure of a long call.

**Join a local carers' group.** Connect with others who understand. We have carer events, trips and in-person or online hubs.

Keep an eye on our website [caringtogether.org/events](https://caringtogether.org/events) or sign up to receive Inside News every month. If you're a young carer, see [caringtogether.org/young-carers](https://caringtogether.org/young-carers)

**Local community events.** Check out local library boards for drop-in events.

**Volunteering** is a great way to connect and find renewed purpose. Pages 10-11 have more on this.

## Stay physically well

Keep warm indoors and out. Try these tips to stay snug.

**Layer up.** Multiple light layers trap heat better than one heavy one.

**Warm drinks.** Keep a kettle or flask nearby for regular warming breaks.

**Heating.** Aim to heat rooms you spend most time in to at least 18°C. Using draft excluders or window film can make a big difference.

**Plan outings for daylight hours.** Wear non-slip shoes and consider walking aids if conditions make you unsteady.

**Eat well.** Batch-cooking soups or casseroles can save time in the long run and are nourishing on busy days. Ensure you stay hydrated - fluids are just as essential in winter.

**Protect against winter bugs.** Flu and COVID-19 can quickly derail your health. Book in seasonal vaccines and encourage the person you care for to do the same. See [nhs.uk/keep-warm-keep-well](https://www.nhs.uk/keep-warm-keep-well) for eligibility and booking.

Don't wait for a minor illness to become serious; call your local pharmacist ([nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy](https://www.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy)) for advice. If you need support to attend appointments, call us on 0345 241 0954 as we may be able to help.



## Plan for practical challenges

**Travel and appointments.** Try to book appointments in daylight hours or ask for phone or online consultations. Keep an emergency kit to hand including water, snacks, medication, and torch, in case journeys take longer.

**Back-up plans.** What would happen if you became unwell or needed to go to hospital? It's good to have a plan.

- If you live in Cambridgeshire, contact us to make a free, emergency What If? Plan, see [caringtogether.org/whatifplan](https://caringtogether.org/whatifplan) or call 0345 241 0954
- In Peterborough, call 01480 211006 or visit [makingspace.co.uk](https://makingspace.co.uk)
- In Norfolk, call 0800 083 1148 or see [carersmatternorfolk.org.uk](https://carersmatternorfolk.org.uk)

**Finances.** Winter can be an expensive time. Make sure you have claimed any Winter Fuel Payments, Warm Home Discounts and carer-related benefits. For information and eligibility, see [gov.uk/eligibility](https://gov.uk/eligibility) and [gov.uk/help-for-carers](https://gov.uk/help-for-carers)

## Simple festive joy

With all that you have going on, the festive season may feel overwhelming. Remember, things don't have to be perfect and keeping celebrations simple can help.

**Memory moments.** Look through old photos, tell family stories, or cook a dish that sparks memories.

**Comforting traditions.** Choose a Christmas film, radio programme or music playlist to enjoy together.

**Plan for quiet time.** If gatherings feel overwhelming, let family and friends know how you're feeling. It's OK to say no.

**Ask for and accept help.** Either from neighbours, friends or family. Contact us for friendly advice on 0345 241 0954 or email [hello@caringtogether.org](mailto:hello@caringtogether.org)



"You laugh a lot of it off but as it gets worse, you start to suffer a bit yourself."

## *Caring for June*

**We met Les who cared for his wife, June, at their home near Cambridge**

**Over a cup of tea, we chatted about Les' journey as an unpaid carer, the support he and his wife have received from Caring Together Charity, and why he chose to nominate us as charity of the year at Kingsway Golf Club.**

Les started off by telling us about his own personal experience as a carer, "At the very beginning, it was quite easy because my wife was mobile but she was showing early signs of mixed dementia. When you're at that stage, you laugh a lot of it off but as it gets worse, you start to suffer a bit yourself and it took us a long time to get her diagnosed."

After June had been diagnosed she then faced problems with her mobility, "She had a knee replacement in 2009 which then became infected and had to be redone, meaning eventually she lost a lot of movement in her knee."

After an accident at home which resulted in a compound fracture, June's mobility significantly decreased alongside her mental wellbeing, "I could have a conversation with her but if you asked her two minutes later, what we were talking about, she probably wouldn't remember."

Les had to eventually make the heart-breaking decision of moving June into a care home. "The biggest feeling I faced was guilt," Les reflected, "even though I've got my own health problems, you still feel like you can actually care for them. But what you've got to do is think about is their safety and your safety, because if something was to have happened to her and I couldn't help due to my health I don't know what I would have done."

When asked what difference Caring Together Charity has made for Les, he was incredibly passionate and complimentary about our professional Homecare service.

"If I wanted to get my hair cut, go shopping sometimes, you would arrange for someone to come and sit with June when I was away. We had a lovely lady called Sophie who used to come and provided good peace of mind so I didn't have to worry about anything."

Les also told us about our how our Shelford hub helped the couple as he and June used to attend twice a month. Les is continuing to attend the hub now. "There were lots of other people in the same situation as us and as you start talking between each other, you then get to hear how their role has changed over time and the different aspects of it. It's also so nice to be greeted by a friendly face that knows your name, Beth and the team know me so well now, and they've usually got a little tag ready for me. I'll get there, the kettle will be on and I get a coffee in minutes! You also end up making your friendship group a lot bigger and you feel like you have lots of people that support you there too."

Les also found our speakers provided invaluable information on social care, legal advice and how to spot scams. "They gave us a lot of information that you probably wouldn't have found out without going."

Then we got on to Les' favourite topic, golf! "I spent more time at the club than the owners and I got a part-time job so I reduced my games to three times a week Monday, Wednesday and Saturday this then reduced again to two games Wednesday and Saturday as June got worse, but the golf became very addictive. It's a good social event, we go round and have a joke with people, you're talking to other players and taking the mickey if something goes wrong – I manage to do 16 holes now and it's a great way for me to take some time out for me and get some exercise in."

Les nominated us as Kingsway Golf Clubs' charity of the year at the start of this year due to his personal connection with the charity. "I recommended Caring Together as I've known the charity for a while since attending the Shelford hub I recommended Caring Together Charity to Paul, the Captain. They have lots of charities to choose from, but I wanted it to be a charity where the money goes back into the charity and that's why I suggested Caring Together."

As part of their fundraising efforts this year, Kingsway Golf Club is organising a variety of fun golfing activities, complete with fantastic prizes to be won. It's shaping up to be a year full of generosity, good sport, and community spirit, plus they have set up a JustGiving page to encourage donations from the wider community to get involved too.

We asked Les if he could sum up why he recommended Caring Together Charity as the golf clubs charity of the year and he fondly replied; "Caring Together is a charity that is there when you need it. It covers quite a lot of advice and help and helps you with problems you may not even realise you have."

When asked what he would say to other Golf Clubs considering supporting Caring Together Charity, he responded: "I'd say you can't go wrong. If any Golf Club Captain is looking for a real charity that puts its time and money into the community I would say Caring Together is the one you are looking for!"

## Could you help?

If you play golf, we'd love you to recommend Caring Together Charity as a charity partner to your golf club captain. All funds raised will enable us to be there when carers like Les need us.

Email [fundraising@caringtogether.org](mailto:fundraising@caringtogether.org) or call **0345 241 0954** for more information.

# Kindness wrapped: Give a Christmas gift that changes lives

**What do you buy for the person who has everything? Make your gift matter this year by supporting those who give so much, yet ask for so little.**

Our Gifts of Kindness help to change lives for local unpaid carers. Each virtual Gift of Kindness comes either as a personalised printed certificate or a downloadable certificate to email to your friend or family member, or to print at home.

When you buy a Gift of Kindness your donation will be used to fund the project you have chosen – the carer helpline, activities for children and young people, or counselling.

You can order online with this QR code, visit **[caringtogether.org/gifts-of-kindness](https://caringtogether.org/gifts-of-kindness)** or by calling us on 0345 241 0954. Make sure to order before Friday 5 December\*, we're ready for your call!



“

*Receiving a gift of kindness from Caring Together is such a lovely surprise – knowing it helps others too is the best gift of all.*

”

\* For printed certificates, or 12 December for emailed certificates.

## Our Gifts of Kindness for Christmas 2025

### £10 Helpline advice for carers who are prioritising others

Our experienced and knowledgeable advisors are just a call away with personalised help and advice for local carers.



### £20 Festive fun for children who are caring

Fund some fun time off for children who care for family members this Christmas.



### £50 Counselling for a carer in crisis

Enable an unpaid carer to receive a vital expert counselling session in their time of need.



## Give back this Christmas with Caring Together Charity cards

Please help unpaid carers by sharing the spirit of the season with our charity Christmas cards. We have four beautiful designs to choose from, and your purchase will help Caring Together Charity provide practical support that really makes a difference.

Each pack includes 10 cards of one design and envelopes. Cards are 140mm x 140mm  
Greeting: Season's Greetings  
£4.50 per pack of 10 + postage

To buy your Caring Together charity cards, scan the QR code below, call us on 0345 241 0954 or complete the order form. Please make sure your order reaches us by Friday 5 December to avoid disappointment.



**Farmyard Friends**



**Festive Tree**



**Stained Glass  
Bethlehem**



**Village Dogs  
Keeping Watch**

## Charity Christmas cards order and donation form

Or you can order online today at [caringtogether.org/christmas-cards](http://caringtogether.org/christmas-cards)



| Card design                                   | Number of packs | Price per pack | Amount |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------|
| Farmyard Friends                              |                 | £4.50          | £      |
| Festive Tree                                  |                 | £4.50          | £      |
| Stained Glass Bethlehem                       |                 | £4.50          | £      |
| Village Dogs Keeping Watch                    |                 | £4.50          | £      |
| Total cost for cards                          |                 |                | £      |
| <b>My donation to support local families</b>  |                 |                | £      |
| Total for postage 1-5 packs £3.50, 6-12 £6.50 |                 |                | £      |
| Total amount                                  |                 |                | £      |

Scan to order cards



Registered with



FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

Gift Aid - boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

☐ I would like to Gift Aid my donations. I am a UK Taxpayer. Please treat all donations I make or have made to Caring Together Charity for the past four years as Gift Aid donations until further notice. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on my donations to charities in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please complete the reverse of this form on page 18.

# Word search

Words can appear horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, forwards, or backwards.

A Y E C A L P E R I F U  
T U M R N I W H Z P M P  
N D I Y D G S C A R F W  
A T M L E H N B A E U I  
S N O W S T O R M S Q L  
V C T O T S R P F E S D  
L O N B R A K O J N C N  
D H A V E L D A P T A A  
X F P Y E K R U T S K L  
E N W O G E V R Q I D R  
S E L D N A C C C W N A  
N I M P A Z E E R X O G

SCARF  
FIREPLACE  
PANTOMIME  
SNOWSTORMS  
CANDLES  
SANTA  
PRESENTS  
SKATING  
GARLAND  
LIGHTS  
TURKEY  
NEW YEAR  
TREE  
ICE  
COLD

Answers  
will be in  
issue 40!

**Good luck!**

## Charity Christmas cards order and donation form (continued) ✂

If you would like to order Charity Christmas cards or make a donation to support local unpaid carers, please complete both sides of this form, cut it out and send it with a cheque made payable to **Caring Together Charity** in the enclosed freepost envelope to: Caring Together Charity, L D H House, Parsons Green, St Ives PE27 4AA

Alternatively, you can make a donation online at [caringtogether.org/christmas-appeal](http://caringtogether.org/christmas-appeal)

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to sign up to receive your regular email newsletter Yes ☐ No ☐

*Thank you for your support.*

Caring Together Charity will not share your details and will process your data in line with our privacy policy at [caringtogether.org/privacy-policy](http://caringtogether.org/privacy-policy). Charity registration number 1091522.

Caring Together Charity will use the information you provide on this form to be in touch with you and to provide updates and marketing. You can change your mind at any time by contacting us at [fundraising@caringtogether.org](mailto:fundraising@caringtogether.org)



# Shortbread

Why not make some to enjoy on a wintery afternoon, with a cuppa!

Add a cellophane bag and some ribbon to make a low-cost Christmas gift for teachers or friends.



## Prepare

Less than 30 minutes

## Cook

10-30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 125g softened unsalted butter
- 55g caster sugar, plus extra to finish
- 180g plain flour

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C fan/Gas Mark 5.
2. Beat the butter and the sugar together in a bowl until smooth. If the butter is cold, you could use a food processor.
3. Stir in the flour until thoroughly combined. If you are using a food processor, you can add the flour in this way.
4. Put the mixture onto a clean work surface. Knead the dough just enough to bring the mixture together in to a smooth ball.
5. Use a rolling pin to gently roll out until the dough is 1 cm thick.
6. Cut into shortbread rounds or fingers and place onto a baking tray lined with baking paper. Prick them with a fork for an authentic look. Alternatively use cutters to make your favourite shapes.
7. Sprinkle with caster sugar and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
8. Bake in the oven for 15–20 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. Set aside to cool on a wire rack.

## Connect with other carers

Don't struggle alone! We run free regular face-to-face groups across Cambridgeshire in Ely, Girton, Great Shelford, Huntingdon and Wisbech. There are also occasional trips out that you can book on. In addition, we run online groups specifically for parent carers. Find out more and book your place at [caringtogether.org/events](https://caringtogether.org/events)

### Online group in Fenland

The Carers Connect Hub, run by Cambridgeshire ACRE, is a supportive online community for unpaid carers in Fenland.

You can join for free at <https://carers-connect-hub.mn.co>. If you need support getting online, please call 01353 865024 or email [lisa.hill@cambsacre.org.uk](mailto:lisa.hill@cambsacre.org.uk)

Once you have signed up you can browse a library of resources, join themed chat rooms (such as dementia, cancer or parent carers), take part in live online sessions, and connect with Village Agent, Lisa. Lisa is a carer for her adult daughter, so she brings both professional and personal experience to the Hub.

# Directory

Information on  
organisations that  
provide support and  
services to carers

## Dementia/Alzheimer's

### Adams Creative Café

For carers and people with mild to moderate dementia. Alternate Friday afternoons 1.30-3.30pm in Littleport.

T: 07821 683130

E: [info@adamsheritagecentre.co.uk](mailto:info@adamsheritagecentre.co.uk)

### Alzheimer's Society

For anyone worried about their memory or affected by dementia.

Local T: 01733 865710

National T: 0333 150 3456

W: [alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

### Brampton Dementia Friendly Community

Activities for those living with memory and dementia related illnesses.

T: 07890 866389

E: [hello@bramptondementia.co.uk](mailto:hello@bramptondementia.co.uk)

### Burwell Drop-In

For people with memory problems and their carers. Second and fourth Tuesday of the month 10am-12pm.

T: 07799 360858

E: [sueevans1949@hotmail.com](mailto:sueevans1949@hotmail.com)

### Cambridge South Rotary Club Memory Café

Meets first Friday of the month 10am-12pm.

T: 01223 276192

W: [rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=500](http://rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=500)

### Crocus Café

First Monday of the month 10am-12pm in Peterborough.

T: 01487 830114

### Damsons Dementia Support Group

For carers and people with mild to moderate dementia at The Reed Barn, Peckover House, Wisbech. Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am-12pm and 1-3pm.

T: 01945 583463

E: [sarah.barnesdyer@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.barnesdyer@nationaltrust.org.uk)

### Dementia Carers Count

Phone and text support. Online community.

T: 0800 652 1102

W: [dementiacarers.org.uk](http://dementiacarers.org.uk)

### Dementia Social Groups

Monthly social events for people living with dementia and their carers. Burwell, Ely, Huntingdon and Yaxley Libraries.

T: 0345 045 5225

E: [libraries.referralcentre@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:libraries.referralcentre@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Forget-me-not Journey Support Group

For those living with dementia and their carers. Every Tuesday and Friday. HI Friends Wellbeing Hub, Kay Hitch Way, Histon.

T: 07780 674563

E: [jan@hifriends.org.uk](mailto:jan@hifriends.org.uk)

### Music Makers Whittlesey

Relaxed friendly singing group for older people with memory challenges.

T: 01733 351594

### Royal Air Force Reminiscence Group

Second Monday of the month 1.30pm at the Norris Museum, St Ives.

T: 01480 497314

### Sing! Together

Weekly singing and music-making in Ely for people living with dementia, memory loss and their carers.

T: 01353 662022

W: [allinsound.co.uk](http://allinsound.co.uk)

### St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Group

For people with dementia and their carers. Café, Love to Move, Reminiscence, Singing Café, Games, Choir, Friendship Lunches and Carers' Support Group.

E: [agipeach@icloud.com](mailto:agipeach@icloud.com)

## **St Neots Rotary Coffee Pot Memory Café**

Meets on a Wednesday.  
T: 01480 395979

## **Trumpington Memory Café**

Third Wednesday of the month  
10.30am-12pm. Organised by  
Trumpington Church and Rotary.  
T: 01223 840268

## **Autism and ADHD**

### **AutiStic Ives**

Group for autistic and/or ADHD adults  
and people who know an autistic/ADHD  
adult in St Ives. Regular meetings.  
E: [autisticives@outlook.com](mailto:autisticives@outlook.com)

## **Mental health**

### **Cambridgeshire Peterborough and South Lincolnshire (CPSL) MIND**

Support for local people who may  
experience mental health challenges.  
T: 0300 303 4363  
W: [cpslmind.org.uk](http://cpslmind.org.uk)

### **CPSL Mind Personality Disorder Group**

Connect with supportive peers.  
W: [cpslmind.org.uk/peer-support-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough](http://cpslmind.org.uk/peer-support-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough)

### **MIND Lifeline**

If days seem tough, and you feel low call  
the helpline.  
T: 0808 808 2121

### **Making Space Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Carer Support Service**

Support to relatives and friends of adults  
with mental health challenges.  
T: 01480 211006  
W: [makingspace.co.uk](http://makingspace.co.uk)

### **Rethink Carer Support**

Carer support groups and information for  
carers of people with mental ill health.  
T: 07783 267013  
W: [rethink.org](http://rethink.org)

## **Motor Neurone Disease**

### **Cambridgeshire Branch of MND Association**

Support for those with MND and their  
carers. Monthly gatherings.  
T: 01954 202095 / 07515 534430  
W: [mndassociation.org/cambridgeshire](http://mndassociation.org/cambridgeshire)

## **Parkinson's**

### **Parkinson's UK**

Phone and text support. Online  
community. Local groups for people with  
Parkinson's and their carers.  
T: 0808 800 0303  
W: [parkinsons.org.uk](http://parkinsons.org.uk)

## **Sensory impairment**

### **CamSight**

Low vision and blindness services for  
children, adults, family members and  
carers across Cambridgeshire.  
T: 01223 420033  
W: [camsight.org.uk](http://camsight.org.uk)

### **CDA Hearing Help**

Services for people with hearing loss  
including hearing aid maintenance.  
T: 01223 416141  
W: [cambridgeshirehearinghelp.org.uk](http://cambridgeshirehearinghelp.org.uk)

### **Deafblind UK**

Support and advice for people living with  
sight and hearing loss and their carers.  
T: 0800 132 320  
W: [deafblind.org.uk](http://deafblind.org.uk)

### **Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind**

Support and advice for individuals  
living with impaired vision or sight loss  
in Huntingdonshire.  
T: 01480 453438  
W: [huntsblind.co.uk](http://huntsblind.co.uk)

## **Other conditions**

### **Huntingdonshire Aphasia Support (H.A.S.)**

Meets second Tuesday of the  
month 2-4pm.  
T: 01480 891977  
E: [anna.bratby@alconbury.org](mailto:anna.bratby@alconbury.org)

## General support

### Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Advice and services for older people.  
T: 0300 666 9860  
W: [ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough](http://ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough)

### Cambridgeshire Libraries

Free books, e-resources and general information. Activities.  
T: 0345 045 5225  
W: [cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library](http://cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library)

### Care Network Cambridgeshire

Information and support to stay healthy, independent and in touch with your community.  
T: 01954 211919  
W: [care-network.org.uk](http://care-network.org.uk)

### Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough

Local independent champion for health and social care, gathering experiences of care to help influence decision makers.  
T: 0330 355 1285  
W: [healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](http://healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk)  
[healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk](http://healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk)

### Healthwatch Norfolk

Local champion for health and social care, gathering experiences to make sure decision makers hear your voice.  
T: 0808 168 9669  
W: [healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk](http://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk)

### Sibs

Support for siblings who have a brother or sister with a life-long disability.  
W: [sibs.org.uk](http://sibs.org.uk)

### The Royal British Legion

Supporting service men and women, veterans and their families since 1921.  
T: 0808 802 8080  
W: [britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk)

## Community and peer support

### Burwell Carers Group

Third Thursday of the month  
10am-12pm.  
T: 01638 741234

### Carers Connected

Online Zoom groups for carers run by the Christian charity, Embracing Age.  
T: 07964 895477  
W: [embracingage.org.uk/for-carers](http://embracingage.org.uk/for-carers)

### Chatterbox

Second and fourth Mondays of the month  
2.15-4.15pm at CARESCO Centre, Sawtry.  
T: 01487 832105  
W: [caresco.org.uk](http://caresco.org.uk)

### Coffee Connections

Second Thursday of each month 10am at Whittlesey Baptist Church.  
T: 01733 351594

### Older Peoples' Monthly Friendship Meeting

Second Thursday each month 2-4pm at St Peters Church Hall, March.

### Simply Saturday

Monthly shared lunch, entertainment, and friendship in Little Paxton Church.  
T: 01480 216255  
E: [young\\_paxton@ntlworld.com](mailto:young_paxton@ntlworld.com)

### St Neots Voluntary Welfare Association Day Centre

Friendship group which provides a freshly cooked two-course meal for retired people. Tues/Weds/Fri.  
T: 01480 475274  
W: [stneotsvwa.org.uk](http://stneotsvwa.org.uk)

### St Neots Community Support

Volunteer service to help with shopping, prescriptions and other support.  
T: 0333 335 5344  
W: [sncs.org.uk](http://sncs.org.uk)

## Families and parent carers

### Centre 33

Support for young carers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.  
T: 0333 414 1809  
W: [centre33.org.uk](http://centre33.org.uk)

### Family Voice Peterborough

Support for parent carers in Peterborough.  
T: 01733 685510  
W: [familyvoice.org](http://familyvoice.org)

## Julaybib Project

Supporting parents/carers of children with special needs and disabilities in Peterborough.

T: 07791 364221 / 07477 681276

W: [julaybibproject.co.uk](http://julaybibproject.co.uk)

## Pinpoint Cambridgeshire

Support for parent carers in Cambridgeshire.

E: [information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](mailto:information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk)

W: [pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://pinpoint-cambs.org.uk)

## Spectrum

Support for families of children with autism, additional needs, disabilities and life-limiting conditions.

T: 01223 955404

W: [spectrum.org.uk](http://spectrum.org.uk)

## Money, benefits and your rights

### CarerSmart

Benefits and discounts for carers and people with care needs.

T: 0345 241 0954

W: [carers.org/grants-and-discounts/carersmart-discount-club](http://carers.org/grants-and-discounts/carersmart-discount-club)

### Disability Huntingdonshire

Supporting people to claim for benefits.

T: 0330 3553 256

W: [dish.org.uk](http://dish.org.uk)

## Exercise

### Love to Move

Seated chair exercises for people with dementia/other neurological conditions.

W: [britishgymnasticsfoundation.org/lovetomove](http://britishgymnasticsfoundation.org/lovetomove)

### PosAbility

Accessible exercise sessions for those with long-term health conditions and reduced mobility. Potential carer respite.

T: 07565 598193

W: [posability.org](http://posability.org)

## Training and courses

### Cambridgeshire Community Arts

Creative arts courses for 19+ to improve your mental health and overall wellbeing.

T: 07763 280029

W: [camcommarts.org.uk](http://camcommarts.org.uk)

## Caring Together Charity

We offer a range of support for carers and the people you look after including:

- **Carer advice line** to talk to someone about information and advice to support you at every stage of your caring role.
- **Emergency planning** to help you to plan for the unexpected, including the What If? Plan. The What If? Plan ensures you know what will happen should you not be able to carry out your caring role.
- **Carers hubs** where you can meet others for peer support, activities and learning. At some hubs you can attend with the person you look after.
- **Homecare** in your home and community for adults and children. You can have a break knowing that the person you look after is being cared for by a trained care professional.
- **Befriending service** where volunteers support Norfolk carers and those they care for.
- **Support for parent carers** including hubs and transition planning.
- **Support for young carers** including activities and trips for children and young people aged five and above.
- **Emotional support** for carers, including counselling.

To find out more about any of our services, please contact us.

Caring Together Charity  
L D H House  
Parsons Green  
St Ives  
Cambridgeshire  
PE27 4AA

Call: **0345 241 0954**

Email: [hello@caringtogether.org](mailto:hello@caringtogether.org)

Web: [caringtogether.org](http://caringtogether.org)



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