

Caring

For everyone looking after a family member or friend



BECKY'S STORY

"If Sofia hadn't known what to do, I might not be here today"



VOLUNTEER

How you can make a difference

Celebrating children with additional needs

Natalia and Amina tell us about the Julaybib Project

Reflexology self-care
How you can help yourself
in five minutes

Get ready for winter
Tips and advice to help you



Hello and welcome



Welcome to the latest edition of Caring magazine.

Now that the dust has settled following quite an extraordinary general election, we ask what we want the government to do to support unpaid carers. It's no different to what we have asked successive governments to do – just make caring easier. We'd love to hear what you would like to see.

This edition we focus on parent carers, celebrating the joy of children with additional needs; volunteering and opportunities to get involved with Caring Together Charity.

We also share some real life stories from carers who tell us what they wished they had known earlier and what things might have helped them sooner.

At the time of writing it is unbelievable that we are thinking about how we support you to prepare for the winter months when we've not yet had a summer. Hopefully the remaining weeks until Autumn will bring some warmth and opportunities to be outside for you all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Miriam Martin'.

Miriam Martin
Chief Executive
Caring Together Charity

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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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Spotlight on carers post election

Following the general election, now is the time to redouble our efforts to put the voices of unpaid carers firmly in the spotlight and to push our new government to take real action to improve carers' lives.

Carers charities have seized this opportunity to highlight the urgent need for action to support the UK's 5.7 million carers; people like you and the thousands of others we support.

Carers UK's manifesto for carers, called on all political parties to commit to a new social contract for carers recognising their huge contribution. They also wrote an open letter from carers to the Prime Minister, setting out the opportunities and responsibilities that come with the privilege of government, with priorities reflecting carers' views. It presents a blueprint for a society that recognises, values and supports carers calling on the government to:

- Reform and increase Carer's Allowance and other payments for carers.
- Deliver an ambitious and fully funded National Carers Strategy.
- Invest in and legislate to give carers the right to breaks and respite.
- Make the NHS the most carer-friendly health service in the world.
- Introduce a right to paid Carer's Leave for working carers.

Go to carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/general-election-2024 to see their full list of priorities and letter to the Prime Minister.

Carers Trust also published a general election brief, *It should not cost to care*, which has three key messages backed up by the voices of carers:

- Stop pushing carers to the limit.
- End carer poverty.
- Commit to fair futures for young carers.

From our conversations with carers and your contributions to the Carers Speak Out web page, we know that these issues resonate with local carers too.

You voice a wide and consistent range of concerns, from the mountains of paperwork related to caring and education to a lack of GP appointments and frustrations at not being heard individually, or nationally through many carers consultations that have failed to result in positive action.

What do you want the new government to do?

If you have ideas that you would like to see front and centre of the new government's policy on carers, let us know on our web page dedicated to your voice caringtogether.org/carers-speak-out

We take note of all your views and use them to raise awareness and encourage action locally and nationally.



Celebrating children with additional needs

The Muslim group supporting mothers in Peterborough

It was at a routine 20-week scan during her pregnancy that Natalia found out her daughter had spina bifida. She describes it as a 'massive shock'. In a matter of moments everything changed. She was told her daughter would be born severely unwell, possibly even unable to take a first breath.

Natalia describes how she began to grieve for her daughter when she was told about how unwell she was. Instead of joyfully discovering the gender of her baby, she had been told news every parent-to-be dreads. She was encouraged by the medical team to consider an abortion but her Islamic faith would not permit this so far into her pregnancy, and she and her husband were determined to keep their baby.

But when Maryam was born Natalia says it was the best day of her life. Her baby was "absolutely beautiful", able to breathe for herself and breastfeed.

Today Maryam (eight) is physically disabled as a result of Spina Bifida and hydrocephalus. She is paralysed from the waist down and doubly incontinent. She also has autism. But she has a steely determination that she can accomplish anything she sets her mind to!

For Amina the realisation that her son was disabled and had additional needs came more slowly. Young Aayan was aged three and not yet walking, and his mother had a gut feeling that something was wrong as he wasn't developing at the same rate as other children his age. A series of tests revealed that Aayan had Marfan syndrome, a genetic condition that causes loose and elongated limbs, and heart complications which can be fatal. Later he was also diagnosed with autism.

The two mothers met at a Peterborough group for new Muslims and quickly became friends, realising they both had something in common. The fact they were both caring for children with additional needs meant they bonded over the shared challenges they were facing.

It is the case in some communities that mothers are blamed for health challenges their children may be facing, as though it is a punishment, or their faith is not strong enough. Natalia and Amina are very clear that this isn't a part of their Islamic religion but a cultural issue. Some fathers find it hard to accept a diagnosis of autism or learning disability as there can be stigma about these. The two women had experienced the impacts of these cultural issues themselves and were aware that other



▲ Caring Together team member Carole Darlow who supports parent carers

mothers in their community would be affected by them too. They both wanted to take action to help other women and so the Julaybib Project was born.

The Julaybib Project meets every two weeks at the Gladstone Child and Family Centre in Peterborough. All mothers of children with disabilities or additional needs are welcome to attend, whatever their faith or cultural background.

“
We want to show every child that they all deserve to achieve.
 ”

It offers a safe space for women who may feel very isolated or anxious, to speak with other mums about their concerns and receive expert advice and information, both from mothers who have their own first-hand experiences and outside visitors from local support organisations. Caring Together's parent carer lead, Carole, often attends the

group to make sure mothers are aware of the support available both to their child and to them as a carer.

Amina and Natalia thought very carefully about where to hold the group as, to enable Muslim mothers to attend, it needed to be within walking distance of much of the Peterborough Muslim community. And it was also important that the venue did not also host a bar as this would be off-putting to Muslims.

As a women-only group it is more accessible to Muslim women who would find it much more difficult to attend a mixed-gender group.

In some communities, the challenges of raising children with disabilities and additional needs are not openly discussed, which can leave mothers feeling overwhelmed and isolated. The group offers support for mothers to offload and openly discuss the difficulties they are facing. Through sharing their experiences, the women help one another, offering their own tips and ideas, and making sure others are aware of the help available to them and their child.

Amina and Natalia are determined that children with disabilities and additional needs should be fully included as members of the Muslim community, and not excluded because of their needs. Some behaviours of children with conditions such as ADHD or autism can be perceived as simply 'bad behaviour', and seen as reflecting poorly on the mothers' parenting, but the women are determined to challenge this.



▲ Mums at a Julaybib Project meeting

▼ A mother who attends the group



“We are trying to dismantle the mental isolation that parents with special needs children go through.”

Having been told that children with additional needs could access Islamic education online instead of in the mosque, Natalia feels that it is important these children are welcomed into the mosque, like any others. She said, “We are trying to dismantle the mental isolation that parents with special needs children go through. We want to show every child that they all deserve to achieve.”

Today the Julaybib Project is going from strength to strength, having initially had much needed support from the New Muslim Circle and local Women’s organisations. Its vision is a fully inclusive community, providing equal opportunities for everyone. For mothers of children with disabilities and additional needs in Peterborough, it provides a place to connect, make friends, access support and find ways forward.

Do you want to know more about the Julaybib Project?

Email julaybibproject@gmail.com
Call 07791 364221 or 07477 681276

Frequently asked questions by parent carers



What do I need to get in place as I plan for myself getting older?

As part of your planning, it is usually wise to consider having a Lasting Power of Attorney in place. Mencap and Scope have useful guides on this, as well as information on Trusts and Wills. As a carer you are also entitled to a What If? Plan which will help you to think through and plan for all kinds of eventualities. We can help guide you through this.

I am a single parent and feel very alone. How can I access support from other parent carers?

Many charities, such as Scope have online communities, or you could join one of our friendly hubs. We also run events like cream teas and wellbeing days for all adult carers. You are welcome to join these to meet other carers. See caringtogether.org/support-for-carers

How do I find out about my own benefit entitlements as a carer?

You may be entitled to Universal Credit, Carer's Allowance or other benefits. For Carer's Allowance, visit our website caringtogether.org; for Universal Credit visit Citizens Advice at citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/before-you-apply/what-universal-credit-is/

Call us for high-level benefit information and we will direct you towards more individual advice.

How do I transfer from DLA (Disability Living Allowance) to PIP (Personal Independence Payment)?

PIP is gradually replacing DLA for people aged 16 or older. You can contact us for general advice or you could contact Citizens Advice, Pinpoint or Family Voice Peterborough.

I want to plan for transitions but don't know where to start.

Contact us for support to complete a transition plan or visit Pinpoint's website, pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/information-hub/preparing-for-adulthood

Do you have further questions?

There are of course many, many more questions parent carers ask us. For more FAQs go to caringtogether.org/parent-carers-FAQs

For information and advice or if you're not sure what support will be most beneficial to you and your family, our Carer Advisors are there to work with you to identify your options.

Call us on 0345 241 0954

Email us at hello@caringtogether.org

Visit caringtogether.org

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire and Family Voice Peterborough also have a wide range of useful information and advice on their websites, pinpoint-cambs.org.uk and familyvoice.org



How you can make a difference by volunteering

Our growing team of volunteers are an integral and highly valued part of Caring Together Charity. Opportunities are many and varied, covering services supporting carers and the people they look after across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk. People of all ages choose to volunteer with us, bringing a wide range of experience and skills which are invaluable to our charity and to the people we support.

Tom

Tom (above left) is a volunteer on our Norfolk Young Carers Forum which provides young carers and young adult carers with opportunities to raise awareness and make a difference to the issues that affect them and their families.

Tom chose to volunteer with the forum because, as a young carer himself, he benefited from its activities, and he wants to help others in similar situations.

Through the forum, young carers can take part in consultations to influence policy makers and join in activities to help build skills and confidence. As a volunteer, Tom supports them to make the most of these opportunities and gets to see the amazing impact they have. Tom's motivation is the great feeling he gets from knowing that he's helping young carers to improve their lives.

Kay

Kay (above right) is a retired midwife who started volunteering as an assessor for our Carer Friendly Tick Award accreditation after seeing the role advertised on Indeed. She enjoys sharing ideas with the rest of the team and using her previous experience to go through policies and practice against accreditation criteria, helping to ensure that other organisations work towards making their workplaces more carer friendly.

Kay now also volunteers at our Norfolk Young Carers Forum; a totally different role supporting meetings and activities.

She was a bit nervous at first but enjoys listening to the young carers putting their voices forward and seeing how their friendships develop by being together.

Both volunteering roles fit in well with Kay's life, and she recently went to an away days for staff and volunteers from across the charity. She said it was so welcoming and friendly and lovely to feel part of the team.

Jodie

Jodie has volunteered as a Trainee Counsellor for just over a year. Having been a paid carer for 12 years, Jodie already understood the challenges carers face every day. On finding that Caring Together could offer the counselling placement she needed to complete her qualification, she jumped at the chance to make a difference to carers lives.

Every day, Jodie witnesses the amazing impact that counselling can have in helping carers step out of their role and work through complex situations and emotions. Her drive to help carers shines through when speaking about the transformation it can bring about, such as when a carer progressed from having crippling self-doubt to living a full and confident life after counselling.

Volunteering has helped fuel Jodie's passion for supporting carers, so much so that she plans to carry on even when she is qualified. She says, "Caring Together are amazing, there is so much support and guidance. They look after their volunteers so well and I have never felt like I am on my own."

Amy

Amy volunteers on our Befriending Service in Norfolk. Her personal experiences as a carer helping her mum look after her siblings who have learning difficulties, led to her wanting to help other carers.



▲ Trainee counsellor, Jodie

▼ Amy supports Pat and her husband Craig



Both carers and their loved ones benefit from Amy's visits. Her companionship helps reduce loneliness and gives them something to look forward to.

“
I have never
felt like I am on
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”

Making the right match between Befriender and family is key to success. In Amy's case the intergenerational element has worked wonderfully, bringing joy and interest to the people she supports because her life is so different to theirs. Amy plans to use her volunteering experiences in her future career as an Art Therapist and says, "I would definitely recommend working as a Volunteer Befriender. It's a very rewarding experience, and you genuinely make a difference."

Are you considering volunteering?

Have a look at the opportunities on our website at caringtogether.org/volunteer

Do get in touch with our Volunteer Co-ordinator if you have particular skills or experience not listed and feel you have something to offer us.

0345 241 0954

volunteers@caringtogether.org



Getting ready for the winter months

While we may still be feeling the effects of warmer months, it is worth thinking ahead and starting to plan for winter.

Colder days and longer nights will soon be upon us, bringing fewer opportunities to meet up with friends, leaving our health needing extra attention and creating added financial pressures. It can be a challenging and isolating time, especially when you are a carer. Here are some suggestions to make this time of year a little easier.

Staying connected

You could consider joining a carers hub or group or take part in our activities for carers of all ages, some meet online and others in-person. These are a great opportunity to catch up with friends and meet new people, to have a chat and a bit of time out together.

- If you're in Cambridgeshire, have a look at our website caringtogether.org/events and check in regularly for seasonal updates.
- For groups in Norfolk see carersmatternorfolk.org.uk/groups

- For activities for young carers, please visit the relevant web page For Cambridgeshire caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/young-carers For Norfolk caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/young-carers/nycf

Keeping warm and well

The colder weather and winter bugs can particularly affect us as we get older and if we're a bit run down. It's not easy to be motivated when we're tired and it's chilly and dark, but a few basic things can help keep us as healthy as possible while keeping an eye on costs, such as

- Having at least one hot meal a day and as many hot drinks as you can.
- Keeping the cupboard and freezer stocked up with basic, healthy foods.
- Heating the rooms you use most at a steady temperature and turning heating off in rooms you don't use much to keep costs down.

- Layering up using several thin layers of clothing rather than one thick one.
- Updating your flu and COVID vaccinations to help prevent winter viruses. To find information about vaccinations and where to go to get them, ask at your local pharmacy or GP or see the information on [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

Planning for emergencies

We are all more susceptible to illnesses in winter, and as a carer you may worry about what will happen to your loved one if you are unable to look after them for a while. For your peace of mind and to be more prepared for the different situations that life may bring, we can support you to complete an emergency plan. We will help you think through what you'd like to happen if an unplanned event such as a car breakdown or family crisis happens, or if you were suddenly unable to care.

In Cambridgeshire this is called a What If? Plan and you can find out how to create and register your plan on our website at [caringtogether.org/emergency-planning](https://www.caringtogether.org/emergency-planning). There is a different plan for carers living in Norfolk and you should go to [carersmatternorfolk.org.uk/making-an-emergency-plan](https://www.carersmatternorfolk.org.uk/making-an-emergency-plan) for information.

Looking after your mental and physical health

As a carer you probably spend a lot of time thinking about the health and wellbeing of the person you look after and organising their appointments. In doing that, you may put your own health issues on hold. Even when you do make an appointment, finding support to enable you to leave home can be difficult.

If this is you, and you have no-one who can step in to be with the person you look after while you attend a health-related appointment, get in touch, we can help. Similarly, if you find yourself in crisis with no-where to turn, call us and we can help.

OTHER USEFUL HELP AND ADVICE

In winter, when transport can be trickier and bad weather keeps us indoors more often, it's easier to become detached from our supportive networks.

Remember you can always go to our website [caringtogether.org](https://www.caringtogether.org), for advice, information and to find out what support is available. Or you can call us on 0345 241 0954 or email us at hello@caringtogether.org

Our friendly customer services and helpline teams will always try to answer your concerns, provide advice and signpost you to other organisations if those are better placed to help you.

You may also find Age UK's guide to keeping well and warm helpful, it's packed full of tips and useful contacts. You can download or print it from their website at [ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/keep-well-this-winter/winter-guide](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/keep-well-this-winter/winter-guide)



Fundraising round-up

People like you, local groups and companies have been very busy raising funds to help our services to continue – thank you! Here are some of the highlights!



Who fancies cycling 54 miles in a day for Caring Together? Well, **Lizzie** did just that, taking on the London to Brighton cycling challenge on 16 June 2024. She raised an incredible £520 to help fund our services!



Cake for Carers! The fabulous **Zoe and Cara** from the **Integrated Care Team, Huntingdon**, raised another £213.73 at their most recent bake sale for Carers Week! You may remember reading about Zoe and Cara in the last edition of Caring magazine.



Not only have **CKLG Accountants and Chartered Tax Advisers** raised over £600 to date through holding a bake sale, Grand National Sweepstake and other activities, but they have also donated stationery sets for young carers, and made up goodie bags for carers at the Shelford Hub in Carers Week in June.



The team at **Bosch Rexroth Limited in St Neots** held a charity football match in May in aid of Caring Together Charity. An incredible £810 was raised to support unpaid carers locally, including children who are carers!



A bear called Cuddles helped raise over £60 for unpaid carer support at the Pop Up down the Paddock event in Godmanchester in early June. A competition was run to guess the name of a Teddy Bear kindly donated by **Co-op Funeralcare and Member Pioneer team**.



What I wish I knew...

Two carers from our Carer Council shared their experiences with us. They gave their views on what they wish they had known when they first started caring, which could help other carers.

Bernard's advice

With my wife, Bobbie, I have cared for my son Stephen, who has autism, for more than 40 years. I am now 81. Although our involvement is not quite as significant as it was, we are in touch with him daily and our caring role and its long-term consequences are constantly with us. Alongside it, my wife and I now also care for each other's increasing physical and emotional needs.

Our son is now 56 and has been involved with care services since he was 13 when he left school because he was being bullied. He has a high IQ and over the years has had several diagnoses of autism. 40 years ago, understanding of autistic spectrum disorders was very different to today though, and had we known where the path we were advised to take would lead, we would not have taken it. Rather than being supported as having autism, Stephen was referred into Mental Health services, placed in hospital and medicated. He has been within this system ever since.

It is difficult to convey in this short space the scale of the struggle we have faced in trying to get the appropriate recognition and support for Stephen despite his diagnosis. The mental and physical toll on my wife and I, as well as on Stephen's own life, is immeasurable.

I wish I had known that there were voluntary sector organisations to offer empathy and support to help us pilot through the system. I have now been involved with the voluntary sector both for support for our family and as a volunteer myself for many years. Its value cannot be overestimated.

I wish I had known at the time that the decision to enter mental health services was not the right one for Stephen, and that it would have such long-standing repercussions for all of us. Having someone to talk to about autism before embarking on that path would have been so beneficial - to help us to recognise that many of his skills and capabilities, although not yet obvious, could develop in a positive way, given the time and support to explore them.

At one point we had a brilliant social worker whose insight was amazing. I would advise every carer to push to have a social worker who can advocate on your behalf.

If I had my time again, I would also do things differently with my work. For many years I had a stressful job and worked away from home. This left my wife with all the caring responsibilities much of the time which caused major stresses in our relationship. I would aim to make things simpler by being around more, enabling us to share the caring role as we did later on.

Steve's advice

My wife, Veronica, has advanced and advancing dementia and has been in residential care for almost three years. I have been caring for her through this savage and unpredictable condition from the moment it became obvious in 2012, and still visit her every two days. At no stage have I known exactly what might happen next, and even if I had, what would I have done with the knowledge? I have chosen three areas where pre-awareness might have been, or indeed was, valuable.

My wife was a brilliant PE teacher, and in her youth an excellent runner, netball player and swimmer. I had no idea that a disease I had always regarded as primarily affecting the brain, would affect her mobility. That she would literally freeze on the stairs and be unable to work out how to make her feet move; that she would similarly get stuck in the bath or be unable to get into or out of the car. At the very least, knowing this could happen, I would have moved her bedroom downstairs long before I did; called in professional carers much earlier; and sought a mobile hair dresser.

We got married in 1969 and celebrated our Golden Wedding in 2019. The first time my wife denied I was her husband was incredibly hurtful, and my instinctive reaction was to argue and tell her that indeed I was the man she married. It took me a year to realise arguing was futile, and that in my wife's altered consciousness what she said was her reality.



Over time I was her Steve, a Steve, her father, that man, and even the boyfriend from before we met. I learned to live with this, and simply be there for her. I do think, however, that knowing I would be denied like this, and possibly offered some coping mechanisms, could have saved great pain.

My wife was highly educated and intelligent. For many years she managed the household finances, and was able to complete numerous Open University (OU) and Local Authority Courses. She achieved her Level 2 certificate with OU, but sadly had become too unwell to complete the Level 3 exam. It was heartbreaking to experience her increasing inability to tell the time; to count; to read; or even to sign her name. And all the patience and encouragement in the world made no difference. The capacity in each area was simply disappearing, and everything she had done now fell to me. I am not certain there was anything else I could have done, but would counsel anyone facing this type of challenge to ensure Lasting Power of Attorney for Property and Financial Affairs and Health and Welfare are in place before it's simply too late. Their existence, with the support of our children, has been invaluable.

Could you help other carers?

Sharing your own caring experiences can help those also caring for a loved one and also help us spread awareness of what it means to be a carer. Many people resonate with stories they hear from other carers, and for some it may be the moment they realise they are a carer. Reading your advice might just help someone get the help and support they need before they reach crisis point.

Email communications@caringtogether.org or call 0345 241 0954 to find out more.

Stand with local unpaid carers

Become a Carer Friend

“If Sofia hadn’t known what to do, I might not be here today”, said Becky.



A Caring Together Charity Carer Friend is someone who makes a regular monthly donation through Direct Debit. It doesn't have to be a lot, but every donation makes a difference. Some of our supporters give just a few pounds a month, the cost of a coffee or a newspaper. Others who can afford it give a little more.

By becoming a Carer Friend, you'll be supporting unpaid carers locally, helping us to provide essential services such as:

- Advice and support from our helpline.
- Hubs where carers can meet, receive information, and make friends.
- Emotional support from our counselling services.

What you'll receive from us

Once you become a Carer Friend, you'll receive:

- A thank you and welcome letter from us.
- An exclusive Carer Friend badge.
- Carer Friend emails, updating you on the special impact your monthly donation is making to so many lives.

Help young carers like Sofia

Sofia, aged 10, is a young carer and helps care for her mum Becky who suffers from PoTS, SVT, Alison's disease and fibromyalgia. Sofia has been caring for her mum since the age of two. At the age of three she saved her mum's life by calling 999 after she fainted whilst painting. Sofia managed to direct the ambulance to their home. Without Sofia, her mum Becky might not be here today. Sofia also helps with the household chores, cooking, and cleaning.

Sofia enjoys attending Caring Together Charity's young carer trips, which provide breaks for young carers, giving them the opportunity to learn new skills and socialise with other young carers.

Becoming a Carer Friend is easy!

To support young carers like Sofia, simply fill out the enclosed form and return it back to us in the freepost envelope provided. Alternatively, you can set up your regular gift online at caringtogether.org/friend

Do you have a celebration coming up?

If you have an upcoming celebration, whether that's a birthday, anniversary, wedding, or something else, then you could invite your family and friends to make a donation to Caring Together Charity instead of giving you a present. These gifted donations will come straight to us and will be used to support unpaid carers across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, and Norfolk. It's a way to make a special occasion even more special! Here's how:

By simply inviting your loved ones to celebrate in this way

Tell your family and friends:

Please don't bring/send a present. But if you would like to, you can make a donation to a charity that is special to us – Caring Together Charity. Make your cheque payable to 'Caring Together Charity' and send/give it to us and we will forward it on to the charity.



Complete the slip below and send it to us with your donations.

With your own free web page

1. Fill out our 'Give in Celebration' form by visiting caringtogether.org/give-in-celebration
2. We'll set up a special website page for you, and give you your own website link to share with your family and friends.
3. Share the link and your loved ones will be able to make a gifted donation, easily and safely. They can also leave you a greeting or message for your special day.
4. We'll be in touch after your celebration has finished, with a letter and certificate with your total collected amount.

We partner with MuchLoved, a platform used to create special celebration pages for you to collect your gifts. It's free and easy to use. All the gifted donations you receive will go towards ensuring that we can continue to be there for unpaid carers.



Our celebration gifts

The enclosed gifts were donated in celebration of

..... on
 (Occasion e.g. Wedding, 70th birthday) (Date)

Name

Tel. no.

Address

.....

..... Postcode

Please use these special celebratory gifts to help local unpaid carers.

Please cut along the dotted line and return your completed form to:
 Caring Together Charity, L D H House, Parsons Green, St Ives, PE27 4AA



Time out

As one of our Carer Advisors, Alison provides information and advice to carers every day and understands the importance of carer wellbeing. As she is also a qualified Reflexologist, Alison shared some of its potential benefits in a demonstration to parent carers at one of our wellbeing events.

Reflexology involves applying different pressures to specific points on the feet or hands which are believed to link with certain organs or parts of the body. Although not scientifically proven, some people feel that reflexology sessions can help reduce anxiety and improve mood, sleep quality and self-healing.

Alison's demonstration focused on hand reflexology which, with regular practice may promote a sense of well-being and balance. She explained that positive touch during reflexology stimulates the release of oxytocin, the 'happy hormone', encouraging relaxation.

People have found reflexology beneficial for all ages. You can learn simple self-care techniques to empower stress management anywhere, anytime and even do it on yourself! Carers at our event gave it a go and you could too by following the steps below - just a five-minute hand massage may help give you a mental break from the day-to-day.



1. Start by warming your hands by rubbing them together for a count of 20. Then add a few drops of hand lotion.
2. Start on your right hand and rub the heels of your hand with your left thumb in gentle circular motions.
3. Using your left thumb, massage up and down and along the muscle where your thumb meets the rest of your hand on the fleshy part.
4. Now using the same technique, with gentle circular motions rub the palm of your hand up to the base of all your fingers, where they bend.
5. Then working on the back of your hand, use an upward circular motion to massage from the base of your hand to the bottom of the finger joints.
6. Very gently use your left hand to pull on each finger. Clasp at the knuckles and pull, focusing attention on the muscles in your palm.
7. Then turn over your wrist as if you were taking your pulse. With your left hand around your wrist, move all your digits in a soft circular motion.
8. Repeat on your left hand.

Reflexology is a complementary therapy which you may find useful alongside conventional medical care. You may wish to ask your GP before trying it.

For more information about reflexology and its use as a wellbeing tool, including for children, have a look on our website at caringtogether.org/reflexology-self-care

Find out more about our events for carers at caringtogether.org/events or call us on 0345 241 0954

Carers hubs

Our carers hubs offer opportunities for you to meet other unpaid carers, have peer support or professional support from one of our Advisors, enjoy relaxing activities and hear from local speakers.

There is no cost to join a carers hub and refreshments are provided. Please contact us (see page 23) for more information and to find out if the person you look after can accompany you.

Adult carers

- Ely - first Thursday of the month 10:30-12:30
- Girton - third Tuesday of the month 11:30am-13:00
- Great Shelford - second Thursday of the month 10:30-12:30
- Huntingdon - second Tuesday of the month 10:30-12:30
- Wisbech - first Wednesday of the month, 10:30-12:30

Parent carers

- South Cambridgeshire fourth Thursday of the month 10:30-12:30 (term-time only)
- Online - third Wednesday of the month 10:00-11:30

Answers from issue 34 Spring into Summer

| Across | Down |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 Blossom | 2 Lambs |
| 6 Allergies | 3 Sundress |
| 9 Bird | 4 Maypole |
| 11 Daisies | 5 Breeze |
| 12 Relax | 7 Lolly |
| 15 Gershwin | 8 Equinox |
| 18 Holiday | 10 Daffodils |
| 20 Lifeguard | 13 Easter |
| 21 Eggs | 14 Nature |
| | 16 Waves |
| | 17 Nectar |
| | 19 Ice |



Traditional Yorkshire Parkin recipe

Why not make this delicious recipe for a Time for Tea event?

Ingredients

- 8 oz (225g) plain flour
- 8 oz (225g) medium oatmeal
- 4 oz (113g) brown sugar
- 1 level teaspoon ground ginger
- 4 oz (113g) butter
- 8 oz (225g) black treacle
- 1 egg
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 5 fl oz (¼ pint) milk

If using gluten free flour, you may need to reduce the cooking time to around 40-45 minutes

Method

1. Melt the sugar, butter and treacle over a low heat.
2. Beat the egg and add to the treacle mix with some of the milk
3. Sift the flour, oatmeal and ginger into a bowl and pour in the treacle mix.
4. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in the remaining milk and add to the rest of the mix.
5. Stir well, then transfer the mixture to a greased flat baking tin, e.g. 11" x 9" x 2" deep (28 cm x 23cm x 5 cm).
6. Bake until firm in a slow to moderate oven (300-325°F, 150-163°C, gas mark 2-3) for about 50-60 minutes.
7. Cake should be shiny and sticky on top and not sink in the middle
8. Keep it in a tin for a week before eating – it becomes deliciously stickier by the day.

Directory

Information on organisations that provide support and services to carers

Dementia/Alzheimer's

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

Brampton Dementia Friendly Activities

For those living with memory and dementia related illnesses, including a social café, singing group and Love to Move seated exercises.

T: 07890 866389

E: 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

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

Carers Coffee Club

Third Wednesday of the month 2-3.30pm at The Royal Oak, Hail Weston.

T: 07889 319888

E: kimpigfarmer@tiscali.co.uk

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 10-12 and 1-3.

T: 01945 583463

E: sarah.barnesdyer@nationaltrust.org.uk

Dementia Carers Count

Phone and text support.

Online community.

T: 0800 652 1102

W: dementiacarers.org.uk

Forget-me-not Journey Support Group

For those living with dementia and their carers. Every Tuesday 2-3pm at the Salvation Army Hall, Impington.

T: 07780 674563

E: jan@hifriends.org.uk

Love to Move and Reminiscence

Mondays (except 2nd Monday of month) 10am-12pm in St Ives.

T: 01480 497314

E: communities@norrismuseum.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

St Ives Dementia Café

Third Tuesday of the month 10am-12pm.

T: 07725 5888145

E: george.smerdon@btinternet.com

St Neots Rotary Coffee Pot Memory Café

Meets on a Wednesday.
T: 01480 395979

The Thursday Club

Respite day club in Brampton, with professional carers, for people with dementia related illnesses. Third Thursday of the month 9.30am-3.30pm.
T: 07890 866389
E: hello@bramptondementia.co.uk

Trumpington Memory Café

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

Young Onset Dementia Group

For carers of those diagnosed under 65. First Friday of the month 2-4pm in St Ives.
T: 07827 159307
E: ruth.eod@yahoo.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

CPSL Mind Personality Disorder Group

Connect with supportive peers.
W: cpslmind.org.uk

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

Rethink Carer Support

Carer support groups and information for carers of people with mental ill health.
T: 07783 267013
W: 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

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

Positively Parkinson's Café

Third Monday of the month 10.30am in Wisbech.
T: 07500 097222
E: jmwilson@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

CDA Hearing Help

Services for people with hearing loss including hearing aid maintenance.
T: 01223 416141
W: 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

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

Other conditions

Huntingdonshire Aphasia Support (H.A.S.)

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

Community and peer support

Burwell Carers Group

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

Chatterbox

Second and fourth Mondays of the month
2.15-4.15pm in Sawtry.
T: 01487 832105
W: caresco.org.uk

Coffee Connections

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

Simply Saturday

Monthly shared lunch, entertainment,
and friendship. Held in Little Paxton
Church.
T: 01480 216255
E: 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

St Neots Community Support

Volunteer service to help with shopping,
prescriptions and other support.
T: 0333 335 5344
W: 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

Family Voice Peterborough

Support for parent carers in
Peterborough.
T: 01733 685510
W: familyvoice.org

Pinpoint Cambridgeshire

Support for parent carers in
Cambridgeshire.
E: information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk
W: 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

General support

Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Advice and services for older people.
T: 0300 666 9860
W: ageukcap.org.uk

Cambridgeshire Libraries

Providing free books, e-resources and
general information; offering activities
for you and your family.
T: 0345 045 5225
W: 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

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough

Local independent champion for health
and care, gathering experiences of care
to help influence local decision makers.
T: 0330 355 1285
W: healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk

Sibs

Support for siblings who have a brother
or sister with a life-long disability.
W: sibs.org.uk

The Royal British Legion

Supporting service men and women, veterans and their families since 1921.

T: 0808 802 8080

W: rbl.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

Disability Huntingdonshire

Supporting people to claim for benefits.

T: 0330 3553 256

W: dish.org.uk

Exercise

Love to Move

Seated chair exercises for people with dementia/other neurological conditions. Time to chat with tea and coffee.

T: Jane Thomas 07731 097236

PosAbility

Exercise programmes for those with long-term health conditions in Histon, Soham, Littleport and Ely.

T: 07565 598193

E: admin@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

Health and Care Sector Work Academy

Training for a career in health and social care.

T: 0800 310 1160

W: citycollegepeterborough.ac.uk/hcswa

Caring Together Charity

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

- **Carer helpline** 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.
- **Day clubs** giving you a break and the person you look after can spend time doing activities such as singing, crafts, jigsaws, and more.
- **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

Tel: 0345 241 0954

Email: hello@caringtogether.org

Web: caringtogether.org



“You are not given enough praise. You were there at a real time of need, the carers were all amazing! I would have been lost without you! Superb service!! Thank you!”

Whether you need help at home occasionally or every day, we can help. Our paid-for homecare service is flexible and reliable.

Contact us for a chat about your needs today

0345 241 0954 • homecare@caringtogether.org • caringtogether.org