

Impact report 2023/24



We would like to thank the following organisations for supporting Caring Together Charity

Abbots Ripton Village Stores

Active Norfolk

The Alan Boswell Group Charitable Trust

The Annie Tranmer Charitable Trust

Aria Court Care Home

Ashton's Legal Charitable Fund

BBC Children in Need

Bridges Outcomes Partnerships

Buckden and District Churches Together

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust Integrated Care Team, Huntingdon

Cambridgeshire County Council

Carers Trust

Circus Starr

Co-op Community Cares

The David Family Foundation

D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

Earith Community Cafe

The Earl of Northampton's Charity, via their sole Trustee, The Mercers' Company

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Ellington Village Club

The Evelyn Trust

Garfield Weston Foundation

The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust

The Grace Trust

Haddenham Steam Rally & Heavy Horse Show

Hethersett District Lions Club

Hillington Parish Council

Huntingdon Freeman's Trust

The Hutchinson Charitable Trust

The Kathleen Hannay Memorial Charity

The Lesley Mary Carter Charitable Trust

Leziate Parish Council

The Lord Cozens Hardy Trust

Maxine Lester Lettings and Property Management

NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System

NHS England and NHS Improvement

NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

The National Lottery Community Fund

Norfolk Community Foundation

Norfolk County Council

PEM Charitable Trust

Peterborough City Council

Peterborough United Charitable Trust

Project Linus

Provincial Grand Lodge of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire

Ridley Godfrey Foundation

Rotary Club of Huntingdon

Rotary in Ramsey Rotary

Sothius Masonic Lodge 8774

Spotted in Ely

St Ives (Hunts) Golf Club

St Ives Rotary Club

St Ivo Masonic Lodge 2684

St Mark's Church, Newnham

The Souter Charitable Trust

Thriplow Daffodil Weekend

Voluntary Norfolk

The Yusef Foundation

Contents

Welcome to the 2023/24 Caring Together annual report	4
The vision that drives us	6
How we are turning our vision into reality	7
Essential support when it is needed most	7
Skills for caring	8
Bringing carers together	9
Supporting children who are carers	9
"I'd been screaming out for help"	10
Giving carers peace of mind	10
Raising awareness of carers	12
Carers' voices being heard	12
Our team to support carers	13
Your support for our work	13
Accounts	15
Our Trustees	16
Our Senior Leadership Team	17
Our year in photos	18

Welcome to the 2023/24 Caring Together impact report

During the year unpaid carers have told us about the impact of sharp increases in the cost of living, their struggles to access health appointments, notably with GPs, and how simply trying to carry on providing the best care they can has contributed to feelings of loneliness, isolation and in some cases them reaching crisis point.

This is exactly what we are trying to stop happening but without doubt we are seeing carers trying to manage extraordinary levels of stress on themselves and their families.

We have continued to be on the frontline and there for carers with the support they need to help them overcome their challenges as much as we can.

This year we have been proud to help around 27,000 people with a variety of support enabling unpaid carers to have a break, prepare for any potential emergency and to have someone to talk to. However, there are over 150,000 carers living in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk who could need our support, so we recognise that we have so much more to do.

During the year we were particularly pleased to see the introduction of legislation entitling unpaid carers to have up to one-week of unpaid leave from their employment to help them in their caring role. While very welcome, it would however be even more beneficial if this leave was paid considering the financial pressures many working carers find themselves facing.

Our partnership with Care Network Cambridgeshire and Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support the Integrated Care Board with hospital discharge work has gone exceptionally well. We have introduced a single point of access for hospital discharge teams to use to improve workflow and the seamless transition of patients. We are already seeing an increase in the number of patients being discharged, which is positive for individuals and the hospitals. Our partnership is also ensuring that, through our community 'at home' individuals are less likely to be readmitted to hospital. We are also able to identify unpaid carers to ensure they can access the ongoing support they are entitled to.

In April 2024 the Office of National Statistics released some data highlighting that by the time we get to 50 years old we are likely to have at least four years of caring ahead of us and that the more hours of care that we provide, the chance of us not being in good health increases hugely. While this doesn't come as a complete surprise, it does mean that our awareness work is vital in reaching more people to ensure they can prepare and know where to go for help. We have worked in schools, with employers and in the community so that more carers can be identified and receive support quickly. In 2023/24 we worked with over 1200 professionals.

While we remain proud of our achievements, we have also seen an increase in our running costs, with income remaining static.

It has been very challenging to respond to an increase in demand for our support when funding is simply not stretching as far as it used to. We were pleased, however, to be able to maintain our position as a real living wage employer and to be able to improve our benefits through the introduction of a death in service benefit and free online GP service.

We continue to explore new ways of reaching new people and have begun to investigate how we can make more use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), being thoughtful about how it can be part of our service delivery.

We constantly look for ways in which we can make ourselves more attractive as an employer as retaining our high quality, well trained and compassionate employees is critical to us being able to maintain our high-quality service delivery. We continue to receive the most humbling of compliments about our staff team from the carers and families we support so we know we need to work hard to retain them at Caring Together. Volunteers are making an increasing contribution to our work, and it has been wonderful to welcome a number of new volunteers during the year who work in our office as well as with our employees in the community. We extend our thanks to all our workers for their continued contribution to our work.

As we look forward to the next year, we will be embarking on a campaign to recruit some new Trustees to replace those who will be coming to the end of their term in the next couple of years.

Our Trustees bring their skills, experience, and passion to enable Caring Together to deliver its vision of 'no unpaid carer in crisis, isolated or struggling alone.' See caringtogether.org/we-are-caring-together

In 2024/25, Christina Wells who has been the chair of our Quality and Service Delivery Committee will be standing down and we wanted to take this opportunity to thank her for her incredible contribution and service over the last nine years.

And finally, we couldn't do what we do without the generosity of our supporters and funders. With funding not stretching, reducing in value and harder to get we have increased our investment in this area to increase growth. Thank you so much to all our donors for everything you have contributed to our work this year. We simply couldn't do what we need to do without it.



Stuart Evans
Chair of Trustees



Miriam Martin
Chief Executive

The vision that drives us

At Caring Together Charity our vision is a world with no unpaid carer in crisis, isolated or struggling alone.

In 2023/24 we supported 27,000 people – unpaid carers and those they look after – the equivalent of the population of a medium-sized town such as Gorleston-on-Sea, Huntingdon or Wisbech. Each of their stories is a reminder of why our support is vital.

When we reach the age of 50 each of us is likely to still have more than four years of caring for someone ahead of us. Caring affects us all.

As well as their caring responsibilities, unpaid carers are impacted by unparalleled pressures on the health and social care system, cost of living burdens, and almost half of them have their own health issues.

Without them our country's health and social care system would collapse.

Too many unpaid carers:

- ✿ are already at crisis point when they first speak to us.
- ✿ are just one step away not being able to cope.
- ✿ have struggled for months or years on their own without support.

We are striving to help carers in crisis and prevent others reaching that stage.



**We supported
27,000 people
in 2023/24.**

The NHS budget for England and Wales was £164 billion in 2020/21*.



*Figures from Valuing Carers research report Carers UK, May 2023 (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023).

How we are turning our vision into reality

Essential support when it is needed most

One diagnosis, an accident, or the health of someone close to us deteriorating and we are in a role we had no preparation for - facing the practical and emotional demands of caring and being a carer.

Navigating the health and social care system can be difficult, daunting and exhausting. Some carers tell us they've felt they were facing a 'brick wall' when in most need of support. Until speaking to us, they may not even have known they're entitled to support.

Our Caring Together helpline, and the advice line we operate as part of the Carers Matter Norfolk partnership, can be their first source of expert, and invaluable advice.

Personalised information and advice are given by phone, email or post. Our website, regular email newsletters and free Caring magazine give more ways carers can stay updated on the services and support available to them.



Over
23,000
calls,
many giving
carers the
essential
personalised
advice they
needed.

"I cannot begin to explain just how valuable I found the phone call... finally someone could "understand" my situation and actually listened to me instead of me coming up against a brick wall.

"Carers Matter [Norfolk] has helped me substantially by giving me help when I most needed it and by offering information and support that was invaluable."

Skills for caring

We help carers develop skills and knowledge to help them and the person they care for. We do this at carers' hubs, specific sessions, and by going along to other groups or events in the community.

The deep and wide demands carers face are reflected in the topics we cover - emergency first aid, carers' rights and entitlements, falls prevention, Technology Enabled Care, understanding dementia, the Mental Capacity Act, benefits, managing medication, legal and finance topics and more. Parent carers are given specific support around the changes they face as their child transitions to adult services. We also hold sessions to build carers' skills at managing their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Caring for someone can be hugely complex, but our support means it is not something people have to do alone.

"I've really enjoyed today. I've taken away tips to help me at home and... have had a much-needed break this morning.

"I have a list of things I need to do and now I feel equipped with the information I was lacking; I can finally get on and do them."

"Wow... so useful. I am so glad I came and looking forward to coming to some other sessions. This has given me the confidence I needed to move forward."

Over 250

trips, workshops, hubs and carer learning sessions. We are here to help carers as young as five through to 101.



Bringing carers together

Being an unpaid carer can make it hard to get out to see people, and carers may feel their role is not understood by those around them. By bringing carers together we can take away that sense of isolation and put them at the heart of a supportive community.

Our carers' hubs are held across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for carers and the people they care for. Online sessions give an alternative way to get together.

The extent to which a carer's attention can be focused on the person they care for, means they may even feel guilty if they're taking time for themselves. Our trips and sessions put carers' needs and wellbeing first.

Whether it's a lunch together, time at the beach, a tour of Ely Cathedral, a massage, or a craft session – these times to switch-off are vital.

Supporting children who are carers

Children as young as five can be looking after someone in their family – a sibling, parent, or at times more than one person. Young carers are almost twice as likely to persistently miss school, and three times more likely to have a long-term mental health condition*.

To relieve the pressures, they need support, breaks and time to be a child or teenager - to simply do what other youngsters their age do.

Activities in schools and trips, such as heading for the zoo, an open farm, the seaside, or an outdoor adventure are valuable times for these youngsters. In Norfolk our young carers' forum gives carers time together and to have their voices heard.

*Children and Young People's Health Coalition - April 2024

"I get to be around people who are in the same position as me. The trips just make me happy. They give me a break; they make me be able to breathe properly."

"We want to say a big thank you for all the kind loving support you have given our family... you have been totally amazing... Caring Together gave the children a chance to be children, to have fun and have a break from their caring role... we are forever grateful."



"I'd been screaming out for help"

The demands of looking after someone can be overwhelming.

We support people facing incredibly challenging caring roles while also struggling with their own problems, including with mental and emotional health. Some of their situations are truly heartbreaking, and the professional support from our counselling team can be life changing, or even lifesaving.

"The counselling support from Caring Together has been life-saving. I was at rock bottom - feeling I was drowning and nobody cared... I'd been screaming out for help and it was the counselling that came through... This service is a lifeline."

"I honestly do not know where I would be if not for the counselling support you have provided.... I was broken and felt ignored and not listened to. I am now in a much better place."



We supported carers with more than 1,500 counselling sessions.

Giving carers peace of mind

Many carers' priority is to make sure the person they look after has everything they need. Our personalised homecare gives people more independence and choice.

We provide companionship, help to get out into the community, personal care, meal preparation and support with medication. But our role goes far beyond this.

Our What If? Plans take away carers' worry about what happens if an emergency means they are unable to support the person they care for. We can quickly put in place the care that is needed.

Getting someone home from hospital, without the right support in place, can be difficult. Our 'bridging care' provides the support needed for this, giving time for more on-going help to be put in place.

And sometimes carers simply need help so they can have a break from the demands of their role. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough our homecare team step in so carers can go to their own medical appointments, or if they are at crisis point. While in Norfolk we deliver breaks as part of the Carers Matter Norfolk partnership.

Providing Day Clubs in March and Brampton means there are not only fun and relaxing activities for those who go along – but our staff are also there to provide for their personal care and medication needs. Again, giving peace of mind for carers and a way to take a vital break.

"It didn't feel the whole weight was on my shoulders. I knew there would be someone there in the morning.

"They were all terrific."

"You were there at a real time of need; the carers were all amazing!

"I would have been lost without you!"

"Your charity was a lifeline to both mum and dad.

"Trusting anyone else to look after mum was very tricky for dad but in his communication with you all, he found comfort, support and an understanding that you would honour your word and keep mum safe when he needed to attend appointments."

Almost **1,000** carers registered for our support in an emergency.

More than **5,000** carers are now signed up for this support if they need it.

We provided
**over
44,000**
hours of
homecare,
including help in
an emergency,
and giving
carers breaks
they need.



Raising awareness of carers

Nearly three-quarters of us who provide unpaid care, or have done so in the past, have never seen ourselves as a carer. This is a barrier to support that must be broken down.

We're raising awareness of carers with employers and in health, education, and community settings. This means more carers are recognised and supported.

We have worked with the media - including local radio and newspapers - to raise the profile of young carers, the Carer's Leave Act, and the need for carers to be identified and supported.

Carers' voices being heard

In 2023/24, our Carer Council continued to help shape our work. Carers gave their views on subjects including caring and work, the demands of caring, and what changes are needed in our 2023 Carers Speak Out report. This was sent to media, MPs and councillors across our area.

Young carers spoke powerfully through our Young Carers Action Day campaign, with two young people meeting MPs and the Children's Commissioner for England in Westminster.



"Your session today has really highlighted to me that sadly I am one of the statistics and am someone who has never really thought about myself being a 'carer'... I feel it's time I probably got in touch with the service."

"...I turned my camera off... I found the videos, especially the young carers, touched a nerve and I did have a cry."

167 awareness raising sessions reached **2,375** professionals.



30 organisations achieved the Carer Friendly Tick award, bringing the total to **115**

Our team to support carers

We are proud of our team of employees and volunteers who are dedicated to the support we deliver. They work side-by-side to deliver support for unpaid carers and many have their own experience of looking after someone.

In 2023/24 our volunteers provided almost 3,000 hours of support for unpaid carers. They have valued roles as part of our Customer Services team, in giving companionship and sit-in services for carers through our Norfolk Befriending service, in supporting our hubs, clubs, and carer trips and in ensuring we can deliver other areas of support for carers.

We saw new roles created in our Fundraising team and People team to ensure we are able to provide sustainable and relevant support for carers. Growing our Norfolk advice line team has been part of developing this valued service for carers.

We were proud the year saw us achieve the Disability Confident tick, recognising the support we give to our team members who require adjustments or additional measures to be able to carry out their roles successfully. We have continued to be a living wage employer. And new benefits introduced included a group life insurance plan and a 24/7 GP service available to contracted staff and their families living with them.



**94% of staff
feel proud to
work for our
charity**

Your support for our work

We are very grateful to the many people, community groups, grant-makers and companies that supported our work to help carers in 2023/24. Our 'Time for Tea in '23' campaign invited supporters to get together with friends for tea and cake and give much-needed donations to supporting carers. Thousands of pounds were raised as people enjoyed meeting up over a cuppa!

We were astonished at the enormous support for our 'Back to School' campaign which launched in September 2023 to help children who are carers. Our support for young carers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough faced closure but donations from groups like Rotary Clubs, Masonic Lodges and Trusts, and many individuals meant our help for hundreds of children and young people has continued to run.

Other highlights included the fantastic Ullswater Way Challenge where a team of intrepid walkers raised £4,000 and Caring Together being chosen as one of the charities to benefit from the famous Thriplow Daffodil Weekend.

We are grateful for every donation, especially at a time many of us face stretched finances. It was also humbling to receive many donations in memory of loved ones who have passed away. All these special gifts will bring help and support to many families across our region.

Those who make regular gifts and who have pledged legacies, help us to secure our services for future generations of carers.

Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)

	2024		Total funds £000	2023
	Unrestricted funds £000	Restricted funds £000		Total funds £000
Income				
Donations and legacies				
Donations and legacies	70.4	14.5	84.9	96.3
Grants receivable	-	542.6	542.6	572.8
Income from charitable activities				
Care fees and contracts	3,282.7	-	3,282.7	3,288.9
Other charitable income	2.0	-	2.0	1.5
Investment income	16.0	-	16.0	0.4
Other income	16.0	-	16.0	10.8
Total income	3,387.1	557.1	3,944.2	3,970.7
Expenditure				
Costs of raising funds	186.2	-	186.2	119.7
Expenditure on charitable activities	3,217.3	551.9	3,769.2	4,010.0
Total expenditure	3,403.5	551.9	3,955.4	4,129.7
Net movement in funds for the year	(16.4)	5.2	(11.2)	(159.0)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	692.1	90.4	782.5	941.5
Total funds carried forward	675.7	95.6	771.3	782.5

Balance sheet

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	63.6	82.9
Current assets		
Debtors	336.4	1,035.8
Investments	300.0	-
Cash at bank and in hand	597.3	513.9
Total current assets	1,233.7	1,549.7
Liabilities		
Creditors falling due within one year	521.1	847.7
Provision for dilapidations	4.9	2.4
Net current assets	707.7	699.6
Net assets	771.3	782.5
The funds of the charity		
Unrestricted funds	675.7	692.1
Restricted funds	95.6	90.4
Total charity funds	771.3	782.5

Our Trustees



Stuart Evans - Chair of Trustees

Entrepreneur Stuart previously chaired Arthur Rank Hospice Charity and was a board member of the East of England Development Agency. He and his wife adopted three children and have first-hand experience of caring.



Alison Griffiths – Honorary Treasurer

Alison, a chartered accountant, brings vast professional expertise to the Board and was a director of taxation in international FTSE 100 groups. She is a Trustee of Cambridgeshire Community Foundation.



Christy O'Connell

Christy has worked in the legal sector for over ten years and is currently a Counsel in the corporate team at Cleary Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton LLP.



Vicki Hayes

Vicki is an experienced Regulatory Professional and Team Leader with 20 years of experience in the pharmaceutical and biotech Industry. She has previously been a Board Director at a professional services company and a Governor at a local primary school.



Bertone Santos Socorro

Bertone has worked as a Senior Leader for the NHS over nine years across different specialties. His passion for community services has led him to pursue his career as a Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Senior Programme Manager with the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board.



Mandy Hill

As managing director of Academic Publishing at Cambridge University Press, Mandy is skilled in delivering improved performance, strategic innovation and collaborative engagement.



Donna Talbot

Donna has extensive experience in generating voluntary income from a variety of sources. She is currently Chief Executive Officer at Emmaus Cambridge.



David Hipple

David brings considerable financial and general management skills to the charity having spent over 35 years as a chartered accountant and director of finance for a number of large and medium sized groups in both the public and private sector.



Christina Wells

Christina spent over 25 years working at a senior level in the public sector and has a wide range of experience, particularly within the NHS. Her interests include promoting the health and wellbeing of carers, developing carer friendly communities and safeguarding.

Please see our website for full biographies

Our Senior Leadership Team



Miriam Martin – Chief Executive

Miriam has worked in the charity sector for over 20 years, including as Chief Executive at Action for Blind People, a UK-wide charity with a budget of £23mn, 900 staff and 400 volunteers, supporting 90,000 people each year.



Sarah Harvey – Director of Operations

Sarah is an experienced senior manager in adult and child social care, having worked for the local authority, private and charitable organisations.



Natalie Chandler - Head of People

Natalie has over 20 years experience as a human resources professional. Before joining Caring Together Natalie was operations manager for a successful local homecare organisation.



John Platten - Head of Digital and Business Intelligence

John has a broad experience of delivering customer-centred digital services with a focus on user experience and change management in a range of sectors.



Neil Portor - Director of Finance and Resources

Neil is a qualified accountant with experience working in an executive role and reporting at board level within the charity sector, having worked at YMCA for over 25 years.



Lisa Downs – Head of Care/Registered Manager for Care

Lisa began her journey in social care as a coordinator and became a registered manager in 2016. After a short tenure working in bids and contracts, she realised her passion lies closer to the frontline of the industry.



Zoe Bunter - Head of Fundraising and Communications

Zoe has worked as a charity fundraiser for over 20 years. She has worked in both large national charities and smaller local organisations, raising essential funding for their work.







No unpaid carer in crisis



L D H House
Parsons Green
St Ives
PE27 4AA

T 01480 499090 or 0345 241 0954
E hello@caringtogether.org
caringtogether.org

Caring Together Charity
Charity Registration Number 1091522
Company Registration Number 4379948



Provider ID 1-19234275

A Network Partner of
**CARERS
TRUST**

