

You're Invited: Carers Rights Day Event – Thursday 20 November

We're delighted to invite you to our Carers Rights Day celebration – an uplifting and informative day designed with you in mind. Whether you're new to caring or have been supporting someone for years, this event is a chance to connect with others who understand, learn more about your rights, and take a well-earned break.

-  **Date:** Thursday 20 November
-  **Venue:** BAWA Health and Leisure,
589 Southmead Rd, Bristol,
BS34 7RG
-  **Time:** 10:00am – 2:30pm

This year's theme is Breaks – reflecting what carers have told us matters most. According to Carers UK's State of Caring 2024 report, the lack of regular, affordable breaks is one of the biggest challenges carers face, often leading to burnout and poor wellbeing. We'll be exploring this issue together and sharing practical ways to access support.



What to expect:

- Talks from our **Carers Voice Team**
- Workshops from Bristol and South Gloucestershire Councils
- Presentations from relevant community groups
- Carers Breaks Fair
- A light lunch and time to chat with other carers
- An optional wellbeing session in the afternoon to help you unwind

Booking is essential, and places fill up fast. To reserve your spot, please contact us with your name, contact details, number of places, dietary needs, and whether you'd like to join the wellbeing session.

 **0117 958 9902**
 info@carersbsg.org.uk
 [Book online](#)

Please note: This event is for carers only, and we're unable to accommodate the person you care for.

We look forward to welcoming you for a day of support, connection, and inspiration.

In this edition:

- ➔ New Carers Breaks Directory – Find the right time away from caring
- ➔ Young Adult Carers Peer Group – Support and connection in Bristol
- ➔ Young Carers Voice Project – National Lottery funding boost
- ➔ Winter Support Guide – Stay warm, well and connected

From our CEO



Dear Carer,

As we head towards winter, I want to pause and reflect on the wide range of support and opportunities available to you through Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire. This issue of Carers News brings together practical guidance, events,

and resources designed to help you feel recognised and supported in your caring role.

I'm especially pleased to invite you to our Carers Rights Day event on 20 November. This is always a highlight of the year: a chance to meet other carers, hear from people who understand your challenges, and learn more about your rights. With workshops, information stalls, and time to connect, it promises to be a day of support, inspiration, and community.

Nationally, there are signs of progress. The Government's new 10-Year Health Plan for England marks an important step in recognising unpaid carers not just as a "resource," but as people with their own health, wellbeing, and rights. While plans and policies can feel distant, we'll be working hard to ensure these promises translate into real change for you, day to day.

We also know the colder months can be a particularly tough time for carers. Rising energy costs, health risks, and the strain of winter can all add pressure. That's why this issue includes a practical guide to staying warm, well, and connected this winter – from financial support and vaccinations to emergency planning and wellbeing tips. I encourage you to take a look and use what's helpful for your situation.

Supporting young carers remains another key priority. Our new Young Adult Carers project and peer support group is already creating much-needed spaces for young people aged 18–25 to connect, be heard, and access tailored support. And with fresh funding for our Young Carers Voice project, younger carers will be better equipped to shape services and influence decision-makers.

Finally, I'd like to highlight our new Carers Breaks Directory and guides. These tools aim to make it easier to plan time away from caring – whether that's a few hours or something longer. They sit alongside all our other services, from CarersLine to support groups, and are there for you whenever you need them.

Caring takes resilience, but you don't have to do it alone. I hope this edition of Carers News reassures you that support is out there, and we are here to walk alongside you.

With warm wishes,

Lucy Giles

Interim CEO, Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire



Trustee view

Jen Tomkinson, a trustee and senior NHS manager with a background in physiotherapy and service transformation, shares her perspective on the long-awaited national plan for healthcare in England – and what it means for carers.

On 3 July 2025, the Government unveiled its long-awaited plan for healthcare in England: Fit for the Future: 10-Year Health Plan for England. It promises sweeping changes to how care is delivered – moving care out of hospitals and into communities, using digital tools like apps to help people, and focusing on keeping people healthy, not just treating illness.

But what does this mean for unpaid carers?

Carers at the Heart of Reform

Unpaid carers are the invisible scaffolding of our health and care system. Their support keeps loved ones out of hospital, enables safe discharges, and bridges gaps in overstretched services. Yet too often, carers have been seen only as contributors – not as individuals with their own health, financial, and emotional needs.

The 10-Year Plan signals a shift: from viewing carers as a resource to recognising them as people with their own health, wellbeing, and rights. The plan recognises that caring can take a toll with many carers living with a long-term physical or mental health condition themselves. The plan commits to:

- Spot carers early: NHS staff will ask about caring roles so carers don't stay hidden

- Include carers in care decisions: Carers will be part of planning care for people with complex needs
- Support NHS staff who are carers: 1 in 3 NHS workers also care for someone. A new programme will help them balance work and caring

Care Closer to Home

The new Neighbourhood Health Service will bring together GPs, nurses, pharmacists, and social care under one roof – reducing hospital visits and enabling more joined-up support. For carers, this could mean:

- Fewer trips to hospital for appointments or admissions
- Easier access to local teams based at the heart of your community
- Care that fits each person better.

Using technology to help

The NHS App will soon include a "My Carer" section, allowing carers to:

- Show they are a carer#
- Book appointments and see records for the person they care for
- Talk to care teams directly

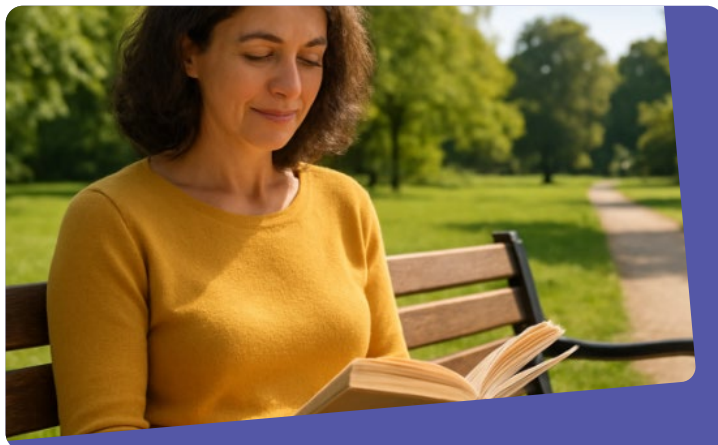
This could make things easier and save time which will be welcomed by many. But some carers will need help to use these tools and understand how information is shared, so as not to create more barriers.

Personal Health Budgets & Support

By 2029 more people will get Personal Health Budgets. Carers can help shape how these are spent – for things like therapies, mobility aids, or end-of-life care at home. The plan also promises more advice, training and emotional support for carers.

This plan could help carers feel seen, heard, and supported – not just in big reports, but in everyday care. But for it to work, the NHS must put carers at the centre of how services are designed and delivered.

New Carers Breaks Directory: Helping You Find the Right Break, Your Way



We know that taking a break from caring isn't always easy – and finding the right kind of support can feel overwhelming. That's why we've launched a new Carers Breaks Directory, designed to make things simpler, more flexible, and tailored to your needs.

Whether you're looking for a few hours to recharge, a day out, or something longer, the Directory brings together a wide range of local options across Bristol and South Gloucestershire. It's easy to use and includes services that support carers directly, as well as those that offer activities for the person you care for – helping you find time for yourself with peace of mind.

The Directory was shaped by carers and built around real-life experiences. It includes filters to help you search by location, type of break, and whether the service is culturally or community-based. We've also made sure it's inclusive, with services for carers of all ages, backgrounds, and caring situations.

If you're not sure where to start, the Directory is a great first step. You can explore ideas, read about what's available, and find out how to access support – all in one place - Visit the [Directory](#)

To make the new Carers Breaks Directory even more useful, we've also created **practical guides** to help carers understand their options for **replacement care** and how to **pay for breaks** that aren't free.

We know that every carer's situation is different, and we're committed to making these tools as helpful and accessible as possible. If you know of a break that isn't yet listed, or have suggestions for improving the directory, we'd love to hear from you.

Together, we can make it easier for carers to take the time they need and deserve.

Welcome to the team



Alice Lancaster – Parent Carer Support Officer

I am the new parent carer support officer for Bristol, but I used to be the administrative assistant. I enjoyed the times I interacted with carers in the admin role and am really happy to have an opportunity to work with carers more directly in my new role. In the outside world I am also a medical herbalist, and I work as a clerk to the governing board of my son's primary school too.



Lisa Furness – Young Adult Carers Support Worker

I've recently taken on the role of Young Adult Carers Support Worker after working with the young carers service since December 2023.

Before joining Carers Support, I worked in cultural venues and community arts projects across Bristol and London, always seeking ways to empower communities to tell their own stories, support talented and marginalised creatives, and bring people together to reduce loneliness and isolation. I've also completed a masters degree in Youth and Community work and have been on the board of directors at the People's Republic of Stokes Croft since 2019.

I'm excited to support young adults as they move on from the young carers service into the adult world, a transition that can often be difficult and lonely. It will also be a chance to get out and have some fun!



Dee Coogan – Carers Support Officer (Bristol)

I am thrilled to be joining the team as a Carers Support Officer for Bristol. In this role I will be facilitating carers groups across the city, providing support and advocacy, and completing assessments to ensure carers have access to the right resources and services. I will also be covering CarersLine, offering assistance and signposting to vital support.

With a background in working within the NHS and a history of supporting charities dedicated to disabled people, particularly in youth services, I have gained valuable experience in navigating the healthcare and support systems. As a parent of three children, one of whom has complex healthcare needs, I understand first-hand the challenges carers face, which fuels my passion for supporting and empowering them.

Outside of my professional life, I enjoy walking, pilates, and focusing on overall wellbeing. I also love meeting new people and am excited to build connections and provide support to carers throughout Bristol.

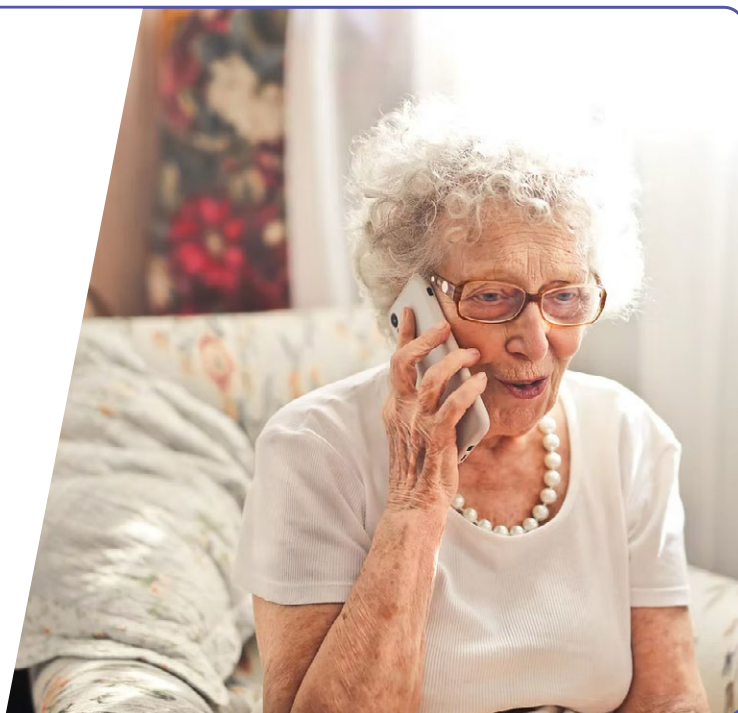
Noticeboard

Marmalade Connections Service: Helping people step out of loneliness

Personalised support is available for people who feel lonely through Marmalade Trust's Marmalade Connections project.

Weekly phone calls with a trained volunteer provide gentle encouragement to explore interests and reconnect with community activities, whether that means joining a local group or rediscovering old hobbies.

To find out more, or to refer yourself or someone you know, visit the Marmalade Trust [website](#) or contact them on ☎ **07566 244788** or @ info@marmaladetrust.org



Mental support helpline for women

Womankind offers mental health support for women through their confidential helpline, and now, a brand-new online webchat. Trained volunteers provide empathetic, non-judgmental listening support, whether you're seeking help with your mental health or simply a friendly chat.

The webchat offers extra privacy, is accessible for deaf and hard of hearing women, and can be translated into over 20 languages.

For opening hours, to use the webchat, or to find out more about Womankind's services, visit: [womankindbristol.org.uk](https://www.womankindbristol.org.uk), or call their telephone helpline on ☎ 0117 916 6461 or 0345 458 2914



South Gloucestershire Carers Emergency Card phone number update

If you have a purple S. Glos Carers Emergency Card, please be aware that the phone number to call in an emergency or to update details is changing.

The number is changing from 0845 266 8622. **Please update your card & information to: ☎ 0300 333 6511 option 4** as this is now the phone number to call.

The 0845 number is charged at a higher rate and cannot be connected by all mobile networks, so it will be phased out.

S. Glos Council have plans to redevelop the Carers Emergency Card scheme, if you would like to be involved, please complete the S. Glos Council survey on the Carers Support [website](#).

Support for autistic and learning-disabled adults

The Hive Avon provides a safe and welcoming space for autistic and learning disabled adults to socialise, learn, and be creative.

Working primarily in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, the charity supports around 300 service users each year, along with their families and carers.

Services are designed to promote independence at a level appropriate to each individual and include a drop-in centre for safe socialising, an education programme, peer support, social events, and individual guidance for families and carers.

As The Hive does not receive local authority funding, charges may apply for some services where alternative funding cannot be secured.

To find out more, visit their [website](#) or contact them on

☎ 0117 9614372 or @ office@thehiveavon.org.uk



Lottery news

Lucky winners

April:

S Watts, A Hart, C Peat,
A Northcott, R Hussey

May:

A Linton, D Crump,
J Reid, M Grace

June:

J Cox, E Black, M Grace, M
Hatch, R Howes

July:

W Patterson, J Hayes,
F Arkley, J Trott, B Giardina

July:

W Patterson, J Hayes,
F Arkley, J Trott, B Giardina

August:

A Northcott, J Hayes,
J Quartly, C Peat, A Black

Carers Lottery to Close

After thoughtful consideration, we've decided to close the Carers Lottery as the time and resources needed to run it are no longer sustainable. The final draw will take place on 31 December 2025.

We're incredibly grateful to everyone who has taken part over the years. Your support has made a real difference to local carers.

If you have an active membership, please cancel your standing order with your bank. Alternatively, you can let us know (by email or post) if you'd like your membership to continue as a donation.

Whatever you choose, thank you – your generosity has truly made an impact.

Living Well Days for people with dementia

Weekly Living Well Days are now running at Hanham Community Centre, designed especially for people living with dementia.

Each session offers a supportive, small-group environment with a programme of gentle, movement-based activities such as soft archery, inflatable darts, and yoga.

Sessions take place every Tuesday from 10 am–2 pm and include:

- Specialist dementia-trained support
- Adapted activities in a friendly group setting
- A nutritious lunch and refreshments
- A warm and relaxed atmosphere

Free taster sessions are available. To find out more or make a booking, call ☎ 0117 947 7422.

Noticeboard

Free Digital Skills Courses for Carers

Feeling overwhelmed by the digital world? You're not alone – and help is at hand.

Bristol Tea and Tech is offering **free digital skills sessions** for carers across North Bristol this autumn. Whether you're new to smartphones, tablets or laptops, friendly volunteers will guide you through the basics in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

Courses are running at **Avonmouth** and **Westbury-on-Trym**, with **drop-in sessions** available in Henleaze, Henbury, Horfield, Lockleaze and Sea Mills. No experience is needed, and you can bring your own device or use one provided.

To find out more, contact Nicola:

@ nicola@northbristoladvice.org.uk

or call ☎ **07936 943583**.



Boost your wellbeing with a range of courses

Bristol Wellbeing College is offering a wide range of free courses, workshops, and activities – both online and at community venues across Bristol.

You can browse their easy-to-use online calendar to see what's on, with sessions running Monday to Thursday. Courses are colour coded:

- Green – gentle, introductory sessions to support everyday wellbeing.
- Pink – more in-depth courses for long-term personal growth.

Topics include Confidence Building, Coping with Low Mood, Life Balance, Managing Intense Emotions, and even Scenery Painting.

View this calendar on their [website](#)

You can also contact them on

☎ **0117 914 5498**.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

Thank you to everyone who has generously donated funds in the last few months to help support carers, including:

- The Anchor Society
- Bristol Brunel Lions Club
- The Dolphin Society
- The Grateful Society
- Honourable Company of Gloucestershire Charitable Trust
- The Nisbet Trust
- William Hancock Trust Fund

Support accessing free annual health checks for people with learning disabilities

Autism Independence is working with local GP services to help people with a learning disability from ethnic minority backgrounds access their free annual health check.

To get this check, the person must be on the Learning Disability Register. Autism Independence can support every step of the way – from registering with a GP and joining the register, through to attending the health check and any follow-up care.

This service places a special focus on supporting people from ethnic minority communities, with translation and clear explanations available.

Find out more at:

@ tinyurl.com/4p97kh6a or by contacting ☎ **07354 486 322**

Carers Voice

Support for carers to get their voices heard and to influence health and social care provision and the services of Carers Support.

Carers' Voices at the Heart of Innovation

When carers and service providers work together, the results can be transformative. That's been the driving force behind our involvement in the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) – a government initiative launched in late 2023 to spark innovation in adult social care, with a clear focus on supporting carers.

From the outset, we saw this as a valuable opportunity to co-produce services that truly reflect carers' needs. Working alongside Bristol and South Gloucestershire Councils, and in partnership with local organisations including **Bristol Black Carers**, **Rethink Mental Illness**, **Chinese Community Wellbeing Society**, and **St Peter's Hospice**, we began a journey shaped by lived experience.

Together, we identified three key areas for development:

- Improving how carers are identified
- Simplifying the assessment process
- Enhancing access to carers breaks

It was the third – carers breaks – that became the central focus of our work with carers.

Listening First: What Carers Told Us

Last summer, we engaged with **70 carers** from diverse backgrounds, ages, and caring roles. These conversations explored what taking a break means, what gets in the way, and what could help. The insights were powerful and clear:

- Breaks are essential, but often hard to access
- The types of breaks available need to be broader and more inclusive
- Information about breaks must be easier to find and understand

We captured these findings in our first in-house research report, **"Understanding Carers' Need for Breaks to Develop**

Innovative Solutions through Co-production" – Read the [Executive Summary](#)

Turning Ideas into Action

With carers involved throughout, the ARF stakeholder group developed several new initiatives:

- A new **Carers Breaks Directory**, offering a clear, easy-to-navigate guide to local break options
- Practical guides on **replacement care** and **how to pay for breaks**. See page 3.

These resources have already been tested by carers who helped shape them. Their feedback?

"This is going to make a big difference."

"It tells you exactly the information you need to know."

We're committed to improving these tools further – if you know of a break that should be included, please let us know.

Other partners have used ARF funding to create culturally appropriate wellbeing breaks:

- **Chinese Community Wellbeing Society** developed the **Power of Music** for East and South Asian carers
- **Bristol Black Carers** launched a **Support Group** to address language and cultural barriers

We also heard that carers supporting someone with mental health needs are often overlooked. In response, **Rethink Mental Illness** created new **online support groups**, and **St Peter's Hospice** began **drop-in sessions** for carers of people with life-limiting conditions.

Supporting Young Adult Carers: A New Focus

In addition to our work on Carers Breaks, the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) has enabled us to develop resources for a group whose needs are often overlooked – young adult carers.

Through co-production with carers aged 18–25, we've begun developing Young Adult Carers Peer Groups, recognising that their experiences and needs can be very different from those of older carers. For many, caring has been a lifelong role, and the support they require reflects that unique journey.

We've also created a dedicated section on our website tailored specifically for young adult carers, offering relevant information, opportunities, and ways to connect.

See page 12 for more details about our work with young adult carers.



A Shared Journey

This has been a long but rewarding journey. It's shown us that the most effective way to design services that meet carers' needs is to **work with carers**, listen deeply, and build on their lived experience.

We're proud of what's been achieved – and even more excited about what's still to come.

The Realities of Caring for Someone with Severe Mental Health Challenges

By Kaz

I never set out to become a carer. It just happened gradually. We were close friends for years, supporting each other through bereavements and health issues. Over time, I found myself helping with hospital appointments, making sure they had food, and looking after them when they came home. One day, someone said to me, "You do realise you're a carer, don't you?" I remember replying, "I'm just helping out." But they said, "That's what a carer does." It took a while for that to sink in.

My partner has lived with a severe mental health condition since they were 17. Episodes can be unpredictable – sometimes every year, sometimes with years in between. But when they come, they're intense and long-lasting. It starts subtly: neglecting basic care, not eating or sleeping, withdrawing socially. Then it escalates – trashing the house, inviting strangers over, becoming verbally aggressive. It's heartbreaking and frightening, especially when you're trying to intervene and they're in their own home.

Hospitalisation often follows, sometimes lasting up to two years, with another year or two of recovery. People assume that once someone's in hospital, the carer's job is done. But that's when the emotional work begins – visiting, encouraging, trying to maintain a connection. At the start, you might not even recognise them. You rebuild everything from scratch, again and again. It takes a huge toll.

I feel lucky to have known them before their first episode. That memory of who they were helps me stay grounded during the darkest times. It reminds me of the person underneath the illness.

At first, I didn't see myself as a carer. I was just helping someone I loved. But gradually, it started affecting every part of my life – my job, my mental health, my relationships. I'd be making phone calls,

chasing services, constantly worrying. It's not a 24/7 role every day, but when things escalate, it becomes all-consuming. And even when things are calm, I'm still there, ready to step in.

One thing I wish more people understood is how vital it is to support the carer. If I'm supported, I can stay calm and present, which directly helps my partner. They pick up on my distress. If I'm frazzled, everything becomes more unstable. And most carers can't work full-time – it's just not realistic. The emotional toll is immense, even if it's not physical care.

Finding support has been tough. I tried local groups, but my situation felt too extreme to relate to others. Eventually, I connected with two women online through a Bipolar UK forum. That was a turning point. We understood each other instantly. One of them had a horrifying experience – she thought everything was fine, then got a call saying the person she cared for was under a train. It's not something most people can relate to, and it was such a relief to find people who could.

Support from professionals has been mixed. We've had brilliant people over the years, but they rarely stay. Every time someone new comes in, we have to rebuild trust from scratch. That's exhausting. And services are stretched so thin. They often say, "We'll only engage when the person is in hospital,"

ignoring everything that leads up to a crisis. I'm spotting warning signs weeks in advance, but unless something dramatic happens, no one steps in.

There was a time when my partner was left in a police cell for days before being moved. Thankfully, things have improved slightly – there's now a crisis suite at Southmead. But bed spaces are reducing, and it's still incredibly hard.

I became a Carers Rep partly out of frustration. I wanted to speak up for carers supporting people with severe conditions. It's a small group, but the challenges are immense. I might not be the best spokesperson, but someone has to say, "We need support too."

If I could give advice to someone just starting their caring journey, it would be: find a peer. Someone who's been through it and can say, "You need boundaries. You need to look after yourself." You hear those things, but they don't sink in until someone says, "You're going to burn out. You won't be able to sustain this."



Because it's not one traumatic event – it's a cycle. It happens again and again, and it wears you down. Sometimes, help isn't there. You're left with yourself and maybe someone on the end of the phone. That's often the reality.

That's why peer support is so important. Someone who just gets it. You can say, "There's a crisis coming," and they'll understand without needing the backstory.

Community plays a role too, though it's complicated. Joining a group or club is hard when you might disappear for six months. When you come back, people ask where you've been. It's difficult to explain that someone's just come through a traumatic episode. And if the episode was public, it's even harder. How do you explain that wasn't them – it was their illness?

But there are beautiful moments too. After a recent episode, I saw my partner slowly come back. They went for a coffee, sat calmly, not paranoid or exhausted. Just themselves. And I thought, "They're back." You treasure those moments when you've seen someone at their worst.

They've even said they wouldn't want to take away their illness – it's given them an appreciation for things others take for granted. And they're grateful for the life they have.

Caring is hard. It's isolating, exhausting, and often invisible. But it's also full of love, resilience, and moments of quiet joy. I just hope more people can see that – and that carers get the support they need to keep going.

"You rebuild everything from scratch, again and again. That takes a lot of emotional energy."

"It's not one big traumatic event – it's something that happens again and again, and it wears you out."



Mental Health Support

- **Bipolar UK** – Offers peer support forums and resources for carers and families.
Peer Support Line: ☎ **0333 323 3880**
Website: 🌐 bipolaruk.org
- **Rethink Mental Illness** – Provides advice, advocacy, and carer-specific support.
Advice Service: ☎ **0808 801 0525**
(Monday to Friday, 9:30am–4pm)
Website: 🌐 rethink.org
- **Mind** – Offers information on mental health conditions and support for carers.
Infoline: ☎ **0300 123 3393**
(Monday to Friday, 9am–6pm)
Website: 🌐 mind.org.uk
- **SANEline** – National out-of-hours helpline offering emotional support and guidance for people with mental health difficulties and their carers.
☎ **0300 304 7000**
(4.30pm–10.30pm daily)
Website: 🌐 sane.org.uk

Winter Support for Unpaid Carers: Staying Warm, Well and Connected

Winter can be a challenging time for unpaid carers.

The colder months often bring increased health risks, higher energy bills, and greater emotional strain – especially for those caring for someone with complex needs. As temperatures drop and services slow down over the festive period, it's vital that carers feel supported, informed, and connected.

Whether you're caring for a loved one with a long-term condition, mental health challenges, or age-related needs, here are some practical ways to access support this winter – and some reminders that you're not alone.

1. Financial Help with Heating and Energy Costs

Keeping warm is essential, but rising energy prices can make this difficult. If you're struggling to afford heating, there are several schemes that may help:

Winter Fuel Payment – If you or the person you care for were born before a certain date, you may be eligible for a one-off payment to help with heating costs.

Winter Fuel Payment Centre:

☎ **0800 731 0160**

🌐 [Winter Fuel Payment](#)

Cold Weather Payment – Automatically paid to those on certain benefits when temperatures drop below freezing for seven consecutive days.

Universal Credit Helpline:

☎ **0800 328 5644** (if you think you should have received a payment but haven't)

🌐 [Cold Weather Payment](#)

Household Support Fund – Local councils often offer emergency help with energy bills, food, and essentials.

🌐 [Bristol](#)

🌐 [South Gloucestershire](#)

Priority Services Register – If the person you care for is vulnerable, you can register with your energy supplier for extra support during power cuts or emergencies.

Contact your energy supplier or network operator directly to register.

Local information on energy efficiency

Energy Efficiency at Home – Bristol City Council

Bristol City Council offers guidance and support to private tenants seeking to improve their home's energy efficiency. Through partnerships with organisations like Retrofit West and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), tenants can access free advice on enhancing insulation, exploring renewable energy options, and adopting best practices to reduce carbon footprints. Additionally, the council provides information on obtaining grants or loans for energy-efficient home improvements.

@ private.housing@bristol.gov.uk

☎ **0117 352 5010**

🌐 [Energy Efficiency at Home](#)

Warm and Well – Severn Wye Energy Agency

Warm and Well is a free, confidential service managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency, offering expert advice and support to residents in Gloucestershire and **South Gloucestershire**. The program helps individuals reduce energy bills, improve

home warmth, and access funding for energy efficiency upgrades. Services include home energy surveys, assistance with fuel debt, guidance on switching energy suppliers, and referrals to the Warm Homes Local Grant for eligible households.

Free Advice Line: ☎ **0800 500 3076**
(Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm)

@ warmandwell@severnwyenergy.org.uk

🌐 warmandwell.co.uk

2. Supporting Your Wellbeing This Winter

Caring doesn't stop for winter – but neither should your wellbeing. Here are some ways to look after yourself and stay connected:

Stay Healthy – Make sure you and the person you care for are up to date with flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. Carers are often eligible for free flu jabs – ask your GP or pharmacist.

Register with Your GP as a Carer – This can help you access flexible appointments, health checks, and priority support.

Mental Health Support – Winter can feel isolating. If you're feeling low, anxious, or overwhelmed, support is available. We offer a range of services, including befriending and peer support. Find out more on page 14. You can also see a list of national and local mental health support organisations on page 9.

Stay Connected – Isolation is a common issue for carers, especially in winter. Short days, bad weather, and festive pressures can make it harder to stay in touch with others. Join online carer groups, attend local drop-ins, or ask about befriending services. A friendly chat can make a big difference.

You're Not Alone

Carers are the backbone of our communities, and winter can be one of the hardest times to carry that responsibility. But support is out there – from financial help and health advice to emotional support and community connection.

If you're unsure where to start or where to go for further advice, please get in touch with CarersLine. We will point you in the right direction.

Call us on ☎ **0117 965 2200**

Email us at @ carersline@carersbsg.org.uk



Take Time for Yourself – Even small acts like a hot bath, a walk, or reading can help recharge your batteries.

Mindfulness and Relaxation – Apps like Headspace or Calm offer free resources.

- **Introductory Mindfulness Programme**

A free online course supporting carers to manage stress and emotions through mindfulness. Includes taster sessions, a 4-module programme, and weekly meditation groups. Run by the charity The Mindful Life:

☎ info@themindfullife.co.uk

🌐 themindfullife.co.uk

3. Emergency Planning and Respite

Winter weather can disrupt routines. Snow, ice, or illness might mean you're unable to provide care as usual. Having a plan in place can reduce stress and ensure continuity of care.

Carers Emergency Card – Get your free Carers Emergency Card. Carrying the card ensures the safety of the person you care for if something happens to you. (see page 14)

Replacement Care – If you need a break or fall ill, respite services may be available. Read our guide to replacement care [here](#).

Hospital Discharge Support – If the person you care for is admitted to hospital, it's important to get involved in discharge planning from the start. Our Hospital Liaison Team provides advice, guidance, and practical support for carers and patients throughout the hospital stay, from admission to discharge. Contact CarersLine:

☎ **0117 965 2200**

@ carersline@carersbsg.org.uk

4. Practical Help and Advice

Sometimes it's the small things that make a big difference – like help with shopping, transport, or navigating benefits.

Carers Allowance and Benefits Advice – If you're not sure what financial support you're entitled to, speak to a welfare advisor. Many carers miss out on help they're eligible for. You can get a benefit check done through Citizens Advice or other local advice centres to find out what you and the person you care for may be able to claim.

- 🌐 **Citizens Advice** (Bristol): Freephone ☎ **0808 278 7957**
- 🌐 **Citizens Advice** (South Glos): ☎ **0808 278 7947**
- 🌐 **Age UK** Bristol: ☎ **0117 922 5353**
- 🌐 **Age UK** S Glos: ☎ **01454 411 707**
- 🌐 **North Bristol Advice Centre** (North Bristol and South Gloucestershire): ☎ **0117 951 5751**
- 🌐 **South Bristol Advice Services** ☎ **0117 985 1122**
- 🌐 **St Paul's Advice Centre** (St. Paul's & East Bristol): ☎ **0117 955 2981**
- 🌐 **One-Stop Shops** (Kingswood, Patchway, Yate)

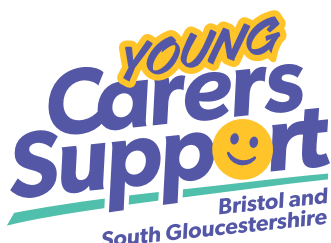
Food Banks and Community Kitchens – If money is tight, local food banks can offer short-term relief.

- Find your nearest Foodbank at 🌐 [Food Banks Near Me](#)

Transport Services – Some areas offer subsidised or volunteer transport for carers and those they support, especially for medical appointments.

- Find your nearest Community Transport Scheme at 🌐 [Community Transport Map](#)

Young Carers



We work with young people to help them to feel positive about being a young carer, feel less isolated, reduce inappropriate care, enable them to plan for their future and seek support when they need it. We provide individual and family support, activities, groups and outings.

☎ 0117 958 9980

@ youngcarers@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

Young Adult Carers: New Peer Support Group and Resources to Help You Feel Seen and Supported

Caring for someone as a young adult can be tough – especially when you're balancing work, study, and your own wellbeing. That's why Carers Support has launched a new project in Bristol to help young adult carers aged 18–25 connect with each other through peer support and access the support they deserve.

As part of this project, we held the first meeting of our Young Adult Carers Peer Support Group in August. Open to all carers aged 18–25, the group is a chance to take a break, meet others in similar situations, and have some fun. Five young adult carers joined us for the first session, where we spent time getting to know each other, chatting about what we'd like from the group – and sharing pizza and snacks.

We agreed that the next meeting should be held in Bristol city centre to make it easier for everyone to attend by bus. If transport is a barrier, Carers Support can cover bus fares – just let us know.

Alongside the group, we're also popping up at freshers' fairs across Bristol in September and October. If you're starting college or university, keep an eye out for us – we'd love to meet you and share what's available.

But the support doesn't stop there. The Young Adult Carers section of our website offers practical advice, emotional support, and resources tailored to your needs wherever you live. Whether you're looking for help with finances, mental health, or just someone to talk to, you'll find tools and guidance to help you balance caring with everything else going on in your life.

To get involved or find out more, visit:

🌐 [YAC Peer Group](#) – Connect with Other Young Adult Carers

Email Lisa at @ yac@carersbsg.org.uk

Text or WhatsApp: ☎ 07591 946 656

We're also looking for affordable central Bristol venues for future meetups – whether it's a private room or a café willing to host a group in exchange for food orders. If you have any suggestions, we'd love to hear from you.

You're not alone. There's support out there – and we're here to help you find it.

Our Young Carers had another action-packed summer!

From canoeing and tree climbing to creative workshops with Unique Voice, they made the most of the sunshine. Highlights included two Heroes workshops to welcome new young carers, several trips to Weston Beach, a performance of their own

play with Acta in Bedminster, a visit to the secret garden in Avonmouth, and another brilliant music project with Bath Philharmonia.



Young Carers Voice Project Receives National Lottery Boost

Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire is celebrating a major funding success after being awarded £19,805 from The National Lottery Community Fund to support its work with young carers.

The grant will fund the Young Carers Voice (YCV) project, which aims to empower young carers aged 12–17 in Bristol and South Gloucestershire to speak up, shape services, and influence decision-makers. The project will offer fortnightly meetings where young carers can take part in skills training, fun activities, and co-design sessions with professionals. The goal is to double the membership of the YCV group and ensure young carers are recognised and supported in meaningful ways.

Young carers are children and young people who care for a family member with a disability, long-term illness, mental health condition, or substance misuse issue. The average age of a young carer is just 12, and many take on responsibilities normally expected of adults. Carers Support provides specialist services for young carers aged 8–18 in South Gloucestershire and 5–18 in Bristol, helping them feel less isolated, reduce inappropriate care, and plan for their future.

The funding will also enable the appointment of a new Engagement Worker, and we're pleased to announce that Hollie Craig has joined the team in this role. Hollie will lead on developing the YCV programme, supporting young carers to build confidence, gain new skills, and connect with others who understand their experiences.

Joss Tagg, Young Carers Service Manager, said:

"We're delighted that The National Lottery Community Fund has recognised our work in this way. Thanks to National Lottery players, young carers will be able to bring about change and make sure that government agencies include their needs in service and policy development."

To learn more about the Young Carers Voice project or to get involved, visit: carersbsg.org.uk/YCV

Carers Support Services for you

We offer a range of services and information to help support you in your caring role and improve your wellbeing.

CarersLine

Our confidential phone and email information and support service for carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, for you to ask questions or talk about any concerns about your caring role.

Monday to Friday: 10 am – 1 pm

Monday to Thursday: 2 pm – 4 pm

(Closed on Bank Holidays)

☎ 0117 965 2200

@ carersline@carersbsg.org.uk

One-to-one support

We provide tailored one-to-one support based on your individual needs, helping you maintain your caring role and well-being.

Carers Assessments

Help with getting and completing a Carer's Assessment. Carer's Assessments look at how caring affects your life and whether support is needed to manage your caring role and wellbeing.

Carers Emergency Card

Get your free Carers Emergency Card. Carrying the card ensures the safety of the person you care for if something happens to you.

Parent carers (Bristol)

Wellbeing Grant applications and support for you if you have a child under 18 who has disabilities or additional needs.

Carers Support Groups

A safe, confidential space to meet with other carers face-to-face and online – to share information and provide support to each other – more information on page 15.

Carers Liaison Service

Information and support for you in the hospital setting and in GP practices.

Hospitals: We provide help, support and advice to you from admission to discharge as a carer and/or patient.

GP practices: A dedicated team working with you to provide support in GP practices.

Carers Breaks Service

In South Gloucestershire a regular volunteer sitter keeps the looked-after person company so that you can take a break.

Walk and Talk

Our friendly support worker leads group walks, offering a listening ear and providing information to help you in your caring role.

Support for Young Carers

We provide specialist support for you if you are aged 8 – 18. This includes one-to-one and family support, young carers groups, activities for young carers to take some time out, short breaks and training.

You can access any of these free services with a call to CarersLine or find out more by visiting our new website at carersbsg.org.uk

Support That Understands: Our Service for Bristol Parent Carers

If you're a parent caring for a child with additional needs, you're not alone – and you don't have to navigate everything by yourself.

Our Parent Carer Support service is here to offer practical advice, emotional support, and a listening ear. Whether you're looking for help understanding your options, managing day-to-day challenges, or simply need someone to talk to, we're here for you.

We're also pleased to welcome Alice Lancaster as our new Parent Carer Support Officer. Alice brings warmth, experience, and an understanding of the pressures parent carers face. She's here to help you feel more confident, connected, and supported in your caring role.

For Bristol Parent Carers Only

This service is specifically for parent carers living in Bristol. If you're based in Bristol and caring for a child with additional needs, we'd love to hear from you.

How to get in touch

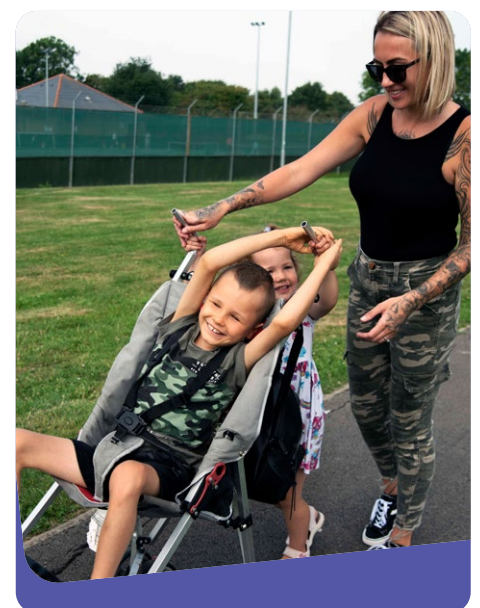
To access support, please register with us as a parent carer using this link. Once you've registered, we'll be in touch as soon as we can to talk about how we can support you.

You can reach Alice through our CarersLine service:

☎ 0117 965 2200

@ carersline@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

🌐 [Find out more](#)



Carers Support Groups

A safe, confidential space to meet with other carers face-to-face and online – to share information and support each other.

Groups are a great way to connect with other carers, share knowledge and give each other support. Please find details of our carers groups below. We are currently running a blend of in-person and online groups, to suit your caring situation.

If you have not attended a group before and would like to, please contact CarersLine:

☎ 0117 965 2200

@ carersline@carersbsg.org.uk

Groups

Please note that you can only attend a carers group that meets in the same local council area as where you live – Bristol or South Gloucestershire – with the exception of the online group.

Group	Venue	Times
Hanham	Hanham Community Centre 118-124 High St Hanham, Bristol BS15 3EJ	1:30 – 3:30 pm First Tuesday of the month – No session in August
Kingswood	The Park Centre Kingswood High Street, Bristol BS15 4AR	2:00 – 4:00 pm Second Wednesday of the month – No session in August
Downend	Badminton Gardens Beaufort Road, Bristol BS16 6FG	2:00 – 4:00 pm Fourth Wednesday of the month – No session in August
Online	Zoom	1:00 – 2:30 pm First Thursday of the month – No session in August
Hartcliffe	Dundry Room Symes Building, Peterson Avenue, Hartcliffe, BS13 0BE	10:00 am – 12:00 pm Second Thursday of the month – No session in August
Lawrence Weston	Lawrence Weston Farm Community Room Saltmarsh Drive, Bristol, BS11 0NJ	2:00 – 4:00 pm Third Thursday of the month – No session in August
Brislington (Dementia group)	St. Peters Church 170 Allison Road, Brislington, BS4 4NZ	10:30 am – 12:30 pm First Wednesday of the month – No session in August
St. George	Crofts End Church 1 Crofts End Road, St. George, Bristol, BS5 7UW	1:30 – 3:30 pm Third Friday of the month – No session in August



How to get help from us

Whatever your caring needs, we are here to help, to guide you through the maze of support and information out there. We also provide a range of services to help improve your caring life.

The best place to start is our website - our online information hub for all things caring and our services at Carers Support. The website is also the easiest way to register with us which will give you access to our services. All our services are free.

www.carersbsg.org.uk



You can also contact CarerLine. CarerLine is a confidential phone and email information and support service for carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire for you to ask questions or talk about any concerns about your caring role.

Monday to Friday:
10 am – 1 pm

Monday to Thursday:
2 pm – 4 pm
(Closed on Bank Holidays)

0117 965 2200

@carersline@carersbsg.org.uk

An answerphone operates outside of these hours and your call will be returned when the helpline next opens.



Donation form Autumn 2025

Your generous donations help us make life better for local carers. If you pay tax, you can make your donation worth an **extra 25p** in every **£1** by completing the Gift Aid declaration.

Title _____ First Name or initials _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

GIFT AID DECLARATION Please treat the enclosed gift of £ _____ as a Gift Aid donation.

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Carers Support.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year and will boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate.

Signature _____ Date _____

If you want to receive our supporter email newsletter please include your email address. You can unsubscribe from this at any time.

Email address _____

Please send your donation and this form to: Carers Support, FREEPOST (RSSU-EZEA-JLLR) Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ