

## Need a Listening Ear? Our Befriending and Connection Service Just Got a Big Boost

We know how isolating caring can be – and how hard it is to find time or energy to look after your own wellbeing. That's why we're delighted to let you know that our **Befriending and Connection Service** is expanding, thanks to generous funding from The Grateful Society and The Dolphin Society.

If you're aged 55 or over and caring for someone in Bristol or South Gloucestershire, this service is here for you. We can pair you with a trained volunteer befriender who'll call you for a friendly, weekly chat over six weeks. It's all by phone – so you can stay with the person you care for while still taking a bit of time for yourself.

Many carers tell us that these calls make a real difference: someone to talk to who understands, who listens, and who can help you feel more connected. After the six weeks, you'll have the option to continue with peer support – because we know how important it is to keep those supportive conversations going.

As Camilla, who runs the service, puts it:

*"This is a lifeline for carers who often feel invisible and unheard. A regular call can really lift someone's week. We're here to remind you: you're not alone."*

Want to know more or sign up?

Visit: [tinyurl.com/4huwdva8](https://tinyurl.com/4huwdva8), or call us on 0117 965 2200. We're here when you're ready.



### In this edition:

- ➔ Andy's Story: Life as a Neurodivergent Carer
- ➔ Financial Support for Carers: Key Updates for 2025
- ➔ Young Carers Action Day

# From our CEO



## Celebrating Our community's achievements

I'm absolutely delighted to be stepping into the role of Interim CEO at Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

It's a real privilege to lead such a passionate and dedicated team, and to continue building

on the incredible work the organisation does to support carers across our communities. As someone who is deeply committed to making a positive difference, I'm excited to work alongside staff, volunteers, partners and – most importantly – carers themselves to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are at the heart of everything we do.

As we embrace the arrival of spring, I'm heartened by the remarkable strides our community has made in recent months.

### Empowering young carers

On March 12th, we marked Young Carers Action Day under the theme "Give Me A Break," emphasising the vital need for young carers to have time for themselves. Our initiatives provided opportunities for these incredible individuals to connect, share experiences, and access much-needed respite. Their resilience reminds us of the importance of continued support.

### Beacon Rise Primary School's recognition

Congratulations to Beacon Rise Primary School in Kingswood for earning the Young Carers in Schools Award. Their commitment to identifying and assisting young carers sets a commendable example for educational institutions across our region.

### Walk and Talk groups: Building connections

We're excited to introduce new Walk and Talk groups tailored for LGBTQ+ carers and young adult carers aged 18-25. These initiatives offer safe spaces to connect, share experiences, and enjoy the benefits of gentle outdoor activities. Additionally, our special event during World Mental Health Week provided a serene environment for carers to focus on their well-being. Find out more on page 17.

### National recognition for Carers Support

I'm proud to share that our organisation has been highlighted as a best practice example in a national resource developed by the Carers Partnership. This acknowledgment underscores our dedication to identifying and supporting carers within healthcare settings.

### Looking ahead

As we continue our journey, let's celebrate these achievements and remain committed to enhancing the lives of carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Your support and engagement are the cornerstones of our success.

**Lucy Giles**

Interim CEO, Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire



## Trustee view

### From our Chair of Trustees, Mary Whittington.

As I write this there's worldwide financial uncertainty as a result of the imposition of tariffs on goods entering the United States. The expectation is that inflation will rise again as a result and prices will rise at a faster rate this year than previously thought. This is extremely bad news as it comes on top of a rise in the cost of living due to the latest increase in energy costs and the likelihood that companies will pass on the increase in their National Insurance contributions in the form of higher prices. The situation is particularly bad for unpaid carers and their cared for following the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves', Spring Statement announcement of major changes to the welfare and benefits system. Read more on this on page 10.

It has been predicted that tighter PIP eligibility rules will lead to 150,000 people losing carer's allowance and the Carer Element in Universal Credit by 2029/30 as PIP is a gateway for accessing carer benefits.

The DWP has yet to assess the impact on people who are unable to work because they care for individuals whose benefits have been reduced. Additionally, 28% of carers have health conditions or disabilities themselves. Currently, around 150,000 unpaid carers receive both Carer's Allowance and Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and they risk losing access to both – a double blow to those already facing significant challenges.

In this environment, the work of Carers Support is even more vital, providing advice to help unpaid carers navigate the welfare system to obtain the benefits and services they are entitled to, befriending and wellbeing support. Carers Support is not immune from the challenges of rising costs, and the Board of Trustees works closely with the management team to ensure that resources are utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible so that the level of services provided can be maintained within the budgetary constraints.

Finally, I would like to welcome Stuart Hill to the Board of Carers Support. Stuart joined us as a Trustee in March and, as he is a retired accountant, has agreed to be our Treasurer. If you would like to know more about becoming a Trustee, please contact me at @ [chair@carersbsg.org.uk](mailto:chair@carersbsg.org.uk)

# BS3 Carers Day: A successful event for carers

Carers Support, Sirona Care and Health and BS3 Community recently hosted the BS3 Carers Day. The day offered an opportunity for carers to access valuable information and support, while also participating in a range of activities.

The event featured:

- Information stands offering essential resources and support for carers
- Activities for carers and the person they care for, ensuring everyone could take part
- A fully accessible venue, ensuring ease of access for all attendees

Carmen, from Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire, reflected: "We were absolutely delighted with how the day went. It was a busy and productive event, with Susy leading a Carers Voice workshop for carers. We were able to connect with many hidden carers, signposting them to support services. I was also able to gather enough interest from carers to set up a local **Walk and Talk** group. It was a wonderful opportunity to network with other organisations and engage with local social prescribers, helping us to strengthen the support available for carers."

The event proved to be an excellent opportunity for unpaid carers to find support, share experiences, and connect with others in the community. We were thrilled to see so many carers attend and actively engage with the services and resources on offer.



## Carers Support recognised for best practice in a national resource

We're proud to be featured as a best practice example in a new national resource developed by the Carers Partnership (Carers UK and Carers Trust) as part of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

The resource, Identifying and Supporting Unpaid Carers in England to Improve Integrated System Working, helps health and care systems enhance carer identification and support. Our work in identifying carers within GP settings has been highlighted,

reflecting our commitment to improving carer recognition in healthcare.

Health and social care professionals can access the resource to drive positive change across the sector.





# Noticeboard

## Free annual health check for people with learning disabilities

**Autism Independence has partnered with local GP services to support individuals with a learning disability, with or without autism, in accessing their annual health check.**

They offer assistance with booking, attending, and following up on health checks and can also help register individuals on their GP's learning disability register.

The service is particularly focused on supporting ethnic minority communities and can provide translation and explanation of the health check process for those whose first language is not English.

For more information, visit [@autism-independence.org](https://autism-independence.org) or contact them on [@hello@autism-independence.org](mailto:hello@autism-independence.org) or [07354 486 322](tel:07354486322)



## South West Autism Central Hub delivered by Bristol Autism Support

Autism Central Hubs provide guidance to families, carers, and personal assistants of autistic people.

Sessions are led by Peer Educators – parents and carers of autistic people who share their knowledge and experience.

Support is available through group and one-to-one sessions, helping families navigate local services and information. Some hubs also offer workshops, drop-in sessions, coffee mornings, and virtual meet-ups.

In the South West, Autism Central is delivered by Bristol Autism Support.

For more information, visit: [tinyurl.com/un25jrbi](https://tinyurl.com/un25jrbi) or contact [@autismcentralsw@bristolautismsupport.org](mailto:autismcentralsw@bristolautismsupport.org) or [0300 125 6207](tel:03001256207)



**Tourettes**   
**action**

## Tackling Tourette's: Support from Tourettes Action

**Tourettes Action is the UK's only national charity dedicated to supporting individuals with Tourette's syndrome and their families.**

As Tourette's remains widely misunderstood and stigmatised, many people struggle to receive a diagnosis or the support they need.

Tourettes Action provides a range of services, including:

- A helpdesk offering support before and after diagnosis
- An education service to help schools and colleges provide appropriate support
- Free eLearning modules for individuals and GPs
- A grant system for people with Tourette's
- Online support groups for peer connection and advice

For more information, visit: [@tourettes-action.org.uk](https://tourettes-action.org.uk) or contact [@help@tourettes-action.org.uk](mailto:help@tourettes-action.org.uk)

## Download the NHS App with Well Aware's help

### Have you got the NHS App?

This app offers convenient access to essential health services. You can book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and access your health records in one place. The app also provides reliable health information, making it easier to manage your care effectively and stay informed.

Whether you're downloading the app for the first time or looking to unlock its full potential, Well Aware can help you with personalised support tailored to suit your needs

Call Well Aware for your free session on ☎ **0808 808 5252** or email @ [info@wellaware.org.uk](mailto:info@wellaware.org.uk)

### Do more with the NHS App!

- 🔗 Order repeat prescriptions
- 📅 Book appointments
- 👁 View your records
- And much more...



## Bristol Women's Voice: Directory of Women's support services

**Bristol Women's Voice offers an online directory of women's support services, providing a valuable resource for individuals and organisations seeking to connect with women-led initiatives in the community.**

The directory includes a wide range of projects, support services, advocacy groups, community organisations, wellbeing activities, and workshops tailored for women. Users can search by keywords or location to find relevant services.

To explore the directory, visit: 🌐 [tinyurl.com/mvprkmps](https://tinyurl.com/mvprkmps)

## Lottery news

### Lucky winners

#### January :

J Cox, D Siddorn, M Nash, E Black, M Grace

#### February:

S Watts, R Howes, J Quartly, M Day (x2)

#### March :

C Hamlen, D Crump, M Nash, J Gowers, R Merritt

### Join our lottery

Join our lottery for the chance to win one of five cash prizes every month. It's just £1 a month for each number, and you'll also be supporting our work.

🌐 [tinyurl.com/32e92xc8](https://tinyurl.com/32e92xc8)

☎ **0117 939 2562**

## We appreciate your support

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

- Denman Charitable Trust
- The D'oly Carte Charitable Trust
- Happy Days Children's Charity
- John James Bristol Foundation
- Quartet Community Foundation – Redcliffe Homes Fund

**Carers Support**  
Bristol and South Gloucestershire

# 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 Support celebrates involvement in Bristol City Council's Adult Social Care Co-Production Policy



Bristol carers from the Carers Voice initiative played a vital role in the Co-Production Policy Working Group, along with representatives from other Bristol charities, and in writing Bristol's Adult Social Care Co-Production Policy.

We believe that the most effective policies are those that are shaped by the very individuals they aim to serve

Carers Support is thrilled to announce its active involvement in the development of Bristol City Council's groundbreaking Social Care Co-Production Policy.

This initiative highlights a collaborative approach to social care, emphasising the importance of incorporating the voices and experiences of carers and disabled people in shaping policies that impact their lives.

As a key partner in this initiative, Carers Support, through our Carers Voice initiative, has been instrumental in promoting the needs and perspectives of local carers. By working closely with the council, the charity has helped to ensure that the policy reflects the realities faced by carers in our communities. This collaboration marks a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and responsive social care system.



"The participation of Carers Support Bristol and South Gloucestershire in the development of the Co-Production Policy is a testament to our commitment to amplifying the voices of carers," said Susy Giullari, Policy Engagement Lead at Carers Support. "We believe that the most effective policies are those that are shaped by the very individuals they aim to serve. Together with Bristol City Council, and carers themselves, we are paving the way for a more supportive environment for carers and their families."

The new Social Care Co-Production Policy outlines a framework for involving carers and disabled people in decision-making processes, ensuring that their insights lead to improved service delivery and outcomes. This innovative approach encourages shared responsibility and collaboration among all stakeholders, fostering a sense of community and support within the social care system.

Since the policy was approved by Full Council, an advisory group has been established to monitor its implementation in adult social care developments. Carers Support staff and carer representatives are committed to continuing their partnership with Bristol City Council as active members of this group. Through open dialogue and strong advocacy for carers' needs, Carers Support is helping to shape and improve social care services across the region.





## Join our Expert by Experience Panel

Are you an unpaid carer looking for a way to share your unique experiences and make a difference in your community?

Join Carers Support's Expert by Experience Panel! Your insights are invaluable, and by becoming a member, you can help shape the services that matter most to carers like you.

As an unpaid carer, you understand the challenges and rewards that come with your role. By sharing your journey, you can

provide a perspective that only those who care for others can truly understand. The Expert by Experience Panel offers a platform where your voice will be heard, and your suggestions will be taken seriously.

Joining the panel is not just about giving your input; it's also an opportunity to connect with other carers who share similar experiences. You'll gain support, build friendships, and foster a sense of community. Together, we can advocate for change and ensure that unpaid carers receive the recognition and resources they deserve.

Your experience matters. Don't miss the chance to be a part of something impactful. By joining the Expert by Experience Panel,

you'll not only share your story but also inspire others and help create a better environment for all carers. Sign up today and take the first step towards making a lasting difference in the lives of unpaid carers everywhere!

The commitment can be as much or as little as you choose, and whenever it suits your life circumstances. Your involvement can be online, in person or a mixture of both.

Interested? Please contact Susy Giullari, our Carers Policy, Engagement and Involvement Lead.

@ [susyg@carersbsg.org.uk](mailto:susyg@carersbsg.org.uk)

📞 07521 945 943

# Andy's Story: Life as a Neurodivergent Carer

For Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Andy shared his deeply personal story of being a full-time carer while living with Asperger's, ADHD, and dyslexia.

Caring for both of his parents is a 24/7 commitment – one that brings enormous responsibility, stress, and emotional strain. But Andy has found ways to navigate the challenges, drawing on resilience, a sharp sense of humour, and a firm belief that carers – especially neurodivergent carers – deserve to be heard and respected.





Andy lives with his mum and dad, both of whom have serious, ongoing health conditions. His father has Alzheimer's disease, a heart condition, Barrett's oesophagus, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and severe asthma. His mum has been diagnosed with skin cancer, osteoporosis, vertigo, and tinnitus. Given the complexity of their needs, there's never really a pause in his caring role.

"It's all day, every day," he says. "There's no switch-off."

Although Andy has a brother, work commitments mean that he's only able to step in when absolutely necessary. And even when he does help, it's not always straightforward.

"Sometimes Mum listens to him more than me, even though I'm the one here every day. That can be frustrating," Andy admits. "But I know it's not intentional, and I'm grateful when he is able to support."

**It's all day, every day,  
there's no switch-off**

Andy's experience of neurodivergence adds another layer to his caring role.

"I can lose my temper quickly if things don't go right," he says. "But I've learned how to handle that. I just sit on it, breathe, and let it pass."

That emotional regulation takes effort, especially when dealing with professionals who, at times, don't take him seriously.

"Some people assume I don't understand what I'm talking about, which isn't the case at all. I just have a different way of processing and expressing things," he explains. "So I let them have it with both barrels – but politely, of course."

His neurodivergent traits had been part of his life from an early age, but the full picture didn't emerge until later. Diagnosed with dyslexia as a toddler, Andy didn't

know at the time that it was part of a wider neurodivergent profile. It wasn't until he was 56 that a GP recognised additional traits and recommended further assessment.

"That's when I got the diagnosis of Asperger's and ADHD," Andy says. "And it just made sense. I always felt different but couldn't explain why. Now I could prove it. I finally had something solid to point to."

Yet getting the diagnosis was only part of the journey. What followed – or didn't follow – was equally telling.

"There's very little support for adult diagnoses," Andy explains. "Once you're past 16, they tell you that the medication won't be effective on your body anymore. So you're basically told: you've got this, but you're on your own."

Navigating the caring system as a neurodivergent person is no easier.

"The system doesn't really listen to carers, and when you're neurodivergent, it feels even worse. You have to fight to be heard," he says. "But the minute I tell them I have a medical background with St John Ambulance, then suddenly I'm taken seriously. That shouldn't be how it works. We know our loved ones better than anyone else, but we're often dismissed."

**I always felt different but  
couldn't explain why. Now I could  
prove it. I finally had something  
solid to point to**

One of the things that's helped Andy cope is being part of the Walk and Talk groups.

"If it wasn't for those groups, I honestly don't think I'd be here now," he shares, without hesitation. "It's not just about talking about caring, it's about being able to talk about anything – life, interests, whatever's on your mind. It's the only way carers get five minutes of sanity – or an hour and a half if we're lucky!" he laughs.

Andy sees these groups as essential spaces of connection and mutual understanding, especially for carers who may otherwise feel isolated.

**If it wasn't for those groups,  
I honestly don't think I'd be  
here now**

"There's a real sense of support there. We get each other. We don't have to explain every little thing."

Despite the ongoing challenges he faces, Andy remains passionate about raising awareness and pushing for change.

**It's not just about talking about  
caring, it's about being able  
to talk about anything – life,  
interests, whatever's on  
your mind**

"The charities are the ones really supporting us – not the system that's supposed to be in place. If the authorities actually listened to carers, if they treated us like partners instead of problems, life would be a lot easier."

**If the authorities actually listened  
to carers, if they treated us like  
partners instead of problems, life  
would be a lot easier.**

His story is one of grit, honesty, and the ongoing fight for recognition – not just as a carer, but as a neurodivergent individual with valuable insight and experience.

"We're not asking for miracles," Andy says. "Just for someone to listen."

# Financial Support for Carers: Key Updates for 2025

Caring for a loved one is a hugely important role, but it can bring significant financial pressure. Many unpaid carers rely on a patchwork of benefits and grants to make ends meet. Here's a round-up of the key support available in 2025, including what's changed – and what still needs to.

## Carer's Allowance: Still Vital, But Limited

Carer's Allowance continues to be a key source of financial support for unpaid carers. As of 2025, the weekly payment has risen to £81.90 for those providing care for at least 35 hours a week. This increase, introduced in the Spring Statement, aims to ease the strain of rising living costs. However, even with this uplift, the UK's Carer's Allowance remains one of the lowest in Europe. In countries like Germany, France, and Austria, equivalent payments often range from several hundred to over a thousand euros per month – shining a spotlight on the financial pressures many UK carers still face.

Despite its importance, not everyone qualifies. Carers who earn above a set income threshold are excluded from receiving it – an issue the government has acknowledged and pledged to review, though no concrete changes have been made to date.



## Carer's Credit: Helping Protect Pensions

Carer's Credit helps carers who don't pay enough National Insurance contributions to keep their State Pension on track. It's available to those caring 20 hours a week or more.

Efforts have been made to simplify the application process and raise awareness, but many carers still don't know they qualify. The government has promised further streamlining, but campaigners say more needs to be done to make this credit accessible and effective for long-term carers.

## PIP: A Lifeline – But Harder to Access

While not a carer benefit directly, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) supports people with long-term disabilities or health conditions and indirectly helps carers too. If the person you care for gets PIP, it can unlock additional support, including help with equipment, mobility, and daily costs.

The Spring Statement outlined plans to speed up benefits processing. However, it also proposed major changes to the eligibility criteria for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and the health element of Universal Credit. These changes are expected to

result in around 150,000 carers losing their entitlement to Carer's Allowance, with many more likely to be forced to leave work to care for loved ones who may lose access to PIP.

## Local Grants: Support Varies by Area

Many local authorities offer small grants or direct payments for things like respite care, home adaptations, transport, or equipment. This support can make a big difference, but availability varies hugely from one area to another.

While the government has announced more localised funding for community care, ongoing cuts to council budgets mean many services are overstretched or underfunded. Some carers report being passed from service to service with little practical help.

## DLA & PIP: Support That's Falling Behind

Both **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** and **PIP** are important sources of support for people with disabilities – and, by extension, for their carers. These benefits help cover the extra costs of care, but with inflation rising and benefit levels frozen, their real value is shrinking.

Carers' organisations are calling for urgent reforms to ensure these benefits actually meet people's needs. They are also campaigning against the proposed cuts to PIP and the health element of Universal Credit, particularly in light of the growing cost of living and increasing pressures on households.

## Attendance Allowance

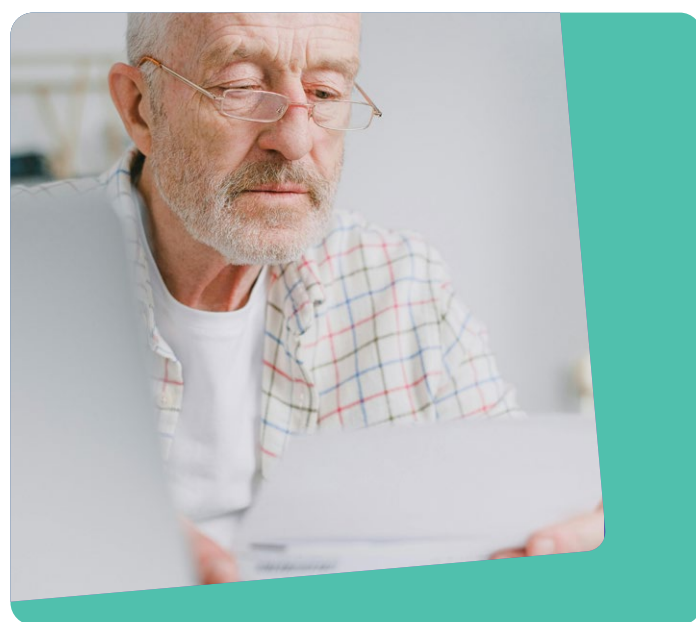
There were no changes to Attendance Allowance announced in the Spring Statement. However, in view of the withdrawal of entitlement to Winter Fuel Allowance for many State pensioners, the need for more people to be aware of Attendance Allowance has increased.

Attendance Allowance (AA) can be claimed by people over State Pension age that need help with personal care or require supervision because of illness or disability. Depending upon the extent of help you need there are 2 different weekly rates. AA is not means tested and any application will not require you to specify level of your personal income or savings. If you are deemed by the Department for Work & Pensions to qualify for AA, the payments do not necessarily need to be spent on your care and can be spent as you see fit. It could be spent on things like equipment to help you remain independent, get meals delivered or taxis/transport to help you socialise/attend medical appointments. In some circumstances, a successful claim to AA can entitle you to claim other State or local Authority benefits.

## The Bigger Picture: Promises vs. Reality

While 2025 has brought some positive changes, including modest benefit increases and simplified processes, the broader picture remains tough. The rising cost of living, cuts to local services, and ongoing pressures on health and social care mean that many carers are still struggling.

Government promises to review eligibility thresholds and improve systems are encouraging – but carers need real, practical support, not just well-meaning announcements.



## Further help and advice

### Online benefits calculator for carers

Carers Trust offers a free online benefits calculator to help you and the person you care for determine which benefits you may be eligible for and how much you could receive.

Once completed, it will indicate which benefits you might be able to claim, such as Carers Allowance.

For more information and access to further advice on benefits and financial support visit the Carers Trust website

🌐 [tinyurl.com/yj77pmz4](https://tinyurl.com/yj77pmz4)

### Local sources of help and advice

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.

As well as benefits advice, some advice centres also help with other money matters, including debt and energy advice.

🌐 **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)

### CarersLine

If you are unsure whether you are entitled to benefits or where to go for further advice, please get in touch with CarersLine. We will point you in the right direction.

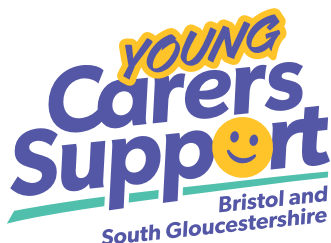
Call us ☎ **0117 965 2200**

Email us @ [carersline@carersbsg.org.uk](mailto:carersline@carersbsg.org.uk)

Or use our contact form [Contact form](#)



# 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](mailto:youngcarers@carerssupportcentre.org.uk)**



## Chloe's story: Finding balance and confidence as a young carer

Chloe is a young carer who looks after her mum while managing college, a part-time job, and maintaining a social life.

At times, caring felt overwhelming. She often felt isolated, especially when her friends didn't understand the pressure she was under at home. Juggling study, work, and caring responsibilities left little time or energy to focus on her future.

Through Carers Support, Chloe was introduced to a local Young Carers group that meets fortnightly. She quickly built connections with others who shared similar experiences. One friendship, in particular – with another young person also applying to university – has provided her with valuable peer support and motivation.

In regular one-to-one sessions with a support worker, Chloe explored what was manageable in her caring role.

Together, they discussed ways her mum could take on more daily tasks, giving Chloe more time and space to focus on college work.

Chloe also received support to write a letter to her tutor explaining her home life and the challenges she faced. As a result, the college offered her additional academic support, flexible deadlines, and arranged a dyslexia assessment – leading to further help with coursework and exams.

Now, Chloe feels more confident about applying to study medicine. She is beginning to plan how care at home can be shared when she leaves for university.

## Young Carers Action Day 2024: A creative and empowering event at The Station

On 2nd April, in celebration of Young Carers Action Day, the Young Carers Service, in partnership with Creative Youth Network, hosted an inspiring event at The Station in central Bristol.

Planned by members of Young Carers Voice, the day brought together 54 young carers from six schools across the city for a fun, creative, and empowering experience.

The event featured a variety of workshops, offering something for everyone. Young carers explored drama with ACTA Community Theatre, practiced football skills with Bristol Rovers, experimented with effects to create short videos, and took part in a calming wellbeing session – both delivered by Creative Youth Network. Over lunch, young carers had time to connect, explore a range of interactive stalls, and access information on services and support available to them.

Thanks to the support of local organisations – including Off the Record, City of Bristol College, Bristol Drugs Project, and Young Carers Development Trust – young carers

could find out about wellbeing support, education and training opportunities, and help with emotional and mental health.

The event ended with a powerful hour of discussion. Four key decision-makers were invited to hear directly from young carers: the Chair of the Children and Young People's Committee, the Director of Education, the Chair of the Education Reference Group (which includes all school heads), and the Young Carers Commissioner. These professionals listened as young carers shared what would make a real difference in schools.

Feedback from the day showed that:

- 93% of young carers rated the day 4 or 5 out of 5 for enjoyment.
- 83% felt more connected with other young carers.
- 72% reported learning more about the support available to them.

Words young carers used to describe the day included: "Amazing," "Encouraging," "Informative," "Entertaining," "Heard," "Seen," and "Protected."



## What Young Carers say: Improving Support in schools

During the final session, young carers shared their ideas on how schools could better support them. Their suggestions focused on four key themes:

### 1. Support for Wellbeing

- Access to 1:1 emotional support and mental health breaks
- Drop-in sessions specifically for young carers
- Young carers diaries to help manage emotions
- Use of headphones to self-regulate during class
- Permission to use phones during the day to check in on the person they care for
- Increased funding for young carer support groups in school

### 2. A Break from Caring

- More fun clubs and social groups for young carers
- School-organised trips or outings to help them unwind and connect

### 3. Help with Schoolwork

- Flexible learning options, like joining lessons remotely when they can't attend in person
- Homework support when they've fallen behind due to caring responsibilities

### 4. Awareness and Inclusion

- Better understanding from teachers about young carer challenges
- Lesson content that educates others about what it means to be a young carer
- Clear identification and inclusion of young carers – similar to how schools support students with ADHD – so they feel recognised, accepted, and supported

## What decision-makers said in response

### The attending decision-makers made strong pledges to act:

The attending decision-makers made strong pledges to act:

- **Chair of CYP Committee:** Raise awareness among education staff; identify schools that didn't attend and follow up; feedback the event outcomes to headteachers and academy trust CEOs.
- **Chair of Education Reference Group:** Explore what support currently exists and improve awareness among school leadership and teaching teams.
- **Director of Education:** Promote a belonging-focused behaviour policy that recognises young carers; improve identification of young carers to better support them.

- **Young Carers Commissioner:** Commit to working with young carers and supporting organisations to co-develop Bristol City Council's new Young Carers Strategy.

Young Carers Voice has asked these decision-makers to report back in six months on the progress they've made. The service will continue working closely with both young carers and professionals to make sure real improvements happen.

**Young Carers lead the way: Shaping services, influencing change**





## Young Carers (YCs) have a vital role in shaping support services, and their insights are essential.

Young Carers Voice developed an ambitious plan for 2025-26 that was the basis of a successful bid for an Awards for All Lottery grant.

Young Carers Voice developed an ambitious plan for 2025-26 that was the basis of a successful bid for an Awards for All Lottery grant.

The grant will pay for a part time participation worker to support young carers (YCs) to co-design improvements to information advice/guidance and training professionals; co-deliver training and work with education and local health trust (including hospitals and mental health services) to improve identification and support for YCs.

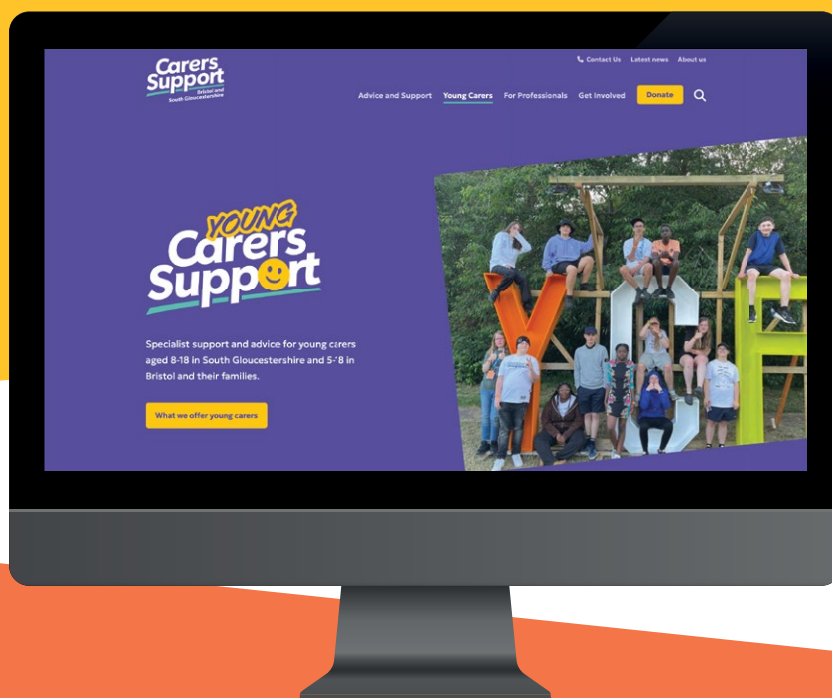
Through the project YC will gain skills in presentation techniques, communication, representing others, influencing and leadership through fun interactive learning opportunities that will enhance their education and employment prospects.

### New website, new look: young carers help shape fresh online hub

*Our brand new website has a refreshed Young Carers section designed to be clear, welcoming and easy to navigate.*

Whether you're a young carer, parent or professional, you'll find everything you need – from how to get support, to stories, events, and helpful resources. The pages have been created with input from young carers themselves to make sure they reflect what's important. Visit the new site at:

 [carersbsg.org.uk/young-carers](https://carersbsg.org.uk/young-carers).



## Contact the Young Carers Service

You can contact the Young Carers Service via the contact form on our new website. Just head to [tinyurl.com/3dpmrtn7](https://tinyurl.com/3dpmrtn7) and scroll to the bottom of the page. There, you'll find a short referral form that young carers, families, or professionals can fill out to get in touch.

You can also:

Call **0117 958 9980** or Email: [youngcarers@carerssupportcentre.org.uk](mailto:youngcarers@carerssupportcentre.org.uk)

# 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](mailto: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 17.

## 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 – more information on page 15

## 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](https://carersbsg.org.uk)

## Are you due a Carer's Assessment?

**Caring for someone can be incredibly rewarding – but it can also have a big impact on your health, well-being, relationships, and everyday life. A Carer's Assessment is a free, confidential conversation that focuses on you and how your caring role is affecting different areas of your life. It's not a test – it's a supportive way to explore what might help make things easier for you.**

If it's been over a year since your last Carer's Assessment, or if your circumstances have changed – perhaps the needs of the person you care for have increased, or your own health or employment situation has shifted – it might be time for a review or a new assessment. If you're unsure it's best to check.

During the assessment, we'll talk through topics such as your physical and emotional health, finances, work, social life, and any support you feel you need. We'll then help create an action plan tailored to your situation. This might include help to access respite, support groups, financial advice, equipment, or referrals to other services.

Many carers tell us they feel more supported and less alone after completing an assessment – it's a chance to step back and focus on your own needs, which often go overlooked.

To find out more or request a Carer's Assessment or enquire about a review, please contact our CarersLine on ☎ **0117 965 2200**.

You can also request an assessment or review through the response form on our new website: [@ tinyurl.com/bdetzbws](https://tinyurl.com/bdetzbws)



# 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](mailto: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	May	Jun	Jul
Hanham	<b>Hanham Community Centre</b> 118-124 High St Hanham, Bristol BS15 3EJ	1:30 – 3:30 pm (First Tuesday)	6	3	1
Kingswood	<b>The Park Centre Kingswood</b> High Street, Bristol BS15 4AR	2:00 – 4:00 pm (Second Wednesday)	21	11	9
Downend	<b>Badminton Gardens</b> Beaufort Road, Bristol BS16 6FG	2:00 – 4:00 pm (Fourth Wednesday)	28	25	23
Online	<b>Zoom</b>	1:30 – 2:30 pm (First Thursday)	1	5	3
Hartcliffe	<b>Dundry Room</b> Symes Building, Peterson Avenue, Hartcliffe, BS13 0BE	10:00 am – 12:00 pm (Second Thursday)	8	12	10
Lawrence Weston	<b>Lawrence Weston Farm Community Room</b> Saltmarsh Drive, Bristol, BS11 0NJ	2:00 – 4:00 pm (Usually third Thursday)	15	19	17
Brislington (Dementia group)	<b>St. Peters Church</b> 170 Allison Road, Brislington, BS4 4NZ	10:30 am – 12:30 pm (First Wednesday)	7	4	2
St. George	<b>Crofts End Church</b> 1 Crofts End Road, St. George, Bristol, BS5 7UW	1:30 – 3:30 pm (Third Friday)	16	20	18

## Walk and Talk: Boost Your Well-being One Step at a Time

Looking to improve your well-being, meet other carers, and get helpful advice – all while enjoying the outdoors? Our Walk and Talk sessions are designed with carers in mind. Led by a friendly support worker, these gentle group walks offer space to relax, connect, and access support for your caring role.

Walks take place over six weeks in local green spaces and are open to all carers – whether you're walking alone, with the person you care for, or looking for an age-specific or LGBTQ+ group. The sessions are free to join and aim to be welcoming and inclusive, regardless of your background or walking ability.

Upcoming highlights include:

- A special one-off walk on 15 May along Bristol's Riverside for World Mental Health Week as part of the Bristol Walk Festival
- An LGBTQ+ group launching in June – register your interest now!
- Festival of Nature Walk Session on Tuesday 10 June
- For the first time, we're also taking part in the Festival of Nature on Tuesday 10 June from 11:00 to 12:30 pm, with a walk session along the Conham River to reflect this year's nature theme which focuses on water.

- A new Young Adult Carers group (18–25) starting 20 May, with one-to-one and group sessions plus free food.

One carer said, "It's fantastic to be out chatting with people who understand what it's like."

To find out more:

visit [tinyurl.com/57rd4547](https://tinyurl.com/57rd4547)

@ [walk@carerssupportcentre.org.uk](mailto:walk@carerssupportcentre.org.uk)

call Stacey on 📞 07742 291073



# 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](http://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](mailto:carersline@carersbsg.org.uk)

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



## Donation form Summer 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