WE CARE
SEE THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE TO UNPAID CARERS’ LIVES

PROVIDING RESpite FOR UNPAID CARERS

While society is opening up again for most of us, the pandemic continues to cast its long shadow over many unpaid carers. Our recent survey of over 1,500 unpaid carers found that more than half have seen an increase in time spent on their caring role because of the closure of local social care services.

And now unpaid carers find themselves at the sharp end of a cost-of-living crisis. We know that well over half of all unpaid carers have had to give up their jobs and income to provide the care their family member needs. And soaring food and energy costs are going to place huge strain on unpaid carers’ household finances for a long time to come.

So your continuing support for unpaid carers has never been more important than it is now. Over the next year we will strengthen further our partnerships with local carer organisations so we can deliver targeted support to those unpaid carers most in need, including providing funded respite so exhausted unpaid carers can take the breaks they so desperately need, and deserve. We will also continue to be a champion of unpaid carers, using our research findings to influence policy makers and secure positive change for unpaid carers.

A MUCH-NEEDED CAMPING TRIP

Since 2007, Trudi has cared for her husband full time. Bob was a highly skilled and respected carpenter for many years and loved his work. But since his stroke, Bob has needed round-the-clock care, meaning both he and Trudi were unable to return to work.

Thanks to a Carers Trust grant, Trudi and Bob were able to book a camping pitch for seven days this Easter in Warwickshire, alongside their daughter-in-law. The trip not only gave Trudi a holiday, but also a much-needed break away from her home life to recharge, so she can carry on caring.

“WE SIMPLY COULDN’T HAVE AFFORDED TO DO ANY OF THIS WITHOUT THE GRANT, AND WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL. THE BREAK CAME AT THE PERFECT TIME TO BLOW OUT THOSE WINTER COBWEBs AND WE REALLY NEEDED THE PICK ME UP THAT IT GAVE US.”

TRUDI

THANK YOU

In our summer appeal we asked you to support our essential grants programme. As ever, you responded generously and we really can’t thank you enough for your continued support.

LOCAL SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS

If you are an unpaid carer you may be able to receive a grant as part of a package of support from your local Carers Trust Network Partner. Find your nearest service on Carers.org or call 0300 772 9600 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm).
I am delighted to introduce myself as Carers Trust’s new CEO.

First of all, a huge and heartfelt thank you for all your support. Overall, you helped us distribute over £4,016,421 in grants to unpaid family carers last year.

As the story on our front cover shows, these grants are an absolute lifeline for family carers, many of whom have had to give up work to care for a family member. This money can make all the difference, helping carers buy essential household items, such as washing machines or a new mattress, or paying for a much-needed short break to help them to recharge batteries. With the cost-of-living crisis already biting, these grants are going to be ever more important in the months ahead.

In the short time I’ve been in post, the most important thing I have done by far has been to get out to meet some of the many local carer organisations that are part of the Carers Trust network.

These vital local organisations are delivering a wide range of frontline services to support unpaid carers in some of the most challenging circumstances imaginable.

It is essential to hear first-hand about the mounting challenges unpaid carers face, because only then can we put in place the solutions that can make life easier. Our new three-year strategy is focused on the issues that count – carer finances and support; health, wellbeing and tackling isolation; access to a fulfilling life alongside caring; and boosting unpaid carer recognition. We have ambitious plans to support a record number of unpaid carers in the years ahead and to make sure that every unpaid carer, regardless of who they are or where they live, is able to access great local services.

With your continuing support, I know we can make that ambition a reality. Thank you so much for supporting us. You really are making a difference.

Kirsty McHugh
Chief Executive Officer, Carers Trust

Unsurprisingly, this is having a severe impact on their mental health. Over half said they either ‘never’ received enough support from school or college in balancing their caring role, or ‘not enough’.

Carers Trust has used these findings to develop key recommendations for policymakers. These include: greater prioritisation of specialist mental health services for young carers; more funded respite breaks; and schools and colleges to take a more collaborative approach with other agencies to ensure young carers get the support they need.

The pandemic hit young people hard, especially young carers who experienced even greater levels of isolation than before. To mark this year’s Young Carers Action Day in March, we surveyed hundreds of young carers across the UK to learn how their caring role was affecting their mental health.

The results were deeply concerning. More than half said their time spent caring had increased because of the pandemic, with one in five saying it had risen by an extra 20–49 hours a week.
Carers Trust joined six other national charities in June for Carers Week, an annual awareness campaign which takes place to recognise the vital contribution made by the UK’s 6.5 million unpaid carers. This year, the week’s theme was making caring ‘visible, valued and supported’. Carers Week worked to raise awareness of the severe pressures unpaid carers are facing due to the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. In the lead up to the week, our CEO Kirsty McHugh joined other charity leaders in a round-table meeting with Minister of State for Care and Mental Health, Gillian Keegan. During the week itself, we invited unpaid carers to a special parliamentary event at which MPs and Peers were able to sit down with unpaid carers to discuss their challenges and what more needs to be done to give them the support they need, and deserve. Around 80 MPs from a wide range of parties attended the event, including Sir Ed Davey MP (Leader of the Liberal Democrats) and Baron Alfred Dubs, Labour Life Peer.

Carers Week is also a time of intensive local activity. Hundreds of face-to-face and virtual events for unpaid carers took place across the UK, many organised by Carers Trust Network Partners.

We understand that writing or updating your will is a personal choice and know that your loved ones take priority. Once you’ve made sure they are looked after, leaving a gift in your will to Carers Trust can help support unpaid carers – whether it be a much-needed respite break, or enabling them to afford a new washing machine.

Thanks to our partnership with Farewill, the top rated will-writer in the UK, we can offer our supporters a free will-writing service. You can write your will with their simple and straightforward service in under 30 minutes, and it will be checked by Farewill’s specialist team to ensure your wishes are clear.

Call Farewill on 0208 050 2686 and let the team know that you are a Carers Trust supporter, or visit farewell.com/carers-wecare and use the voucher code ‘CARERS-WECARE’ to get started.
FREE ONE-TO-ONE CARE GUIDANCE

We can now offer unpaid carers practical and emotional support from a care expert through a dedicated online hub and confidential telephone advisory service, thanks to Legal & General.

Any unpaid carer supported by the Carers Trust network can access the service free of charge and utilise the 30-minute telephone support session, a state funding assessment, advice on typical care costs and educational resources to understand the different care options available – and how best to fund them. After the consultation, users will also receive a summary of everything discussed, a care guide tailored to their unique situation and a list of useful services.

To learn more about the service, please visit: www.legalandgeneral.com/care/care-concierge/.

“We are now entering a time of financial stress and uncertainty with a cost-of-living crisis and soaring energy bills. So, Carers Trust is delighted to be working with Legal & General and providing our partners access to the range of support and guidance its Care Concierge Service offers.”

Kirsty McHugh, CEO of Carers Trust.

LEARNING SOMETHING NEW!

Many local carer services offer training for unpaid carers and former carers, opening up new opportunities and a chance to build confidence. Get in touch with your local service (see front page). Or have a look at Carers.org/studying-and-training to find out about local courses or online studying, including free courses on how to use the internet.

FINANCIAL HELP

If you are struggling financially, make sure you claim any benefits and credits that you, and the person you care for, are entitled to. To see what you might be able to claim, including Carer’s Allowance, use the new and improved benefits calculator from Turn2us on our website. Find out more at Carers.org/money-and-benefits/intro.