Carers & Communities

Winter 2026 Edition

CARINGNEWS

The Magazine for the County's Carers

As the seasons change and we move towards winter, many carers find themselves reflecting on the challenges, changes and achievements that come with supporting someone they care about.

Whether you are currently caring for a family member, friend or neighbour, are new to caring, or your caring role has recently changed, this edition is here to support, inform and encourage you.

This year, as we look ahead to Carers Rights Day, we explore the rights and support available to carers, along with practical ways to make those rights work for you in everyday life. We also shine a light on something many people do not realise: that someone in your family, workplace or community could be providing unpaid care without recognising themselves as a carer.

Knowing the signs and encouraging people to seek support can make a real difference.

We also know that caring roles do not stay the same forever. For some, caring responsibilities may reduce or come to an end due to changes in circumstances, increasing independence of the person cared for, entering supported living, or bereavement. Our feature on Life After Caring offers gentle guidance, reassurance and practical ideas for navigating this transition while looking towards the future with confidence and hope.

As winter approaches, we recognise that shorter days and colder weather can bring additional pressures. We have included advice, support information and wellbeing tips to help you stay connected, take care of yourself and access help when you need it.

Above all, we want you to know that you are not alone. Your contribution matters, your experiences are valued, and support is available every step of the way.

Carers & Communities



WHAT'S INSIDE

Carers UK
Do you know your rights?
PAGES 2-4

Worcester Cathedral
Christmas Tree Festival
PAGES 4

Up & Coming Dates
Listings of activities
PAGE 5

CEO Words
Carer Voice
Online Membership
Act On Energy
Energy Advice
PAGE 6

When circumstances change:
Life after caring
PAGE 7

How to get in touch
PAGE 8

Carers & Communities
Navigating Life's Journeys



Do You Know YOUR RIGHTS?

Someone you know is also a carer, but do they know it yet?

This year's Carers Rights Day takes place on **Thursday 19 November**. Together with Carers UK, we're helping more people recognise when they are carers and understand the rights, support and opportunities available to them.

When we think of the word carer, many of us picture someone providing significant support to a family member or friend. But caring can look very different from person to person.

You might help a parent with shopping, manage appointments for a partner, provide emotional support to a friend with a long-term condition, or regularly check on a neighbour who struggles with day-to-day tasks. If this sounds familiar, and that person relies on you, you may already be an unpaid carer, even if you've never described yourself that way.

This year's Carers Rights Day is an opportunity to understand the rights available to carers and, just as importantly, to make sure the people around us know too.

Quick Carers Check

You may be a carer if you regularly:

- ✔ Help someone attend appointments
- ✔ Manage medication
- ✔ Provide emotional support
- ✔ Help with shopping, finances or paperwork
- ✔ Support someone because of illness, disability, mental ill health or frailty

Why Knowing Your Rights Matters

Caring can be rewarding, but it can also have an impact on your health, finances, work, relationships and wellbeing.

Many carers tell us they simply "get on with it", often putting their own needs last or not realising the full range of support and rights available to them. Understanding your rights can help you access practical assistance, prevent burnout and ensure your own needs are recognised alongside those of the person you care for.



Your Rights as a Carer

1 The Right to a Carer's Assessment

If you provide unpaid care for someone, you have the right to ask your local authority for a Carer's Assessment.

This assessment is about you and your caring role, not the person you care for. A Carer's Assessment is an opportunity to focus on how caring affects you, get any help you need to support you in your caring role and protect your health and wellbeing. It is not an assessment of your abilities as a carer.

It looks at:

- How caring affects your daily life.
- Your physical and mental wellbeing.
- Whether you're able to work, study or pursue hobbies.
- What support could help make caring more manageable.

Put it into practice:

- ✔ Contact us at Carers & Communities and request information about a Carer's Assessment.
- ✔ Before the assessment, write down everything you do as a carer, including any emotional support you provide, as well as administration tasks such as arranging. appointments or managing finances.
- ✔ Be honest about how caring affects you. This is your chance to share what would help.
- ✔ For more information, look at our website or get in touch. We are here to help.

CLICK HERE **Carer Assessments**

2 The Right to Look After Your Own Wellbeing

When you're caring for someone else, it's easy to put your own needs to one side. Appointments get postponed, hobbies fall away, and taking time for yourself can feel like a luxury rather than a necessity. But your health and wellbeing matter too. Looking after yourself isn't selfish; it's an important part of being able to continue caring.

You have the right to:

- Access support for your own health and wellbeing.
- Speak to healthcare professionals about the impact caring has on you.
- Seek support when caring becomes overwhelming.

Put it into practice:

- ✔ **Tell your GP that you are a carer and ask to be recorded as such.** We can help with this.
- ✔ **Request a free flu jab from your GP surgery – you're entitled to one.**
- ✔ **Think about the appointments, check-ups or health concerns you've been meaning to address.** Looking after yourself is an important part of maintaining your wellbeing as a carer.
- ✔ **Identify an activity that is just for you,** whether that's a walk, meeting a friend, reading or attending a support group.

We offer a range of events and activities for carers. **See page 5** for more details or visit our events calendar on our website.

CLICK HERE

3 The Right to Information & Advice

You have the right to information, advice and guidance to help you make informed decisions about your caring role and your own wellbeing.

Your caring role may change over time, and so can the support available to you. Keeping up to date with information, services and guidance can help you access practical assistance, financial support and opportunities to look after your own wellbeing.

Put it into practice:

- ✔ Check whether you may be entitled to financial support or benefits.
- ✔ Contact us for information about support groups, training and event opportunities.
- ✔ Keep a folder, notebook or phone note with key contacts and information you may need.

We have a dedicated webpage where you can find more information, or you can give us a call. We are always happy to help.

READ HERE

4 The Right to Be Recognised at Work

Many unpaid carers balance employment alongside caring responsibilities.

Increasingly, employers recognise the importance of supporting carers in the workplace. The Carer's Leave Act and the Flexible Working Act, which came into effect on 6 April 2024, have strengthened rights for many working carers.

If you're managing caring alongside paid employment, these changes may help you balance work and caring responsibilities more effectively. However, carers still face many challenges juggling work and caring responsibilities.

In September 2026, Carers UK reported that 1,500 people a day are giving up work to care for older and disabled relatives, a 150% increase in seven years.

Understanding your rights at work can help you have informed conversations with your employer and explore the support available to balance work and caring.

READ HERE

Put it into practice:

- ✔ Talk to your manager if caring responsibilities are affecting your work.
- ✔ Explore flexible working arrangements where available.
- ✔ Understand your organisation's policies relating to carers and wellbeing.

5 Your Right to Protection from Discrimination & Harassment

Being a carer is an important role, and you should not be treated unfairly because of the support you provide to someone else.

If you care for an older, disabled or seriously ill family member or friend, you may be protected by law from discrimination or harassment linked to your caring responsibilities. This can include situations where you are treated less favourably because you are a carer, or where assumptions are made about your ability to work, learn or participate in activities because of your caring role.

Understanding your rights can help you recognise when you may have been treated unfairly and give you the confidence to seek advice and support.

Put it into practice:

- ✔ Know your rights. Familiarising yourself with legal protections can help you recognise when something doesn't feel right.
- ✔ Keep a record of concerns. If you feel you have been treated unfairly because of your caring responsibilities, make a note of what happened and when.
- ✔ Speak up. Whether it's in the workplace, an education setting or when accessing services, don't be afraid to raise concerns if you feel you have been disadvantaged because of your caring role.
- ✔ Seek advice and support. Carers organisations, advice services and HR teams can help you understand your options and the support available to you.

6 Your Right to Be Involved When the Person You Care For Leaves Hospital

A hospital discharge can be a worrying and stressful time, particularly if you will be helping to support the person once they return home.

As a carer, you are often the person who knows the individual best. Your knowledge, experience and understanding of their needs are valuable and, wherever possible, you should be involved in discussions about discharge arrangements. Being consulted can help ensure that the right support, equipment and services are in place before the person leaves hospital, making the transition home safer and more manageable for everyone involved.

Put it into practice:

- ✔ Let hospital staff know that you are a carer. They may not already know about your role or the support you provide.
- ✔ Ask questions and take notes. Make sure you understand any ongoing care needs, medication changes, follow-up appointments or support services being arranged.
- ✔ Be honest about what you can and cannot do. It's important that discharge plans are realistic and take your own circumstances into account.
- ✔ Request information before discharge. Knowing who to contact if concerns arise can help you feel more prepared and supported.

READ HERE

Continued on page 4

Carers RIGHTS DAY 19TH NOV

Carers Helpline: 0300 012 4272

Continued...

Someone You Know May Be a Carer Too...

One of the biggest barriers to accessing support and exercising rights is that many people simply don't identify themselves as carers.

They may say:
- "I'm just helping Mum out."
- "It's what any husband would do."
- "I'm only checking in on my neighbour."
- "I'm just doing what families do."

But providing regular support to someone who couldn't manage without it often means you are an unpaid carer.

This Carers Rights Day, consider the people around you.

One conversation could help them identify as a carer and access information, support and rights they may not know about.

Perhaps it's:
- A colleague who regularly attends medical appointments with a parent.
- A friend who manages a partner's medication.
- A neighbour who shops for an older relative every week.
- A young adult supporting a parent living with illness.

They may not realise that support is available because they haven't recognised themselves as carers yet.

How You Can Help

If you think someone you know may be an unpaid carer:

- ✔ Start a conversation.
- ✔ Share information about local carers support services.
- ✔ Let them know it's okay to ask for help.
- ✔ Encourage them to explore their rights and available support.

Sometimes a simple conversation can be the first step towards someone receiving the support they deserve.

A Final Thought

Knowing your rights is not about asking for special treatment. It's about recognising the valuable role unpaid carers play every day and ensuring they have the support needed to maintain their own wellbeing.

This Carers Rights Day, take a few moments to think about your own caring role and the people around you.

You may discover support, rights or opportunities that could make a difference to you.

And you may help someone else recognise that they are a carer too.



Worcester Cathedral – Carers & Communities Christmas Tree

For the second year we are displaying a **Carers & Communities** Christmas Tree which is being designed and built by our Shop staff and volunteers.

Celebrating the Festive Season, the event showcases 100's of trees decorated by local schools, businesses and charities and runs from the **27th November 2026** through to the **5th January 2027**.

Admission will be just £5 per adult, with FREE entry for children under 18 and carers, and tickets available to book from late autumn.

Further details can be found here. CLICK HERE

CARINGNEWS : TRAINING & ACTIVITIES EVENT CALENDAR

Learning

MOVING WITH CONFIDENCE
It's essential as carers we are confident with safe moving and handling to prevent hurting ourselves and the person we look after.

BOOK NOW **5th November**
10:30am-12:30pm
Redditch

CARERS ESSENTIALS SESSION ONLINE
This introduction to some of the ways carers can begin to access practical help and support.

BOOK NOW **17th November**
10:00am-11:00am

BOOK NOW **16th December**
10:00am-11:00am

DEMENTIA ONLINE
Cover the different types of Dementia, seeing the person behind the disease. We cover coping strategies and how to live with someone with Dementia while looking after yourself.

BOOK NOW **Toolkit**
26th November
10:30am - 11:30am
Online

BOOK NOW **Communication**
26th November
11:30am - 12:30pm
Online

FALLS PREVENTION
Join us and the experts to risk-check the living space and situation of the person you care for.

BOOK NOW **5th November**
11:30am-12:30pm
Redditch

Wellbeing

MINDFULNESS
Take some time for yourself and discover how mindfulness can help you navigate the challenges of a busy caring role.

BOOK NOW **6th November**
10:00am - 11:30am
Worcester

SOUND THERAPY
Come and find rest and stillness with a deeply relaxing and re-balancing Sound Bath.

BOOK NOW **12th November**
10:30am - 12:00pm
Pershore

FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA - ARLEY HOUSE & GARDENS
This special event is a chance to step away from your caring responsibilities for a couple of hours, unwind in stunning surroundings, and enjoy delicious refreshments in the company of fellow carers.

BOOK NOW **20th November**
2:30pm -4:30pm
Bewdley

WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP
Join us for a festive and enjoyable wreath-making workshop, where unpaid carers can take some well-deserved time out from their caring responsibilities and embrace the spirit of the season.

BOOK NOW **30th November**
10:00am - 12:30pm
Bromsgrove

BOOK NOW **1st December**
10:00am - 12:30pm
Worcester

GLASS FUSION
Take some time out from your caring role and join us for a relaxing and creative Glass Fusion Workshop in the picturesque village of Flyford Flavell.

BOOK NOW **4th December**
10:00am - 12:30pm
Worcester

Legal & Financial

PREPARING TO PAY FOR CARE
Worried about care home fees? Join our expert-led online event and get the answers you need.

BOOK NOW **5th November**
10:00am-12:00pm
Online

BENEFITS - CARING & CARING MATTERS ONLINE
Designed for unpaid carers, family members and anyone supporting someone with care needs, this session offers clear, accessible guidance and practical signposting to help carers maximise income and access the support they deserve.

BOOK NOW **3rd November**
10:00am-12:00pm
Online

LEGAL & FINANCIAL
Join Solicitor Chris Milne and Carers & Communities for all the essentials.

BOOK NOW **9th December**
10:30am-12:30pm
Worcester

Quick Reminder... REMEMBER to check your spam!

For any mailing you subscribe to, be sure to check your spam so you don't miss it.

We are pleased to announce that when you book your spot for an event, there is now the option to make a voluntary donation.

Any contributions you make will go back into supporting carers.

Thank you!

A few words... from our CEO

As one year draws to a close and another begins, this edition of *Caring News* looks at change, which is something every carer experiences, although rarely in a predictable way. Caring responsibilities can grow, reduce or end; services and circumstances shift; and what someone needs from one month to the next may look very different.

Our feature on life after caring is an important reminder that caring can shape routines, relationships and identity over many years. Moving into a different stage of life can bring relief and new possibilities, but also uncertainty, grief or a loss of purpose. There is no single or "right" way to adjust.

Meanwhile, the Government has published a new action plan for unpaid carers, committed to appointing a dedicated carers' champion and strengthened its commitment to a future National Care Service. These are welcome developments, but what happens next will be crucial. Now is the time for carers to say what works, what does not and what needs to change. Through our Carer Voice opportunities, we'll ensure the experiences of our carers inform local and national discussions, and that decisions about the future of care are shaped by those who understand it best.

Closer to home, we are pleased to have secured some additional funding that will help us build on our existing support. These will be modest steps, but they are positive ones, and we look forward to sharing more in due course.



So, whatever stage of caring you are at, please stay connected with us, contact us when you need support and share your experiences. Together, let's make the most of this renewed focus on caring.

with best wishes
Karen



Valuing; Opinions, Involvement, Consultation, Engagement.

We are delighted to share details of our Online Membership.

As a member of the Carer Voice online membership, you'll receive our regular newsletter, opportunities to share your views and experiences, and invitations to take part in consultations, surveys and engagement activities to help shape and improve services for carers.

We would be delighted for more carers to join us.

How does it work?

We share some of the key issues carers have been talking to us about recently.
We gather feedback through conversations, meetings and engagement activities to help us understand what's working well and where improvements are needed.

We also share consultations, surveys and other carer voice opportunities.

Every contribution helps shape better support for carers.

Your voice as a carer can make a real difference.

Together, carers are stronger and can help bring important issues to the forefront and inspire action.

Your Voice. Your Choice. Your Impact.

Sign up today : **carervoice@carersandcommunities.org.uk**

Act On Energy

Act On Energy is an award-winning, free, impartial energy advice charity offering expert guidance over the phone, online, in the community and through appointment-based home visits.

Our goal is to help as many local residents as we can, with our team of Community Outreach Officers providing support through a wide range of household energy challenges.

Some of the issues we typically help people with include:

- Understanding bills & tariffs
- Energy saving tips
- How to & helping contact energy suppliers
- Metering issues
- Damp & mould advice
- Carbon monoxide advice

Certain low-cost measures are also available for residents receiving home visits with items such as electric blankets, radiator foils, draught excluding tape and LED bulbs on offer where necessary.

With support from Worcestershire County Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund, our Energy Resilience Officers are expanding the help available to local residents, offering more intensive, personalised support for those experiencing complex domestic energy issues.

This service complements our existing offer and is designed for cases such as:

- Complex billing disputes
- Faulty or disputed metering issues
- Long-standing supplier complaints
- Energy Ombudsman cases
- Other challenging energy-related situations requiring specialist assistance

Guidance is delivered through tailored casework, typically by means of additional home visits, to help residents resolve issues and improve their energy resilience.

Call us today for information on reducing your energy bills, support with energy issues and supplier disputes and to check your eligibility for other support schemes.
0800 988 2881 e: advice@actonenergy.org.uk
www.actonenergy.org.uk

We welcome referrals from professionals. If you know someone who could benefit from our service.

READ HERE

You can find our logo and various other resources in Act On Energy's Professional Resources Toolkit.

CLICK HERE

When Circumstances Change: Life After Caring

Caring roles can change in many ways. The person you care for may become more independent, move into supported living or a care home, or your caring role may end following a bereavement. Whether change happens gradually or suddenly, it can bring new routines, practical challenges and a wide range of emotions. You may feel sadness, relief, uncertainty, loss, pride or guilt and sometimes all at once. These feelings are valid, and you do not have to face the transition alone.



Understanding life after caring

When caring has been a major part of your life, its absence can leave a real gap. You may miss the routines, conversations and responsibilities that once shaped your days, while also feeling relief that the pressure has eased. If your role ended through bereavement, you may be grieving both the person and the loss of your daily purpose and identity. Physical or emotional exhaustion can also become more noticeable once the demands of caring reduce.

There is no right or wrong way to respond. Everyone's experience is different, and adjustment takes time. Be patient with yourself: grief, relief, sadness and hope can exist together.

Recognising what caring has given you

Caring may have strengthened your organisational, communication, problem-solving, advocacy and resilience skills. You may have coordinated appointments, navigated services and managed difficult situations, while showing patience, compassion and determination. These strengths remain part of you and can support your relationships, community involvement, education, volunteering or employment.

Giving yourself permission to adjust

After months or years of putting someone else first, focusing on your own needs may feel unfamiliar. You do not need to have everything worked out. Give yourself permission to adjust at your own pace and begin with small, manageable steps:

- Take things one day at a time.
- Avoid rushing major decisions if they can wait.
- Reconnect with hobbies and interests you may have put aside.
- Accept support from family, friends or support services.
- Create new routines that bring structure to your week.

A daily walk, coffee with a friend, a local group or a new activity can provide structure, rebuild confidence and create a renewed sense of purpose.

Rediscovering you

When caring has become part of your identity, it is natural to wonder what comes next. Consider what matters to you now, what brings you enjoyment, and which goals, interests or relationships you may want to revisit. You might return to a hobby, take a course, strengthen friendships or reconsider an ambition that caring placed on hold. Rediscovering yourself does not mean leaving your caring experience behind; it means recognising that you are more than the role and carrying its strengths into new opportunities.

Staying connected

Life after caring can feel isolating, especially if caring reduced your social contact. Family, friends, bereavement groups, former-carer networks and community activities can offer companionship and understanding. Volunteering may also provide connection and a way to use the skills and compassion developed through caring.

Looking after your health & wellbeing

Your own health may have taken a back seat while you were caring. Now may be the time to offer yourself the same care and compassion you gave to someone else. Consider:

- Prioritising rest and sleep.
- Eating regular, nutritious meals.
- Staying physically active.
- Looking after your mental wellbeing.
- Attending any health checks, screenings or appointments you may have postponed.

Finding meaning beyond caring

Moving forward is not about forgetting the person you cared for. It is about carrying important memories, values and experiences with you while finding purpose in ways that feel right. You might learn new skills, return to work or education, become involved in your community, or use your lived experience to help improve services through engagement, co-production or Carer Voice activity.

There is no pressure to make changes or take on anything new before you feel ready.

Where to find support

Support may be available from:

- Carers & Communities.
- Bereavement support organisations.
- Your GP practice.
- Community groups and activities.
- Local and national helplines.

Asking for help is not a weakness. Just as you supported someone else, you deserve support too.

Looking ahead

A caring role may change or end, but the compassion, resilience and dedication it required remain part of you. Take one step at a time. With support and patience, life can still hold purpose, connection, growth and hope. Every caring journey is different. For further information, advice and support, visit our website and explore the resources below.

If you have experiences or words of encouragement that could help others facing a change in their caring role, we would like to hear from you. Sharing them can help current and former carers feel understood and less alone.

A note about changing caring roles

Being a carer is not defined by where you live or a single set of circumstances. If the person you care for has moved into a care home, supported living, or you support them from a distance, you may still be a carer and support may still be available to you.

Whether your caring role has evolved or you are adjusting to life after caring, we recognise that every caring journey is unique and aim to offer support that reflects your individual circumstances.

Not sure what support is available to you? Get in touch. We'd be happy to help.

Further information & support

- READ HERE — Emotional Support
- READ HERE — Life after caring
- READ HERE — Annette's story
- READ HERE — Marie Curie
- READ HERE — Strength study

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Carers & Communities

Here are ways you can keep connected with us.

Carers Helpline :
0300 012 4272
Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm, with a later opening time of 8pm on a Wednesday

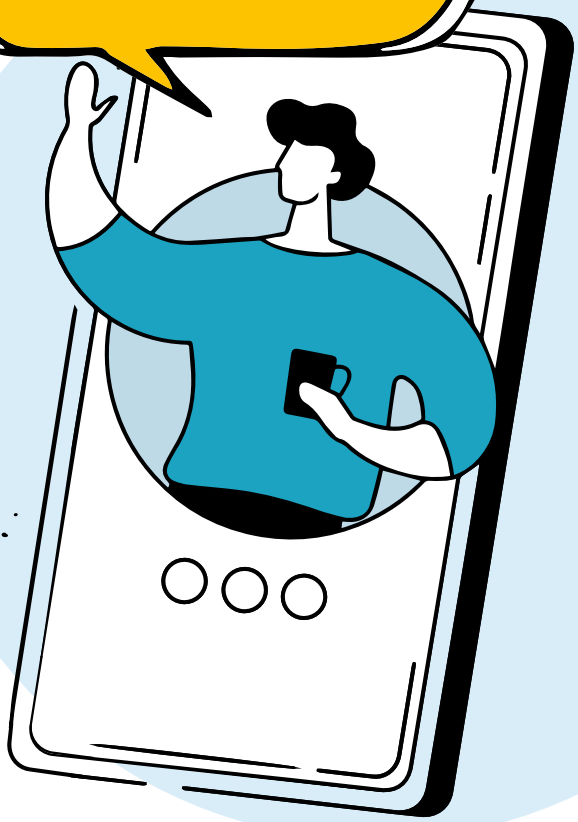
For more information :
www.carersandcommunities.org.uk

Email us at :
mail@carersandcommunities.org.uk

Carers & Communities
Polysec House,
Blackpole Trading Estate West,
Hindlip Lane,
Worcester, WR3 8TJ

Something you want to know more about in the next edition?

Drop us a line... we welcome your feedback and ideas!



You can FOLLOW US here:

Keep on making a difference and sharing your support for our work by following us on social media.

Change of Circumstances?

Need to tell us about a change of personal details : name, address, email, telephone number? Are you no longer a carer? You can get in touch with us via phone, email or even webchat. Or you can tell us via the handy form on our website.

Keep us updated at a time to suit you and we can ensure you are getting the information you need in your caring role.

CLICK HERE

*Carers & Communities is a working name of Worcestershire Association of Carers.

Registered Charity No. 1071850.
Registered Company No. 03485330. 12/2025.

Worcestershire Carers Hub
Run by : **Carers & Communities** | **0300 012 4272**
Funded by : **Worcestershire County Council**

worcestershire county council