



Welcome to the latest edition of **Caring News**, where we celebrate **Carers Week**, share practical support, and recognise the vital contribution unpaid carers make every day.

It has been a busy and inspiring time here at Carers & Communities.

One of the highlights has been Carers Week, a national campaign that raises awareness of caring, shines a light on the challenges unpaid carers face, and recognises the extraordinary contribution they make to families and communities across the UK.

This year's theme, Building Carer-Friendly Communities, felt especially important. It reminded us that support starts with awareness, understanding and connection - and that many people with caring responsibilities may not yet recognise themselves as carers, or know what help is available.

Throughout the week, we shared information to help people identify carers, offered guidance for those new to caring, and signposted people to essential support. We also held several drop-in sessions across the county, giving carers the opportunity to speak

with us, ask questions and access advice in a welcoming space.

We were delighted to meet so many new carers during these sessions. The response has encouraged us to explore how we can offer more opportunities like this in the future, so please do watch this space. In the meantime, please take a look at the activities and training sessions we deliver, along with our expanding wellbeing programme, featured on pages 4 and 5.

Carers Week also gave us the chance to highlight the importance of carer voice. By listening to carers' lived experiences and sharing them with the wider system, we can help influence meaningful change. This includes learning from the Accelerating Reform Fund report, which focused on hospital discharge and the critical need to involve carers at the earliest opportunity. You can read more on pages 5 and 6.

"Carer-friendly communities are built by working together, listening carefully, and acting on what carers tell us."

Carers consistently tell us they need a break and want to feel recognised, valued and visible. We know there is more work to do, and we will continue striving to provide carers with the support they need and deserve. As the warmer days arrive, we also hope this edition offers a little light relief, with useful tips, trusted resources and ideas for places to visit that may make days out with the person you care for a little easier.

Best wishes,

**Carers
& Communities**

Carers Week

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Carers & Communities

Navigating Life's Journeys





As the warmer days arrive, many of us start thinking about getting out and making the most of the season.

For carers, however, even a simple day out can take extra planning - and with the rising cost of living, finding affordable, accessible options matters more than ever.

To help, we've brought together useful tips, trusted resources and ideas for places to visit that may make days out with the person you care for a little easier, more enjoyable and less stressful.

Accessibility Planning



A good place to start is AccessAble, which provides detailed accessibility information for thousands of venues across the UK and Ireland. It can help you check wheelchair access, disabled facilities and other practical details before you travel.

Search for "AccessAble" online to find their accessibility guides.

Discounts & Day Trip Ideas



Carers UK has a useful list of offers and discounts that may help carers take a short break or enjoy a change of scenery with the person they care for.

National Attractions & Concessions



National Trust: The National Trust offers an Essential Companion Card for up to two companions of someone with a disability or support need. This can provide free entry for the carer/companion.

The National Trust also provides access guides for many of its places, so it is worth checking accessibility information before visiting.

English Heritage:

English Heritage can offer a free carer ticket when accompanying someone with a disability. They may ask for evidence such as a PIP letter or Blue Badge.

RHS Gardens & Flower Shows:

The RHS offers free entry for essential carers accompanying visitors with a disability at its main gardens and some events, with proof of carer status or support need.

Theatre & Cinema



Theatre: Some theatres offer discounted or free companion tickets for disabled visitors or people who need support. It is always worth checking with the theatre in advance, especially if access information is not clear on their website.

Cinema: The CEA Card is a national scheme run by the UK Cinema Association. It allows a disabled cinema guest to take someone with them free of charge, where support is needed.

The card currently costs £6.50 per year. Some cinema providers may also offer their own discounts, so check before booking.

Theme Parks, Wildlife Centres & Days Out



Many UK attractions offer carer or companion concessions. Examples include Thorpe Park, Alton Towers, Chessington, LEGOLAND, Blair Drummond Safari and Adventure Park, M&D's Scotland Theme Park, Landmark Forest Adventure Park, Cadw sites in Wales and the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

For larger attractions, it is also worth checking whether a Ride Access Pass or similar arrangement is available. These schemes can help visitors who may find standing in queues difficult because of a physical disability, learning disability, health condition or sensory need.

Useful Cards & Passes



Access Card: The Access Card helps people communicate their access needs using recognised symbols. It can reduce the need to explain support requirements repeatedly at different venues.

The card costs £15 for three years. A free Digital Access Pass may also be available.

Carers Card UK: Carers Card UK offers an official carer ID card, along with online discounts and in-store savings through digital vouchers.

RADAR Keys: A RADAR key, also known as a National Key Scheme key, opens many locked accessible toilets across the UK. They are widely used by local authorities and can make days out more practical for people who need accessible facilities.

Grants & Financial Support



Some charities offer grants for carers and families on a low income who would benefit from a break. Eligibility and application processes vary, so check each organisation's website before applying. Examples include Family Fund, The 3H Foundation, The Respite Association and The League of Helping Hand.

Local Venues



Warwick Castle: One carer per guest with additional needs may be entitled to free entry to the Castle when booking a short break. Proof of disability or support need may be required.

Dudley Zoo & Castle: Dudley Zoo offers concessions for pre-booked disabled adult and children's tickets. Proof of disability is required.

Carers First: Carers First has a directory of discounts and cheap days out for unpaid carers, including local attractions, museums, parks, wildlife parks and historical sites.

West Midlands Safari Park: West Midlands Safari Park offers essential companion tickets for people who need support because of disability-related needs. Check the park's current documentation requirements before booking.

Before You Go



Schemes and discounts can change, so always check the venue's latest accessibility information before travelling. It can also help to book ahead, ask what evidence is needed and take any relevant documents with you, such as a Blue Badge, benefit award letter or carer identification.



Meet Melissa

We are delighted to introduce Melissa Aldridge, one of the newest members of our team. Melissa joined us in April as our Carer Training & Events Officer and is already helping to shape a refreshed programme of training, information sessions and wellbeing activities for carers.

Since taking up the role, Melissa has focused on making our sessions useful, accessible and relevant. She has been reviewing how training and support sessions are structured, looking at what helps carers attend, and considering how we can make each session clear, practical and worthwhile.

Alongside this, Melissa has been reintroducing and expanding our wellbeing activities. Sessions have already been secured for late summer, October and the Christmas period, with a focus on relaxed, creative and enjoyable opportunities that give carers time to pause, connect with others and do something for themselves.

Melissa is also exploring options for some last-minute summer activities, so please keep checking the events calendar on our website. New opportunities will be added as they are confirmed, and we would love carers to take a look and get involved.

We also share regular updates on our News pages, including our monthly What's On blog. It is a simple way to find the latest news, upcoming events and carer voice opportunities for the month ahead.

We hope carers enjoy the refreshed programme and find something that feels helpful, enjoyable or simply a welcome break.



'Click here' to browse our events calendar.



'Click here' to read our latest news & updates.

Learning

MOVING WITH CONFIDENCE
It's essential as carers you are confident with safe moving and handling to prevent hurting yourself and the person you care for.

- 4th August**
10:30am-11:30am
Malvern
- 21st October**
10:30am-11:30am
Kidderminster
- 5th November**
10:30am-12:30pm
TBC

DEMENTIA
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.

- 30th September COMMUNICATION***
10:30am - 11:30am
- TOOLKIT***
11.30am - 12:30pm
*Both events at the same location, Worcester
- 26th November**
10:30am - 12:30am
Pershore

FALLS & FRAILTY SKILLS
Risk-check the living space and situation of the person you care for.

- 4th August**
11:30am-12:30pm
Malvern
- 9th September**
11:30am-12:30pm
Kidderminster

Legal & Financial

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

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

CARERS ESSENTIALS SESSION ONLINE

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

- 18th August**
10:00am-11:00am
- 16th September**
10:00am-11:00am
- 15th October**
10:00am-11:00am
- 17th November**
10:00am-11:00am
- 16th December**
10:00am-11:00am

PRACTICAL FIRST AID
Having up to date First Aid skills can make a significant difference to your confidence in that situation.

- 9th September**
10:30am-11:30am
Kidderminster
- 30th November**
10:30am-11:30am
Kidderminster

STROKE AWARENESS & MANAGEMENT
This session provides a practical introduction to stroke awareness for carers, including how to recognise possible signs of a stroke.

- 21st October**
10:30am - 11:30am
Kidderminster

SAFEGUARDING & CARERS LIVE Q&A ONLINE

This session will include a Q&A with the safeguarding team, giving carers the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences, and take part in discussions around safeguarding and support for carers.

- 13th August**
1:00pm - 3:00pm
Online

Wellbeing

CANAL TRIP AND FISH & CHIPS
This enjoyable trip offers the chance to unwind and take in the beautiful Worcestershire waterways.

- 7th August**
12:00pm-3:00pm
Droitwich

SHELSLEY WALSH HILL CLIMB
We are delighted to have been kindly gifted two tickets per month throughout the summer season by Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb, offering unpaid carers the chance to enjoy a fantastic day out at this iconic motorsport venue

- 8th August**
8:00am - 6:00pm
Shelsley Walsh
- 13th September**
8:00am - 6:00pm
Shelsley Walsh

WALK & TALK AT ARROW VALLEY LAKE
Join us for a relaxing and friendly guided Walk & Talk around Arrow Valley Lake.

- 14th August**
10:00am - 12:00pm
Redditch

THERAPEUTIC WRITING SESSION FOR CARERS
These NEW monthly online sessions are a gentle, nurturing space designed especially for carers.

- 26th August**
10:00am-12:00pm
Online

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

- 6th August**
10:30am-12:30pm
Bromsgrove
- 6th October**
10:30am-12:30pm
Pershore

DROP IN SUPPORT SURGERY (discuss topics with Carer Advisors & peer support)
Join us for a friendly and supportive drop-in session in Worcester, offering carers the opportunity to connect with others and access expert advice in an informal setting.

- 20th August**
10:30am - 11:30am
Worcester*

MEDICATION SUPPORT, NUTRITION & HYDRATION
This session offers practical guidance for carers who support someone with medicines, eating and drinking at home.

- 20th August**
11:30am - 12:30pm
Worcester*

*Same location

MALVERN AUTUMN SHOW
We are delighted to share we have 6 free tickets available for carers. Please use our booking system to book your ticket today.

- 27th September**
10:00am - 3:00pm
Malvern

THE HISTORIC GHOST WALK OF WORCESTER
The Historic Ghost Walk of Worcester will lead you through gates normally locked and doors usually bolted to learn of ghostly experiences and historical facts in a fascinating tour of one of the most haunted and historical cities in Britain.

- 29th October**
7:30pm - 9:00pm
Worcester

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.

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



NEWS ARTICLES



Listening to carers: improving hospital discharge through partnership.

During Carers Week, we celebrated the vital role unpaid carers play in our communities and renewed our commitment to ensuring they are recognised, supported and involved all year round.

Carers are often the quiet constant at moments of major change. They coordinate appointments, provide practical and emotional support, and help loved ones adjust when life takes an unexpected turn. Yet too often, their own needs, knowledge and capacity are not fully recognised when important decisions are made.

That is why listening to carers and acting on what they tell us matters. Their lived experience can help shape better systems, services and communities. Building truly carer-friendly communities depends on partnership: listening carefully, understanding what carers need, and making sure their voices influence practical change.

From insight to action
This message is at the heart of the Accelerating Reform Fund project delivered in 2025-2026. The project focused on hospital discharge, which is an issue carers have raised concerns about for many years, and explored why carers need to be identified and involved from the earliest possible stage.

“The implications for discharge flow, readmissions, carer breakdown and health inequalities are significant if carers are not identified and involved at the earliest opportunity.”

The report highlights the impact of collaborative work across health, social care and voluntary sector

partners to improve support for unpaid carers during and after hospital discharge. It sets out the programme’s achievements, learning and outcomes, as well as the opportunities to improve carers’ experiences across Worcestershire.

- What the report found**
- Carer identification remains inconsistent and significantly below expected levels.
 - Of the 67 carers who shared their experience, only 27% felt their own needs had been considered during discharge planning.
 - There is a clear gap between strategic policy and operational practice.
 - Carers are still too often seen as barriers to discharge, rather than partners in care.
 - Small, targeted changes within discharge pathways can have a positive system impact.
 - Carers often experience health inequalities, financial strain and increased caring intensity after discharge.

What needs to happen next
To fully realise the benefits of this work, the system now needs to move from insight to implementation. The report identifies several priorities that could make support for carers more consistent, visible and effective:

- A standardised, system-wide approach to carer identification.
- A dedicated carer offer embedded within discharge pathways.
- Executive-level endorsement of carers as equal partners in care
- A carer dashboard to support performance oversight.
- Integration of technology-enabled solutions for carers as part of routine discharge practice.

Continued on page 6 ➡

A few words... from our CEO

As we move into the summer edition of **Caring News**, it feels a good moment to pause and recognise how much has continued to develop since we became **Carers & Communities**. The new name was never just about changing how we look. It was about better reflecting the work we do every day: supporting unpaid carers, strengthening local connections and helping make sure carers are seen, heard and valued across Worcestershire. This edition shows that in a very practical way, from Carers Week activity across the county to new opportunities for carers to connect, learn and have their say.

The pages here bring together a wide range of stories, updates and practical information, and I hope they give a real sense of the breadth of activity taking place across our services and communities. Whether it is helping someone understand their rights, offering advice at the

right time, creating refreshed training and wellbeing sessions, or working with partners to improve support locally, the common thread is the same: carers should not have to navigate everything alone.

We also know that many carers continue to face real pressures, from the cost of living and health concerns to balancing work, family life and caring responsibilities. That is why our role remains both practical and personal: providing clear information, listening carefully, and making sure carers' experiences help shape what happens next. The work highlighted in this edition, including carer voice opportunities and learning from the Accelerating Reform Fund project on hospital discharge, reminds us how important it is that carers are identified early, involved properly and recognised as partners in care.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition, and to the carers, volunteers, staff



and partners who continue to share their time, insight and energy with us. Your involvement helps keep our work grounded in what matters most. I hope you enjoy this summer edition and find something in it that is useful, encouraging, or simply reminds you that support is here and that your voice matters.

with best wishes
Karen

Continued...

The ARF programme makes one thing clear: improving carer identification, involvement and support is not an optional enhancement. It is a system necessity.

This sits alongside the sustained and unprecedented pressures facing the NHS, both now and in the future. Acute and community services are operating under high demand, workforce constraints, financial challenge and increasing clinical complexity. Staff continue to demonstrate professionalism, resilience and compassion in delivering safe care. Improving support for carers should therefore be seen not as an added burden, but as part of creating safer, more sustainable discharge pathways.

A shared responsibility

Behind every discharge is a family adapting to change, often at pace.

Behind every hospital bed is a multidisciplinary team balancing flow, safety and quality. The programme has consistently highlighted that sustainable discharge is a shared responsibility - one that depends not only on clinical readiness, but also on carer

capacity, confidence and resilience.

Carers' stories

The report shares the stories of four carers, following their experiences from hospital admission through to discharge. These personal accounts may be difficult to read, but they are essential. They show the real impact of excluding carers during significant life transitions and the difference it can make when carers are properly involved.

Keeping carers' voices at the centre

Although implementation is still ongoing, one lasting outcome of this work is a renewed commitment to ensuring carers' voices are heard, valued and used to shape meaningful, lasting change across the system.

We encourage carers, families, professionals and community partners to read the report and share it with others. The more widely these experiences are understood, the stronger the opportunity to build services that recognise carers as equal partners in care.

If you would like to get involved,

please get in touch. Whether you want to share lived experience, help shape services, contribute to local conversations or influence future developments, your voice can help make a difference.

We know that lived experience plays a vital role in shaping systems and services, helping them work better for everyone who uses them. By sharing your experience as a carer, you can help shape positive change.

That is why we want to make it easier for carers to share their views in a way, and at a time, that suits them.

We understand that caring responsibilities can make it difficult to attend meetings or get involved in formal opportunities. We have therefore been thinking carefully about how to offer more flexible ways for carers to contribute. Forums, meetings and boards are important spaces where we can share carer views, identify common issues and support solution-focused discussions.

You can still get involved by joining meetings, but if you would prefer something more flexible, you can join our Online Membership and Carer Voice community.

As a member, you can share your views on topics relevant to caring and receive regular email updates about opportunities to have your say:

- Hear about topics that matter to you in your caring role.
- Share feedback easily on the issues that matter most to you.
- Give feedback at a time that suits you.
- Choose as much or as little involvement as you want.
- Receive updates from carer-related meetings.

Your voice as a carer can make a real difference. Together, carers are stronger and can help bring carer issues to the forefront and inspire action.

Join our online community and become a member of the Online Membership.

Contact:
carervoice@carersandcommunities.org.uk

Have Your Say

health watch

Your feedback can make a difference.

Have you recently used a GP, hospital, dentist, or other health and care service in Worcestershire?

Healthwatch Worcestershire wants to hear about your experience - whether it was positive or could have been better. Your feedback helps highlight what's working well and where improvements are needed.

By sharing your views, you can help shape health and care services for your community and make a real difference for others.

Mental Health

Every story matters, and your voice can help improve services across Worcestershire.

"Help us understand the experiences of people living with Severe Mental Illness in Worcestershire. Our latest survey follows on from previous work on mental health, this time focusing on finding out the experiences of people in Worcestershire living with a serious and enduring mental health condition (SMI). We are also interested in hearing how carers are impacted and if they are receiving support."



State of Caring

The State of Caring is the UK's most comprehensive regular research into the lives and experiences of unpaid carers. It is used as a vital source of evidence not only by Carers UK, but by many other organisations including Government, local authorities, health and social care services, charities and carers groups.

The State of Caring 2026 survey is NOW OPEN, and will be live until 11.59pm, Sunday 9 August 2026.



Taking Part in Health Research – Why it Really Matters

Every contribution, no matter how small it may feel, becomes part of something bigger, offering hope, improving lives, and supporting healthier communities for generations to come.

Taking part in health research is a simple yet powerful way to make a difference and change lives. It's about more than studies and data - it's about people helping people. By sharing a little of your time, your experiences, or your voice, you contribute to a deeper understanding of health and care. This helps shape better treatments, improve services, and bring about earlier diagnoses for others in the future. Every contribution, no matter how small it may feel, becomes part of something bigger - offering hope, improving lives, and supporting healthier communities for generations to come. To find out more about the National Institute for Health and Care and to take part in a study scan the QR code.

There are a number of studies taking place across Herefordshire & Worcestershire looking at experiences of living with a mental health diagnosis through to helping in your local community by becoming a Cancer Champion. Community Power are an independent Charity connecting local communities to local, regional and national systems, including health research and will support you, however you want to be involved.



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



You can FOLLOW US here:

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

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

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

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.



CARERS ACTION WORCESTERSHIRE A CONSORTIUM COMPRISING:

Carers & Communities

Reg Charity no: 1071850
Polysec House, Blackpole Trading Est. West,
Hindlip Lane, Worcester, WR3 8TJ.
t: 01905 751340
e: mail@carersandcommunities.org.uk
www.carersandcommunities.org.uk

Jigsaw Worcestershire Mental Health

Reg Charity no: 1173868
35 The Drive, Powick, Worcester, WR2 4SA.
t: 07503 601737
e: jigsaw.worcs@gmail.com
www.jigsawgroup.info

Worcestershire Parent & Carers Community

Reg Charity no: 1122583
WPCC, Perdisswell Young People's leisure Club,
Perdisswell Park, Droitwich Road, Worcester, WR3 7SN.
t: 07955 760488
e: tamara@worcestershireparentcarers.org.uk
www.worcestershireparentcarers.org.uk

YSS Worcestershire Young Carers

Reg Charity no: 1071850
Polysec House, Blackpole Trading Est. West,
Hindlip Lane, Worcester, WR3 8TJ.
t: 01905 751340 e: mail@carersworcs.org.uk
www.carersworcs.org.uk

Carers Careline

Reg Charity no: 1106747
Room 1, Ecumenical Centre, 6 Evesham Walk,
Redditch, B97 4EX.
t: 01527 66177
e: info@carerscareline.co.uk
www.carerscareline.co.uk

Worcestershire Carers Hub,

Run by:
Carers & Communities
0300 012 4272

Funded by:
Worcestershire County Council

