

Carers

The magazine for Unpaid Carers

Are you a Carer
without realising?

Working for
Change

Carer Story

Peer Support
at our Hubs

Our Carers
Survey Results

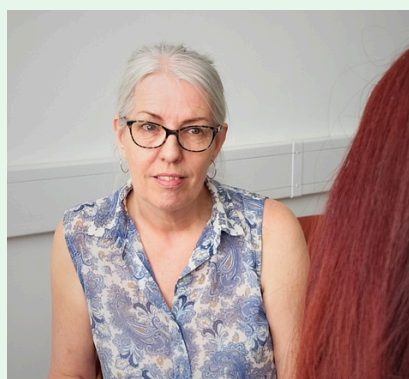
Young Carers
new look!

Want to speak to someone?

You can talk to one of our friendly team at a time that suits you.



**Scan this code to
Book a Call**



Want to arrange to meet a Support Worker face to face?

**Scan this code to
Book a Face-to-
Face appointment**



Want to connect with other Carers?

Our WhatsApp Community has dedicated groups to connect Carers.



**Scan this code to
join our WhatsApp
Community**

Find your nearest Hub

Join us for peer support, a chat with our Support Workers, engaging activities, learning opportunities and relaxing treatments. Find more info on page 13.





Supporting Unpaid Carers across our community for over 20 years

Our experienced support workers can help you with:

- ✓ Information and advice
- ✓ Personalised one-to-one support
- ✓ Wellbeing support
- ✓ Connecting with other carers at our workshops, groups and events
- ✓ Benefits advice & Grants

0300 111 1919

carersinbeds.org.uk



Supporting Young Carers in Bedford Borough

- ✓ Groups & Activities
- ✓ Wellbeing
- ✓ School Engagement

youngcarersbedford.com



Support for Memory Loss and Dementia

- ✓ Information & Advice
- ✓ Support Groups
- ✓ Listening Ear

memorynavigationsservice.co.uk

Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of your Carers Magazine. Whether this is your first time reading or you’ve been with us for years — thank you. This magazine is one of the ways we aim to keep you connected, informed and supported in your caring role.

In this issue, we’ve packed in stories, updates and practical advice shaped by what you’ve told us matters most. You’ll find results from our latest Carers Survey, offering honest insights into the challenges you face — from exhaustion and financial pressure to the struggle of taking even a short break. Your feedback is powerful, and it’s already shaping how we advocate for better support.

We also spotlight the quiet commitment of Male Carers, the unique experiences of Young Adult Carers, and the progress our Young Carers team is making in schools across Bedford Borough.

There are updates on our Hubs, outreach work, Dementia services and more. And if you’re not yet part of our WhatsApp community, this issue shows how simple it is to stay in touch, ask questions and find support.

Finally, I encourage you to read Sam’s story — a powerful reminder that behind every statistic is a person doing their best. If that’s you, please know this: you are not alone. We see you, we hear you, and we are here for you.

With warm wishes,

Nicky

Communications Lead
Carers in Bedfordshire



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Cover image: Tizi is a Carer and is also a
Young Carer Support Worker

Could you be a Carer without realising?



Many people don't realise they're a Carer. You might be helping a parent with medication, supporting a partner with a health condition, or checking in on a neighbour — and not think twice about it. But if someone depends on you, you could be a Carer. And recognising that is the first step to getting support.

At Carers in Bedfordshire, we often meet people who've been caring for years without knowing help is available. Identifying as a Carer not only opens the door to practical support — it also protects your wellbeing and your rights at work, school or with healthcare.

Our latest survey showed many Carers hadn't even told their GP — even though they were struggling with stress, finances, and time for themselves.

Spot the Signs — In Yourself and Others

You might be a Carer if you:

- Help someone with washing, dressing or meals.
- Regularly attend appointments or manage medication for a loved one.
- Offer emotional support to someone with a mental health condition.
- Coordinate care or services on someone's behalf.

But it's not just about looking inward. Take a moment to notice those around you:

- A friend who always leaves early to check in on a parent?
- A neighbour who hasn't been out much and seems exhausted?
- A colleague juggling work with phone calls to care providers?
- Gently ask, "That sounds like a lot — do you have any support?" could be the start of them identifying as a Carer and getting the help they need.

Top Tips for Spotting a Hidden Carer

- They downplay what they do: "Oh, it's just what you do for family."
- They're always tired or unavailable, especially at weekends or evenings.
- They cancel social plans often because the person they care for needs them.
- They seem overwhelmed but don't ask for help, or say "I'm fine."

If You've Just Realised You're a Carer

- You're not alone. There are over 40,000 unpaid Carers in Bedfordshire — and we're here for you.

Steps you can take...

1

Visit: www.carersinbeds.org.uk or call 0300 111 1919 to find out more about our services

2

Register with Carers in Bedfordshire

3

Book a one-to-one appointment to talk through your situation and the many ways we can support you

Are you missing out on support?

Meet Jenny, our Benefits Advisor who's here to help.

Caring for someone you love can be all-consuming — emotionally, physically and financially. Many Carers don't realise they might be missing out on financial support they're entitled to. That's where Jenny comes in.

Jenny is our dedicated Benefits Advisor, and she meets with Carers every day to help them understand what support is available and how to access it. Whether it's Carer's Allowance, Attendance Allowance, PIP, or support with form filling and applications, Jenny is here to take away the stress and guide you through the process.

"A lot of Carers tell me they feel overwhelmed," says Jenny. "The forms can be confusing and people worry about getting things wrong.

But once we sit down together, it starts to make more sense — and often they're entitled to more than they realised."

Many Carers are surprised to find they've been missing out on money that could make a real difference — whether that's help with day-to-day costs, transport, or heating the house. Jenny offers 1-1 appointments, both in person and by phone, and can also help you prepare for benefits reviews or appeals.

How we can help:

- Understand what you're entitled to
- Help you apply for Carer's Allowance or other benefits
- Support you with difficult paperwork or forms
- Connect you with other useful financial advice services if needed

Don't Struggle Alone

If you're not sure what you're entitled to — or need help getting started — Jenny's here to help. To book a free, confidential appointment with our Benefits Advice service, give us a call on 0300 111 1919 or email contact@carersinbeds.org.uk. Or if reading digitally, Book a Call [here](#). You've earned this support — let us help you get it.





Your Voice Matters: What the Carers Survey Told Us

Every two years we ask Carers to tell us how things really are. Over 600 of you responded to our 2025 Carers Survey—thank you for being so honest.

These surveys aren't just tick boxes. Your feedback shapes our services, influences what we push for locally, and helps make the system work better for you.

What You Told Us

◆ Caring is intense

More than half of you provide over 71 hours of care each week. Many also juggle jobs, health conditions, and family responsibilities.

◆ Mental and physical health is getting worse

57% said your mental health had declined this year, with 58% reporting worsening physical health too. Stress and exhaustion are at an all-time high.

◆ Financial worries are growing

Almost half said their financial situation had worsened. Many Carers still don't know how to access help for a break, or can't afford one.

◆ Breaks are rare

69% of you said you can't take a break when you need one. While some can manage a few hours, overnight respite remains out of reach for most.

◆ You want support that's human

You told us you value practical help, emotional support, and speaking to someone who understands. Face-to-face and phone support topped the list—email and online services were less helpful.



What We're Doing

We're already using your responses to shape our work:

- Reviewing how we offer respite advice and emotional support
- Pushing for better options with local councils and NHS teams
- Strengthening our Carers Voice and Carers Panel to influence real change

We've also shared the findings with funders, commissioners, and partners—because your voice helps us fight for better.

Stay Involved

Want to help shape what happens next? Join our Carer Voice (see pg.8), attend a group, or simply stay connected.

Visit www.carersinbeds.org.uk, email contact@carersinbeds.org.uk or call 0300 111 1919.

We're here. We're listening. And together, we can make things better for Carers in Bedfordshire.

Help is Just a Tap Away

Caring for someone can be intense, isolating, and overwhelming — but getting support doesn't have to be complicated. We've made it easy to get help at a time that works for you.

Whether you need a chat, advice or just want to know someone is there — help is just a tap away.

Book a Call

With just a few clicks, you can book a one-to-one call with one of our friendly team members. They'll listen to what's going on, help you find the right support, and follow up if needed.

👉 To book a call, click this [link](#) or scan the QR code below.



Face-to-Face

You can now book a face-to-face appointment with a Support Workers at one of our Hubs. With four Hubs across the county you can choose the one closest to you.

👉 To book a face-to-face appointment, click this [link](#) or scan the QR code below.



Join Our WhatsApp Community

Sometimes you just need to ask a quick question. Or connect with others who get it. That's where our WhatsApp groups come in.

We have a growing WhatsApp community where you can:

- Get quick updates and reminders from us
- Join specialist groups (e.g. Dementia Carers, Young Adult Carers)
- Share tips and experiences with other Carers
- Ask questions — no judgement, just support

To join click this [link](#), scan the QR code below or email contact@carersinbeds.org.uk and we can send you the link.



"The WhatsApp group is like a lifeline some days. It's comforting knowing others are only a message away."



Have you heard?

Who Really Cares? Podcast - Season 2

We're back! Season 2 of our Who Really Cares podcast is here — and we're kicking things off with a powerful episode featuring actress and writer Tanya Franks.

You might know Tanya from EastEnders, Broadchurch or Pulling, but in our conversation, she opens up about something far more personal — caring for her stepdad who had Alzheimer's. Tanya shares the emotional journey of supporting him, what she learnt along the way, and why she's now using her voice to campaign for better brain health and dementia support.

Every episode this season brings together Carers and professionals to share stories that are honest, moving — and often uplifting too. Because talking helps. It connects us, empowers others, and reminds us that we're not alone.

 Listen now on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or through our website:
 www.carersinbeds.org.uk/help-for-carers/who-really-cares-podcast
Got a story to share? Get in touch — we'd love to hear from you.

Who Really Cares?

Tanya- Because I care

Tanya Franks is a well-known actress with a successful career in television and theatre. She cared for her stepfather during his experience with Alzheimer's, and is now working to create meaningful change for the next generation.

Brought to you by

Carers 
in bedfordshire



"What we do know is that we can cut down new cases of dementia by up to 45% by the lifestyle choices that we make... I wanted to learn more because I don't want other families to go through what we went through" - Tanya Franks



Carer Voice

Speaking up for change.

45 people have now signed up to Carer Voice, committed to speaking up for change. If you also sign up, every couple of months we'll send you opportunities to have your say to improve services for carers. Examples –

- Joining a national Carers Trust protest from home, asking MPs for better respite for Carers
- Working with Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire councils' to make their processes Carer friendly
- Linking up across the Eastern Region to share examples of good practice
- Proof-read and test our Online Training Courses

Carers Panel

This meets four times a year to advise the Board on issues faced by carers.

Recent projects include –

- Submitting evidence to the Parliamentary enquiry on Adult social care – the costs of inaction. The Panel divulged their own experiences of hardship and heartache to illustrate graphically the impact of poor or non-existent services. Not only was our Carers Panel evidence accepted, but it was also quoted at the start of the section on unpaid carers
- Carers Survey – the Panel designed some of the key questions.

- A small group is advising on campaign themes focusing on GPs, MPs, respite and advocacy.

A Carer Panel member and our Benefits Advisor went to a national Parliamentary event to share with MPs the financial difficulties carers face. One of the Bedfordshire MPs couldn't attend but visited our office afterwards to learn more and told us that he hardly ever hears from carers. Let's fix that! Our "Your MP and Parliament" workshop gave Carers tips on how to approach MPs. We'll be sharing those with you soon. Change only comes with collective pressure.

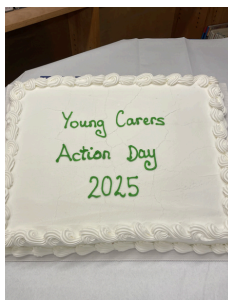


Our bright new Young Carers Bedford Borough branding landed in April! We wanted a fun, lively, action-packed brand that properly represents the Young Carers we support.

Whilst our services haven't changed - we wanted to be more visible and recognisable in the community to make sure that all Young Carers know about us, and know that they are welcome to join us and get the support they so richly deserve.

Our work to support Young Carers in schools and during the holidays continues at full speed. We are reaching more Young Carers every week and making sure that they have the emotional and physical tools they need to carry on caring for their loved one whilst also fulfilling their potential at school and reaching their own life goals.

Young Carers Action Day



YCAD raises awareness of Young Carers. We joined brilliant Young Carers, the Mayor and dignitaries at schools across the county to celebrate their role. Schools laid on special breakfasts, treats and cake—giving them a moment to relax and feel recognised.



Young Carers Making Memories

Over the past six months, our Young Carers have had the chance to take a well-earned break from their responsibilities and just be kids—and what a time they’ve had! From the magic of *The Lion King* in the West End to up-close encounters at Whipsnade Zoo, and a sunny adventure at Grafham Water, there’s been no shortage of fun, laughter and friendship.

These trips offer more than just a day out—they give our Young Carers the space to relax, connect with others who understand, and make memories that last far beyond the journey home.



YC Bedford Borough - Top 10 result!

The School Census has been completed again this year, and we’re thrilled to share that Bedford Borough is now one of the Top 10 areas in the country for recognising Young Carers in schools. Thanks to our outreach work and brilliant partnerships with schools,

more Young Carers here are being identified, recognised and supported than in most other parts of the UK. We're so proud—and hugely grateful to the many schools who've helped make this happen.

Building Awareness in Schools

It's been a brilliant term for raising the profile of Young Carers in schools. Our School Engagement Worker, Natalie Christian-John, has been working closely with staff to make it easier to spot and support Young Carers early on.

By listening to schools and streamlining the way they refer pupils to us, we've created a quicker, simpler system that gets help to the right young people at the right time.

The results speak for themselves.

During the pilot phase at Kempston Academy, Mark Rutherford School and Cotton Forest Primary, nearly 50 Young Carers were identified and referred to us. Now that the scheme has launched more widely, almost 20 schools have already signed up to use our new YC Lite cards.

By reducing the admin and giving schools practical tools to support Young Carers, we're making sure that more children get the recognition and help they deserve — without delay. It's a small change that's already making a big difference.

Looking after Young Carer Wellbeing

Being a Young Carer can come with a lot of pressure. That's why we support not just the practical side of caring, but the emotional side too.

Our Young Carers Wellbeing Practitioner offers 1:1 support to help young people manage stress, anxiety, and the day-to-day challenges of caring.

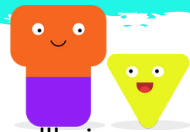
Whether it's dealing with school pressure, navigating friendships, or simply needing someone to talk to, our wellbeing support helps Young Carers feel heard and understood.

We offer:

- Friendly, confidential wellbeing chats
- Advice for coping with low mood, worry, and overwhelm
- Access to tools and strategies to build resilience
- Support to speak to school or health professionals if needed

This support helps Young Carers find balance—so they can thrive, not just survive.

If you think a Young Carer could benefit, get in touch with our team or visit www.youngcarersbedford.com



Is he getting the support he deserves?

Peter's Story: "I was in the army for 30 years. This is the toughest thing I've ever done."

Peter, 72, thought retirement would be a chance to travel and slow down. But when his wife Jean was diagnosed with cancer, everything changed.

"I'm her cook, her driver, her nurse. I'm on alert all the time. I watch her breathing at night to make sure she's okay. I'm proud to do it, but it's exhausting."

Peter doesn't always talk about how he's feeling. "You get good at saying, 'I'm fine.' But truth is, it gets lonely. You miss the little things – chatting about the telly, planning a holiday."

He came to Carers in Bedfordshire after someone at his GP surgery mentioned support was available. "Just having someone to talk to made all the difference. I realised I wasn't the only one feeling like this."

Peter cares – and he's not alone.



Peter's Story was part of our **He Cares Too** campaign which set out to highlight something that often goes unseen — the experiences of Male Carers.

We know that many men who care for a loved one don't always recognise themselves as Carers. They may not talk openly about the challenges they face, or feel comfortable asking for help. This silence can mean that support comes too late — or not at all. That's why we chose to share real stories from men like Carter, who cares for his son Michael and has had to make huge sacrifices to support his son's mental health; and Simon, who supports his cousin Lucas, often quietly and without recognition. These are very different situations, but they share a common thread: quiet commitment, emotional weight, and the need for better understanding. Through these stories, we wanted to show the wide range of caring roles that men take on — and how important it is to recognise and support them too.

We run regular activities for men and Men's Breakfast meet-ups, as well as all our family events and other services too. If you know a man who is a Carer and isn't accessing support - please let him know we are here for him.

Have you visited one of our Hubs?

Why should I attend?

The Hubs are designed to give you in-person access to our services, information, and staff. At each Hub you are able to relax, meet other Carers, attend a workshop or talk and even book treatments or a 1-to-1 appointment with a Support Worker. You can book treatments and support by visiting our website or calling 0300 111 1919.

Upcoming Talks at the Hubs

Keep an eye on our website for final confirmation and details, but here is an example of some of the upcoming talks happening at The Hubs:

- Emergency Planning
- Carers Rights Workshop
- Manual Handling Training



Hub Timings

Each Hub operates the same timings:

10am - 1pm

4 Hubs across the County



Dunstable Hub
Dunstable Centre
Court Drive
Dunstable, LU5 4JD

Biggleswade Hub
The Bigg Theatre
36 High Street,
Biggleswade,
SG18 0JLZ



Bedford Hub
Kings House
254 Ampthill Road
Bedford, MK42 9AZ

Marston Moretaine
Hub
The Forest Centre
Station Road
Bedford MK43 0PR



Your Weekly Planner of Regular Groups

Monday

Carers Monday Coffee - weekly

Bedford office
10.00am - 12pm



Tuesday

Carer's Choir - Weekly term time

Bedford
9.45am - 11am



**Dunstable
Every Second Tuesday**

Wednesday

Walking Group

Leighton Buzzard
1st Wed of the Month 1pm- 3pm

Mental Health & Addiction Carers

1st Wed of the month
7pm- 8.30 pm

Support Group Online

7.15pm - 8.15pm
4th Wed of the Month

Treatments at the Hubs

We offer heavily discounted treatments at our Hubs. Choose from a haircut, foot care or massage. Book an appointment online. Then stay for a chat or extra support if you need.



Group times or locations are subject to change. Please check carefully before turning up. Call the office on 0300 111 1919 for clarification



Your Weekly Planner of Regular Groups

Thursday



Bedford
Every First Thursday



Biggleswade
Every Third Thursday



Marston Moretaine
Every Last Thursday

**Carers Supporting
Someone with Cancer**
Peer Support
Bedford Office
4pm - 5pm

Friday

**Dementia Memory
Gateway**
Online
11am - 12pm

Saturday

Activity and Social
Bedford - 2nd Sat of
Month
11.30am - 1pm

Activity and Social
Central Beds - 2nd
Sat of Month
11.30am - 1pm
Various Locations



Activity and Social Groups

These groups will be held at different times and locations, offering various activities. These groups are designed to promote physical health and wellbeing and you will always be able to speak to a Support Worker. Please check the website or speak to the office about what is coming up near you. No need to book - just turn up or drop in!



Young Adult Carers - Stuck in the Middle

Navigating Life, Education, and Caring Between Childhood and Adulthood

For many people in their late teens and early twenties, life is a time of new beginnings—university, first jobs, moving out, and discovering who they are. But for Young Adult Carers, this phase of life looks very different.

They're caring for a family member or friend while also trying to find their place in the world. Often, they're juggling education, work, social pressures, and big life decisions—on top of the emotional and practical responsibilities of being a Carer.

"I wanted to go to uni like everyone else, but I also couldn't imagine leaving my mum. I didn't know if she'd cope without me." – Jess, 19

The Quiet Struggle

Young Adult Carers often fly under the radar. They're no longer seen as children in need of extra help, yet adult services aren't always tailored to their unique situation. Many feel too old for Young Carer support, but too young for adult services.

This age group may be managing:

- Complex caring roles at home
- Financial pressure to contribute
- Guilt for wanting independence
- Lack of time for friendships or self-care
- Anxiety about the future

It's a lot for anyone—especially for those trying to build their own identity and life.

How We're Helping

At Carers in Bedfordshire, we recognise this gap and are working to bridge it. Our Young Adult Carer support offers:

- 1:1 emotional support
- Help with next steps into work, training, or university
- Peer connection through events, socials and a WhatsApp Group
- Practical advice on housing, benefits, and health

We want every Young Adult Carer to know: you're not alone, and it's okay to have ambitions outside your caring role.

What's Next?

We're developing more tailored services for this group, including focus groups and creative campaigns to raise awareness.

If you work with young people—or know someone aged 16–25 who might be caring for a loved one—please let them know about our support.



Why Your Wellbeing Matters

When you're caring for someone else, it's easy to put your own needs last. But your wellbeing isn't a luxury — it's essential.

At Carers in Bedfordshire, we know that Carers give so much of themselves: time, energy, and love. Whether you're supporting someone with a long-term condition, a disability, or mental health needs, the constant juggle can be exhausting. Our latest Carers Survey showed that over half of Carers said their mental and physical health had got worse in the last year. Many are feeling burnt out, lonely, and overwhelmed.

Looking after yourself isn't selfish — it's what keeps you going. Even small moments of rest and support can make a big difference. That might mean taking a proper break, speaking to someone who understands, or accessing one of our wellbeing services.

Remember, you don't have to do it alone — we're here for you.

How to get help

The wellbeing service at Carers in Bedfordshire can offer many types of wellbeing support. We have online support including a digital **wellbeing booklet** and **online courses** which you can access at anytime as well as monthly **wellbeing webinars** which are included on our What's on page.

We also offer individual support with a wellbeing practitioner to talk through stress, worries and low mood. To find out your eligibility for 1-2-1 support, please chat to our early response team, by calling the office or emailing contact@carersinbeds.org.uk, or by booking a call at a time to suit you via our website.



Spreading the Word

Reaching Out to Carers in the Community

As part of our Lottery-funded outreach, our Community Engagement team have been out and about across the county—promoting our support and connecting with services that could benefit the Carers we work with. These visits are also a vital way to find and register Carers who may not yet be getting any support.

Here's where we've been recently:

Amptill Cost-of-Living Fair

Jenny and Caroline spoke with lots of Carers and several organisations—many of whom are now asking us to attend their own events.

Parent Carer Forum Roadshow – Leighton Buzzard

We registered 20 new Carers in one day and connected with 9 new organisations.

Café Connect – Queen's Park

A fantastic opportunity to meet Carers from under-represented communities. We spoke with 40 attendees, and 10 organisations including The Jobs Hub and BPHA.

Saturday Stay & Play – Queen's Park Family Hub

While many were already registered, our conversations helped families recognise hidden caring roles and new areas they might need support with.

Nomad Dads Group

This monthly group for dads and their children is now joining our Carer Network Group after we discussed ways we can support male Carers.

Clifton Good Neighbours

A well-attended local group where we promoted our services—including our Memory Navigation Service—to a warm and welcoming community.

Our outreach helps us reach hidden Carers, raise awareness and strengthen local connections. If you'd like us to visit your group or event please email contact@carersinbeds.org.uk



Dementia Carers

Groups and Events

Caring for someone with Dementia can bring unique challenges — emotionally, practically, and socially. At Carers in Bedfordshire, we understand the pressures that Dementia Carers face, and we're here to support you every step of the way. We run regular social groups that give you the chance to connect with others in similar situations, share experiences, and feel less alone. Whether it's a friendly coffee catch-up or a relaxed community event, these are safe, welcoming spaces for both Carers and the people they care for.

Our dedicated Support Workers are always on hand to offer advice, a listening ear, and tailored help to suit your circumstances. We also provide a programme of training sessions designed specifically with

Dementia Carers in mind. These practical workshops cover a wide range of topics such as estate planning, legal matters, nutrition, and understanding Dementia. Each session is created to give you the tools and confidence to care effectively — and look after yourself, too.



Befriending Calls

Caring for someone can be incredibly rewarding — but it can also feel isolating. That's why our Befriending Call Service is here to offer a regular friendly chat with someone who understands.

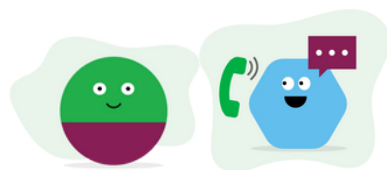
You'll be matched with one of our lovely volunteers, who'll call you for a relaxed conversation at a time that suits you. Whether you'd like a quick check-in or a longer chat, we'll work around what feels right for you.

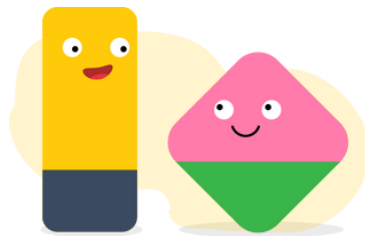
There's no agenda, no pressure — just a kind voice and a listening ear. Many

Carers tell us their befriending call is a highlight of the week and a real lifeline during tough times.

If you'd like to receive a regular befriending call, or refer someone who might benefit, please contact the office.

"It lifts my mood every time. It's lovely to know someone's thinking of me"





The Memory Navigation Service covers Bedfordshire (excluding Luton) to help people worried about their memory or living with dementia, and their Carers. It is a telephone service that offers support at a time that is convenient to you.

- An opportunity to speak to a trained support worker
- A regular call for ongoing support
- Clinical information from a Dementia Nurse.
- Access to groups and events
- Monthly Information Zoom sessions
- Access to our Memory Chatbot – ‘Emma’.
- Signposting to local resources

You can get in touch with the Memory Navigation Service team on 0300 111 9090. If you want to set up a convenient time to speak to one of our team, you can book a call with someone from our team [via this link](#), or by visiting our website.

Visit the new website at www.memorynavigationsservice.co.uk where you will find resources, information, advice and all the details you will need to help guide you through the stages of dementia whether you are living with dementia yourself or are caring for someone with dementia.

Do you need clinical advice?

We have our own Dementia Nurse, Tracy-Ann Johnson. Tracy works part-time and on a flexible basis. If you would like to talk to her, then you can email her directly on tracy-ann.johnson@carersinbeds.org.uk or alternatively speak to a Support Worker and they can put you in touch.



Have you seen us on the screens at your GP Surgery?



How the Memory Navigation Service works

When someone receives a diagnosis from the Memory Assessment Clinic, they'll usually be supported by the clinic team for a short period. During this time, the team will focus on establishing the right clinical support. Once that is in place, the person is discharged back to the care of their GP.

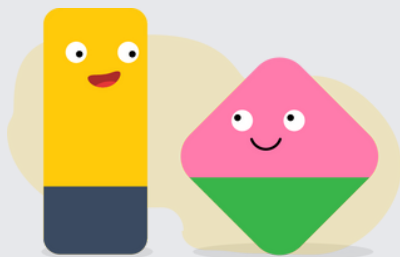
From then on, the GP will invite them to attend an annual dementia review. This is where the Memory Navigation Service becomes involved.

We're here to provide ongoing support, both for the person living with dementia and their carer, so they can live as positively as possible. We will check in from time to time to see how things are going, as we understand that situations can change. But you don't need to wait for us to contact you. Our support is always available when you need it, so please reach out.

We can help with:

- Arranging care support at home
- Accessing local services
- Providing information about dementia—general advice or tailored to your situation
- Any barriers that come up in your caring role

Carers and people living with dementia are both welcome to contact us directly for support.



How the MNS can help

Recently, Mary contacted us on behalf of her friend who had been caring alone for a person with dementia. She hadn't asked for help before and was struggling, thinking that this was just how things had to be. After working with the Memory Navigation Service, she now receives regular support through local authority-funded care and respite breaks from Age UK. She's also started connecting with others at local Tibbs events, which provide social opportunities for people with dementia and their Carers.

We recently gave Anne, one of our Carers, a regular check-in call to see how things were going. After a friendly chat, it became clear that she was finding a few things difficult. She mentioned feeling a bit lonely and was also unsure about some new behaviours her husband had started showing. We asked our Dementia Nurse to give her a call to talk through some of those changes and offer a bit of helpful advice. We also passed her details on to our befriending team, so she'll now get regular calls from one of our volunteers. Anne told us she really enjoys having a chat and wishes she had more chances to do so. We hope this brings a bit of extra connection to her week.

Fundraising



We're incredibly grateful to all our funders, partners and donors — from local councils and trusts to individual supporters — whose generosity enables us to be there for Carers across Bedfordshire. Their support truly makes a difference.

Tesco Blue Token

A Tesco blue token Community Grant, has enabled us to put on a trip to the Seaside - they gave us £1500. Don't forget that you can nominate us for this at your local Tesco store too!

Bedford Running Festival

We have secured 10 places for the Bedford Running Festival again this year. If you want to run for us - then email

fundraising@carersinbeds.org.uk to join the team!



**Local
Community
Fund**

Co-Op Community Grants has provided us with £500 so far this year to take some of the Young Carers to the Forest School in Marston.



Carers Trust

Gave Young Carers £750 to take a group of Young Carers to Whipsnade Zoo. This was a chance for Young Carers to get together, make new friends and have some time away from their caring responsibilities.



John Lewis Partnership

Kindly gave us £850 to support some Carer Events and activities.

Want to support Carers?

From tea and cake to car signatures — fundraising can be whatever you make it.

Every day, unpaid Carers across Bedfordshire go above and beyond to look after someone they love. At Carers in Bedfordshire, we're here to support them — but we can't do it without the help of our community.

The good news? Supporting us doesn't have to mean running a marathon (unless you want to!). Here are just a few ways people have recently raised funds for us:

☕ Host a Coffee Morning

In Upper Caldecote, a group of lovely locals put the kettle on, baked some cakes, and raised an amazing £324.44 at their Charitea and Coffee Morning. A warm atmosphere, good conversation, and a great cause — what could be better?

🚗 Get Creative Like Colin

Over at Caffeine & Machine, Colin turned heads and raised funds by letting visitors sign his car in return for donations. It raised £63.80, and was a fun talking point that got people engaged — all shared on Instagram too!

🍰 Cake Sales, Quiz Nights and Sponsored Challenges

Maybe you'd prefer to host a quiz night in the pub, take part in a sponsored walk, or simply sell some homemade bakes at work or school. Whatever you love doing, you can turn it into support for Carers.

📘 Facebook Fundraising

Did you know that you can organise a Facebook fundraising campaign for your birthday? Just select us as your charity of choice when they ask and let the good wishes flow in.

Get Started

Visit

www.carersinbeds.org.uk/fundraising for more ideas, downloadable posters and resources — or email us at fundraising@carersinbeds.org.uk and we'll help you bring your idea to life.



Our Volunteers Making a Real Difference

If you haven't been in touch with us for a while, you might receive a call from one of our friendly volunteers. Their role is to check in with you, see how things are going, and let you know about any services or activities that might help you in your caring role. It's also a chance for you to update us on any changes to your circumstances.

Misbah, who coordinates the team, explains:

"Some Carers don't realise we can help them tackle a problem. Others might be shy or unsure about picking up the phone. A call from a volunteer who has time to listen can be just the prompt they need."

Afia is the newest member of our small team of telephone volunteers – she's also an active member of our Carers Panel.



Meet new volunteer, Afia

Hi, I'm Affy! My passion for volunteering began with a South London-based charity that supports parents and carers in becoming confident advocates for their young people. Through training focused on understanding the social model of disability and the importance of inclusive education. As a carer for over 22 years, I understand how important it is to feel heard, valued, and supported.

My volunteer training has shown just how much you offer. For example I didn't realise all the things that go on at the Hubs – I had thought they were "just a coffee morning!"

Over the years, I've seen Carers in Bedfordshire grow exponentially. I'm proud now to be part of that support network.

We also have volunteers who make befriending calls to dementia carers. Another volunteer calls carers for feedback about our hospital hub and our welfare benefits services – much nicer for you than filling in a form!



Volunteering can be good for you...

- A positive impact on health and wellbeing
- Opportunities to meet new people
- A way to give back to your communities and make a difference
- Develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge
- A route to employment

If you would like to help to get started with volunteering, get in touch with our Volunteer Coordinator Carol Solaiman.



07462 153060
volunteering@carersinbeds.org.uk

Team Focus - Meet Milly



Meet Milly – Bringing Energy and Empathy to Every Event

Milly joined Carers in Bedfordshire just over a year ago as our Early Response Assistant for Events and Activities. If you've attended one of our Hubs or events recently, chances are you've met Milly – and been greeted by her infectious energy and warm enthusiasm. With a “no problem” attitude and a flair for organisation, Milly approaches every challenge with creativity and care. She says her favourite event so far has been the Garden Party, where she loved seeing Carers come together to enjoy the sunshine and activities.

Milly's understanding of the caring role comes from her own lived experience. She supported her sister through a period of mental ill health, and while her sister is now stable, that time shaped the empathy Milly brings to her role. She meets every Carer with compassion and understanding.

Alongside her work on events, Milly now runs our Caring with Confidence courses – and again, her warmth and maturity shine through. Carers have often commented on how incredible her insight is for someone so young.

Milly left school at 16 and began working in a care home, leading activities – experience that has clearly set her up for success here. One day, she hopes to run her own events company, building on the skills she's developing at Carers in Bedfordshire.

In her spare time, Milly enjoys spending time with friends, catching up on sleep – and the occasional fishing trip (though she admits that's a rare one!)



Milly leading the Caring With Confidence Course

Gallery



Celebrating Founders and Staff



Hospital Volunteer, Liz



Our Team Spreading the Word



Peer Support



**Schools Award Presentation,
Daubney Academy**



Carers Panel Meeting

Gallery



Find Myself Again - Sam's Story

Sam, now 30, first connected with Carers in Bedfordshire when she was just 10 years old. Her school had begun to notice that she wasn't quite like her classmates — she often arrived on her own, did the weekly food shop, and showed signs of caring responsibilities that were far beyond her years. A referral was made, and through the Young Carers service, Sam found something she hadn't expected: friendship.

She met Nathan, a boy from school she'd seen around but never really spoken to. It turned out he was a Young Carer too. That shared understanding formed the start of a deep and lasting friendship — one that continues to this day.

Since then, Sam has never stopped caring. Her mum, who lives with complex mental health challenges, has always needed support. And Sam, quietly and without complaint, has provided it. Now a mum herself to two children, she also helps care for her grandmother. "Caring has defined my whole life," she says. "It's not just something I do — it's who I am." That identity hasn't come without cost. Sam has often found herself accepting behaviour that others might not — and it's taken a toll.

"Because I've had to accept negative behaviour from my mum, it's changed how I react to people in my own life," she explains. "I've tolerated things I shouldn't, because it's all I've known."

There have been moments when Sam tried to pull back from her caring role — times when she felt the emotional load was too heavy. But stepping away brought its own pain. "The guilt is overwhelming," she says. "Even if I take a step back for my own mental health, I feel like I'm letting her down."

Despite everything, Sam still worries her story sounds too negative. "I don't want to put people off or make them feel hopeless," she says. "I just think people need to know they're not the only ones who feel this way. That it's OK to struggle."

When Sam visits our Bedford Hub, it gives her something she rarely has — space. Space to breathe, to catch up with friends, and to be seen not just as a Carer, but as herself. She dreams of becoming a hairdresser one day, something she's wanted to do since childhood. "I've always put others first," she says. "But now, I'm starting to think about what I want. About who I might be — outside of being a Carer."

Sam's strength shines through, even if she can't always see it herself. She's starting to imagine a future where caring is part of her life — but not all of it. "I want to find out who I really am," she says. "Not just who I've had to be."



Useful Contact Numbers

Social Services

**Bedford Borough Council
Carers Assessment &
Social Care Team**

01234 267422

**Central Bedfordshire
Carers Assessment &
Social Care Team**

0300 300 8036

Safeguarding Team

Bedford Borough

01234 276222

Safeguarding Team

Central Bedfordshire

0300 300 8122

Emergency Safeguarding

Duty Team for

Bedfordshire

0300 300 8123

Mental Health

Bedfordshire Talking

Therapies

01234 880400

NHS 111 - option 2

Samaritans

116 123

NHS

**Advice on a non-
emergency medical
concern**

NHS 111 - open 24/7

Emergency Only

999

Bedford Hospital

01234 355122

Carers Hub ext. 5247

**Bedfordshire Community
Health Service Single Point
of Access**

0345 602 4064

Luton and Dunstable

University Hospital

01582 497990

Non-emergency Patient

Transport (East of England
Ambulance Service)

0345 605 1208

Red Cross Home from

Hospital Free Transport

01234 341 503

Local Charities

Advice Central

Advice service in Central
Beds

0300 303 6666

Age UK Bedfordshire

01234 360 510

Alzheimer's Society

0333 150 3456

Autism Bedfordshire

01234 350 704

The Bedford Rural

Communities Charity
(BRRC)

01234 838 771

Citizen's Advice

Amphill - 01525 402 742

Bedford - 01234 867 944

Biggleswade

- 01767 601368

Dunstable - 01582 670 003

Leighton-Linslade

- 01525 373 878

Tibbs Dementia

Foundation

01234 210 993

Carers in Bedfordshire, Unit 153/154, Bedford Heights, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7PH

0300 111 1919

contact@carersinbeds.org.uk

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individuals, groups and organisations.



You care, we care.

**Do you know an Unpaid Carer
who cares for a loved one?**

Caring can be incredibly difficult and we are here to help and support in many ways.

Visit our website at www.carersinbeds.org.uk

Or call us on 0300 111 1919

We are
here if you
need us.

