

Putting Carers **First**



Lighten the Load

Our new campaign to help you access the financial support you need.

What's
inside:

Carers
First



Page 10
Money saving
tips



Page 14
Young carers and
the community



Page 16
Norman shares
his story

Contents

3	Welcome from Alison Taylor, Chief Executive
4	News and updates from Carers First
6	Key information for carers
8	Let us help you Lighten the Load
10	Tips to make your money go further
12	How Anglian Water can support carers
14	Young carers support their community
16	Norman's story about caring for his wife
18	How smart meters could help carers
20	Free access to Legal & General's Care Concierge service
21	The difference a volunteer can make
22	Fundraising news and thanks

Welcome



Alison Taylor
Chief Executive,
Carers First

Welcome to the first issue of Putting Carers First.

Putting Carers First has been designed with carers, for carers. It provides key information, helpful tips and tools and shares carers' experiences. It also highlights some of the work we are doing as a charity in supporting carers across Lincolnshire, Essex, London and Medway.

This issue focuses on financial support for carers. With increases in energy, food, fuel and housing costs, we are seeing more carers who are under financial pressures.



Many carers are extremely worried about how they are going to manage, and for some this is affecting their own health. In our recent survey we discovered that nine in ten of carers are losing sleep because they are worrying about how to afford the basic essentials.

We also know that many carers find it difficult to access the benefits, grants and discounts that are available. Our new campaign, Lighten the Load, is aimed at helping carers maximise their income, reduce costs and access discounts. Read on to find out more about the campaign as well as some key information on the areas of financial support carers can access now.

We are also delighted to share with you some of the fantastic events and projects we have been able to deliver with and for carers. You will be able to read about how young carers in Medway brought a community together, as well as hearing from a carer we have supported in Haringey, Norman.

We hope you find your magazine informative and engaging, and if you have any suggestions on what you would like to see covered in future magazines, please let us know by emailing commsandinvolve@carersfirst.org.uk

Warmest wishes
Alison



93% of carers told us that they are worried about the rising cost of living.



Over half of carers are already in debt, or will be soon, owing to their caring responsibilities.

News and Updates



Improving hospital discharge in Southend-on-Sea

Carers First has developed a new pocket guide as part of a campaign to support people caring for someone coming home from hospital in Southend-on-Sea.

The guide was created collaboratively with local carers who have experience of supporting a family member or friend through the discharge process, ensuring that the guide contains everything a person needs to prepare a person they care for to return home.

We understand how important it is to support carers when they're taking care of relatives or friends following a hospital stay, and we are pleased to hear the stories of carers in Southend who have already benefited from the guide, helping alleviate the stress and worry that often comes as a result of not knowing what to do or where to turn to after the person they care for has been in hospital.

If you need support caring for someone coming home from hospital, you can download the guide on our website here: carersfirst.org.uk/southend-discharge

Continuing and strengthening support for carers in Lincolnshire

We are delighted to have been recommissioned to provide the Carers' Support Service, on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council.

There will be continued development and enhancement of services offered to carers across Lincolnshire. The newly commissioned service will provide information, advice and practical, emotional and financial support to carers online, by phone and face to face in the community.

Through collaborative working, we will be able to identify, reach and support more carers in Lincolnshire.

Success at Kent Charity Awards

Carers First is celebrating being a finalist for Care Charity of the Year in the Kent Charity Awards 2022, for the second year in a row. This nomination recognises the work that Carers First has done to continually develop its services to reach and support more carers.

Alison Taylor, Chief Executive at Carers First, said:

“We are delighted to have been recognised for the second year running by Kent Charity Awards. Thank you to the Judges for this opportunity to make caring more visible, valued and supported.”



Some of the Carers First team celebrating at the awards ceremony.

Congratulations to the winning charity, Romney Marsh Community Hub, and the other finalists.



New emergency planning campaign to support carers in Haringey

An emergency plan ensures that the person you care for will continue to receive care if you are suddenly and temporarily unavailable. An emergency situation could be an unexpected childcare issue, a period of illness, travel disruption, or even a stay in hospital. No matter what the cause, if you're unable to be there to care, your emergency plan ensures you've got it covered.

Over the summer, Carers First launched a campaign to support carers in Haringey with emergency planning. The 'Plan for the Best' campaign encouraged carers to put an emergency plan in place and included a free emergency plan pack to guide carers through the process. Read on for Norman's story to find out how we were able to support him with an emergency plan.

Find out more
[carersfirst.org.uk/
planforthebest](https://carersfirst.org.uk/planforthebest)

Key information for carers



Carers given new rights as Health and Care Act 2022 introduced

Carers now have stronger legal rights when it comes to decisions about services and hospital discharge, following the introduction of the Health and Care Act 2022.

The Act recognises the equal importance of supporting carers as well as the people they care for, giving carers the right to receive support from their local authority if they have eligible needs; which can be identified through a carer's assessment. The new legislative measures, which amends the measures set out in the Care Act 2014, aim to make it easier for health and care organisations to deliver joined-up care for people who rely on multiple different services.

New rights for carers to be involved in care planning

Carers must now be consulted when decisions are made about changes to an existing service, or developing a new service, when there is an expectation of involved care in relation to the patient's prevention, treatment and diagnosis.

New rights for carers at hospital discharge

NHS hospital trusts in England must ensure that carers are involved as soon as possible when plans for a patient's discharge after treatment are being made. This covers all carers of adults needing care and support following hospital discharge.

Carers First understands how difficult and disempowering hospital discharge can be for carers, especially when they are not consulted, involved or provided with the right information and support to care safely and well.

We look forward to working with the NHS and local authorities to ensure that these changes are supported and delivered well, with improved outcomes for carers, the people they care for and for local services.

If you would like to know more about what rights you have as a carer, visit our website or speak to us. Be sure to look out for more information this Carers Rights Day on 24 November.



Carers confirmed as a priority group for Autumn 22 flu jabs and COVID-19 boosters

The government has confirmed that unpaid carers will be offered the flu vaccine and COVID-19 booster dose. So, if you are caring for someone, and you are not already registered as a carer with your doctor's surgery, tell your GP or medical practice receptionist so you can be added to their carers register. Being on the carers register will enable you to receive your booster vaccines and other benefits such as a health check to support you with managing your own health.

The best time to get vaccinated is in the autumn, before the cold temperatures start. As a carer, you may be more likely to be in close contact with someone

vulnerable, that's why it's important for carers to get their free flu vaccine and COVID-19 booster when they are invited by the NHS.

Carers First are urging all carers not to wait and get boosted against Coronavirus (COVID-19) this autumn to protect themselves and the people they care for this winter.

Find out more and how to book through the NHS website, or speak to your local pharmacy or GP.

Lighten the Load



As the cost-of-living crisis worsens in the UK, those looking after a family member or friend have been amongst the hardest hit. Our new campaign, Lighten the Load, aims to raise awareness of the financial support available to carers and increase the number accessing that support.

Helping you get the financial support you need

It's very common to worry about the financial implications of caring, this can be particularly true if you need to give up work or if the person you care for requires specialist care or equipment. But help is available.

You may be entitled to certain benefits, such as Carer's Allowance, Carer's Credit or Universal Credit. There are also grants

that you may be eligible to apply for, which can be particularly helpful for one-off costs you would otherwise struggle to cover.

And did you know you can also receive discounts and help with your household bills? You can save on your weekly shop, or buying insurance, as well as accessing schemes and offers for your energy bills.

To find out more, visit our website at carersfirst.org.uk/ **LightenTheLoad**, where you can also sign-up for our financial support email series. If you would like to speak to someone, call our helpline on **0300 303 1555**.

Support from Colin

Colin McFarlane, who is the voice of ITV's The Cube and starred in Amazon Prime's Outlander series, Batman Begins and The Dark Knight, has spoken out in support of the campaign following our support of his father Sidney, who cares for his mother.



Colin McFarlane and his father Sidney McFarlane with Shirley Ballas.

“Carers like my dad work tirelessly to support their loved ones. This can often impact their own health and wellbeing, as well as their finances. That’s why it’s so important there are charities like Carers First, who carers can rely on to provide them information and support when they need it most.”

Lighten the load of enjoying a day out

Have you heard about our Carer Days Out Directory? We have put together a digital directory of parks and attractions that offer either free or discounted entry for carers.

We know that many carers have cut back on days out due to the cost-of-living. Our directory, which you can access on our website, lists zoos, country parks, theme parks and other attractions that offer free or discounted entry for carers. There is information on how you can claim the offer, making it easier for you to enjoy a day out with loved ones, without worrying about the price.

If you are unsure how to find the directory or don't have digital access, you can call our Helpline Team who will be able to talk you through accessing the directory, or simply let you know the offer details if you need information on a specific attraction.

We hope this will encourage other attractions to consider their carer offer too. If you would like to share an offer that's not on our directory, email us at partners@carersfirst.org.uk

View the directory and save on a free day out
Scan our QR code





Five tips to make your money go further

When your income is limited and your outgoings are high, small savings can make a big difference. Here are a few suggestions to help you save money and cut costs.

1

Join a community shop for your groceries

Sticking to a shopping list, looking out for yellow reduced price stickers, and not shopping when you are hungry are all tried and tested ways to save money when doing a food shop.

But have you thought about where you shop? There are community stores popping up that offer reduced price food for locals on low incomes. Community Shop, is just one example. They source surplus goods, and are able to give significant discounts to its members.

You could also sign up for free food apps, such as Olio or Too Good To Go which allow you to get surplus food for free or highly discounted prices.

2

See what discounts are available for carers

As a carer, there are hundreds of discounts available to you – for all kinds of purchases. So before you buy anything new – whether that’s the weekly shop, buying insurance or a day out – have a look around and see how you can save money.

Discounts for Carers is free to join, offering thousands of discounts for carers through their website discountsforcarers.com. Their members can save monthly on groceries, utility bills and transport.

3

Get a grant to support your own wellbeing

As a carer, it’s vital that you look after yourself. So consider applying for a grant for an activity that would support your own wellbeing, that you would otherwise go without. Whether that’s for a much-deserved manicure, a short break, or, as Sarah chose, Reiki (energy healing) sessions:

“Thank you to Anglian Water and Carers First for this grant. I wouldn’t be able to afford it otherwise and I’m spacing my 10 Reiki sessions fortnightly, so they last longer.”

4

Access free data

It’s tough to navigate the world without internet access, and data costs can add up. Luckily, Good Things Foundation have a national data bank offering free data. We’ve teamed up with them so we can offer free internet data for carers registered with us. To access it, contact Carers First for more information.

5

Get help with transport costs

Healthcare travel costs can be expensive, so do check if you’re eligible for help with travel costs through the NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme. You might also apply for a Blue Badge Parking Permit, road tax exemption or bus and train concessions.

For more information on financial support for carers visit our website carersfirst.org.uk/LightenTheLoad, or, if you would like to discuss your personal circumstances, email us at hello@carersfirst.org.uk or call **0300 303 1555**



Anglian Water Supporting Carers

If you are caring
for a loved one,
Anglian Water
are here to
support you.



We are proud to work in partnership with Anglian Water to make sure you and your loved ones are aware of the Priority Services Register. Anglian Water's Priority Services Register can help lots of different people with free practical support, such as:

- Letting you know about upcoming work in your area and help if your water goes off.
- Helping protect you against bogus callers, which includes setting a password for your account.
- Sending bills in different formats and communicating with you in your preferred language.

If, like many people at the moment, you're finding it difficult to pay, Anglian Water may be able to help. They can offer affordable payment plans, discounted tariffs and assistance schemes.

Anglian Water and Carers First want to urge all carers to get their cared for registered for Priority Services to ensure they are able to best support them. It's free to join and only takes you a few minutes to sign up.

Anglian Water is committed to supporting its customers who may need extra help. This includes carers and the person they care for.

Pat, 69, cares for her son, Matt, 45, who has physical and mental disabilities. Pat and her husband are retired with limited income.



Pat has received support with a discounted tariff from Anglian Water as well as signing up to the Priority Services Register.

The Priority Services Register is a free support service offered by every energy and network operator (water, gas). Please contact your supplier for more details.

Pat says:

“Anglian Water has helped make sure we are on the right tariff which is helping us manage our bills. It gives me peace of mind that they know our situation with Matt and prioritise us in case of an emergency.”

Support from Anglian Water

If you are an Anglian Water customer, you can sign up to receive free priority services.

Find out more:
anglianwater.co.uk/watercare or scan the QR code or call: 0800 232 1951





Young people brought together for a series of Graffiti Jam workshops

Young carers and young people from the local Medway community came together to get creative and renovate a youth shelter in Medway, during a series of Graffiti Jam Workshops.

The series of workshops, which were inspired by ideas shared by young carers earlier this year, involved spray graffiti art and hip-hop sessions. A total of 18 young people from the local area took part, including 6 young carers, aged between 12 to 18, with many of the young people attending saying they would like to do it again.

Nikki Brooker, Young Carers Team Lead for Medway and Project Lead, said:

“Young carers shared that they wanted to do something creative in co-production with Carers First that made a difference to their local community, whilst also using their creative talents to express themselves in a unique way.”



Graffiti artists Catneil and Memz (art name, Auton), from Marg8 Graff, also showed their support by leading the graffiti art workshops and providing a generous discount on graffiti paints. Local grime artist, rapper, and activist for social change, Logic, also supported the event by providing hip hop workshops for Medway's young and inspiring rappers.

The youth shelter needed improvement and wasn't a very inviting place for teenagers and young people. With there being limited spaces in the area for young people, it was an ideal location to bring people together and do something positive to recreate a friendly, vibrant space for young people which is fun, but most of all, a welcoming space for young people to go to.

The project was initiated after Carers First contacted Pat Cooper, Medway Council member for Gillingham North ward and Chair of Friends of Hillyfields, to discuss opportunities for young carers in Medway to make a creative difference. Pat was supportive of the young carers' idea and was keen to get involved and identified the youth shelter as somewhere young people could express themselves.

The workshops were also made possible because of Karen Francis, Partnership Officer for Green Spaces & Piers at Medway Council Parks and Peers,

who was significant in the success of the project; allowing Carers First to have use of the park.

Speaking about the project, Alison Taylor, Chief Executive of Carers First said:

"It has been wonderful to view the work of young carers and other young people in Medway. This project has brought a community together, with an idea that started with some passionate young carers. Carers First is dedicated to supporting young carers and encourages them to express their feelings creatively. We believe that providing workshop opportunities like these enables young carers to do just that. These workshops also show what collaborative working, and communities can achieve when they come together."

Young carers can find out more about our services and support at carersfirst.org.uk/young-carers

Norman's

Story



Norman, who lives in Haringey, London, cares for his wife, Pearline, who has dementia. He tells us of the challenges in his caring role, and how Carers First has been able to support him.

For Norman, a typical day is spent looking after Pearline. Pearline struggles to take care of herself without support, and everyday tasks have become tricky for her to complete on her own. Her memory loss has made her prone to getting into dangerous situations.

Norman fears that if he were suddenly unable to be there for Pearline, she would neglect her basic needs. In need of constant supervision, Pearline relies heavily on Norman and would struggle without his support. Norman knows Pearline better than anyone and expressed concerns around what would happen to her if he was to be affected by an emergency when he first reached out to Carers First.

Norman said:

“When caring for relatives with dementia, you get used to their patterns of behaviour, but nothing is static, it keeps changing and you have to adapt to that change. For someone who is not used to these patterns and doesn’t know them well, it can be hard to spot warning signs.”

After seeking support from Carers First, Norman was able to create an emergency plan, providing peace of mind in his caring role should he not be there in an emergency situation.



Norman told us:

“If the back door was open, she would go out and wander off. She left the electric kettle on the stove once, and when I came downstairs, I saw the smoke. From then on, before I go to bed I lock the kitchen door, I feel safer about going upstairs at night.”

Norman now attends regular carer groups and various events local to him, chatting and socialising with our Carer Support Advisers and other carers, which has given him an opportunity to get outside, take breaks and speak with other people in similar situations.

Do you have an emergency plan?

An emergency plan ensures that the person you care for will continue to receive care if you are suddenly and temporarily unavailable. Writing an emergency plan is straight forward. Whether you'd like advice on where to start or need help on how to improve your existing plan, we are here to support you.

There are 7 million unpaid carers like Norman in the UK looking after family members or friends. Accessing support and information can be a challenge, and many may be unaware of the help available – and that's why we're here.

We can provide personalised and tailored advice online, by phone, or face to face. If you are in need of support, get in touch with us today.

Visit carersfirst.org.uk or call our helpline on **0300 303 1555** for support in your caring role.

How smart meters could help busy carers manage their energy use

With energy bills increasing at an extremely high rate, we know that for many carers, the costs of their gas and electricity over the next few months will be worrying. One way you can help manage your bills is by using a smart meter.

A smart meter can help you know how much the energy bills should be – taking some of the guesswork out of balancing the budget for you and the person you care for. The in-home display is sometimes called an IHD. It comes with the smart meter and shows how much energy you're using and how much it has cost. You can check how much energy has been used today, this week or this month.

One carer who is benefitting from having a smart meter is Dan Fleshbourne, who lives in Lincolnshire and cares for his wife, Nicci, and mum. Dan's caring role is demanding, and having a smart meter means he has one less thing to think about when it comes to meter readings and estimated bills. With a smart meter, you get a bill based on the energy that has been used – not an estimate.

Dan is so pleased with his smart meter, he even recommended one to his mum,

Anne. Anne has dementia and failing eye sight, and she is wary of technology. However, Dan was able to show her his smart meter and she got one installed too. With a smart meter, gas and electricity readings are sent directly to your energy supplier. So, there's no need for you – or the person you care for – to climb a ladder or crawl into a cupboard to read the meter.

"It's nice to have peace of mind knowing what our bills will be, as well as being able to be more efficient with our use by taking advantage of the night-time tariff and setting a timer on the washing machine."

The only people who can see how much energy is being used are you, the person you care for and their energy supplier. The only information that gets sent to energy suppliers is how much energy is being used and when. Suppliers can't see what's plugged in, or when the washing machine is on.



Dan and his wife, Nicci.

“We have our in-home display on the kitchen side, so we can all keep track of the energy use. It shows us the cost per day and also has a budgeting feature that we use. It alerts me when we are nearing our daily budget.”

Smart meters can help you save energy but it's not automatic. You can use the in-home display to work out how to save energy around the home.

Some homes can't get a smart meter yet. Your energy supplier can tell you if you can have one and how soon it can be installed.

Getting a smart meter

Smart meters are installed by gas and electricity suppliers. They replace your old energy meters, and do it all safely and securely. There is no extra cost to the customer. If you or the person you care for are interested in getting a smart meter, search 'get a smart meter' on your digital device or get in touch with your energy supplier to find out how they can help.



This image shows how a typical in-home display looks. Smart meter in-home display and figures are for illustrative purposes only.

Legal & General offer carers free access to its Care Concierge service



Caring for a loved one is a huge responsibility which also carries emotional, physical and financial strains.

It is important to look after yourself, so you can continue your caring role effectively. Yet, we must not forget that financial health is just as important, as it often directly impacts our mental and physical wellbeing.

With the cost of living on the rise, many carers are facing sleepless nights worrying about how to afford basic essentials like utilities and food, and it is estimated over half are already in debt due to their caring roles.

Legal & General Care Concierge is a confidential one-to-one telephone service, designed to support you with caring for a loved one in their later life. It will help you with understanding your options and even finding later life care and how to pay for it.



To find out what support you are entitled to as a carer, as well as support for your loved ones receiving later life care, call us on **0800 086 9071*** for a free 30 minute impartial guidance call about what practical and financial assistance may be available. Simply say you have been given this number by Carers First, to access our guidance free of charge.

**Calls may be monitored and recorded*

This content has been sponsored by Legal & General.

The difference a volunteer can make

Chris Dennis is our longest serving volunteer. He first joined Carers First as a volunteer after retiring in 2010. Over a decade later and Chris has made over 12,000 calls to carers.

Chris has helped many carers who were in a desperate situation. He is proud to have played a part in getting them the support they need. He told us:

“Carers tend to get on with things without asking for help. I spoke to one lady who started our call saying she was OK and didn’t need any help. She went on to mention she had cancer and was caring for two people! I gently suggested she could do with some support.”



Chris is a testament to the difference a volunteer can make. Thank you for everything you do to support carers Chris!



Will you join our team of volunteers?

Every day our volunteers make such a difference to unpaid carers. They provide support in so many ways: from making cups of tea at a support group or taking a group of young carers out on a trip, or ringing someone regularly, or helping out in the office – volunteers help us to provide a better service for unpaid carers.

We have lots of different volunteering opportunities available, and all of them will help to make a difference to carers. It doesn't matter whether you have minutes or hours to volunteer – there'll be something you can do to support us.

What we offer

- We provide all the training and support you need
- You'll be part of a small and friendly team
- Volunteer expenses: no volunteer should be out of pocket

Visit carersfirst.org.uk/volunteer to find out more.

Fundraising

news



It's easy to donate!
See back page for details

Lincoln City Fundraising

A team of staff and volunteers from Carers First were delighted to attend Lincoln City Football Club's final game of the last season in April to help raise money and awareness for carers.

£770.87

A fantastic **£770.87** was donated by supporters. We will be collecting at Lincoln City again on Saturday 19 November, do come and say hello if you're there!

Money Guidance for Carers



We are proud to be part of the pilot Money Guiders programme from the Money and Pension Service, as the only carers charity in England involved in the pilot.

Katie Pickering, our new Carer Support Benefits Adviser in Lincolnshire is part of the e-learning programme and says:

“The programme has increased my knowledge and confidence in giving a wider range of money guidance to carers.”

Summer Garden Party

We were pleased to host a summer garden party for supporters in the beautiful setting of Brome House in Kent. This was an opportunity to thank people who have contributed so much to carers and Carers First.



One of the guests who attended was Iris, 84, who helped found Medway Carers in the 1990s, which later merged with Carers First. She said:

“It was a wonderful event in such a beautiful setting. It was so lovely to re-connect with old friends and meet people who are taking the charity forward.”

Register with us

By registering with Carers First, you will get access to a whole range of services, including news, information, advice, training, groups, events and lots more. Visit carersfirst.org.uk/register or call our helpline on **0300 303 1555**

Getting online

We want you to be able to access the full range of information and support available, including our online groups and website. If you are not already online, someone in our team or an IT buddy can talk you through the process step by step.

Stay in touch

We want to hear from you and your stories.

Email us at:
hello@carersfirst.org.uk

Help us lighten the load of caring

If you're able to donate today, you can help us be there for more carers who need us.

It's easy to donate:

Visit carersfirst.org.uk/donate

To donate £5, text

CARER to 70970

Send a cheque made out to Carers First to Carers First, Unit 4, Michael Gill Building, Tolgate Lane, Rochester, Kent, ME2 4TG

Follow us on social media

 @carersfirst

 @carers_first

 @carersfirst

Get in touch

carersfirst.org.uk

T: 0300 303 1555

Carers
First

A Network Partner of
CARERS
TRUST

We are registered as a charity in England and Wales (1085430). Carers First is also a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered at Companies House (04144820). Registered office: Unit 4 Michael Gill Building, Tolgate Lane, Rochester, Kent, England. ME2 4TG