

Introduction

The winter months can be particularly hard for unpaid carers. With sky-high energy bills and inflated costs of living, many are unable to afford essential items without financial help.

This is why I'm incredibly proud of what our amazing grants programme can offer those unpaid carers most in need of help - and this is only possible thanks to you, our supporters.

Thanks to your unwavering support, over the past six months we were able to provide carers with beds, cookers, fridges, washing machines, breaks, gym memberships, laptops and more.

To hear just how much impact these grants can have on carers' lives, read Maureen and Carol's stories on page 4.

I thank you, sincerely, for enabling us to provide this life-changing support for unpaid carers, and wish you all the best for the year ahead.



Kirsty McNulty

Celebrities and young adult carer light up our Christmas carol concert

We were delighted to be joined by renowned broadcasters Angela Rippon CBE and Joanna Gosling alongside acclaimed actor Greg Wise at our annual Christmas carol concert. The concert is held each December as a fundraising event to raise more money to support unpaid carers.



Interwoven with some powerful and moving Christmas music from the City of London Choir, Angela, Joanna and Greg entertained guests with Christmas-themed readings.

This year, we were also joined by young adult carer Elena Vissani, who provided an inspiring and heartfelt closing speech about the challenges she has faced when caring for her father and the difference Carers Trust made to her life.

Thanks to the funds raised at events like the carol concert and your generous donations, Elena was recently able to complete a funded three-month internship in the Policy Team at Carers Trust. She attended parliamentary events in the House of Lords, spoke directly with MPs and key decision-makers about young carers' needs and gained great experience in a dynamic working environment.

Find out how we're creating opportunities for young adult carers at: www.carers.org/young-carers-futures

LOCAL SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS

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

Spring has sprung – so step out into nature to support unpaid carers

As the days gradually get longer and warmer and signs of spring start to emerge, what better way to spend a day out than by visiting one of the National Garden Scheme's 3,500 beautiful gardens? With a huge range of choices across the UK – from community gardens and allotments to beautiful country gardens – there's a garden for everyone.

And it's not just the fresh air, open space and stunning flora that you benefit from when visiting a National Garden Scheme garden. Not only is it doing you good, but you're doing good too – as your admission fee goes towards helping charities like us.

For over 25 years, the National Garden Scheme has partnered with Carers Trust to help improve the lives of unpaid carers in the UK. With more than £5.5 million donated so far, this long-standing collaboration has meant we've been able to provide much-needed support, advice and grants to those unpaid carers who need them most. These grants can go towards everything from essential

household items like a washing machine, to short breaks away for unpaid carers.

Susan from North Tyneside is an unpaid carer who has benefitted from such a grant. For years, Susan cared for her wife Cath, who lived with multiple health conditions. When Cath sadly passed away in July last year, Susan was able to use a National Garden Scheme grant to fund a trip to Scarborough and visit some friends the week after the funeral.

Without the grant, Susan wouldn't have been able to afford the break, or had the motivation to do it.

"It was fantastic. I stayed half-board so even having somebody else to prepare food for me made a big difference, because towards the end I was doing everything and caring for Cath 24/7. They say a change is as good as a rest and it really, really was. It was amazing to be able to just get away from it all, put everything down to go away and be me for the first time in five or six years."

Thanks to our partnership with the National Garden Scheme, Susan is one of many unpaid carers who has benefitted from a life-changing grant. We look forward to providing many more in 2024 and beyond.

Make the most of spring by visiting your local National Garden Scheme garden – find your nearest at: <https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/>



Speaking up for young carers – a national conference and parliamentary inquiry

On October 16 we were joined by 200 people at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester for our first national Young Carers Futures conference. The conference provided an invaluable platform for discussing how to bring about significant improvements for young carers and young adult carers.

The event brought together young people, professionals and academics whose aim is to help transform the lives of the estimated one million young people across the UK who care for a family member or friend.

“We deserve to be seen, heard and looked after, the way we fight so hard to do for other people,” said

Jordyn, a young adult carer who is Co-Chair of Carers Trust’s Youth Advisory Panel.

Children’s Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, was among the key speakers at the event. As well as talking about making young carers a priority, she heard directly from young carers attending the event about the challenges they face in their education, future employment and wellbeing.

Just a few weeks after the conference, we published results from the first ever parliamentary inquiry into the life opportunities of young carers. Led by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, and supported by Carers Trust, the inquiry reported on some troubling findings. These included a particularly shocking finding that as many as 3,000 young children under ten are spending more than 50 hours a week caring for a family member or friend.



This time spent caring means young carers, left unsupported, can fall behind at school. They can also miss out on potential job opportunities or the chance to go to university. Many remain unidentified by local authorities or schools for several years, creating a postcode lottery where support for young carers is better in some areas than others.

Duncan Baker MP, chair of the inquiry and vice-chair of the APPG, said: **“It’s up to all of us to give these young people a better start in life so we also need local authorities, health providers, schools, employers and regulators to join in and help young carers. This is why the All-Party Parliamentary Group is calling on the Government for a national carers’ strategy to co-ordinate support right across the country.”**

Our work highlighting the needs of young carers continues with Young Carers Action Day, Wednesday March 13. This will build on the theme of Fair Futures for Young Carers. Visit www.carers.org/ycad to learn more.

Partnership with Rank supports carers through cost-of-living crisis

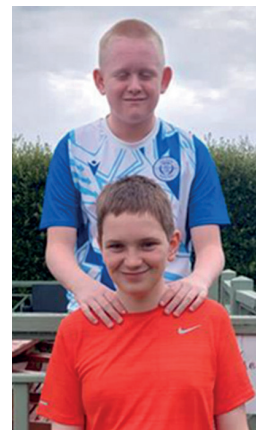
Without your continued support, we wouldn't be able to form and maintain important relationships with key funding partners, like The Rank Group PLC ('Rank').

We're thrilled to say that our strong, long-standing partnership with Rank has now entered its 10th year. In that time Rank has raised an incredible £3.5 million to support unpaid carers.

These funds have been used to provide more than 13,837 unpaid carers with support from local carer organisations across the Carers Trust network. This money can go towards

courses for carers on things like cognitive behavioural therapy, or help buy vital household items like a fridge.

Maureen cares for her 14-year-old son Thomas, who is autistic. She's a single mum to Thomas and his brother Steven, and works full-time as a finance worker at a wholesaler.



When Maureen's boiler broke last year, she was landed with a £2,000 bill to replace it. She wasn't sure how she would be able to afford it, until she applied for a Carers Trust Rank grant with the support of Dumfries and Galloway Carers Centre, one of our Network Partners.

Maureen said: **"All my wages went on that boiler. The advice to apply for the money was a lifesaver. I'm really grateful and I can't praise Carers Trust and Rank enough for that help. It stopped me and the boys struggling for a good few months."**

Leave a caring legacy to help people like Carole

Carole's caring journey started 37 years ago when her son was born with spina bifida. Since then, she has taken on two additional caring roles for other members of her family, including her mother who has vascular dementia and Alzheimer's.

As a working carer, Carole has an incredibly limited amount of time to do the things she loves. After her husband passed away 10 years ago, Carole took up salsa and ballroom dancing classes and met her close friend Steve, who is also an unpaid carer. But following the pandemic and the intensification of both of their caring situations, Carole and Steve were unable to keep attending dance lessons.

Through their local carers service in our network - Care for the Carers in East Sussex - Carole and Steve applied for a grant, which enabled them to pay for some private dance lessons and fund replacement care so they could both attend.

"We had the best time. We felt energised from the lessons, physically and mentally. We waltzed, tangoed, jived, cha cha-d, quickstepped and rumba-d all thanks to the grant we received."

By leaving a gift in your will to Carers Trust, you will be leaving a long-lasting legacy to keep helping people like Carole have a break from their caring role and do the things they love.

Gifts left in wills have the power to ensure unpaid carers have the support they need - in whatever form that looks like - so they can keep on caring for their loved ones. Even a small amount can make a huge difference.

For further information please contact **legacies@carers.org** and we will be pleased to help.

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