

2023-24

Action for Carers

Surrey

Impact Report



98%

of the thousands of Surrey carers who've used our services, would recommend us to another carer.

"Your involvement has given Mum back her dignity, sense of self, and better quality of life. I am so thankful to Action for Carers for providing this fantastic service.

Before speaking to you, I was feeling desperate as I just didn't know where to turn or how to help Mum.

Throughout our meetings, calls and emails, I've felt supported and listened to and it's made a whole world of difference."

Surrey carer



Supporting carers of all ages, across Surrey

Tim Bevans, Chief Executive

Surrey's carers face many challenges, living often very isolated lives in highly stressful circumstances.

Our charity exists to help these unpaid family and friend carers.

We are supporting carers as young as five years old, and have many carers still trying to cope in their late 90s registered with us too.

Challenging lives

Why are carers lives so hard? The role brings multiple challenges. As well as the emotional pressure of caring for someone who's not well or disabled, carers face practical challenges, financial pressures (often households can end up with no one in paid employment due to their caring role, and caring often brings extra costs), and there are impacts on mental health too.

I am humbled every day by the stories unpaid carers tell of the essential role they play, and how carers often don't realise they ARE carers—but instead simply see themselves as 'husband' or 'mum'. Our role is to **help carers realise they are carers** and there is

support for them from us and others. We provide a wide range of support and services which you can read about on the next few pages – making a huge difference to very stressful and challenging lives.

We also look to influence the wider world about carers too, working closely with Surrey County Council, the NHS and other local and regional charities to improve services, raise awareness and make a difference.

The numbers are high though – there are an estimated 120,000 unpaid carers in Surrey.

We want to reach more carers and help change their lives – but need your help. There are many ways to get involved and support our cause, either as an individual, community organisation or workplace, or simply just having the conversation with family and friends about caring.

Can you help us reach them, and help change more carers' lives?

**Tim Bevans, Chief Executive
Action for Carers Surrey**

"The service made me feel like me again, and not an isolated person with nowhere to turn."

Surrey carer

Some facts about carers and caring...

- One in five UK 50-64 year-olds are carers.
- Women are the majority of carers, with an approximate 60/40% female/male split.
- 45% of carers care for 90 or more hours each week, 15% care for 50-89 hours, and 24% care for 20-49 hours.
- 74% care for one person, 19% care for 2 people, 4% care for 3 people and 2% care for 4 or more people.
- More than a quarter (27%) of unpaid carers have bad or very bad mental health.
- Carers are seven times more likely than the general population to say that they are always or often lonely.
- 40% of carers have given up work to provide care—with approximately 600 people stopping work every day.
- 30% of carers are struggling to make ends meet.
- 36% of young carers report being bullied because of their caring role.
- Over a quarter of carers aged 11-25 regularly miss school.
- Carers in England & Wales contribute £445 million to the economy every day.
- The value of unpaid care is equivalent to a second NHS.



26,515 Carers are registered with us, including **3,274** aged under 18.

On average, we have **400+** new carers register with us each month, by phone, email and in person.



But there are an estimated **120,000** unpaid family and friend carers in Surrey's 1.2m population. We need your help to reach more.

Giving carers advice, support, information and a little time out

We offer carers assistance with emotional, practical, legal and financial concerns, helping people to feel supported, more in control and less alone.

Carers are referred or refer themselves — we had **4,000+** referrals in the year 23-24, and **99%** of these were triaged for assessment within five days.

Carers are then offered a range of tailored support, including 1-1 help where required, invitations to all our groups, events and activities, free resources, and access to our specialist services, such as our Moving & Handling team, or benefits advice as needed.

Hubs, support groups and activities

We have **15** drop-in carer Hubs running across Surrey, as well as activities online. Hubs take place twice a month, and are run by our staff with support from volunteers.

800+ events held

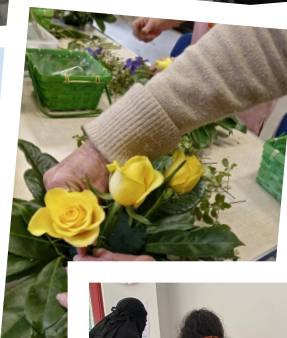
In person, and online, these included...

- Learning and training events: e.g. about caring for someone with Parkinson's, final advice on planning for the future, or your rights as a carer.
- Relaxation & wellbeing events: e.g. Tai' Chi, jewellery-making, yoga, crafts, & mindfulness.
- Support Groups: both general and specific (e.g. for dementia or parent carers).

456 Hubs

Action for Carers Surrey HUB

Were held over the year, across the county, at 15 different locations.



"I've been very fortunate to have met up with this wonderful, inspiring group of people at the Shepperton Hub. I came away feeling empowered and very grateful. I felt less alone and knew that I could depend on this group for support and common sense."

Surrey carer



Special events !!!

Autism and Dementia are two of the main conditions that our carers support.

We ran two special day-long events last year, offering a broad range of support on these conditions, with free activities, specialist speakers, and guest organisations attending.

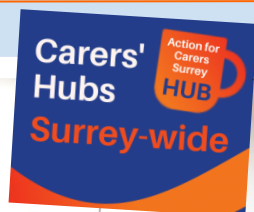
70 carers attended our special **Autism Day** in June 2023.

60 carers and 25 professionals attended our special **Dementia Day** in April 2024.

"Since coming to the Woking Hub, my life has changed for the better. Things are slipping into place after years of no help."

Surrey carer





Addlestone, Banstead, Camberley, Caterham, Cranleigh, Epsom, Farnham, Godalming, Guildford, Hersham, Horley, Leatherhead, Merstham, Shepperton, Woking, and online!

Helpline heroes

Our Helpline offered **4,238 hours** of support over the past year, responding to carers, often in great distress, via phone, email and text, providing vital information and emotional support.



Grants to carers

We access grants to distribute to carers in need, and in the year 2023-24 this included:

£93,000 from Surrey County Council for carers in food/fuel poverty from the Household Support Fund;

£22,000 in Early Intervention Payments to 105 carers (over 6 months);

£12,000 from Carers Trust; and

£7,000 of Travelcards to 22 carers (over 6 months).

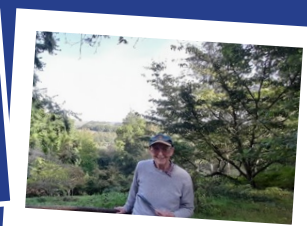
“I’m new to Action for Carers and very much trying to find how I can support my young adult son with ADHD and Autism cope with the pressures of life. I met Sarah at the Leatherhead Hub today — thank you so, so much Sarah for all your help and guidance, and for your wealth of experience and knowledge. I am very grateful.”
Surrey carer

Working in partnership

We are grateful to many, diverse partners and supporters for their help. This help comes in many forms including donations, gifts in kind, access to attractions, free advice and more.

During 2023-24 the **National Trust** in Surrey once again gave our carers free passes to selected properties, allowing **1,800** of them to enjoy some peace and tranquillity.

As one carer said: *“An absolute sanity ticket.”*



Historic Royal Palaces also continued their support, allowing us to take a group of carers to Hampton Court each month for fantastic days out.



Huge thanks too to **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre** for free tickets, and **West Horsley Place, Painshill Park**, and **RHS Wisley** for access to and activities at their beautiful locations.

Resources for carers

We produce a number of booklets, newsletters and packs for carers to help them with their caring role.

New releases this year included *Relaxation for Carers* with big



updates of our key booklets, *The Carers Checklist*, and our *Hospital Guide*, all available to order or download free on our website.





"Dear team, that was the best event ever, I liked the bearded dragon and holding the chicks the best and the rabbit and the snake... actually I loved everything. Thank you very much I loved it. Love Leo." Mum said: "Thank you so much, I think Leo really enjoyed his first event with you!"

We ran
262
events for
3,204
young people

Helping carer of all ages, from 5-years-old upwards



We support young carers aged from 5-17 who are providing ongoing care and support for a brother or sister, parent or other family member.

They may help by doing physical tasks, like getting someone out of bed, or helping give medication; provide emotional support; or carry out practical roles to help the household run, like cleaning, cooking and shopping.

We offer free, impartial information and support to young carers and their families on minimising the impact of their caring role. As well as tailored support, we provide free information workshops, and we also run lots of fun activities, giving young carers a little 'time out' as well as the chance to meet other young people in similar situations.

Our overall aim is to reduce caring's impact on their lives, and help them achieve their full potential.



Information in their hands



We have a lots of free resources for our young carers, including our packs for caring for common conditions; transition guides for those moving schools; and guides on issues such as resilience and wellbeing, plus a bumper-packed newsletter!

Our Angel Award is made to schools who achieve the standards to show they are truly 'young-carer' friendly.

26 schools were awarded this year.

"D's world has changed since she started young carers, she has really come out of her shell and wants to attend any event put on. When D is with the young carers group, she doesn't feel the odd one out and feels accepted and can act like a child again."
Parent of a young carer

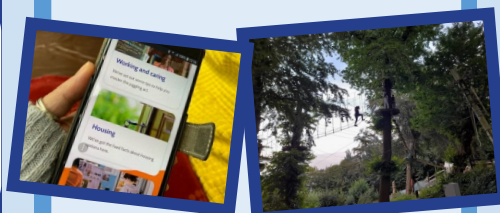




Young adult carers

Young adult carers – aged up to 24 – have particular needs as they start to think about their future.

There are hard decisions like whether they can go to college, or move away, plus manage their caring responsibilities.



We offer a range of support to this group, including specialist advice, tailored events, and a bespoke information section on our website, *'What you need to know'* created with young adult carers, to help them understand their options and plan their futures.

950 Children

were referred to us this year

"The whole support from you and the team have been first class and I know the difference it's made so a big thank you from me for all you do." Parent of a young carer

Whole family support

We ran two Family Fun Days at Painshill Park and West Horsley Place, which provided a safe space for people to come together and meet other families in similar situations and enjoy time together.



Thank you to our many friends, partners and supporters!

We're grateful for support from a wide range of people and organisations, allowing us to offer more and better support to your young carers. Just a few examples from the last year include gifts of skateboards from 3E; the use of facilities and more from ACS International Schools, Easter Eggs from Berkeley Group, and generous support



for young carer events from the Community Foundation for Surrey.

Supporters have also carried lots of fundraising challenges for us, including Evelyn Partners, Surrey University quiz team, Berkeley Group, Azets and many more. **Huge thanks to all our supporters!**



Financial support, specialist teams and help where you need it

We have a number of specialist teams, providing tailored support. This includes our Moving and Handling team, Benefits Advisor, and Hospital team. In mid 2024, we set up a new team helping those carers supporting someone with poor mental health.

"Thank you for your support and for listening to me. I did not know which way to turn. You are the one person who has made a difference."
Carer supported by the mental health team



Moving and Handling

Our Moving and Handling team provides a unique and much needed service. They provide safe solutions for carers who help their loved one move about, eg get up from a chair or into bed. The service turned **25** years old in 2024.

The team offer information, advice, training and support to help carers prevent potential injury to themselves as well as the person they care for, and understand how equipment can help and be safely used.

The team of six specialists, including a manager

Made **662** visits to carers

Made **3,491** support calls to carers

Sent **1,427** emails to carers

to give advice, support and information.

They also offer training online and face to face, providing **26** group sessions for **163** carers this past year.

This last year, the team had nearly **900** new referrals, and triaged **100%** of these carers within five days to ensure they receive appropriate support; with **100%** of urgent cases being triaged within two days.



"The service is exceptional and I feel very luck to have benefited from this care and expertise. Thank you all for a wonderful service." Surrey carer

Money matters

Carers households often have money worries. People may need to go part-time, or give up work to care, and caring brings costs too, everything from equipment to heating bills.

Families can often be entitled to benefits, but the system is complicated, and forms are daunting. Our Benefits Advisor fully understands how people's lives are impacted by caring and disability, and helps carers complete a variety of forms.

"Your support helped my wellbeing immensely and took so much stress off me."
Surrey carer

By March 2024, our Benefits Advisor had helped carers access an estimated **£1.3m** in benefits that they were entitled to.



Support in hospital

Our Hospital Carer Support Advisors work in Surrey's four main hospitals. They give advice, information and emotional support, and aid communications between the carer and the hospital, especially around discharge home. They also help hospital staff identify and support carers. This year the team had **950** referrals.

Our people: volunteers, trustees and staff



Our wonderful volunteers

Our volunteer programme has been building over the past two years, from a very small base.

We have a variety of roles including: supporting in our Hubs, going into GPs to update their carer information, helping at our events, and volunteer drivers delivering equipment and resources.

We currently have **25** active volunteers who we could not do without!

We offer all our volunteers training, induction, on-going support and reimbursed expenses such as travel. It's a great opportunity to be part of a growing team making a real difference to the lives of unpaid carers across Surrey.

Interested in finding out more about volunteering? Visit our website or email recruit@actionforcarers.org.uk



We have a Board of Trustees, over two-thirds of whom are carers or former carers, and all are volunteers. We thank them for all they do! *(Trustees pictured with some of our management team.)*

52% of our staff are unpaid carers themselves

We have **66** staff (filling **54** total full time posts), representing the people we support and with a wealth of knowledge, insight and genuine understanding of caring.

(Above are current figures, the year until April 2024, we had 58 staff, with 47 FTEs.)



100% of our staff Would recommend our services



"I've been a carer for almost half my life which has been very isolating. Volunteering gives me the opportunity to meet others in similar situations and help them. It improves my confidence and is very fulfilling. The support for us is phenomenal" ACS volunteer, Ashu

Being heard and influencing others

A big part of what we do is amplifying carers' needs and views, joining with others to campaign for change and work to make sure everybody understands carers' lives better.



We work across Surrey to reach carers in need of support, but also target professionals, organisations, as well as the public, to improve understanding, reach more carers, and encourage people to get involved. We also feedback carers' views— gathered through our events, Forums etc, with relevant Surrey bodies.



"I would like to thank you for an eye-opening presentation, it was heart-wrenching at some points and I learnt so much in such a short space of time, thank you." Surrey school

The three big annual campaigns: Young Carers Action Day, Carers Week and Carers Rights Day allow us to reach more carers and help them get the support they need.

Marking November's Carers Rights Day, we held nine Carers' Fairs across the county, with ourselves and many other organisations offering advice, support and more.



"Very informative and everyone was very helpful and friendly. Gave me clarity on a few issues I need to address. Thank you for being there!" Surrey carer

Training professionals

Education, health and social care professionals meet many carers in the course of their work.

We run regular free training, helping professionals understand the challenges carers face, and stay up-to-date in best practice in identifying, supporting and signposting carers. As well as our general offer, we also provide sessions for schools, as well as bespoke training, e.g. for GP practices.



Young Carers Action Day in March events included a young carers 'take-over' of Surrey Hills Radio, plus other interviews, hospital stands, awareness sessions with SCC, creative activities for young carers, and a visit with the Reigate & Banstead Mayor!



144 professionals attended our 'Because Carers Count' training and

242 education staff joined our schools training sessions.



Special thanks to Royal Bank of Canada for their support at the above.

And in June's Carers Week, we celebrated carers and all they do at our Hubs and events across Surrey, offering fun and relaxation sessions, plus time to chat and connect.

Our website averages **8,500** visitors a month, and we have **10,000** social media followers. Please follow us!

Get involved – and thanks!

So many organisations and individuals have helped us in myriad ways and we are so grateful. We could not do what we do without this support.

As well as the gifts of money, physical gifts and amazing fundraising efforts, we are kindly gifted other help too, including free tickets, trainers, facilities, advice, publicity, training and more. And of course time!

We've received help for a wide range of organisations, from other charities, schools, radio stations, businesses, supermarkets, football teams, and many others. A particular thanks to the many community groups who support us, including golf clubs, Rotary clubs, and Lions clubs.

See a full list of all major supporters in our Annual Accounts www.actionforcarers.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-financial-statement/

We get our core funding from Surrey County Council, as there is a government requirement for carers to be supported. But the extra help we get allows us to do so much more. We received **£94,000** in grants and donations this year.

Inspired to get involved?

Please get in touch on 0303 040 1234, or visit our website: www.actionforcarers.org.uk/getinvolved. You can find out all about volunteering, corporate partnerships, individual events and more! We'd love to hear from you!

Physical gifts this year have included skateboards, Easter Eggs, Christmas presents (kindly delivered by amazing volunteers) and items for our 'wellbeing boxes' – toiletries in an open box at events for young carers just to quietly help themselves.



Here for you

Action for Carers Surrey

We provide information, advice and support for unpaid carers of *all* ages, right across Surrey.

Our support includes benefits advice, advocacy, guidance on moving and handling, workshops, events, support groups, drop-in Hubs throughout Surrey, resources and more – giving carers a little time out and helping them feel less stressed, and more in control.

We have specialist support for young carers, a support team working in Surrey's hospitals, and also provide training and support for professionals working with carers.

Find out more at www.actionforcarers.org.uk

Call our Helpline on **0303 040 1234**.

It's open 9am-5pm on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, and open 9am-6pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

You can also text us on

(SMS) **07723 486730**, or email

CarerSupport@actionforcarers.org.uk

www.actionforcarers.org.uk