

# Caring

## TIMES

1 March - 30 June 2026

Blackpool  
**CARERS**  
Centre

THE FREE MAGAZINE FOR UNPAID CARERS ON THE FYLDE COAST



**NEWS &  
SUPPORT**

**WHAT'S ON GUIDE**

**CARERS'  
TRUE STORIES**

**LIVE-IN CARER  
COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT**



Blackpool  
**CARERS**  
Centre

**CARERS WEEK 2026  
RAFFLE**

1st Prize **£250** CASH  
2nd Prize **£150** CASH  
3rd Prize **£100** CASH

other great prizes to be won



**CASH PRIZE RAFFLE  
TICKETS ON SALE UNTIL 14 JUNE**

Page 2

**CARERS WEEK  
8-14 JUNE**

Page 10

**CARER'S ALLOWANCE  
OVERPAYMENT TURNING POINT**

Page 12

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[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org)

FR REGULATORY

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**Blackpool CARERS Centre**

**CARERS WEEK 2026**

**RAFFLE**

Raising funds to provide respite for carers from the age of 5.

1st Prize **£250 CASH**

2nd Prize **£150 CASH**

3rd Prize **£100 CASH**

Plus other great prizes to be won!

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Thanks to our generous sponsors, 100% of ticket sales goes direct to our carers!

Raffle Prizes sponsored by **carers week** **JR ROOFING**

Raffle Tickets sponsored by **bdj**

8-14 June 2026 Draw will take place on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Winners will be notified on 16<sup>th</sup> June.

FR REGULATORY

[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org) Registered Charity No. 1114559

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# Hello and welcome...

...to the latest edition of *Caring Times*!

Throughout this issue, you will find a range of updates on news stories which have featured in previous editions as well as real stories from some of the carers we support.

You will read, on page 8, about our expanding adult respite including upcoming wellbeing days and the tantalisingly titled "magical mystery trips", which I must confess even I do not know the destinations of!

The Power of Peer Support has also been explored on page 14, by Carla, our Refocus Lead. The comments made by carers accessing this form of support show the importance of being given the opportunity to talk to others in a similar situation to yourself and are well worth a read.

On page 21 you will see that our young carers have been busy and look as though they will continue to be, with regular youth club sessions as well as a range of trips and activities taking place with a particular highlight being our Oscars Night, which is fast approaching.

Alongside this, we continue to strengthen our partnerships with local authorities, schools, funders and community organisations to ensure unpaid carers of all ages receive the recognition and support they deserve.

Pages 22 and 23 provide an update on the fantastic work that some of our wonderful community and corporate fundraisers have been doing since our last edition.

Thank you for being part of our community, whether as a carer, professional, volunteer or supporter. Your support makes a difference every single day.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Best Wishes



**Tom McMurdo,**  
Director of Finance and Resources



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## How to refer to us and access our services

- Call or email the office using the details below.
- Visit [www.blackpoolcarers.org/online-carers-referral-form/](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org/online-carers-referral-form/) and fill in the form
- Ask your GP or social worker to refer you

## Please let us know!

If you no longer wish to receive this magazine, please let us know by calling Matthew on 01253 393748 or by email at [data@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:data@blackpoolcarers.org)

You can view our Privacy Policy at [www.blackpoolcarers.org/privacy-and-cookies-policy/](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org/privacy-and-cookies-policy/)

## Contact Blackpool Carers

Beaverbrooks House 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ

Tel: **01253 393748**

Email: [admin@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:admin@blackpoolcarers.org)

You can also send us a message using the 'Contact Us Form' on our website: [www.blackpoolcarers.org/contact](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org/contact)

Front cover: Volunteers from DWP getting our front garden 'National Garden Scheme' ready!

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# What's On Guide...

Call Pat on 01253 393748 or text 07508 495977 for information on any of the events listed below unless otherwise stated. New trips and events are organised regularly, so please check for updates on our website: [www.blackpoolcarers.org/whats-on/](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org/whats-on/)

## FOR ALL CARERS...

### Carers' Kitchen & Warm Hub Drop-in

**Held on the first Saturday of the month at Beaverbrooks House 10.00am-2.00pm**

A monthly drop-in session for carers of all ages. Come along for an informal chat or to discuss any queries or concerns about caring roles and to access help and advice, including benefit advice. We often have visiting speakers too. Refreshments available.

## FOR ADULT CARERS...

All sessions take place in the relaxing venue of Beaverbrooks House. Plans are subject to change, so please call 01253 393748 before attending.

### Adult Carers' WhatsApp

**Social WhatsApp Group for adult carers** registered with Blackpool Carers Centre.

*If you'd like to join the Group, contact Pat on 07508 495977 for more information.*

### Facebook Updates

**Daily on Blackpool Carers Adult Team closed page (for carers registered with Blackpool Carers)**

Regular notifications about our sessions, well-being advice and local/community information. *To take part, you'll need to join our closed Facebook Group for Adult Carers - Just search on Facebook for "Blackpool Carers Adult Team" request to join and answer 3 general questions to keep the page private. Call Pat for more information.*

### Facebook Live

**Via the Adult Carers Closed Facebook Group - Mondays and Fridays at various times**

A live video which is also recorded and can be watched at any time. We

look at what is planned for the week and any other relevant updates. We have the occasional surprise guest and sometimes a different location! Facebook Live gives you the opportunity to comment and join in the conversation! *To take part and to receive notifications, you will need to join our closed page 'Blackpool Carers Adult Team'. Search on the Blackpool Carers Centre page on Facebook in the 'groups' section and request to join. Call Pat for information.*

### Knit and Natter

**Held weekly on Mondays at Beaverbrooks House 10.30am-12.00pm**

Join us to knit outfits for our mascot Rocco that are on sale at the Centre and in local hotels and businesses. Also, come along if you would like to learn how to knit or crochet!

### Music Aloud Carers' Choir

**Held weekly on Mondays at Beaverbrooks House 6.15-7.30pm**

Young and adult carers are welcome to come along and join our Carers Choir. Our wonderful visiting tutor, vocal coach and professional singer, Irene Phillips has run choirs in Blackpool and Manchester for a number of years and is an amazing teacher! She also teaches privately.

### Chair-based Exercise, Tai Chi and Meditation Drop-in Session

**Tuesdays at Beaverbrooks House 11.00-12.00pm**

Gentle chair-based exercise for all and your chance to relax and unwind. No need to book, just come along in your comfy clothes and recharge your batteries.

### Movement and Dance

**Tuesdays at Beaverbrooks House 1.00-2.00pm**

This new fun exercise session is a great way to get fit and mobile and involves a variety of dance elements such as line dancing or Bollywood!

### Wellbeing Afternoon

**Held weekly on Wednesdays at Beaverbrooks House 1.30-3.00pm**

Take your pick either inside or outside, it's up to you! Join our gardening group for a spot of weeding and pottering in our community garden, or enjoy the peace and quiet in the woodland area. If you don't fancy gardening, you can try your hand at one of the many crafts we have on offer. It's never too late to learn a new skill! Everyone is welcome. We always have a cuppa and there is often cake!

### Magical Mystery Trips in the Minibus

**Thursdays at Beaverbrooks House 12.30-5.00pm**

Local trips setting out from the Centre at 12.30pm and after a pickup in town, travelling to a local destination. Return approximately 5.00pm.

### NHS Talking Therapies

**Held on the last Wednesday of the month at Beaverbrooks House 10.15am-1.00pm**

**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

Advice is available from attending members of the Adult Support Team but also Healthier Minds NHS Mental Health Support (Formerly Supporting Minds). *Call the Adult Support Team on 01253 393748 if you wish to book an appointment.*

## ReFocus & ReCharge Monthly Support Group

Held on the third Thursday of the month at Beaverbrooks House  
10.30am-12.00pm

A monthly support group for carers of those affected by alcohol and/or drug use. Come along to our friendly group, have a chat and meet people in the same situation as you!  
Call Carla for more information.

## HUGS Monthly Support Group

Held on the first Friday of the month at Beaverbrooks House  
10.30am-12.00noon

Help, Understanding and Group Support (HUGS) monthly group for carers of those affected with mental ill health. Come along to our friendly group, have a chat and meet people in the same situation as you!  
Call Carla or Leah for more information.

## Spring Equinox Wellbeing Day Retreat

Saturday 21 March  
Beaverbrooks House  
11.00am-2.30pm

Come along and enjoy some valuable 'me' time. We have many activities for you to try including crafts, archery, boules, Tai Chi, hand massage, Reiki, Yoga, meditation and dance. You can do as little or as much as you wish, but there's lots to choose from.

## Don't forget to ask Pat for your copy of our Take 5 Times, weekly What's On Newsletter!

To receive your weekly 'What's On for Carers' newsletter, call Pat on 01253 393748 and ask for your name to be added to the email list.

Printed copies can also be picked up from reception at Beaverbrooks House on Friday mornings.

## International Dance Day

Wednesday 29 April

Beaverbrooks House  
1.00-3.30pm

If you love to dance or just enjoy watching others, you're welcome to come along and join in the fun.

## Mental Health Awareness Week

11-17 May -

SAVE THE DATES  
Beaverbrooks House  
& other venues



Our website and social media platforms will be updated with information and events in the coming weeks...so keep checking!

## Carers Week

8-14 June -  
SAVE THE DATES  
Beaverbrooks House &  
other venues



Our website and social media platforms will be updated with information and events in the coming weeks...so keep checking!

## Annual Carers Week Raffle

1 March to 14 June

Your chance to win one of 3 cash prizes, plus many other great items. Raffle tickets can be purchased from Beaverbrooks House and are just £1 each. The draw will take place on Monday 15th June.  
Call Julie on 01253 393748 for more information.

Additional trips and special events organised after the printing of this magazine, will be posted online and in our weekly Take 5 Times newsletter.

## SOCIAL & COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING EVENTS...

The following community events are open to everyone and all funds raised help to provide support and respite for unpaid carers in Blackpool.

## Annual Blackpool Caring Corporate Partner Event

Friday 20 March  
Beaverbrooks House  
2.00-4.00pm

A must-attend event for all local

**business owners.** This is a premier networking opportunity for local leaders committed to impact. Discover how CSR excellence boosts staff retention and elevates your brand. Secure your spot to connect with like-minded peers and help us transform the lives of Blackpool's unpaid carers.  
Call Terry on 01253 393748 to book your place - numbers are limited!  
See advert on page 15.

## Tri to Race the Sun - Dawn to Dusk Triathlon

Saturday 18 April  
Start at Sabden Village

This epic fundraising event will see participants cycling, canoeing and then climbing to victory...all before the sun goes down!  
See advert on outside back cover and call Terry on 01253 393748 for more information. Places are limited!



## National 3 Peaks Challenge

12-14 June

Scale the peaks of Ben Nevis, Scafell and Snowdon over 2 days.  
See advert on inside back cover and call Terry on 01253 393748 for more information. Places are limited!

## Capital to Capital 2026 Cycle Challenge

3-5 September

This year's formidable cycle challenge will cover 200 miles from London to Paris.  
See advert on page 2 and call Terry on 01253 393748 for more information. Places are limited!

## Great North Run

Sunday 13 September  
Newcastle to South Shields

We have just 10 places available for runners wishing to take part and to fundraise for Blackpool Carers Centre. To book your place call Terry on 01253 393748. See advert on page 25.

# Live-in Carer Council Tax Discount: A Timely Reminder for Unpaid Carers

Recent coverage by Money Saving Expert (MSE) identified that a number of councils, including Blackpool, were publishing incorrect or incomplete information about the live-in Carer Council Tax discount.

While Blackpool Council has now updated its website, the episode is a timely reminder of how important it is that unpaid carers are aware of the financial support available to them and that they check their entitlement carefully.

The live-in Carer Council Tax discount means that the carer is “disregarded” for Council Tax purposes. In simple terms, they are not counted as an adult resident when the council calculates the bill. If a carer lives with the person they support and they are the only two adults in the household, it is treated as though only one adult lives there. This would normally make the household eligible for the 25% single person discount. In some cases, the discount could increase further if the person being cared for qualifies for the Severe Mental Impairment (SMI) disregard.

To qualify for the live-in Carer discount, the carer must provide at least 35 hours of unpaid care per week to someone in their household who is not their spouse, partner or child under 18. The person being cared for must also be receiving a qualifying disability benefit.

Before welfare reforms in 2013, the qualifying benefits included: Attendance Allowance (higher rate), Constant Attendance Allowance (increased amount), Disability Living Allowance (care component, higher rate) and Disablement Pension (increased rate). However, since 2013 the criteria have widened to include additional benefits and it was these that some councils had mistakenly excluded. These include Armed Forces Independence Payment (any rate), Attendance Allowance (lower rate), Disability Living Allowance (care



component, middle rate), and both the standard and enhanced rates of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

For carers already facing significant financial pressure, access to the correct Council Tax discount can make a meaningful difference. We would encourage unpaid carers who live with the person they support to review their eligibility and, if in doubt, seek advice. Ensuring accurate information is available is essential but so too is making sure carers feel confident in claiming the support they are entitled to.

## STAFF PROFILE

### Julie Taylor, Finance Officer

**My name is Julie and I joined Blackpool Carers Centre in September 2012. Like many people, my working life began with the usual jobs – cashier, waitress – but I truly found my calling when I moved into the charity sector.**

Before joining Blackpool Carers Centre, I spent 12 years working as part of the fundraising team at Trinity Hospice. I loved being able to put my energy into a cause I felt passionate about. After all those years, I felt ready for a change and, when I saw a job advert for a Charity Administrator at Blackpool Carers Centre, another local charity, I thought, I’ll give it a go.

Almost 14 years later, I can hardly believe how quickly the time has flown. During that time, I’ve had the privilege of watching this amazing charity grow from a small building the

size of a three-bedroom house into the fabulous Beaverbrooks House we call home today. It’s been a real rollercoaster journey, and I’ve worn many hats along the way.

In the early days, I answered every call that came into the building and handled the usual paperwork and administrative tasks. Over time, I began to branch out, using my skills to help organise fundraising events and support the financial side of the organisation. It’s true what they say about working in the charity sector you never really do just the one job you were employed to do. Everyone mucks in and does whatever needs to be done!

Eventually, I discovered what I truly loved: finance. I gladly accepted the opportunity to study for my AAT qualification. Going back to school at



*Julie accepting a very generous Easter egg donation*

42 wasn’t easy, but I did it – and today my main role is Finance Officer. That said, there’s still a whole host of other jobs to be done, and there’s never a dull day.

Blackpool Carers Centre is a fantastic place to work. The team really does feel like a second family, and the dedication and passion to Make a Better Life for Carers is clear for everyone to see. It’s a pleasure to come to work every day, and as we often say, it’s truly ‘more than just a job’.

IMAGINE WHAT YOU COULD DO WITH

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FOR JUST £1 A WEEK, OUR LOTTERY  
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## Where, How, When?

Where did you go?  
When did you leave?  
You cannot tell me and only I can see.

There are skills you have forgotten  
There are words you cannot say  
In your mind you are with me  
But in mine you are slipping away.

Sometimes you can see things  
Things that I know are not there  
Sometimes you sit and smile at me  
Sometimes you sit and stare.

Sometimes you say that you are scared  
The fear shows on your face  
Sometimes you scream and shout at me  
As if this is not your place.

This dreadful thing has stolen you  
It's taken you away  
If only I could have a wish  
It would be for one more day.

*Dementia Poem by Debbie Milller*

## Our Board of Trustees

- **Sarah Lambert (Chair)**  
Retired Development Manager
- **Alison Gilmore (Treasurer)**  
Former Hotel General Manager
- **Tracy Jackson**  
Former Hospital Director
- **Ben Reilly**  
Head of Property and Store Image,  
Beaverbrooks
- **John Topping**  
FCAT Community Relations and  
Estates Lead

We keep overheads low  
so almost all of your  
donation is spent  
supporting our carers.

**94p in every £1 raised**  
goes directly towards  
helping to make  
a better life for carers!

[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org)

# Take 5 Adult Respite update from Pat

**A**s the daffodils and snowdrops are just beginning to come to life, so the Adult Respite sessions are beginning to return to normal after what has been a stormy cold winter!

Music Aloud Carers Choir is back with some new additions to their repertoire. They are looking forward to taking part in some performances at the centre as well as in some care homes and even at a nearby Women's Institute evening in April. Everyone enjoys these performances although it is not essential to take part in these, of course, as the main objective of the choir is to socialise, gain confidence and resilience and have fun.

The same can be said for all Respite activities, but the chair-based exercise and meditation session adds an element of calm and focus on a carer's relaxation. This is a very gentle session, with most of the exercises being done on a chair but also including balance and strengthening exercises. Again, we only ask that you do as much or as little that you feel comfortable with.

As some of the participants have progressed so well, there is a new movement session on Tuesday afternoons.



*We always have exciting activities to try.*

**Take 5**

*Music Aloud Carers' Choir were invited to sing at Ansdell Masonic Lodge Christmas event.*



This involves a bit more standing and a variety of dance elements such as line dancing or Bollywood!

We have a Spring Equinox Wellbeing Day Retreat coming up on Saturday 21st March which will be activity based with crafts, archery, boules, Tai Chi, hand massage, Reiki, Yoga, meditation and dance. Again, you can do as little or as much as you wish on this day but there will be lots to choose from!

Until then, we have our regular Wednesday afternoons which can be any form of activity that can help towards carers' wellbeing, be it crafts, art, baking, painting, games – all to involve socialising, relaxing and having some well-deserved time out.

Now that we have the minibus back, we are using it on Thursday afternoons for little trips out. These will be mainly local but anywhere that has a café and has some under cover space in case it rains! It may also give some carers the chance to socialise with others if they cannot come into the Centre.

We will have a town centre pickup point or can pick up on the way. These will be our 'Magical Mystery Trips'! There will be other trips that will be full days so please keep in touch for details.

There will also be more activities and events so keep a look out for the newsletter or posters.

If you would like to receive the newsletter to keep abreast of what is happening on a weekly basis, please contact the Centre with your email

address. Or you can pick up a physical paper copy from Reception on Friday mornings.



*Proud carer with her Painting by Numbers artwork, on Wellbeing Wednesday.*

You can also check the Adult Carers WhatsApp group and Facebook (Blackpool Carers Adult Team) for details of any events and let me know if you would like to join us. If you need help in joining the groups or wish to receive the newsletter, please let me know.

I'm looking forward to seeing as many old and new faces as possible this year!

Best wishes  
**Pat, Adult Respite Coordinator**

# Balancing life, work and caring for mum

**M**y name is Anna and I have worked within health and social care services for over 35 years, so in my mind juggling work and caring for my family would be straight forward, how wrong could I have been and this is a story I have not wanted to share.

We didn't call it dementia at first, we did not want to contemplate the possibility. We made excuses about being stressed and getting older, but we all noticed that mum was drinking more than usual."

My parents always drank, not in a way that made people uncomfortable. It was just their and our everyday normal. So, when she started to forget things and become repetitive, I didn't panic. Mum would lose things and her mood would change from being to calm to sudden anger and the family would be on the receiving end.

Then she started accusing people of doing things that had not happened or stealing her money or important papers. She would look at me like I had betrayed her when we found whatever was "stolen" later stuffed in places that made no sense. It also caused a divide within the family as her accusations were confabulatory and no one knew what to believe.

By the time someone finally said alcohol-related dementia, I was already worn down in a way I did not have words for.

This is not the kind of dementia people talk about gently; It is not just memory loss, its paranoia, its rage, it's shame that turns into blame. There are days when she knows something is wrong and blames everything but alcohol for it. Other days she is convinced the family are controlling her life for no reason.

And the drinking did not stop because in her mind she is 'fine.'

That part does not get said out loud enough and a diagnosis does not make things disappear. Taking the alcohol away made her angry and

defensive, and allowing her to continue drinking made everything worse. I live in the space between two bad choices, trying to pick the one that would hurt her less today.

Here is what keeps me functioning, not what makes things "better":

- **I stopped correcting her.**  
Telling her the truth only made things explode, if she said she had not eaten, I tell her that I am hungry and we eat together, being right is not worth the fallout.
- **I made life smaller.**  
Maintaining a routine and having fewer decisions works, less is more.
- **I choose safety over being liked.**  
I limit the alcohol as much as I safely can, which makes her angry. She tells people I am controlling her life and lying about her drinking, but I had not shared this with anyone. I let this happen as keeping her safe matters more than my reputation.
- **I write everything down.**  
The confusion, the falls, the drinking, the mood swings. Professionals need information to assist with any diagnosis and support they can provide.
- **I have learned when to emotionally detach.**  
When she calls me cruel or accuses me of ruining her life, I remind myself: this is brain damage, not insight, not honesty and not her choosing to hurt me, but is still does.

The worst part is not the extra work and cleaning up vomit or the numerous hospital admissions. It is losing her in pieces, grieving someone who is still breathing.



Missing conversations that are never coming back and watching alcohol take more than it ever gave and knowing I cannot undo it.

One day she looked straight at me and called me 'James' which is my brother's name. This would have been funny as he is bald and has a beard which I certainly do not. I answered her, then drove home and cried, after that I have stopped expecting recognition and show up as a carer, not a daughter.

If you are living this:

- **You are allowed to be angry.**
- **You are allowed to be tired.**
- **Caring does not fix neurological damage.**
- **Setting limits does not make you abusive.**
- **Wanting relief does not mean you want them gone.**

Caring for a family member with alcohol-related dementia is brutal in a quiet way. There is no clean ending, no clear victories, you just keep going until you cannot anymore.

And if all you did today was get through it, that counts.

I am fortunate that I have a good employer and colleagues who do not judge me and allow me the time to work around my caring responsibilities.

Thank you, Blackpool Carers Centre.

**Anna, adult carer**

# Take time to care for yourself

**B**eing a carer is tiring in a way that sleep does not always fix, it's being 'on call' all the time and worrying even when things are calm. It is putting someone else first so often that you forget what you need. That is exactly why staying well as a carer matters so much.

When you are run down, everything gets harder, your patience is shorter, small problems feel massive and you might snap, feel guilty, or just go numb. That does not mean you are a bad carer it means you are human and exhausted. Looking after your own health helps you cope on the days that are heavy, not just the good ones.

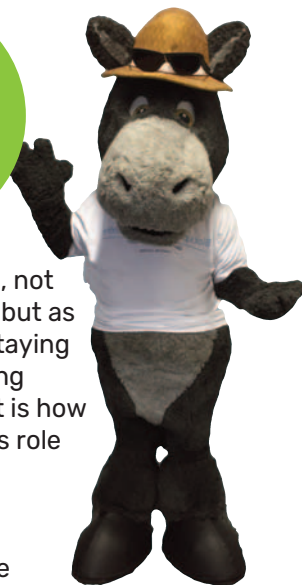
Staying well is not about spa days or pretending everything is fine, it is about basic things: getting some rest when you can, eating properly,

moving your body a little, and having at least one person you can be honest with. It is about noticing when you are overwhelmed and saying so, instead of carrying on until you break.

A lot of carers feel selfish or guilty about taking time for themselves. But if you don't, your body and mind will take it anyway through burnout, illness, or complete emotional shutdown.

Looking after yourself is what allows you to keep showing up with care, kindness, and patience.

Rocco's  
'STABLE  
ADVICE'



You matter too, not just as a carer, but as a person and staying well is not letting anyone down it is how you survive this role without losing yourself.

The team at the Centre are always available to listen and walk alongside you in your caring role at a time and pace that is right for you. Call us on 01253 393748.

## Carers Week 8-14 June 2026

**C**arers UK, alongside a coalition of national charities, has announced that the theme for Carers Week 2026 will be Building Carer Friendly Communities – a call for better recognition and practical support for unpaid carers across the UK.

There are an estimated 5.8 million unpaid carers nationwide, providing vital support to family members, friends and neighbours who are ill, older or disabled. In towns like Blackpool, where health inequalities and deprivation are higher than the national average, the role of unpaid carers is even more significant. Every day, local carers help loved ones manage long-term conditions, mental health challenges, substance misuse recovery and age-related frailty – often at great personal cost.

Unpaid carers save the UK economy an estimated £184 billion each year – the equivalent of a second NHS. Yet many carers struggle without adequate support. Carers UK research shows that 57% of carers feel overwhelmed 'often' or 'always'. In Blackpool, we regularly see carers juggling employment, financial hardship and their own health needs alongside demanding caring roles.

### So what does a carer friendly community look like?

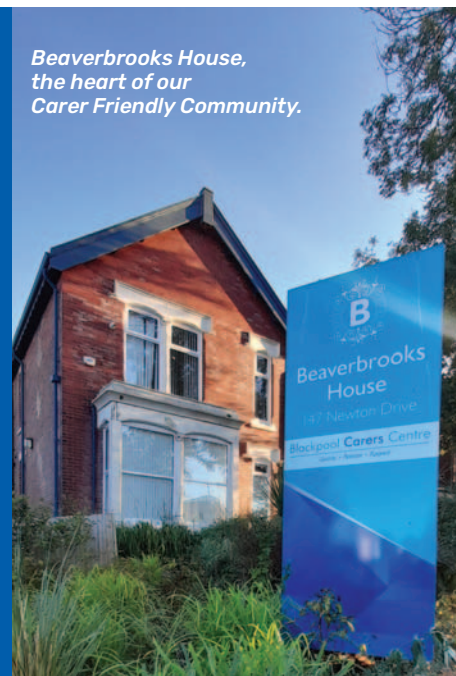
It is a place, organisation or service that actively recognises carers, listens to their experiences and takes practical steps to ensure they are not left to cope alone. That could mean flexible working policies from local employers, GP practices proactively identifying carers, schools supporting young carers to achieve their potential, or neighbourhood networks tackling loneliness and isolation.

In Blackpool, there are already positive examples to build upon from hospital-based support within the Transfer of Care Hub, to schools working more closely with young carers, to community organisations creating safe spaces for respite and peer connection. But there is more to do.

Carers Week 2026 will shine a light on what is working and what must change. It is an opportunity for local businesses, faith groups, health services, education providers and community leaders to ask: Are we truly carer friendly?

Backed by headline sponsor TSB Bank, the campaign invites communities to share good practice

*Beaverbrooks House,  
the heart of our  
Carer Friendly Community.*



and take practical action. As Helen Walker, Chief Executive of Carers UK, says, this is a crucial chance to build pathways of support that improve carers' health, relationships and financial security.

In Blackpool, where caring responsibilities touch thousands of households, building a carer friendly community is a local priority. By working together, we can ensure carers are seen, valued and supported every step of the way.



# 2026 Poverty Report highlights how certain groups including carers are living in deep poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's newly published UK Poverty 2026 report presents a sobering picture of life for millions of people across the country. While headline poverty rates have remained largely unchanged, the depth and severity of hardship experienced by many households has intensified.

According to the report, 20% of the UK population is living in poverty a figure that has remained stubbornly static. However, beneath that headline number lies a more troubling trend. An estimated 6.8 million people almost half of those in poverty are now living in very deep poverty, meaning their income is far below the standard poverty line. For these households, the challenge is not simply about managing rising costs, but about meeting the most basic essentials of food, heating and housing.

The report highlights how certain groups remain disproportionately

affected, including disabled people, families with children and those with caring responsibilities. Informal carers are more likely than those without caring responsibilities to be living in poverty 23% compared with 20% although it is encouraging that this gap has narrowed slightly in the latest data.

In 2023/24, one in ten adults (5.2 million people) were informal carers, and six in ten were living in families where someone was disabled. For many, the financial impact of caring is significant. Reduced working hours, missed career progression and the need for flexibility mean carers often face a financial penalty.

In 2023, the report found that unpaid social care givers experience an average pay loss of £414 per month nearly £5,000 per year.

These figures underline the structural challenges facing carers: providing essential support that saves the public



purchase billions, while often absorbing personal financial strain. As the report makes clear, tackling poverty in the UK requires not only maintaining employment opportunities and strengthening social security, but also recognising and supporting those whose caring responsibilities limit their earning capacity.

With poverty rates unchanged and deep poverty rising, the findings act as a renewed call for coordinated action ensuring that those who care for others are not pushed further into hardship themselves.

## Raise funds for us for FREE

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Join as our supporter today at:  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause)  
 Just search for:  
**Blackpool Carers Centre**

8,000+ retailers will donate to us whenever you shop with them

Start at the  
easyfundraising  
website or app

Click out  
to where you'd  
like to shop

Checkout:  
prices are exactly  
the same!

The retailer sends  
a % of your spend  
to easyfundraising

They pass  
it on to us  
:)

Plus, you'll get...

Exclusive retailer offers

Competitions

A warm feeling inside!

Over  
£60m

raised for UK good causes

£0

extra cost to anyone

Join our team!

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Blackpool Carers supports unpaid carers and their families. Join our friendly team to connect with your local community, share skills, help others and make a better life for carers from the age of 5.

We need your help with:

- ✦ Welcome & Friendship
- ✦ Awareness & Fundraising
- ✦ Carers' Respite Activities
- ✦ Administration
- ✦ Gardening

For you:

- Full support and training will be given
- Flexible opportunities
- Monthly 'drop-ins'
- Annual celebration event

Interested?

Call our Volunteer Coordinator, Kerry, on 01253 393748 or email: [kerry.cossens@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:kerry.cossens@blackpoolcarers.org)

Beaverbrooks House, 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ  
[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org)

# Carer's Allowance Overpayments: Sayce Review signals turning point for carers

**The long-running Carer's Allowance overpayment scandal reached a significant milestone this week with the publication of the independent Sayce Review.**

For thousands of unpaid carers who have spent months and in some cases years facing distressing repayment demands from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the report represents a major step toward justice.

The scandal has seen large numbers of carers pursued for often unaffordable sums after breaching Carer's Allowance earnings rules. While the weekly earnings limit is clearly set out, the system around reporting changes and calculating entitlement has been widely criticised as complex and poorly communicated.

Many carers were unaware they had crossed the threshold, sometimes by small amounts, only to later receive letters demanding repayment of thousands of pounds.

Over the past 18 months, Carers Trust has worked closely with The Guardian to highlight the human impact of the issue. Stories shared by carers revealed the toll of repayment demands on people already under intense financial and emotional pressure. For some, debts accumulated over several years before they were notified, creating shock, anxiety and in some cases severe hardship.

The Sayce Review concludes that DWP guidance on overpayments was both wrong and confusing, describing the situation as a serious error stretching back more than a decade. Crucially, the review recommends the re-assessment of hundreds of thousands of cases a significant victory for carers and campaigners.

Kirsty Hugh, CEO of Carers Trust, welcomed the findings, stating: "As the review makes clear, the DWP's guidance on overpayments was both wrong and confusing. It was a huge error going back a decade that meant countless carers were wrongly judged to have



received overpayments of carer's allowance.

*"We are pleased the DWP has taken it on the chin and listened to both carers and the services that support them. Its acknowledgement of its error today, along with its commitment to resolve this injustice, are a very positive step forward in making right this wrong to carers."*

*"We are delighted our campaigning on this means that thousands of carers will be relieved of this enormous burden and that a re-assessment service will be created to review each case."*

While much work remains to ensure fair and timely reassessments, this moment marks an important recognition that unpaid carers who already save the UK economy billions each year deserve clarity, fairness and respect within the benefits system.

## VOLUNTEER TRUE STORY

### Blackpool Carers Centre is a lifeline and sanctuary for Lynnette

**I have been a carer for many years, attending the Centre for 8 years, and volunteering for the last 6 years.**

My journey with the Centre started when I was referred by the Crisis Team.

Suddenly I was surrounded by the most amazing support from extremely caring staff, who gave time to listen, picked up problems and dealt with them, taking on such a lot of the burden. This was a lifeline and a sanctuary, A warm and inviting place to get away from the worries and traumas of a carers life.

I have volunteered in different areas of the Centre, but mainly on Reception. It's such a calming, relaxing and peaceful atmosphere. I like dealing with the varied people who come in, all for different reasons, and showing empathy for people who are in a similar situation.

I also enjoy any admin and helping the staff when needed, and in turn they make you feel very valued.

I like to think I give people a welcoming and caring approach to help them feel comfortable, bringing all my previous skills forward from my working life as a teacher and a manager.



The Carers Centre is an amazing, unique place, much needed for the people who are mostly under the radar, and who are increasing at an alarming rate. A lifeline for many. A truly special place.

**Lynnette, volunteer**

# Young Carers Action Day

Wednesday 11 March 2026



**O**n Wednesday 11 March 2026, organisations across the UK will mark Young Carers Action Day a national campaign shining a light on the thousands of children and young people who provide unpaid care for a family member who is ill, disabled, experiencing mental ill health or affected by substance misuse.

**This year's message is clear: Help us give young carers a fair future.**

Young carers often carry responsibilities far beyond their years. Many help with personal care, manage medication, translate at appointments, supervise siblings, provide emotional support and keep households running. While they show incredible resilience and maturity, the impact of caring can affect their

education, friendships, wellbeing and future opportunities.

**Too often, young carers remain hidden in plain sight.**

Young Carers Action Day 2026 is calling for greater recognition in schools, improved access to training and employment opportunities, regular breaks from caring, dedicated wellbeing support and stronger pathways into adulthood. Every young carer deserves the same opportunity to learn, grow and thrive as their peers who do not have caring responsibilities.

Recognition in education is crucial. When schools understand a young person's caring role, simple adjustments – flexibility around homework, a named staff member,

quiet spaces or attendance support – can make a life-changing difference. Access to respite and wellbeing sessions is equally important, giving young carers the chance to be children first and carers second.

As we mark Young Carers Action Day, we are asking professionals, employers, schools and communities to play their part. By identifying young carers early, listening to their experiences and responding with practical support, we can ensure they are not disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control.

Young carers contribute so much to our communities. On 11 March, let's commit to giving them what they deserve: recognition, opportunity and a fair future.

## FAMILY FOCUS TRUE STORY

# I can now identify my emotions and advocate for myself

**I** am 16 years old and I care for my mum, who struggles with her mental and physical health and is a recovering addict. My relationship with my mum has been up and down, and I find it difficult to have open conversations with her around her previous addiction and the impact this has had on me and my siblings.

Before coming to the centre, I didn't speak openly about my caring role, or the impact this was having on me, so it felt strange to be able to talk openly about this for the first time.

Coming to the Centre and receiving 1-1, my support worker Leah has helped me to identify boundaries I

can put in place and be open about my past experiences and emotions. I do find it hard to express how I feel at times when talking to my mum, and Leah helps me to identify my emotions and advocate for myself.

Leah helps me to focus on what I would like to achieve in the future and encourages me to create goals to work towards. I feel I have managed to build confidence with my independence with making appointments for myself, which was something I struggled with before.

Since coming to the Centre, I have enjoyed coming to Young Adult Carer (YAC) group on a Tuesday evening and enjoy having this time for myself. I have now got a job that I love and have been made



permanent which I am proud of myself for.

The support from Blackpool Carers Centre has helped me to better understand my caring role and enabled me to speak openly in a safe environment without fear of judgement.

**Stacey, young adult carer**

# The Power of Peer Support: Why carers need safe spaces too

**U**npaid carers are the quiet backbone of our communities. They show up every day for the people they love, often at great personal cost. For carers affected by another person's substance misuse, this role can be especially isolating, overwhelming and emotionally exhausting. Behind closed doors, many are coping with chaos, uncertainty and heartache – yet feel unable to speak out or ask for help.

Substance misuse still carries a heavy stigma. Carers frequently tell us they feel ashamed, judged or blamed for what is happening in their family. This fear of judgement can cause them to withdraw from friends, family and wider society, leaving them feeling alone at a time when they need support the most. Over time, isolation can take a serious toll on mental health, confidence and wellbeing.

This is where peer support becomes so powerful.

Peer support offers something unique: the chance to sit alongside others who truly understand. There is no need to explain, justify or apologise. When carers come together with people who share similar experiences, something remarkable happens. The weight they've been carrying alone begins to feel lighter.



*Tasha at The Alcohol Recovery Conference at Blackpool FC hosted by Horizon's Lighthouse team*

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we run a monthly peer support group called **ReFocus & ReCharge**, specifically for carers affected by substance misuse. The group is a safe, confidential and welcoming space where carers can talk openly about their experiences, listen to others, and feel heard without fear of judgement.

Sharing with like-minded people is deeply cathartic. Many carers arrive

feeling nervous or unsure, only to discover a room full of compassion, understanding and acceptance. Hearing someone else put your own feelings into words can be incredibly validating. It reminds carers that they are not alone – and that what they are feeling is both normal and understandable.

Peer support is not about fixing problems or offering solutions. It's about connection. It's about being able to say, "This is hard," and having others nod in recognition. For carers who have spent months or years suppressing their own needs, that simple act can be transformative.

**ReFocus & ReCharge** also helps carers reconnect with themselves. When your life revolves around crisis management and worry, it's easy to lose sight of who you are beyond the caring role. Taking time to step into a supportive space, even for a short while, can help carers regain a sense of balance, strength and resilience.

**The group runs on the third Thursday of every month, from 10.30am to 12pm, here at Blackpool Carers Centre.** There is no pressure to speak – some people come just to listen – and new faces are always welcome. Whether you've been caring for years or are only just beginning to recognise yourself as a carer, you will be met with warmth and understanding.

If you are affected by another person's substance misuse, or if this article resonates with your own experience, please do get in touch with us. You are also very welcome to simply turn up to the group. You will be greeted with open arms by people who understand what you are going through.



*Quiz Master, Carla, at the ReFocus Christmas party*

No one should have to carry this alone. Peer support can be the first step towards feeling seen, supported and less isolated – and sometimes, that makes all the difference.

The following comments are from ReFocus & ReCharge carers:

*"I have gained some good friends that I can trust. They never make me feel ashamed and, when I talk to them, they get where I'm coming from. I have so much respect for them."*

*"Having a group that understands your journey and where you can share your experiences, can reduce stress and isolation. It is a safe space where you can gain strength and hope from others."*

*"The centre is a safe refuge, and the peer group offers support, friendship and understanding where you feel free to share your stories knowing you will not be judged."*

*"The ReFocus group was a huge turning point in my life of struggling to deal with the addiction problem in my family. We all support each other especially during a crisis and we know we are never alone. I am convinced the ReFocus team has literally saved lives."*

*"Having a safe non-judgmental space to share our worries is what the group offers to each and everyone of us. I can't say thank you enough. They have helped me get my life back."*

**Carla, ReFocus Lead**

# Blackpool Caring Corporate Partner INFORMATION & NETWORKING EVENT



**Friday 20th March 2026 • 2.00-4.00pm**

**Beaverbrooks House • 147 Newton Drive • Blackpool • FY3 8LZ**

## ATTENTION BLACKPOOL BUSINESS OWNERS!

**If you're looking to elevate your business's impact, join us for our Caring Corporate event to discover how partnering with Blackpool Carers Centre benefits both our community and your bottom line.**

If you would like to **enhance your CSR, boost staff morale, and gain local visibility** whilst helping unpaid carers within your workforce and in our community, come along to find out more. **Join with other high-profile businesses** already helping to build a stronger Blackpool together.



**Blackpool  
CARERS  
Centre**



Light refreshments provided.

Numbers are limited so please book early.

RSVP to [terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org)  
by Friday 14th March to book your place.

[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org)

Charity No. 1114558

## Are you affected by someone's alcohol and/or drug use?

Come along to our monthly support group:

### ReFocus & ReCharge

on the third Thursday of every month  
**10.30am-12.00pm**

at Blackpool Carers,  
Beaverbrooks House,  
147 Newton Drive,  
Blackpool

Your chance to have a brew, a chat and meet people in the same situation as you!



**Blackpool  
CARERS  
Centre**

For more details, contact  
Carla Talbott on 01253 393748

[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org)

## Do you care for someone with mental ill health?

Come along to our monthly support group:

### HUGS

Help, Understanding and Group Support

Held on the first Friday of every month • 10.30am-12.00noon  
at Beaverbrooks House,  
147 Newton Drive, Blackpool

Our welcoming group gives peers the opportunity to share their own experiences, seek support and forge new friendships in a relaxed, reassuring setting.

"It's just nice to find someone like me."

- ReFocus Carer



**Blackpool  
CARERS  
Centre**

For more information, or a friendly chat before you attend, call Leah on 01253 393748.

## Blackpool Carers Centre staff have made me see that I matter too

**M**y name is Sam and I am a 49 year old mum and carer for my son Joe who is 28.

My caring role began when Joe was a very young child. He was diagnosed with ADHD and Autism, and his behaviour was out of control. He would regularly smash up the house and was violent towards me. I was going under and struggling to cope and then I was sadly widowed at the age of 28 when Joe's father tragically lost his life in a car accident. Children's Services felt he would be best placed in care until he was 18 years old.

A stream of professionals entered our lives, and I had to repeat the same questions, and I was asked to attend various courses and jump through hoops which didn't help my already stressful home life. I felt I was failing Joe as a mother and I was devastated. The focus had always been on Joe since he was a child and I thought this would shift once he became an adult, but it is still the same today. Everyone and everything takes second place to Joe.

Six years ago Joe was introduced to alcohol by a neighbour who befriended him and took advantage of his vulnerabilities. Joe was convinced that his new drinking companions were his friends, unable to recognise they were taking advantage of him. When intoxicated he makes threats to harm himself and has attempted to take his life. I should have had the Police on speed

dial as we were in regular contact due to Joe's wellbeing.

Joe has stolen money from various family members - £600 from my elderly father and also my youngest son's pocket money. He has even stolen a bracelet which belonged to my late mother and held so much sentimental value to me and sold it to a friend for £4! This incident caused me immense pain and I felt ashamed that my son could do this to me. I had always instilled values in my children and this was unbearable.

My son repeatedly blames me for his drinking, he screams and swears at me "I drink because you put me into care". I feel it should be me drinking with what I have had to deal with. Professionals know that us as parents are not going to walk away. I often have to step in to keep my son safe and I feel I replace the support that services are unable to provide.

Caring for Joe leaves me exhausted and it affects my own wellbeing and my relationships with the rest of the family as it is so time demanding. I feel like I am on a constant merry go round and I can't get off. I live in fear that I will get a phone call from The Police telling me he is hurt, intoxicated or worse no longer alive.

My life has been turned upside down. I have 3 other children but Joe is the biggest worry. He thinks nothing of throwing himself off the pier or walking into traffic. He gets so low in mood and it has caused huge



arguments with the wider family. I was directed to the ReFocus group at Blackpool Carers Centre by Blackpool Council's Learning Disability Team.

This has been a lifeline for me especially the listening ear I have found in Tasha. I have discovered a safe space where I feel I can offload without judgement. Tasha has made me see I matter too and now I feel I can prioritise myself.

The ReFocus peer support group has been an amazing support. I feel like I am not on my own and I can be completely honest in the group. "I find it so comforting that everyone is so honest and open in the group and they all made it so easy for me to share my story and not feel judged. I don't feel on my own anymore."

If you are supporting a loved one who is struggling with mental health issues and/or substance misuse, please come along for support. I'm Samantha, my son is Joseph.

**Sam, ReFocus carer**

## A treat for your feet is good for the 'sole'

Blackpool Carers' Foot Care Service offers dedicated and accessible foot care, tailored to suit your needs, in the comfort of your own home.

Our friendly, fully-trained foot care practitioner, Tracy, offers you a complete foot care package for £23\* including cleansing foot soak, nail trim and file and relaxing foot massage.

*\*There is an additional one-off charge of £15 for your own Foot Care Pack, payable at the first appointment. This contains all the equipment required and remains with you for future treatments.*

We also offer additional treatments including finger nail cutting.

**To book an appointment or to find our more, call 01253 393748**  
or email [tracy.taylor@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:tracy.taylor@blackpoolcarers.org)



# Sam no longer feels alone

**M**y name is Sam, I am 14 years old and have a caring role for my brother who has recently been diagnosed of ADHD, there is the possibility that he is also autistic.

The challenges that I face with my caring role are that a lot of my free time is taken up by my brother and this impacts my mental health. I sometimes feel stressed as my brother can bother me whilst I am trying to do the things that I enjoy. He also wants to spend time with me out of the house which sometimes I am ok with this.

I find it more difficult during the school holidays as I am with my brother all the time whereas at school, I feel it gives me a break.

My mum referred me to Blackpool Carers Centre after my brother was being supported by Aiming Higher.

Initially I was feeling happy that I was finally getting some support that was just for me but nervous and fearful of the unknown.

I met Dannie, the Young Carers' Support Worker for the first time when I was in school. I have been receiving 1 to 1 support which I am loving. I look forward to my 1 to 1 support sessions with Dannie as it gives me the opportunity to talk about my thoughts and feelings.

I have gained the knowledge on how to deal with situations and how to



manage time for me. I am now aware that I am no longer alone and there are many other young carers.

I have been offered the respite sessions from the start but am just starting to give them a go. I also go to cadets which I love as this also gives me time away from my caring role.

**Sam, young carer**

## Calling all Blackpool schools... Don't miss our invaluable workshop to help you identify and support young carers attending your school!

**O**n 4th March 2026, the Young Carers team will host our second Young Carers in Schools Identification workshop for staff from local Blackpool schools. The event aims to deepen understanding of how schools can identify and support children and young people who take on caring responsibilities for a family member due to illness, disability, mental health issues, or substance misuse.

The identification of young carers remains a challenge and data from the national 2025 school census showed around 64,500 pupils in England were recorded as young carers.

This figure is widely recognised as capturing only a fraction of the true picture, with estimates suggesting there may be as many as one million young carers across the country.

In Blackpool, official school census figures identify only a small proportion of young carers, yet Blackpool Carers Centre's data reveals that many more children are providing care than the census suggests. This gap highlights the need for schools to improve

awareness and recording, so that hidden carers aren't overlooked.

Importantly, young carers are now recognised in Ofsted inspection frameworks and must be recorded on the school census, which helps ensure their needs are considered in school provision and accountability processes.

The Young Carers in Schools Identification workshop will explore practical strategies for identifying young carers early, ways to adapt school support, and how to work with families and external services to reduce barriers to attendance and attainment. Research shows that young carers often face higher absence rates and lower

*Sam addressing a packed Training Room at our first School's Workshop last year.*



educational outcomes when their responsibilities go unsupported.

By working in partnership with schools, Blackpool Carers Centre and the Young Carers team are strengthening support and creating positive change so young carers in Blackpool can succeed both inside and outside of education.

**Call Samantha on 01253 393748 or email: [samantha.howard@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:samantha.howard@blackpoolcarers.org) for more information.**

# Caring responsibilities are not just part of life for many young carers, they are also a barrier to opportunity

**A powerful new report from the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers has shone a stark light on the hidden cost of caring and the long-term consequences for young people's futures.**

Published following a wide-ranging parliamentary inquiry, the report examines the experiences of young adult carers in the context of the Government's ambition for every young person to be in education, employment or training.



Its findings are sobering. For hundreds of thousands of young people across the UK, caring responsibilities are not just a part of life they are a barrier to opportunity.

The inquiry found that 75% of young adult carers said their caring role made it difficult to take part in education or training. Almost half (49%) reported missing out on education or training opportunities altogether, while 38% said they had either turned down or not applied for a job because of their caring responsibilities. Financial strain is a significant factor, with 53% stating their caring role has affected their finances, making participation in education or training harder.

Perhaps most concerning is the impact on attainment. In 2025, fewer than half (46%) of young carers left secondary school with five GCSE passes including English and Maths – a critical benchmark for future progression. Behind these statistics are young people juggling coursework with medication routines, job interviews with hospital appointments, and exam revision with sleepless nights.

The report highlights a number of systemic challenges: insufficient financial support for carers in further and higher education; a lack of flexibility from universities and employers; and the physical and emotional toll of providing many hours of care each week. Young adult carers often fall between services no longer seen as children, but not fully supported as adult carers either.

The APPG is calling for stronger identification of young carers, improved financial support, and greater flexibility within education and employment settings. Without change, the report warns, caring responsibilities will continue to entrench inequality and limit life chances.

For organisations like Blackpool Carers Centre and others across the country, the findings reflect what frontline teams see every day: capable, resilient young people whose potential is too often constrained by circumstance. The message from Parliament is clear if we are serious about opportunity for all, young carers must not be left behind.

## In Memory of Glenn Willis – a truly wonderful man

**It is with great sadness that we share the news of the sudden passing of one of our long standing Caring Corporate supporters, Glenn Willis of InXpress, on 18th December.**



*Glenn (r) with Terry (l) and other Caring Corporates at our celebration event.*

Glenn has been supporting Blackpool Carers since 2018 and

was among the very first businesses to register their commitment to support Blackpool Carers when we launched our Caring Corporate Programme a number of years ago.

Since then, he has continued to champion our work, providing generous financial contributions as well as invaluable guidance, particularly in helping us establish our Annual Charity Golf Day four years ago.

His family were deeply aware of Glenn's unwavering dedication to Blackpool Carers and thoughtfully requested donations in lieu of flowers at his funeral, a gesture that reflects the meaningful connection he felt to our cause.



*Terry giving Glenn a well-deserved winner's hug at our Charity Golf Day.*

As a tribute to Glenn and his remarkable support over the years, our Annual Charity Golf Day will now be known as The Glenn Willis Charity Golf Day. His legacy will continue to make a difference for carers and families across our community.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Glenn's family, friends, and colleagues. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by everyone at Blackpool Carers.

# Caring & Sharing

## with Charlotte



*Hello, my name is Charlotte. I am 17 years old and I care for my 9-year-old younger brother (Frankie) who requires 24 hour care. The main reason that I spend so much time caring for my brother is because my mum also has a chronic illness and needs support every day. You may remember me from the previous 3 magazines. I'm starting to become quite a pro at this.*

*By reaching out to you through this column and sharing my journey of being a young adult carer, including how it can be so difficult to the point that you feel like it's never going to end.*

*I want everyone to know that these feelings are completely normal and you are never alone at Blackpool Carers Centre. My aim with writing this column is to get more young carers seen and heard and even if I can help 1 person then I will have succeeded in raising awareness.*

*There are so many carers that don't get noticed until later, and so by sharing my story I really hope that I can help those carers get noticed! If you are currently reading this and think you have been through similar experiences as me but don't know*

*how to get the support that you need as a young carer, then you are in the perfect place I believe that at Blackpool Carers Centre, every carer always gets the support that they need and are always made me feel welcome.*

*In September of 2025 I was starting college to study a childcare course in early years. When I am older I would love to work in a nursery with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) children. As I care for someone with special needs, I have a lot of experience with SEND children and so I believe that it could make a positive impact in young children's lives.*

*In the summer holidays before starting college I was extremely nervous and I even thought about giving up on myself and not going because I was too scared. I was thinking....*

- *What if no one likes me?*
- *What if people see me as 'annoying' because of my difficulties?*
- *What if the teachers get fed up with me because I need a little more support than others?*
- *What if something happens to Frankie or my mum while I'm not at home?*

*I had enough of feeling like I did and so in one of my 1-2-1s with Sam I had told her about how scared I am and how I kept thinking I should just give up and not go.*

*The reason why I was so scared was because the last time I was in a mainstream setting it was very traumatic and so I was scared that it was going to happen again.*

*So for the rest of the summer holidays, Sam helped me to not feel as nervous to start. We had 3 or 4 meetings with some of the staff at*

*Blackpool and The Fylde College about how scared I am and asked what they could do to help me. Me and Sam even did a walk from my house to and from college to see how long it would take.*

*We went to the college to look around where my classrooms were going to be, which did really help because all of the classrooms were set up as primary school classrooms and 1 set up as a nursery classroom (this made me a little less nervous).*

*Then September quickly came around and it was almost time for my first day. The day before college I was extremely nervous and the first day was extremely hard. I was ok in the first lesson until it was lunch and it all got too much.*

*After quite a while of trying to get used to it and really trying not to give up, I am now loving it at college, and I am doing all of the things that I enjoy. People have even voted for me to be a part of the student union!*

*Overall, this shows that although you can be scared of starting something new there is always someone there that can help you along the way.*

*At Blackpool Carers Centre there are a lot of people who would support you with any worries that you have and because of the support I have been receiving from Blackpool Carers Centre, they have helped me to be able to go to college and I am so grateful for them and honestly don't know what I would have done without them.*

*If you're a young carer and need support, please do not hesitate to contact the Young Carers Team on 01253 393748.*



*Charlotte is loving studying for her early years childcare course at Blackpool and The Fylde College*

# YOUNG CARERS' FUN ZONE

## Family Bike Rides

Family Bike Rides: Get yourselves active if you can and dust off the bikes and explore safe trails in our local park or along the promenade.



## Easter Crafts

Try some of these fun Easter activities - use old tins, cardboard and material!

## Hoorah - Spring is finally here!

The days are stretching longer and getting warmer. Everywhere you look, life is popping up: trees are flaunting their fresh green leaves, daffodils are peeking out of the ground, and the world is basically saying, "Come outside and play!"

Here are some great activities you can do with your family and friends to welcome spring in 2026.



**Painted Eggs:** decorate hard-boiled ones with paint and glitter, make various facial expressions on different ones.

**Wreaths:** Use paper plates, pom-poms, or fresh flowers to create festive Easter wreath.

**Toilet Roll/Tin Bunnies:** Paint toilet rolls or tins, add card or material ears, googly eyes and pom-poms for noses.

**Potato Stamping:** Carve shapes into potato halves to use as stamps for cards or wrapping paper.

- ALBUS DUMBLEDORE
- BELLATRIX LESTRANGE
- DOBBY
- DOLORES UMBRIDGE
- DRACO MALFOY
- FRED WEASLEY
- GINNY WEASLEY
- HARRY POTTER
- HEDWIG
- HERMIONE GRANGER
- LORD VOLDEMORT
- LUCIUS MALFOY
- LUNA LOVEGOOD
- MAD-EYE MOODY
- NEVILLE LONGBOTTOM
- NYMPHADORA TONKS
- PROFESSOR MCGONAGALL
- REMUS LUPIN
- RON WEASLEY
- RUBEUS HAGRID
- SEVERUS SNAPE
- SIRIUS BLACK

## Wiztastic Harry Potter Wordsearch

Can you find all the Wizardy Harry Potter themed words hidden in the square below?

Remember, they can go backwards and diagonal too!

J	R	S	E	R	U	B	E	U	S	H	A	G	R	I	D	L	K	E	J	O	Z	V
Z	P	A	X	B	V	F	K	M	M	H	C	C	N	T	K	U	W	M	M	Y	J	N
D	O	L	U	C	I	U	S	M	A	L	F	O	Y	R	C	N	I	X	N	F	Y	E
N	G	E	E	P	A	N	S	S	U	R	E	V	E	S	O	A	M	H	T	D	Z	V
H	I	V	J	A	S	C	P	M	X	E	G	G	E	E	S	L	A	H	R	O	H	I
M	N	D	M	I	R	M	G	N	D	O	N	M	U	L	P	O	E	M	O	L	C	L
S	N	T	I	Y	B	B	O	D	I	A	B	U	R	B	K	V	B	A	M	O	C	L
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C	L	R	Z	A	X	I	M	W	T	X	E	M	G	N	Q	E	F	R	M	S	H	V

## Beach Days

Beach days are always fun if the weather is good. As a family or with your friends build Sandcastles, paddling, and sit on the steps of the prom and watch the sunset. Make sure to keep yourself safe and check on the day what are tide is doing before your visit.



## Where's Rocco?

Our mascot Rocco has hidden on a page in this magazine. Can you find him?



#RoccoCares

# Young Carers' Take 5 update

**A**s we step into 2026, Take5 has been buzzing with energy, creativity, and memorable moments.

Back at the end of October, Our Take5 Secondary had their Trip to YHA Edale Activity Centre where we got involved with various adventurous activities that thrilled, excited and challenged us along the way, that has created memories to last a lifetime.

We were visited by Ella from the Grand Theatre as part of the Cultural Passport project. She met with the group to consult them on their ideas, what they would like to see happen, and what opportunities could be made available for young people in Blackpool.

To end 2025 in true festive style we had our Christmas Party, which was made extra special by a surprise visit from Santa Claus himself. Laughter, music, and festive cheer filled the room as we enjoyed games, treats, and the opportunity to celebrate together.



*Young carers meeting Santa*

Events like these continue to play an important role in strengthening relationships and creating a sense of belonging for everyone involved. We would like to thank Cash for Kids and Rab Ferguson for their kind generosity of gifts and The Late Crew QR codes to download the e-books.

We brought 2026 in with our vibrant "Around the World" New Year Party, a celebration of cultures from across the globe. We explored a variety of traditions and activities, learning how different countries welcome the new year. The event was brought to life by the fantastic Amelia from Wigan Piers Entertainment who kept the atmosphere lively and engaging throughout. A huge thank you goes to Blackpool Skips, whose generous

funding made this celebration possible and helped us deliver such a meaningful and inclusive experience.



*Getting creative with Rachel from Wildlife Trust Lancashire*

Our regular youth club sessions are in full swing, and we have had a visit from Rachel at Wildlife Trust Lancashire. Rachel spent time interacting with our Take5 groups, leading engaging discussions and activities focused on wildlife and nature in our local ponds, streams and the sea, and environmental awareness.

Her visit sparked curiosity and enthusiasm among us and has laid the groundwork for an exciting new project, which we are looking forward to developing together in the coming months.

We are excited to share plans for an action-packed February half term. Our young people will take part in two amazing trips to the Anderton Centre, where they will enjoy a full adventure day designed to build confidence, teamwork, and resilience through outdoor challenges.

Alongside this, we will also be hosting a Chinese New Year celebration, giving young people the



*Karaoke at our New Year Party*



*A challenging climb at YHA Edale Activity Centre*

chance to learn about its traditions, culture, and significance through themed activities and creative sessions.

In March, we will be celebrating Young Carers Action Day on Wednesday 11th March 2026 with a dedicated vision board event for our young carers. This session will offer a supportive and reflective space for them to explore their aspirations, recognise their strengths, and visually plan their goals for the future with help and guidance from Andrew Walker from Blackpool & Fylde College.

We are also delighted to share that planning is already underway for our much-loved Oscar Night celebration. This popular event gives young people the chance to dress up, celebrate achievements, and enjoy an evening of fun, creativity, and recognition in true red-carpet style.

Take5 is currently planning upcoming trips and activities for the Easter holidays and May half term, guided by the ideas and preferences of our young people. Their input is shaping what they would like to see within youth club sessions, trips, and activities.

As always, we are incredibly grateful to our supporters, and funders who continue to make these opportunities possible. With so many exciting activities and more on the way, 2026 is shaping up to be a truly inspiring year for our young people.

**Suzanne,  
Respite Activity  
Coordinator**



# Fundraising and Community News from Terry

## Caring Corporates

Thank you to the following Caring Corporates who continue to sell our Rocco soft toys - **The Imperial Hotel, Park House Hotel, The Doric, BlueWaters, Caledonian, The Grand Hotel, The Flints and Stanley Villa Farm Fishing and Camping.**



## Blackpool Skips' donation meant the 'world' to our young carers at Christmas



Our young carers

welcomed in 2026 with a special "Around the World" New Year celebration on 30th December. They explored New Year traditions from across the globe and took time to reflect on where they see themselves in ten years' time. These thoughtful reflections were placed into a very special time capsule, which will be buried in our garden and opened a decade from now.

The celebrations continued with New Year games, music, and

karaoke, led by the wonderful Amelia from Wigan Pier Promotions, who kept everyone entertained throughout the event. To top it all off, everyone enjoyed a fantastic spread of New Year party food - perfect for keeping energy levels high.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to one of our **Caring Corporates, Blackpool Skip Hire Ltd**, whose generous funding made this event possible.

Thanks to their support, our young carers were able to welcome the New Year with laughter, smiles, and memories that will last a lifetime.

## A Brotherhood of Support: Heartfelt thanks to our local masonic lodges

We wish to recognize the following generous donations from our local Masonic lodges. These funds enable us to provide essential respite and resources to those who need them most. We are deeply grateful to the local Brethren for their steadfast commitment to our community and for ensuring that no carer has to face their challenges alone.

- Ansdell Lodge - £800
- Blackpool Chapter Rose Croix No 136 - £250
- Freemasons of Peace & Unity Chapter No 3966 - £400
- Lodge of Triumph 1061 - £900
- New Sanctuary Lodge 6604 - £200
- Rotary Sunrise - £1,309.00
- Royal Arch Chapter - £250
- Saturnian Lodge 7563 - £150
- St Johns Lodge 2825 - £500
- Symphony Lodge 4924 - £400
- Wyre Korc - £300

## The Christmas gifts of support

The magic of the festive season was felt more deeply than ever this year, thanks to the overwhelming kindness of our local business community. Just take a look!

### Be Inspired Toy Appeal

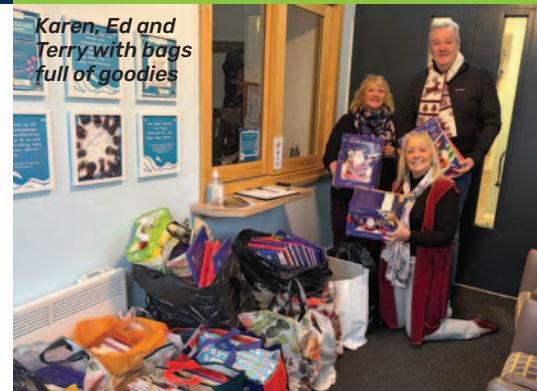


Karen from Be Inspired with her huge Christmas donation

We want to share a huge thank you to Karen and everyone at Be Inspired magazine for including us in their amazing Christmas Present Appeal. We were one of 14 charities they supported, and together, they collected an incredible 3,333 gifts for local children!

Thanks to the kindness of your business contacts and readers, all our young carers received presents this Christmas, helping bring smiles, excitement, and a little extra sparkle to their day.

To Karen and the whole team: thank you for inspiring our community and making such a wonderful difference.



Karen, Ed and Terry with bags full of goodies

### MOD Norcross

Karen, Ed and the incredible team at MOD Norcross have been supporting our Christmas appeal since 2019. This year they donated a massive 300 advent calendars and selection boxes for our carers. Thank you all for making Christmas brighter for those who need it most.

# A 'fairytale' ending to the 2025 Cinderella Ball

**W**e extend our warmest thanks to Gill Booth for hosting her fifth spectacular Cinderella Ball. The evening sparkled with kindness, generosity and community spirit, perfectly reflecting Gill's dedication and the wonderful guests who joined her.

We are delighted to share that this year's event raised an incredible £7,826 in support of Blackpool Carers. In total over the last 5 years Gill and her supporters have raised over £26,000. Gill has kindly requested that all funds raised from the evening are dedicated

to supporting our young carers. Thanks to her generosity, we will be able to provide essential respite activities that give these remarkable children precious time to simply be children, to relax, have fun and create special memories away from the challenges of their caring roles.

A special thank you also goes to Joe Fryer, who, now at 21 years old, attended the event to share his personal caring journey, which began when he was just eight.

Joe spoke movingly about the support he received from Blackpool Carers and described how vital a lifeline the service was throughout his childhood. His words were a powerful reminder of the impact your generosity has on young lives.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Nick Knowles from DIY SOS, who sent a heartfelt message to Gill and all attendees, expressing his appreciation for their continued support of Blackpool Carers. His warm



Gill (c) with Terry (r) and Jane looking fabulous

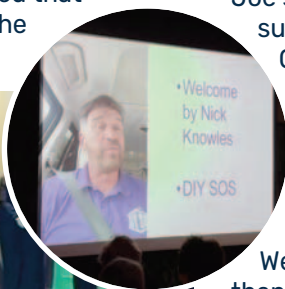
words added something truly special to the evening.

Thank you, Gill, and thank you to everyone who attended, supported and contributed to this magical event. Your kindness and generosity help us continue delivering the support local carers need and deserve.

**If you would like to host your own event in aid of Blackpool Carers, please contact Terry Hodkinson on 01253 343748 or email: [terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org)**



Joe sharing his young carer story with Ball guests



## Beauty-ful Hearts

**A** HUGE thank you to salon neighbours, Rhianna from Rhianna's Nails & Beauty, and Chelsea from Cherry Beauty.

Their wonderful clients have kindly 'given back' by donating Christmas gifts for our young carers. The total value was an incredible £588!



Rhianna with the donated presents



Our YACs in their snuggly new hoodies

## Bring me 'Sunshine'

**R**otary Club of Blackpool Sunrise kindly donated funds to buy new hoodies for our young adult carers (YACs). They are absolutely thrilled with them. Thank you so much!

Chelsea from Cherry Beauty



## Fantastic Fox's

**T**hank you to all the staff at Fox Brothers for their donation of Christmas presents for young carers.



Gill from Fox Brothers with gifts for young carers

## Thanks also go to:

- **Ameon** for their donation of selection boxes.
- All our **Caring Christmas Auction supporters and bidders**, you helped to raise an amazing £1,730.
- Everyone who bought a gift for a carer off our **Christmas Wishes Tree** or from our **Amazon Wish List**.
- **Clarke from FM Electrical Solutions** and **Sharon from Daly Utilities** for delivering Christmas presents to our young carers.

# PHOTO GALLERY

...special moments we want to share!



Young adult carers enjoying some sunshine on the Comedy Carpet



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The last year has, once again, been challenging for carers. Many people around the country are struggling with the demands of their caring role, unable to access respite and feeling isolated and exhausted. Carers are the backbone of our society, giving service to friends and family; a service given out of love despite the high price in terms of their own financial and emotional wellbeing.

As President of Carers Trust, I have witnessed life-changing support provided to carers of all ages. This support, delivered by the Trust's local carer services the length and breadth of Britain, is often life changing. Tailored to a carer's individual needs, it could be a grant to help with household expenses, a short break either with or away for the person for whom they care, advice on energy bills or increased support in school.

It has been an eventful and important year for Carers Trust. Collectively, as a network, over 1.1 million carers were reached, and the Trust now covers about 85% of the country, delivering a range of powerful programmes and renewing efforts to build the sustainability of services at local level.

I am pleased to see the progress that has been made for young carers in 2025. Over 250 organisations, including the Welsh and Scottish Governments and UK Government departments have signed up to the Young Carers Covenant, thereby committing them to take action, where they can, to create better and fairer futures for young carers.

Carers Trust has achieved a great deal in 2025, but, as ever, there is much to do. Over the coming year, I encourage you to continue your invaluable support. It is only by pulling together that we can make a difference for carers.

Letter from Princess Anne



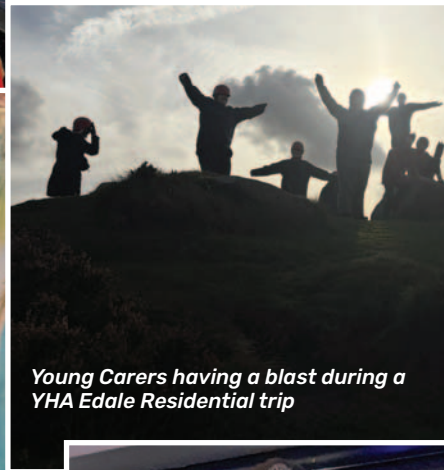
Staff and visitors at our 20th Anniversary Event at Beaverbrooks House



Our Christmas Wreath Making Workshops raised a fantastic £551 for carers - thank you everyone who attended and donated



Volunteers, Janet and Louise all ready for our carers Beach Party



Young Carers having a blast during a YHA Edale Residential trip



Young Carers caving



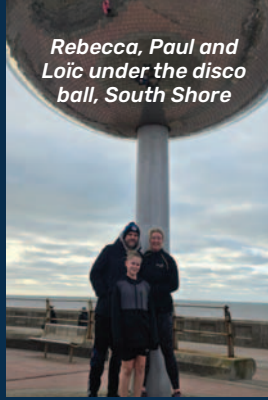
Volunteers Matt and Drew were nominated for an award promoting inclusivity at Blackpool's Big Thank You event



Young carer with her Carers Rights Day message

# The 'daily dash' - Rebecca's year long run for carers

In 2020, my brother in law was diagnosed with Epilepsy. As the condition developed, it became something that not only affected Paul, but it affected his family also.



Rebecca, Paul and Loic under the disco ball, South Shore

Amongst the family, is Paul & Rachael's son, Loïc, and as he has grown up, he has had to learn to understand Epilepsy, what the seizures look like, and when it's important to call for help when in his dad's care.

In 2021, Loïc started going to Blackpool Carers Centre where he was offered support, and also mixed with children in a similar situation. The weekly sessions and holiday activity clubs give young carers the opportunity to mix with children in similar situations, learn skills and have lots of fun!

In 2025, I wanted to raise awareness of Blackpool Carers Centre and the work they do. I set myself the challenge of running 2 miles, every day, for a year! Apart from a 3 week injury, and these were added on afterwards, I completed the challenge. Rain, snow, 40 degree heat, across 6 countries, I managed the 730 miles and raised £1,578.17 for Blackpool Carers Centre.

Rebecca Senior, fundraiser

Give the Gift of a restful tomorrow.



## Caring is a 24-hour job that can often lead to total exhaustion.

By remembering Blackpool Carers Centre in your Will, you fund vital respite sessions and peer support groups. Your kindness provides a much-needed 'breather' for local carers, giving them the strength and mental wellbeing to keep going.

We completely understand that family and friends come first; so just 1% left to us, after they're provided for, is a wonderful bonus.

To remember Blackpool Carers Centre, all your solicitor needs is our name, address and Charity Number (1114558).

For more information, please contact Terry Hodkinson, Head of Business Development and Fundraising on 01253 393748 or email: [terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org)



## Make your miles matter!

Take on the world's biggest half marathon in aid of Blackpool Carers Centre and change a life.



13 SEP 2026

AJ BELL GREAT NORTH RUN

Only 10 Charity Places available...sign up today!



Run 13.1 miles from Newcastle to South Shields on Sunday 13th September 2026. Join Team Blackpool Carers Centre to provide vital respite for local carers.



To register your interest, call Terry on **01253 393748** or email: [terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org)

Beaverbrooks House, 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 6LZ  
[admin@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:admin@blackpoolcarers.org)  
[www.blackpoolcarers.org](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org)  
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Main image courtesy of AJ Bell Great North Run

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# A Lasting Tribute: The Power of Memory Giving

When we lose someone dear, finding a meaningful way to honor their legacy can bring a sense of comfort and purpose during a difficult time.

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we are often asked how families can create a lasting tribute that reflects the kindness and spirit of their loved one.

Memory Giving is a beautiful way to ensure their legacy lives on by supporting others in our community. By choosing to ask for donations in lieu of flowers at a funeral or memorial service, you are providing a lifeline to unpaid carers across Blackpool.

These gifts allow us to continue offering essential respite, emotional support, and specialist advice to those who give so much of themselves to care for others.

Every donation, no matter the size, helps us provide a 'quality of life' for carers who may feel isolated or overwhelmed. It is a gift of hope, transformed from a moment of sadness into a future of support.

## Arranging Your Tribute

If you would like to name Blackpool Carers Centre as your chosen charity, please ask your Funeral Director who will manage collections on your behalf, or set up an online tribute page for your loved one on Memory Giving.

You can also request personalised donation envelopes from Terry Hodkinson, Head of Business Development and Fundraising on 01253 393748 or email: [terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org)

*Thank you for thinking of Blackpool's carers; your generosity ensures that no one has to care alone.*

Memory Giving 



## Our supporters and awards



**Pass it on!**  
*Once you have read this magazine, please give it to a friend or someone you know who may be a carer, instead of putting it in the recycling. Thank you.*

**If you require further hard copies of this magazine, please email: [kay.soper@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:kay.soper@blackpoolcarers.org)**

Thank you to the supporters who help to fund the production and distribution of our magazine.

All information included in this magazine is correct at time of going to press and does not necessarily reflect the views or recommendations of Blackpool Carers. Names may have been changed to protect identity of individuals.

If you have difficulty reading this magazine, please download the pdf version from our website at: [www.blackpoolcarers.org/downloads](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org/downloads) where you will be able to view it at a size suitable for you.



IN AID OF  
**Blackpool CARERS Centre**

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BEN NEVIS | SCAFFELL | SNOWDON

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**3 PEAKS CHALLENGE?**

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Travel from Preston to Fort William | Evening Dinner | Overnight B&B accommodation | Climb Ben Nevis | Drive to overnight B&B in Santon Bridge | Climb Scafell then drive to Snowdon for the final climb | Celebrate with glass of fizz | Return travel to Preston

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Full details from Terry Hodkinson on 01253 393748 or email: [terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org](mailto:terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org)  
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**REGISTER TODAY!**  
Limited places available  
Act fast!

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f X in



**Excuse me!**  
**Did you know that by advertising in this magazine, you are directly supporting young and adult carers in Blackpool?**

Not only that, but your advert will be seen by **1,000s of carers, families, GPs, patients, schools, health professionals, organisations and businesses, both locally and nationally.**

Caring Times raises awareness of our services throughout Blackpool and The Fylde Coast to ensure we reach as many **'hidden' carers** as we can, offering them vital support so that they can continue to care for the people they love.

To find out more scan the QR Code or visit: [www.blackpoolcarers.org/caring-times-magazine/](http://www.blackpoolcarers.org/caring-times-magazine/)





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THE SUN**  
CYCLE • CANOE • CLIMB



**SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026**

**CYCLE, CANOE &  
CLIMB TO VICTORY**  
in our Dawn to Dusk  
43 mile Charity Triathlon!



Join this exciting group challenge and test your endurance, whilst having fun and raising funds for Blackpool Carers Centre.

*Event supported by 3C's Sport & Leisure Tours.*



In aid of

**Blackpool  
CARERS  
Centre**

## TRIATHLON ROUTE

- START AT SABDEN VILLAGE & CYCLE 36.5 MILES
  - ARRIVE AT CAPENWRAY & CANOE 1.5 MILES
  - DRIVE FROM TEWITFIELD TO GRASMERE
  - CLIMB HELVELLYN FOR 5 MILES
- ... AND ALL BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN!

**REGISTER TODAY!**



**£100 Deposit • Limited Places Available!**

Full details from Terry Hodkinson on 01253 393748  
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