

Caring TIMES

1 July - 31 October 2026



THE FREE MAGAZINE FOR UNPAID CARERS ON THE FYLDE COAST

SUPPORT & ADVICE

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

WORKING CARERS AT A TIPPING POINT

**Carers' Voice:
Shaping Services**



**OPENING OUR GATES FOR THE
NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME**

Page 7



**CARERS WEEK
WELLBEING EVENT**

Page 9



**IMPROVING ADULT SOCIAL CARE
IN BLACKPOOL**

Page 12-13

Who cares for the carers?

You can.

Behind closed doors across Blackpool, thousands of unpaid carers provide vital support to loved ones every day. Often, they are exhausted and alone.

A **Gift in your Will** ensures Blackpool Carers Centre can provide the professional advice and emotional support they deserve. Be the hero for those who care.

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 on **01253 393748** or email: terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org www.blackpoolcarers.org



SCORE BIG in Caring Times - The Referee's Verdict Is In!

Think advertising is a tough game? This is an absolute open goal.

Advertising in Caring Times is an absolute game-changer for our community. **Every single advert directly funds vital support** for young and adult carers across Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, helping us scout and support "hidden" carers who look after the people they love.



Your brand will be seen by a **stadium-sized audience of thousands**, including:

- Carers & Families
- GPs, Patients & Health Professionals
- Schools, Businesses & Organisations (Local & National)



Don't get caught offside!

Scan the QR Code above or visit: www.blackpoolcarers.org/caring-times-magazine/ to secure your spot in the lineup.

BERRYS SOLICITORS is a family run specialist legal firm covering Blackpool, Lancaster and the wider Lancashire area.



We offer a professional, approachable and personal service from our dedicated team of committed experienced solicitors.



We are participating solicitors for the Cancer Research UK and Free Wills Network service.

We can help you with:

- Lasting Powers of Attorney: Health & Care; Property & Finance
- Wills, Trusts & Tax Planning
- Care of the Elderly & Court of Protection
- Administration of Estates (Probate)
- Inadequate or No provision made under a Will or in an Intestacy
- Disputed Estates
- Needs Assessment & Top Up Fees
- Conveyancing & all property matters

For a free no obligations chat please contact Chris or Mathew Berry at Berrys Solicitors, 247 Church Street, Blackpool for an initial appointment.

Telephone: 01253 620022
 Email: info@berrys-solicitors.co.uk
 Website: www.berrys-solicitors.co.uk

In aid of **Blackpool CARERS Centre**

CAPITAL TO CAPITAL CYCLE CHALLENGE

3-5 SEPTEMBER 2026

200 MILES

Start **London** Finish **Paris**

Event fully supported by Chapeau, including:

- FULL ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE
- BIKE TRANSFER TO LONDON AND BACK FROM PARIS
- HB ACCOMMODATION
- LUNCH & REFRESHMENT BREAKS
- EVENT SHIRT & MEDAL
- CELEBRATION DINNER

£150 Deposit • Limited Places Available!

Full details from Terry Hodkinson on 01253 393748 or email: terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org

www.blackpoolcarers.org

Welcome...

to the July to October Edition of Caring Times!

Across Blackpool and beyond, unpaid carers play a vital role every day, often balancing caring responsibilities alongside work, education, family life and their own wellbeing. Yet, as several of the articles in this edition demonstrate, carers cannot and should not be expected to do this alone. Effective support relies upon responsive services and a commitment to listening to the voices of those with lived experience.

This edition explores some of the exciting developments taking place locally and nationally. We look at the launch of the Fair Futures for Young Carers programme on page 20, a significant investment that aims to improve educational outcomes for young carers and ensure that schools across the country are better equipped to recognise and support them. On page 22 we also examine the growing challenges facing working carers and the importance of creating workplaces and support systems that enable people to remain in employment whilst continuing to care for their loved ones.

You will also read about the importance of carers' voice in shaping services and why listening to carers remains central to everything we do at Blackpool Carers Centre on page 16. Whether feedback is shared through formal consultations or informal conversations at respite sessions, it is carers themselves who help us ensure our services remain relevant, accessible and effective.

Elsewhere on page 7, we reflect on the recent opening of our beautiful Beaverbrooks House garden as part of the National Garden Scheme and the opportunity this provided to showcase the importance of wellbeing and respite for our carers.

As always, thank you to every carer, volunteer, partner and supporter who contributes to our work. We hope you enjoy this edition and find it both informative and inspiring.

Best Wishes



Tom McMurdo, Director of Finance and Resources



Contents

Who cares for the carers?	2
Advertise in this magazine	2
Welcome from Tom	3
How to refer to our service	3
Please let us know!	3
Contact us	3
What's On Guide	4-5
Our Board of Trustees	5
Take 5 Adult Respite update	6
Opening Our Gates: National Garden Scheme update	7
Adult Carer True Story	8
Celebrating Carers Week	9
Staff Profile	10
Rocco's Stable Advice: Power of Attorney	10
Caring & Sharing with Charlotte	11
Mobile Foot Care Service	11
Improving Adult social Care in Blackpool: The Road to Recovery	12-13
HUGS and ReFocus Peer Support Groups have now joined forces	13
ReFocus Carer True Story	14
Young Carers' Take 5 update	15
Carers' Voice: shaping services that reflect real lives	16-17
Caring Corporate update	17
Young Carers' Fun Zone	18
Volunteer True Story	19
Young Adult Carers' update	19
Raise funds with easyfundraising	19
Fair Futures for Young Carers	20-21
Young Carer True Story	21
Working Carers at tipping point	22-23
Fundraising and Community News from Terry	23-24
Photo Gallery	25
The Impact of Memory Giving	26
Our supporters and awards	26
Join our Weekly £1 Lottery	28

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/ 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

You can view our Privacy Policy at 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

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

Front cover: Young carers 'facing their fears' on a Residential at The Anderton Centre

Blackpool Carers Centre is a registered charity in England and Wales No. 1114558. Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 5633524.

This magazine is printed by B&D Print Services, Leyland. Tel: 01772 435050



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/

FOR ADULT CARERS...

All sessions take place in the relaxing venue of Beaverbrooks House unless otherwise stated. Plans may change, so please call 01253 393748 before attending.

Adult Carers' WhatsApp Groups

We have dedicated Social WhatsApp Groups for adult carers registered with Blackpool Carers Centre, and our Music Aloud Carers' Choir

If you'd like to join either 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.*

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.*

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 *Please note: there will be no group in August due to holidays.*

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.

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!

NHS Talking Therapies

Held on the last Wednesday of the month at Beaverbrooks House 10.00am-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.*

Magical Mystery Trips in the Minibus

Thursdays at Beaverbrooks House Various times

Trips setting out from the Centre at various times, travelling to places of interest. Return times vary. *Please check the weekly newsletter for information.*

HUGS & ReFocus Peer Support Group

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

Our monthly HUGS and ReFocus peer support groups have now been combined into one session.

This group is open to all carers **supporting someone with mental health challenges and/or substance misuse issues.** This group provides a safe, welcoming, and non-judgemental space where carers can come together to share experiences, gain support, and

Take 5 Times, our weekly What's On Newsletter!

Call Pat on 01253 393748 and ask for your name to be added to the email list to receive your copy.

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

connect with others who understand the unique challenges of the caring role.

There is no pressure to speak if you do not wish to; many people find it helpful simply to listen and be among others who understand. Whether you are new to caring or have been providing support for many years, you are welcome to attend.

We look forward to bringing carers from both groups together to create a stronger, more inclusive peer support network where everyone can feel heard, supported, and valued.

Call Carla or Tasha for more information.

'Brew & Breathe' Coffee Morning

**Fridays at Beaverbrooks House
10.30am-12.00 noon**

NEW GROUP - starts 11 September

A relaxing time to recharge and unwind - bringing carers together, one step at a time.

Call Debbie for more information.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES...

During the Autumn we'll be organising several special activities for carers, including:

- Cinema screenings in the garden
- Full-day minibus trips
- A Garden Party
- Wellbeing Day

Please check *Take 5 Times* and our website for details.

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.

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!



Blackpool CARERS Centre

SLIP, SLIDE & CONQUER THE COURSE AT...

WILD SHORE Wipe Out 2026

25 FRIDAY SEPTEMBER

AT WILD SHORE BLACKPOOL

Unite your squad of up to 65 team members for a high-energy, inflatable showdown at the Wild Shore Wipeout!

You'll be teaming up to raise vital funds for Blackpool Carers Centre, ensuring our local unsung heroes receive the respite and expert support they deserve. Every giant leap and hilarious splash directly fuels essential breaks for carers of all ages across our community.

So gather your crew, conquer the obstacles, and let's make waves for this incredible cause!

ONLY £24pp including wetsuit hire!

Sign up today!

For Entry Forms or more information, call Terry on 01253 393748, or email terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org

www.blackpoolcarers.org
Charity No. 1114558

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.

Wild Shore Wipe Out

Friday 25 September

Wild Shore Water Sports & Aqua Park, Ream Hills Caravan Park, Mythop Rd, Preston PR4 3NJ

Bring your friends, family or work colleagues and join in this 'splashtastic', hilarious fundraising event. To enter your team call Terry on 01253 393748. See advert above.

Our Board of Trustees

- Sarah Lambert (Chair)
Retired Development Manager
- Alison Gilmore (Treasurer)
Former Hotel General Manager
- Tracy O'Flaherty
Former Hospital Director
- Ben Reilly
Head of Property and Store Image, Beaverbrooks
- John Topping
FCAT Community Relations and Estates Lead
- David Wright
Director of Chapeau Events Ltd

Take 5 Adult Respite update from Pat

Take 5

The weather has gradually picked up over the last couple of weeks and so have the numbers attending respite activities. It has been particularly refreshing to hear some of the new attendees' reactions to their experiences. They have all expressed how much happier and relaxed they feel, even after attending only a couple of sessions.



Choir having fun entertaining the local Women's Institute Group

The Music Aloud Carers Choir continues to thrive, with new members arriving regularly. They have been out to entertain the local Women's Institute group and were very well received. They love performing and plan to visit local care homes in the summer. They already have two bookings for Christmas! More members are always welcome to join: The more the merrier!



Making fairy houses takes lots of concentration!



Tea and cake at Lytham Hall

The chair based exercise and meditation group continue to enjoy a relaxing gentle workout but always look forward to the meditation at the end, with everyone nearly falling asleep! All abilities are welcome.

The Wednesday Wellbeing Afternoon is all about learning new skills and being creative. Sometimes the activity demands a level of concentration which results in a quite quiet room, but most of the time the laughter from the group is heard throughout the building! We've tried many crafts, but I think the favourite has been making fairy houses out of clay and jam jars! They were so cute!

We have been trying to host weekly afternoon trips, now that we are lucky enough to have our own minibus. Sometimes this has been on a Wednesday, but they have mostly been on Thursdays. We have been on many trips, but I think a favourite is always Lytham Hall. Personally, I love our visits to Lowlands Alpaca Farm, which is owned by one of our Caring Corporate partners, Charlotte.



Lovely lambs at Lowlands Farm

During the summer we hope to run more longer day trips to places a little further afield, such as the Buddhist Temple at Ulverston.

All our respite activities are designed to follow one or more of the 'Ways to Wellbeing', being in nature and exercise, being creative and learning new skills, giving, (time for others as well as themselves), connecting with others, and being 'in the moment'.

We're not looking for the next Pavarotti, or Picasso, or expect a level of fitness akin to an Olympic athlete. What we want in respite is to hopefully build confidence, resilience, and a sense of worth, for just a short time every week. This will give carers that space and time to be themselves and to enjoy maybe a new hobby and good company. Also, time for fun and laughter!

Best wishes
Pat, Adult Respite Coordinator

Opening Our Gates: Sharing a Special Place with the Community

This summer, Blackpool Carers Centre had the privilege of opening the gates of its award winning garden as part of the National Garden Scheme, welcoming visitors from across the Fylde Coast and beyond to experience a space that has become a sanctuary for unpaid carers of all ages.

The weekend proved to be a tremendous success, attracting visitors who had never previously stepped inside the grounds of Beaverbrooks House. While guests came to admire the garden itself, many left with a greater understanding of the vital role that outdoor spaces can play in supporting the wellbeing of unpaid carers.

The National Garden Scheme is best known for providing public access to some of the country's most beautiful private gardens while raising millions of pounds for nursing and health charities. Since its inception, the scheme has donated more than £77 million to charitable causes, including support for organisations such as Carers Trust, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK and Parkinson's UK.

For Blackpool Carers Centre, becoming part of this nationwide initiative felt like a natural fit.

Anyone who has visited Beaverbrooks House will know that our garden is far more than an attractive outdoor space. Designed by landscape architect Laurence Mitchell, the garden was created specifically with unpaid carers in mind, recognising the importance of providing opportunities for relaxation, reflection, play and connection with nature.

The garden serves a diverse community of carers, including children as young as five years old through to older adults caring for partners, relatives and friends. Every element has been thoughtfully designed to support wellbeing and encourage engagement with the outdoors.

Visitors exploring the garden discovered a woodland storytelling area, raised planting beds, a bug hotel and an orchard, all nestled amongst mature protected trees that provide a peaceful backdrop

throughout the year. The garden offers quiet corners for reflection alongside spaces that encourage activity, creativity and social interaction.

Perhaps what makes the space most special is its ability to adapt to the changing needs of the people who use it.

Throughout the week, many adult carers use the garden as a place to relax, take a break from their responsibilities and spend a few moments focusing on their own wellbeing. For carers whose daily lives are often shaped by the needs of others, having access to a calm and welcoming outdoor environment can make a significant difference. Yet the same space can look very different just a few hours later.

As young carers arrive at the centre, the garden is transformed into an energetic and vibrant youth club environment. Footballs appear on the lawn, cricket games spring into life, children disappear into games of hide and seek, and the play area quickly becomes the centre of activity. The laughter and energy of young carers enjoying time with their peers is every bit as important as the quieter moments experienced by adult carers earlier in the day.

This versatility reflects the diversity of caring experiences and demonstrates how thoughtfully designed outdoor spaces can support a wide range of emotional, social and wellbeing needs. The National Garden Scheme weekend also provided an opportunity to strengthen connections with the local community. Many visitors were surprised to discover the scale and quality of the garden hidden behind the walls of Beaverbrooks House, while others took the opportunity to learn more about unpaid caring and the support available through Blackpool Carers Centre.



Events such as these help to raise awareness of caring responsibilities and highlight the importance of supporting carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing. They also provide an opportunity to celebrate the positive impact that community spaces can have on people's lives. Of course, no successful National Garden Scheme opening would be complete without tea, coffee and cake, and visitors certainly did not leave disappointed. A dedicated team of volunteers worked tirelessly throughout the weekend to ensure refreshments remained plentiful and that every guest received a warm welcome.

Their contribution played a vital role in creating the friendly and inclusive atmosphere that characterised the event and reflected the spirit of the organisation as a whole.

As the final visitors departed and the garden returned to its usual role supporting carers, there was a real sense of pride in having shared such a special place with the wider community.

The success of the weekend demonstrated that gardens can be much more than attractive landscapes. They can provide opportunities for respite, connection, play, learning and wellbeing. For the unpaid carers who use the garden throughout the year, these benefits are invaluable.



Ian (I) and Trevor, our wonderful gardening volunteers who oversaw the whole event

Having someone to talk to whenever I was feeling sad meant the most to me

I was referred into Blackpool Carers Centre by an NHS worker. I had not known about the Centre and when the worker suggested I would get some help from them, I thought that this would be good. I was right to think this.

I was very nervous when I first went to meet my allocated support worker. We met at the centre and as soon as I arrived, the reception staff member made me feel welcome and I was offered a cup of tea and taken into a quiet room to talk about my situation.

I had stopped work to look after my elderly mother, and it was all getting too much for me. I had asked to meet at the Centre as I could no longer have people visit our home as mum would shout at them and constantly ask why they were there.

My support worker at the Centre suggested that my mum would benefit from a review by the GP and discussed with me that perhaps my mum's symptoms might be due to a memory problem. To cut a long story short my mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's type dementia.

My support worker also helped us get the right benefits in place and allowed me to talk to her whenever I was feeling sad or upset. This meant the most to me. I had no other family to talk to and to be able to pop into the Centre or phone and speak to my support worker helped me immensely. I was able to get help to fill out forms from the council and my support worker was able to explain what all the jargon in the letters meant.

Eventually I was no longer able to keep looking after mum at home.



Following a stay at the hospital she went into a care home. I visit her most days, and she seems very settled there. My support worker has continued to provide me with emotional support, and I know that if I have any worries or issues about my mum's care or just need to talk about how I am feeling, she is there for me.

Jasmine, adult carer

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

Beaverbrooks House, 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ
www.blackpoolcarers.org
 Registered Charity No: 1144244
 Main page copyright of AJ Bell Great North Run

Blackpool CARERS Centre logo, Great North Run logo, and AJ Bell logo.

The Zen Den

Sensory Room at Beaverbrooks House

- Sensory lighting
- Bubble tubes
- Soft seating
- Projector screens
- State-of-the-art sound system

Our Zen Den Sensory Room is available to hire for small groups and is suitable for babies, children and adults.

★ **Zen Den hire charge only £20.00 per hour** ★
 (maximum 4 persons)

Visitors are welcome to enjoy our lovely garden.

For more information or to book your Sessions, please contact Julie on **01253 393748** or email: julie.taylor@blackpoolcarers.org

The Zen Den logo, Beaverbrooks House address: 147 Newton Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LZ.

Gift Vouchers available. Ask for details

Celebrating Carers Week 8-14 June 2026



This year's Carers Week activities started with awareness raising events at South Shore Health Centre, Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre and Victoria Hospital. The adult team identified carers and shared information about support available with them and with staff.

On the weekend prior to Carers Week, we opened our gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme (see page 7). We welcomed visitors to enjoy our outdoor spaces and to find out more about what we offer carers. Our team of volunteers have worked tirelessly to prepare the gardens so a huge thank you to them.



Plant stall during Open Garden Day

On Wednesday 10 June we celebrated our carers and thanked them for all they do for their loved ones with a wonderful Wellbeing Day. Carers enjoyed self-care activities including meditation and Yoga with Lou, hand massages and nail painting.



Carers unwinding during Yoga with Lou

Citizens Advice were on hand to provide information on legal and financial matters, whilst Active Blackpool encouraged carers to be more physically active with details of their exercise on referral scheme and wellbeing suites.

A lovely pampering manicure



Cozy Homes provided information on their services to support people to keep themselves warm and comfortable at home.

Tasha trying out a spot of archery



Staff and local organisations informing visitors of services to support them.

Indoors, we held creative activities included mindful colouring, painting and modelling with scented dough. Outside, carers challenged themselves and each other with soft archery, always a popular activity! Members of the adult team served carers a delicious lunch giving lots of opportunity for socialising together.



Visitors enjoying the delicious lunch

Lovely comments from one carer: **"Had a great day today, thank you so much. Hand massage, painting, archery, even lunch - terrific!"**

Please contact the adult team on 01253 393748 if you would like to access support or find out more about any of the organisations mentioned above.

Blackpool CARERS Centre

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

Genevieve Hall, Service Administrator

Hi, I'm Genevieve! My journey into this role hasn't been straightforward, but I think that's what's made it so rewarding. I originally studied Nutrition and Physiology at university, and although I didn't go directly into that field, it gave me a strong interest in health and wellbeing that's stayed with me ever since.

After graduating, I moved into medical administration, starting out in GP surgeries where I learned a lot about working in busy healthcare environments. I then spent five years with the Lancashire Bowel Screening Service, which was a big part of my career and helped me

develop really strong organisational and communication skills.

After that, I decided to take a leap and moved to London to work at The Ewell, a private fertility clinic on Harley Street. It was such a different setting and gave me experience in specialist care, which I really valued. Not long after, I took some time out to travel to Bali; an amazing experience that gave me time to reset and reflect.

When I came back, I found my role here at Blackpool Carers Centre and it immediately felt like the right place for me. I started as a Family Focus Referral Coordinator and



recently transitioned into my current role as Service Administrator. I've been here for three years now.

I genuinely love working here. The team are so supportive and welcoming and I feel really lucky to be part of a service that makes such a meaningful difference. I'm incredibly passionate about supporting unpaid carers and proud to be part of a charity that values and supports them every day.

Why putting a Power of Attorney in place is so important for carers and their loved ones

No one wants to imagine that one day they may be unable to make decisions about their health or financial matters. Yet it is an important consideration if you have views about your future health care and treatment or how your financial assets are managed.

Asking a trusted person to act on your behalf, if you no longer have capacity to make decisions, is known as appointing an 'Attorney'.

You can ask a trusted person, or people (as you may choose more than one individual) to act on your behalf in financial, and/or health and welfare related matters.

The Court of Protection regulates this process and to gather further information on how you can complete the paperwork yourself or through a solicitor, visit the Government website: www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney.

Rocco says that planning ahead and having those difficult conversations with those you love about what your future wishes are, can often help everyone in the long run. It gives you

peace of mind that someone you trust will advocate on your behalf and ensure that your best interests are met.

Getting a Power of Attorney has been invaluable

A carer who attends the Centre recently spoke about how getting Power of Attorney put in place for her mother has been invaluable. Her mother had made the decision several years ago to have this completed by a solicitor and appointed her daughter to act as her Power of Attorney in relation to both financial and health and welfare issues.

Fast forward fifteen years and sadly her mother now has dementia and can no longer manage her banking and financial concerns.

Rocco's
**'STABLE
ADVICE'**



As her mother's Power of Attorney, the carer has been able to manage her mum's bank accounts, set up direct debits to ensure her mum's bills are paid and move investments to ensure that her mum gets the best rate of interest on her savings. Without the Power of Attorney this would not have been possible.

For more information contact the Adult Team on 01253 393748.





Caring & Sharing

with Charlotte

Hello, my name is Charlotte, I am 18 years old and I care for my 9-year-old younger brother Frankie who requires 24-hour support. The reason why I spend so much time caring for Frankie is because my mum also struggles with a chronic illness and needs help every day. You might remember me from the past magazines I am becoming quite a pro at this.

I really enjoy sharing my journey in this magazine because young carers often go unnoticed, so I would really like to help people to get recognised sooner. Even if I only help 1 person get noticed I will have still succeeded in helping people through these articles in the magazine. If you are reading this article and feel like you relate to me then don't hesitate in reaching out to Blackpool Carers Centre.

My last article was about starting college and how much I struggled. Now my course is coming to an end so I thought I would talk about it more. I never really lasted in high school. In year 7 I really struggled to cope. I would cry every day and ended up getting signed off from high school by the doctor after being there for only 3 weeks. I hated the whole environment. I didn't ever go back to high school. I tried homeschooling but I just felt so overwhelmed and couldn't ever focus. I felt lost.

To be honest, I have always felt lost because my whole life I have struggled and couldn't get professionals to listen. I was sure I was autistic, but it felt like no one believed me. No matter

how much my mum asked for help, we just felt unheard and left to struggle. One of my primary school teachers even said 'she can't be autistic because she has friends' and then when Frankie got diagnosed so young I just felt let down because of how long it has taken them to listen to us. It took them until I was 14 for them to finally diagnose me with autism, severe anxiety and selective mutism.

After approximately 5 years of being out of education, I then started a 1-1 tutoring alternative provision. From February 2024 to July 2024, I could only access this online, and I would never turn my camera or my microphone on because I was scared. The only way that we would communicate was through the zoom chat. Then from September 2024 to July 2025, I started face to face and going for 3 hours a day. In September of 2024 was when I was referred to the carers centre and I came to visit Sam with one of my teachers I was very scared, but I knew that it was to support me, so I was willing to give it a chance. At the start I couldn't speak to Sam. My teacher would often speak for me. Then over time and doing 1-1s with Sam my confidence grew, and I was even able to gain new friends which I have always struggled to do.

Now my confidence has grown so much, and I really couldn't have done it without Sam's help. By coming to YAC

group most weeks I feel more able to step out of my comfort zone to join in with group activities and board games.

When I told Sam how worried I was about starting college, she immediately started to think of ways to help me prepare the best that she could. I really don't know what I would do without her. I have loved my course at college now and I can't wait for what's to come. I never thought I would get to feel like this.

I have now been nominated as student of the year at Blackpool and the Fylde College! I can't believe I have managed to achieve this nomination in recognition of how I've been able to overcome so much, alongside my caring role too!

On Friday 12th June I am going to the Grand Hotel to attend an awards presentation where there will be afternoon tea. I am very excited, but I don't think that I would have been able to do this without Sam there for me every step of the way. I don't think there is a thank you big enough for everything that Sam has done for me in such a small amount of time. I feel like a completely different person compared to who I was when I first stepped into Blackpool Carers Centre

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

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 out more, call 01253 393748
or email tracy.taylor@blackpoolcarers.org



ONLY
£23
per treatment

Improving Adult Social Care in Blackpool: Partnership, Challenge and the Road to Recovery

In 2025, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessed Blackpool Council's adult social care services and awarded an overall rating of "inadequate" under its assessment of how the authority discharges its responsibilities under the Care Act 2014.

While this judgement presents clear challenges for the local system, it has also acted as a catalyst for a comprehensive, multi-agency response focused on improvement and collaboration across the town.

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we are a member of the Adult Social Care Improvement Board and remain committed to working alongside the Council, NHS partners, the voluntary and community sector, and people who draw on services to drive meaningful and sustained change.

In response to the CQC findings, Blackpool Council has established the Adult Social Care Improvement Board, bringing together key partners across the local health and care system. This includes representatives from Blackpool Council, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust, Trinity Hospice, Empowerment, and Blackpool Carers Centre, alongside government and Local Government Association involvement.

The Board is independently chaired by Deb Butcher, a former executive director of adult social care, health and wellbeing and NHS director, bringing external expertise and oversight to the improvement journey.

This structure reflects a shared recognition that adult social care does not operate in isolation. The quality of support experienced by local people is shaped by a complex system of services, pathways and partnerships. Improvement, therefore, must be system wide.

Improvement Plan

A detailed Improvement Plan has been submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care, setting out the steps already taken and the future actions required to strengthen adult social care in Blackpool.

The plan is structured around four key themes: working with people,

providing support, safety, and leadership. Within these themes are a series of measurable performance indicators designed to track progress over time.

These include reducing the number of people waiting for reviews, increasing the proportion of people who feel they have control over their daily lives, improving the number of individuals supported to live independently in the community and ensuring safeguarding outcomes better reflect people's preferences.

Alongside these, the plan focuses on operational improvements such as reducing waiting times for assessments and referrals, improving the timeliness of reviews and ensuring safeguarding processes are delivered more efficiently and consistently. Importantly, the plan also recognises the need for stronger mechanisms to hear the voices of people who use services, their carers and frontline staff, in shaping ongoing improvement.

Coproduction Board

One of the most significant developments within the improvement programme is the emphasis on coproduction. A dedicated coproduction board has been established, bringing together people with lived experience of adult social care to help design and shape future services.

This approach ensures that improvement is not solely driven by systems and performance metrics, but also grounded in the real experiences of people who rely on care and support in their daily lives.

Alongside this, there is a parallel commitment to workforce engagement, recognising that staff across adult social care hold critical insight into what works in practice.

Their involvement in service redesign is intended to strengthen delivery and build a more responsive system.

Although the Improvement Plan is ongoing, early indicators suggest positive movement across a number of areas.

There has been a reduction in the number of people with overdue reviews, alongside improvements in the timeliness of assessments and referral pathways across community, hospital, learning disability and mental health services. More people are now being supported to remain in their communities, reflecting a shift towards prevention and independence.

In addition, the proportion of people receiving short term support who do not require ongoing services has increased, suggesting more effective early intervention. Improvements have also been recorded in the provision of information, advice and guidance at the first point of contact, as well as in the proportion of people who report that their preferred safeguarding outcomes have been achieved.

Collectively, these changes indicate a system that is beginning to move towards greater responsiveness, clearer operational control and improved outcomes for local people.

Blackpool's Carers

For Blackpool Carers Centre, the improvement journey is not only about system performance, but about the lived reality of unpaid carers supporting family members, friends and neighbours across the town.

Carers are often the first to experience the impact of delays,

My Ketamine Story

This story may come across as chaotic because that is my reality. I am living a chaotic life. There are fewer steps forward and far too many steps backwards, and that is what loving someone with a ketamine addiction looks like from the inside.

It began while my daughter was in sixth form. She was predicted to do well in her A-levels, had plans, structure, and a future that felt steady. Then something shifted. Slowly at first. She stopped getting up for college. She disengaged from her work. Her personality changed. She was physically present but emotionally absent. I was getting phone calls from the school, attending meetings, doing everything a parent is supposed to do. We gave 100% support, but nothing improved.

It was not until December 2024 that I finally understood what was really happening. My eldest daughter told me that her sister was using ketamine. Until that moment, I had no knowledge of this drug whatsoever. To me, ketamine was something associated with horses, not something young people were taking and certainly not something that could dismantle a family. Suddenly, every behaviour and symptom I had been witnessing made sense. The disengagement, the personality change, and the chaos were all signs of ketamine use.

What followed was a spiral. Lying. Manipulation. Stealing. Deceit. Isolation. The person I knew began to disappear, replaced by someone unpredictable and unreachable. My home, once safe and calm, became a place of constant vigilance. Sleep disappeared. Anxiety ruled everything. I lived in a permanent state of alert, never knowing what version of her I would wake up to.

In desperation, she went to Thailand with her dad for six weeks to try to stop using ketamine. The first two weeks were rough. Instead of routine, structure, or change, she isolated herself in the apartment. Nothing shifted. Distance did not cure addiction. It only showed me how little control I had.

She returned to the UK, and within a few weeks of her return, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I do not talk about that much because it feels almost irrelevant when your child is at

risk of dying. But the truth is, I was suddenly fighting on two fronts, physically and emotionally, while trying to hold my family together.

Hospital admissions came and went. Each one brought hope and each discharge brought fear. Support was fragmented. Services did not connect. I was left trying to hold everything together while watching my child destroy herself with a drug that is still dangerously underestimated.

My life became manic. I removed window handles. I locked doors at night. I took keys to bed. I administered medication with her consent because I was terrified she would not sleep and terrified of what might happen if she did leave the house. These were not choices made lightly. They were acts of desperation. Survival decisions no parent ever expects to make.

I installed CCTV at the back of my house because people were coming to my home to collect or use drugs. They deliberately avoided my Ring doorbell by entering through my neighbour's entrance so they would not be picked up on camera. Knowing strangers were accessing my home in this way destroyed any remaining sense of safety. I was no longer just worried about my child. I was trying to protect my home, my neighbours, and myself.

I have spent hours listening to my child being violently sick and sitting in the bath for hours at a time, trying to ease the excruciating pain she was suffering. Hearing that level of pain and being unable to take it away is something no parent ever forgets.

Around the end of September 2025, my initial guiding light was a woman called Natalie, whom I reached out to after reading an online news article about her beautiful daughter Beth, who had sadly passed away and had also been using ketamine. Natalie is one of the strongest women I have ever met. Her sheer determination, knowledge, and



willingness to help others in the darkest moments humbled me. She was clued up, honest, and real. When I felt completely lost, her strength helped guide me forward.

I was also referred for parent and carer support and was assigned a support worker called Carla. Having someone whose role was to support me, not just my child, made a huge difference. Carla helped me feel seen, steadied me when I was overwhelmed, and reminded me that carers need support too. This kind of help for parents and carers is invaluable and often overlooked.

What has also saved me from complete darkness is my family. When I felt myself slipping under the weight of everything, they held me up. They reminded me who I am when I could no longer see it myself. Their love, patience, and quiet strength have carried me through moments I did not think I would survive.

What has kept me going is connection with other parents who truly understand. Sitting in support groups and listening without judgement, without explanations, and without fixing. Hearing others speak my reality back to me reminded me I am not alone and that this is not a failure on my part. It did not fix anything, but it helped me breathe.

This journey has stripped me back to my core. It has changed how I see the world, services, addiction, and parenting. Ketamine is not a party drug. It is destructive, isolating, and devastating, not just for the user but for the families who love them.

I am still in this. There is no neat ending. No recovery bow to tie it with. Just endurance, love, boundaries, fear, hope, and a determination to keep speaking, because silence helps no one.

This is my ketamine story. And it is far from over.

Karen, ReFocus carer

Young Carers' Take 5 update

Hello warm weather and hello Summer 2026! Can you believe we're already halfway through the year?

Here at Take5, we've shared so many wonderful experiences filled with fun, laughter and unforgettable memories.

Back in March, we proudly celebrated Young Carers Action Day (YCAD) 2026 with the theme "Fair Futures for Young Carers." Thanks to the generous funding provided by Carers Trust, we were able to host an inspiring Vision Board Workshop for our young carers aged 5-24, delivered by Andrew Walker from Blackpool & the Fylde College.



The session encouraged our young carers to dream it, shape it, and achieve it, reminding them that every goal matters whether it's big, small, or still taking shape. Through open discussions and lots of creativity, the young carers designed their own vision boards, sharing their hopes for the future and exploring how they can make their voices heard and truly listened to. It was a truly uplifting celebration of our amazing young carers and their bright futures.

We also held our very special Take5 Oscars Awards Evening, where we celebrated our young carers and their individuality. The evening was filled with fun activities, music, food, and laughter. Every award winner received an "Oscar" and a certificate to recognise their achievements and create lasting memories.

During our Take5 youth club sessions, we've been making the most of the beautiful weather by spending more time outdoors. We've enjoyed returning to the play park and taking part in favourite outdoor

games such as football, hockey, and cricket. Our artistic side has also been shining through, with young carers creating clay sculptures and colourful chalk masterpieces in the sunshine.

We're also excited to have a variety of visits and activities planned, including a trip to our local fire station, along with visits from our local PCSO team and the Northwest Ambulance Service, helping our young carers learn more about the fantastic services within our community.

Throughout the Easter period, we once again enjoyed a wide range of activities. We had a lovely day out at Lowlands Farm meeting the amazing alpacas and their animal friends. A huge thank you to Charlotte and the Lowlands Farm team for having us. We also spent time at Park View 4 U, where everyone had lots of fun in the sand pits, and enjoyed a day trip to Williamson Park in Lancaster, giving our young carers some valuable free time away from Blackpool.

Some lovely comments from our young carers

Lowlands Farm & Park View 4 U

"Today has been brilliant! I was brave by letting the alpaca come close to me. I loved playing in the park after and would love to come back again."

"Today has been amazing. Everything has been so fun. My favourite part was holding the animals and playing with my brother and friends. I didn't want the day to end."

Williamson Park

"Today was good. I really like Williamson Park. I got some time for myself and had fun with my friends."

"It was good to get out of my house and away from Blackpool for a while. I didn't have to be the big brother for a bit. I could just be me."



Take 5

"I liked being out today because I got some me time and some peace and quiet, but I was also free to play on the equipment with everyone else and have fun."

During the May half term, we had even more exciting activities taking place, including Wild Pebble Arts, Lights Camera Vibes, youth club days, movie afternoons, picnics in the park, and much more.

We are now busy preparing our summer programme, and we have some fantastic adventures planned for our groups at a variety of locations. Upcoming trips include visits to the beach with the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, as well as continued work with our Blue Space Warriors Group. This developing project continues monthly, with young carers now putting their ideas into action by exploring ways to better support our blue spaces, improve recycling, and help save energy within our centre.

This year, our aim is to spend as much time outdoors in nature as possible, whether that's in our own gardens or on trips to places such as Beacon Fell and Weeton Barracks for a Wild Heart, Wild Skills session with Jenna from Roots to Branches, along with many more exciting experiences.

Please keep an eye out for everything coming up at Take5, including youth club sessions and upcoming trips. You can also visit our closed Facebook page, Blackpool Young Carers, for updates and information.

Suzanne,
Respite Activity
Coordinator





Carers' Voice: shaping services that reflect real lives

At Blackpool Carers Centre, one principle sits at the heart of everything we do: that services should not be designed for carers without carers. Unpaid carers are experts in their own lives. They understand better than anyone what support works, what does not and crucially, what needs to change. Whether they are caring for a parent, partner, child, friend or neighbour, their lived experience is essential in shaping services that are relevant, responsive and effective.

That is why carers' voice is not a standalone activity within our organisation. It is embedded across our services, from project design and delivery through to day to day support conversations.

Carers' voice begins with simple but important conversations. When carers attend support sessions, respite activities, peer support groups or one to one appointments, we actively encourage feedback not just on what they receive, but on how it is delivered.

This includes asking practical questions: What would make this easier to attend? Is there a better time or format? What are we missing? What would you like more of?

However, listening alone is not enough. The real value comes when feedback leads to visible change.

We are committed to ensuring that when carers tell us something is not working or that something could be improved we act on it wherever possible. This may involve adapting delivery times, changing session formats, introducing new types of support, or designing entirely new

pieces of work with carers themselves.

Coproduction is often discussed at a strategic level, but for carers it needs to feel practical and accessible.

For many of the carers we support, involvement does not mean attending formal meetings or sitting on committees. Instead, it can be as simple as sharing an idea during respite sessions, speaking to a support worker, or suggesting changes after attending a group activity. We actively encourage carers to do exactly that.

If a carer has an idea, or would like something to be delivered differently, we want to hear it. That message is simple and consistent across our services: tell your support worker, or mention it next time you are attending respite.

Those conversations matter. They are often where the most meaningful improvements begin.

One of the biggest challenges in delivering effective carer support is recognising just how diverse caring experiences can be.



Young carers, working carers, older carers and those supporting someone with complex needs will all experience different pressures and priorities. A service that works well for one group may not work for another.

This is why ongoing engagement is so important. Carers' circumstances change and our services must be able to respond to those changes in real time rather than relying on fixed assumptions about what is needed.

By continually seeking feedback and adapting provision, we aim to ensure that support remains relevant and accessible.

A key strength of a carers' voice approach is its ability to directly influence service development.

Over time, feedback from carers has helped shape a wide range of changes within our organisation.

This has included adjustments to respite provision, the introduction of more flexible support options, improved communication methods, and the development of targeted groups for specific caring situations.

In many cases, these changes have come directly from informal conversations rather than formal consultation exercises. This highlights an important point: meaningful engagement is not always about formal structures, but about everyday relationships and trust.

When carers feel heard, they are more likely to share ideas. When they see those ideas acted upon, they are more likely to stay engaged. This creates a continuous cycle of improvement.

The importance of carers' voice extends beyond individual organisations. In health and social care systems under pressure, services that are designed with people who use them are more likely to be effective, efficient and sustainable.

For commissioners and providers, embedding carers' voice can help ensure that services are not only



meeting statutory requirements, but also reflecting the realities of daily life for those who rely on them.

In Blackpool, where levels of deprivation and complex need are high, this approach is particularly important. Services that are shaped by lived experience are better equipped to respond to the realities carers face, from financial pressures to emotional strain and practical barriers to accessing support.

Embedding carers' voice is ultimately about culture.

It requires organisations to be open to challenge, willing to adapt and to be committed to continuous

improvement. It also requires carers to feel confident that their views will be welcomed and respected.

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we work hard to create that environment. Whether through structured engagement activities or informal conversations, the aim is always the same: to ensure carers feel heard and know that their experience can shape the support they receive.

While carers' voice can be discussed in strategic and policy terms, at its core the message is simple. If something could be improved, tell us. If something is not working, tell us. If you have an idea, tell us. Speak to your support worker, or mention it next time you are attending respite.

Because the most effective services are built with the people who use them, shaped by their experience and strengthened by their ideas.

And that is what truly puts carers at the centre of support.

Thank you to our generous and 'Caring' Corporates

As we closed the financial year, we were proud to recognise 33 incredible corporate partners who together raised an outstanding £124,292 for Blackpool Carers.



Our Caring Corporates at our annual Networking event

At our Caring Corporate event on 20th March, we brought many of these businesses together to celebrate what they've helped achieve, real lasting support for unpaid carers across our community.

Looking ahead, we're inviting more businesses to get involved. There are plenty of ways to make a difference, including:

- Selling our much loved Rocco donkeys to holidaymakers (with

local hotels and venues like Stanley Villa Farm)

- Organising a charity golf day, party night or team fundraising event
- Sponsoring one of our events or activities
- Taking part in one of our many fundraising challenges
- Making a regular monthly or annual donation
- Supporting our £1 a week Lottery.

Every contribution truly counts and it's about working in partnership. By working together, we can also support your organisation to identify and support staff who may be balancing work with a caring role.

If you'd like to support your staff and help to make a difference in our community, contact Terry Hodkinson on 01253 393748 or email: terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org.



Say 'hello' to summer!

The days are longer, brighter, and full of sunshine. Parks are buzzing with laughter, flowers are in full bloom, and everyone is ready to get outside and enjoy the warm weather.

It's now is the perfect time to relax, explore, and make special memories with family and friends.

Here are some fun, free activities you can enjoy together during summer 2026!



Wonderful Wimbledon Wordsearch

Can you find all the tennis themed words hidden in the square below? Remember, they can go backwards and diagonal too!

T	C	B	B	N	S	C	F	Y	H	H	P	D	R	E	S	S	C	O	D	E
I	M	U	O	C	T	T	J	B	I	J	Y	T	E	N	N	I	S	U	T	P
K	I	O	B	M	R	R	U	S	T	S	E	D	L	O	D	N	N	T	H	S
M	A	E	R	C	U	O	Y	X	R	M	Y	N	V	B	A	N	R	C	E	E
J	X	V	J	A	O	P	R	E	U	C	O	C	Q	N	O	E	U	S	C	I
B	O	D	T	Y	C	H	Q	A	O	C	A	Z	Y	D	E	T	B	D	H	R
P	I	B	W	G	T	Y	J	K	C	T	U	C	A	M	J	N	N	L	A	R
B	T	G	B	E	R	A	J	L	E	B	J	L	A	D	U	W	U	B	M	E
V	S	B	R	O	L	D	W	R	R	E	L	F	L	F	Q	A	S	R	P	B
I	G	Q	L	A	E	L	I	M	T	E	T	N	O	D	E	L	B	M	I	W
S	K	E	J	Q	S	N	F	I	N	O	O	N	E	C	O	U	R	T	O	A
V	X	K	X	U	G	S	H	G	E	Q	N	J	F	M	T	Z	J	W	N	R
G	X	D	X	M	W	W	L	R	C	I	W	O	R	A	O	V	P	S	S	T
Q	S	B	R	I	L	A	A	X	X	G	O	D	Z	B	L	C	I	H	S	
T	L	J	E	L	N	V	P	N	E	X	L	I	L	N	Z	Q	W	C	I	I
I	N	A	A	D	R	F	B	D	N	H	B	H	Y	M	O	L	F	C	P	Z
U	X	L	O	R	U	F	U	S	T	H	E	H	A	W	K	L	J	D	S	W
C	X	U	M	V	S	J	C	L	Z	L	X	P	I	M	M	'	S	C	U	P
L	M	T	L	Y	M	U	I	A	L	W	E	Q	N	S	R	X	Z	C	P	T
U	G	G	E	W	C	L	V	M	F	M	D	E	S	I	V	E	L	E	T	S
B	J	Q	Z	L	D	Y	H	D	T	N	E	M	A	N	R	U	O	T	C	K

July Fun Month

Treasure Hunt fun

As a Family why don't you try working together to solve clues and find hidden items around your house or local park.

Sports Games and Races

Have fun with your family or friends and take part in Friendly football matches, relay races, tug of war, and obstacle courses to keep everyone active.

Arts and Crafts Fun

If it's a rainy day, it doesn't mean the fun has to stop. Painting, colouring, bracelet making, and recycled crafts where you can at home.



Family Movie & Picnic Days

Outdoor family films with picnic blankets, snacks, and relaxed family games is such a precious family memorise to create.

Dance & Talent Activities

Get your groove on by taking part in Music, dance challenges, karaoke, and talent performances to entertain the whole family, create silly, little awards and have lots of fun.

Where's Rocco?

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



- ALL ENGLAND
- ALL-WHITE
- BBGs
- CATERING
- CENTRE COURT
- CLUB
- COURTS
- CREAM
- DRESS CODE
- GRAND SLAM
- GRASS
- JULY
- LAWN TENNIS
- LONDON
- NO. ONE COURT
- OLDEST
- PIMM'S CUP
- ROLEX
- RUFUS THE HAWK
- STRAWBERRIES
- SUNBURN
- TELEVISED
- TENNIS
- THE CHAMPIONSHIPS
- TOURNAMENT
- TROPHY
- WIMBLEDON

Explore & Create in August



Science Experiments

Simple hands-on activities like volcano making, bubble stations, and paper airplane contests.

Family Quiz Nights

Team quizzes, puzzle games, and family challenges with small prizes and certificates.

Water Games & Splash Days

Water balloon games, sponge races, and splash play during warm weather is such a fun family day to do.

Community Activities

As a family get together and do kindness activities! This could include mini clean-up events, and teamwork games that encourage community spirit.

Volunteering at Blackpool Carers Centre is so satisfying

I have been a volunteer for various support networks in Blackpool for a number of years yet still feel there is more I can contribute to the local community.

Searching the internet I came across Blackpool Carers website and was immediately struck by the inspiring and heartfelt support they provide to young and adult carers through their many respite services.

My responsibility as Receptionist at Blackpool Carers Centre is to meet and greet people with a warm and inviting welcome hopefully, making them feel at ease.

I am sure you are aware of 'Rocco' the donkey who has the most 'designer outfits' in entirety. Beautifully knitted by enthusiasts around local areas and beyond.

They knit out of the goodness of their own hearts, and I have the pleasure of packing them ready for sale. Amazing.

So, being part of a team that goes above and beyond, literally, that is committed to making a difference to people of all ages who have or, are still facing familiar experiences gives me a sense of satisfaction.



Tina on Reception, packing up Rocco outfits.

In addition, an understanding of their difficulties inspires many opportunities forming friendships that bring fun, laughter, warmth and togetherness.

Tina, volunteer

If you would like to volunteer, call our Volunteer Coordinator on 01253 393748 for more information.

Young Adult Carers' update

Over the past few months, the Young Adult Carers (YAC) service we offer at Blackpool Carers Centre has continued to evolve, ensuring that young people aged 16-24 still receive the support they need alongside their caring responsibilities.

As our services develop, support for carers under 18 is now delivered through our Young Carers Team, while carers aged 18+ are supported by the Adult Carers Team.

This partnership approach allows us to continue providing tailored support at every stage of a carer's journey. One area that continues to thrive is our youth club for 16-24 year olds.

Attendance continues to grow, with more young adult carers coming together to socialise, relax, and have a break from their caring role. The group offers a safe and welcoming space where young people can build friendships, confidence, and resilience.

We are also delighted to welcome a new volunteer to the group, who brings a fantastic background in arts and crafts. Their creativity has already introduced new activities and opportunities for young people to express themselves and try something different.

Alongside weekly sessions, we continue to organise fundraising activities to help provide trips, resources, and experiences for the group.

These opportunities are invaluable in giving young adult carers time away from their responsibilities and the chance to make positive memories together.

We also remain committed to working closely with local colleges to raise

awareness of young adult carers across Blackpool and strengthen the support available within educational settings. By continuing these partnerships, we hope to ensure carers feel recognised, understood, and supported in achieving their goals.

YACs learned how to transfer their skills during a Jobs Workshop



Turn your daily shopping into everyday magic for us with easyfundraising

You shop, brands donate to us. It won't cost you any extra!

easyfundraising

Help us make a difference when you shop. Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

- 1 Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk
- 2 Sign up and search for us
- 3 Your favourite brands donate to us whenever you shop with them

Shop with 8,000+ brands including:

Booking.com
bv
M&S
GROUPON
BT
Uber Eats

Fair Futures for Young Carers: Why Education Must Be Part of the Caring Conversation

For many people working in health and social care, the term "carer" immediately brings to mind an adult supporting an older relative, partner or friend. Yet across the UK, hundreds of thousands of children and young people are undertaking caring responsibilities that can have a profound impact on their education, wellbeing and future opportunities.

We work with young carers every day and see first-hand the challenges they face. Many are helping to care for a parent with mental ill health, a disability, a long term health condition, substance misuse issues or additional support needs. Alongside the responsibilities of childhood and education, they are often providing practical care, emotional support and household assistance that would be challenging for many adults.

A brighter future for Blackpool's young carers

That is why we are delighted to be one of nine carer organisations selected to deliver Fair Futures for Young Carers, a new five year programme funded by The National Lottery Community Fund through a £5 million investment awarded to Carers Trust. Delivered in partnership with The Children's Society and local carer organisations across England, Scotland and Wales, the programme represents a significant opportunity to transform how schools identify and support young carers.

One of the most striking aspects of the programme is the scale of the challenge it seeks to address.

Research suggests that around one in ten students may have caring responsibilities at home. However, schools in England currently identify only a fraction of these young people. This means many children continue to struggle without recognition or support, often feeling isolated and misunderstood.



Sam at our Young Carers in Schools Workshop in March, advising local schools on how to recognise and support young carers

The consequences can be significant. Young carers are more likely to experience disrupted attendance, lower educational attainment and reduced wellbeing. They may arrive at school tired after helping a family member during the night, struggle to complete homework due to caring responsibilities, or worry throughout the school day about what is happening at home.

For some young carers, the pressures can become overwhelming. Yet many remain invisible because they do not see themselves as carers or because families are reluctant to disclose the challenges they are experiencing.

As professionals working across the caring sector, this should concern us all. Education plays a crucial role in determining future opportunities, health outcomes and economic wellbeing. If young carers are unable to access the same educational opportunities as their peers, inequalities can become entrenched from an early age.

The evidence behind the approach is compelling

The Fair Futures for Young Carers programme builds on more than a decade of learning from the Young Carers in Schools initiative, developed by Carers Trust and The Children's Society.

Independent evaluation has shown that schools engaged in the programme identify significantly more young carers and achieve improved attendance outcomes. Young carers in participating schools missed fewer school days than those attending schools without the programme, demonstrating the tangible difference that awareness and targeted support can make.

Importantly, the programme is not about creating additional burdens for schools. Instead, it focuses on developing a whole-school culture where young carers are recognised, understood and supported.

Simple measures can make a significant difference. These might include identifying a dedicated staff member for young carers, improving awareness among teaching staff, introducing flexible approaches to homework where appropriate, creating opportunities for peer support, and ensuring young carers know where they can turn for help.

When schools understand the realities of caring responsibilities, they are better placed to respond compassionately and effectively.

Blackpool faces some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country, and many of the families we support are experiencing multiple and complex challenges. The ongoing

cost-of-living crisis has placed additional pressure on households already managing ill health, disability and financial hardship.

Against this backdrop, young carers often shoulder responsibilities far beyond their years.

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we know that early intervention and recognition are critical. When young carers are identified early, support can be put in place before attendance declines, wellbeing deteriorates or educational opportunities are lost.

We also know that schools want to help. Across Blackpool, we have seen a growing commitment from education professionals to better understand the experiences of young carers and ensure they receive the support they need. Fair Futures for Young Carers provides an opportunity to build on this momentum and embed good practice across the education system.

One of the most exciting aspects of the programme is its commitment to placing young carers at the centre of decision-making.

Too often, services are designed for young people rather than with them. Fair Futures for Young Carers takes a different approach, ensuring that young carers' lived experiences help shape the programme through youth led governance, ambassador roles and direct involvement in programme development.

Young carers are experts in their own experiences. They understand the barriers they face and often have practical, insightful ideas about how schools and services can better support them.

By amplifying these voices, the programme aims not only to improve individual outcomes but also to drive wider systems change.

Supporting young carers is not solely the responsibility of schools, carer services or local authorities. It requires collaboration across education, health, social care and the voluntary sector.

Recognising how caring affects the wider family

For care providers and professionals working with adults, there is an important role to play in recognising

the wider family impact of illness, disability and caring responsibilities. Asking whether children in a household are providing care, understanding the pressures they may be experiencing, and connecting families to appropriate support can make a significant difference.

Fair Futures for Young Carers represents an ambitious investment in creating a future where no young carer is disadvantaged because of the support they provide to someone they love.

We are proud to be part of this national programme and excited about the opportunities it presents. By working together with schools, families, communities and young carers themselves, we can help ensure that caring responsibilities do not become barriers to education, wellbeing and future success.

Every young carer deserves the chance to thrive both at home and in the classroom. This programme is an important step towards making that ambition a reality.

YOUNG CARER TRUE STORY

Ashleigh can now cope with her feelings and open up

My daughter Ashleigh has been accessing support from Young Carers for some time now, around the impact of her father's substance use and mental health.

Ashleigh had been significantly impacted by her father's life choices, including knowledge of her father living on the streets and using substances.

Ashleigh struggles with her own mental health, and before receiving support from Support Worker, Leah, Ashleigh had been refusing to go to school, and been experimenting with substances herself.

Ashleigh was very closed off and would not share how she was

feeling with anyone before. Since Ashleigh has been supported by Leah, she has been attending school regularly, and Leah has managed to help Ashleigh to open up to her.

Leah has helped Ashleigh to speak openly about school, worries and talking about her father. She has also supported Ashleigh to explore the risks of self-medicating with alcohol and cannabis and helped her to understand these risks.

With Leah's help, Ashleigh is able to identify how to cope with her feelings regarding her father and is more open to accepting support from other services.



Ashleigh and I are so grateful for all the help Leah has given us, supporting us through the good and the bad.

Ashleigh is able to contact Leah directly and ring her if she is feeling anxious or upset, and Leah will always get back to her. I honestly don't know where we would be without this amazing service.

Working Carers at a tipping point: Why employment support must be part of the caring conversation

Across the UK, thousands of unpaid carers are quietly balancing paid employment with increasingly complex caring responsibilities. While many describe work as a vital source of identity, income and respite; growing evidence suggests that this balance is becoming harder to sustain.

We are seeing more working carers seeking support as they struggle to juggle employment alongside caring for a parent, partner, child or friend. Their experiences reflect a wider national picture: carers want to stay in work, but too often feel they are being pushed to the point where leaving employment feels like the only option.

Recent research by Carers UK highlights this growing pressure. While 74% of carers in employment say that working has a positive impact on their wellbeing, offering structure, social contact, financial stability and a break from their caring role, nearly half (47%) are now considering reducing their hours or leaving work altogether. This tension sits at the heart of what Carers UK describes as a “tipping point” in working life for unpaid carers.

For many carers, employment is far more than a financial necessity. It provides routine, independence and a sense of normality at a time when their caring role can dominate every aspect of daily life.

Carers in work consistently report better wellbeing outcomes than those who have left employment. Research shows that working age carers not in employment are more likely to report poor or very poor mental health (46% compared with 35% of those in work) and are also more likely to be experiencing financial difficulties.

Many carers describe their workplace as a form of respite; “me time” away from the intensity of caring responsibilities. It can offer social contact, confidence, and a sense of identity beyond the caring role.

However, this positive impact is increasingly fragile. Despite the benefits of employment, almost half of working carers are



now considering reducing their hours or leaving work altogether. The reasons are complex and often interconnected: increasing caring responsibilities, declining personal health, limited access to support services, and workplaces that are not always equipped to respond flexibly.

Among those who have already left employment, many report that the decision was not truly a choice. Carers UK research highlights that 62% of current and former carers felt they had little choice but to leave work because alternative care options were not available.

A lack of coordinated support from health and social care services is also a key factor. For those no longer in employment, 35% said that more affordable, accessible or reliable social care services could have helped them remain in work.

The impact of this shift is significant. Leaving employment can lead to long-term financial insecurity, reduced pension contributions, and increased reliance on already stretched welfare and support systems.

Workplaces play a crucial role in whether carers can remain in

employment, yet many carers still feel unable to disclose their situation. Research shows that 48% of carers who left work to care did not feel comfortable speaking to their line manager about their circumstances, while 43% reported that their employer did not have specific policies in place to support carers.

Even where policies exist, they are not always accessible in practice. The Carer’s Leave Act 2023 provides employees with up to five days of unpaid leave per year to support someone with long-term care needs. However, many carers say they cannot afford to take unpaid leave, limiting its effectiveness in real-world situations.

The research also highlights the importance of paid leave. Around 60% of carers said that access to paid carer’s leave would reduce stress, while 45% said it would make them more likely to remain in employment.

These findings point to a clear conclusion: flexibility alone is not always enough. Financially viable support is essential if carers are to stay in work.

The implications extend far beyond individual employers or households.

Carers UK estimates that the economic cost of carers leaving employment is approximately £37 billion per year. This includes lost productivity, increased recruitment and training costs, and greater pressure on public services.

From a workforce perspective, supporting carers is also a retention issue. Employers are increasingly recognising that flexible working, carer-friendly policies and proactive support structures help retain experienced staff and reduce absence and turnover.

As Claire Hawkins of Standard Life has noted, caring responsibilities are becoming more common across the workforce. Without appropriate support, more employees will reach a point where leaving employment feels unavoidable, often with long-term consequences for income and pension security in later life.

One of the strongest messages emerging from the research is the link between social care provision and employment retention. For many carers, access to reliable care services is what enables them to stay in work.

Without this support, carers are often forced to take on increasing levels of responsibility themselves,

making it more difficult to sustain paid employment alongside their caring role.

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we see this interplay every day. When services are delayed, unavailable or inconsistent, the impact is often felt not only by the person receiving care, but also by the family member trying to remain in work.

Social care, therefore, is not separate from employment policy, it is a critical enabler of economic participation for unpaid carers.

If the UK is to address the growing “tipping point” identified by Carers UK, a coordinated response is needed across government, employers and social care systems.

Key areas for action include:

- **Greater access to affordable and reliable social care services**
- **Expansion of flexible and carer-friendly workplace policies**
- **Introduction of paid Carer’s Leave to complement existing rights**
- **Improved awareness among employers of the prevalence of working carers**
- **Encouraging open workplace cultures where caring responsibilities can be discussed safely**

These changes are not only about supporting individual carers, they



are about sustaining a workforce that is increasingly affected by caring responsibilities.

Working carers are a vital part of the UK workforce, yet too many are being forced to make impossible choices between employment and care.

At Blackpool Carers Centre, we believe that supporting carers to remain in work is not only a matter of individual wellbeing, but also of social and economic importance. When carers are supported effectively, they are more likely to remain in employment, maintain their wellbeing, and continue contributing to both their families and the wider economy.

The challenge now is ensuring that support systems, both in the workplace and in social care are strong enough to prevent carers reaching breaking point.

Because for too many, that tipping point is already very real.

Fundraising and Community News from Terry

Lancashire Poultry Club

A big thank you to the Lancashire Poultry Club for choosing Blackpool Carers Centre as their nominated charity this year and raising a very impressive £2,260.

We are incredibly grateful for your support, which will help us continue providing vital support, activities and opportunities for unpaid carers in our community. Your generosity really does make a difference, and we look forward to working together over the coming year.



Kelly (l) and Jon from Lancashire Poultry Club with Terry

Few places left on our London to Paris Cycle Challenge!

This thrilling three-day challenge on 3-5 September, will bring together an incredible team spirit, stunning routes, and the rewarding experience of cycling into Paris.

If you've been thinking about joining us, or know someone who'd love to take part, call Terry on 01253 393748 to reserve one of the remaining places!

Blackhurst Budd Solicitors



Thank you to Blackhurst Budd Solicitors for their recent generous donation of £1,100.

The donation comes from the firm's charity account, which is made up of residual balances, small sums that arise during client transactions and which their clients have generously agreed to donate to good causes.

Egg-ceptionally Egg-cellent Easter Surprises

Our carers had a very special Easter, thanks to all the generous donations from several local businesses, including:

- MOD Norcross
- Dianne, Pam, Di and Debbie who donated £80 worth of Eggs
- Fox Brothers
- Visiting Angel Fylde Coast

We would like to say thank you so much to them all for their kindness and for thinking of our carers. It's much appreciated.



Fox Brother donated Eggs, Easter games and toys for young carers

Good Luck to all our fundraisers!

We wish all the very best to everyone taking part in the following fundraising events:

- Capital to Capital Cycle Challenge
- Great North Run
- Glenn Willis Charity Golf Day

Thank you for supporting us.



Karen, Ed and Lily from MOD Norcross presenting staff with 200 eggs!



Visiting Angels Fylde Coast presenting volunteer, Helen with their donation

Wild Shore Wipeout is back!

Thank you to the team at Wild Shore for supporting us with this annual fun event and helping us create memorable ways to raise funds.

We're inviting local businesses or groups of friends to get a team together for a couple of hours of laughter, teamwork and plenty of splashes on the inflatable course.

See advert on page 5 for more details or call Terry on 01253 393748 to enter your team today!



Fabulous Freemasons' Donations

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the local Masonic Lodges who have supported Blackpool Carers Centre over the past year and continue to stand alongside us.

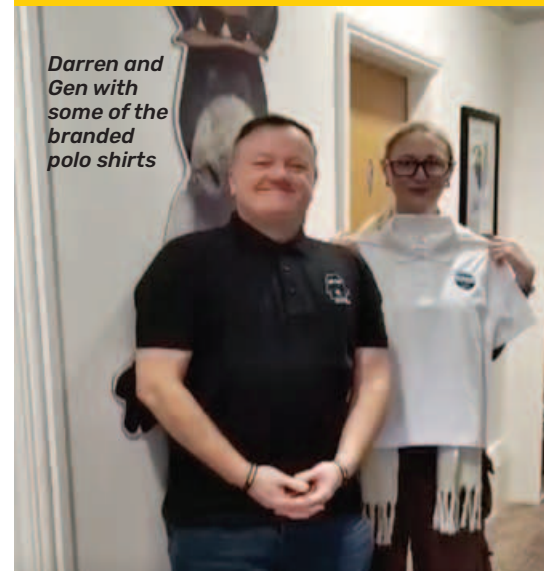
Your generosity and kindness make a real difference, helping to fund trips, activities and much needed experiences for our young carers. These moments give them the chance to relax, have fun and simply be children, away from their caring responsibilities. We are truly grateful for your ongoing support and the impact it has on so many young lives.

Local business Zell-Em donated branded garments

We recently received a fantastic donation from Zell-em in Blackpool.

They provided over £500 worth of branded garments including polos, tshirts and jackets for our carers, volunteers and staff. THANK YOU SO MUCH for thinking of us!

Catch the full story in the Facebook video at the link below <https://www.facebook.com/reel/26016540817968880>



Darren and Gen with some of the branded polo shirts



Young carers trip to Williamson Park



Proud young carer with her Chinese New Year, Year of the Horse mask

PHOTO GALLERY

...special moments we want to share!



Playing on the climbing frame in our gardens at Beaverbrooks House



We took delivery of a Bra Bank to raise funds for United Youth Alliance

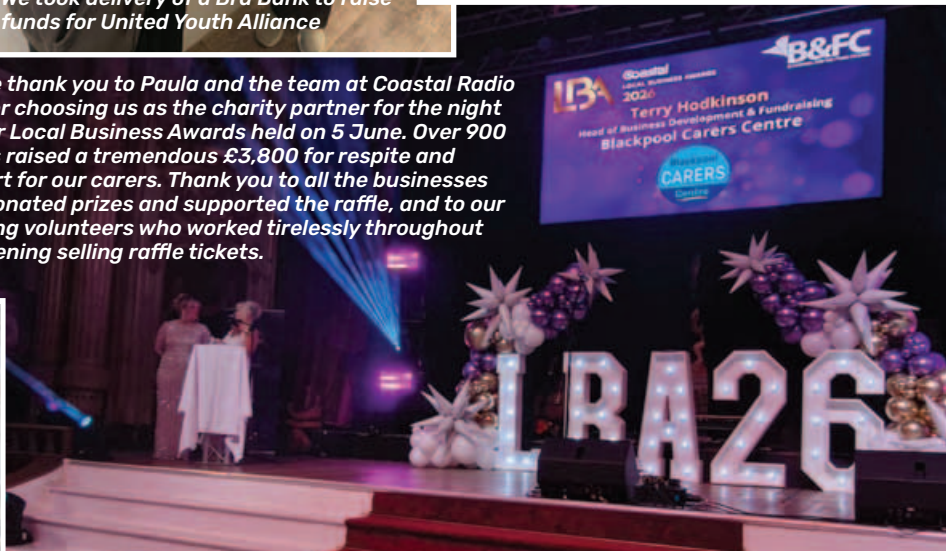


Making the most of the sunshine with an outdoor painting session

A huge thank you to Paula and the team at Coastal Radio DAB for choosing us as the charity partner for the night of their Local Business Awards held on 5 June. Over 900 guests raised a tremendous £3,800 for respite and support for our carers. Thank you to all the businesses that donated prizes and supported the raffle, and to our amazing volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the evening selling raffle tickets.



Cheese Gromit? Adult carer having fun during a trip to the Harris Art Gallery in Preston



If you're a local business and are interested in becoming a Caring Corporate Partner call Terry on 01253 393748 or email: terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org



Young carers enjoying very drippy ice creams in Stanley Park



The 'Four Musketeers' - our volunteer gardeners having a well-earned brew break

From Flowers to Hope: The Impact 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

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

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 where you will be able to view it at a size suitable for you.



We have been serving
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde for
the last 26 years as the areas
leading mobility supplier.

Call for more information or to
arrange a home assessment
0800 3285670



119/125 Buchanan St. Blackpool Lancashire FY1 3BP

BEAVERBROOKS

Proudly Supporting
Blackpool Carers Centre



Explore at beaverbrooks.co.uk
Experience in stores nationwide
Speak to a consultant on 0800 169 2329



IMAGINE WHAT YOU COULD DO WITH

£25,000

FOR JUST £1 A WEEK
BLACKPOOL CARERS CENTRE LOTTERY
COULD MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE!

Plus... your entry directly funds vital
respite and support for over 12,000
young and adult unpaid carers
registered with our charity.

£25k
1st Prize,
plus other
great
cash prizes
every
week!

JOIN TODAY @
blackpoolcarers.affinitylottery.org.uk
or scan the QR code below.

SCAN ME!



In aid of

