



Carers  
First

Impact report  
2023–24



## Introduction

# From our Chief Executive and Chair of Trustees

**More and more of us are taking on caring responsibilities for friends and relatives, with two in three of us now expected to become a carer at some stage in our lives.**

# 330,000

People reached, to provide information about caring (an increase of 23% on the previous year).

# 51,000

Registered carers who can access advice and support.

**The 2021 Census found that there were over 5.8 million unpaid carers in the UK.<sup>1</sup> According to Carers UK, 600 people are leaving work every day to care for their loved ones<sup>2</sup>.**

At Carers First, we work directly with carers to provide personalised information and support to make life easier. Whether it's supporting a carer with finding time for themselves, helping someone to navigate the benefits system or access peer support in their area, our person-centred approach is about making sure carers can live their lives to the fullest.

We co-design solutions with carers to meet their needs. From our helpline through to our innovative Programmes of Support, and our online advice and information to the face-to-face services we deliver in the East of England, Midlands, London and the South East. We are there for carers whenever and wherever they need us.

This year we were able to reach more than 330,000 people to provide information about caring, an increase of 23% on the previous year. We provided 51,000 registered carers who can access advice and support. We are incredibly proud that 95% of the people we support would recommend us to another carer.

This impact report tells the story of some of the carers we have supported, as well as the value that we have delivered for our partners, our funders and the communities we operate within.

We want to thank all of our supporters, partners and funders for the vital part you have played in helping us to support more carers than ever before, and we look forward to continuing to work together to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

**Alison Taylor**  
Chief Executive



**Peter Davies**  
Chair of Trustees



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/planningforcensus2021/ukcensusdata>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.carersuk.org/media/ieknycot/cuk-manifesto-2024\\_policy-briefing-web.pdf](https://www.carersuk.org/media/ieknycot/cuk-manifesto-2024_policy-briefing-web.pdf)

## Introduction

# Our impact at a glance

**Caring for a family member or friend can be incredibly rewarding, but it often comes with challenges that shouldn't be faced alone.**

**At Carers First, we are dedicated to providing unpaid carers with personalised information and tailored support, empowering them to find balance and live life to the fullest—not just for today, but for years to come.**

With more people stepping into caring roles earlier in life, we're expanding our work to help carers sustain employment, working directly with employers to create supportive and inclusive workplaces.


At the same time, we are committed to helping young carers unlock their potential, ensuring they have the tools and opportunities to build the bright futures they deserve.

By standing alongside carers, we aim to make finding support simple, accessible, and impactful, enabling them to thrive in every aspect of their lives.

A circular infographic with a purple border. The number '96%' is prominently displayed in the center. Below it, text explains that 96% of carers felt more resilient in their caring role after receiving support. A small white segment is visible at the top of the circle.

## 96%

of carers felt more resilient in their caring role after our support

A circular infographic with a teal border. The number '95%' is prominently displayed in the center. Below it, text explains that 95% of carers felt listened to and that their own needs were taken into account through interventions. A small white segment is visible at the top of the circle.

## 95%

of carers felt listened to and that their own needs were taken into account through our interventions

A circular infographic with a blue border. The number '93%' is prominently displayed in the center. Below it, text explains that 93% of carers felt more confident and informed in their caring role after receiving support. A small white segment is visible at the top of the circle.

## 93%

of carers felt more confident and informed in their caring role after our support.



## Our impact at a glance *continued*

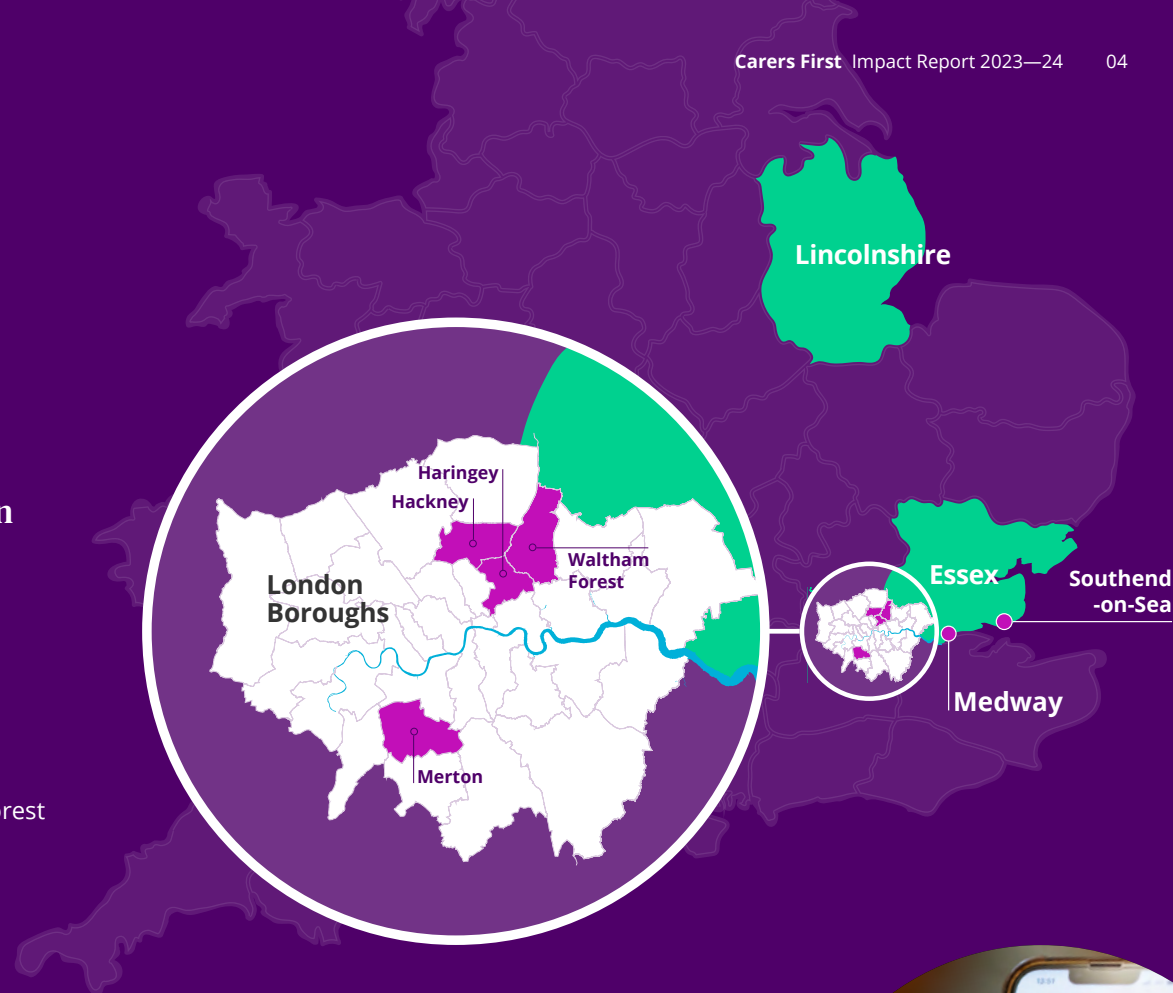
### Where we work

**We support young carers, young adult carers and adult carers throughout England.**

We support young carers, young adult carers and adult carers throughout England with our comprehensive online offer including information, advice and guidance (IAG) tools, resources and training, as well as through our vibrant online peer support communities.

**We also deliver locally commissioned services in the following areas:**

- Essex
- Lincolnshire
- Medway
- Southend-on-Sea
- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Haringey
- London Borough of Waltham Forest
- London Borough of Merton (from April 2024)



Introduction

## Our impact at a glance *continued*

### How we support carers

We offer a range of support options for carers to access in ways that work best for them:

Our holistic approach ensures that no matter how carers choose to engage, they have access to the help and resources they need to thrive.

#### Face-to-Face Support

Available both one-to-one and in group settings, providing personalised and community-based assistance.

#### Online Support

Accessible resources and virtual sessions to ensure carers can connect with us anytime, anywhere.

#### Dedicated Helpline

A trusted source of advice, guidance, and a listening ear for carers navigating their journey.

#### Extensive Online Resources

Comprehensive and easy-to-use tools, guides, and information to empower carers with knowledge and confidence.

#### Collaborative Partnerships

Working with organisations and communities to provide a seamless network of support tailored to carers' needs.



# Maria's Story

**Maria, 56, is a full-time carer for her mum Esther, 91, who has frontal temporal lobe dementia.**



**Caring for someone with dementia can be emotionally and physically demanding, requiring constant supervision and extensive personal care.**

This often leads to sleep deprivation, social isolation, and financial strain. However, it can also be rewarding and can nurture deep connections and moments of joy with the right support.

Maria, 56, often feels overwhelmed as she cares for her 91-year-old mother, Esther, who has frontal temporal lobe dementia. Fortunately, she has found relief through support from Carers First.

Maria has been living with her mother, Esther, whom she returned to care for nine years ago after leaving Australia. Esther requires around-the-clock care.

By the time Maria found out about Carers First, she was contemplating placing Esther in residential care because the stress of the situation was negatively impacting her mental health. "I was ready to walk away. I was so stressed and felt so guilty, but I couldn't see any other option."

"Mum doesn't like many people coming into the house, so I provide most of her care. I cook all her meals since she can be very forgetful, help her choose her clothes for the day, and support her with showering. She also gets up often during the night to use the toilet, so my sleep is usually disturbed."

Maria believes that support from charities like Carers First is essential when caring for someone. She says, "Carers First has supported me in so many ways, from helping with council tax reductions to

assisting in applying for Attendance Allowance for my mum and Carers Allowance for me. They have been my lifeline. I honestly wouldn't be able to care for my mum without their support."

Carers First has also helped Maria secure direct payments, allowing her to engage in personal activities and take time for herself.

"The direct payments have been a godsend. The team also arranged for me to have a counsellor and set me up with a dementia navigator. I also now attend a weekly dance class, which I enjoy. Before I connected with Carers First, I was so stressed that I was having heart palpitations and was grinding my teeth.

**“Carers First is amazing. I'd give them 100 out of 10.”**

"The groups and drop-ins are fantastic, giving me something to look forward to. Carers First is amazing; I'd give them 100 out of 10. I tell everyone about Carers First."

**Maria believes that support from charities like Carers First is essential when caring for someone.**



Our Strategic Objectives

# How we have delivered on our strategy

1

**Recognise and reach greater numbers of carers, at the earliest opportunity**



2

**Enhance our support to make a material difference in carers' lives**



3

**Raise the profile of Carers First and its work, to secure support for carers in collaboration with other organisations**



4

**Develop a vibrant, supported, inclusive and high performing team**



5

**Grow our financial sustainability and strengthen efficiency of our operations**





Our Strategic Objectives

# 1

## Recognise and reach greater numbers of carers, at the earliest opportunity

**We know that reaching carers early is critical to getting them effective support, whatever their circumstances.**

One of the challenges is that many people don't immediately recognise themselves as a carer. Our focus this year has been on extending our reach and raising awareness of the support that we can offer.

### 330,000

People reached, to provide information about caring and caring support (up 23% on 2022/23).

### 51,000

Registered carers supported to access information, advice and support.

### 14%

Increase in carers reached in their first year of being a carer.

### 1,600+

Members in our vibrant Facebook Community

### 15,000

People assisted through our helpline.

### 19,500

Subscribers to our newsletter.

### 20,000+

People receiving our bi-annual magazine.



## Our Strategic Objectives

## Objective 1: Recognise and reach greater numbers of carers, at the earliest opportunity

**In January 2024, Derek Draper, husband of Kate Garraway, passed away. Kate cared for Derek throughout his long illness, using her profile as a respected TV broadcaster to advocate for carers' challenges.**

Carers First worked with Kate, as she put together an award-winning ITV documentary and related social media activities, about her life as a carer and how caring impacts the lives of others.

By developing case studies, recruiting and supporting carers to participate, providing details through our own research, and supporting the messaging of the programmes, Carers First was able to shape some of the narrative around the challenges carers face. Kate's openness about her caring role has helped Carers First to increase the visibility of carers and caring.

This has encouraged more people to identify as carers.



“  
Sadly I am no longer a carer for Derek but the last four years showed me what a wonderful and testing role it is.”

Kate Garraway, June 2024



2

# Enhance our support to make a material difference in carers' lives

**At Carers First, we understand that for the carers we support, outcomes are what truly matter.**

That's why we collaborate with carers to co-design our programmes, ensuring their voices shape our approach. We continually monitor, measure, and evaluate the impact of our work to ensure we make a meaningful difference in their lives.

We are continuously developing our offer to reflect what carers tell us that they need. Our innovative Programmes of Support offer detailed advice and guidance for some of the most complex and challenging situations carers will face.

## Highlights

### Hospital to Home Project

- We secured a new contract to deliver a Hospital to Home Project funded by Mid Essex Better Care Fund

### 'Caring Confidently' programme

- We offer an online 'Caring Confidently' programme that supports carers in navigating their role, especially those who are just beginning their caring journey.

### Programmes of Support

- We provide Programmes of Support providing guidance for some of the most complex and challenging situations carers will face.

### Free short breaks with Carefree

- We support carers with free short breaks through our partnership with Carefree.



## Our Strategic Objectives

## Objective 2: Enhance our support to make a material difference in carers' lives

**Our Caring Confidently programme supports carers as they navigate their caring journey.**

The online, four-part course is designed to help increase resilience, improve wellbeing, and give carers the tools to be more resourceful in their caring role.

### Our Impact Measurement Framework

- 96% of carers felt more resilient in their caring role after our support.
- 95% of carers felt listened to and that their own needs were taken into account through our interventions.
- 93% of carers felt more confident and informed in their caring role after our support.
- 81% of carers felt there had been an improvement in their lives as a result of Carers First support.
- 95% would recommend Carers First to other carers.

## Stu's Story

**For over 30 years, Stu has been caring for his wife, Ann, who has progressive multiple sclerosis and is being assessed for early onset dementia.**



**As Ann's condition worsened, Stu's responsibilities intensified, leading to feelings of exhaustion and isolation.**

He struggled with depression and guilt related to his caring role, often feeling that life had lost its purpose. He expressed resentment at times, which in turn made him feel guilty, as he didn't want anyone to think he blamed Ann for his feelings.

After being referred to Carers First for a Statutory Carers Assessment, Stu received support to access Continuing Healthcare (CHC) funding. This funded six hours of paid care each week and three respite stays for Ann each year, helping him manage his responsibilities more

effectively. Carers First also connected Stu to the 'Men Care 2' project, which offer opportunities for days out and peer support among male carers.

With this support, Stu's overall wellbeing has improved significantly. Thanks to the respite time provided through CHC, he was able to visit Berlin, a trip he previously thought was impossible. Now, Stu feels more optimistic and rejuvenated, allowing him to continue his caring role for Ann. He shared, "It's wonderful to have something to look forward to, just for myself. It helps me recharge before going back to my caring role."

**Now, Stu feels more optimistic and rejuvenated, allowing him to continue his caring role for Ann.**



# What our funders say

Thank you for submitting your year 2 report. It was nice to read about all the activities undertaken this year. It sounds like a lot of fun was had, with the range of activities available!

You have given some good detail on the differences made for the young carers and it was nice to read some quotes from them and from parents as [they] help build a picture of the progress being made... It is clear that the project is having a positive impact... and you can see their confidence growing.

**BBC Children in Need**  
Funder of Carers First Medway  
Young Carers Project



Thanks for submitting your interim monitoring report, it was brilliant to read about all your activities, and the flexibility you provide to enable young carers to dip in and out as needed.

**Swire Charitable Trust**  
Funder of Carers First Medway  
Young Carers Project

**SWIRE  
CHARITABLE  
TRUST**

It was really good to read about the project, especially that more wellbeing sessions have been organised than expected and it was lovely to read some of the quotes from participants.

**The Mercers Company**  
Funder of a three-year  
wellbeing programme for  
carers across Lincolnshire





3

Raise the profile of Carers First and its work, to secure support for carers in collaboration with other organisations

## Collaboration is at the core of our approach.

We recognise that caring is complex, often requiring coordinated support from multiple agencies, and that reaching carers is a collective effort.

By working closely with partners, funders, and stakeholders, we deliver high-quality, tailored services that create meaningful and lasting impacts on the lives of carers.

“

Carers First supported us with several local and online events and visited several workplaces, talking with colleagues across HMPPS on how they can access support both via internal and external channels. The work and supporting documents produced in partnership with Carers First have been a great platform for HMPPS to drive forward support for working carers.”

**Tracey Varela**  
HR Business Partner at the Ministry of Justice





## Our Strategic Objectives

## Objective 3: Raise the profile of Carers First and its work, to secure support for carers in collaboration with other organisations

### This year, we have:

**Developed new referral pathways with health and social care professionals and local organisations.**

By working in a responsive way, we manage carer referrals across multiple local authorities to ensure seamless and efficient support.

**Expanded our work to support GP practices to identify and support carers.**

**Developed a new Carer Champion model for GP surgeries to equip healthcare professionals with the skill and knowledge to support carers.**

**Launched new projects with employers to identify and support carers within their workforces with sustaining employment.**

**Worked with our partners Dementia Carers Count to deliver specialist training for staff, supporting our Programme of Support for people caring for someone with dementia.**





4

Develop a vibrant,  
supported, inclusive  
and high performing  
team

## Our people are our greatest asset.

As an employer, we believe in leading by example. If we want to deliver for carers, we know we need a highly motivated team of people who feel valued, supported and heard.

Our staff are deeply valued by the carers they support, and we want to reflect this in everything we do. This year, we have continued to invest in our team, ensuring that we deliver the highest quality support to carers.

### We are proud:

#### 40%

of our workforce are carers and we are pleased to support them with Carer's Passports and flexible and supportive working arrangements, including offering paid Carer's Leave.

#### Peer support

We have a staff carers network so that our staff and volunteer team can share their experiences and offer peer support to each other.

#### Volunteering

We have increased opportunities for volunteers to work with us and to learn new skills including supporting and leading peer support groups, becoming telephone befrienders, mentors, supporting activities and events, and fundraising.

#### 80%

of our people say they are proud to work for Carers First.

### What our people say about us:

supportive **caring**  
friendly inclusive



## Our Strategic Objectives

## Objective 4: Develop a vibrant, supported, inclusive and high performing team

### Megan's Story

"I joined Carers First in November 2023 to work on a project in Mid Essex. Since then, I have felt welcomed, valued, and heard. My opinions matter, and I receive helpful guidance that enhances my work experience. Carers First creates a friendly and supportive environment that makes each day enjoyable.

As an adult with autism and ADHD, finding employment that fits can be challenging, but Carers First invests in my success. They provide the support I need for fulfilling work, and my managers encourage me to seek growth and progression within the organisation."



**Megan Williams**  
Team Lead, Southend-on-Sea

### Daniel's Story

"My experience at the charity has been exceptional. Starting as an apprentice, I've received incredible support from my manager and the Finance Team, which has been vital for my growth. Thanks to their guidance, I've completed AAT Level 3 and am progressing through Level 4.

The charity's commitment to my studies has built my knowledge and confidence. It's truly a great environment to learn and grow."



**Daniel Stevenson**  
Finance Assistant





5

Grow our financial sustainability and strengthen efficiency of our operations

## Income

**£4,931,362**

2023/24 **£4,931,362**

2022/23 **£4,694,622**

Income up £236,740 from the previous year

## Expenditure

**£5,056,341**

Expenditure for 2023/24.

**£1,373,952**

Reserves: Unrestricted funds.

**£70,398**

Deficit for 2023/24 £70,398. Reserves were used to strategically invest in support for carers.

**£349,345**

Reserves: Restricted funds.

## Highlights

### ISO9001

Maintained our ISO9001 certification with no non-conformance.

**200%**

Increase in voluntary income over three-year period.

**-40%**

Reduction on office costs over the last two years.

### Contract Successes

#### Contract retenders:

- Medway
- South and Mid Essex

#### Contract extension:

- Waltham Forest

#### New contract:

- For adults and young carers service in the London Borough of Merton.

# Thank you

Thank you to all of our local authority and health sector partners, including:



We would like to thank all our supporters and funders who have helped to make a vital difference in carers' lives, including:





# Five ways you can help us.

**Together we can enable carers to thrive. Here's how you can help make a life-changing difference:**



## 1 Partner with us

We want to work with like-minded individuals and organisations. If you share our passion and commitment to support carers, we would love to work with you.

## 2 Make a donation or fundraise for us

Whether you want to make a one-off donation, give on a regular basis or undertake a fundraising challenge your support is vital in helping us support more carers.

## 3 Spread the word

We rely on word of mouth and people (and partners) talking about Carers First and the great support that we provide. The more we talk about carers, the greater chance we have of reaching those who are hidden.

## 4 Share your story

By talking about your experience as a carer, you can help us tell powerful stories that raise awareness of the needs of carers, help more people identify themselves as carers and help carers to feel less isolated.

## 5 Volunteer

Volunteers are vitally important to enrich our work with carers. If you have a few hours to give a week, or would like to support specific short-term projects, we would love to hear from you.

# Carers First

If you're a carer you can get in touch by emailing [hello@carersfirst.org.uk](mailto:hello@carersfirst.org.uk) or by calling our helpline: 0300 303 1555

If you're interested in working with us you can get in touch by emailing: [partners@carersfirst.org.uk](mailto:partners@carersfirst.org.uk)

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A Network Partner of

**CARERS  
TRUST**

