

Carers' Support (Bexley)

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025



Message from our Chair

What an extraordinary year it has been for Carers Support (Bexley). Thanks to a remarkably generous bequest, we were able to purchase our own property to accommodate our overseas volunteers during their placements. This milestone has secured the future of our much-valued Respite Service, which continues to be deeply appreciated by unpaid carers across Bexley and Greenwich. By providing in-home respite, we help ease the significant stress and fatigue that so often accompany the responsibilities of caring.



Nicky Fry
Chair of Trustees

We continue to support unpaid adult carers by offering clear guidance on benefits, grants, and available funds through our Information and Support service. Maximising income is vital in today's climate, and we are proud to help bring greater financial stability and reassurance to unpaid adult carers in Bexley.

Recognising the challenges unpaid carers face in maintaining their mental well-being, Carers Support (Bexley) has sustained its commitment to offering an impactful counselling service. This service provides vital support, helping carers navigate difficult family circumstances, that can be so hard to bear alone and offering much-needed peace of mind.

Our groups and activities have had a profound effect, creating opportunities for friendship and companionship – a chance to relax in the company of people who understand what you are going through.

Through One Bexley unpaid adult carers are supported through an often complex and bewildering journey of accessing the statutory services to which they are legally entitled, and had not been aware of. Immeasurable value in the support that is received from our Trusted Assessors.

Our Support Worker Service continues to deliver a bespoke, compassionate approach, with specially selected staff providing practical help to unpaid carers and their families – addressing the everyday realities of caring.

As we enter a new year, CSB remains dedicated to supporting unpaid carers and finding new ways to make a positive impact on their lives and the lives of their families.

Message from our CEO

Every day, the 19,284 unpaid carers across Bexley give so much of themselves: often while struggling with their own health, finances, and sense of isolation.

This year, we heard from many carers who felt stretched to breaking point, yet still carried on. It reinforced a belief that sits at the core of our work: carers must be cared for too.

At Carers Support Bexley, we provided space for carers to breathe, be heard, and rebuild their strength. Whether through wellbeing support, specialist advice, peer groups, activities that ease loneliness, carers assessments or emotional support.

“It’s been an absolute godsend for me, the support has given me so much and includes me feeling much stronger and I’m coping again.”

The pressures on carers are not easing. Nationally, unpaid carers face one of the toughest years we have seen. Locally, Bexley’s ageing population and rising care needs mean even more families are relying on unpaid care. Too many carers still slip through the net and are not able to prioritise themselves.

Our commitment going forward is clear. Carers Support (Bexley) will advocate for better recognition, stronger financial support, and accessible, responsive local services that care for the carer. We will work with partners to create a community where no carer has to choose between caring and their own wellbeing.

Thank you to the team, volunteers, our carers, partners, donors, supporters and funders all working together to support carers.

Our focus is, and will always remain: caring for the carers.



Vikki Wilkinson – CEO

The logo for Carers' Support (Bexley) is a purple speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom left. The text "Carers' Support (Bexley)" is written inside the bubble in a white, sans-serif font.

Carers' Support (Bexley)

Our Purpose and Principles



Vision

A borough where every carer feels recognised, supported, and able to care without sacrificing their own wellbeing.



Mission

Our mission is to ensure unpaid carers are valued, supported, and central to local decision-making, helping them feel listened to and empowered.



Values



People First – We treat everyone as individuals, with compassion, respect, and empathy



Valuing Staff & Volunteers – We invest in training, support, and development for our dedicated team and volunteers.



Respect & Diversity – We embrace differences and ensure dignity for all.



Honesty & Integrity – We are open, transparent, and keep our promises.



Professionalism – We deliver high-quality, flexible services with a positive, “can do” attitude.



Independence & Partnership – We value our independence but work with others to achieve more for carers.



Free Support – We strive to keep our services free for carers wherever possible..

Review of our year 24/25

Our Information and Support team has continued to be a lifeline for unpaid adult carers across Bexley. Whether someone is new to caring or has years of experience, our friendly and knowledgeable staff are there to offer expert guidance every step of the way.

In 24/25 we supported carers with advice on local services, welfare benefits, and help completing benefit forms – ensuring they could access the support they're entitled to with confidence and ease.

An evaluation conducted in 2024/25 showed outstanding satisfaction with our service:

- **73%** of carers rated the service as **"Excellent"**
- A further **19%** rated it **"Very Good"**

Carers consistently told us that our support helped reduce their stress and made them feel less isolated. Many shared that without our service, they would struggle to navigate the complexities of caring alone.



Guided

634

**carers in
completing
benefit forms**



Supported

1177

**unique unpaid
carers**



Supported

3030

**carers who
contacted us**

We achieved the successful reaccreditation of the Advice Quality Standard (AQS), demonstrating our commitment to accessible, high-quality advice and support

"Carers support informed me of benefits the person I am caring for was entitled to which has greatly helped." – Carer



"It was a moving experience as one member of the public tearfully expressed how my words resonated with her and brought relief knowing support was available." – staff member

Review of our year 24/25

Our free counselling service remains a vital lifeline for carers, helping them build resilience and improve wellbeing.

Delivered by trainee counsellors supported by a clinical supervisor, sessions are offered both in person and online for flexibility and accessibility.

Demand for this high-quality support continues to grow and in 24/25 we delivered **460** counselling sessions, providing carers with a safe space to be heard and supported during challenging times.

We are proud of the difference this service makes and grateful to our dedicated counsellors for their commitment and care.



“Counselling has enabled me to cope with the situation at home and regain my confidence”.

“it was wonderful to be able to speak openly and honestly and have no fear of being judged.”

Funded by the Government, the **Household Support Grant** provides essential financial relief for those most affected by rising living costs. In 2024/25, we once again partnered with the Local Authority to distribute this vital support to unpaid carers across Bexley.

The grant helped carers cover essentials such as heating, food, and household items –easing financial pressure and enabling them to continue caring with greater comfort and stability.



“The grant helped me heat our home and buy clothes for my children. It came at a time when I felt overwhelmed and exhausted – this support meant everything.”

Review of our year 24/25

Pathways

Trusted Assessors at Carers Support Bexley are specially trained staff who carry out Care Act and Carer Assessments for unpaid adult carers and those they support. Working in close partnership with One Bexley, they identify and assess the needs of unpaid carers, ensuring each carer receives tailored support, resources, and referrals to additional services. This collaborative approach enables a more coordinated and responsive service, helping carers access the help they need more quickly and effectively. As a result, Trusted Assessors play a vital role in strengthening the wellbeing and resilience of carers and their families, making a meaningful difference across the borough.

In 24/25 our Trusted Assessors carried **194** statutory assessments and **100** statutory reviews.

"I can't thank you enough for all the help and support you've given us and that kick up the backside I needed."

Support Worker Service

The Support Worker Service at Carers Support Bexley is our only chargeable service and provides vital respite and practical support to unpaid adult carers across the Bexley borough. Our team of six part-time dedicated support workers offer companionship, assistance with outings, and help accessing appointments and activities for those being cared for, enabling carers to take much needed breaks..

"More than happy with the service, Kathy and Julie are fantastic and the service provided is brilliant, could not fault it."

"Would not fault the service at all."

"The service has been fine. I am 100% happy. I can't put into words how grateful I am."



**Support Workers
provided**

3284

**hours of respite to
carers**



**The service supported
a total of**

41

clients

Review of our year 24/25

Our **Respite Service** operates across the Bexley and Greenwich boroughs and continues to be a lifeline for carers, giving them precious time to rest, recharge, and manage their own wellbeing.

Our Respite Volunteers are the heart of our Respite Service, offering not just practical support but meaningful companionship to those being cared for. Their presence helps reduce stress, improve wellbeing, and foster social connection – both for carers and cared-for individuals.

Feedback from carers consistently highlights the emotional and social benefits of volunteer visits. An evaluation conducted in 24/25 showed outstanding satisfaction with our service:

- **73%** of carers rated the service as **“Excellent”**
- A further **19%** rated it **“Very Good”**

***“Human-centred,
personalised support”***



In March 2025 we were thrilled to purchase a dedicated property for our Respite volunteers. This milestone was made possible through an incredibly generous bequest from a former client whose life was touched by our Support Worker service and our respite volunteers.

When the house we had rented for years was repurposed, our Respite service faced uncertainty. Instead of stepping back, we stepped up – turning a challenge into lasting security. After a nine-month search, we acquired a home deeply connected to our values and history.

Owning this property safeguards the future of our Respite service and stands as a powerful symbol of stability, gratitude, and progress a testament to the compassion and determination of our team..



Review of our year 24/25

Carer Money Matters Project

In September 2024 we partnered with Carers Trust and Crossroads Care South East London launching the Carer Money Matters project. This provided unpaid carers with free and vital support on managing their energy bills and finances.

If you are an unpaid adult carer and worried about money or debt alongside your caring role please get in touch with our team.

✉ info@carerssupport.org | 🌐 www.carerssupport.org | ☎ 020 8302 8011

Carers Advocacy Project

Carers Support (Bexley) delivered a six-month pilot advocacy service funded by a community grant. The project provided one-to-one support for unpaid carers, helping them navigate complex systems, challenge decisions, and access vital services. Supporting 25 carers, the initiative proved to be a crucial source of empowerment – helping carers feel heard, and more confident in managing their caring roles. Its success has highlighted the need for continued funding and expansion.

London Marathon

In 2024, we were proud to announce that Carers Support (Bexley) had secured its first-ever charity place in the prestigious London Marathon 2025.

This exciting opportunity enabled us to raise both funds and awareness for the work we do supporting unpaid adult carers. Our runner, Vince Moore, brought a deeply personal connection to the challenge – his nan had received support from our service, making his participation especially meaningful.



Vince in training for the marathon

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring every carer feels recognised, supported, and empowered.

Outreach Work

In 2024/25, our outreach efforts focused on identifying and supporting carers who might otherwise remain unseen and also engaging more with unpaid working age carers.

We attended over a dozen community events—from Carers Week and Lark in the Park to the Thamesmead Festival and Silver Sunday event – bringing our services directly to the heart of Bexley residents.

Our team distributed hundreds of information leaflets about Carers Support (Bexley), provided tailored advice, and made numerous referrals to other specialist services.



Additionally, we raised awareness through partnership working such as hosting a General Election Hustings with Bexley Mencap to amplify carers' voices in policy discussions. And also partnered with a local MP to improve access and visibility.

Our outreach is not just about presence—it's about impact. Every conversation, leaflet, and referral is a step toward recognition, support, and empowerment for adult unpaid carers.

Groups and Events

During 2024/25, we hosted **116 support groups** and organised **7 special events** and outings. These gatherings continue to provide vital support for unpaid carers—offering safe, welcoming spaces to connect, share experiences, and access both practical advice and emotional support.

Carers consistently tell us that these groups help them build lasting friendships and draw strength from a supportive community. Our social events and trips provide a much-needed break: time to recharge, feel valued, and return to their caring roles refreshed and better equipped.

We were also pleased to welcome guest speakers who delivered engaging talks on topics such as local history, mental health, fraud and scams, and wills and lasting powers of attorney.

From coffee mornings to day trips, every event reflects our ongoing commitment to reducing isolation and improving wellbeing for unpaid adult carers across Bexley.



Carers Christmas Party



Alberts Band



Magic of the Movies



Bluebell Railway Trip



Guide Dogs Visiting

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are highly valued members of our team who bring unique skills and experiences that significantly enhance the values of the charity. Many of them have been carers themselves or know a friend or family member who has, which often gives them an exceptional sense of empathy that resonates with carers. Our volunteers do all sorts of things, like telephone befriending, helping with support groups and events, giving welfare advice and assisting with Blue Badge/Taxicard applications.

The respite service at Carers Support (Bexley) collaborates with the Inter Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE). This partnership allows the charity to source dedicated volunteers from ICYE, who join us twice a year in August and February.



A heartwarming aspect of this collaboration is that many volunteers keep in touch with the charity even after they leave their placement. They often form lasting friendships with carers and other volunteers while working here, and it's wonderful to see how these relationships continue across the miles.

Thank you to all our volunteers at Carers Support (Bexley). Your support is invaluable and truly appreciated.



Our Team, Trustees & Donors

We were delighted to welcome Vicky Baker (Support Worker Manager & Trusted Assessor) back from maternity leave. We also said goodbye to Lesley Skinner (Information and Support team) and Oscar Lizalda (Support Worker) we wish them well for the future.



A huge **thank you** to all our staff for your continued dedication, resilience and compassion. Your commitment to unpaid carers is truly inspiring, and your efforts consistently go above and beyond to deliver exceptional support.

We extend our **deepest gratitude** to our incredible trustees, who generously share their time, skills, and expertise to guide and strengthen our work. Their dedication ensures we can continue making a real difference for unpaid carers across Bexley.

Although much of their contribution happens behind the scenes, its impact is felt every single day. Their leadership and commitment keep us true to our mission and help shape our vision for the future.

The achievements highlighted in this Annual Report have been made possible **thanks to the generosity** of individuals, community groups, businesses, and charitable trusts. Every donation we've received this year has helped us make a real difference, and we are deeply grateful for your continued kindness.

This year, we were honoured to receive several heartfelt gifts given in memory of loved ones who have sadly passed away. These contributions – often made at funerals or in the weeks and months that followed – not only celebrate the lives of those we have lost but also provide hope and support to unpaid carers in our local community.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the London Borough of Bexley and Royal Borough of Greenwich for their continued support and funding, which contributes towards us delivering free, accessible services and advice to unpaid adult carers across the boroughs.

To everyone who has supported us: thank you. Your generosity empowers us to continue helping unpaid carers and their families in profound and lasting ways.

If you would like to make a donation to Carers' Support (Bexley) please use the bank account details below:

Carers' Support (Bexley)
Sort Code: 40-52-40
Account number: 00009013

Finances

The financial position of the charity at 31 March 2025 and comparatives for the prior period can be summarised as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Total income	635,066	809,665
Total expenditure	721,158	723,855
Net income	(86,092)	85,810
Total funds brought forward	802,293	716,483
Total funds carried forward	716,201	802,293

And finally ...

We continue to strengthen our digital presence to keep unpaid carers informed, connected, and supported. Our regularly updated website provides news, activities, and practical information, while the integrated events calendar offers easy access to support and learning opportunities.

Active social media channels extend our reach and engagement, raising awareness and highlighting available support.

Our bi-monthly e-bulletin, shares service updates and local activities to ensure carers stay connected throughout the year.



www.carerssupport.org



020 8302 8011



Carers' Support Bexley



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www.bexleycarers.co.uk

Carers' Support (Bexley)