



Frequently asked Questions

What is Carers Together?

- Carers Together is a Hampshire wide organisation that has been operational for over fourteen years and has its base in Romsey.
- It was established in 1993, when a meeting of carers from all over Hampshire decided that there was a need to develop a countywide network of carers, carers groups and organisations.
- Following this initial meeting, a small working party was formed to investigate how a countywide consortium could be developed and this resulted in the name 'Carers Together' and the outline aims and objectives being established.
- Consultation with carers and carers groups across Hampshire ensued and the organisation was launched in 1994, becoming a registered charity in 1995.
- Carers Together continues to highlight the needs and represent the views of carers across the whole of Hampshire.
- It involves carers from across the geographical county of Hampshire and all care groups are represented on the management committee.

Why did it develop?

There were several reasons for the development of a county group: -

- To develop the profile of carers in the county
- To form a larger and stronger voice for carers
- To support and promote the development of local carers support groups and forums to offer carers local support and an opportunity to express their views in their own area
- To ensure local networks are linked together and are able to take a broader strategic view and to represent that view at a wider county level.
- To enable carers to form a strong and cohesive partnership to ensure their needs are met.
- To be an umbrella organisation for carers and carers groups across greater Hampshire

What are its aims?

The aim of Carers Together is to

- Empower and enable carers (of all ages and regardless of whom they care for) to identify, discuss, co-ordinate and represent their needs effectively,
 - Be accessible and involve carers from all areas of historic Hampshire.
 - Listen to carers with empathy and respond appropriately to their individual need.
 - Improve the quality of life for carers and the people they care for by providing an independent non-judgemental listening ear to enable carers to offload.
 - Recognise the expertise of carers and ensure this is used effectively.
 - Advocate for carers, ensure they can benefit from advocacy services and take an active part in expressing their needs when the needs of the person they care for are being assessed.
 - Gather and collate information and share this with carers and carers groups.
 - Improve carers awareness by facilitating courses to increase their knowledge and skills.
 - Develop the profile of carers and ensure their voice is heard.
 - Ensure carers are involved in all stages of planning, development, implementation and review of services locally and county wide, and in all areas and levels of decision making.
- Support carers to find out more about services available to support them including Direct Payments, CLICK, and Respite Care.



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- Give support to existing carers groups in the county as required, establish and support new groups and forums and to link them through a countywide support network.

What does it do?

Carers Together:

- Listens to carers with empathy
- Harnesses the experience of carers for the benefit of carers,
- Ensures that carers are offered informed choice
- Enables and empower carers to care with dignity and independence
- Signposts carers to appropriate services
- Advocates for carers as needed
- Monitors
 - The implementation and effectiveness of care packages in providing support for carers.
 - The number of carers who are offered an assessment of their needs. (Our aim is to ensure that all health and social care staff empower and inform carers of their right to an assessment of their needs)
 - The implementation of continuing care and its effect on carers, and are following closely the series of changes that are taking place in the Health Service and NHS Trusts and trying to ensure the views of carers are taken into account.
 - The effectiveness of carers involvement in the planning and development of services and ensuring that the voice of carers is heard as widely as possible.
 - The increase in carers who are able to access Direct Payments
 - The planning of hospital discharges

How does it achieve this?

Carers Together:

- Employs workers in Basingstoke, East Hampshire, the New Forest and Southampton to give carers support under a contract with Social Services
- Employs Direct Payments Support Workers across the south of the county to assist carers to find out how they can get cash instead of services from Social Services, and give help and support to carer to set up their own Direct Payments scheme so they can take control of their own lives.
- Employs a support worker to be carers champion and to develop a carers champions service using volunteers to assist carers to deal with any problem or concern they feel they need help with – complain, deal with meetings and reviews etc
- Provides a dedicated independent free telephone line to support carers, provide information and signposting to services or simply listen to their concerns and enable them to offload stress 08000 3 23456.
- Provides an independent Carers Active Support Service in central Hampshire
- Maintains a comprehensive Information Resource that is available to carers to help them to care and to find out what is available to help them. The information and support is free to carers and is also available for professionals to assist them in supporting carers.
- Issues a regular Newsletter, with a continually growing circulation list.
- Maintains a database of Hampshire carers and carers groups, as well as people/groups interested in supporting carers, and through this, and the newsletter, continues to develop and improve links with carers, local groups and forums.
- Works with carers to find out what they want and need, helping them to access appropriate services.
- Works with disabled people/groups on issues affecting users and carers



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- Works with carers to:
 - Represent the views of carers on issues that affect carers, and which need publicising or have been brought into the public domain.
 - Provide representatives on a number of committees/consultation groups run by Health, Social Services and Voluntary organizations including Community Action Hampshire, Carers Help line, SUHT Patient Forum, Hampshire Learning Disability Partnership Board, Patients Participation Forum West Hampshire NHS Trust, PALS Steering Group SUHT, Southampton and Portsmouth Universities - Social Worker New Degree Development, Intermediate Care Workforce Development.
- Encourages and supports carers to establish Carers Forums in all areas of the county so that they can have a stronger voice in the locality and ensure the services available meet their changing needs. The support to Carers Forums is ongoing and affiliating them all together forms a strong network for carers.
- Holds consultation meetings and seminars countywide for carers.

How are carers involved?

- Carers consulted, designed and developed the vision and package of support for carers
- The management committee consists of carers or former carers whose experience of caring is invaluable.
- There is regular consultation with carers and carers groups on issues affecting carers and those they care for.
- Carers and carers groups have the opportunity to input into a regular newsletter
- Carers are encouraged to join committees for planning, development, monitoring and review of services for themselves (and those they care for) and to feed back into the countywide network. This includes becoming involved with consultation, service provision and University Social Work Training Courses and influencing social work practice.
- There are regular consultation seminars at least annually that also provide opportunities for carers from each locality to meet and to share views, news, needs and seek mutually beneficial solutions.
- Carers Together has developed CLICK, an email support group for carers who live across the whole of Hampshire. Carers can link with each other at any time of the day and night, and it enables them to be consulted and considered on any topic or issue. The Carers are active members and are able to share information across a wide range of disabilities and to discuss good practice in different localities.

What are its Principles?

- Carers Together has a commitment to the belief that carers should be supported according to their needs, sometimes by other carers, sometimes by paid workers and sometimes by volunteers.
- Carers have the right to represent themselves and, where appropriate other carers, and to be assisted and encouraged to do this whenever possible.
- Carers Together has a varied programme of services, training and activities for carers and workers to access that are supportive, practical and sometime fun – e.g. consultation, information, relaxation, signposting, training tips, creative activities etc.

- Carers Together is breaking down barriers for carers and encouraging them to feel more confident about themselves and their needs.
- The future
 - Prevention and well being
 - Social enterprise developments



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- Companion and befriending services
- Chat with a friend
- Share and Care
- Training for carers and professionals in carers issues
 - Carers Rights and Legislation
 - Key words for carers
 - CT Annual Statement
 - CT Strategy
 - Carers Awareness Training
 - Parent Carer Information Courses
 - Checklists for Health and Social Care professionals
 - Checklist for GPs
 - Lasting Powers of Attorneys
- Working with others – statutory, voluntary, business
- Don't re invent the wheel