

Carers



In Touch

*The free newsletter for family Carers
in Staffordshire*

Winter 2022/23



**Merry
Christmas
and Happy
New Year**

From everyone at
**CASS The Carers
Association**

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You can access additional information on topics by clicking the links in the newsletter highlighted in blue and underlined. If you do not have access to the internet or cannot access any of the links provided in the newsletter, please contact our Advice Line for assistance.



CASS The Carers Association
Carers Advice Line

01785 606675

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 10am – 4pm
Free information, support and advice for family Carers in Staffordshire



A word from our Chief Operating Officer...

Where has 2022 gone? So much has happened over the part year including the lifting of Covid restrictions, a war in Ukraine, the Platinum Jubilee and the sad loss of Her Majesty the Queen, who has been succeeded by King Charles. There were floods and summer heat, not to mention three Prime Ministers and extortionate energy bills and the threat of recession. It has, and continues to be, a year of change, a year of loss and a year of worry.

From my point of view, the families and couples we meet at CASS still manage to focus on the positive and strive to do what they can to make their lives as happy as possible. I always compare caring for someone as a roller coaster ride—sometimes you have dips where your heart goes into your mouth but sometimes there are highs where you can see the world around you and relax for five minutes. It is an inevitable part of loving and caring for someone.

We have had a lot positive feedback and achievements at CASS over the past year. We arranged trips out, Carers' groups online, digital interaction and targeted workshops, always including the family supporter and the person they support. We continued to listen, respond and act immediately to any calls via the Advice Line. None of this could have been achieved without the dedication and willingness of Megan, Mandy and Helene who are part of the CASS team—thank you! We also have a lot of organisations and supporters to thank this year, see page 5.

We have continued to support family Carers without southern Staffordshire over the past 21 years. I have been with CASS for most of this time and recently I did a 'rough calculation' of the Carers we have supported since 2001. Amazingly, this amounted to 10,000 adult Carers and 600 young Carers. Using today's calculations (provided by Carers UK), CASS has assisted Carers in southern Staffordshire to save the UK economy over £1.9 million!

As you will be aware, if you attended our AGM this year, CASS is now at a crucial stage because of the lack of funding available to smaller charities and the impact of the Covid pandemic. A decision by the County Council to take back 'in house' Carers support and award part of the Carers contract to a provider external to Staffordshire did not help this matter, although CASS worked in partnership with over eight other Staffordshire charities to apply for the contract at the time. We are continuing to apply for funding with the help of Kent Parson, who is a CASS voting member and former employee. Kent understands the impact of caring and the value CASS brings to the local area. We will keep you informed. If you would like to be involved in assisting us in keeping CASS in Staffordshire, please contact me.

Finally, a few positive words....Seeing how the country and even the world came together to celebrate the Queens Jubilee was a joy to watch after the pandemic. We got together as families to celebrate in our own way whatever we believe in. The sun even shone! This was part of the 'roller coaster ride' where we saw the world and relaxed. **HANG IN THERE!**

I wish you all a very happy holiday season from everyone at CASS x



Karen Leighton

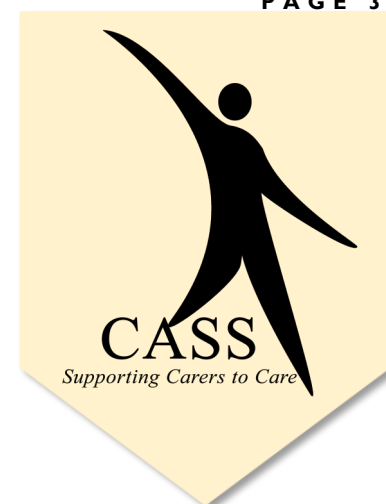
Chief Operating Officer

CASS Services . . .



We want to hear from you! The views of our Carers are so important to us in ensuring we are delivering the best support to you. We are looking at what works well and what needs to be improved. If you access our services and would like to leave feedback please email:

enquiries@carersinformation.org.uk



Carers Christmas Get Together

Ho Ho Ho...Get the Christmas celebrations started this year with the CASS team.

Join us on:

TUESDAY 13TH DECEMBER

1pm-2.30pm

Medequip Centre (Tollgate Drive, Tollgate Industrial Park, Beaconside, Stafford ST16 3HS)

There will be hot drinks, mince pies, Christmas songs and carols, Christmas card writing and lots of festive cheer. As always, the person who you care for is most welcome to join us at the get together.

You need to book with us—so we make sure we get enough mince pies for everyone! Call our Advice Line on 01785 606675 to register your place.


Christmas
PARTY

“What Carers Say...

“The dementia workshops have opened my eyes up to support I didn't know was there for Carers.

Thank you so much.”

Caring and Support Skills—Dementia Workshop attendee

CARERS IN TOUCH

Annual General Meeting

Thank you to those who attended our AGM in November 2022. There was an over-riding feeling of happiness to have everyone back face to face for our annual meeting, even though we had to deliver sad facts about the uncertain future for CASS.

Every year we discuss matters that are affecting Carers in Staffordshire and nationally, report back on the work we have done over the past 12 months and look at the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Our second thanks goes to the Board of Trustees and our Volunteers, who have dedicated their own time to support CASS. Colin Smith MBE, chair of Trustees, spoke about CASS from the beginning and how far the charity has come even in the face of ever changing circumstances.

We're pleased to say that both Trustees, Isabella and Mark, who were up for re-election, have been voted back onto the Board for the forthcoming term. Angie Miles resigned from the Board of Trustees and she was thanked for her input. The other Trustees thanked all the Carers who supported CASS over the past year.

Current Trustees

Names of our current trustees: Colin Smith MBE—Chairperson, Jane Rowbottom—Deputy Chairperson, James Harding—Treasurer, Father Graham Bott, Mark Howe-Senior, Isabella Davies.



Carers Together

Our online support group has been joined by a number of external guests over the past couple of months, including a Love To Move session and Silvertime Legal Services.

Whilst Carers Together is an online group - this hasn't stopped our Carers meeting up in person after the sessions. The group is a place where Carers can come together and leave as friends. As we have seen over the past few months, where 2 Carers have connected at the group and realised they live only minutes away from each other. They have both introduced each other to other support and have created an expanding support network for themselves as Carers.

Carers Together is Carer led. If you would like to join contact our Advice Line to request an invite.

Fundraising

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT CASS IN THEIR NEXT STEPS?

HAVE YOU—any commercial contacts who may donate to our worthy cause?

HAVE YOU—any background in funding applications

HAVE YOU—any good contacts?

HAVE YOU—any ideas for fundraising?

If so...**WE NEED YOU!**

Karen (Leighton) and Kent (Parson) are also forming a working group of interested people. If you would like to be involved or have any good contacts or ideas you would like to pass on, please email Karen and Kent on:

karen.leighton@carersinformation.org.uk

If you do not have email access, contact the Carers Advice Line on 01785 606675

Thank you

**We need
your
support!**

Caring and Support Skills Dementia Workshops



During November, for the first time, the Caring and Support Skills workshops were completed in person at the Medequip Service Centre in Stafford.

Over the 4 weeks, the group received information covering communication, home support, the care navigation system, 1 to 1 support and even received goody bags with items to take away supplied by Medequip. As a group, we explored the option of meals on wheels with a taste testing session! Thank you to ICare who supplied a selection of hot meals and desserts for us to try on week 4. A huge thank you to the attendees for making the group such a positive and welcoming space for everyone.



For attending the workshops the Carers will receive a certificate as a record of attendance.

For more information about Medequip and ICare click the links below:

Medequip Catalogue - [click here](#)

ICare - [click here](#)



Thank you for your support in 2022!

Our grateful thanks go to organisations, carers, volunteers and people in the community who have contributed funding or their own time and skills towards our work. Throughout 2022 we were fortunate to have the following support CASS:

- Ron Dixon—90th Birthday donation
- Stafford Lions
- Medequip
- Gartmore Riding Stables
- People's Postcode Lottery
- Postcode Neighbourhood trust
- British Red Cross
- Carers Trust
- Caudwell Energy

In addition we'd like to thank Mandy Binns, who has worked as our Carers Advice and Support Officer in 2022, our wonderful volunteers, who have always given the gift of their time and skills to support our work, the Board of Trustees, who guide the charity's direction and beliefs and finally...**you!** Our Carers at home. We are fortunate to support amazing people who go above and beyond for their loved ones. We hear from many Carers who feel alone and are receiving minimal support and want to change that. We hope you have, in 2022, taken those steps with the help of CASS in getting the support you are entitled too.

Medequip Tri Walkers

Are you in need of or looking into purchasing a tri walker for additional support when walking?

We have a great offer on for you to purchase these from Medequip at a **considerable discounted price**. We have already delivered numerous walkers to Carers courtesy of Medequip. These can be purchased for a donation fee of your choice towards Medequip (we suggest a £10 donation).

The tri walkers, similar to the one shown below, are all in stock at the Medequip Centre. If you require one, call CASS on 01785 606675 to arrange.



CASS Carers Christmas Get Together

*Tuesday 13th December
1pm - 2:30pm*

*At the Medequip Centre
(Stafford)*

Join us for mince pies, Christmas songs, Christmas card writing and some festive cheer!

**Places must be booked
Call 01785 606675**



Other News . . .

Potentilla Wellbeing Centre (Tamworth)

If you're a Carer in Tamworth and are feeling stressed, have you tried therapy to promote kindness, self-compassion and empathy? Potentilla Wellbeing Centre are proud to be getting involved in raising awareness to the support available for Carers in the local area.

To do so, Potentilla have contacted CASS to increase their own knowledge and to pass on insightful information from CASS to raise awareness to services supporting people's health and wellbeing.

Hermione at Potentilla Wellbeing Centre said, "At our wellbeing centre we are also excited to offer a range of services to support people's wellbeing, including counselling services, informational blogs and wellness resources. We aim to help people heal, thrive and feel accepted as human beings.

Our counselling services provide a safe and confidential place for you to explore any issues or difficulties you may be experiencing and move towards growth, in a way that is unique to your own personal journey.

We are pleased to announce, **we have opened our new location in Tamworth** and we will continue to support our local community by raising awareness to support services and initiatives to help people's health and wellbeing. Find out more about what we do on our website:

www.potentillawellbeingcentre.co.uk or come in to our centre to enquire about our services."



Carers Rights Day 2022

Each year, Carers UK brings organisations across the UK together to raise awareness and focus on the rights and support Carers are entitled to. Whether you are a new Carer or have been caring for someone for a while, we believe that it's important that you understand your rights and are able to access the support that is available to you as soon as you need it. This year's Carers Rights Day campaigned around the ways in which Caring Costs unpaid carers. Sometimes it's the financial costs associated with looking after someone, on top of the cost of living crisis everyone is facing, but also this year Carers have identified how caring is costing them the quality of their relationships and the cost to your health and wellbeing.

Regardless of the length of time someone has been caring for someone, all Carers have the rights to: discuss flexible working options; protection from discrimination; request a free flu jab; receive a Carer's Assessment; be identified as a Carer at your GP; be consulted on hospital discharge. CASS have previously worked with all GP surgeries across Staffordshire, offering them training on how to best support Carers in their surgery.

If you want to find out more about your rights, you can read the Carers UK [Looking After Someone \(England\) - Information and support for Carers in England](#) guide (linked).

Can you refer a friend?

Do you know a friend, neighbour, other family member or even a colleague in a caring role, who's not yet signed up with us? Could you let them know what's available from help with by talking to CASS.

Get them to call us on 01785 606675

Cost of Living advice

Caring for someone can have a significant effect on your every day bills at home and for many, this is a worrying time. If you are concerned you don't have enough to live on, you might be able to receive help from the government, your local council or other organisations. Below we've listed helpful information and advice to

CASS Cost of Living Tool Kit

Visit our website for local information and guidance which can support you at home.

Turn 2 Us

The Turn 2 Us guide has information on how to boost your income and cut your outgoings as far as you can. [Benefits, grants and sources of support.](#)

Benefits Calculator

Millions of people are missing out on money they are entitled too. The benefits calculator assesses your situation to find out what benefits you are entitled too. [Head to the benefits calculator here.](#)

Budget Planner Tool

A great tool to plan and keep track of where your money is being spent. [Access the Planner Tool here.](#)

Supermarket Support

Most of us are in the vicinity of one of the major supermarkets in the UK. Many supermarkets and other retailers are offering discounts and offers to help support either all or the most vulnerable of people. Find a round up of offers to help you save here: [Supermarket Support.](#)

Read our Cost of Living Help and Advice Factsheets on page 8 & 9.



State of Caring
SURVEY 2022

carersuk

Carers UK State of Caring Report 2022

The State of Caring Survey is the UK's most comprehensive research into the lives and experiences of carers. This year Carers UK received the largest ever number of responses, with over 13,000 current and former carers talking about their experiences of caring in the last year.

The State of Caring responses revealed the real crisis Carers are in. Having made it clear that the cost-of-living crisis has created unprecedented pressure for carers, affected their finances in addition to their health and wellbeing. If you would like to read the full State of Caring Report you can access it via the Carers UK website or [directly linked here.](#)

41%

of carers haven't taken a break in the last year. A quarter of carers (26%) haven't tried to take a break because they felt it was too difficult.



Nearly two-thirds

63%

of carers said they were extremely worried about managing their monthly costs



Over three-quarters

77%

of carers said that the rising cost of living is one of the main challenges they will face over the coming year



A quarter

25%

of carers said they were cutting back on essentials such as food or heating



Nearly a third

30%

said their mental health was bad or very bad



CASS The Carers Association

Cost of Living Help & Advice



Factsheet

No. **1f**

Explanation

The increase in the cost of living is affecting us all, this guide is aimed to summarise all the financial the help that may be available to you (you will need to check your own circumstances and eligibility) and some useful money saving tips.

Energy Help

The current levels of help the UK Government is providing households towards their energy costs for the winter period 2022/23 are listed below. See also CASS Factsheet 1e – Energy Help – Winter 2022/23 for more information.

- **£400 Energy Bill Discount** – applicable to all UK households, payable automatically via your energy supplier.
- **Winter Fuel Payment** – this is being increased by up to £300 per pensioner household for the winter period 2022/23 to help with rising energy bills, payments will range from £250 to £600 depending on your eligibility and is paid automatically to those eligible
- **£150 Warm Homes Discount** – you will need to be in receipt of certain benefits to be eligible, but is then paid automatically.
- **Cold Weather Payment** – Paid to those in receipt of certain benefits if the temperature is 0°C or below for each 7 day period between 1 November 2022 and 31 March 2023, but is then paid automatically.

- **Financial support from energy suppliers**

Contact your energy supplier as soon as you can if you are worried about paying your energy bills or think you won't be able to afford them.

Your supplier must take into account your circumstances and situation and offer help.

There are some circumstances where a supplier should not install a prepayment meter as a means to help customers manage energy costs these include:

- If you are in a vulnerable situation, and if doing so would be severely traumatic
- If you're disabled or ill and your condition makes it difficult for you to use, read or top up the meter, or if your illness affects your breathing or is made worse by the cold, such as asthma or arthritis
- If you use a stair lift, dialysis machine, or any other medical equipment that needs electricity

- **British Gas Energy Trust**

The British Gas Energy Trust will consider applications for grants from anyone, regardless of who your energy supplier is.

- **Help with Energy Costs as a result of medical equipment usage**

For those with oxygen machines and home dialysis contact both your medical equipment and energy supplier to find out if there are any rebates available to you for the use of your medical devices that rely on electrical power.

Contact Details for more information and support:

Telephone the Carers Advice Line:
01785 606675
(Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
10am-4pm)

Email us:

enquiries@carersinformation.org.uk

Visit the CASS website:

www.carersinformation.org.uk

CASS Office Address:

CASS The Carers Association
S6 Tollgate Court
Tollgate Drive
Stafford ST16 3HS

Supporting Carers to Care

CASS The Carers Association

Cost of Living Help & Advice



Factsheet

No. **1f**

Cost of Living Help

Other levels of help the UK Government is providing UK Households towards their cost of living are detailed below.

- **Cost of Living Payment - £650**

For people in receipt of eligible means tested benefits.

£650 will be paid to all those who are in receipt of eligible means tested benefits.

These benefits include:

Universal Credit	Income-based Jobseekers Allowance	Income-related Employment and Support Allowance	
Income Support	Working Tax Credit	Child Tax Credit	Pension Credit

It is paid in two instalments the first was payable in July 2022 and the second will be paid in Autumn 2022 – CASS will publish dates when known.

- **Disability Cost of Living Payment - £150**

£150 will be paid automatically as a one-off payment from September 2022 to those people in receipt of the following benefits:

Disability Living Allowance	Personal Independence Payment	Attendance Allowance	Scottish Disability Benefits
Armed Forces Independence Payment	Constant Attendance Allowance	War Pension Mobility Supplement	

- **Council Tax Rebate**

All those paying council tax in Bands A to D will have £150 rebate applied to their 2022/23 bill, this will be applied automatically by your relevant council.

See also CASS Factsheet 1d for other council tax reductions you may be eligible for.

- **Check that you are in receipt of ALL your eligible benefits.**

You can use on-line benefit checkers to check if your eligible for income based or means tested benefits, for example:

- Turn2us is a charity that provides practical help to people who are struggling financially. Their calculator takes 10 minutes to complete, make sure you have all the information ready, such as your savings, income, pensions and any other benefits you may already be in receipt of. You can also do a separate benefit check for the person you care for if they are 18 and over and not your partner.
www.benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk
- The Government also has a benefits calculator on their website and includes ways you can get help with living costs such as those we have detailed in this factsheet and more.
www.gov.uk/check-benefits-financial-support

Or contact CASS Advice Line and we can arrange to talk you through some steps you can take to get started.

- **Household Support Fund**

The government has given local councils additional funding to help households fill gaps in their household income, contact your local council for more help and ways of accessing these funds.

Supporting Carers to Care

Emergency Advice and Support Contacts

If you need support over the winter period, there are several support numbers you can contact

Staffordshire County Council Contacts

Social Care team: 0300 111 8010
First Response Team: 0800 1313 126
Reporting Abuse (adult): 0345 604 2719
Emergency Duty Team: 0345 604 2886
(Out of office hours 5pm - 9pm, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays)

NHS Non Emergency: 111

In an emergency call 999

Carers UK Helpline: 0808 808 7777

(Mon - Fri 9am - 6pm)

Carers Trust: 0300 7729600 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm)

Family Line: 0808 802 6666 (9am - 9pm)

Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline:

0808 800 2234 (open 24 hours)

Samaritans: 116 123 (open 24 hours)

Southern Staffordshire Urgent Mental Health Helpline:

0808 196 3002 (open 24 hours)

Staffordshire Women's Aid Helpline: 0300 330

5959 (open 24 hours)

Citizens Advice: 0808 278 7874

Crime Stoppers: 0800 555 111

British Red Cross Support Line: 0808 196 3651
(10am - 6pm)

Contacting CASS

To speak to a specific member of our team - please see the contact numbers below

Carers Advice / Carers Together Support Group / Caring and Support Skills Workshops -

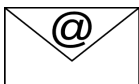
01785 606675 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 10am—4pm)

Digital Buddy Scheme / Communications Officer -

01785 222365 (Weds, Thurs & Fri)



01785 606675



enquiries@carersinformation.org.uk



www.carersinformation.org.uk



[CASS The Carers Association](#)



[@CASSwecare](#)



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Disclaimer: CASS make every effort to ensure all information is true and correct at the time of publication and cannot accept liability for errors or inaccuracies.

*To subscribe,
contact our team
on 01785 606675*



Coming up with

CASS The Carers Association

Dec 2022

Tuesday 6th 2pm - 3pm - Carers Together (online)

Tuesday 13th 1pm - 2.30pm - Carers Christmas Get Together (Medequip Centre, Stafford ST16 3HS)

Tuesday 20th 2pm - 3pm - Carers Together (online)

**there will be no Carers Together group on the 27th Dec*

Jan 2023

Every Tuesday 2pm - 3pm - Carers Together (online)

Feb 2023

Every Tuesday 2pm - 3pm - Carers Together (online)

**To BOOK on any of these events call the
Carers Advice Line on
01785 606675**

Advice Line Opening Hours (Christmas Period)

Friday 23rd Dec - 10am - 4pm

Monday 26th - Closed

Tuesday 27th - Closed

Wednesday 28th - Closed

Thursday 29th - 10am - 4pm

Friday 30th - 10am - 4pm

Monday 2nd - Closed

Tuesday 3rd - 10am - 4pm

Messages left during the times
we are closed will be returned
upon our return.

CASS
Supporting Carers to Care

