



 **care for the  
carers**

**2022 – 2023 Annual Review**

# Contents

A message from the Chair and Chief Executive	03
Our services	04
Our impact in 2022/23	05
Support, advice and guidance	06
Seeing Carers: a carers' photography project	07
Groups and activities	09
Tools and resources	10
Local carers centres	11
Awareness, information and communication	12
Engagement and representation	14
Governance and management	16
Partnerships	17
Our finances at a glance	18
Young Carers	20
Cost of Living	21
Volunteering update	22
Fundraising update	23

## Annual Review 2022 – 2023



**Dr Neil Churchill, OBE**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

### A message from the Chair...

Looking after others is something so many of us do, day-in and day-out and yet the experience can leave us feeling invisible. Our vision as a charity is that no-one should be left to care alone and so we have been pleased that over the past year many more carers have made contact with us, to request information, ask for advice, share their views or participate in social activities.

Such recognition is especially important when carers are also coping with rising costs of living, over-stretched public services and the lingering effects of Covid-19.

Indeed, those pressures have led many more carers to breaking point. Our aim has been to help carers to avoid crisis and come through these challenges, by ensuring that all voices are heard, expanding face-to-face services into new locations across the county and enhancing the information and advice we can offer online. Carers are formidable individually and collectively and by caring for the carers we can make society better for all.



**Jennifer Twist**  
Chief Executive

### ...and the Chief Executive

The sheer scale of unpaid caring in East Sussex today is staggering. This year, we saw the number of carers accessing Care for the Carers' services grow to over 10,100. Caring roles are intensifying too, with carers providing increasingly complex help to the people they support. Caring in 2022-23 is tough, stressful and isolating, and takes place against the backdrop of the cost of living crisis and a hugely stretched health and social care system. We are immensely proud to be making a difference with and for local carers who are themselves achieving so much.

So, to everyone who supported our work in the past year – whether it be giving your time, a donation, or spreading the word – thank you.





"At last I feel someone is listening, understanding and speaks the same language. I don't feel quite so scared about the future now."

## Our services

Summer 2022 saw the formal opening of our two new local carers' centres in Uckfield and in Hastings. We have used these two new centres to provide direct support, carers groups, counselling and social and wellbeing activities as well as working with local partners to deliver comprehensive services for carers from these locations, alongside other opportunities across the county.

We have ensured that carers can continue to access our services in a way that suits them. While many groups and activities are in-person, we offer remote support when needed. Telephone support is available through our Hub, and we run online monthly carers support and advice groups, for working carers and for those caring for someone with severe mental illness. We provide information and advice through our website, social media and publications, quarterly Careline magazine, and monthly e-newsletter.

Our volunteer led Carers in Touch service continues to provide regular telephone calls to carers to offer a listening ear, with a trained volunteer checking on the carers' wellbeing.

As lead for the East Sussex Voluntary and Community Sector Carers Network we partner with a range of local organisations that provide services to carers, ensuring a coordinated response to the issues that carers are faced with, ensuring best access to the information and support that they need.

We continue to consult with carers throughout the year, through surveys, focus groups and events, and use their views to shape the delivery of our services.





## Support, advice and guidance



Carers are offered a single point of contact, the Carers Hub, which is accessible by phone, email, via the website or by dropping in to a local Carers Centre. Specialist staff provide swift support to carers, including onward signposting and referrals to the range of services available across the county, and access to coaching support.

Carers can benefit from a coaching session or a longer Directions session with one of our support workers, who can provide one to one support, advice and guidance, by telephone, online, or in person. These sessions are an opportunity for carers to talk through any worries or concerns, discuss what they need and want and get advice, information and support with their caring role.

*"It's been good to talk to you, it's helped me to know in future if anything goes wrong I've got help."*

Our specialist counselling service Time to Talk provides emotional support to carers, reducing feelings of social isolation and improving carers' health and wellbeing. Carers can have 12 free counselling sessions with a volunteer counsellor. This can be over the phone or in person, giving the carer dedicated time to talk.

Our partnership work with the NHS continues to support carers with complex and crisis situations within the Hastings and St Leonards Primary Care Network. The project addresses the health and socio-economic inequalities that many carers experience, and we offer personalised, holistic intensive support via a combination of casework, wellbeing activities, enhanced counselling and peer support.



## Seeing Carers: a carers' photography project

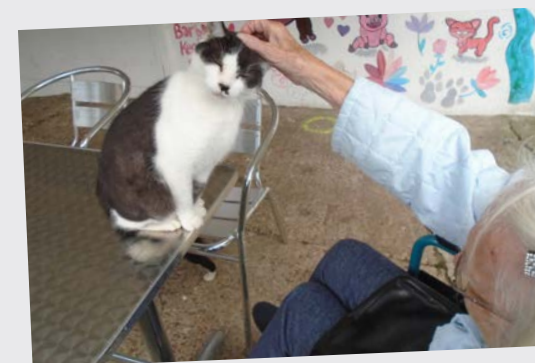
Care for the Carers' 'Photographer in Residence' project started in 2019 with two photography courses for carers, working with a local photographer and partner organisation, 18 Hours.

Photography was used to help carers explore their caring role and share their experiences of caring. The project culminated with 'Seeing Carers', an exhibition at the Conquest Hospital gallery, opened during Carers Week 2022. A photography album, a legacy book, was published to help further raise awareness of caring and carers.

Cara was caring for her mother when she took part in the course. Her images featured in the exhibition and are included in the book 'Seeing Carers: a carers' photography project'...

"The most important part of the project was that it provided me with friendship and a support group. Both of my parents had been keen photographers and I remember them developing photos at home whilst I was growing up. I'd never attended a photography workshop myself before and valued that Care for the Carers had paired us with professional photographer John Cole.

The opportunity meant I took far more pictures of my mum in her final year than I would otherwise have done. I took pictures that focused on light and composition. The picture of Mum stroking the cat was taken the week before her stroke.



She loved cats and I had taken her to the Barby Keel Sanctuary. I also took photographs of the Gratitude Jar into which Mum had put the daily statements of thanks she had written. It was some time before I read these, but she was 'grateful for eating so much produce from the garden' and 'thanks to Cara who looks after me and feeds me.' "





## Groups and activities

We facilitate a range of groups across the county, along with regular activities for adult carers to come together, get support and advice, and take some time out from the caring role.

Carers' Information and Advice groups offer carers an opportunity to meet one another and access information, advice and support. Groups are facilitated by support workers, and guests are invited from relevant services. These groups are particularly aimed at supporting those new to caring or new to accessing support to build their confidence, resilience and resources. A monthly evening group enables working carers to attend at a time more convenient to them.

Carers' Wellbeing groups are the 'next step', led by carers, for carers, with volunteer hosts supported by a named Carer Support Worker. The focus can be on anything that the group feels would improve their wellbeing, so may be based around activities such as walking, arts and crafts or meeting for a coffee.

For those caring for someone with a severe mental illness, there are face-to-face groups, online groups, and various activities. These include 'walk and talk' activities, cinema trips, open garden visits, meals out, theatre shows and more. There are also information sessions such as first aid training, condition-specific talks, and mental health carers days with guest speakers.

We run monthly Young Adult Carer groups for carers aged 17-25 years and support the development of groups run by DRI (Diversity Resource International) for carers from diverse cultural backgrounds.



# 355

carers benefited from our social and wellbeing activities programme in the last year



In addition to the monthly groups for adult carers, Care for the Carers has made use of specific funding from generous donors to undertake additional work with Young Carers, offering monthly clubs and a variety of school holidays activities.

Thanks to further funding from local trusts we are able to offer sought after social and wellbeing activities to adult carers. The events give carers a break, to engage with something fun and relaxing, and enable them to socialise with other carers. Activities have included spa days, cinema and theatre trips, days out including Bluebell Walk and heritage sites, afternoon teas, day at the International Tennis Tournament, mindfulness sessions, meal vouchers, walks and Christmas lunches.

We prioritise attendance for carers who have not had an opportunity to access activities in the last 12 months. This year we were pleased to welcome 20 carers from ethnically diverse backgrounds, as we are actively seeking to reach more carers from communities who have been less well represented among our service users.

Peer support, being able to take time out and meeting other carers are among the **top 5 priorities** for carers in East Sussex

(For Caring Out Loud! East Sussex Carers Voices Report 2022)



# Tools and resources

We provide carers with tools and resources that can help in their caring role. This includes the East Sussex Carers Card, which has a number of functions.

It helps to identify carers, offers discounts from a wide range of businesses in East Sussex, and alerts the emergency services that cardholders are carers. The card is available to all carers including young carers and parent carers of children. We have seen a significant rise in the number of the carers signed up to Carers Card during the year, with a total of 2,555. Adult carers of another adult can also link their Carers Card to a backup emergency care plan through East Sussex County Council's Carers Respite Emergency Support Scheme (CRESS).



We also support carers with Healthcare Appointments Respite Grants, administered on behalf of East Sussex County Council (ESCC), which allow carers to access respite to enable them to attend healthcare appointments, training courses or engagement. This offers opportunity for carers who have no care provision in place or pay for care themselves.

The 'Small Grants for Carers Groups Fund' supports set up costs for new groups that directly benefit carers and helps established groups to develop their offer.

Care for the Carers and our partners produce and promote useful fact sheets and online materials on subjects including Lasting Power of Attorney, what's involved in having a Carer's Assessment and Cost of Living support.

This year we have carried out a comprehensive update to information about respite and carers breaks available locally and shared the resource with professionals in other charities supporting carers.

**2,555**  
carers signed up for the Carers Card during the year

**215**  
carers attended our groups and support sessions

**98**  
grants to carers

**£23,954**  
in grant payments to carers

# Local carers centres

Our local carers centres are beginning to make a real difference to the lives of carers, providing visible and localised services, helping to reach more hidden carers and raising awareness of the role of carers in their communities.

Working with partner organisations has been crucial, along with consulting with local carers to co-design services at every stage.

Our Uckfield local centre is at the Victoria Support Pavilion, co-located with Sussex Support Service. In Hastings we are based at the Isabel Blackman Centre (IBC), a leisure and wellbeing centre for the over 50s, run by Age UK East Sussex.

A 'typical' month at a local centre can include.. Carers drop-in for coffee morning, 1:1 Carers Clinics, Time to Talk counselling sessions and carer activities such as mindfulness, arts and crafts and walks. In addition the two centres offer:

- UCKFIELD**
- ✓ Carers Information and Advice group
  - ✓ Severe Mental Health Carers support group
  - ✓ Carers O' Clock provided by Culture Shift
  - ✓ AMAZE parent-carer support group

- HASTINGS**
- ✓ Adfam Carers Clinics
  - ✓ Free social memberships for the IBC
  - ✓ Carers Activity and Wellbeing passes

The local centres provide carer inclusive spaces, large enough for carers to spend time together, taking part in a variety of activities, closer to home, reducing barriers, such as cost, time and travel.

Development of our local centres has been made possible through funding generously provided by the National Lottery Community Fund.





## Awareness, information and communication

Our 'Building a Carer Friendly Community' programme raises awareness of the valuable role carers play, their needs, experiences and the challenges they face. We work with local businesses and organisations, supporting them to become more carer-aware, taking into account both carers who access their services, and their own employees who are also carers. Organisations are supported to address obstacles that carers face in the workplace and do 'small things that can make a big difference' to carers' lives. We also actively reach out to local businesses asking them to sign up to the East Sussex Carers Card and offer discounts to carers.

Our 'Think Carer' Training for professionals is available through monthly open sessions, face-to-face and on-line, as well as in-house, bespoke and 'bite-size' sessions. We are pleased to say that the demand for Think Carer training has continued to grow.



Through our information and communication network, we lead on the local coordination of national campaigns for carers such as Carers Rights Day and Carers Week. We promote events, share resources, and build on partnership working and sharing learning with our partners.

Our communications include a quarterly CareLine magazine, which is distributed to around 8,000 carers by email, online and by post. Our monthly e-Newsletter is sent to over 4,000 recipients, focusing on Carers Voices opportunities, policy updates, events and activities information. Our active social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, where we share information and aim to reach out to as many carers as possible from diverse groups.

Our website acts as a first port of call for carers and professionals who wish to know more about local services for carers and the support available. It also acts as an awareness raising and fundraising platform, reaching out to a wide group of stakeholders. We now have more website news articles published throughout the year, and we have published a new 'Cost of Living support' fact sheet. We will continue to make improvements to the website to ensure it remains a useful, interactive and accessible resource.





## Engagement and representation

Our commitment to the meaningful involvement of unpaid carers in local health, social care and voluntary sector strategic planning is achieved through the Carers Voices Network. The Network enables carers to share their views, experiences and needs and to influence decision making on the issues that impact their lives. We also encourage a wide group of carers to participate in consultations, focus groups and campaigns initiated by Care for the Carers or by our partners, and use a range of methods to ensure these opportunities are made as accessible as possible.

This year we have introduced an annual East Sussex Carers Voices Report which comprehensively brings together carers feedback and views shared throughout the year with us and our partner organisations, presenting a consistent picture of what is important to carers.

The 2022 Report highlighted nine key challenges carers face locally and nine areas carers need support with the most, as well as sharing local data about carers' experience of caring and its impact on health, wellbeing and finances. The report allows us to raise the profile of carers and Care for the Carers and raise awareness about caring with decision makers and politicians.

Read 'For Caring Out Loud: East Sussex Carers Voices Report 2022' at:

 [www.cftc.org.uk/caringoutloud](http://www.cftc.org.uk/caringoutloud)

**In spring 2022, carers took part in our Annual Carers Survey sharing what impact their caring role has on them and reflecting on their lives coming out of the Covid pandemic.**

In autumn 2022 we hosted face-to-face and on-line focus groups discussing the impact of the cost of living crisis on carers, which contributed to local and national findings and raised awareness about carers in South East media coverage.

*"Please, keep on drawing attention to all the people, like myself, that give years of their lives, caring for family we love, unpaid."*

In January 2023 we held discussion groups shaping the vision for carers' services in the next Adult Social Care Plan.

Our popular Annual Carers Voices Conference has moved to coincide with Carers Week in June 2023, with a large in-person event. We stayed in touch with the Carers Voices Network by running an

on-line Carers Voices Workshop in March 2023.

Attendees had an opportunity to discuss with our charity and the Adult Social Care Commissioner, progress made since the 2022 conference and challenges in NHS and social care which continue to affect their lives.

**259 CARERS**  
are part of the Carers  
Voices Network

**85 CARERS**  
took part in our Annual  
Carers Survey

**45 CARERS**  
attended our focus  
groups and Carers Voices  
Workshop, alongside 13  
professionals



## Governance and management

Our Board of Trustees are all volunteers. The majority of our Trustees, including the Chair, have current or past experience of caring, as well as bringing a wide range of professional skills and expertise to the organisation. This year we were delighted to welcome Geoffrey Munn and Graham Turner to the Board of Trustees. We also said goodbye to Susan Lilja, our former treasurer. We thank her and all our Trustees for their support and dedication.



**2022-23**

Chair: Neil Churchill

Vice Chair: Jake Jay

Chair of Finance Sub-Committee:  
Richard Pearson

The Board sets out overall strategic direction, delegating day to day management to our Chief Executive and senior management team comprised of the Head of Resources, Head of Services and Head of Communities. Care for the Carers' current Strategic Plan concentrates on the following four priority areas:

- ✓ Supporting carers – including more carers from less heard groups and those requiring more specialist support
- ✓ Creating a Carer Friendly East Sussex – supporting professionals to identify carers earlier
- ✓ Developing our charity to innovate and be impactful
- ✓ Speaking up with and for carers to improve services and shape decision making

This is underpinned by our new business plan, developed this year and informed by the Carers Voices Network and carer feedback.

## Partnerships

We work collaboratively with colleagues at other charities and health and social care organisations so that together we can provide a comprehensive support to all carers, and help identify and support carers early on their journey, as well as when in crisis. We host the East Sussex VCS Carers Network, which brings together over 20 charities working with carers. Alongside this, we administer Small Grants for Carers Services enabling local groups to offer even more support for carers. Thanks to this we are developing a network of supportive local and specialist services for carers, reaching out to carers from a much wider range of backgrounds.

Together, we build a holistic range of services, share intelligence and can access more support for carers, as well as better influence the decision making in social care and health.



We are part of the Sussex Carers Partnership alongside Carers Support West Sussex and Brighton & Hove Carers Centre, which allows us to secure more services for carers from regional funders and run specialist projects, such as the Making Carers Count programme for ethnically diverse carers.

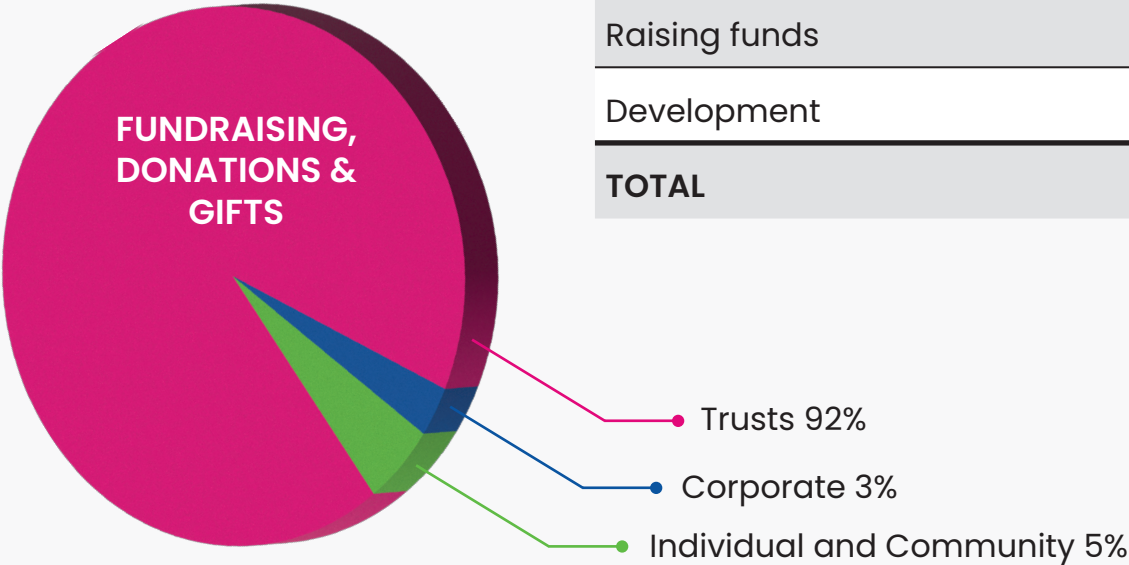
We are one of the founding members of the East Sussex VCSE Alliance, where this year our CEO Jennifer Twist stepped in to the chairing role. Nationally, we are an active Network Partner of Carers Trust and a member

of Carers UK, contributing to national research, lobbying efforts and key campaigns including Carers Rights Day, Carers Week and Young Carers Action Day.



# Our finances at a glance

INCOME	(£)	EXPENDITURE	(£)
Donations and gifts	29,260	Support and advice	614,113
Grants	1,365,547	Groups and activities	107,731
Net gain on investments	19,177	Involvement (engagement & representation)	269,516
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,413,984</b>	Carer awareness	193,744
		Information and communication	54,273
		Tools and resources	48,733
		Raising funds	39,236
		Development	41,276
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,368,622</b>



Care for the Carers was in a good financial position at the end of 2022-23, with cash balances of £885,337 and reserves of £2,404,635. The charity's reserves are principally made up of long term investments and will be used to seed-fund services responding to carers' needs. The main funding sources of regular income this year continued to be grants and donations.



Grant funding increased by £318,472 to £1,365,547 - we were very grateful to receive these funds which have enabled us to deliver additional services to support unmet need. Income from donations decreased by £24,003 to £29,260. The year end result is a surplus of £45,362.

The contract to deliver the East Sussex Carers Centre, jointly funded by ESCC and NHS Sussex remains secure, and the charity's largest contract. However this is now complemented by several additional multi-year contracts.

We have budgeted a deficit for the coming year 2023-24. We expect the deficit to be covered by new funding, donations and if necessary the appropriate use of our reserves.

**1 in 5**  
of our services are  
funded through  
donations







Supporting young carers between 5 – 17 years, the Young Carers service provides fun outings and activities during the school holidays, monthly youth clubs and activities for the whole family.

### From young carers

*"I like that every month... everyone makes me smile and...I've made lots of friends"*

*"Thank you for helping me gain a social life and confidence in myself"*



The service continues to grow, with almost 300 young carers registered with the service, and 37 clubs and activities delivered this year. We opened a club in Uckfield, adding to our Eastbourne monthly youth club, doubling our provision and reaching those in the north of the county.

Amazing respite outings and activities throughout the year varied from Thorpe Park to mask making, from trampolining to cooking.

A huge thank you to Community Chef who ran four cooking sessions, Saffrons Fireworks who gave us free family tickets and to Eastbourne Borough FC who gave the young carers a chance to meet the team and be mascots on match day!

Supporting young carers to have their voices heard is vital. We ran consultation sessions, used the 'Bursting the Bubble' young carers video in our Think Carer training and did some amazing graffiti with local charity Priority 154 highlighting how it feels to be a young carer.

*"It has changed our life being part of young carers and I can never repay all the effort you guys put into the programme."*

### From a parent



## Cost of living

Cost of Living focus groups in the autumn highlighted the impact of the cost of living crisis on carers.

Almost all the carers we spoke to were experiencing a great deal of uncertainty about finances and living costs. For many there was a 'sense of panic' and 'extra stress'. The increased costs of travel to medical appointments, and just meeting the day-to-day needs of those they care for, was having a big impact on carers.

Carers are seeing huge rises in their energy bills, some needing to constantly run specialist equipment. For many, reducing heating was not an option.

The rising cost of food was also impacting carers disproportionately, especially where already expensive specialist food is needed for medical reasons for the person they care for.

*"I take my disabled daughter to college 3 times a week... I can't believe how much the petrol has gone up."*

### A voice for carers

We shared these findings widely with supporters and decision makers, including Carers UK, and the district and borough councils.

Jacky Everard, Chief Executive of Hastings Representation and Advice Centre: "It was a very sobering read on how the cost of living crisis is

impacting on the health and wellbeing of East Sussex carers; it is a really anxious and stressful time for all."

### Carers nationally counting the costs

Our findings fed into the Carers UK national survey "Heading for Crisis: caught between caring and rising costs" which found that 1 in 6 carers are in debt as a result of their caring role and financial situation, and the proportion of carers unable to afford their utility bills has gone from 6% in 2021 to 14% in 2022.

**We will continue to amplify carers' voices to bring about change and increased support for carers.**



## Volunteering update

We continue to develop our volunteering offer, one of our aims coming out of the pandemic.

**Carers in Touch volunteers provided 164 carers with over 550 hours of support in over 350 calls each quarter.**

We focused on the **Carers in Touch** project this year, maintaining it as a volunteer delivered service, providing support to the most isolated carers. Having regular contact, 'someone who can be the listening ear' remains one of the top priorities for carers (Carers Voices 2022 Report).

**Time to Talk**, our counselling service, returned with a full team of volunteer counsellors providing face-to-face and evening telephone call sessions.

25 of our Ambassadors, Supporters and Carers in Touch Volunteers were involved in running Care for the Carers' day at the Arlington Bluebell Walk event. They provided 17 hours of volunteering, including cooking, serving food and welcoming visitors.

The day raised funds and awareness, provided activities for carers, and re-launched our volunteering offer after the pandemic, providing the first chance for our community of volunteers and supporters to meet face-to-face.

**26 Time to Talk volunteer counsellors**

**298 Volunteer Carers Ambassadors**

*"A very thorough introduction, a supportive environment, educational in the role of the carer. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn and work alongside your wonderful counselling service."*

## A BIG THANK YOU

to all our volunteers, those mentioned above as well as wellbeing hosts, events and young carers activities volunteers. We could not deliver our support without you.



## Fundraising update

We have had another great year of fundraising, with wonderful support from the local community, individuals and Trusts and Foundations including taking part in the Bluebell Walk, and fundraisers from Ninfield Flower Group, Wellshurst Golf Club, Uckfield HM70 Committee, Uckfield College, Eastbourne quizzers, and the Rotary Club of Sovereign Harbour. Money raised enables us to deliver programmes and activities that carers tell us they need, and supports services funded by donations, including our Young Carers Service and Activities Programme.



### Leaving a lasting gift - new free Gifts in Wills guide

In response to supporters' requests, we developed a new guide on leaving a gift in your Will. You can order a copy of our new free Gifts in Wills guide on our website

[www.cftc.org.uk/giftsinwills](http://www.cftc.org.uk/giftsinwills) or contact us.

If like us you believe that all carers should have the recognition, choices, influence and access to quality support and services that they need and want, then a legacy gift can be one of the easiest and most thoughtful ways to leave a lasting gift of care and ensure no one is left to care alone.

## Thank you for your support...

29th May Charitable Trust, Asda Eastbourne, Bexhill Lions, Bluebell Walk, Childwick Charitable Trust, Duke of Devonshire's Charitable Trust, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, Eastbourne quizzers, Eastbourne Rotary Club, East Sussex County Council, Green Hall Foundation, Hailsham Lions, Hall and Woodhouse Community Chest, Hedley Foundation, Lewes Town Council, Masonic Charitable Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, NHS Sussex, Ninfield Flower Group, Pavers Foundation, Rotary Club of Sovereign Harbour, Rotary club of Hastings Sovereign Light, Rotary club of Senlac, Sussex Community Foundation, Seaford Youth Forum, Tesco in, Bexhill, Hastings and Seaford, Twelve Hundred Postcards, Uckfield HM70 Committee, Uckfield College, Wellshurst Golf Club and Waitrose in Eastbourne, Hailsham and Lewes ...**and everybody who has made a donation to the charity.**





*"You've made me feel so much better about everything. I can go away now and feel more positive about things. Thank you so much."*



**Phone:** 01323 738390 **Text:** 07860 077300 **Email:** [info@cftc.org.uk](mailto:info@cftc.org.uk) **Web:** [www.cftc.org.uk](http://www.cftc.org.uk)

Highlight House, 8 St. Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3UH

Registered Company No. 3677361 Charity No. 1074906