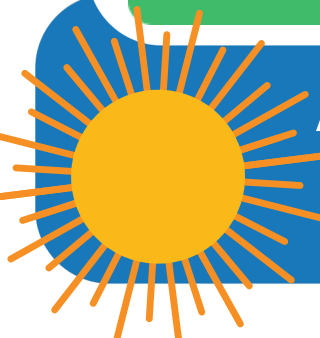




Adult Carers Newsletter

July – September 2026



Welcome to the **SUMMER - AUTUMN** edition of our newsletter!

Phew, it has been a hot few months, but we have still been busy, with trips to Kew and Hastings for our unpaid carers and their cared-for, as well as our Carers Week celebration with an afternoon tea and fabulous entertainment.

We're also looking forward to launching three new groups over the coming months and are excited to introduce our new Carers Starter Pack – a handy one-stop information booklet for anyone new to caring. You can read more about both later in this newsletter.

In this edition, we'll be sharing a wonderful caring story from one of our clients, an update on the new Universal Care Plan, and details of what's coming up for our carers. With the year flying by, we hope you are all keeping well (and cool!), and that you can take a moment to sit down with a cuppa and enjoy this newsletter.

Love

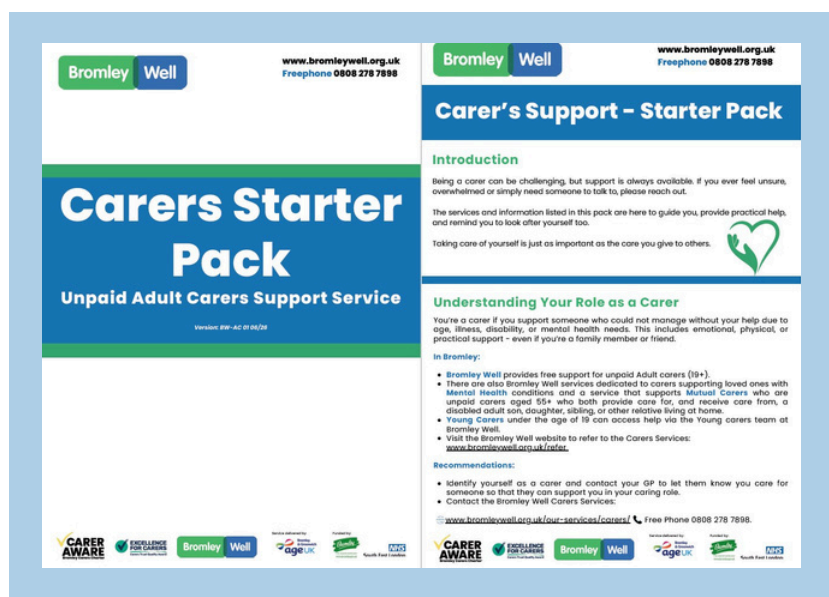
The Adult Carers Team X



New Carers Starter Pack

When you are new to caring, everything can feel overwhelming. It can be an emotional time, with lots of new information to take in. We want to help make that journey a little easier, so we've created a new 12-page Carers Starter Pack covering the topics people most often ask about when they first come into our service.

The booklet includes information about the Bromley Well Adult Carers Service, the first steps to take as a carer, guidance on navigating hospital discharge, benefits you may be entitled to, and much more.



From October, we will be introducing a quarterly New Carers Workshop where we will explore the starter pack in more detail.

The workshop will give new carers the opportunity to meet others who are new to caring and learn more about the support available through our service and in the borough.

Once you register with the service, we will let you know when the next workshop is taking place, giving you the opportunity to attend if you wish. If you're unable to make it, don't worry, one of our advisors will talk you through the available support during your initial call, and we can also post a copy of the Carers Starter Pack to you.

If you have any questions about the new workshop or the Carers Starter Pack booklet, please do get in touch: carers@bromleywell.org.uk – 020 8315 1925

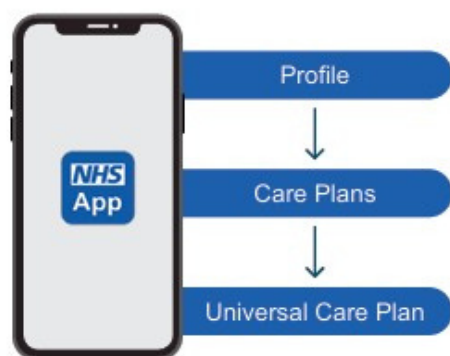
Universal Care Plan (UCP)

We've previously encouraged carers to create an Emergency Care Plan so support is in place if they are suddenly unable to provide care.

The Universal Care Plan (UCP) is a secure digital care plan, available through the NHS App, that can be created for both unpaid carers and the people they care for. Unlike a paper plan, the UCP can be securely accessed by authorised NHS and social care professionals and, in an emergency, helps the appropriate local NHS and social care services to respond, helping ensure the right support is put in place when it is needed most.

Managing your UCP in the NHS App

You can view and create your Universal Care Plan in the NHS App on your mobile phone.



Carers can record important information including who they care for, emergency contacts, replacement care arrangements, and any relevant health or wellbeing needs.

The cared-for person's UCP can also include details of their health and care needs, as well as information about their unpaid carer.

Carers and the person they care for can create and view their UCP through the NHS App or with support from a health or care professional. The Bromley Well Adult Carers Team can guide carers through the planning process.

As the UCP is digital, it can be updated as circumstances change. It can also help GP practices identify someone as an unpaid carer, reducing the need to repeatedly explain their caring role. We will be introducing the UCP options to current and new carers, but to understand more, please visit the UCP website: ucp.onelondon.online/patients-ucp-for-carers/

Adult Carers Service – Updates

New! Orpington Coffee & Chat for Carers from August

**NEW**

We're excited to be launching a brand-new monthly Coffee & Chat peer support group for unpaid carers in Orpington!

Many of our carers live in the Orpington area and we wanted to give more carers the opportunity for peer support. The new group starts on Thursday the 20th of August and we'll be meeting monthly at Orpington Methodist Church from 10.30am – 12.30pm.

Whether you're looking to meet others who understand the realities of caring, pick up practical tips, or simply enjoy a cuppa in friendly company, we'd love to welcome you. If you'd like to discuss anything privately, there will also be the opportunity to have a one-to-one chat with one of our advisors.

Dying Well Forum – 30th September



Talking about future wishes doesn't have to be a difficult or morbid conversation – in fact, it's one of the most important conversations any of us can have. Planning ahead can help ensure your wishes are known, reduce stress for your loved ones and make it easier to navigate decisions if circumstances change.

We are planning a forum for Autumn where a representative from St Christopher's Hospice will explain the wide range of support the hospice provides, far beyond end-of-life care, including guidance on planning for the future, arranging additional care, Power of Attorney, wills, funerals and bereavement support.

This informal session is designed to raise awareness, encourage open conversations and help you understand the options available, so you can make informed choices for yourself and your family.

Adult Carers Service – Updates

**COMING
SOON**

New! SEND Carers Cuppa & Connect

We have noticed an increase in the number of unpaid carers coming to our service who are caring for children, young people and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), ADHD, autism and learning disabilities.

While there's already some fantastic support available across the borough, we wanted to create a relaxed, welcoming space where unpaid carers can come together over a cup of coffee, share experiences, exchange advice and support one another. Sometimes, talking to someone who truly understands can make all the difference.

We have been speaking with Bromley Mencap and the Bromley Council SEND Programme Team – bromleysend.org/ who have provided us with valuable information about local services and support which will enable us to better support carers and ensure we can signpost them to the most appropriate help when needed.

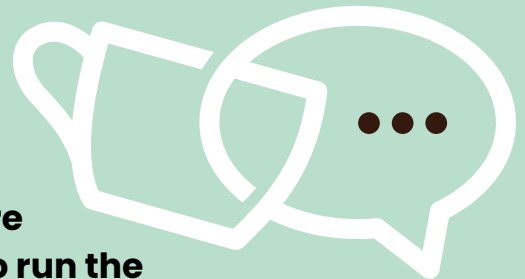
The group will also give carers an opportunity to tell us about the challenges they face. By listening to their experiences, we hope to identify common themes, seek answers where we can, and feedback carers' views to local partners to help shape future support.

We are currently consulting with carers to find the day and time that works best for most people and hope to launch the group in September. Watch this space for more details!



Adult Carers Service – Updates

Penge Carers Café



We're always looking for more opportunities for unpaid carers to connect with others, so we were delighted to meet the wonderful volunteers who run the Carers Café at Penge East Community Centre. We had a great meeting with the team and were really impressed by the warm, welcoming atmosphere they have created.

The café is a friendly, carer-led group that meets on the last Tuesday of every month, offering a relaxed space to enjoy refreshments, chat with others who understand, and, if you wish, take part in creative activities. The group welcomes carers from all backgrounds, including those caring for children with SEND, adult relatives, partners, and even former carers whose loved one has passed away.

One of the things we particularly liked is that, if you cannot leave the person you care for, they are welcome to come along too. The venue is fully accessible, has excellent transport links, and provides a safe, inclusive environment for everyone.

Although this café is independent of Bromley Well, we are pleased to recommend it as a fantastic local source of peer support. We hope to attend one of their future sessions to introduce our service and meet more local carers.

Penge Carers Café:

- **Penge East Community Centre, 13 Station Road, Penge, London SE20 7BE**
- **Last Tuesday of every month**

Carers Corner



"Enjoy the Small Things" – A Story of Love, Caring and Dementia

Every caring journey is unique, but Brenda Parsons' honest and deeply moving account reminds us of the love, resilience, humour and heartbreak that so many carers experience. We are incredibly grateful to Brenda for sharing her story so openly, and hope it offers comfort, reassurance and inspiration to others walking a similar path.

"This is written with tears in my eyes and remembering what a lucky person I was to have such a loving husband."

When Jim's wife looks back on their life together, she doesn't think first about dementia. She remembers a kind, loving gentleman who was her soulmate for 50 years.

"We both enjoyed the same things," she says. "Skiing, walking, the arts, travel and theatre." Together they worked in education, volunteered in their community, and shared a lifetime of adventures - including camping on the ice in Antarctica. "No ensuite there!" she laughs.

***Artwork by Brenda Parsons**

Carers Corner

Their caring journey began gradually in 2014 when Jim admitted he was frightened to travel to Paris alone because he thought he might get lost. For a man who had led school field trips and skiing expeditions, this was completely out of character. "The penny dropped," she recalls. "I had no idea before."

Following assessments, Jim was diagnosed first with Mild Cognitive Impairment and later vascular dementia. But they made a conscious decision not to let the diagnosis define their lives.

"He was the same Jim the day before diagnosis as he was after, so there was no need to suddenly change life." Instead, they carried on enjoying holidays, days out and everyday life while quietly planning ahead, including arranging Power of Attorney while Jim still had capacity.

One piece of advice proved invaluable: 'Continue living your own life for as long as possible.'

She carried on volunteering and teaching textiles, creating simple routines that helped Jim feel secure whenever she went out. A note on a board told him where she was, when she would return and what he planned to do that day. It worked because it respected his independence while giving both of them reassurance.



Carers Corner

At home, they focused on enjoying each day together. They played Snakes and Ladders, looked through family photographs, exercised to music, laughed together and created moments of joy. She labelled cupboards so Jim could continue helping to lay the table. "I looked like a police traffic control officer!" she jokes.

Throughout their journey she found that small adjustments made all the difference.

"I always made sure that the people I was with knew Jim had dementia and suggested ways they could help both of us. Without prompts, I found most people didn't know how to behave, so it was best to chat to them and suggest together how to support."

Looking back, she says it took almost two years before she recognised herself as a carer.

"It was the most important job I had ever had, not applied for and had no training for. The confident woman who could organise almost anything felt completely useless and unprepared."

But she also discovered that caring, like any new role, is something you can learn.

"The carers who came helped me learn, as did the staff in hospital. It's important to ask and learn."

As Jim's needs increased, she accepted support from home care services, dementia cafés and local organisations, while continuing to care for him herself for as long as possible. She adapted everyday routines, even taking evening trips to the supermarket where Jim could choose food more easily by seeing it, and happily pushed the shopping on his rollator.

Carers Corner

One of the hardest moments came when it became clear she could no longer care for Jim safely at home.

"I felt a failure. I had promised to look after him in sickness and in health."

After a hospital admission, professionals explained that Jim now needed specialist nursing care. Finding a suitable placement was incredibly stressful, but with time she came to understand that moving him into residential care did not mean she had stopped being his wife.

"The doctor told me to be a wife and visit Jim rather than try to look after him without the specialist skills. You don't really relax about this decision, but inside you know it is the right one."



Even in the care home, their relationship remained full of love. They held hands, walked in the gardens, watched squirrels and birds together, and treasured every smile.

Perhaps her favourite memory came when Jim told a nurse he couldn't remember the name of the person visiting him, but said simply, "She is my life."

"What more could you ask?"

Carers Corner

Jim died nine days after her 80th birthday.

"He died in my arms, and I felt I had done what I promised - to ensure he was looked after until the end." Later, walking home alone in the early hours of the morning, she cried, but also knew she had done everything she possibly could.

"Her advice to other carers comes not from textbooks, but from lived experience.

"Enjoy the small things - a smile, holding hands and a shared meal. They are all precious."

"Accept help. Be clear about what you really need. It might not be coffee and cake. It might be someone helping with forms, coming for a walk with you, or simply sitting and chatting while your partner sleeps."

"Find someone to talk to."

Most of all, she wants carers to know they are not alone.

"It's a very hard, lonely job... but there is help. Link in with your local dementia-friendly community and carers service. There are people who understand and who want to improve services and support."

Taken from a longer account about her caring role by Brenda Parsons. If you would like to read the full version, please do get in touch:
carers@bromleywell.org.uk



Adult Carers

If you are an unpaid carer and would like to find out more about our service and how we can support you, please contact us: carers@bromleywell.org.uk or call: **020 8315 1925**.

Or to make a referral visit: www.bromleywell.org.uk/make-a-referral/

If you would like to find out more about our upcoming events, please visit the website: www.bromleywell.org.uk/events/ or contact us for a copy of the events leaflet: carers@bromleywell.org.uk

Please note: All events are for current unpaid adult carers registered with the Bromley Well Adult Carers service.

