

Essex Respite & Care Association

Autumn Newsletter

‘Providers of Mental Health Support and Respite’

About Us

Founded in 1995, our support service was originally set up as a sitting service, supporting those with a mental health condition, allowing carers some much needed respite.

Over the years, our service has evolved and we now also support service users who do not have a designated carer, neurodivergence, stroke, acquired and traumatic brain injury. We strive to help our clients live a happier and healthier life, supporting clients to become more independent, both at home and in the community.

Our support service is invaluable, many of our clients say that we have helped to improve both their confidence and life skills, which is detailed in our September 2023 Impact Report.

We ensure that the support we provide is person-centered, meeting our client's goals and aspirations. Our support allows client's carers or loved ones much needed respite, with the knowledge that they are being cared for by a specialist mental health support worker.

To find out more about our service please refer to our website: www.essexrespite.org.uk, call us on 01245 353855, or email us at office@essexrespite.org.uk.

Service News

It has been an exciting Summer. We are pleased to announce that Gemma Baines joined the charity as a Co-Manager to work alongside Jemma Pollack, replacing Lena Dey who left the charity in June to continue her carer in Adult Social Care.

We have also recruited the following new team members:

Lisa, an admin assistant, who has joined Emma, working in the office 3 days a week.

Matthew, a support worker in Mid, North and West Essex.

Katie, a bank support worker working in West Essex

Sadly, two of our support workers, Zara and Kerry, have left the service to further their careers. We are sure you will join us in wishing both Zara and Kerry every success in their future career choices, they will be missed by fellow staff and service users alike. We are pleased to announce that Zara, who is an Assistant Psychologist, has agreed to volunteer as a specialist advisor to our Board of Trustees.

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Megan Leach, a full time carer who is closely involved with the NHS, has also joined Essex Respite & Care Association as a voluntary specialist advisor.

Since June, the managers have been meeting with organisations across Essex to promote the charity and support services we can provide.

The goal is to expand our services across North and South Essex, increasing our client base and services to include support groups.



We have recently gone 'live' on Facebook. Social media is new to Essex Respite & Care Association so please follow us, like and share our posts and share our page. Your shares will help to raise our profile and if you have any suggestions for groups we should be following let us know.

In August, Gemma summoned up the courage to go on Gateway FM, taking part in a radio interview about the charity and the services we provide.

To listen to the interview, please click here : [Essex Respite & Care Association - Gateway 97.8 \(gateway978.com\)](https://gateway978.com).

As the winter months will shortly be upon us, we understand that, for some, their mood can be affected. With this in mind we will be offering an online support group twice a month on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

This will commence from 5th December for service users, via Teams.

If this is a success, we may look to expand upon this and offer a carers support group too. For further updates, please follow us on Facebook.

Essex Respite & Care Association
'Providers of Mental Health Support and Respite'

ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

Held on the first and third Tuesday of every month, via Teams.
Open to all who access our service
6.00 - 7.30pm

FOR REGISTRATION AND ENQUIRIES CONTACT:
office@essexrespite.org.uk
01245 353855

Company Registration No. 3088636
Registered Charity No. 1051589

Get Involved

We are always looking for volunteers to help out. We have a small team and any help offered is always appreciated.

There are many good reasons to volunteer with us, 'It's good for your own mental health and helps you to meet others', 'You get to gain experience working in an office environment and help our charity progress'. We also like to think that we are a funny bunch, we like to have a light hearted joke, and genuinely all love what we do!

Volunteering for any charity, not just Essex Respite & Care Association is a wonderful thing to do, even if you can only give a few hours a week, those hours soon mount up and make a genuine difference. If you think you would like to become involved in our Charity, then why not give us a call on 01245 353855.



Impact Report

Our Impact Report is now available on our website. Here are some of the key results, that are very encouraging.

- ERCA delivered 9,962 hours of support from 1 August 2022 to 31 August 2023.
- Every client reported their mood improved following a support visit.
- 87% of clients said they can discuss any concerns regarding their mental health with their Essex Respite & Care Association support worker.
- 9 out of 10 clients felt that having a regular support service from Essex Respite & Care Association helped them to manage their own mental health.
- 90% of clients said accessing the community with their support worker helped to reduce their levels of anxiety.

These positive results would not be possible without our dedicated mental health support workers. We would like to say a 'Huge' thank you and well done for their continued support.

World Suicide Awareness Day

On the 10th of September it was World Suicide Awareness Day. This is an important date and one which should be highlighted and talked about.

As a mental health charity, we promote 'open conversations' and raising awareness around topics that some may find difficult to discuss. We urge anyone suffering from suicidal thoughts to reach out and speak to someone. This might be a stranger, family member, colleague, or a helpline such as the Samaritans. There is no need to suffer in silence help is readily available.

Over the coming months we will be sharing posts on Facebook in line with the Mental Health calendar to raise awareness and promote conversation.

For anyone in need of immediate help, please reach out to the Samaritans on 116 123.

Fundraising

As a small charity, we rely on grants and donations. Funds received help to secure the future of Essex Respite & Care Association and each year there is greater competition to secure much needed funding.

We would like to thank the following funders who have supported us during the past year.



The Fore - £10,000 unrestricted funding towards an administration assistant



The Edward Gostling Foundation - A grant of £15,000, awarded over 3 years towards operating costs.



The Diana Tinson Fund - ECF - A grant of £5,000 awarded towards salary costs of Key Workers.



FSJ Trust - A grant of £2,000 awarded towards core costs.



We're delighted to inform you that we are in the customer vote for the Tesco Stronger Starts scheme. The scheme gives community projects like ERCA grants of up to £1,500. Tesco customers will now vote in store during the next 3 months to decide how much funding we get, so please support us next time you shop at Tesco!

The project with the highest number of votes across our region will receive £1,500 (or the amount that was requested up to this value), the second placed project £1,000 (or the amount that was requested up to this value), and the third placed project £500.

These are the store :

2709 Hoddesdon Express High Street, Hoddesdon, EN11 8TQ

3356 Waltham Abbey Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1JH

6626 Hoddesdon Brfd Burford Street, Hoddesdon, EN11 8JB

Please can you visit the stores and also spread the word to your friends and family who may live near these stores.

<https://www.tescopl.com/strongerstarts>



The Fun Walk Trust

On 19th October 2023 the office staff were joined by our support worker Anne and two of our clients in Danbury Country Park where we completed a 2km sponsored walk to raise much needed funds for our activity project.

We are hoping to raise over £500 which will provide the activity budget for 50 client visits.



Chairman's Note

It has often been said that the only thing that is constant in life, is change. Certainly, for ERCA, there has been a lot of change in the 2 years that I have been a trustee. We have had to recruit new director-trustees and been successful in ensuring that we continue to have an appropriate balance of skills and expertise, as some of the long-standing trustees decided to step down. On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to former trustees for their efforts and contribution. It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death last month, following a long illness, of Hazel Ruane, who was one of ERCA's founding members and Chairperson from 2004 to 2022 and our thoughts are with Hazel's family.

In addition to new Board members, we have strengthened ERCA's management committee with two specialist advisers, Megan Leach and Zara Smalley, who will be able to bring their 'lived experience' and specialist knowledge of the mental health and carer environments to Board level discussions and decision making.

Notwithstanding these changes, we continue to seek volunteers who are able to dedicate a small amount of their time to join the Board as trustees, or perhaps in other capacities. In the last year we have had the support of two volunteers in the Office, which has provided a valuable resource for the Managers.

We also welcomed Gemma Baines who was appointed as co-manager in June, following the departure of Lena Dey, who left to pursue new career opportunities. Gemma brings a wealth of healthcare knowledge and experience having worked in the sector for several years.

Throughout all this change, there has been one constant factor and that is the dedication, care and support that ERCA's Support Workers provide to our clients. They continue to provide a service that is a lifeline for many people and at ERCA we remain committed to making a positive difference to the lives of the people we support. Again, I would like to express the Boards thanks to them.

Looking forward, with greater competition for funding from Trusts, Foundations and other grant providers, we are looking to grow the size of ERCA to achieve greater financial self-sustainability. This presents further challenges in attracting both new clients and additional suitably qualified Support Workers which will be the focus of the Boards and co-managers attention over the next few months.

Essex Respite & Care Association
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