

Essex Respite & Care Association Christmas Newsletter

Providers of Mental Health Support and Respite

Service News

Welcome to our Christmas Newsletter 2024. We hope that you are all keeping warm and preparing for the festivities ahead.

On the 18th of November we held staff training, we covered GDPR, COSHH, food safety and moving & handling. We recognise the importance of ensuring that all staff have the skills to keep themselves and those we support safe.

Following the training we held our annual staff Christmas meal at the Great Baddow Barn.



During the meal we said a sad farewell to our longest serving member of staff Kenny, who after 27 years of service, will be retiring.

From everyone involved with ERCA, we would like to thank Kenny for his hard work and dedication over the years. We wish him all the best for the future.

Over the past couple of months Gemma and Jemma have been busy promoting the charity. On the 5th December, they were kindly hosted by The Chelmer Bridge Rotary Club, where they shared a presentation about ERCA and the vital support service that we provide.



From 13th-15th December we will be participating in the All Saints Church, Maldon's Christmas Tree Festival, if you are in the area please pop along to see our tree and a display of trees representing individuals and organisations from the local area.



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On the 18th of December we will be hosting a Christmas Gathering for our clients and their carers at Danbury Village Hall from 1-3pm.

This is a chance to bring everyone together, please join us in spreading festive cheer, enjoy some entertainment, take part in our Christmas quiz and maybe win a prize in our raffle. We look forward to seeing our clients and carers there!



Fraud and Scams

Unfortunately, we are hearing a lot about various scams from clients, friends and family. We have recently highlighted this matter on our social media platform but we wanted to share some important information with you to help keep you safe.

- Bank details - Never share your bank details with anyone calling you claiming they are from your bank. Instead, hang up and call your bank directly.
- Scam calls - Around this time of year there appears to be an increase in scam callers, calling vulnerable individuals stating they are calling from 'Amazon' and your account has been hacked. If you get such a call hang up. Another reoccurring theme appears to be additional delivery fees for goods ordered. Again if you get such a call hang up and check with the delivery company directly.
- Doorstep callers - Unfortunately, this type of scam has been going on for a number of years and can be very intimidating. If you have someone knocking on your door, stating that your roof or driveway is unsafe and they have been ordered to fix this for a fee, please send them away or call the police. If needed, ask a neighbour for assistance.

There are many other types of scams and we have only highlighted a few. For more in depth information please visit www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

Fundraising

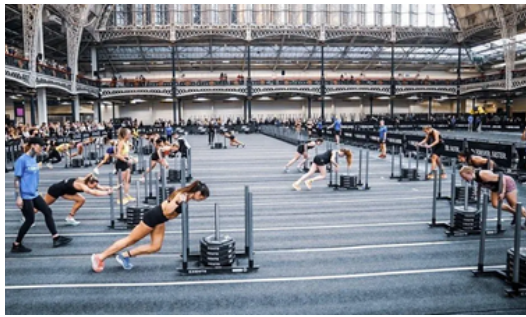
As you may know from our Autumn newsletter we got our walking shoes on in September for The Fun Walk. Our aim was to raise a £1,000 for the activities budget.

We can confirm that with the help of your generous donations we surpassed our target and raised an amazing total of **£1719.50**. Thank you for your support!



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A HUGE thank you and congratulations to George Salvage and Alfie Ambrose for completing The Hyrox men's double event London 2024. They smashed their target of £1,200 and raised a whopping **£2,252.50** for ERCA.

We would also like to say thank you to the Masonic Charitable Foundation for their recent donation of £250.00 from the members of the Chapter of Success.

All donations received mean so much to ERCA and the individuals we support and allows our support workers to help clients to access their local communities, avoiding social isolation.

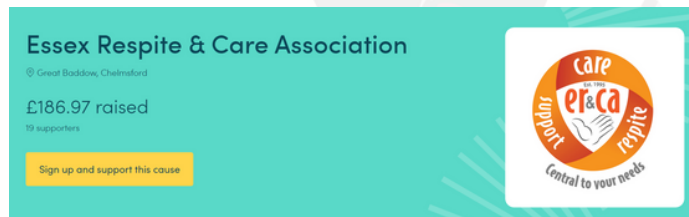
Donations



If you would like to make a donation to our charity you can visit our page at: www.justgiving.com/essexrespite



You can also sign up to our easyfundraising to support our charity. You can find the link on our Facebook or head to: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/erca/



Get involved

If the above has inspired you, why not look at ways you could raise much needed funds for ERCA such as hosting a quiz night or an Afternoon Tea.

The Charity really does need all the help we can get, any funds raised, no matter how big or small, really make a difference.

Would you like to volunteer for Essex Respite & Care Association?

If you have any free time to spare within your week and would like to get involved with our charity, we'd love to hear from you.

Send us an email at office@essexrespite.org.uk or head to: www.volunteersex.org/organisation/395/

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Charity Matters

Christmas, although a happy time for many, can also be a hard time for lots of people too.

We want to remind everyone, whether you celebrate Christmas or not, if at any point over the holiday season you feel down or lonely to reach out for help. Below are some useful numbers:

- **Samaritans** are open over Christmas to call for free, day or night, on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org.
- **Mind's** helpline provide information and support by phone and email. Their line is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm. It will be closed on 25 and 26 December 2024, and 1 January 2025.
- **No panic**, helping/supporting people who live with panic attacks, phobia's, OCD & other anxiety related disorders. Help line open 365 days a year 10am - 10pm 0300 772 9844.

Ways to help your wellbeing over the festive period

- *Managing the festive period in a way that works for you.* As hard as it may be, putting pressure on yourself socially or financially will not help your wellbeing. Remember that real quality time is the best gift you can give.
- *Look back with kindness.* The Samaritans use this phrase nicely on their website. To look back on the year with a sense of kindness to what you have achieved over the year rather than what you haven't.
- *Be honest about your feelings.* It can be particularly hard to reach out for help at this time of year. It's ok to ask for help. Despite the season's festivities, there are still people to support you, such as a loved one a helpline.

You can find more useful tips to help cope over the holiday season on the Samaritans website www.samaritans.org.



Chairmans Message

As we draw close to the festive season, it is appropriate that we look back on another year and think about our experiences and achievements from the past 12 months. We can reflect on how events have played out, specifically what surprises delighted us and what may have disappointed us.

For ERCA, 2024 started out in a very positive way, with confirmation of medium-term financial support being provided by The Edward Gostling Foundation. This has allowed the trustees to plan and take decisions affecting the medium term, knowing there is a 'safety net' in the form of The Endowment Fund that can be used, if necessary.

The year has also been notable for 3 individual fundraising activities which raised just over £5,000. This amount has easily surpassed the £800 raised in 2023. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank both those undertaking the fundraising activities and the larger number of people providing sponsorship. Hopefully, we can build on this success in 2025, as reducing reliance on grants and donations from Trusts and other charitable funders, will be an important step in ERCA becoming more financially sustainable.

2024 has not been without its challenges, as we have seen a reduction in both client numbers and weekly support hours provided. During the year, the trustees have supported the managers' requests to make changes to ERCA's HR, training and policy providers, as well as expanding the administrative support in the ERCA Office. We now need to reap the rewards of this investment, and I am looking for Gemma and Jemma to reach out to potential clients and increase the number of clients and support hours provide by ERCA.

I would like to thank the support workers, managers and other members of staff, as well as my fellow trustees and other volunteers, for their work and continued support of ERCA over the past year.

I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Where to find us

To keep up to date with ERCA you can follow us on Facebook:

Essex Respite & Care Association

Or

Visit our website at www.essexrespite.org.uk

If you, or anyone you know, would like to join us as a volunteer head to our website to get in contact!



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