

ERCA

Summer Newsletter 2026

Providers of Mental Health Support and Respite

Service News



Welcome to our Summer 2026 newsletter. As we embrace the warmer months, we're delighted to bring you the latest updates from ERCA. In this edition, you'll find news from across our services, highlights from recent activities and events, and updates on our fundraising efforts.

The past few months have also provided an opportunity to reflect on National Carers Week, Dementia Action Week, Volunteers' Week, and Loneliness Awareness Week—campaigns that are all closely aligned with ERCA's mission and values.



In May, we said goodbye to one of our longest-serving members of staff, Crystal, who has dedicated over 20 years to ERCA. We thank Crystal for her commitment, compassion, and invaluable contribution to the charity, and wish her a long, happy, and well-deserved retirement.

We are also delighted to announce Ollie has a new role as Client Outcomes and Review Co-ordinator. After 18 months as a Support Worker, Ollie is taking on this new position while continuing to support our clients.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome Jo to the ERCA team as our newest Support Worker. Jo joined us in early May and has been supporting clients in the West area. We wish both Ollie and Jo every success.

The ERCA team attended training on 19th June, covering Moving & Handling, Infection Control, Health & Safety, and COSHH. Thank you to Jon from My Own Mentor for delivering another fantastic day of informative and engaging training.

Service News - Events

We continue to be busy sharing the vital work we do with our local community and across Essex. Throughout April to June Gemma and Aimee attended over 20 events, with more planned over the summer. We look forward to seeing you on 16th July for the AgeWell Fair at The Institute in Braintree.



Featured in this issue:

- Service News
- Client poem
- Fundraising
- Donations
- Charity Matters
- Get involved
- Where to find us
- Chairman's message

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Hello Summer!

Where to Stay Cool

If your home becomes too hot, consider spending some time in:

- Your local library
- Community centres
- Leisure centres
- Shopping centres
- Museums and galleries
- Cafés (where appropriate)

Many councils also identify cool spaces during periods of extreme heat, its worth finding out from your local council areas where you can keep cool.

If you need more advice about the heat, reach out to these trusted sources:

- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) – Heat-health advice and staying safe in hot weather.
- NHS – Advice on coping in hot weather, preventing dehydration and recognising heat exhaustion.
- Mind – Information on how hot weather can affect mental health and practical ways to cope.
- Age UK – Advice on helping older people stay safe during hot weather.
- Local council website – Information about cooling spaces and community support available in your area.

Get involved

Do you have some spare time? Are you perhaps looking for a way to make a real difference in your local community?

If you have administration skills, website development experience, or a background in Health and Social Care, we would love to hear from you! We are always looking for volunteers to help out in the office or to join our Board of Trustees. Your skills and time could make a huge impact, so please give us a call to find out how you can get involved.

We would also love to hear from you if you wish to feature in our next newsletter to share your creativity, achievement or some feel-good news.

Where to find us

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

ERCA

Or

Visit our website at www.erca.org.uk

If you, or anyone you know, would benefit from our support, please give us a call or head to our website for more information.

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Client Poem

We are delighted to share a poem written by one of our talented service users in 2010, inspired by a village Spring Show. We hope you enjoy reading this wonderful piece of creative writing.

The Village Spring Show

There's great excitement in the Village today,
It's the Village Spring Show and everyone's on their way.
There's Mrs Brown with her daffodils standing tall,
And Mrs Jones with her tulips shouting to one and all
"I'm going to win the cup, you just see if I don't!"

The men folk have set up the benches ready
To greet the tulips, pansies, heathers and polys.
The scent from the daffodils is becoming rather heady.
And the ladies with their floral art entries
Are making their flowers stand up like sentries.

The judges stand tall and poised
With clipboard, pen and rule book to hand.
The stewards go round with coloured stickers
A yellow one for him, blue for her and a red one for old Mr Vickers.

The door opens at two for everyone to come and view
With Mrs Jones in front of the queue
"Oh no" she cries "I haven't got the cup or a single sticker
I'm sure he cheated, that old Mr Vickers.
But I'll beat him next year, you just see if I don't!"

"Are the judges blind?" some say
"My blooms are better than hers any day"
They then go off to gossip over cake and tea
And send the poor old judges on their way.

The afternoon speeds by and soon it's Presentation Time.
One and all clap the winners
And then the Chairman calls "the Spring cup goes to Mr Vickers".
But Mrs Jones is not amused
And loudly shouts "I'll beat you next year, you just see if I don't!"

March 2010



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If you would like to make a donation to our charity you can visit our page at:

www.justgiving.com/essexrespite

JustGiving™

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/

 **easyfundraising**

Charity Matters

Summer Wellbeing - Stay Connected This Season

Longer days and warmer weather can lift our mood, but they can also bring challenges. Changes to routine, school holidays, financial pressures or seeing others' holiday posts on social media can leave some people feeling lonely or overwhelmed. Looking after your mental wellbeing doesn't have to mean doing something big, it can also be the small things too.

This summer, you could:

- Arrange a walk or picnic with a friend or neighbour.
- Join a local community group or summer activity.
- Check in on someone you haven't spoken to for a while.
- Spend time outdoors, even if it's just sitting in a local park.

If you're struggling, you don't have to cope alone. Reaching out to a trusted friend, family member or support service is a positive first step.

Keeping Cool During Hot Weather

High temperatures can affect both our physical and mental wellbeing. Some medications used to treat mental health conditions can also make it harder for the body to regulate temperature, so it's especially important to take care during hot weather.

Top tips:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Keep curtains or blinds closed in rooms that face the sun.
- Stay in the shade between 11am and 3pm where possible.
- Wear loose, light-coloured clothing.
- Use sunscreen and wear a hat if you're outside.
- Take cool showers or use a damp cloth on your wrists and neck.
- Check in on older relatives, neighbours or anyone who may be vulnerable.
- If you take medication and are concerned about how the heat may affect you, speak to your pharmacist or healthcare professional.

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Chairman's Message

Dear Friends, Supporters, Volunteers and Staff,

As we welcome the summer months I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who continues to support our charity's mission. You are the reason we can make a meaningful difference.

In my spring message I mentioned the formal introduction of our new logo and redesigned website. I am delighted by the positive response both have received.

I am also pleased to welcome two new trustees to the Board: Kate Greenwood and Paul Austin. Their skills and experience will strengthen the Board and help support ERCA going forward.

I would also like to congratulate fellow trustee Ian King on completing his Lands' End to Southend cycle ride, raising over £900 for ERCA – an impressive achievement, especially during the heatwave at the end of May.

Enjoy the summer.

Bob Barclay
Chairman

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Fundraising

Following last year's success, The White Horse hosted a charity quiz on 30th April 2026, with all donations supporting ERCA. It was a fantastic evening, full of fun, and an incredible £368 was raised. A huge thank you to Matt and his wonderful team for hosting such an enjoyable event and supporting our charity.



At the end of May, one of our Trustees, Ian King, completed an incredible cycle ride from Land's End to Southend Pier in support of ERCA. Dedicating a week to the challenge, Ian has raised over £900 for our activities budget. We would like to thank Ian for his dedication, generosity, and outstanding achievement.

If you would like to make a donation to Ian's cycle ride for ERCA, his JustGiving page is still open and you can scan the QR code to make a donation.



On 16th September we will be hosting our annual Fun Walk organised in partnership with the Fun Walk Trust to raise money for our activities program.



This year we will be walking through the beautiful Ingatestone countryside and our Patron Lord Petre has kindly allowed access to the Gardens of Ingatestone Hall where the walk will end.

If you would like to join us on the day please contact us on 01245 353855.

If you would like to organise your own fundraising event to support ERCA, we would very much welcome your support. Whether it's a charity run, a cake sale, a coffee morning or a social event with friends, every effort helps raise much-needed funds for the charity. We would also be delighted to help promote your fundraising activities on our social media channels.

Donations

At the end of the last financial year, we were fortunate to receive several donations. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Marsh Charitable Trust, The Michael and Anna Wix Charitable Trust, and an individual donor whose gift of £10,000 will make a significant difference to our work.

While we are extremely grateful for this support, we still have a significant fundraising challenge ahead this financial year, with more than £50,000 needed to reach our target. We would be grateful for your help in spreading the word about the vital work ERCA does within our community. We are also keen to hear from corporate donors who would like to support a local grassroots charity, helping people experiencing mental health challenges and the carers who support them.

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Service News cont...

Throughout the recent months, several important awareness weeks gave ERCA the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the invaluable contributions of carers, volunteers, and everyone who supports vulnerable members of our communities, while also raising awareness of the vital role they play.

Mental Health Awareness Week (11th - 17th May) looked to promote positive wellbeing and encourage everyone to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues. This year's theme was 'Take Action' and we encouraged everyone on our social media pages to take action towards something positive for themselves or others.



During the 18th to the 24th May, we turned ERCA blue for Dementia Awareness Week. We proudly support individuals living and caring for those with dementia as we see everyday how much dementia can affect a family's lives.

Volunteers' Week on the 1st - 7th June, celebrated the incredible commitment of volunteers whose time, skills and compassion make such a difference to organisations like ERCA. We appreciate the hard work of all our volunteers.

Carers' Week 8-14th June highlighted the dedication of unpaid carers and continues to raise awareness of the challenges they face.

We understand the importance of their dedication to caring for their loved ones and how much sacrifice this takes. We are proud to support carers.



Loneliness Awareness Week took place from 15th to 21st June, reminding us that anyone can experience loneliness and that a simple hello can make a real difference. Throughout the week, we encouraged our social media followers to take a moment to check in with someone and help tackle loneliness.

Together, these awareness campaigns remind us of the importance of kindness, inclusion, support and community spirit in helping people live healthier, happier and more connected lives.

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