

ERCA

Spring Newsletter 2026

Providers of Mental Health Support and Respite

Service News

Welcome to our Spring newsletter. After what has seemed like a very rainy couple of months, spring is finally here and the sunshine has appeared. Spring is a gentle reminder to us all that there are brighter days ahead, and that even after difficult periods, growth and hope can return.



In our Christmas newsletter, we shared that our new website was in the final phases of development. We are pleased to announce that it went live in February. Please take a look at www.erca.org.uk and feel free to share your feedback.

We have been busy as usual, spreading the word about the services we provide to try and make a real difference in our community. For those of you who follow us on Facebook, you may have noticed that we have attended a variety of community events. These events not only help raise the profile of the charity but also provide valuable opportunities for networking and connecting with new clients & carers.



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Braintree District Council
AgeWellFair
 Thursday
 9th April 2026
 10.00 - 13.00
 Halstead Leisure Centre,
 Colne Road,
 Halstead CO9 2HR
 No need to book and admission is FREE*
 Getting older can be difficult to navigate. Come along and find out how local services can support you and those you care for.
 30+ local organisations will be attending to offer you advice, support and help.
 *If you do choose to register, you will receive a FREE goody bag
 SCAN HERE TO REGISTER
 If you prefer to book over the phone, please call 01376 552525

Over the next couple of months, we will be attending a number of different events. Gemma and Aimee will be attending the Age Well Fair on the 9th April, we encourage you to come along for a chat.

We will be attending a charity quiz at the White Horse pub in Ramsden Heath on the 30th April, which will be raising important funds towards our activities budget. Although our team did not win the quiz last year, it was a great night for all to come together and raise money and local awareness for ERCA. If you would like to enter a team please let the office know. We hope to raise even more money than last year!



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Service News cont...

Over recent months, we have seen a noticeable increase in dementia diagnoses and a growing number of referrals into to our Sitting Service. As more families begin to navigate the challenges that come with dementia, we want carers to know that support is available and that they do not have to face this journey alone. Our Sitting Service offers a safe and supportive environment for individuals living with dementia, while giving carers valuable time to rest, attend appointments or simply take a well-deserved break. If you are caring for someone living with dementia and feel you would benefit from extra support, we warmly encourage you to reach out to our team to learn more about how we may be able to help.

Toby (The Polar Bear)

One of our clients, Andrew, has written a beautiful and inspiring short story reflecting on climate change and the impact it is having on wildlife. Thank you Andrew for sharing your work with us. We always enjoy celebrating the creativity and achievements of our clients. If anyone else would like to share a story, poem or artwork, an award they may have received, or simply some feel good news, please do let us know.



Once upon a time there was a Polar Bear (named Toby)

He was worried about the ice sheet melting.

One day he noticed it was getting thinner and thinner.

He thought to himself 'what can I do?'

Should I warn the humans, what about my friends.

It would be too late soon. I know I'll make a flag and put the pole in the North Pole.

Yes just right.

Just then he heard a crack not the first time, but this crack in the ice was very large. He saw a family of Polar Bears they were playing in the ice.

"Why Toby" they said, "have you put a flag in the North Pole?"

"I thought," said Toby with tears in his eyes, "I better warn you that right under our feet this ice is melting."

The sun shone so bright it looked like fairyland.


The lakes had a wonderful covering of snow.

But the ice was treacherous. And this bear name Toby knew a thing or too. He was no fool.

You could say he had more brains than most of the Polar Bears put together.

His warning flag pole at the North Pole warned it did the job so the other Polar Bears stayed away from the danger and Toby and the family of Bears lived happily ever after.



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Fundraising



ERCA will once again put on their walking boots to take part in The Fun Walk Trust's 5K Challenge in September. Clients, carers and staff will come together to complete the walk, making it a fantastic opportunity for everyone to get involved and enjoy the day.

Our goal this year is to raise £1,000 to support the ongoing work of ERCA. These vital funds will contribute towards our activities budget, allowing our clients to attend meaningful activities in the community.

If you would like to support us, we will be sharing details soon on how you can donate and get involved. Every contribution, no matter how small, helps us continue to provide valuable support to carers and those they care for.

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.



Keep an eye on our Facebook page for our latest events and updates!

Donations


We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Vodafone for their generous donation of SIM cards. These SIM cards will enable the support workers and clients to stay connected. Support like this makes a real difference to our organisation, enabling us to focus our resources where they are needed most – supporting our clients and carers.



We would also like to thank Essex Community Foundation for their grant award of £7,000 from the Acorn Fund and Community Resilience Fund. This contribution helps us provide a vital lifeline, allowing us to continue supporting those most in need within our community.

We are incredibly grateful for the support we receive from organisations such as Vodafone and Essex Community Foundation. Their generosity helps ensure that we can continue providing essential services and support to the people and families who rely on us.



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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:

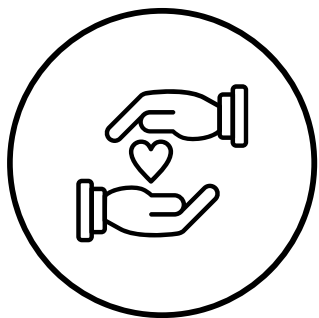
www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/erca/

 **easyfundraising**

Charity Matters

Across the country, charities provide a wide range of services, from respite care and support groups to advice services and community activities. For most people these organisations are a lifeline, offering not only practical support but also a sense of belonging and reassurance that they are not alone.

However, a lot of small charities face ongoing challenges in keeping their services running. Funding can often be uncertain, and organisations frequently rely on a combination of grants, fundraising, donations, and the dedication of volunteers to continue their work.



Despite these challenges, small charities remain committed to supporting the people who depend on them, often doing a remarkable amount with limited resources. This sense of connection is especially important when we consider mental wellbeing. Mental health affects us all at various times in our lives, and strong community networks can play a key role in helping people feel supported.

This year the UK marks Mental Health Awareness Week from the 11th - 17th May. The theme is 'Action' encouraging individuals, communities and organisations to take positive steps to support mental wellbeing.

For charities like ERCA 'taking action' is part of our everyday work. By providing support to carers and those they care for, offering opportunities for respite, and helping people stay connected within their communities, small charities help reduce isolation and promote wellbeing.



Mental Health Awareness Week reminds us that supporting mental health does not always require big gestures. Sometimes action can be as simple as checking in with a neighbour, offering help to someone who needs it, or supporting a local charity that has an influence in people's lives.

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Charity Matters cont.....

Small charities continue to show that when communities come together, positive change happens. Through compassion, support and action, we can all play a part in building healthier and more connected communities.



During Mental Health Awareness Week, there are many simple actions you can take to support your well-being and the community.

Start by checking in with friends, family, or colleagues, sometimes a small conversation can make a big difference. Take time for self-care, whether it's a walk in nature or practicing mindfulness, share these strategies with others. You can also volunteer, donate, or advocate for mental health services in your area, helping to create lasting positive change.

Every action, no matter how small, contributes to a culture that values mental health and well-being.

Get involved

Do you have some spare time? Perhaps you're 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 even 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.

Quote of the season

One of our team members recently shared a beautiful quote by the late Robin Williams, who spoke openly about the challenges he faced with his own mental health over the years:

“Spring is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s begin again.’” – Robin Williams.

We love this quote because spring often feels like a fresh start. As the days become longer and the world around us begins to bloom again, it can lift our mood and remind us that new beginnings are always possible. For many people, this time of year brings a sense of renewal and hope, knowing that brighter days are ahead.

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Chairman's Message

Dear Friends, Supporters, Volunteers and Staff.

The new year has seen an important milestone in our journey with the formal introduction of our new logo and our redesigned website, two changes that reflect not only how far we have come, but also where we are determined to go next.

Our refreshed visual identity is more than a fresh look. It represents clarity, confidence, and a renewed commitment to the people we serve. The logo captures the values that define us: integrity, progress, and a belief in delivering excellence every day. It is modern, purposeful, and built to carry us into the future.

Alongside this, our new website has been designed to offer a cleaner, more intuitive experience. It brings our services, insights, and updates together in a way that is easier to navigate and more reflective of the high standards we set for ourselves. This platform will continue to evolve as we grow, ensuring that our community, partners, and clients always have direct access to what matters most.

These changes are the result of thoughtful collaboration across our organisation. I want to thank everyone involved for their creativity, dedication, and belief in our shared vision.

While our appearance has evolved, our mission remains unchanged. We continue to stand for quality, trust, and long-term value. This new identity simply strengthens our ability to communicate who we are and what we aspire to achieve.

I look forward to the next chapter with optimism and determination and I am delighted to share it with you.

Bob Barclay
Chairman

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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