



# Kent Children & Young People Newsletter

---

*Hello and welcome to our countywide newsletter for everything related to both our Young Carer and Short Breaks projects.*

*We hope you enjoy these monthly updates and would love to hear your feedback and ideas for regular features as well as your good news stories and achievements for us to share and inspire!*

---



**Kent Young Carers (KYC)** is a countywide service for those residing in Kent aged 5-18yrs who are providing a form of care, supervision or support to a family member with: a long-term illness, disability including SEND, mental health illness or substance misuse issue.

KYC works with schools, communities, statutory and voluntary agencies to identify hidden and hard to reach Young Carers and offers free awareness training and information to all professionals. If your family is receiving support from services such as Early Help, please ensure that you make them aware that your child is registered with us and ask that they get in touch.



Our **Short Breaks** service is for children and young people with a mild to moderate disability aged 8-19yrs (inclusive), who live in Kent and require a level of additional support that makes accessing mainstream/universal services unlikely.

This service is about enabling disabled children to have fun, gain independence, learn new life skills and develop, while families get to take a break from their caring role.

## Young Carers Update

Kent Young Carers fundraise to support Young Carers to access any respite and workshop opportunities. So we are always so very grateful when we receive donations however small, to be able to run various activities and benefit as many of our 8,000 Young Carers as possible across the county.

In order to be considered for these opportunities, Young Carers need to be at least 8 years old, have a completed consent form and have had a recent Young Carers Assessment. Your child may not always be offered a place due to limited availability but we do our best to allocate fairly.



Some of our Young Carers in Ashford visited The Reindeer Centre where they visited Santa's Grotto and met the man himself, all the Young Carers were given a gift each. We then headed over to the animal den where we fed the reindeers, and met a range of other animals including birds, guinea pigs, giant bunny, goats and donkeys.

The Young Carers were so excited to meet Santa's Reindeers, most of them had never met a real reindeer before!

We then headed to the café for some lunch and spent the rest of the time playing in the barn's fake snow soft play area and sang and danced along with the elves.

The Young Carers commented that they had the best day, and they all had the opportunity to relax, have fun and socialise.

Our Young Carers in Folkestone and Hythe spent the afternoon at Folkestone Creative where they designed and constructed a still life piece using some very interesting shapes from nature. From the start of this activity there was lots of laughter and smiles, more importantly friendships were formed.



Folkestone Creative also very kindly donated 60 tickets to a book event for Young Carers and their family members in the area. Some of our Young Carers met comedian and author Olaf Falafel who was there to promote his book, Trixie Pickle Art Avenger.

Some of our Young Carers from Swale visited Planet Ice in Gillingham to watch Wizard of Oz on Ice - an amateur performance from local skaters. They had a great time and enjoyed pizza and drinks after the show.







## **DELIVERING JOY**

We have been truly blown away by the huge generosity of the customers at Dunelm this month. This year their Delivering Joy campaign chose to support our Young Carers and so far we have received over 250 gifts to benefit our particularly struggling families across the county this festive season.

Our Support Coordinators will soon be out and about delivering the lovely gifts and we cannot thank each and every one who donated as well as the staff at Dunelm for choosing us, packing and tagging as well as delivering enough - I know these gifts will be very well received :)

We also received some lovely gift bags from The Body Shop in Tunbridge Wells, these will soon be distributed across the district to our Young Carers. The Body Shop have been an amazing support for our organisation over the last few years and we're so very grateful.





**SCHOOLS UPDATE**

A further 10 schools across Kent received our Young Carers Awareness training this month including; St Augustine's in Folkestone & Hythe, East Stour in Ashford, New Line Learning Academy in Maidstone and Shoreham Village School in Sevenoaks.

This means more and more schools are better informed and have the resources to put provisions in place and work with us to ensure Young Carers are being identified and supported.



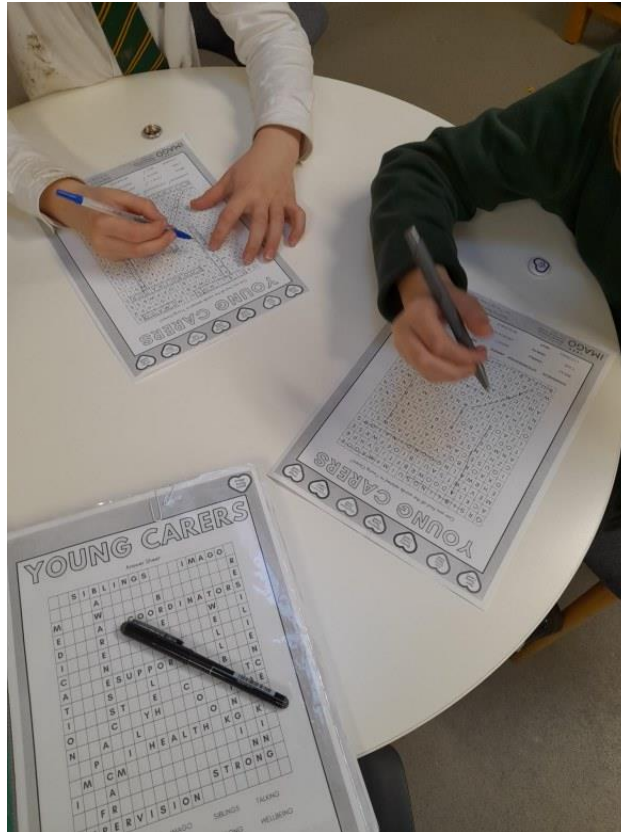
Our Support Coordinators have been visiting various schools across the county such as Hawkhurst Primary in Tunbridge Wells and Sandown Primary in Dover to deliver Young Carers Awareness assemblies, dropped-in at Young Carer support groups and given talks at parent coffee mornings to raise awareness of the support we offer.

Schools have been doing such fantastic work this year to support Young Carers including Pilgrims' Way Primary School in Canterbury who have held 2 groups a week, playing boardgames, doing arts and craft activities and enjoying some hot chocolate!

On Carers Rights Day this month, we had our termly Young Carer Champion meeting. Champions are school staff who advocate for their schools Young Carers and who we have as our main contact to arrange various meetings and check ins.

During the meeting we discussed, how support groups were going, shared ideas on what activities to include and the many books available either about or featuring Young Carers.

Follow; [Young-Carer-Book-List.pdf \(caringtogether.org\)](#) to check out the list.



## NETWORKING EVENTS

This month I had the honour of being one of the speakers at The Education People Show where I delivered a workshop to school staff on How to Identify and Support Young Carers in School. This was also a fantastic opportunity to network and arrange training with schools and professionals across the county.

We also spoke at the Ashford Emotional Wellbeing Network, attended the Healthy Kent Network events in Maidstone and a Making Connections meeting organised by Stronger Kent Communities which saw lots of different organisations from the voluntary sector and Kent Cricket who offer over 50's walking cricket and a group for refugees.

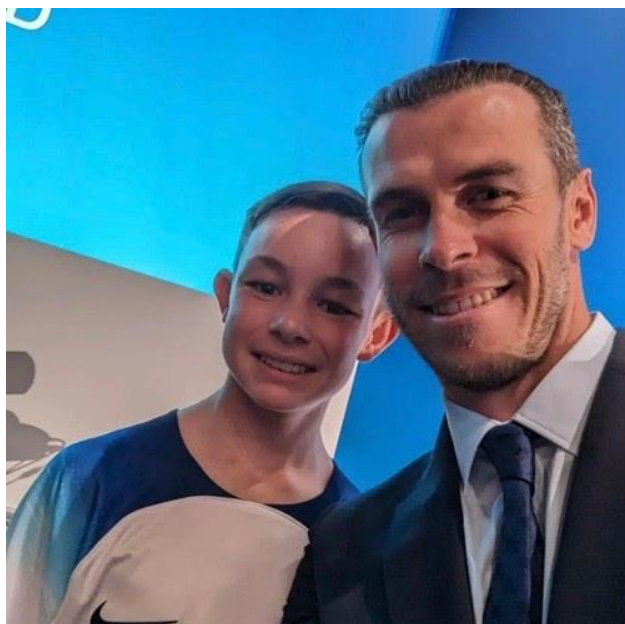


### GOOD NEWS STORY

We were thrilled and so proud to hear that one of our Young Carers Callum aged 12 from Ashford represented England in the Euro 2028 ceremony in Switzerland recently.

Callum, who plays left wing for Ashford United U13s, also helps the newly-formed Ashford United Disability teams with training sessions, taking the lead in some drills. He also attends a monthly disability tournament and helps coach two teams, along with helping set up a new sensory football club along with his mum Laura.





Callum said: “My brother has autism and I want to help everyone to enjoy playing sports. I also wanted to give something back to the local community. It was great fun going to Switzerland and when I met Gareth Bale I was pretty nervous because I’d never met a famous player before. He was great, absolutely lovely.”

To read the full article, visit; [Ashford’s Callum Pollard helps secure UEFA EURO 2028 football tournament for UK and Ireland](#)

**HUGE WELL DONE CALLUM!!**

We'd love to feature other amazing good news stories in our newsletter so do send in photo's and write ups to [jo.rickword@imago.community](mailto:jo.rickword@imago.community) :)

## Short Breaks Update



### Ashford

**After school club:** This month the group got up to a few creative activities. They designed and decorated tote bags, made snow globes, slime and played a variety of group games and had a great time together.

**Saturday club:** the group visited Planet Ice in Gillingham to take part in an ice-skating session. Group leader Heather was so proud of each and every young person in the group, despite being nervous, every young person had a go at ice skating.

### Folkestone & Hythe

**Saturday club:** the group visited the Spitfire and Hurricane & RAF museum in Manston this month. The young people enjoyed seeing different RAF planes and vehicles and learning about WW2. The group finished off their day with a visit to Kaspas to enjoy a tasty dessert.

### Dover & Thanet

**Saturday club:** the group took a trip on the minibus to visit Planet Ice in Gillingham to take part an ice-skating session. The group then visited Chatham Ski Centre to take part in snow tubing, they had a great time.

**Thanet after school club:** This month, Thanet after school club took part in making candy apples, pizza baguettes and playing group games.

## Canterbury & Swale

**Swale after school club:** the group enjoyed making slime which they got to take home, took part in a quiz, made rocky road and then finished off creating clay sculptures.

**Swale & Canterbury Saturday club:** the group visited Folkestone Sports Centre this month, to take part in soft archery and group games. The young people played a very intense basketball shootout, with the final score being 8-2 with the A team winning! The group then visited the cinema to watch the new 'Marvels' film.



## Dartford

**Saturday club:** our Dartford group also visited Bluewater cinema this month to watch the new Marvels movie, the group had a great time and the staff didn't mind seeing twice :)

## Sevenoaks

**Saturday club:** We also visited Planet Ice (which made an ice change hehe) in Gillingham to take part in an ice-skating session, the group really enjoyed themselves and luckily no injuries which is always a bonus!



**After school club:** Sevenoaks after school club took part in some winter themed activities this month. Firstly, they created their own firework painting for firework night, they also created poppies for Remembrance Day, they made hot dogs and finished off with toasting marshmallows.

#### **Tunbridge Wells & Tonbridge and Malling**

**Tunbridge Wells after school club:** Tunbridge Wells after school club took part in designing and decorating tote bags, they made pizza to enjoy and played a variety of group games.

**Saturday club:** Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling Saturday club visited The Climbing Experience in Maidstone this month. The group had a great time trying out all of the fun climbing walls. The group visited Maidstone Museum and finished off their day with a treat at McDonalds.

To find out more about our Short Breaks project or to make a referral, please contact our Hub or visit our website via; [Short Breaks Service \(imago.community\)](https://www.imago.community)

#### **SEND NEWSLETTER**

For the latest news and updates to support parents of SEND children, please sign up to the termly newsletter; <https://mailchi.mp/kent.gov.uk/kent-send-signups>

#### **LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM STRATEGY**

NHS Kent and Medway is working with Kent County Council and Medway Council to produce a three-year plan for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

They want to hear from residents of Kent and Medway with lived experience of learning disability or autism, their family, carers and professionals who work with them. Understanding experiences will help inform this strategy.

To find out more about how the plan is being developed and how to have your say, please visit our [online page](#) and answer three questions.

[Kent and Medway learning disability and autism strategy | Have Your Say In Kent and Medway](#)

## The Big Reveal

Shops and businesses across Tunbridge Wells town were invited to take part in creating their own festive window display ahead of the annual event.

Displays were covered in brown paper to avoid spoilers and torn off on the night for the big reveal! Our lovely charity shop took part and we're proud to announce that we achieved 3rd place for the Top of Town area!

Well done shop team!





## Good to Know



## DECEMBER KINDNESS

Each month we will share the self-care calendar created by Action for Happiness. This is a fantastic site to help empower people of all ages to take action to improve their wellbeing.

For more information and guidance as well as how to download their free App, follow; [Happier Kinder Together | Action for Happiness](#)

**Cost of Living Support**  
We're here to help you with these, and more...

**Household Budgeting**  
**Finding Work**  
**Grants for Appliances**  
**Internet and Digital skills**  
**Benefits & Housing**  
**Healthy Eating**  
**Health & Wellbeing**

**Get in touch today!**  
**01843 210005**  
[costofliving@sekgroup.org.uk](mailto:costofliving@sekgroup.org.uk)

\*Support for people in East Kent

**East Kent**  
 Health and Care Partnership

## SUPPORT

While we continue to go through a cost of living crisis and many will be concerned during these winter months, please see below some additional support that could benefit you and your household:

List of food banks and community Hubs in your area - [Find a food bank - Kent County Council](#)

[Cost of living support - Kent County Council](#)

Get cost of living advice through [Porchlight](#)

Applications now open - [Educational Grants - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](#)

[E.ON Energy Fund initiative | About us | E.ON \(eonenergy.com\)](#)

## #SAVESAFELY

Kent Fire and Rescue Service wants to help you to save money safely when cutting costs in response to the rising cost of living. That's why they've created a Save Safely campaign to share money saving tips while helping to keep you safe and reduce your fire risk.

If you're thinking about doing things differently at home to bring down the price of energy bills, it's important to remember do so safely. This can include thinking about the hazards that come with changing your usual routine.

[Savesafely | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)



## Things to do in Kent



### **WALKING WITH THE SNOWMAN**

Inspired by Raymond Briggs' timeless festive tale, The Snowman™, this winter at Knole, Sevenoaks you can discover 12 giant The Snowman™ sculptures in the parkland and courtyards until Sunday 7th January.

For further details on this event and other events at National Trust sites, visit;

[Walking with The Snowman™ at Knole | National Trust](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/walking-with-the-snowman-at-knole)



## KENT EVENTS

Whether you're looking for something to do on a rainy day, find a regular hobby, youth group or one off events, you can look at opportunities in your area via the Kent County Council website; [Local Kent Directory](#) or your district's own site;

Ashford - [Things to do in the borough of Ashford, including town centre events, tourism, volunteering, sport, the arts and Create festival.](#)

Canterbury - [Visit Canterbury - Visit Canterbury](#)

Dartford - [Leisure and Culture – Dartford Borough Council](#)

Dover - [Community & Events \(dover.gov.uk\)](#)

Folkestone & Hythe - [Upcoming events in the district | Folkestone & Hythe District Council \(folkestone-hythe.gov.uk\)](#)

Gravesham - [Leisure and culture – Gravesham Borough Council](#)

Maidstone - [Sports and Leisure | Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Sevenoaks - [Your community | Sevenoaks District Council](#)

Swale - [Upcoming Events \(swale.gov.uk\)](#)

Thanet - [Leisure & recreation - Thanet](#)

Tonbridge & Malling - [Events – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](#)

Tunbridge Wells - [Sports and leisure \(tunbridgewells.gov.uk\)](#)

## Contact Us



Our friendly Hub Team are on hand Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm to answer your queries, provide information and guidance and direct you to your local support coordinator.

You can reach us by:

**Phone** - 0300 111 1110

**Email** - [hub@imago.community](mailto:hub@imago.community)

**Post** - Imago

John Spare House

17-19 Monson Road

Tunbridge Wells

Kent

TN1 1LS

Or send us a message via our [Facebook](#) page :)



For more information or to submit a new referral for another eligible child within the home, please visit:

[Kent Young Carers \(imago.community\)](http://kentyoungcarers.imago.community)

[Short Breaks Service \(imago.community\)](http://imago.community)

Please send your good news stories/write ups/photos to [jo.rickword@imago.community](mailto:jo.rickword@imago.community) who will add to future newsletters

---

**Thank you for reading, we hope you've enjoyed it!**

**We wish you all a happy holiday season and the very best for the New Year!**

**Catch our next newsletter in January!**

---