

# OUR LIFE

WINTER 2024



## Hello from Michelle ❄️

Dear Young Carers,

As the winter nights draw in and the weather gets colder, it is time to snuggle down and get ready for the festive break. School is coming to an end for 2023 and you can put your books away and take some time for yourself.

This year may have gone in a blink of an eye for some, or dragged on for others, but whatever you have experienced next year is full of opportunity and hope. So, make sure you take some time to celebrate YOU and think about all the good stuff you bring to your family and friends.

From us all at Surrey Young Carers, have a lovely holiday and we are looking forward to putting on some great events for you in the New Year!

**Michelle Harper,**  
Manager SYC,  
Action for Carers Surrey



**2024's Young Carers Action Day will take place Wednesday 13th March.** Organised by Carers Trust the day encourages everyone to take action, to support and raise awareness of young carers. The theme this coming year is 'Fair Futures for Young Carers'.

Ask your school what they plan for the Day and email us if you need help [syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:syc@actionforcarers.org.uk)

**#YoungCarersActionDay**

## Filming opportunities with SYC

**Young carers from Surrey will have a chance to help in the making an important new film.**

*Young Carer Voices UK* is a documentary being made by Japanese filmmaker Mari Yamamoto. The film is about support for young carers in the UK and will be shown around the world to help raise awareness of young carers needs across the globe!

The film will help our national Young Carers Alliance provide information about this topic to other countries including people in the UK. Mari has so far captured a lot of material, including interviews about the evolution of our legislation, policies and support systems. The idea is to also show how a local young carers service works and Surrey Young Carers are helping with this. Mari wants to film some of our activities and to hear directly from young carers in Surrey about how the support they get helps them. Mari and her film crew are to visit several times over the next few months.

As part of this, Mari would like to give young carers themselves the opportunity to use the cameras and sound equipment and will show how to use these. This will allow young carers to take their own shots of the activities and of each other. The idea is to see things through your own eyes and to help you understand more about using film and sound equipment.

### Taking part

You/your parents will sign film consent forms. And Mari also promises that even after we have agreed to film, she will respect any change of wishes and will not use any footage in the film should anyone change their mind about consenting.

**So, if you're interested in participating in this exciting opportunity, please contact [Michelle.harper@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:Michelle.harper@actionforcarers.org.uk)**



# What's been going on?!

An update on events that some of our young carers in different parts of Surrey have been able to attend.



From above, clockwise: drop-in at ACS Cobham; Believe session at Sandown; VR session; Radio Surrey Takeover; sports drop-in Phoenix Centre; chilling at ACS school; silent disco; outdoors at Caterham School; Chelsea Foundation; coaching with Surrey Cricket; and centre two images – Gatwick Museum day!

## Things to do in January ❄️❄️❄️

Here are some suggestions:

- Feed the birds or even build your own bird feeder.
- Find a new hobby. Exercise, a language or volunteering, there's so many to try.
- Keep a family diary. Once a week, you could ask your family to write down three things that they've enjoyed.
- Make a different cake for each week of January! 
- Watch a box set with the family
- Go to the local library and get some new books to read.
- Have a tidy out – it might not sound like fun, but it certainly feels great afterwards and it can be very engrossing!

## New job role opens!

We're excited to announce we got funding to recruit an Education Coordinator, to help us support young carers in Surrey's schools, including helping schools identify young carers better.

More here from January!  
[www.actionforcarers.org.uk/about-us/jobs/](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/about-us/jobs/) Let any job-seekers know!



## Joke corner!

What is green, covered in Christmas lights and Christmas bulbs, and goes ribbit?  
**A mistle-toad!**

How do sheep say Merry Christmas to each other?  
**Fleece Navidad!**

What is every parent's favourite Christmas song?  
**Silent Night!**

## Sidekick

Sidekick is a confidential TEXT helpline for UK young carers aged 13–18. If something's bothering you, text them on **07888 868 059\***, or email [sidekick@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:sidekick@actionforchildren.org.uk)  
 More here: [sidekick.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://sidekick.actionforchildren.org.uk)

*\*Texting is free if you have free texts included in your mobile plan. If not, it will be your normal rate.*



# Feeling your best in winter: top tips!

Some of us feel a little low during the dark winter days, and things may be harder because of your caring role. If you're feeling down, here's some ideas for steps to take to help yourself feel better.

## This is normal...

There are biological reasons why many people feel low and lack energy during the dark months. Understanding that it's a natural response is helpful.

## Get as much daylight as possible

Lack of daylight is partly why people suffer 'winter blues'. So, take every chance to be outside during the day.

## Beware of NY resolutions!

People tend to make resolutions now because of guilt, they tend to make difficult resolutions, then they fail, and feel worse. If you're going to make a resolution, make sure it's one you can manage, such as 'on school evenings, do an hour of homework with my phone off, because I'll work better'. Then do it and feel better! (Which will encourage you to do it again.)

## Get moving

Exercise is one of the best ways to fight depression and improve wellbeing and mood. Doesn't have to be a hot and sweaty work out, a quick brisk walk is great for you too!

## Identify your worries

If you have specific things that are making you feel anxious or sad, make a list and add possible solutions. If a solution is 'ask someone



for help', do it! Writing things down helps.

## Do something new

Every year is different. How will you *make* this one different rather than waiting for it to happen to you? On your own or with a friend, throw ideas around till you find *one thing* you'd love to achieve, do or learn this year. Work out what steps you need to take. Make a plan and start the first step.



## Read for pleasure

Burying yourself in a gripping book of your choice is a great way to take your mind off feeling low.

## Eat properly

When feeling down, we are often drawn to sugar and junk food and we eat too little or too much. You can improve how you feel by eating a good mix of all types of food.

## See a doctor if necessary

If your low mood is severe and lasts more than a couple of weeks,



see a GP, in case you need more support. Don't forget you can ask to be registered as a Young Carer with your GP.

## You are not alone

Lots of your friends will be going through the same or similar feelings, but you may not realise it. Find someone to talk to – a friend or a trusted adult. We're all in this life together and there are people out there who want to help you.

***Spring and lighter days are not far away! Until then, take care of yourself and let the people who love you help you.***



## Are there other carers in your family? A sibling over 18, parent, grandparent?

Please let them know our Adult Service can help them too! It offers information on rights and benefits, practical and emotional support, free events, wellbeing sessions, support groups, resources and much more. **They just need to register: [www.actionforcarers.org.uk/register-with-us/](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/register-with-us/) or by phone on 0303 040 1234 (option 2).**

## Our support for young people



Find out about all the support we offer young carers here: [www.actionforcarers.org.uk/who-we-help/young-carers-](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/who-we-help/young-carers-)

Got a yummy recipe to share? Send it in, and we'll print it!

# Recipe Corner

## Cinnamon-sugar snowflakes

Don't forget to ask an adult for help if you need it.

### INGREDIENTS

- Tortillas
- Melted butter
- White sugar
- Cinnamon

### METHOD

1. Start by putting your tortillas in the microwave for about 10 seconds. This softens them up so they won't rip.
2. Fold a tortilla in half, and then in half again, and cut it as if you were making a paper snowflake.
3. Place your tortillas on a baking sheet and brush with them with the melted butter.
4. Now sprinkle your snowflakes generously with cinnamon and sugar.
5. Bake your snowflakes, at 200 for five to ten minutes. If you like them to crisp right up, go for the full 10 minutes.
6. Let them cool for a few minutes before serving.
7. *Eat and enjoy!*



## Coping at Xmas

We will be closing our office 22nd December, open again on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan.

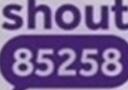
If Christmas is a hard time for you for whatever reason, it's important to remember that you are not alone. If you find yourself in crisis or needing to speak to someone, below and right, are sources of help.

NSPCC are open to help children 24/7. Just call their [Childline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/childline) number **0800 1111**.



# COPING AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be tough. That's why it's important to know there's always someone you can talk to.

  0300 123 3393  Helpline  <a href="https://www.mind.org.uk">mind.org.uk</a>	  Text SHOUT to 85258  24/7 text service  <a href="https://www.giveusashout.org">giveusashout.org</a>	  116 123  24/7 helpline  <a href="https://www.samaritans.org">samaritans.org</a>
  Text YM to 85258  24/7 text service  <a href="https://www.youngminds.org.uk">youngminds.org.uk</a>	  0800 58 58 58  Helpline for men  <a href="https://www.thecalmzone.net">thecalmzone.net</a>	  0800 068 4141  Under 35s Helpline  <a href="https://www.papyrus-uk.org">papyrus-uk.org</a>



**Action for Carers Surrey**  
A Network Partner of **CARERS TRUST**

**Call on 0303 040 1234, option 3 or email [SYC@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:SYC@actionforcarers.org.uk)**

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