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Carers respite at the Crossroads in Surrey?

6 August 2025



A row has erupted over the sudden withdrawal of Surrey County Council funding for respite care provided by the long-standing charity, Crossroads Care Surrey, leaving hundreds of unpaid carers uncertain about their future support.

Crossroads Care Surrey announced this week it has stepped in to safeguard the wellbeing of **274 unpaid carers** after what it calls a **“U-turn”** by the local authority on a previously agreed commitment to honour their full entitlement to respite breaks.

The charity, which has delivered government-funded respite care for unpaid carers across Surrey for **over 14 years**, was **given six months’ notice in February 2025** that its contract—due to run until **March 2027**—would end early on **4 August 2025**.

The controversy surrounds carers who were told they would still receive **their full allocation of 70 hours of respite**, even after the early termination of the contract. However, according to Crossroads, the Council has now **withdrawn that commitment**, leaving carers with “just a few weeks’ notice” of lost support.

> *“This abrupt U-turn not only breaks the promise made to unpaid carers, it also places already exhausted individuals in an impossible position,” said **Terry Hawkins**, CEO of Crossroads Care Surrey. “We know just how vital these respite breaks are for carers’ mental and physical health… the loss of this service will undoubtedly place an even greater burden on the already stretched GPs and hospitals across the county.”*

> *Despite the withdrawal of public funds, Crossroads confirmed that thanks to a surge of **generous donations**, the charity will **continue delivering the promised respite hours until 30 November 2025**.*

> *“Whilst it’s deeply disappointing to see the council walk away from their commitment, we’re proud to stand by unpaid carers when they need us most,” added Hawkins. “It has given us the means to do the right thing, and we are incredibly grateful.”*

The charity is urging carers affected by the cut to **contact Surrey County Council** if they wish to **challenge the withdrawal** or explore **alternative respite options**. Carers can also access support beyond November through **Crossroads Direct**, a self-funded version of the service.

“We’re Putting Choice Back in Carers’ Hands”

In response to the criticism, **Cllr Sinead Mooney**, Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, insisted the authority had **worked constructively** with Crossroads to manage the transition.

> *“We’re pleased that Crossroads Care Surrey has confirmed they will honour their agreements with carers by continuing to offer replacement care for those with remaining hours, following the end of the council’s contract,”*
> *said Cllr Mooney.*
>
> *She explained that the replacement respite care was provided under **individual agreements** between carers and Crossroads, **not directly guaranteed by the Council**.*
>
> *The Council defended its decision to introduce a **new carers’ wellbeing support scheme**, offering **£300 on a pre-paid card** to give carers **“complete flexibility”** over how they arrange their breaks.*

> *“This new offer… has the potential to benefit many more carers across Surrey,” said Mooney, adding that it puts “**choice and control back in the hands of carers**. Our priority is to support carers in the best way we possibly can with the resources we have.”*

> *The Council also pointed to its **“Good” rating from the Care Quality Commission**, which cited **co-produced strategies with carers** as part of its ongoing commitment to improvement.*
>
> *Mooney urged any carer affected to contact the County Council’s information and advice service.*

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Crossroads Care Surrey says this is about **trust and continuity**—many carers joined the service with the understanding that **support would remain**, regardless of the Council's early termination of the contract.

As the situation unfolds, the spotlight falls on the **financial and strategic pressures** facing local authorities, and whether charitable donations can sustainably replace **core public service funding**.

Crossroads has reaffirmed its **mission to campaign** for the rights of unpaid carers and is calling on individuals, businesses, and communities to help ensure that **"no carer is left without support."**

For further details, visit: crossroadscaresurrey.org.uk

If you are an unpaid carer affected by the recent changes, contact Surrey County Council's adult social care information and advice line or Crossroads Care Surrey for assistance.

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