

Carefree



2024 Impact Overview

Carefree is a multi-award-winning charity that transforms vacant hotel rooms into vital breaks for full-time, unpaid carers.

Together with our partners, we are radically reshaping how unpaid carers are recognised and supported to continue their caring role.

To date Carefree has delivered over 12,500 breaks to carers - nearly half of that in 2024 alone!

We virtually doubled our breaks delivery, launched our first mainstream social media campaign and made incredible efficiency gains to keep our costs low in the face of extreme financial pressure.

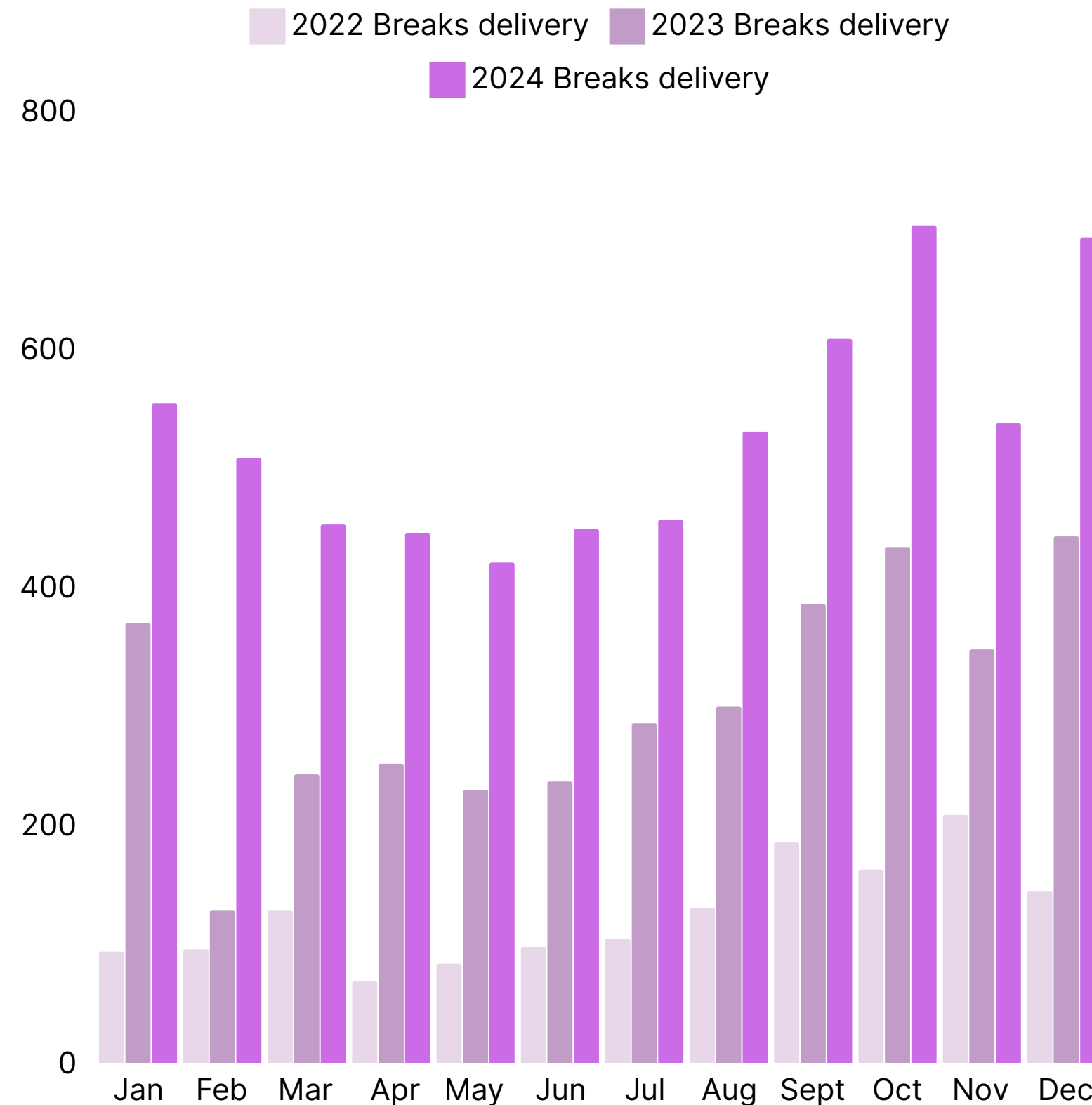
Thank you to all who have supported us this year and our incredible 8-person team that has made it all happen!

6,354

breaks delivered

11,504

new carer referrals



2022-2024 comparison of the number of breaks delivered per month

Carer Insights

With such a step-change in our delivery numbers, we took the opportunity to engage with the 29,498 carers registered with us through a series of surveys to understand more about who they are, their caring situation and why they haven't booked one of the breaks on offer yet.

Demographic survey

- Most of our users are aged 55-64 (30%), followed by 45-54 (28%) and 35-44 (20%)
- 71% identify as British, 31.9% English, 8.5% Scottish, 2.9% Welsh, 1.6% Irish, 1.1% Northern Irish & 3.5% Other
- 89% identify as female
- 85% identify as white, 5% Asian/Asian British & 5% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
- 64% have their own health conditions

Based on 4,158 responses

Carer break feedback

- 84% say their ability to cope has improved following their break
- 94% say their wellbeing has improved following their break
- 76% say they feel more socially connected
- 87% couldn't have taken a break without Carefree
- 68% hadn't had a break for more than a year;

Based on 1965 responses (owing to mid-year survey Q update)

Non-booking carers

- 34% struggle with interim care
- 17% felt guilty about the prospect of taking some time away
- 72% will rely on friends & family to enable them to take a break; 10% govt funded respite support & 9% personally funded respite support
- 34% of carers want to go on a break close by in case something happens

Based on 4,520 responses

Case study: What Kaykay found when she found Carefree

Eight years ago, Kakay became a full-time carer for her son, who was born with a brain injury requiring 24/7 care. Following a traumatic birth, she faced the dual challenges of physical recovery and grief while adapting to her new caring role.

When Kakay stumbled upon Carefree online, she says she couldn't believe that such a simple, accessible initiative existed.

Unlike other support services that often require significant time and energy to access - Carefree's break offer, user-friendly website and excellent customer service provided a lifeline when self-care seemed out of reach for her.

Through Carefree, she and her husband took their first 24-hour break from caring in eight years. "At first we felt a bit lost and then just giddy with excitement and gratitude. It was like a balm to my soul and weary bones." To other carers, she says: "These moments of freedom restore your spirit and make caring responsibilities feel lighter. Regular breaks improve your health, resilience, and relationships. Just trust your replacement carers and go!"

“
Take any
opportunity you
can for a break
— no matter how
big or small.



Building economies of scale

Delivery:

In the past 12 months, we've grown our breaks delivery numbers by 42% for an increased operating cost of just 5% (£710k expenditure in 2024 vs. £668k in 2023)

↑ 42%

Cost efficiency:

We also brought down our cost of servicing each user from £183 in 2023 to £107 in 2024.

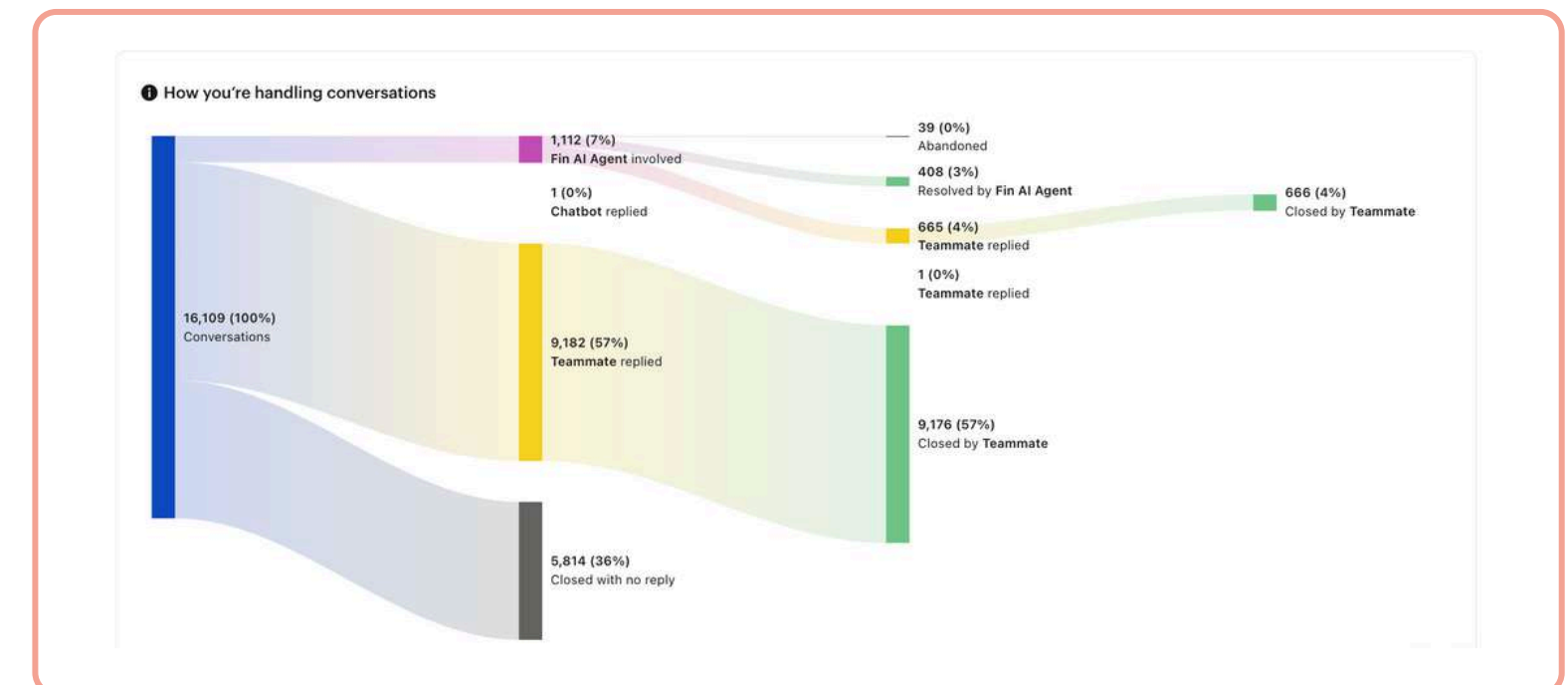
↓ 42%

Tech Capacity:

We added 11,504 new carers to our service in 2024 - increasing our number of platform users to nearly 30,000 people, whilst lowering our tech development and software cost spend from £126k in 2023 to £80k in 2024.

↓ 37%

Under the Hood



Our two-person customer support team was able to process 36,909 customer service support requests and 16,109 conversations with carers through a combination of human responses, automated messages and self-serve help articles. 93.7% of users who received assistance gave a 5-star rating.

Tech Projects

Our impact gains mirror an ambitious tech agenda for 2024 with several flagship projects:

HIDDEN CARER PATHWAY

20% of our self-referrals are not connected to other carer services.

Now, we can offer to connect them with other support services via an automated pathway following their break.

This feature also presents a great benefit for our Community Partners who often struggle to identify hidden carers in their area.

TACKLING CARER EXCLUSION

We partnered up with Vouchsafe to enable full-time unpaid carers who lack a Photo ID like a driver's license or passport to be able to register with our service. This will enhance the accessibility of our service for those edge cases and improve digital inclusion.

EMBRACING AI

This year we launched an AI chatbot to enable us to better support users out of office hours and to absorb some of the load of the growing demand on our customer service channels without needing more staff.

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

Our new site is much better set up to guide carers through their sign-up journey and bring in new accommodation partners.

WALL OF LOVE

Live and transparent impact reporting has always been part of our philosophy and now every Carefree partner - whether it's a hotel gifting rooms or a community organisation referring carers, has their own live web page of carer testimonials and impact stats from the people they've helped.

ThirdSector Awards

2024 Finalist for Digital Innovation of the Year

The hotel partners that make it all possible



Delivery

Hospitality Partners

Our hotel partners new and old have been working in unison to almost double our breaks delivery in 2024. We stepped into new territory working with household names, such as Greene King and Atlas Hotels, who are the largest UK franchisee of Holiday Inn Express.

In 2024, Carefree expanded its hotel partnerships, reaching a total of 198 hotels committed to offering short breaks to unpaid carers.

A live list of participating hotels can be viewed [here](#).

“

Saying yes to Carefree was the quickest meeting I ever had. It's so easy to do, and I would challenge anyone in the hotel industry to find a reason why they can't jump aboard.

Alex Lewis, Business Performance Director, Axiom Hospitality

Community Partners

After launching our annual membership offer in late 2023 for Community Partners to refer carers to Carefree, we were thrilled that virtually 100% of our partners chose to renew with us in 2024.

New memberships grew by 20% and thanks to an injection of Accelerated Reform Fund funding from the Department of Health and Social Care, we have been able to focus our efforts on expanding our reach within Cornwall and Cambridgeshire.

A live list of our Community Partners can be viewed [here](#).

94%

say we increased
access to carer
breaks in their area

9/10

rated 9 out of 10 for
overall experience

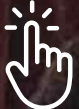
Change Happens Overnight Campaign

Our inaugural media campaign garnered over 3m views on social media of the 5 carer stories filmed by award-winning filmmaker Jason Smith. This campaign was entirely possible through the generosity of Hogarth Worldwide and Gramercy Park Studios who gifted the post-production facilities, alongside the director, edits and crew who donated their time to create the films. Axiom Hospitality gifted our use of the filming location at Elvetham Hotel and pro bono PR support was provided by Woodthorpe Communications. Other partners included Presence production and Empower Agency who ran the social media campaign.

 [View the films here.](#)



3m 
video views

10,778 
clicks



The launch event also marked our 10,000 breaks milestone and we were delighted to be invited to speak on Eddie Nestor's mid-morning show for BBS Radio London. Clips from the interview with our CEO and carer Alison can be found [here](#).



“
I love what you do and the way you do it!”
Eddie Nestor, Presenter, BBC Radio London

What's Next

With the foundations laid for our scale-up journey, 2025 signals a return to strategy - refocusing on building brand awareness, building an independently validated evidence base for our model and dipping our toes into the world of advocacy to garner support for a carer's right to respite.

We'll also be working to increase our supply of gifted accommodation so we can place between 8-10,000 carers on a break and launching a touring photography exhibition with Invisible Army to illustrate the life of a carer and the critical difference that a break can make.

If you'd like to partner with us or find another way to support our work, please reach out to hello@carefreespace.org.

A huge thank you to all our core supporters:



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