

Why is extra support needed?

Background

Bridgit Care are a Social Enterprise that supports unpaid family carers and the carer services that support them across the UK.

Bridgit's digital approach, uses AI coaches and mentors to provide real-time & personalised support to carers, linking to a self-help support, with advice, guidance, medical support, and intelligent signposting to local services and events.

As we approach winter demand for support increases.



Winter Pressures

Unpaid family carers often face increased challenges during winter, which can also strain the healthcare system.

1. **Health Concerns:** Cold weather can worsen health conditions. Carers might need to provide extra care, and there's a higher risk of both the carer and the person they're caring for getting ill.
2. **Increased Costs:** Heating homes becomes essential, leading to higher utility bills. This can be a financial strain for many carers.
3. **Mobility Issues:** Snow and ice can make it difficult for carers to transport their loved ones to appointments or to get essential supplies.
4. **Mental Health:** Winter can be isolating due to shorter days and bad weather. Both carers and those they care for might feel more lonely or depressed.
5. **Healthcare System Strain:** With more people getting sick during winter, hospitals and our health system become busier. This means longer wait times and potential delays in getting necessary care or treatments.

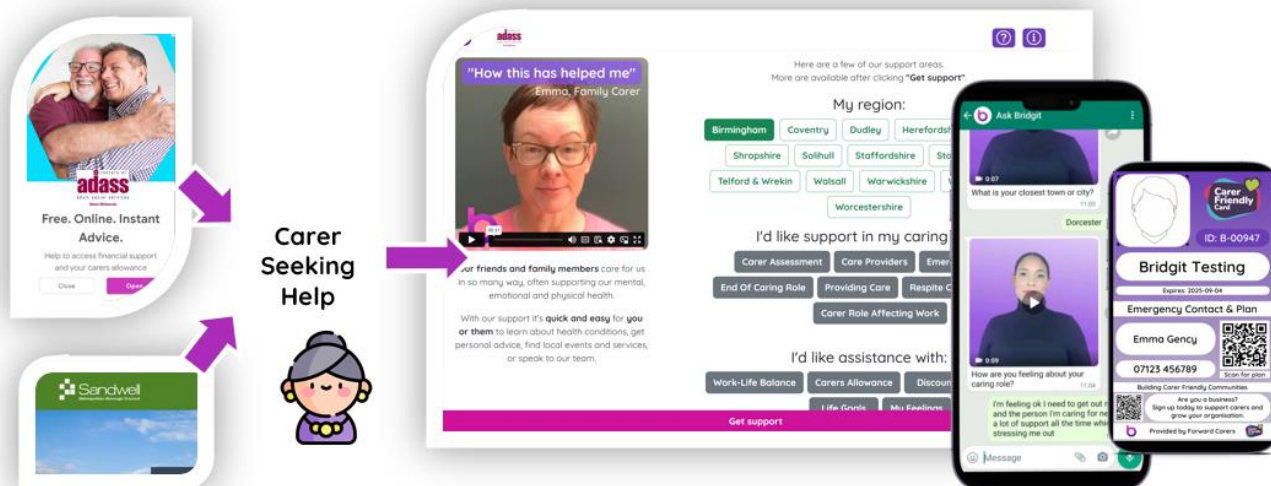
In simple terms, winter makes caring harder due to health, cost, and mobility challenges, and the healthcare system feels this extra pressure.

What additional support will be provided?

Bridgit is working with several ADASS groups to provide a light touch version of their support for carers. Bridgit will cover the cost of providing their service across selected Councils for the winter period, at a time when carers will need support the most.

The Light Touch Bridgit Service, platform will include:

- **WhatsApp Coaches** – Access to 6 coaches to help the carer 24 / 7.
 1. **Caring:** Comprehensive support in all facets of caregiving.
 2. **Wellbeing:** Focused assistance on prioritising and nurturing a carer's personal well-being.
 3. **Employment:** Support for carers juggling their caregiving duties with work, or those looking to return to employment.
 4. **Finances:** Expert advice on available financial options and how to access them.
 5. **Time Out:** Suggestions tailored to help carers take essential breaks and prioritise self-care.
 6. **Care At Home:** Guidance for carers assisting patients transitioning between home and hospital.
- **Self-Help Access & Personalised Email Courses** - 25 carer support modules covering the 5 areas of carer support, and targeted emails on support areas.
- **Virtual Carers Card** – Access to a free Carers ID card, and national discounts through our partner Forward Carers.
- **Emergency 'What If' plan** – An online space to create and share the what-if plan with friends, family, and professionals.



How will the solution be made available?

The steps that Bridgit take to provide the solution into a new region are:

1. **Knowledge** – Our AI system is updated to include all the information and knowledge from the council website, and any other key information sources in the region.
2. **Services** – The system uses AI to automatically find services and events for the carers within a region based on the carers' needs. It doesn't need to be annually populated. However, key services are selected (e.g., local Carer Service) and promoted, and a link to the local directory is included for any services not visible online.
3. **Link & Branding** – A link is created for the region to use, and the location can decide on branding they want displayed throughout (e.g., Bridgit, ADASS, LA or Carer Charity)
4. **Promotion** – A comms pack is provided for each region including leaflets, brochures, social posts and videos all customised for the local region and including the local brand and link. Also includes a guide for you to use for paid advertisements.
5. **Analytics** – Reports are set up to provide a monthly view of carers signposted by the council into service, carers receiving support, and key challenges in the region.

What does each council need to do?

Setup – An Excel sheet will be sent to each council to validate and update. It's hopefully just a 15-minute job for someone within the team to:

1. Check the top 5 local services we've chosen to promote,
2. Check the knowledge sources look correct, and
3. Confirm the branding that you'd like to use.

Ongoing – To get the most value from the service and improve the support for carers, it's vital that Councils promote the platform. Some ideas are:

1. **Website:** Include a Link on your website for any carers looking for help.
2. **Community:** Share the link within your VCSE community, with your Hospital Teams, and your local Carer Services.
3. **Primary Care:** Follow our SMS guide, to help your Primary Care Networks easily identify and signpost carers into the support. Improving registers & reducing effort.
4. **Paid Ads:** You can run campaigns yourself or work with a marketing partner and follow our guide.