



Our Special Friends



Animal companionship for
people at vulnerable times

Why people need our support?

The power of animal companionship is well documented. Providing and maintaining opportunities for relationships between people and animals to flourish is recognised as being hugely beneficial.

For the lonely, the ill, and other people at vulnerable times in their lives, access to animal companionship can have enormous impact. It can provide a sense of comfort and safety, reduce anxiety and potentially decrease the need for reliance on other services.

Pets can be vital companions especially for the vulnerable or isolated, however there may be times in all of our lives when help is needed to maintain that special bond.



What is Our Special Friends?

We are a Suffolk based charity which has grown out of a desire to support people who are struggling in a range of situations and where animal companionship plays an important role in helping them to cope. Our team of employees and volunteers provides support to hundreds of people and animals each year, this is often in conjunction with existing resources in the local community.

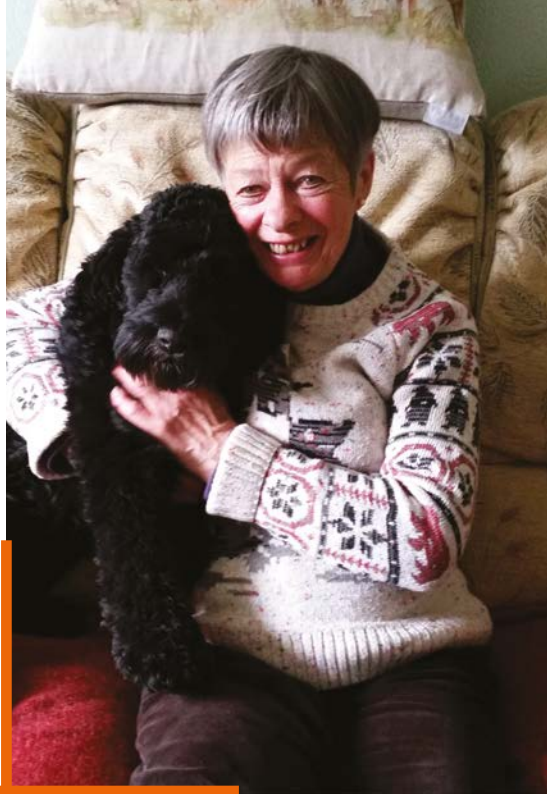
With the right funding and support, **Our Special Friends** is now set to embark on an ambitious plan to bring the power of animal companionship to even more people facing personal difficulties.

What we do?

People are referred to us in a variety of ways: concerned friends and relatives, community and social care teams, associated charities and veterinary practices.

The team at **Our Special Friends** then work with each case to understand the need and consider the most appropriate support.

Through our volunteers we provide practical and emotional support to people in their own home, nursing home or hospice. Currently, this is in the West Suffolk area but demand is such that we are expanding geographically as funding allows.



How we do it?

- Assisting people to look after their pets enabling them to stay with their owners, including dog walking, pet care, transport and feeding
- Assisting with veterinary care
- Arranging for temporary fostering
- Providing bereavement support
- Helping with the placement of a new pet
- Regular visits from a 'visiting' dog and volunteer
- Planning pet care to give peace of mind
- Supporting people to cope with difficult decisions
- Empowering a local support network

What people say about us?

Family member – pet welfare:

"When Mum became ill, there were also implications for her Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, a beloved companion. His welfare was in question as he needed daily medication for his eyes, regular meals and walks. OSF was a life saver – they provided us with daily support and recommendations to allow mum's dog to stay with her. I would highly recommend them."

Family member – visiting dog:

"It was so nice that when I went to see Dad he had 'news to tell me' for a change. His days used to be all the same and now he so enjoys his visits from 'the little dog' who sits on his lap to be stroked and has prompted him to reminisce about the dogs he had in the past."



Client – rehoming:

"People have said I've got my sparkle back. OSF have been so helpful in finding these two little dogs for me. They give so much. They are absolutely gorgeous they really are."



Client – dog walking:

"A massive thank you from myself and Sy for all your help and support, to the office for recruiting such special volunteers and to the volunteers themselves; come rain or shine, they turn up. Sy loves you all. So thank you again for caring for my boy."

Nurse – accompanied walking:

"OSF's involvement with my patient has made a remarkable difference. She is more engaged and has found new joy in her life, she often talks about her weekly walks with OSF. The value of OSF in this lady's life is multiple: health benefits from the exercise, mental stimulation and socialisation in a way that suits her. Most of all, I attribute the twinkle in her eye to the involvement of OSF in this lady's life. Thank you!"

Carer for a 92-year old gentleman:

"Have heard nothing but great reports on how OSF helps so many people and animals and have now seen it for myself. An amazing charity who love what they do. Am in awe."

Why volunteer for us?

We simply could not do our work without the help of our wonderful team of volunteers who support more than 150 people every week. Some give their time on a regular weekly basis while others help out when they can. Every hour given to us can make a difference, enhancing the lives of those they are helping. Our volunteers often tell us that volunteering for **Our Special Friends** enriches their lives too.

"If you're debating whether to volunteer for Our Special Friends I can thoroughly recommend it. I have met some fabulous people and find it incredibly rewarding."



Please support us

We are entirely dependent on fundraising to enable us to provide our services. Your gift will make a huge difference to someone's life. If you would like to donate to Our Special Friends directly from your own bank account, make a payment by **BACS** or to set up a **standing order**, please use:

Our Special Friends Ltd

Sort Code: 20-16-12 Account: 43077829

Or send a cheque, with your contact details to:

Our Special Friends
c/o British Racing School, Snailwell Road,
Newmarket, CB8 7NU

Thank You

***"Our Special Friends is the kind of social
prescribing that can make a real difference to a
person's health."***

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
and local MP for West Suffolk.



We are here to help, so please contact us:

Our Special Friends,
c/o British Racing School, Snailwell Road,
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Tel: 01284 335351
Email: office@ourspecialfriends.org
www.ourspecialfriends.org



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Our Special Friends is a registered charity: 1156778

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