



Oct '24

# Companionship Services

PROVIDING PERSONAL ASSISTANCE - EXPANDING YOUR WORLD

*togetherness*  
THE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our first Company Newsletter which is **created for our Companionship Services community**; made up of our clients, their families and other local people with an interest in bettering the lives of our more senior members of society. It's our aim to help you to get to know our company a little better; **understand our values** and get to **know our wonderful team** of companions. We also want to help you or your loved ones by providing **information** that you will find relevant, informative and useful and by helping us all to **feel more connected with the Companionship Services community** and the **wider local community** too.

*Anja* - Company Owner & Founder

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Anja with her family



Meeting Spelthorne Mayor, Cllr Med Buck



Winner of The Spelthorne Business Plan Competition

# The Start of Something Special

Launched back in May this year and with one business award already to its name, how did Companionship Services Ltd come to be? It's an inspirational story of triumph over adversity!

Company founder, Anja Abaraou, is a 43 year old woman, originally from Germany and now living in Ashford (Surrey) with her husband and 3 children. She has always been a people person and naturally caring, which stood her in good stead in her career as a hairdresser and later working as a LSA, helping children with special educational needs.

Unfortunately, in 2021 life was turned up side down when Anja found herself physically unable to work following a sudden collapse and the onset of a chronic dizziness condition with associated fatigue.

More than two years later and when her health was in a better place, Anja looked into part time roles in care and then personal assistance as a means to slowly get back into work. After a year working as a companion, and being asked to take on more work through word of mouth, Anja could clearly see the need for a service around befriending and support. From here the idea for Companionship Services Ltd was born.

[Learn More](#)

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# Out and About

It has been so nice to be part of some local events recently. We've been able to meet with older people and their families as well as connecting with community groups, organisations, businesses and charities, who support senior people in the community in some way. All this whilst spreading a little joy with a fun game of Wheel of Fortune with prizes to be won! Thank you to **Ashford House, Stanwell** and **Age UK, Hounslow** for having us at your wonderful community events.



## Looking After Mental Health

Thursday **10th October** marks **World Mental Health Day**. According to Age UK, there are 1.4 m chronically lonely older people in England. Many older people go for many days without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. This social isolation can have a huge impact on mental health, which in turn can affect physical health too.

Below are just a few actions you or your loved one may be able to take to help combat feelings of isolation.



### **Get involved in community**

**activities** - Singing, walking, book clubs, bingo, art class, making and mending...there's a lot out there to inspire you. Whether it's an activity or hobby you've done before or something new you've wanted to have a go at, try out some of the activities available to you locally. This can be more difficult to access for some who have reduced mobility, so see which activities have community transport associated.

[Find out about community transport services and Shopmobility](#)



**Pick up the phone** - Reach out to relatives and friends. If you don't have family and friends that can be reached on the phone, you could consider getting in touch with charities Age UK [Befriending services](#) | [Combating loneliness](#) | [Age UK](#) or [Re-engage: charity for reducing loneliness in later life](#) who both provide a call companion service for older people who are feeling isolated. They will arrange regular telephone calls with a friendly volunteer, so you can enjoy a chat together.



**Invite a friend for tea** - Perhaps there is a friend or neighbour who would enjoy a catch up over a cuppa and maybe a biscuit or two! If we're feeling lonely, sometimes we can believe that others are too busy to see us and are not interested to visit, but it usually isn't the case. By extending a friendly invitation, you may even be helping someone else out, who might be feeling isolated themselves.



**Smiling is good for you** - Studies show that putting a smile on your face causes the release of feel good chemicals in your brain that can trigger positive feelings. Smiling also makes you appear more approachable to new people. So put on your best smile and grab every chance to interact with others when out and about, whether that's while you're picking up your groceries, in a queue or whilst in a waiting area before an appointment.

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# WIN WIN WIN

## *October Giveaway!*

To spread a little joy, each monthly newsletter features a prize giveaway, which is free for our subscribers to enter (please note, prizes can only be distributed within the area we serve i.e. postcodes TW1-TW20). This month we're giving away a beautiful fresh bouquet of flowers. Click below to enter. [T&Cs apply](#).



(Bouquet flowers may vary from picture)

[Enter Draw](#)

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# Getting Creative at Home

It is our aim to inspire you each month with something creative you may want to try at home, whether that's playing a game, doing a puzzle, making a craft or getting creative in the kitchen with a new recipe.

## Recipe:

### *Spicy butternut squash soup*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 butternut squash
- 2 carrots
- 2 tsp coconut or other cooking oil
- 1-2 tsp curry powder (according to heat preference)
- 50g red lentils
- 1 tin (400ml) coconut milk
- 750ml vegetable stock

(Usually enough for 4-6 bowls depending on size of butternut squash)

What's nicer at this time of year than a warming bowl of soup. Here's a favourite recipe to try from Debs, one of our companions.

## Method:

1. Peel and chop the butternut squash into roughly 2 cm cubes, discarding the seeds.
2. Peel and chop the carrots into thin slices.
3. Add the oil to a very large saucepan and turn up a medium heat.
4. When the oil is hot add the butternut squash and carrots and give them a stir every now and then for 2 minutes, adding the curry powder at the end and mixing in.
5. Now add the lentils followed immediately by the coconut milk and vegetable stock.
6. Stir and adjust the heat to allow the soup to bubble very gently for 25-35 minutes, stirring every now and then.
7. After, remove pan from heat.

For a smooth soup, use a blender. I prefer a chunkier soup, so I use a potato masher, to break up some of the chunks of butternut squash and carrot, leaving a few larger chunks in too.

It's ready to serve straight away, or you can freeze in portion-sized containers and defrost then heat when you're ready for some more.

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*Get in Touch:* If there's something different you'd like to see from us in future newsletters, then we'd love to hear from you. Your feedback is invaluable to help us shape a service suits the needs of the community. We're all ears!

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