



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2016-0108 , 8 June 2016

Carers

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Summary

On Thursday 9 June, MPs will take part in a debate on Carers. This debate was recommended by the Backbench Business Committee following a representation from Mims Davies MP.

This debate pack provides an overview of the issues, relevant reports and Parliamentary and media coverage. The following Library briefings are also relevant:

[Carers' rights and benefits \(England\);](#)

[Carer's Allowance;](#)

and [Carer's Allowance and the Retirement Pension.](#)

[Watch Parliament TV: General debate on carers](#)

Digital Debate

From Monday 6 June members of the public can inform the Backbench Business debate by joining the conversation on the Carers Week Facebook page at www.facebook.com/carersweek.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Background

Carers' legislation

The 2011 census showed that 5.4 million people in England (10.2% of the population) were providing some level of unpaid care, with 1.3 million (2.4%) providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week.

Carers' legislation is a relatively recent phenomenon. The needs of carers, independent of the needs of those they are caring for, have been recognised and subsequently strengthened in law by three Private Members' Bills that became Acts of Parliament: The *Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995*, the *Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000*, and the *Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004*.

These have recently been further strengthened by the *Care Act 2014*, which for the first time means that carers will be recognised in the law in the same way as those they care for. The Department of Health explains that the changes mean that:

- local authorities have a responsibility to assess a carer's needs for support, where the carer appears to have such needs;
- following the assessment, the local authority must decide whether the carer's needs are 'eligible' for support from the local authority. This approach is similar to that used for adults with care and support needs;
- the local authority and the carer will agree a support plan;
- carers should receive a personal budget, which is a statement showing the cost of meeting their needs, as part of their support plan.¹

The *Children and Families Act 2014* gives young carers (and parent carers) similar rights to assessment as other carers have under the *Care Act*.

Carers' Allowance

Carer's Allowance – formerly Invalid Care Allowance – is a non-contributory, non-means-tested benefit paid to people who care full-time for someone who is severely disabled. To be entitled to Carer's Allowance, a person must be providing at least 35 hours of care a week for someone in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit, not be in full-time education, and, if in paid work, have earnings after certain deductions of no more than £110 a week.

Entitlement to Carer's Allowance also acts as a "passport" to the carer premiums/additions in means-tested benefits such as Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.

Issues frequently raised in relation to Carer's Allowance include:

¹ Department of Health, [Guidance – Care Act factsheets – Factsheet 8: the law for carers](#), updated 19 April 2016

- The level of Carer's Allowance, when compared with other "income replacement" benefits
- The problems faced by people seeking to study or do paid work while claiming Carer's Allowance
- The fact that Carer's Allowance cannot be paid in addition to certain other state benefits, including the Retirement Pension

Flexible working

On 30 June 2015 the Government extended a right request flexible working arrangements after a 26 weeks' qualifying period, building on a previous entitlement for some carers. An employee with 26 weeks' continuous employment has the right to request flexible working; a change to their hours, times or location of work (e.g. reducing working time, working from home or working compressed hours).

For a full discussion of the relevant law and policy, see the Library's briefing paper, [Flexible working](#).

2. Press articles

Independent, 25 May 2016

[More than a million carers are living in poverty, research warns](#)

Campaigners have called for financial and practical support for carers to be improved amid concerns many are undergoing severe financial hardship

BBC News, 7 May 2016

[Unpaid carers in England 'struggling', report says](#)

Guardian, 12 April 2016

[Caring for home and family is real work – and it deserves proper recognition - and it deserves proper recognition;](#)

Officials are right to put a value on domestic labour, but other ways we care for loved ones matter too

The Guardian, February 18 2016

[Unpaid carers can't keep on plugging gaps in the NHS and social care](#)

More people need care than get it, and the gap is growing. Support for family carers is vital

Telegraph, 23 Jan 2016

[Who cares? Meet the children who juggle school with looking after their parents](#)

3. Press releases

Carers Week

Patchy support from employers forcing many carers to forgo promotions, reduce working hours or leave work altogether

8 June 2016

The life chances of many of the 3 million people in the UK who combine paid work with caring for a disabled, older or ill family member or friend are being damaged by a lack of support and awareness about caring from employers, according to new research launched today for Carers Week 2016.

Carers reported significant barriers to being able to balance caring for a family member or friend with paid employment:

- Over a third (38%) don't feel comfortable talking about caring at work
- Over a third (35%) say their employer doesn't understand their caring role
- A third (33%) say their employer doesn't have policies in place to support carers

This lack of support and recognition from employers is having a significant impact on carers' life chances, causing many carers to forgo promotions, reduce their working hours or leave work altogether. As a result of barriers to balancing employment and care:³

- 60% of carers have given up work or reduced their hours to care
- 25% of carers have been unable to pursue, or had to turn down, a promotion
- 37% of carers say their work has suffered
- 42% of carers have struggled financially

More specifically, when an employer doesn't have policies in place to support those balancing work and care, the negative impact on carers is even more significant:

- 72% of carers have given up work or reduced their hours to care
- 29% of carers have been unable to pursue, or had to turn down, a promotion
- 44% of carers say their work has suffered
- 55% of carers have struggled financially

When carers are supported by their local community,⁴ they are twice as likely to always be able to balance employment and care [5]. However, only a minority of carers say they actually feel valued and recognised by their community (26%), indicating that there is still a long way to go.

Emily Holzhausen, who leads the Carers Week partnership, said:

"Despite 1 in 9 people in the UK workforce balancing paid work with caring for a disabled, older or ill family member or friend, caring still remains a relatively hidden issue in many workplaces. Indeed, high

numbers of carers told us that they don't feel comfortable talking about their caring role at work and that their managers and colleagues don't understand their caring responsibilities.

"There are a number of ways that employers can improve the way they support carers in the workplace. An understanding manager, flexible working policies, and workplace carers' networks that offer peer support all have a vital role to play in supporting carers in employment.

"This support delivers a triple win for carers, employers and the wider economy. Evidence shows that supportive employers help carers to stay in work for longer and have a life of their own outside of caring; which in turn leads to employers benefitting from greater staff retention, less absence and improved performance and productivity. As our population ages, growing numbers of people will be juggling work and care. This is an issue that employers can't afford ignore."

Simple actions that employers can take to improve the way they support carers, include:

- Introduce and promote flexible working policies
- Introduce paid care leave so that carers are not forced to take annual leave for caring emergencies or to support the person they care for
- Set-up or encourage staff to set-up a carers' staff network
- Ensure there is regular communication to all employees informing them of their right to request flexible working and take emergency time off

Carers Week is made possible by Carers UK joining forces with Age UK, Carers Trust, Independent Age, Macmillan Cancer Support, Motor Neurone Disease Association and MS Society.

Carers UK

Combination of inadequate support and lack of awareness from communities is damaging life chances of UK's carers

06 June 2016

The life chances of many of the 6.5 million people in the UK who care, unpaid, for a disabled, older or ill family member or friend, are being damaged by inadequate support from local services, according to [new research](#) launched today for [Carers Week](#) 2016.

What's more, when carers face a lack of understanding about their caring role from the overall community,² the negative impact on their health, wellbeing, relationships and finances is exacerbated.

Three-quarters of carers (74%) with some of the most intensive caring responsibilities say their community does not understand or value their caring role, resulting in high numbers of carers struggling to balance other areas of their lives alongside caring.

One carer said:

“As a carer attempting to get understanding, advice, support and emergency care from the ‘community’ – such as GP, public transport, social services, dentist pharmacies and hospitals – it can be very challenging, exhausting and beyond stressful.”

Mixed support from local services means that the majority of carers are facing barriers to maintaining their health, balancing work and care, and balancing education and care³, which is having a markedly negatively impact on their life chances:

- Over half of carers (51%) have let a health problem go untreated
- Half of carers (50%) have seen their mental health get worse
- Two thirds of carers (66%) have given up work or reduced their hours to care
- Almost half of carers (47%) have struggled financially
- Almost one third of carers (31%) only get help when it is an emergency

One carer said:

“I find my care needs pushed further and further away until they break down completely and become an emergency. Last time this happened, I was in hospital for 10 days.”

The Carers Week research shows that when carers are supported by their community, they face far fewer barriers to having a life outside of their caring role:⁴

- Carers who are supported by their communities are three times more likely to always be able to maintain a healthy lifestyle (27% compared with 9%)
- Carers who are supported by their communities are three times more likely to always be able to maintain relationships with close friends and family (29% compared with 9%)
- Carers who are not supported by their communities are more than twice as likely to never be able to balance work with care (35% compared with 15%)
- Carers who are not supported by their communities are more than twice as likely to never be able to balance education with care (47% compared with 23%)

Emily Holzhausen, who leads the Carers Week partnership, said:

“Carers have told us that it makes a huge difference to their lives when they are supported by their local services and communities; whether that’s being offered a flexible appointment to see their GP, having flexible working policies from their employers, or their school raising awareness of caring and disability.

“Despite this, the majority of carers told us that their local community was not supportive of their caring role, which in turn is having a significant and negatively impact on their life chances.

“This report comes at an opportune moment, with a new Carers’ Strategy in development in England, and new governments forming

across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We're calling on individuals, organisations and governments to think about what they can do to improve the lives of carers in their community."

The seven charities driving Carers Week are calling for adequate funding for social care support to be prioritised by newly elected Governments and Assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and by the UK Government.

Carers Week is made possible by Carers UK joining forces with Age UK, Carers Trust, Independent Age, Macmillan Cancer Support, Motor Neurone Disease Association and MS Society.

Carers UK

Building Carer Friendly Communities: research report for Carers Week 2016

6 June 2016

The Carers Week 2016 research report presents key findings on Carer Friendly Communities across five themes: community, health, employment, education and older carers.

The research for this report was carried out as part of Carers UK annual State of Caring Survey. A total of 6,149 carers and former carers responded to Carers UK's annual State of Caring Survey between March and April 2016.

Carers UK

Carers UK responds to Care Quality Commission's five year strategy

24 May 2016

Today, the Care Quality Commission published its [5 Year Strategy from 2016-2021](#), setting out its ambition for a more targeted, responsive and collaborative approach to regulation, so that more people can receive high-quality care.

Emily Holzhausen, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, said:

"We're pleased to see the direction of travel for the Care Quality Commission and the recognition that unpaid carers have valuable information, experience and insight into the quality of care that is provided. The quality of care services across health and social care has a direct impact, not just on the quality of life of the person receiving care, but on carers too.

"Good services have the ability to transform lives and make caring easier for England's 5.4 million carers. Carers UK's evidence from carers is that poor quality services impact negatively on carers' own health and wellbeing, their relationships with others and their ability to stay in

employment. Where carers aren't supported by reliable and good quality services, they feel their role is undervalued.

"We welcome the Strategy's new focus looking at how good care services are in particular areas of the country. Carers can have contact with up to 30 different services and professionals so what matters to them is whether the quality of all of these services add up to the right kind of support for people with complex and long-term conditions. We hope that the "local quality map" will develop over time to look at key interactions between services and carers' experiences and that it will provide an important part of this experience and evidence base."

NHS England

Commitment to Carers – improving carer health and wellbeing

17 May 2016

Developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners and which forms part of NHS England's ongoing **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

The 'integrated approach' provides a toolkit that clarifies the new duties on NHS organisations under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014, provides a template Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support joined up working locally, and includes numerous examples of positive practice of work that have proven successful in supporting carers and their families.

Carers are twice as likely to suffer from ill health as non-carers. More than half of those who provide more substantial care have suffered physical ill health as a result of caring, and more than 70 per cent of those caring round the clock have suffered mental ill health at some time.

Taking an integrated approach to delivering support for carers allows the NHS to develop new models of delivering care and allows different services to work together and respond more flexibly to the needs of individual carers and their families.

Neil Churchill, Director of Patient Experience at NHS England, said: "The NHS must do everything it can to help end a situation where carers are twice as likely to suffer from ill health as non-carers. This toolkit will make it easier for carers to access the right support, at the right time and in the right place – we hope those working across the NHS will use it to improve the support they offer."

Helen Leadbitter, Operational Programme Manager at the Children's Society, said: "The Children's Society welcomes the publication of this toolkit which has the potential to help ensure that England's 170,000 young carers and their families get the support they need at the time they need it. The integrated approach outlined in this toolkit offers an opportunity for all local partners involved in the care of

children to co-operate with each other in supporting young carers and their families in a whole systems, whole family approach” .

Emily Holzhausen, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Carers UK said: “The toolkit sets out some really important clear principles around the duty to cooperate to improve carers’ health and well-being and sets out some common principles across health and social care that could transform carers’ lives. It tackles some key issues that carers have raised time and again and will pay dividends for many carers in improving their experience of care, their ability to juggle work and care, and improve their health and well-being” .

Professor David Croisedale-Appleby OBE, Chair of the Standing Commission on Carers, said: “The Standing Commission of Carers is hopeful that implementation of this toolkit will evidence not only improvements in the lived experience of carers but also the value of working in partnership in an integrated health and social care system; a system that values the carer’s voice and supports staff to provide optimal care for carers consistently.

“The MOU included as part of this toolkit provides an excellent basis for areas that are looking at more regionally based decision-making and devolved responsibilities from national bodies” .

Copies of the toolkit are being sent out to clinical commissioning groups, directors of social services, health and wellbeing boards and local carer support organisations.

Copies of the toolkit can be accessed on our: [Commitment to carers web page](#).

Carers UK

More than half of carers report bleak outlook for 2016 as new law not yet delivering promised improvements to their lives

07 May 2016

Carers UK is calling for the Government, local authorities and health bodies to redouble their efforts to support England’s 5.4 million unpaid carers, as new research from the charity reveals how a perfect storm of squeezed public services and financial pressures is pushing carers to the brink.

Carers UK’s [State of Caring 2016](#) report shows that, one year on from the implementation of the Care Act 2014 – designed to improve support for carers – carers in England are still struggling to get the support they need to care well, maintain their own health, balance work and care, and have a life of their own outside of caring.

Carers’ experiences show that the positive rights outlined in the Care Act are not matching up with reality. Growing numbers of carers believe

their quality of life will get worse over 2016 (54%), despite the Care Act being in force, compared with expectations last year (50%) before the legislation was introduced.³

Under the new legislation, all carers are entitled to a timely assessment of their needs.⁴ Yet, shockingly, 1 in 3 carers (29%) who reported having an assessment in the past year had to wait six months or longer for it. More alarming still, over one-third of carers (39%) looking after someone at the end of their life had to wait six months or more for an assessment.

Almost one-quarter of carers (22%) had to request an assessment for themselves over the last year instead of having one offered to them, as the law requires.

Not only are carers facing barriers to getting an assessment, but they told Carers UK that the assessments they have received are, consistently, not fit-for-purpose. Of carers who received an assessment in the past year:

- 2 in 3 (68%) felt their need to have regular breaks from caring was either not considered or not thoroughly considered
- Only 1 in 3 (35%) felt that support to look after their own health was thoroughly considered
- 3 in 4 working age carers (74%) did not feel that the support needed to juggle care with work was sufficiently considered
- 1 in 5 (21%) said they received little or no helpful information or advice, and felt they didn't know where to go for support with caring

Carers UK's research shows that carers continue to see negative impacts on their finances, with 48% of those caring 35 hours or more struggling to make ends meet. Half of carers responding to the survey (49%) have left work to care, with a further quarter (23%) reducing their hours.

The Census shows that those providing 50 hours or more care a week are twice as likely to be in poor health as non-carers.⁵ Yet 1 in 5 (20%) carers providing 50 hours or more support a week are receiving no support whatsoever with their caring role.

These findings are particularly stark in the wider context of reducing support services and changes to social security. Carers UK's survey revealed further evidence that a reduction in public services⁶ is hitting carers and their families hard. 1 in 3 carers (34%) reported a change in the amount of care and support services they or the person they care for receive. Of these, over half (59%) saw a reduction in care and support services due to cost or availability; this includes 13% who said a service was closed with no replacement offered.

Heléna Herklots, Chief Executive of Carers UK, said:

"The Care Act is a powerful piece of legislation, for the very first time giving carers the same right to support as the person they look after. But one year on from the Care Act coming into force and carers' lives have not improved – in fact, compared with last year, more carers believe their quality of life will get worse in the next year."

If the Care Act is to deliver on its promise to improve support for carers, the Government must set-out a clear expectation of when carer's assessments should be carried out, alongside investment in the care and support services that are desperately needed to backup families.

Caring is not an issue that we, as a society, can afford to ignore. After all, caring will touch each and every one of our lives – whether we provide care for a loved one or need care ourselves. With this in mind, the Government's new Carers' Strategy, which is currently being developed, is a vital opportunity to ensure caring, and the issues that matter most to carers, are at the heart of policies, programmes and legislation across Government. "

Carers UK believes that immediate practical action on the following is needed to make a difference to carers' lives:

- Government setting-out clear expectations on the timing of carer's assessments
- Local authorities reviewing their practices to support carers, including waiting times for assessments and how information and advice can reach carers earlier
- Many more local authorities and employers working with organisations like Employers for Carers to boost workplace support for carers to remain in and return to work
- The NHS building on existing policies that support carers by introducing carer passports⁷ in every hospital and ensuring GP practices are identifying carers and giving them the support and advice they need to improve their quality of life.

[Click here](#) to download the State of Caring 2016 report.

Department of Health

Carers strategy: call for evidence

18 March 2016

We think that we need a new strategy for carers that sets out how more can be done to support them. It needs to reflect their lives now, their health and financial concerns, and give them the support they need to live well while caring for a family member or friend.

To help us develop the strategy, we want to hear from carers, those who have someone who care for them, business, social workers, NHS staff and other professionals that support carers.

We have extended the closing date until 31 July 2016 (from June 30 2016). This will help to make sure we hear from all those we would like to reach and understand the complex diversity of caring roles – both carers and those they care for.

Carers Trust

Young Carers Awareness Day 2016

Young Carers Awareness Day is a national day of recognition for the 700,000 young carers in the UK.

28 Jan 2016

Young carers are children and young people under 18 years old who provide unpaid care to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

We want Young Carers Awareness Day to get everyone talking about the thousands of carers who are so often unidentified, and who miss out on the vital services and support that they are entitled to.

New research: young carers missing out on childhood

Research released to mark [Young Carers Awareness Day](#) reveals that 80% of young carers are missing out on childhood experiences because of caring for family or friends.

Instead of seeing friends, enjoying hobbies and completing, these children, as young as 10-years-old, are cleaning, cooking, administering medicine, shopping and looking after a brother or sister – along with many other daily tasks.

An audience with young carers

We invited more than 20 young and young adult carers to put their questions and concerns about being a carer to a carefully selected panel. The event was chaired by Nicky Cox, Editor of First News — the children's national newspaper. [Watch a recording of the event.](#)

Carers Trust

Research reveals 80% of young carers miss out on childhood experiences

27 Jan 2016

New survey results published today reveal that up to 80% of young carers are missing out on childhood because they are caring for family and friends.

Instead of seeing friends, enjoying hobbies and completing their homework, these children, as young as 10-years-old, are cleaning, cooking, administering medicine, shopping and looking after a brother or sister – along with many other daily tasks.

The research has been released to mark Young Carers Awareness Day, which aims to shine a spotlight on the vast range of tasks these children carry out, day-in-day-out. The day of action includes numerous 'audience with young carers' events taking place across the country, in a bid to help identify others who may not know they are a young carer, and to help them receive the support they desperately need.

The survey results reveal that:

- 80% of young carers say they miss out on what other children their age are doing because of their caring role;
- 82% said they miss out on seeing friends – 60% said they miss attending events and other activities and 45% struggle to get their homework done on time;
- 80% carry out their caring role every day;
- 50% help to administer medicines to family members;
- Almost a quarter of those surveyed care for more than 20 hours a week;
- 41% help with personal care, such as washing and helping the person they care for to get dressed.

Gail Scott-Spicer, CEO of Carers Trust, said:

“Thousands of young carers across the UK are missing out on their childhoods because they are caring for an ill family member. Playing out with friends, going on trips and to the cinema are some of the things that most young people look forward to, but for many young carers their reality is cleaning, shopping and cooking instead.

“Young carers are constantly burdened with the worry of what is happening to the parent or sibling they care for at home. Their caring role never stops - whether they are at home or school.

“As part of Young Carers Awareness Day, we want as many people as possible to help identify and raise awareness of young carers and the invaluable work they do.

“We want these children to be able to live a full life, like their friends, which means they won't be missing out on their childhoods - getting the help and support they desperately need.”

Carers Trust

Young adult carers four times more likely to drop out of college or university

2 Jul 2015

Carers Trust Wales' report on the experiences of young adult carers, 'Time to be Heard Wales', has found that young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university than a young person without caring responsibilities.

The report, to be launched before the Senedd on 2 July, provides recommendations about what can be done to better support young adult carers in Wales. The event will include speeches from young adult carers, the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis AM, and the Deputy Minister for Health, Vaughan Gething AM.

Young adult carers are those aged 14-25 who care, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem

or an addiction cannot cope without their support. There are over 22,000 young adult carers in Wales balancing their caring duties with their education, employment or training – that’s at least one young adult carer in every class.

The report is part of Carers Trust Wales’ campaign to raise awareness of young adult carers among decision makers in Wales, and to give young adult carers the opportunities they need to make their voice heard. Carers Trust Wales has spent the past year talking to young adult carers in Wales, finding out about the barriers they face and what would make a difference to their lives.

The ‘Time to be Heard Wales’ report draws on these findings as well as research that Carers Trust commissioned the University of Nottingham to undertake of young adult carers UK-wide.

The report also finds that young adult carers:

- Miss or cut short on average 48 school days a year because of their caring role
- Over a third (35%) had not informed someone in school that they were a carer
- Experience high rates of bullying – one quarter reported bullying and abuse in school because they were a carer
- Have higher rates of poor mental and physical health than the average young person
- Jodie Williams, a young adult carer who is in her first year of university, said: “One of the challenges of being a young adult carer is having a balance. Making sure that I focus on myself as well as everything else.

“One of the challenges with education is having the time to do everything and to take part in as much as I can. Being a young adult carer makes the decision to carry on with education very difficult. I found that a very important part of the decision is to consider everything, for example location, time, and money.

“The main thing that has really helped me is having support. One of the smallest things, just knowing someone is there to talk to. It really makes a difference.”

Simon Hatch, Director of Carers Trust Wales, said: “There are at least 22,655 young adult carers in Wales, and we believe it’s time their voices were heard.

“Many young adult carers have been caring for most of their lives. Often putting the needs of the person they care for above their own. Leaving school, going to college or university, entering employment – these are difficult transitions for all young adults. But for young adult carers, when there isn’t the support that they need, they can be insurmountable obstacles.

“This report is clear, there is a need for greater recognition, support and understanding of young adult carers in local authorities, education, and employment.

It is time to listen to the voices of young adult carers and create a Wales that not only gives young adult carers the support they need but also the recognition they deserve.”

4. EDM, Parliamentary questions and debate

4.1 Early Day Motion

[CARERS WEEK 2016](#)

That this House welcomes this year's annual Carers Week, organised by Carers UK, which runs from 6 to 12 June 2016; notes that this is an awareness campaign dedicated to highlighting the contribution of the UK's 6.5 million unpaid carers whilst spreading the word about support available to those who are caring; further notes that this year's campaign focuses on building Carer Friendly Communities; highlights the fact that care provided by carers in the UK is worth around £132 billion each year, and that two in three carers say a lack of support from their community makes it harder to look after the person they care for; recognises that as people can become carers overnight, support must be readily available; commends Age UK, Carers Trust, Carers UK, Independent Age, McMillan Cancer Support, the MNDA and the MS Society for their support in the campaign; and calls on the Government to work in conjunction with the organisers and supporters of Carers Week to ensure that carers are given the full and proper assistance that they deserve.

26 May 2016 | Early day motions | 121 (session 2016-17)

Primary sponsor: Ferrier, Margaret

4.2 PQs

[Carers](#)

Asked by: Kendall, Liz

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the (a) average and (b) longest wait was for a carers' assessment after an initial request was made since the introduction of the Carers Act 2014.

Answering member: Alistair Burt

There is no central collection of data on the average and longest wait for a carer's assessment after an initial request was made since the introduction of the Carers Act 2014. Nor is data collected centrally on the number of people currently on the waiting list for a carer's assessment.

Data on the number of carers assessed during the financial year 2014-15 by local authority is attached. It should be noted that these figures include both joint and separate assessments from the cared for person. The source for this data is Short and Long Term Support (SALT), England 2014-15. This return is collected and published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Link to SALT:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB18663>

25 May 2016 | Written questions | 37763

[Children: Carers](#)

Asked by: Cunningham, Mr Jim

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of carers aged 16 and under looking after a relative in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Edward Timpson

According to the Office for National Statistics, there were 166,000 young carers in 2011.

The Government has changed the law so that all young carers have been entitled to an assessment of their needs for support since April 2015, regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide, or how much time they spend caring. Around 60% of young carers are thought to be eligible for free school meals, and those who have been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years will attract pupil premium funding to the schools that they attend.

We do not specifically estimate the amount of financial support provided to young carers.

24 May 2016 | Written questions | 37692

[Carer's Allowance](#)

Asked by: Field, Frank

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate he has made of the rate of take-up of carer's allowance; and what steps he is taking to improve that rate.

Answering member: Justin Tomlinson

There are a number of qualifying conditions that have to be met in order for a claimant to receive Carer's Allowance. These include providing care for 35 hours a week to a disabled person in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit; earning less than £110 net a week; and not being in full time education. There is no basis on which we could accurately make such an assessment on take-up rates given that these and other conditions have to be satisfied to receive Carer's Allowance, and they can only be tested when an actual claim is made.

Information on Carer's Allowance is widely available, including on Gov.UK. We have also introduced a new online claiming service for Carer's Allowance, which was designed using customer insight. This has proved extremely popular with claimants, with around seven out of ten claims now being made that way and customer satisfaction rates of 90 per cent. Performance data is available on Gov.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/performance/carers-allowance>

DWP also works closely with stakeholders to promote Carer's Allowance, this includes regular engagement with Carers UK; a Carer's Allowance Unit Outreach Manager who regularly attends events throughout England, Scotland and Wales promoting Carer's Allowance; and engagement with Carers groups through the DWP National Partnership Team. Further information on Carer's Allowance is available on Gov.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance>

23 May 2016 | Written questions | 37081

[Carers](#)

Asked by: Prisk, Mr Mark

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the scope is of the current consultation on the Government National Carers Strategy.

Answering member: Alistair Burt

The Government recognises the valuable contribution made by carers, many of whom spend a significant proportion of their life providing support to family members, friends and neighbours and they must receive support.

This is why the Department is leading on a new cross-Government National Carers Strategy to look at what more we can do to support existing and future carers.

On 18 March the Department launched the National Carers Strategy call for evidence for carers and those who support them. This is focussed on improving knowledge of local practice and hearing from carers about the kind of support that helps them. The consultation will end on 30 June 2016. We intend to publish the new strategy towards the end of 2016 but want to ensure that it is based on an academically robust examination of evidence and draws on a wide range of views and ideas.

As the strategy develops, we will consider evidence around the economic impact of caring and what role it plays within the health and care sectors and wider society. We will also look at both international and national best practice to see what support works best for carers so that they can find a healthy balance between providing high quality care and support and maintaining their own life and wellbeing.

26 Apr 2016 | Written questions | 34537

[Carer's Allowance](#)

Asked by: Haigh, Louise

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have decreased their working hours in order to remain eligible for the carers allowance since the introduction of the National Living Wage.

Answering member: Justin Tomlinson

I have made no such estimate and I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to her on the 25 April 2016 to Question [UIN34752](#)

12 May 2016 | Written questions | 36994

[Carer's Allowance](#)

Asked by: Haigh, Louise

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the eligibility threshold for carer's allowance to enable carers working 16 hours per week on the new National Living Wage to keep their entitlement to that allowance.

Answering member: Justin Tomlinson

The primary purpose of Carer's Allowance is to provide a measure of financial support and recognition for people who give up the opportunity of full-time employment in order to provide regular and substantial care for a severely disabled person. It is not, and was never intended to be, a carer's wage or a payment for the services of caring, nor is it intended to replace lost or forgone earnings in their entirety.

The earnings limit for Carer's Allowance is a net figure which is the figure left once income tax, National Insurance contributions and half of any contributions to an occupational or personal pension are deducted from earnings. There are also a number of other deductions which can be made that mean that people can earn significantly more than £110 per week and still be eligible for Carer's Allowance.

The Carer's Allowance earnings limit is not linked to the number of hours worked. Instead, it is set at a level that aims to encourage those who give up full time work in order to undertake caring responsibilities to maintain a link with the labour market through part time work.

Whilst the Government does not link the earnings limit to any other particular factor (including the National Living Wage), we do keep it under regular review and increase it when it is warranted and affordable, and this will continue to be our approach. Most recently in April 2015 the earnings limit was increased by 8% to £110, far outstripping the general increase in earnings.

For those carers working around 16 hours a week on a low income and receiving Working Tax Credit, Carer's Allowance is taken fully into account as income. That means that any loss in Carer's Allowance is likely to be offset by an increase in Working Tax Credit, and this is one of the changes of circumstances that results in an immediate change to Tax Credits. Going forward the earnings taper in Universal Credit will help ensure that people are always better off in work.

25 Apr 2016 | Written questions | 34752

[Social Security Benefits: Carers](#)

Asked by: Baroness King of Bow

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have notified full-time carers affected by the benefit cap of their decision to exempt such claimants following the High Court judgment against the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Answering member: Lord Freud

We will be writing to claimants potentially affected by the planned changes to the benefit cap in the coming months, ahead of the launch of the new benefit cap levels from the Autumn. These notifications will include details of the forthcoming exemptions. We are also working with stakeholder organisations to support them to share information with affected carers.

19 Apr 2016 | Written questions | HL7442

[Carers: Young People](#)

Asked by: Smith, Royston

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate her Department has made of the savings to the public purse of young carers supporting their families instead of the local authority doing so.

Answering member: Edward Timpson

Young carers are this country's unsung heroes, selflessly providing support for the people they love. Yet, for the most noble of reasons, they can often overlook their own needs. This government recognises the enormous contribution that young carers make and that's why we are improving support for carers of all ages and developing a new cross-government carers strategy.

No official assessment has been made of the savings to the public purse of young carers supporting their families.

16 Mar 2016 | Written questions | 30140

[Mental Illness: Carers](#)

Asked by: Berger, Luciana

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will estimate the monetary value of (a) unpaid care provided to people with mental health issues and (b) the support to these carers by the NHS in each of the last five years.

Answering member: Alistair Burt

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, the report of the independent Mental Health Taskforce, was published by NHS England on 15 February 2016. The report includes details of an analysis commissioned by NHS England which found that the national cost of dedicated mental health support and services totals £34 billion. It also noted that if all hours of care provided by unpaid carers to people with mental health issues were instead provided by paid staff, the cost would be approximately £14 billion (this is included in the £34 billion total).

The Taskforce report is available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2015/09/fyfv-mental-hlth-taskforce.pdf>

Separately, a 2013 report by the Office of National Statistics valued informal care provided in the United Kingdom at £61.7 billion per year

(as an output of household production), although it is not possible to identify within this unpaid care specifically provided to people with mental health issues.

The Government recognises the invaluable contribution made by unpaid carers and the importance of supporting them in their caring roles. We have also made an additional £400 million available to the National Health Service between 2011 and 2015 to provide carers with breaks from their caring responsibilities to sustain them in their caring role. The equivalent annual allocation of £130 million for carers breaks is now included in the Better Care Fund.

In May 2014, NHS England published its action plan **NHS England – Commitment to carers**, it includes a series of commitments around eight priorities. NHS England launched new commissioning guidelines in December 2014 entitled Commissioning for Carers: Principles and resources to support effective commissioning for adult and young carers.

NHS support represents only one form of Government support for carers. We continue to support the improved rights for carers enshrined in the Care Act 2014. This includes a right to an assessment on the appearance of needs for support that will look at a carer's wellbeing in their own right and what support they may need in their caring role. The Department has provided £104 million of funding to local authorities for these rights in 2015/16.

The Department is also leading the development of a new cross-Government National Carers Strategy that will look at what more we can do to support existing carers and those of the future.

04 Mar 2016 | Written questions | 29233

[Older Carers](#)

Asked by: Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con)

What steps the Government is taking to help older female carers balance the demands of work with caring for older relatives.

Answering member: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women and Equalities and Family Justice (Caroline Dinenage)

Unpaid carers are the unsung heroes of our society, which is why the Care Act 2014 gave carers new rights, focusing on their wellbeing, which includes their employment. In 2015, the Government extended the right to request flexible working arrangements, and we are also investing £1.6 million in nine pilot sites, exploring ways to support people who are combining work and caring responsibilities.

14 Jan 2016 | Oral answers to questions | 604 c992

[Carers](#)

Asked by: Baroness Redfern

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment the Department for Health has made of the number of adult carers in the UK, and the

capacity of those carers to provide an improved quality of care to individuals in their own homes.

Answering member: Lord Prior of Brampton

We have assumed the Noble Lady is referring to informal, unpaid, carers rather than to paid care workers.

The 2011 Census indicated that there are approximately 6.26 million adults with informal caring responsibilities in the United Kingdom.

The Government recognises the invaluable contribution made by unpaid carers and the importance of supporting them in their caring roles. That is why we continue to support implementation of the improved rights for carers enshrined in The Care Act 2014. This includes a right to an assessment on the appearance of needs for support that will look at a carer's wellbeing in their own right and what support they may need in their caring role.

The Department has provided £104 million of funding to local authorities for these rights in 2015/16, which include, for the first time, a legal duty on local authorities to meet carers' eligible needs for support. We have also made an additional £400 million available to the NHS between 2011 and 2015 to provide carers with breaks from their caring responsibilities to sustain them in their caring role. The carers' breaks funding of £130 million for 2015/16 is in the Better Care Fund.

The Department is also leading the development of a new cross-Government National Carers Strategy that will look at what more we can do to support existing carers and future carers.

04 Jan 2016 | Written questions | HL4671

[Employment: Carers](#)

Asked by: Smith, Owen

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress his Department has made on establishing pilot schemes to support carers to stay in work in North Tyneside, Northamptonshire, Cheshire West, Gateshead, Bury, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Staffordshire and Stoke and Sefton.

Answering member: Justin Tomlinson

Government has provided £1.6 million of funding for nine Carers in Employment pilots in North Tyneside, Northamptonshire, Cheshire West, Gateshead, Bury, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Staffordshire and Stoke and Sefton, to explore how carers can be supported to stay in, or return to paid work alongside their caring responsibilities. They began running in all nine Local Authorities from April 2015. These pilot projects support local businesses to make the best use of flexible working arrangements, maximise the use of assistive technology; improve carers' access to information and resources, and support carers to set up micro-businesses that will expand the local care market.

24 Nov 2015 | Written questions | 17088

[Carers](#)

Asked by: Mulholland, Greg

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to support carers who are also in full or part-time employment.

Answering member: Alistair Burt

The Government recognises the valuable contribution made by carers, many of whom spend a significant proportion of their life providing support to family members or friends. Professionals in health, education, social care and other parts of the community including employers, have a key role to play in identifying and signposting those with caring responsibilities to information, advice and support.

The Care Act 2014 is a historic step for carers, for the first time putting their rights on the same footing as the people they care for. Under the Care Act, local authorities have an expanded duty to assess carers, removing the previous test of whether they were providing "regular and substantial" care. This is predicted to lead to an additional 360,000 carers a year receiving an assessment by 2018/19. In addition, local authorities are required to ensure that there is a comprehensive information and advice service available to their local population, specifically including carers.

Under the Act, carers' assessments will include a thorough consideration of the impact a caring role has on a carer's wellbeing and the outcomes they wish to achieve, including their ability to engage in work, training, education or volunteering. On the basis of these assessments, local authorities will have a duty to meet eligible needs for support (and will also be able to meet needs which are not considered eligible). The Department of Health has provided £104 million of funding to local authorities for additional carer assessment and support in 2015/16.

The Care Act requires National Health Service bodies and local authorities to co-operate with each other in the exercise of their respective functions relevant to care and support, including those relating to carers, so we would expect local authorities and NHS bodies to cooperate in identifying and signposting carers.

In addition, we made it clear in our mandate to NHS England that by 2015, carers looking after friends and family members should routinely have access to information and advice about support available, including respite care. This supports Government investment of £400 million between 2011 – 2015 to improve NHS support for carers and to enable them to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

Support for carers more broadly is integral to the work NHS England is leading to improve the quality of life of people with long term conditions. NHS England published a **Commitment to Carers** in May 2014 - an action plan with a series of commitments around eight priorities, including raising the profile of carers; person-centred, well-coordinated care, commissioning support and partnership links. NHS England are currently reviewing progress and developing plans for next steps.

The Department of Health has also provided over £2 million in recent years to the professional bodies such as the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Nursing, as well as Carers UK and the Carers Trust, to develop initiatives to raise awareness of carers among healthcare professionals and to help identify and support carers. Initiatives have included the recruitment of GP carer champions, work with pharmacy organisations to identify carers in pharmacy settings, and to identify more carers through the 2014 flu vaccination campaign.

We recognise that many carers of working age wish to stay in touch with the job market for their financial well-being and to enhance their own lives and the lives of those for whom they care. Many also feel under pressure to give up paid work to care.

On 30 June 2015 the Government extended a right request flexible working arrangements after a 26 weeks' qualifying period, building on a previous entitlement for some carers. This will help to normalise the kind of flexible working patterns that can help carers balance different responsibilities.

On 13 February the Government launched a joint Department of Health, Government Equality Office and Department for Work and Pensions investment of £1.6 million in pilots in nine local authority areas to explore ways in which people can be supported to combine work and care. Through the scheme, nine pilot areas will explore how professional support, technology, volunteering, informal networks and support from employers can be combined to ease the pressure of caring. This will build on the requirement in the Care Act to consider support for employment as part of an assessment of eligible needs, set out above.

More broadly, the Department for Work and Pensions continues to invest in supporting carers to return to work. For example, income replacement benefits help people and households on lower incomes, and include a carer premium, currently £34.60 a week. An equivalent additional amount applies in Pension Credit. Universal Credit will also include a carer element at the rate of £150.39 per monthly assessment period. This means that lower-income carers can be better off than others who receive these benefits.

On 1 July my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State (Mr Jeremy Hunt) announced that I will develop a new carers' strategy that looks at the best of international practice and examines what more we can do to support existing carers and the new carers we will need.

08 Sep 2015 | Written questions | 8191

4.3 Debate

[Carers](#)

20 Jun 2013 | Backbench debates | 564 cc1070-1115

5. Further reading

Department of Health consultation: [How can we improve support for carers?](#) (runs from 18 Mar 2016 to 31 Jul 2016)

Carers UK, [Building Carer Friendly Communities](#) (June 2016)

The Carers Week 2016 research report presents key findings on Carer Friendly Communities across five themes: community, health, employment, education and older carers.

Carers UK, [State of Caring 2016](#) (7 May 2016)

Care Quality Commission, [Our strategy for 2016 to 2021](#) (updated May 2016).

Carers' Trust, [Flexible working](#) (revised: May 2016)

NHS England, [NHS England Commitment to Carers End of Year Progress Summary 2014/2015](#) (August 2015)

Carers UK, [Assessments and the Care Act Getting help in England from April 2015](#) (November 2014)

This factsheet contains information about the new system of care and support that will come into place in England on 1 April 2015.

Carers UK briefing: [Care Act 2014](#) (June 2014)

This briefing covers the main relevant provisions for carers.

Carers UK, [Supporting working carers. A guide to requesting flexible working](#) (June 2014)

NHS England, [Commissioning for Carers: Principles and resources to support effective commissioning for adult and young carers](#) (December 2014)

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