**Updated briefing on LGBTQ+ carers**

**Introduction**

As part of the Making Carers Count project, Carers UK previously published a [research report](https://www.carersuk.org/media/apae5zm5/carers-uk-lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-carers-covid-report-2022.pdf) looking at the experiences of LGB+ carers, based on surveys conducted during 2020 and 2021. This briefing provides an update by highlighting the findings from State of Caring 2023, and sharing the data on caring and sexual orientation and gender identity from the Census 2021.

**State of Caring 2023 findings[[1]](#footnote-2)**

**Finances**

* **LGB+ carers[[2]](#footnote-3) were more likely to be struggling financially.** 40% of LGB+ carers said they were struggling to make ends meet, compared with 28% of heterosexual carers. 74% of LGB+ carers said they were worried about living costs and whether they can manage in the future, compared with 60% of heterosexual carers.

*“I am personally very poor and dependent on the income and residence of the person I care for. We have enough because I am careful, but very little outside that. I haven't taken a holiday in over a decade because I don't have the money for it.”* Queer carer

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to be cutting back on things.** 53% of LGB+ carers had cut back on seeing friends/family compared to 46% of heterosexual carers. 41% of LGB+ carers had cut back on essentials like food or heating compared with 33% of heterosexual carers.
* **LGB+ carers were more likely to say the cost-of-living crisis was affecting their health.** 76% of LGB+ carers said the increase in the cost-of-living was having a negative impact on their physical or mental health, compared with 63% of heterosexual carers.

*“I am struggling to balance studying, working and caring but need to work to afford the cost of living.”* Bisexual carer

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to say they needed more financial support.** 60% of LGB+ carers said they needed more financial support compared with 49% of heterosexual carers.

*“I’m heavily in debt because the benefits system was not properly explained when I started my caring role*.” Gay/Lesbian carer

**Health**

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to say that caring had impacted on their mental health.** 84% of LGB+ carers said they feel stressed or anxious, compared with 79% of heterosexual carers, and 56% of LGB+ carers said they feel depressed compared with 49% of heterosexual carers.

*“I've been diagnosed as having burnout about 6 weeks ago and I've just been hanging in there ever since. I need to take naps most days and my CBT treatment has my Stress levels constantly at severe.”* Queer carer

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to feel lonely.** 59% of LGB+ carers said they feel lonely compared with 50% of heterosexual carers. 43% of LGB+ carers said they needed support to prevent/reduce their loneliness/social isolation compared with 35% of heterosexual carers.
* **LGB+ carers were more likely to say they needed more support with health and wellbeing.** 68% of LGB+ carers said they needed more support to look after their own health and wellbeing compared with 63% of heterosexual carers.

*“I think the emotional support sometimes needed by carers goes unrecognised .i.e., if you are not providing a lot of physical care you are not a real carer. Also the family dynamics change when you live with a parent and carer for them particularly if it’s in their own home and this can be very stressful.”* Gay/Lesbian carer

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to say they needed a break.** 52% of LGB+ carers said they needed more breaks or time off from their caring role compared with 48% of heterosexual carers.

**Support with caring**

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to have concerns around services not meeting their needs.** 52% said that services not meeting their needs would be a challenge compared with 48% of heterosexual carers.
* **LGB+ carers were more likely to feel unsatisfied with social care services.** 34% of LGB+ carers receiving support from social care services disagreed they were satisfied with the quality of care, compared with 24% of heterosexual carers. 35% of LGB+ carers receiving support from social care services disagreed that they would be listened to if they had concerns about the quality of care, compared with 30% of heterosexual carers.

*“I've asked for support in the past with something and was told I'd hear back and receive the support, I did not.”* Pansexual carer

* **LGB+ carers were more likely to say they needed more support with planning for the future.** 38% of LBG+ carers said they weren’t sure how to plan for an emergency and would like more support with this, compared with 33% of heterosexual carers.

*“I had not considered this as it is always me in everyone else’s plan as first contact! I don’t know where to start and will need help with this.”* Gay/Lesbian carer

**Census 2021**

**Sexual orientation**

* The Census 2021 in England and Wales found that more unpaid carers aged 16 years and over identified with a lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) sexual orientation in both England (4%) and Wales (4%) compared with non-carers (3% in both countries).
* 147,000 (147,405) carers are LGB+. 4 million (4,436,165) are straight/heterosexual

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| **Sexual orientation** | **Number of carers** | **% of carer population** |
| Straight or heterosexual | 4,436,165 | 89% |
| Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other | 147,405 | 4% |
| Did not answer | 321,310 | 7% |

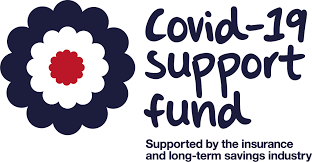
**Gender identity**

* The Census 2021 in England and Wales found that there are 25,000 trans carers (25,355).

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| **Gender identity** | **Number of carers** |
| Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth | 4,626,199 |
| Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given | 10,028 |
| Trans woman | 5,409 |
| Trans man | 4,541 |
| All other gender identities | 5,377 |
| Not answered | 253,329 |

**About the Project**

Carers UK, in partnership with Carers Trust, has received funding from the Covid 19 Support Fund to support the “Making Carers Count” project. This part of the three-year project seeks to understand the experiences of four traditionally under-represented groups of carers both during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. These are LGBTQ+ carers, ethnic minority carers, older carers without access to the internet and carers of faith. This project is pulling together existing knowledge and engaging in new research to more fully understand the experiences of these carers and the unique challenges they may experience in their caring role as well as collating examples of best practice. This knowledge gained will be applied to Carers UK services and shared with other service delivery organisations and commissioners to improve access to and outcomes from support, information and advice for marginalised carers.



**Further resources**

As part of the Making Carers Count project, Carers UK has previously published:

* A [research report](https://www.carersuk.org/reports/the-experiences-of-lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-carers-during-and-beyond-the-covid-19-pandemic/#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20pandemic-,The%20experiences%20of%20lesbian%2C%20gay%20and%20bisexual%20carers%20during,beyond%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic&text=New%20research%20by%20Carers%20UK,lesbian%2C%20gay%20and%20bisexual%20carers.) on the experiences of LGB+ carers during the COVID-19 pandemic
* A [best practice guide](https://www.carersuk.org/press-releases/carers-uk-releases-good-practice-briefing-for-supporting-lgbtq-carers/#:~:text=Carers%20UK%20has%20released%20a,since%20the%20Covid%2D19%20pandemic.) on supporting LGBTQ+ carers
* A [research report](https://www.carersuk.org/reports/the-experiences-of-trans-carers/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI1-rD1PWEhAMVpJJQBh3tTw_-EAAYASAAEgLNiPD_BwE) on the experiences of trans carers

**Contact**

We would like to thank our LGBTQ+ carers advisory group for its support.

For further information about this policy briefing, please contact the policy team at [policy@carersuk.org](mailto:policy@carersuk.org)

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**Disclaimer:** While every effort has been made to ensure that this briefing is accurate, it is not an authoritative statement of the law. Please note that there will be periodic updates as new information is released. Please ensure that you have the most up to date version.

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1. Due to the small sample size, we are unable to report on trans carers. However our [research report](https://www.carersuk.org/reports/the-experiences-of-trans-carers/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI1-rD1PWEhAMVpJJQBh3tTw_-EAAYASAAEgLNiPD_BwE) on trans carers considered the experiences of trans carers. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. LGB+ refers to carers who self-reported their sexual orientation as gay/lesbian, bisexual, or other (eg queer, asexual, pansexual). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)