

Make connections, get support

Recognising ourselves and others as carers





Introduction

6.5 million people in the UK are providing unpaid care to a family member or friend, that's one in eight adults and more than one in ten people. 3 million people are juggling work and care – the equivalent of 1 in 9 people in the workplace¹. Yet, this research reveals a lack of awareness and understanding of this role even amongst those closest to us.

Why does that matter?

Caring is part of life but there is a great deal of evidence to show the negative impacts it can have. From the challenges of staying in work and the financial hit that caring costs can bring to the struggle to look after your own health and have a life of your own alongside caring for someone else. Getting the right information and advice to support you to care without putting your own life on hold is a challenge and is made more difficult by the complexity and disjointed nature of our health, care and welfare systems. However, the biggest challenge of all can be identifying yourself as someone entitled to the support on offer; as a carer. Previous research carried out by Carers UK with carers found that half of carers (52%) said their health was affected and half (50%) said their finances were affected by missing out on support because of the time it took them to identify as a carer².

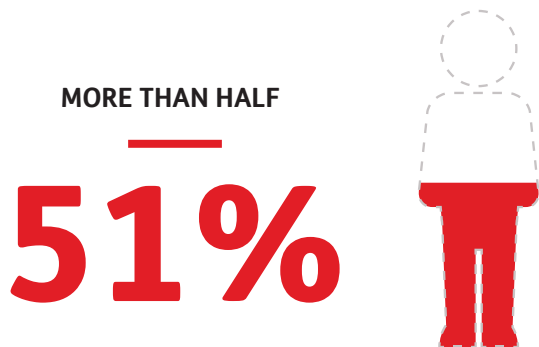


Half of carers (52%) said their health was affected by missing out on support because of the time it took them to identify as a carer.

¹ Census 2011

² Carers UK (2016), Missing Out: The identification challenge

Key findings:

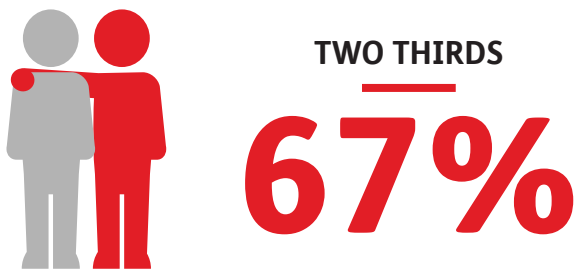


More than half (51%) believe they don't know a single family member or friend who cares, whilst as many as 3 in 5 workers (62%) believe they don't know any work colleagues who help look after a loved one.

3 in 5 / **58%**



Of those who know a friend or family member who is a carer, 3 in 5 (58%) have not suggested to them where they could find information on caring. This rose to 65% in relation to workers who know a carer in their workplace.



Amongst all of those polled, including those that had not recognised carers in their social circles or at work, two thirds (67%) said they would feel confident providing 'emotional support' to a new carer.

2 in 5 / **42%**



Only 2 in 5 (42%) of the UK public would feel confident pointing people in the direction of information about caring.

Carer recognition

	England	Scotland	NI	WALES	UK
Percentage of people that don't know a family member or friend who is a carer	52%	49%	47%	50%	51%
Percentage of workers who don't know colleagues who are carers	63%	57%	51%	58%	62%

Have directed carers towards support

Percentage of people who have not suggested where to go for support with caring to family members or friends	58%	55%	62%	62%	58%
Percentage of people who have not suggested where to go for support with caring to colleagues	39%	42%	37%	37%	39%

Confidence in supporting carers

Percentage feeling confident that they could direct a carer towards information or advice	42%	42%	35%	45%	42%
Percentage feeling confident they could give emotional support to a carer	67%	68%	54%	70%	67%



Awareness of carers in our families, friends and workplaces

Half (51%) of the UK public do not think they have a friend or family member providing unpaid care. Only 4 in 10 (39%) of the UK public say they have at least one friend or family member who is a carer. Women are more likely to say they know a friend or family member who is a carer (44%) compared with men (33%).



51%

of the UK public do not think they have a friend or family member providing unpaid care.

Only 1 in 5 (22%) of UK workers say they know a colleague who provides unpaid care. 3 in 5 people (62%) of UK workers do not think they know a colleague who is providing unpaid care alongside work. Women (27%) are more likely than men (17%) to say they know a colleague who is caring.

Despite being the at the peak age of caring themselves, those aged 45-54 are not much more likely (40%) to say they have any family or friends that are carers than the rest of the population and are only slightly more likely to say they know a colleague who is a carer (24%) compared with an average of 22%.

Unsurprisingly those who have never had an unpaid caring role are more likely (59%) to say that they do not know any friends and family who are carers. Only 17% of current carers say they do not have any friends or family that are caring.

In the workplace, even amongst those who currently work and care unpaid, nearly half (44%) say they do not know anyone else at work who is a carer. This rises to 2 in 3 (66%) among people who have never been a carer themselves.

22%

of the UK public say they know a colleague who provides unpaid care



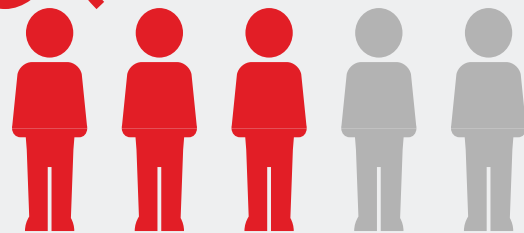
Helping carers find support



3 in 5

58%

of people have not made suggestions to friends and family they know who have caring roles about where to go for information about support.



Women (42%) are more likely than men (34%) to have suggested where carers in their family or friendship group could go for information.

People are even less likely to have offered information to colleagues at work who they know to be carers. Only one third (31%) of workers who know a colleague who is a carer has suggested to them where they could find information about support with caring. Women are significantly more likely to have done so (35%) than men (25%).

Despite being in the age group most likely to have caring responsibilities, those aged 45-54 are only slightly more likely (42%) to have made suggestions about where to go for support to friends and family than those across all ages (39%).

Those aged 65 years and over are not much more likely than the rest of the UK population to have made suggestions to friends and family with caring responsibilities about where to go for support and those aged 75 and over are less likely to have done so (35%).

Unsurprisingly people who have had a caring role themselves are much more likely to have offered information to friends, family and colleagues about where to go for support compared with people who have never had a caring role themselves. Half (52%) of people with caring experience themselves have made suggestions about where carers can go for support compared with 30% for people who have never had a caring role.

Similarly, in the workplace nearly half (44%) of people who've had a caring role have made suggestions about where to go to for support to colleagues compared with just over a quarter (25%) of people without any experience of caring.

Helping carers find support *continued*



2 in 5 (42%) of the UK public feel confident that they could point someone new to caring in the direction of information and advice about caring. Women are more likely (46%) to feel confident about doing so than men (37%).

Confidence in providing this information appears to grow with age. Younger people aged 18-24 were least likely to feel confident in signposting carers to information, with 29% saying they felt confident, compared with those aged 75 or over (57%).

Worryingly, those in the age group most associated with caring (45-54 years old) are slightly less likely to feel confident about offering this information (40%) compared with the overall population (42%).

When it comes to how confident the public feel about offering emotional support to someone who has started caring, two thirds (67%) of the UK public feel confident about offering emotional support if they knew someone who is a carer.

This increases to three quarters of women (75%) compared with 3 in 5 (58%) of men. Unlike pointing carers towards information, the public's confidence in providing emotional support is consistent across all ages.

Two thirds (66%) of people who have had caring experience themselves feel confident about offering information about support compared with a third (34%) of people who have never been a carer. 4 in 5 (78%) of people with experience of caring themselves feel confident about providing emotional support if they knew someone with a caring role. This compares with just under two thirds (63%) of people with no experience of caring themselves.

two thirds

67%

of the UK public feel confident about offering emotional support if they knew someone was a carer.



Variation across the UK:



The Northern Irish public were more likely to say they know a friend or family member who provides unpaid care with only 47% saying they did not know someone compared with 51% across the UK. Similarly Northern Irish workers were the most likely to say they know a colleague who is a carer (28%) compared with 22% across the UK public.

People in Scotland are the most likely to have made suggestions about where to go for information on caring to friends and family with 42% doing so compared with 39% across the UK. People in Wales and Northern Ireland were least likely to have made suggestions about where to go for information with 62% saying they had not done this compared with 58% across the UK. This is despite people in Wales being the most confident in the UK that they would be able to point a new carer in the right direction for support with caring – 45% of those polled in Wales said they would feel confident about doing so compared with 42% across the UK.

Despite being more likely to know someone in their family or friendship group, people in

Northern Ireland are also slightly less likely than the UK average to have suggested information – 62% had not. This is reflected in feelings of confidence about directing carers to information amongst the Northern Irish public. Only 35% of people in Northern Ireland said they felt confident they would be able to point a new carer in the direction of advice or information about caring compared with 42% across the UK. People in Northern Ireland also feel least confident in offering emotional support if they knew someone who had recently become a carer with only 54% feeling confident compared with 67% across the UK. People in Wales feel most confident of any nation that they could offer emotional support if they knew a carer, with 70% expressing confidence compared with 67% across the UK.

What can we do to reach carers earlier?

The public

Though most of us feel able to offer emotional support to someone who has a caring role, we have not recognised the carers we know in our own families, friendship groups and workplaces.

We should all think about the people we know who have caring responsibilities for others and the understanding and support that they might need. If you know someone looking after someone with care and support needs, tell them about carersuk.org where they can find expert information and connect with other carers

Employers:

Although 1 in 9 people in the workplace are combining their paid work with an unpaid caring role, the polling shows that most people are not aware that colleagues have caring responsibilities outside work. Even when colleagues are aware, they are unlikely to suggest where they could find information about support.

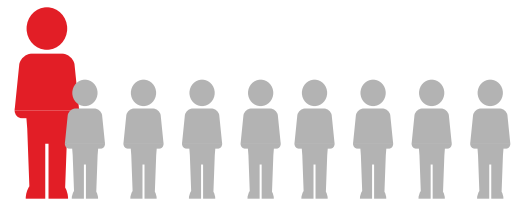
Employers should put in place policies to support employees juggling work and care and raise awareness of the support available in the workplace so that carers feel included and supported at work.

Health, care and education professionals:

Professionals have an important role in raising awareness amongst other professionals and the public of the contribution of carers and their need for support with their caring role. Health and care professionals are key to helping people identify their role as a carer and find information and advice as early as possible – helping to reduce the health and financial impact of caring without the right support.

Carers:

Despite two thirds (66%) of people with experience of caring feeling confident that they would be able to point someone in the right direction for support with caring, only around half (52%) said they had done this for friends and family and even fewer had made suggestions to colleagues about where to get support. Getting information from someone who has been there can make a huge difference when you are navigating a complex path of practical and financial support. Share what you learnt as a carer and help connect others to support.



1 in 9

people in the workplace
are combining their paid
work with an unpaid
caring role.¹

¹ Census 2011



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About the research

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4511 adults of which 2,484 were workers. Fieldwork was undertaken between 30th October - 7th November 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

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