

Dear Secretary of State

We 6.5 million unpaid carers provide the majority of care for families in the UK, saving the economy an estimated £132 billion per year¹.

We are calling on the Government to raise Carer's Allowance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by at least £8.50 per week in the short term to match the changes happening in Scotland. The 778,953 carers² in England, Wales and Northern Ireland currently in receipt of Carer's Allowance deserve to see an increase in the financial support they receive.

In the long term, we want an increase in Carer's Allowance and the Carer Premium in the whole of the UK, rising annually with Government adjustments for inflation so that carers living in all parts of the UK see an increase.

Many of us live in poverty. 1.2 million carers³ are living in poverty in the UK and nearly 4 out of 10 carers describe themselves as struggling to make ends meet⁴.

Many of us have had to give up work. 2.3 million⁵ UK adults have given up work to care at some point in their lives and almost 3 million have reduced their working hours.

The costs of caring. We cut back on the things that allow us a life outside of our caring responsibilities in order to make ends meet, such as hobbies, seeing friends and family or even essentials such as food and heating.

Make it Fairer for Carers

It's not fair that the financial support carers receive will depend on where they live in the UK. We call on the Government to recognise the value of the care we provide and raise Carer's Allowance to improve carers' day-to-day lives in all parts of the UK.

¹ Carers UK, University of Sheffield, University of Leeds (2015) Valuing Carers 2015; the rising value of carers' support

² Using figures of recipients of Carer's Allowance as of November 2016, England and Wales figures from Department for Work and Pensions dataset: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/> and Northern Ireland from Assembly research briefing: <http://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2017/06/15/carers-in-northern-ireland-key-statistics/>

³ New Policy Institute (2016) Informal care and poverty in the UK.

⁴ Carers UK, State of Caring 2018

⁵ YouGov and Carers UK, 2013