



# State of Caring in Scotland 2024

## Health and social care support for unpaid carers

March 2025



# Contents

Introduction.....	3
Key Findings from State of Caring 2024 .....	4
The Impact of Caring on Health.....	5
Carers Physical Health .....	5
Carers Mental Health .....	6
Feeling overwhelmed .....	7
Support for Health and Wellbeing .....	9
Breaks from caring .....	10
Support through the social care system .....	11
Carer support - Adult Carer Support Plans.....	11
Support during hospital discharge.....	12
Access to social care support .....	13
Conclusion and Recommendations.....	15
Recommendations.....	15
Appendix 1: Demographic breakdown of respondents .....	17

## Introduction

An unpaid carer is someone who provides care and support to a family member, partner, friend, or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, who needs extra help as they get older or is affected by addiction. This support could be a few hours a week, or it could be round the clock care and can include, for example, assisting with daily tasks like bathing, dressing and eating, managing medication and providing emotional support.

Scotland's Census 2022<sup>1</sup> found that there are 627,700 unpaid carers in Scotland and that more carers are providing longer hours of care each week. Carers Scotland believes that this still underestimates the true number of carers. Often people do not identify themselves as a carer; many consider caring as part of family life and see themselves primarily as, for example, a partner, parent, daughter, sibling, or a close friend. As a result, they can miss out on vital support. With Scotland's population ageing, more people living longer with multiple health conditions, and at the same time, our health and social care systems struggling to meet demand, the unpaid carer population will inevitably continue to grow in years to come.

Despite the monetary value of the contribution of unpaid carers being an estimated at £15.9 billion<sup>2</sup>, unpaid carers face deteriorating physical and mental health, loneliness and isolation, with too many driven to despair and denied access to the very support they need to maintain a healthy life.

State of Caring is Scotland's most comprehensive annual research into the lives and experiences of unpaid carers and, in 2024, it heard from 1561 carers<sup>3</sup>. This report demonstrates the ongoing struggle that carers face to access the services and support they need, both to provide care and to care for themselves, including having regular breaks from caring.

## Thank you

Carers Scotland would like to thank every unpaid carer who contributed to this survey, from those who helped us develop and test the survey to every person who took the trouble and time to tell us about their experiences. Your experiences will be used to help Carers Scotland's work to campaign for a society that recognises and supports carers effectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Scotland's Census 2022 - Health, disability and unpaid care, National Records of Scotland (2024)

<sup>2</sup> Valuing Carers 2022: Scotland, Dr Jingwen Zhang, Dr Maria Petrillo and Professor Matt Bennett (2024)

<sup>3</sup> A breakdown of respondents can be found in Appendix 1

## Key Findings from State of Caring 2024

1. 36% of all unpaid carers and 59% of carers who reported struggling to make ends meet said they had bad or very bad mental health.
2. 28% of all unpaid carers and 49% of carers who reported struggling to make ends said they had bad or very bad physical health.
3. 65% of unpaid carers said they needed more support with their health and wellbeing.
4. 80% of unpaid carers said the impact of caring on their physical and/or mental health will be one of the main challenges they face over the next year.
5. 56% of unpaid carers and 76% of carers who reported struggling to make ends meet said they often or always feel overwhelmed by caring.
6. 63% of unpaid carers felt overwhelmed because they have not had a break from caring and 50% because of their own health needs.
7. Just 20% of unpaid carers have had an Adult Carer Support Plan in the last 12 months and, of those, 65% had needs identified that were not met.
8. Only 31% of unpaid carers had been involved in decisions about discharge from hospital with just 11% provided with sufficient support and services to protect their health and wellbeing or that of the person they care for.
9. Just 22% of unpaid carers with a disability were involved in decisions around hospital discharge, despite managing their own health conditions alongside caring.
10. 45% of unpaid carers had sought support from social work services, but 59% of those said that support services were not there when they needed them, and 58% saying that they had experienced long wait times for assessments, reviews, care or support.

## The Impact of Caring on Health

Providing care for someone is a demanding responsibility that often takes a toll on the physical and mental wellbeing of the person. Over the last 10 years, there has been a 15% increase in the number of unpaid carers providing care of 50 hours or more each week<sup>4</sup>. Often carers, including those who provide such significant levels of care, do not get the opportunity to take the regular breaks from caring that are needed to protect their own health and wellbeing. They can face ongoing stress, anxiety, and often put the needs of the person they care for above their own. This relentless commitment frequently leads to sleepless nights, feelings of isolation, physical exhaustion, and emotional burnout.

The findings of State of Caring 2024 show that a substantial proportion of unpaid carers are not receiving the support they need to maintain their own health and wellbeing whilst managing their caring responsibilities. Eight in ten (80%) said that the main challenge they will face over the next year is the impact of caring will have on their physical and/or mental health.

### Carers Physical Health

Over a quarter (28%) of unpaid carers in State of Caring 2024 said that their physical health was bad or very bad and this increases for some groups of carers, particularly those on low incomes, as shown in table one below.

Table 1: physical health	% with bad/very bad physical health
All carers	28%
Struggling to make ends meet	49%
Means tested benefit (eg. Universal Credit or Pension Credit) with carer element/addition	48%
Caring for more than one person	37%
Carers Allowance or Carer Support Payment	36%
Carers who have given up work to care	36%
Caring for 10 years or more	34%
Caring for 35 hours or more	31%

According to Scotland's Census 2022, 6.8% of the population reported that their general health as "bad" or "very bad"<sup>5</sup>. This suggests that unpaid carers are much more likely to experience poor physical health than those without caring responsibilities.

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<sup>4</sup> Scotland's Census 2022 - Health, disability and unpaid care, National Records of Scotland (2024)

<sup>5</sup> ibid

## Carers Mental Health

Unpaid carers were more likely to report having poor mental health than physical health. This suggests that caring may have a greater impact on mental health than physical health. A significant number of carers stated that they had poor mental health. This year, over a third (36%) of responding carers reported their mental health was bad or very bad, this was a 29% increase from last year's figure (28%). This suggests that there has been a significant worsening of mental health for unpaid carers in Scotland in the last year.



Caring can negatively impact mental health in several ways. Caring often results in poverty and additional financial costs, which result in unpaid carers struggling to pay for essentials like food and heating. Carers who were struggling financially were more likely to report poor mental health. Over half (59%) of carers that reported that they were struggling to make ends meet had bad or very bad mental health and the highest levels of poor mental health in State of Caring 2024 are amongst those on the lowest incomes, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: mental health	% with bad/very bad mental health
All carers	36%
Struggling to make ends meet	59%
Means tested benefit (eg. Universal Credit or Pension Credit) with carer element/addition	52%
Carers Allowance or Carer Support Payment	44%
Carers who have given up work to care	43%
Caring for more than one person	42%
Caring for 10 years or more	40%
Caring for 35 hours or more	40%

This trend of high levels of poor mental health has continued from last year's State of Caring reports. In 2024, 44% of those in receipt of the main carer benefit, Carer's Allowance/Carer Support Payment<sup>6</sup> reported bad or very bad mental health, an increase from 37% from State of Caring 2023.

These findings are reinforced by comments from unpaid carers themselves, which further illustrate the impact caring is having on their mental health.

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*"I will be 70 in few months and I have numerous physical ailments. My own physical and mental health are affected by my caring role"*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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<sup>6</sup> Unpaid carers in Scotland are moving to Carer Support Payment from Carer's Allowance. At the time of State of Caring 2024, a proportion of carers in Scotland received this benefit with a proportion still receiving Carer's Allowance.

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*“Physical and mental health in bits”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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Over a quarter (29%) of unpaid carers who responded to State of Caring 2024 cared for more than one person. Managing the needs of multiple people can cause stress and anxiety, particularly when these needs may be quite different. It is, therefore, of no surprise that 42% of carers who are caring for two or more people said that their mental health was bad or very bad.

Unpaid carers who are caring for multiple people reinforced how this impacted on their mental health.

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*“Mentally tiring, struggle to work due to tiredness. No time for myself. Affects my relationship with my partner.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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*“The challenge (of caring for multiple people) is it is mentally draining and I feel there is no support for unpaid carers for their mental and emotional capacity - to speak about your own mental health and to get advice from a mental health service.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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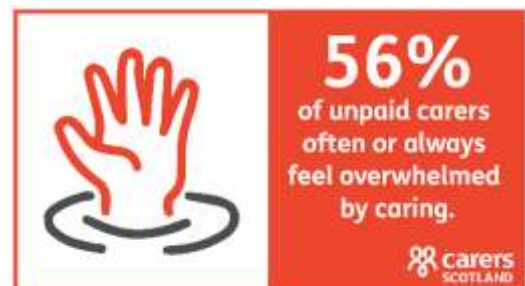
Feeling undervalued can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. Unpaid carers expressed that they need more recognition for the important role they are playing in supporting health and social care systems. More than half (56%) of carers said they needed better understanding and recognition of unpaid carers from the general public.

It is perhaps underestimated just how important feeling valued can be to the mental health of unpaid carers. Nearly half (47%) of carers who said they did not feel valued by the general public reported bad or very bad mental health compared to 25% of those who said they did feel valued.

## Feeling overwhelmed

In State of Caring 2024, unpaid carers were asked if they felt overwhelmed by their caring responsibilities and what contributed to this feeling.

Over half (56%) of unpaid carers reported that they often or always felt overwhelmed by caring. A further 38% said that they felt overwhelmed sometimes. Only



6% said that they rarely or did not feel overwhelmed by their caring role.

Again, poverty and financial strain had a significant impact. Unpaid carers that reported struggling financially were more likely to feel overwhelmed than other groups of carers. More than three quarters (76%) of carers who were struggling to make ends meet and 69% of those on means tested benefits said they felt overwhelmed compared to 44% of those who said they were not struggling financially. However, the high level of carers who reported “feeling overwhelmed” by caring makes clear that struggle is linked not only to financial means but to the demands of caring itself.

In addition to this, unpaid carers caring for more hours were more likely to report feeling overwhelmed. 61% of carers caring for 35 or more hours a week said they felt overwhelmed often or always compared with 43% of people caring for less than 35 hours a week.

<b>Table 3: Feeling overwhelmed</b>	% of carers
All carers	56%
Struggling to make ends meet	76%
Means tested benefit (eg. Universal Credit or Pension Credit) with carer element/addition	69%
Carers Allowance or Carer Support Payment	62%
Carers who have given up work to care	67%
Caring for more than one person	67%
Caring for 10 years or more	61%
Caring for 35 hours or more	61%

One of the main reasons unpaid carers had for feeling overwhelmed was not being able to take a break from caring (63%). Other reasons included managing the different needs of the person they care for (58%) and struggling with their own health condition (50%).

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*“Having to become a medical expert myself, to review treatment plans (that have proven to be flawed) and so forth, is stressful and sometimes overwhelming.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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Below are just two quotes from unpaid carers. There are many more that set out how just how overwhelming being an unpaid carer can be and the impact that caring can cause to carers’ health.

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*“Not being able to have a couple of hours each morning for myself when I have some energy to do some exercise. But worse having no space to take a shower, peace to concentrate and deal with household admin.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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*“Constant juggling priorities. Always on high alert never time to relax. Living on adrenaline and energy drinks as care includes day and night. Feeling like everyone being kept down as they don't get all the care they need.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

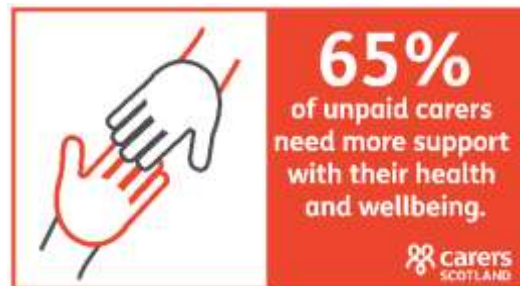
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Overall, Scotland’s unpaid carers are facing a growing mental health crisis that if remains unchecked is likely to grow year on year. It is clear from this research that too many unpaid carers are struggling with their mental health and are overwhelmed with the myriad challenges of caring. They are emotionally fatigued and burnt out, not only from caring itself but from caring within a health and social care system that neither values their role sufficiently nor provides the support they so desperately need. It is having an impact on all parts of their life and, the high levels of poor physical and mental health they experience will store up problems that, without change to deliver the interventions needed, will lead to further crisis. This could not only include a breakdown of care of the person they are caring for, but a breakdown of the carers’ own health requiring substantial interventions and care. More must be done to support them urgently.

## Support for Health and Wellbeing

As the previous sections show, caring can take a serious toll on the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers. Access to healthcare, mental health support, and opportunities for rest and self-care can help prevent burnout and ensure that carers can continue providing care without compromising their own wellbeing.

However, State of Caring 2024 shows that unpaid carers are crying out for more help. Two thirds (65%) of carers said they need more support with health and wellbeing. This was the top need cited by carers. Worryingly 80% of carers said the impact of caring on their physical and/or mental health will be a challenge over the next year.



Unsurprisingly, unpaid carers who already are in poor health were more likely to say they needed more support to look after their health and wellbeing, with 79% of carers with bad or very bad physical or mental health saying they needed this help.

Last year’s State of Caring revealed that unpaid carers were often unable to get the support they need with their health and wellbeing due to long waiting times for appointments, inflexible GP appointment systems, and insufficient support from replacement care. Four in 10 (41%) carers

said they needed more support from the NHS or healthcare professionals<sup>7</sup> and this year we saw no improvement, with similar proportions (43%) of carers reflecting these challenges.

For several years, there have been a range of issues faced by unpaid carers trying to access the NHS. In 2023, State of Caring found that four in 10 (41%) carers had put off their own healthcare treatment<sup>8</sup>. Carers often, unselfishly, put meeting the needs of the person they care for above their own health. This is exacerbated by the time demands of caring and a lack of replacement care to access health services for themselves. Whilst, this is not new information, with previous research finding that women with heavy caring responsibilities were less likely to visit their GP than non-carers<sup>9</sup>, it is clear that access to healthcare for carers is not improving. It is vital that carers get access to healthcare when they require it, including to important screening programmes, as delays both add to the physical and mental demands of caring and impact on carers' own health.

## Breaks from caring

Having a break from caring is also an important support for both physical and mental health. As noted earlier, one of the main reasons unpaid carers felt overwhelmed was because they had not been able to get a break from caring. It is an injustice that society expects unpaid carers to continue to care without time off from their responsibilities, yet at the same time nearly two thirds (63%) of carers felt overwhelmed because they haven't been able to take a break from caring. Taking a break from caring is essential to enable carers to recharge, spend time with family and friends, and engage with their own hobbies and interests to improve their wellbeing. Carers shared examples of the direct consequences of the result of being unable to take a break from caring.



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*“I am getting older and my physical and mental health has deteriorated significantly solely due to my caring role and the lack of breaks.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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*“I used to go to the gym and go walking and swimming. Now my caring role takes too much time and energy to do anything else.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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<sup>7</sup> State of Caring 2023: A health and social care crisis for unpaid carers in Scotland, Carers Scotland (2023)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Unpaid carers' access to and use of primary care services, Arksey and Hirst (2005)

Without the opportunity to step away and have a break from caring, many carers are unable to look after their own health but have no choice but to continue to provide care. Our earlier research<sup>10</sup> revealed that 72% of carers continued providing care, even when they felt they were at breaking point.

Overall, it is evident that current support for the health of unpaid carers is falling short. As legislation to deliver a statutory right to a break progresses in the Scottish Parliament, it is crucial that it receives full funding and includes work by the Scottish Government and partners in local areas to develop an increased variety of breaks that support choice and meet the diverse needs of Scotland's carers. A statutory right to a break must also be accompanied by broader efforts to ensure carers have the support they need. Investing in health and social care is essential not only to protect carers' own health and wellbeing but also to sustain their ability to provide care without reaching crisis point.

## Support through the social care system

Carer support and social care are essential for unpaid carers, as they provide the help needed to balance caregiving with their own wellbeing. Access to practical support, breaks from caring and financial assistance can make a crucial difference, helping them continue their role without reaching crisis point. Ensuring carers receive the right support not only benefits them but also improves outcomes for the people they care for.

### Carer support - Adult Carer Support Plans

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 introduced the right to an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) for all adult carers, and a Young Carer Statement (YCS) for young carers. This means that local authorities/health and social care partnerships must offer an ACSP to anyone they identify as an unpaid carer or who identifies themselves as such to the authority. The ACSP should contain a variety of information about a carer's circumstances and caring role such as, the nature and extent of the care provided and the impact on their wellbeing and day-to-day life, the extent to which a carer is able and willing to provide care and much more<sup>11</sup>. The Plan should be reviewed at least once a year to see if the carer's circumstances or needs have changed.

However, State of Caring 2024 found that just 20% of unpaid carers said they had received an ACSP in the last 12 months. This means that four in five (80%) carers who responded to this survey had not had an assessment of their needs in that time.



When asked if they felt their local authority had supported them with their caring role after receiving their ACSP, four in 10 (39%) of carers said their local authority **had not** supported them, with a similar proportion saying they had been

<sup>10</sup> State of Caring 2023: A health and social care crisis for unpaid carers in Scotland, Carers Scotland (2023)

<sup>11</sup> Carers' charter: Your rights as an adult carer or young carer in Scotland, Scottish Government (2018)

supported. Nearly two thirds (64%) of carers said that there were areas identified where they needed more support, but this had not been provided. In addition to this, nearly a third (32%) said that the assessment did not sufficiently consider their needs. Many carers expressed dissatisfaction with both outcomes and the process for assessment itself.

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*“The assessment process doesn’t have a clear plan for next steps.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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*“The assessment was a tick box only.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

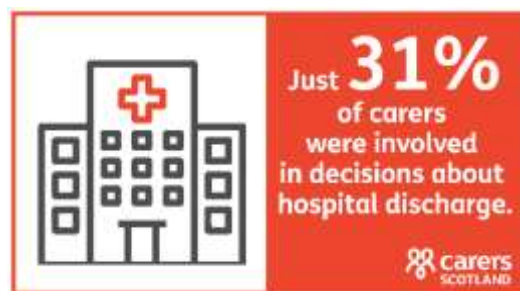
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## Support during hospital discharge

State of Caring 2024 explored carers' experiences with the NHS and identified areas for improvement. This included hospital discharge and wider support.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on NHS boards to involve and inform unpaid carers during the discharge process of the person they care for. This ensures that carers are consulted on plans for discharge and provided with relevant information about the needs of the person they care for, follow-up appointments, and support services to be provided. This should include support and assessment for their needs as a carer, including an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP). However, State of Caring 2024 highlighted that there is a worrying continued gap between the intention of the Act and its implementation.

Only one in three (31%) unpaid carers had been involved in decisions about discharge from hospital. 19% had been asked about their ability or willingness to provide care and just 11% said they had been provided with sufficient support and services to protect their health and wellbeing or that of the person they care for. Only 17% had been offered an ACSP during the process and just 23% said they felt treated as an equal partner in care.



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*“I feel ignored and just expected to cope”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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*“Lack of services led to [an] unplanned discharge through the night. Difficulty accessing information relating to my son and mother. I feel there is a lack of holistic care in the NHS due to its top-heavy structure, [they] are unable to provide care which is not task oriented.”*

[Unpaid carer, responding to State of Caring 2024]

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The lack of involvement in discharge appears to be getting worse year on year, particularly for unpaid carers with a disability. Last year, a third (33%) reported that they had been involved in decisions about discharge<sup>12</sup>. This year, this had plummeted to just 22% - a 33% fall. Despite already managing their own health conditions and disabilities, these carers are receiving even less support from healthcare professionals. The NHS should be offering greater consideration for their additional needs and the support they need to care, rather than reducing their involvement further.

Overall, many unpaid carers do not feel like the NHS is currently supporting them – as individuals and in their caring role. Just 9% said that they receive the support they need for their own health and wellbeing. Just one in five (20%) said that they feel supported by NHS staff in their caring role, with 19% saying that they were given the relevant information and support by NHS staff to care safely and well. This is a worrying gap both for carers’ health and for the health and wellbeing of the people they care for.

## Access to social care support

State of Caring 2024 found that unpaid carers were continuing to struggle with a lack of social care support.

Four in ten (45%) carers in State of Caring 2024 had tried to access social care support in the past year. However, when asked about their experiences, over half (59%) said that support services were not there when they needed them and 19% said they were not affordable, a lack of consistency in who was providing services was a concern for four in ten (43%) carers, with 38% having concerns over the quality of care provided.



The main challenge for unpaid carers who had asked for support was around waiting times, with 58% reporting that they had experienced long wait times for assessments, reviews, care or support.

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*“Shortage of carers and places in support services so cannot access them despite having funds to do so.”*

[Unpaid carer, State of Caring 2024]

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<sup>12</sup> State of Caring 2023: A health and social care crisis for unpaid carers in Scotland, Carers Scotland (2023)

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*“Overnight support approved but wait lists of approx. 4 years (by which time my son will be moving to adult services). To pay privately it would cost £500 minimum per night!”*

[Unpaid carer, State of Caring 2024]

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Unpaid carers also have concerns about social care provision in the coming year, with half (51%) saying that support services meeting their needs is one of the main challenges they will face. This is worrying for too many carers, particularly given changing care needs is a main challenge for 73% of carers. More than half (56%) said that being able to get regular breaks from caring is one of the challenges they will face.

A lack of awareness and information about what help is available continues to be a barrier to supporting carers. More than half (51%) of unpaid carers in State of Caring 2024 said that knowing what support is available and how to access it is one of their main needs. Even amongst those who had asked for help, information may not be forthcoming, with 38% of carers saying that they did not know who to contact or what help was available to them.

None of what unpaid carers have told us about social care support in State of Caring 2024 is unexpected. The ongoing social care crisis is placing immense pressure on unpaid carers, who are being left to fill the gaps in a struggling system. With a lack of funding, staff shortages, and long waiting times for support, many carers are providing more care than ever, at the expense of their own health and wellbeing, careers and financial security. As social care fails to meet demand, unpaid carers are increasingly relied upon to step in, leaving them exhausted, financially strained, and without the support they need to continue their vital role.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of State of Caring 2024 highlight the overwhelming strain on unpaid carers, who continue to bear the weight of an overstretched health and social care system. As public sector services struggle, carers are increasingly expected to fill the gaps - to step in when social care services are unavailable and to provide hospital discharge when the NHS faces capacity issues. All too often this is with little choice and without the support they need.

Meanwhile, unpaid carers' physical and mental health continues to decline, to the point that we are looking at crisis levels of poor health, without the support they need to have the time, resources, and energy to take care of their own wellbeing. Whilst the Scottish Government has focused on reducing NHS waiting lists, improving hospital discharge delays and improving access to essential health services, there remains an urgent need for investment in social care and support for carers

The stalled National Care Service provided hope for many unpaid carers and disabled people that things could change. However, many feel their needs have been lost to a wider political debate and little has changed to improve their lives.

State of Caring 2024 shows the real-life consequences for unpaid carers – poorer health and wellbeing and deteriorating support for their health and for the care they provide. Carers must have the access to the healthcare they need and receive adequate support from social care services to prevent the alarming levels of poor health they are currently facing. Urgent action and investment are needed in social care and in support for unpaid carers.

## Recommendations

To ensure all unpaid carers get the support they need to look after their health and wellbeing and receive the right help for caring:

**The Scottish Government should work to address the current inadequacies in social care provision by:**

- Increasing investment in social care, recognising both its fundamental role in supporting the NHS and its key role in protecting the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers and their opportunities to take part in employment and education.
- Delivering the proposed right to a break for unpaid carers, ensuring that it is fully funded and that work is undertaken to ensure that a full range of break options are available for carers based on their needs and the needs of the person they are caring for.

**The Scottish Government, NHS Board and Health and Social Care Partnerships should work to improve unpaid carers' involvement in hospital discharge by:**

- Delivering increased and improved training for NHS staff in their duties to recognise, involve and inform unpaid carers, to support their involvement in hospital discharge.
- Improving the protocols for involving unpaid carers in discharge, ensuring that they are involved from the earliest opportunity in discussions on hospital discharge.
- Ensuring that all unpaid carers are provided with the information they need on discharge and are referred for an Adult Carer Support Plan.

**The Scottish Government should work with NHS Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships to improve the health of unpaid carers by:**

- Increasing investment in local carer services to provide support for mental wellbeing and training to support caring.
- Delivering on the commitment within the National Carers Strategy to provide health checks for carers and accessible and flexible access to health appointments.
- Developing a dedicated Carers Health Inequalities Plan with measurable actions to improve carers' health in the short, medium and long term to prevent the health inequalities that carers face.

**The Scottish Government should seek to address the additional impact of poverty on health by:**

- Increasing the value of and eligibility for Carer Support Payment including ensuring that plans to deliver a new payment for those caring for more than one person are delivered in this Parliamentary term.
- Committing to delivering a pilot Minimum Income Guarantee for unpaid carers to provide increased income and holistic support.



## Appendix 1: Demographic breakdown of respondents

The demographic breakdown of carers responding to State of Caring 2024 is as follows:

- 84% of respondents are female, 15% male with the remaining 1% preferring to self-identify as either non-binary or transgender.
- 3% were aged 18-34, 10% are aged 35-44, 24% were aged 45-54, 38% were aged 55-64, and 26% were aged 65+.
- 30% have a disability
- 98% of respondents were white Scottish, Irish or other white; 2% of respondents were black, Asian or minority ethnic.
- 92% of respondents were heterosexual, 4% gay, lesbian or bisexual, the remainder preferred not to say or skipped this question.
- 40% were in some form of employment and 27% were retired.
- 17% also have parental responsibility for a non-disabled child under 18.
- 3% have been caring for less than 1 year, 25% for 1-4 years, 23% for 5-9 years, 25% for 10-20 years and 23% for more than 20 years.
- 17% provide 1-19 hours of care per week, 10% provide 20-34 hours of care per week, 15% for 35-49 hours and 13% for 50-89 hours, 44% provide 90 or more hours of care per week.
- 71% care for one person, 21% care for two people, 6% care for three people and 3% care for four or more people.

### The people unpaid carers care for

Carers responding to State of Caring 2024 provided information about who they care for and the conditions the person(s) live with:

- 35% are caring for a parent/parent-in-law, 32% were caring for a spouse or partner, 39% for a son/daughter/in-law), 9% for another relative and 3% for someone else eg. a friend or neighbour.
- 18% care for someone aged under 18, 23% for someone aged 18-34 years, 25% for someone aged 35-64 and 56% for someone 65 or over

### Respondents were caring for people with a range of health conditions and/or disabilities:

31% Autism, ADHD, or another neurodiversity	26% Needs that arise from being older
26% Mental health condition	25% Physical disability
24% Neurological condition	24% Dementia
21% Incontinence	20% Sensory impairment
20% Learning disability	18% heart disease
18% Arthritis	13% Diabetes
11% Other	11% lung disease
8% Cancer	8% Bowel disease or disorder
7% Urinary disorder	4% kidney disease
4% Blood disease	3% Addiction
3% eating disorder	3% ME or chronic fatigue syndrome
2% Palliative or end of life care	2% Liver disease
2% Long COVID	



**Carers Scotland** is Scotland’s membership charity for unpaid carers. We work to represent and support the hundreds of thousands of people in Scotland who provide unpaid care for ill, older or disabled family members or friends – fighting for increased recognition and support for all carers and to ensure they have a voice in the issues that affect them.

[www.carerscotland.org](http://www.carerscotland.org)

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