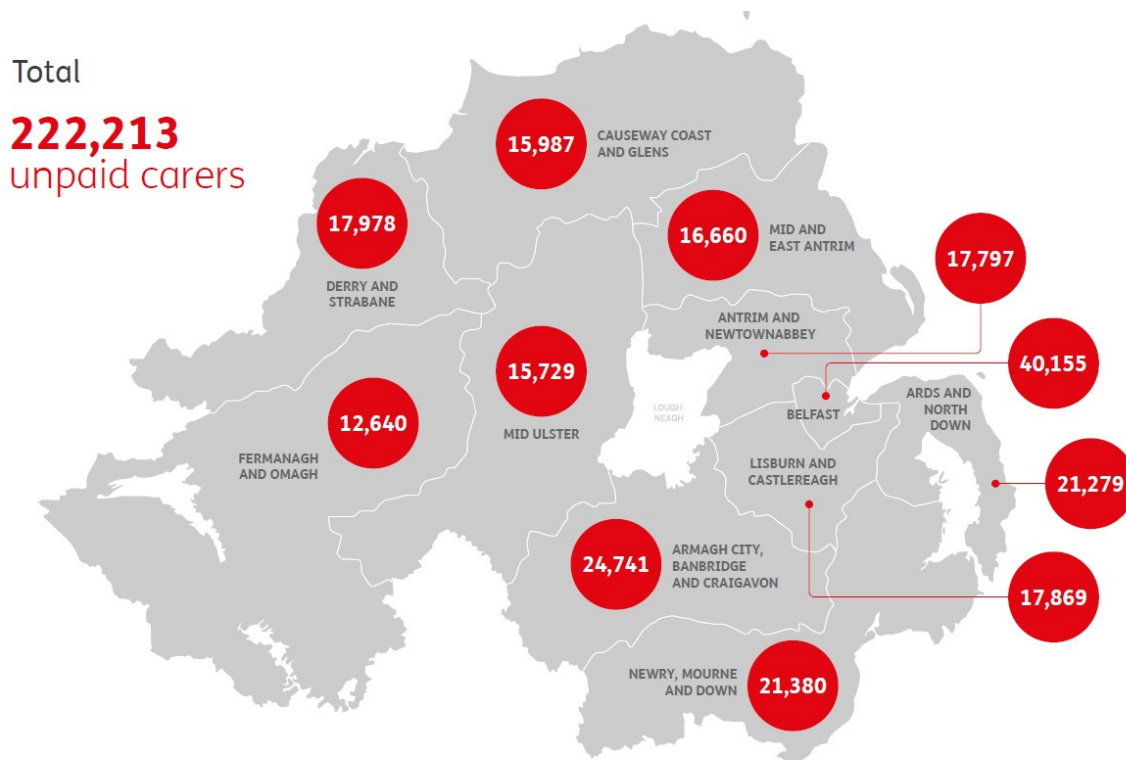# Challenge your candidates to care:
Local Government election engagement guide for unpaid carers

On 18 May 2023, elections will be held for Northern Ireland's 11 local councils. The days and weeks ahead will likely see political party representatives and candidates delivering leaflets and knocking on doors to ask for your vote – this is a great opportunity to ask them how they would support unpaid carers if they're elected!

According to official data, at least 1 in 10 people in every local council area in Northern Ireland is an unpaid carer. Unpaid caring should be at the top of the agenda of every party contesting the election and local councils have a range of powers at their disposal to give carers better support. If you feel comfortable to, this guide has some tips on how you can ask the parties and candidates contesting the election about their plans to support carers in your area.

Total
222,213
unpaid carers

CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS — 15,987
DERRY AND STRABANE — 17,978
MID AND EAST ANTRIM — 16,660
ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY — 17,797
ARDS AND NORTH DOWN — 40,155
MID ULSTER — 15,729
FERMANAGH AND OMAGH — 12,640
BELFAST — 21,279
LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH — 17,869
ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON — 24,741
NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN — 21,380

Source: NI Statistics and Research Agency (2023). Census 2021: Unpaid caring.

carers NI

Ask your local council election candidates about supporting unpaid carers

Based on the views and ideas of unpaid carers, Carers NI has published a manifesto for the Local Government election – calling on all parties and candidates contesting the election to:

1) Deliver bespoke cost of living or hardship grants for unpaid carers
2) Introduce concessionary rates for council leisure services for carers
3) Implement carer-friendly workplace policies for council staff with unpaid caring roles.

You might consider asking the parties and candidates who knock on your door if they support these policies. For example, you could ask:

- Will you support the creation of a hardship or cost of living grant from council to help those providing unpaid care financially?
- Will you help to introduce, or extend, concessionary rates for all unpaid carers to help them afford council leisure services?
- How will you support the council to become a carer friendly workplace?
- What else will you do to support unpaid carers in this council area?

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