



Photo: Chris Steele-Perkins / Magnum

Carers Manifesto

The Facts



- > In 2011, **370,230** people in Wales are carers and this number continues to rise.ⁱ This shows a **9%** increase since the last census in 2001 and we estimate that by 2037 there will be a further rise of **40%** meaning that there will be over half a million carers in Wales.
- > **103,594** people in Wales provide **over 50 hours** of unpaid care per week.ⁱⁱ
- > Every year in Wales over **123,140** adults become carers and almost the same number will cease to become carers.ⁱⁱⁱ
- > **3 in 5** people will be carers at some point in their lives.^{iv}
- > The care provided by Wales' unpaid carers is worth an estimated **£8.1 billion** a year.^v Health and Social Services rely on carers' ability and willingness to provide unpaid care and without carers support the health and social care system would collapse.



This manifesto is built on the views and experiences of carers including:

- > National opinion polling conducted for Carers Week in 2014 which asked a representative sample of **2000** members of the public what support they would want if they became carers.
- > Over **294** carers in Wales who completed our annual State of Caring survey giving us information about what impact caring has on their lives.
- > Carers Wales annual Carers Summits attended by over **60** carers from across **16** counties in Wales to discuss their experiences to inform our campaigning and policy priorities.

Policy across Wales

Wales is a devolved nation and this manifesto sets out recommendations and analysis for the Welsh Assembly elections in May 2016. It makes recommendations for policy areas which are devolved to Wales. All statistics provided are for Wales.

ⁱ 2011 Census – Office for National Statistics

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Analysis conducted for Carers UK by Michael Hirst (2014) Transitions in and out of unpaid care.

^{iv} Carers UK 2001 – It could be you – A report on the chances of becoming a carer

^v Carers UK and the University of Leeds (2015) – Valuing Carers 2015: the rising value of carers' support

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Carers Wales is part of Carers UK, a charity registered in England and Wales (246329) and in Scotland (SC039307) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (864097). Registered office 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX.



Our evidence^{vi}

- > Full time carers are more than twice as likely to be in bad health as non-carers
- > 80% of carers stated that their health was worse because of caring
- > 73% find it difficult to get a good night's sleep
- > 37% have suffered a physical injury because of their caring responsibilities
- > 87% feel more stressed because of their caring role
- > 56% stated that they were affected by depression after taking on a caring role
- > 65% have experienced increased charges or cuts to their care and support services
- > 53% expect their quality of life to get worse over the next year with only 4% stating that it would get better.

Demographic change means that not only are there more carers but there has been a sharp rise in the proportion caring for over 20 hours a week (26%) and a 16% rise in the number for those caring 50 hours a week or more.

The growing demand for care from an ageing population is being met with less, rather than more, support from social services. Carers are reporting cuts to care packages, rising care charges and direct payments failing to keep pace with the costs of care services.

Families are being forced to fill the growing gap between the demand for care and the support available. This is having a serious consequence to their mental and physical health and pushing them into social isolation.

“

I am getting close to depression and all the doctor says is 'go for a walk'. That's OK if you can leave the person you care for!

”

“

I have no time to myself at all any day.

”

^{vi} Carers Wales – The State of Caring 2015



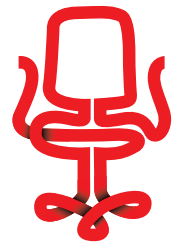
What carers want

- > Good quality, reliable and affordable care services which enable them to have a life, alongside caring.
- > Health and social care services that identify carers and recognise carers as expert partners in care.
- > An amendment to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 to introduce a formal appeals process for carers and those they care for
- > A health service which recognises that carers have their own health needs and that provides flexible support which proactively seeks to reduce carer ill-health.



Recommendations

- > An urgent, new and sustainable settlement for social care and the NHS, which sets out the funding mechanisms which will deliver the funding needed to tackle the existing gap between need and supply, and which keeps pace with growing demand.
- > Sufficient funding to implement the new duties included in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.
- > Greater clarity on the duties on the NHS to identify and support carers following the repeal of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.
- > A 'carer friendly' NHS programme including:
 - 'Carer friendly' hospitals – ensuring that carers are involved in decision making and to recognise carers' roles as expert partners in care. Ensure carers are provided hospital based access to independent information, advice and support.
 - 'Carer friendly' primary care services – Welsh Government's own research states that for 4 out of 5 carers their first point of contact with any statutory agency is with a community based health service, and that these services are best placed to identify and support carers.



Our evidence

- > 51% of carers had given up work to care
- > 64% of carers said it was the stress of juggling everything that meant they gave up work
- > 53% gave expensive or lack of suitable services as reasons they gave up work or retired early to care
- > 44% had taken annual leave to care.

In Wales 181,135 carers are working. Of these 100,260 work full-time and 52,480 work part-time.^{vii}

Whilst the nature of some carers' caring responsibilities is so intense that work alongside caring would be impossible, many carers want to combine work and caring but cannot access the support to do so.

The costs of the failure to support working carers is high. In addition to the long term personal costs to families, the Welsh economy is paying the price too.

What carers want

- > To have access to good quality, reliable and affordable replacement care services so they can have confidence in the care being provided whilst they are at work.
- > Flexible, understanding employers who recognise the value of supporting carers to combine work and caring.
- > Rights at work which recognise and value caring as much as other family responsibilities and allow carers time off to care.
- > Support to return to work when caring comes to an end.
- > A benefits system which supports carers to work or study alongside caring, rather than makes it harder.

Recommendations

- > Ensure that measures are introduced to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of affordable, flexible and good quality care services across Wales to support carers who wish to work
- > Development of good practice, led by the Welsh Government as an employer
- > Welsh Government should use procurement policies to encourage carer-friendly working practice amongst suppliers

^{vii} Census 2011



Our evidence

- > 48% of carers have not had a carer's assessment
- > 57% found that care and support services, GP practices and hospitals were the least carer friendly
- > 65% said that the impact of not being carer friendly had an impact on their mental and physical health
- > An estimated £66 million in carers' benefits go unclaimed each year in Wales.^{viii}

A lack of recognition of who carers are and the impact of caring results not just in carers missing out on advice and support, but also prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion.

What carers want

- > For their role to be recognised and respected as a crucial part of society
- > For advice, information and support to be easily accessible wherever carers are, rather than them having to seek it out. Health and social care professionals, workplaces and community settings should work to identify carers and guide them to support.



Recommendations

- > Welsh Government, local authorities, health and other key statutory agencies should work together to develop good practice on how the new duties in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act can promote tailored advice and information to carers
- > The introduction of longitudinal research to improve understanding and the impact of caring responsibilities on social services, health, workforce inclusion, household family structure, retirement and social inclusion
- > A new strategy to connect different 'contact points' across public services to improve carers' access to information and advice

^{viii} Carers UK 2013. Available from www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-releases/record-360-000-carers-miss-out-on-1bn-allowances