

National Strategy for Unpaid Carers

A consultation for children and young people



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Hello

All across Wales people are supporting friends or family members and caring for them. People do this for many reasons:

- an illness
- a disability
- mental health issues
- problems with alcohol or drugs.

That support makes a big difference to people's lives, and they don't get paid for it. They are unpaid carers.

Carers can be any age, even young people.

Young Carers

A young carer is a child or young person who helps look after someone at home, such as a parent, brother, sister, or other family member.



Caring might include practical help, looking after others, or giving emotional support.



Many carers don't see themselves as carers, they're just doing what feels right for their family.



Caring can affect time, energy, school, work, friendships and how someone feels.



All unpaid carers deserve to be recognised, listened to, and supported.

The Welsh Government wants all unpaid carers to get the help and support they need, when they need it. But many unpaid carers don't realise they can get help and support.

So in 2025 we asked unpaid carers what mattered to them and how we could support them better. We took everything they told us and developed this

National Strategy for Unpaid Carers.

This strategy has **8 main priorities**. Each priority comes with actions to improve unpaid carers lives.



We want to know what you think.



Follow this link so you can answer the questions as you go:

gov.wales/draft-national-strategy-unpaid-carers-2026

recognising carers

Many unpaid carers don't get the right help and support because services don't know what they do. Some people don't see themselves as carers.

Outcome: People understand who unpaid carers are and why their role matters. Unpaid carers feel seen and valued.

» Actions

We will run an information campaign to help more people understand who unpaid carers are, why they matter, and what rights they have. This information will be:

- shared with local groups, schools, health services and communities
- easy to read and understand
- respect people's beliefs and culture
- be available in different languages.

We will provide training and information to help people understand what unpaid carers do.

Outcome: Unpaid carers understand what they do and feel able to say 'I'm a carer'.

» Actions

We will:

- use clear messages to help unpaid carers see themselves as carers
- promote projects that increase awareness of unpaid carers and help people see what they do.

Outcome: Unpaid carers are spotted early and given the right support.

» Actions

We will make sure more staff can get training about unpaid carers. This includes health, social care, housing, police and community staff.

We will make sure online training is available for pharmacists.

Schools and colleges will make sure staff learn how to spot and support young carers.

Health Boards will make sure:

- staff know how to spot unpaid carers and help them find support
- hospitals record who the unpaid carer is when someone is in hospital
- GPs notice unpaid carers and offer them support.

Local authorities will make sure staff know how to talk to unpaid carers kindly and give clear help.



2 Getting support from services

Some unpaid carers don't get support because it's not available where they live. Some avoid services because they worry about being judged or not understood.

Outcome: Unpaid carers understand their rights.

» Actions

We will:

- refresh and share the Carers' Charter
- work with organisations so they can help unpaid carers understand their rights
- support community organisations to help unpaid carers learn about their rights too.

i Carers' Charter – a promise that explains what unpaid carers should expect from services in Wales.

Outcome: More unpaid carers get the right support checks, on time, wherever they live in Wales.

» Actions

We will make sure all unpaid carers get the same clear information about assessments and support, whatever their age.

Local authorities will:

- make sure staff who carry out these checks are well trained
- make it easier for unpaid carers to ask for a new check if their needs change.

Outcome: Unpaid carers get the support they need.

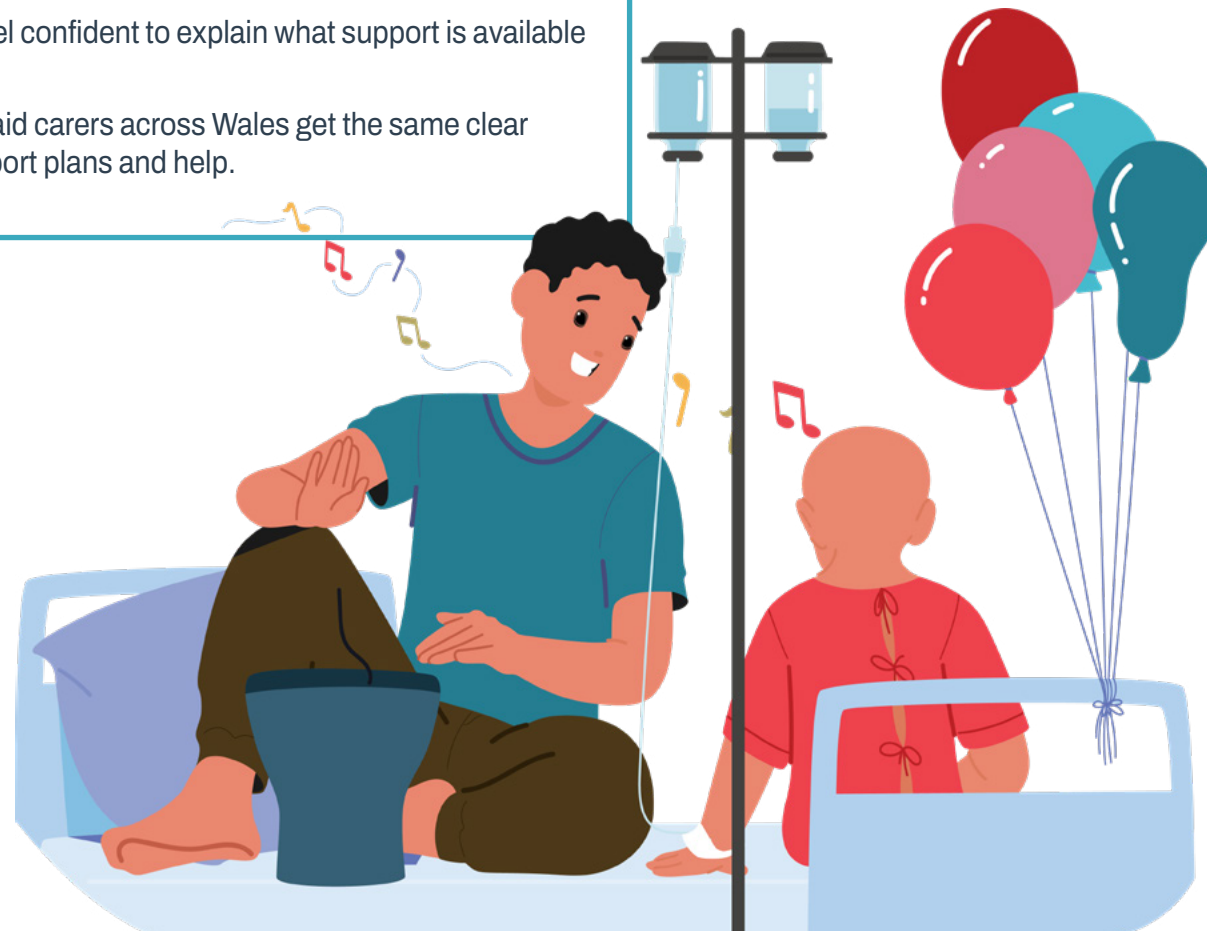
» Actions

We will use information to make sure there are the right services across Wales that match what people really need.

Local authorities will:

- give unpaid carers a support plan that is checked and updated regularly
- make sure staff feel confident to explain what support is available to unpaid carers.

We will make sure unpaid carers across Wales get the same clear information about support plans and help.



3 Young carers

Young carers often feel unnoticed at school and by services. Caring can make learning harder, it can affect their health and it can make seeing friends harder. Many young carers say they want more of a voice in decisions that affect them.

Outcome: Young carers know their rights.

» Actions

We will:

- share information on social media so more people know about the Young Carers Covenant
- encourage organisations to sign the Young Carers Covenant and support young carers.

i The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – a list of children's rights.

i The Young Carers Covenant – says young carers should be recognised, listened to, supported and included in decisions.

Outcome: Young carers can have a say and help plan services they use.

» Actions

We will make sure young carers are listened to when local services and policies are being planned. They will be able to take part in decisions that affect all of Wales.

Outcome: Young carers are recognised and supported in schools and colleges.

» Actions

Schools and colleges will:

- create a safe and positive place for young carers to speak up and say they are carers
- help teachers and college staff learn more about young carers and how to support them
- make sure leaders in schools and colleges know what to do if they are worried about a young carer
- have the same clear information about young carers across Wales.

We will share good examples of school young carer policies so other schools can learn from them.

Outcome: Local authorities help protect young carers so caring does not harm their health, learning or future.

» Actions

Local authorities will:

- give young carers assessments and support when they need one
- give young carers the help they need and it is written in their support plan. It will be reviewed regularly
- make sure local authorities check young carers are not given too much responsibility and get the right support
- get the right information from services so they can support young carers properly.

We will make it easy for young carers to have a new check if their caring role changes.



Outcome: There is clearer information about young carers' wellbeing and education.

» Actions

We will make sure we understand how young carers are feeling and learning, compared with others their age.

Outcome: Young carers have Young Carer Identity Cards so schools and pharmacies know they are carers.

» Actions

Local authorities will:

- run and promote Young Carer ID card schemes
- work with schools so more young carers know about and use their ID cards.

We will make sure pharmacists understand and recognise Young Carer ID cards.

Outcome: Young carers have the right mental health and wellbeing support.

» Actions

We will:

- make sure young carers can get mental health and wellbeing support
- help health and education staff use clear information about young carers' wellbeing to plan better support.

Outcome: Staff working in health, housing, the police and community groups notice and listen to young carers more.

» Actions

We will:

- make sure staff involve young carers in conversations and decisions about care
- make sure pharmacies help young carers collect medicines safely.

Outcome: Young carers and young adult carers have the same chances to learn, train and work as others.

» Actions

We will make sure staff in colleges, universities and Careers Wales have clear information about young carers and young adult carers.

Outcome: Young carers can get financial support.

» Actions

Schools and colleges will understand what young carers do and help them get money for education support.

We will make sure young carers get help to get the Carers Support Fund and money advice.

Outcome: Young carers get time to rest, relax and have a break from caring.

» Actions

Local authorities will check that young carers aren't doing too much and can take breaks.

We will make sure groups like Carers Trust Wales help young carers know about short breaks and how to get them.



4 Financial hardship

Many unpaid carers earn less because they work fewer hours or have to stop working. Extra costs, like heating and travel can make money worries worse. Some carers don't know what benefits they can get.

Outcome: Unpaid carers understand benefits and can get any money they have a right to.

» Actions

We will make sure unpaid carers are included in information and support about benefits and money.

Local authorities will make sure staff guide unpaid carers to advice on benefits and money.

We will also make sure:

- carer services share money advice and help unpaid carers find what they need
- the Support Fund keeps giving money advice about financial help.



5 Paid employment

It's often hard to balance work and caring. Sometimes employers are kind and find ways to work around their caring role but that doesn't always happen.

Outcome: Unpaid carers can stay in or return to paid work because support is in place for the person they care for.

» Actions

We will make sure:

- support checks include what people think and want from working
- care plans show what support is needed while unpaid carers are at work, and what support is in place.

Outcome: Employment services know about unpaid carers and support them into work.

» Actions

We will make sure:

- staff who work in employment support have information about unpaid carers, their skills, and their rights at work
- unpaid carers are clearly included in programmes to help people return to work.

Outcome: Employers understand unpaid carers and their rights at work.

» Actions

We will:

- share clear information with employers and trade unions about carers' rights at work
- promote ways to help workplaces become more 'carer friendly'.



6 Replacement care (respite) and breaks from caring

It's hard for many carers to get a break from caring. Carers say they need breaks that are flexible and reliable.

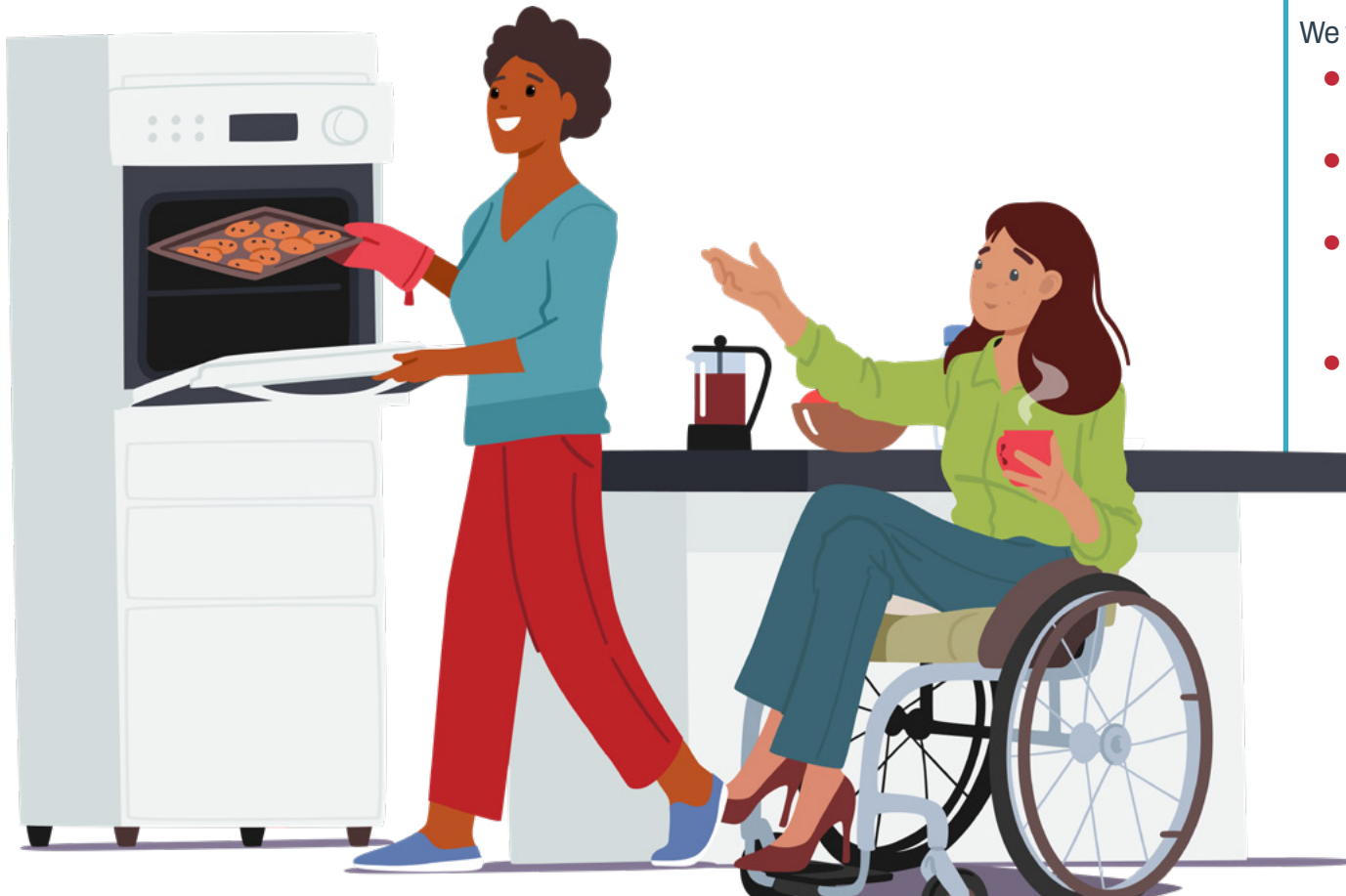
i **Respite care** – when someone else looks after the person you care for, so you can rest, do your own things or have time off.

Outcome: Unpaid carers can get breaks from caring that meet their needs and the person they care for.

» Actions

We will:

- check how short breaks for unpaid carers are working in each area locally and across Wales
- create more short breaks, including overnight and holiday breaks
- make sure unpaid carers get the same clear information about short breaks and direct payments across Wales
- keep supporting the national Short Breaks Scheme until 2029.



7 Mental health and wellbeing

Caring can make people feel tired, worried, and alone. Many unpaid carers are not sure about their future and need help when they stop caring.

i Mental health – how we feel and think. It affects our mood, our relationships and how we cope with everyday life.

Outcome: Unpaid carers can manage their mental health and wellbeing.

» Actions

Health Boards and local authorities will help unpaid carers look after their mental health and wellbeing.

We will:

- support national carer organisations to give wellbeing support
- help general wellbeing services understand unpaid carers better and meet their needs.

i General health services – services that help people stay healthy like GPs, nurses, hospitals, dentists and pharmacies.

Outcome: Unpaid carers who are struggling with their mental health and at risk of suicide are spotted and given support.

i Suicide – when someone ends their own life.

» Actions

We will:

- make sure unpaid carers are included in plans to reduce suicide in Wales
- use online training so staff notice when an unpaid carer is at risk of suicide and support them
- give community and charity workers training to understand suicide risk
- make sure staff think about suicide risk when they carry out unpaid carers' support assessments.

Outcome: Unpaid carers get help to move on in life after they stop being an 'unpaid carer'.

» Actions

We will check what information about support there is, create more if needed, and share it with carers.



8 Carers in care planning

Some unpaid carers spend a lot of time trying to get help for the person they care for from health and care services. They are often not included in important health decisions. Waiting for support makes stress, work, and money worries worse.

Outcome: Unpaid carers are listened to, treated as part of the team and involved in planning the care for the people they care for.

» Actions

We will make sure:

- professionals include unpaid carers in care checks and planning care
- services understand and respect young carers
- staff working in health services include unpaid carers in care and treatment plans when the person agrees.

Health Boards will help staff understand how important it is to get consent from the person being cared for and keep some information private if they want.

Outcome: Unpaid carers help plan what happens when the person they care for goes home from hospital.

» Actions

We will make sure staff include unpaid carers when planning how someone leaves hospital.

Health Boards will:

- make sure unpaid carers have clear information and support when someone leaves hospital
- keep clear ways to record who unpaid carers are, and that staff understand people's privacy and consent.

Outcome: Unpaid carers are included in health and social care decisions, as long as it's safe and what the person they care for wants.

» Actions

Local authority services will listen to unpaid carers when planning care and services.



Working together

To make sure this strategy makes a difference in the lives of unpaid carers, we will work with:

- Health Boards
- Local authorities
- Carers Wales
- Carers Trust Wales
- Young Carers Advisory Board
- Organisations that work with carers and young carers
- Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru)
- Regional Partnership Boards.



Have your say


Please answer the questions online here:


gov.wales/draft-national-strategy-unpaid-carers-2026

Or send them to:

 UnpaidCarersPolicy@gov.wales

Or you can respond by post:

 Unpaid Carers Policy Team
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

 The closing date is 13th April 2026