

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Strategy for unpaid carers in Wales



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of '**Strategy for Unpaid Carers in Wales**'.

March 2021

How to use this document



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Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what all the words in blue mean on **page 28**.



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Welsh Government

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Introduction



This is our new **strategy for unpaid carers in Wales.**



An **unpaid carer** is someone who gives unpaid care to an adult or disabled child.



Carers Wales say there are over 370,000 unpaid carers in Wales. The care they give is worth £8.1 billion each year.



This is a huge amount of money for Wales. We must recognise the value of unpaid carers, and how much they do for our society.



The aim of this strategy is to support unpaid carers in Wales, and make sure people understand how important unpaid carers are.



The **Ministerial Advisory Group on Unpaid Carers** helped to write this plan, with support from **Carers Trust Wales**.



This strategy has **4 priorities** for supporting unpaid carers, especially after coronavirus.

Priorities are the things that are most important to focus on.



We must support unpaid carers through coronavirus.



We must support unpaid carers with any problems, before their health and well-being is affected.

Where are we now



We have done a lot of work to help improve the lives of unpaid carers. For example:



- Unpaid carers now have more rights.



- Local authorities have a duty to make sure they meet the needs of unpaid carers.



- In 2018 to 2019 we spent almost £1.5 million on services that support unpaid carers in Wales.



- In 2019 to 2020 we spent over £7.5 million on services that support unpaid carers. We think the amount we spend to support unpaid carers will go up each year.



- In 2019 we ran a campaign to help unpaid carers understand their rights. We will start the campaign again when coronavirus allows.



- We are working with the **Welsh Employers for Carers programme**, to help workplaces support unpaid carers.



- We gave £236,000 for ID cards for young carers. During coronavirus young carers needed ID cards so they could get food and medicine. We will give more money next year to continue this work.



- We worked with **Carers Trust Wales** and **Carers Wales** to help more people understand what young carers do, and what support they need.



- We are giving money to:
 - **Carers Wales**
 - **All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers**
 - **Carers Trust Wales**
 - **Age Cymru**
 - **Children in Wales** – to run the Young Carers Network
 - **National Carer's Support Fund** - to support unpaid carers through coronavirus

Unpaid carers with protected characteristics



The **Equality Act 2010** is a law that says that we must not treat people unfairly because of their **protected characteristics**.

Protected characteristics are:



- Disabled people



- Men and women

- Black, Asian or **minority ethnic** people

A **minority ethnic** person is someone who lives in a place where most of the other people are a different race.



- Age



- Different beliefs or religions



- **LGBT** people

LGBT stands for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender**.

- **Lesbians** are women who are attracted to other women.
- **Gay** men are men who are attracted to other men.
- **Bisexual** people are people who are attracted to both men and women.
- **Transgender** people are people who are born as one sex but are the other sex. For example a person who looks like a man may be a woman on the inside.



- Women who are pregnant or have a new baby



- People who are married or who have a civil partner.



We have worked with lots of different community groups, to find out what support unpaid carers with **protected characteristics** need.



We are writing an **Equality Impact Assessment**. This will help us to find out how services can support unpaid carers with **protected characteristics**.

Some issues include:



- Over half of unpaid carers in Wales are women. Working age women are more likely to be unpaid carers than men.



- Now that people are living longer, more people have care needs or will become unpaid carers.



- Unpaid carers are often likely to be disabled or have a health condition.



- We do not know exactly how many unpaid carers are **lesbian, gay, bisexual** or **transgender (LGBT)**. Carers UK think there are 390,000 **LGBT** carers in the UK.



The **Equality Impact Assessment** will help us to know if the strategy is working for unpaid carers with **protected characteristics**. It will help us to know if we need to make changes to make things better.



We will also think about the issues people can have around money.



Most unpaid carers are of working age and want to work. Sometimes their caring role makes working difficult.



Priority 4 in our new strategy is to help unpaid carers to stay in work by giving them more support in the workplace.

Young carers and young adult carers



There are around 30,000 young carers in Wales. This is more than anywhere else in the UK.



Young carers are children or young people who care for a family member, friend or neighbour. They are up to age of 16 years.



Young carers often have difficulties with school, homework, seeing friends, feeling different from other people and worrying about the person they care for.



A young adult carer is someone from the age of 16 years to 25 years. They have to think of things like finishing education, finding a job or leaving home.



Because of lockdown, many young carers were not able to get the kind of support they needed. This may have affected their health and well-being.

Priorities for unpaid carers

Priority 1 - Support unpaid carers to continue to care for people



Unpaid carers must be valued for what they do for our society. And have an equal voice in their own health and social care.

Our work on priority 1

Value unpaid carers



We will continue with the **Carers Rights** campaign. We will work with organisations to make sure unpaid carers and young carers know about their rights.



We will start using the term '**unpaid carer**' so that people know we are not talking about staff who are paid to provide care.

Raise awareness



We will work with partner organisations to help find unpaid carers that we don't know about. This will help us to give them early support.



Carers Wales and **Carers Trust Wales** will use their projects to help improve support for unpaid carers.



They will help to change people's negative views about caring roles.



We need to improve the way we work with unpaid carers who are:

- black, Asian and **Ethnic Minority**
- older
- **LGBT**
- disabled
- do not speak English as their main language.



Women Connect First run a project to give early help to **ethnic minority** women aged over 50. If the project goes well, we will do it in more places in Wales.



It is important to support unpaid carers in their main language. This helps them to feel comfortable to tell us how they feel.



Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers

This is our plan to get a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. Part of this plan is for people to get services in Welsh without having to ask.

Improve carers assessments



We will make sure that all unpaid carers can get an **assessment** that will be useful to them and help them to have a good life.

Assessment is a way of finding out if someone needs help and support.



Our **Unpaid Carers Guide** will help us make sure that **assessments** are easy for everyone to do.



The **Social Care Institute for Excellence in Wales (SCIE)** are looking at what unpaid carers think of the **assessments**.

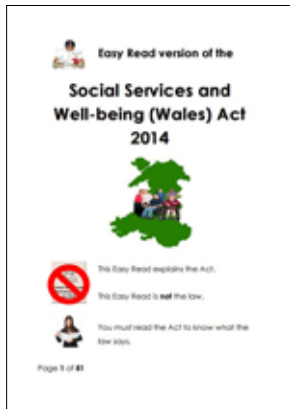


Caring Communities of Change is a new project supporting families who care for disabled family members.



We will work with **Social Care Wales** to put together training and information for people working in Social Care.

Priority 2 – Give the right information, advice and assistance to carers



The **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act** says that local authorities **must** give information about:

- how the care and support system works
- what care and support is available
- how to get care and support
- who to talk to about the well-being of a person who has support needs.



Unpaid carers should be able to get **Information, Advice and Assistance services** anywhere in Wales.

Our work on priority 2



Help unpaid carers to get information and support

We will help more unpaid carers to find information through doctors, community groups and online.



Age Cymru and **Carers Trust Wales** are planning to work with older carers and unpaid carers with **dementia**.

Dementia is a condition that affects the brain. People with **dementia** have problems with memory and can be confused. It usually affects older people.



We will look at ways to improve access to **advocacy** services.

Advocacy is when someone helps you speak up for yourself, or speaks up for you, to make sure your voice is heard in decisions about your own life.



We are giving money to the **HOPE** project to support unpaid carers and older people use **advocacy** to get the services they need.



During coronavirus, service providers changed the way they work to make sure unpaid carers could get support.



Information was shared through social media, e-mail and new telephone services. Information was in Easy Read too.



Many unpaid carers do not get all of the benefits that they are able to have.



Our campaign **Claim What's Yours** helps more unpaid carers to know what benefits they can get.

Access to technology



During coronavirus a lot took place online. A lot of unpaid carers did not have access to a computer or the internet.



Our **Digital Plan for Wales** wants to make sure that everyone has access to technology and knows how to use it.

Priority 3 - Give support to unpaid carers to take a break and have a better life



Many unpaid carers do not get time for themselves. Everyone needs time for a break and to do the things that they enjoy.

Our work on priority 3

Short breaks and time off



We are making a plan for **respite** breaks in Wales.

Respite is having a break from doing something which can be difficult or tiring.



Respite can be different for different people. We need to make sure that each unpaid carer gets the right **respite** for them.



Because of coronavirus, people will need day centres and **respite** services that they are used to. Next year we will think about new services that will work even better.

Mental health support



Coronavirus has affected the mental health and well-being of unpaid carers.



We have changed our **Together for Mental Health Plan** to make sure that it helps people in the right way.



Carers **assessments** will help unpaid carers to talk about their mental health.



The **Dementia Integration and Links (DIAL)** project runs activities to support well-being, and **counselling** for people with **dementia** and their carers in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Counselling is when a person with special training supports you through an issue or supports you to deal with difficult feeling and emotions.



Services like **counselling**, can help unpaid carers with stress or loss. During coronavirus we gave extra money to **Cruse Bereavement Care** to help people to deal with loss.

Priority 4 - Support carers in education and work



Being able to learn and work is an important part of life. Unpaid carers who are not working or learning should be able to if they want to.

Our work on priority 4

Help councils and schools to support young carers



Young carers need to be able to go to school **and** do their caring role. If young carers miss a lot of school, they will have difficulties in the future.



Schools in Wales will now focus more on well-being through the new **curriculum** – the plan for what is taught in schools. This should help young carers.



It is very important that schools and young carer services work together. Some schools have a person in charge of making sure this happens. We should have this in all schools in Wales.

Helping workplaces to support unpaid carers at work



We will keep on working with the **Wales Hub of Employers for Carers** - which helps organisations to support staff who are unpaid carers.



Because of coronavirus a lot of people have lost their jobs. This will could have a big impact on many unpaid carers.



We will look at how things like gender, not earning much money and caring impacts **poverty**.



Poverty is not having enough money to pay your bills, to feed yourself and your family, to heat your home, to buy the things you need and to get around.



We will use the **Equality Impact Assessment** to understand how women unpaid carers are coping with work and money.

Help people to manage their money well



Many unpaid carers are unable to work full-time to earn more money. We want UK government to raise **Carers Allowance**, so unpaid carers can have enough money to live well.



We must make sure that everyone who is able to get support through things like benefits and support services, knows about it.

A Charter for unpaid carers



Unpaid carers said that they did not get the same level of support from different health boards and local authorities around Wales.



So, we want to make sure everyone understands the rights of unpaid carers and the level of service they should get, by writing a **Charter for Unpaid Carers**.



A Charter is a document that states what rights a group of people have.



We will write the **Charter for Unpaid Carers** with unpaid carers.



The Charter will:

- help unpaid carers understand their rights
- support local authorities to carry out their duties to support unpaid carers
- and help make sure the voices of unpaid carers are heard.

Checking our work to make things better



We will set out clear actions for how we will achieve the things written in this document, in a **delivery action plan**. This will be ready in autumn 2021.



We will say **how** we will measure the progress we make in that plan.



We are checking how well we are meeting our duties under the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**. And how our work has made a difference to unpaid carers.



We will talk to unpaid carers and professionals. And use what we learn to further improve the lives of people, including unpaid carers, in Wales.



We also have a project called **Measuring the Mountain** that is finding out about people's experiences of care and support.



More than half of the people who took part in this project in 2019 to 2020 were unpaid carers. This work will help us understand how we can improve services and support for carers.



We are also working with social care services, to collect information about care and support for unpaid carers. And are looking at how to improve the information we collect so we can improve services.

Hard words

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Assessment

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Priorities

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Respite

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