

Strategy for unpaid carers

A plan to value and support all unpaid carers



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Young people's summary

Hello

370,000

In Wales there are 370,000 people who care for someone and don't get paid to do it.

Under 25

Around 30,000 of them are under 25.

£8 billion

If they were paid, it would cost over £8 billion.

Carers Wales

An unpaid carer looks after a member of their family, a relative, or a friend who:



has a disability



has mental health issues



has an illness



has a substance misuse issue



are elderly



has other issues

Unpaid carers support people in different ways:

- cooking and cleaning
- personal care
- doing shopping
- collecting medication
- helping them to get out and about.

What they do is really important. The Welsh Government wants to make sure these unpaid carers are valued and have support.

This is our plan to value and support unpaid carers.



Writing the plan

- involving people



We talked to unpaid carers across Wales including:

- young carers
- young adult carers
- unpaid carers from black, Asian or other minority backgrounds
- LGBTQ+ carers
- different forums and groups
- the Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers.



91 unpaid carers, groups and professionals took part in our public consultation.

They helped us shape this plan and decide our 4 priorities.



Covid-19

They also told us the pandemic made life harder. It:

- affected their physical and mental wellbeing
- added money worries
- added more hours to their caring role
- made shopping and getting medication more difficult
- made them worry about catching Covid-19 or passing it on.

Priority 1:

To identify unpaid carers, support them and value them

We want to make sure unpaid carers are valued and get the support they need as quickly as possible.

So, services need to know who they are and value the work they do.



We will:

- make sure people know what an 'unpaid carer' is and what they do
- make sure people know about young carers and young adult carers
- make sure people understand what unpaid carers add to society
- make sure unpaid carers are identified early and get support quickly
- support events celebrating carers' rights
- promote the role unpaid carers do using radio and other media
- continue the Carers' Rights Awareness Campaign
- work with Carers Trust Wales and Carers Wales
- work with local authorities
- reduce the stigma that some unpaid carers face – especially young carers looking after a parent with alcohol issues
- support unpaid carers from ethnic minority communities, older carers and others who face extra issues
- make sure services and support are available in Welsh
- develop training for the social care workforce
- make sure unpaid carers are listened to and have a say in decisions.



Covid-19:

Unpaid carers have done a lot to support people through the pandemic. They have helped reduce the pressure on other services. **We will make sure they are valued.**

Priority 2:

To give unpaid carers information, help and advice

It's important that unpaid carers have the right information, at the right time.

They need to know what's available in their area.



We will:

- make sure unpaid carers know where to get information, help and advice
- fund projects that improve how unpaid carers get information, help and advice
- look at ways to improve information, help and advice in Welsh
- look at ways to fund and improve **all advocacy services** for all unpaid carers
- use the Digital Strategy for Wales to help unpaid carers get online and have support to use the internet.

Advocacy services – give people advice and support them to be listened to in decisions that affect their lives.



Covid-19:

During the pandemic many services started using new ways to get information and advice to unpaid carers. This included telephone hotlines, online platforms, email and social media. This worked well. **We will look at how all services can do this in the future.**

Priority 3:

To support the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers

Unpaid carers must have time away from caring to switch off and enjoy things like sports, leisure activities or just meeting friends.

This can make a real difference. When they get a break, they must be able to relax and trust the person they care for is safe.



We will:

- make sure unpaid carers can have a short break or rest
- make sure all unpaid carers have the same opportunities
- make sure breaks don't just happen when there's an issue or a crisis
- work with others to find new ways to meet needs
- find ways to give unpaid carers more options for breaks and time away from caring
- make sure unpaid carers have time to get help with mental health needs
- fund bereavement services so unpaid carers have support if the person they care for dies.



Covid-19:

The pandemic has added more stress to the lives of unpaid carers. **We will make sure there are enough services to help them have a break or a rest as soon as possible.**

Priority 4:

To support education, training and work for unpaid carers

Unpaid carers should have information, advice and support for their education, training and work.

Lots of young carers are at school or college. They have to balance learning and caring. They face lots of challenges, so we need to make sure they have support.



We will:

- make sure local authorities identify young carers and support them
- focus on the well-being of young carers through the new Curriculum for Wales
- build connections between schools and local young carers' services
- look at having a lead for young carers in all schools
- work with employers to make workplaces more friendly towards unpaid carers
- promote the Wales Hub of Employers for Carers
- look at ways to help women who are caring and working
- look at ways to support unpaid carers who have had to give up work because of their caring role.



Covid-19:

Lots of unpaid carers have lost their job or faced work challenges because of the pandemic. **We will support them with information, advice and training to move forward.**

There are some decisions that we don't have control over because they are made by the UK Government. **We will continue to ask them to:**

- increase the payment rate of carers allowance
- give an extra week of unpaid leave to unpaid carers.

A Charter for Unpaid Carers

There are 22 local authorities in Wales and 7 health boards. Many of them work together well to support unpaid carers, but not all carers get the same support.

So, we are working with unpaid carers to write a Charter for Unpaid Carers. It will set out the roles and responsibilities of:

- Welsh Government
- local authorities
- local health boards
- third sector organisations
- unpaid carers.



Thanks for reading this

We will work with unpaid carers and the Ministerial Advisory Group on Unpaid Carers to check this plan is making a difference in people's lives.

Then we will write our first report at the end of 2021.

We know unpaid carers face many challenges and if we need to change this plan to support their needs better – we will.

You can find out more here:

gov.wales/strategy-unpaid-carers