

Explore barriers to wellbeing and inclusion for informal carers. Refer to theory, policy and practice.

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What is a carer?

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) define a carer as,
“A person of any age, adult or child, who provides unpaid support to a partner, child, relative, or friend who couldn’t manage to live independently or whose health or wellbeing would deteriorate without this help. This could be due to frailty, disability or serious health condition, mental ill health or substance misuse.”

RCGP (2018)



Image 1 : Care in Ireland (undated)

Informal Carers and their contribution

Carers UK estimated that informal carers save the UK £132 billion a year (Carers UK, 2015).

Care can be provided for by

Family

Friends

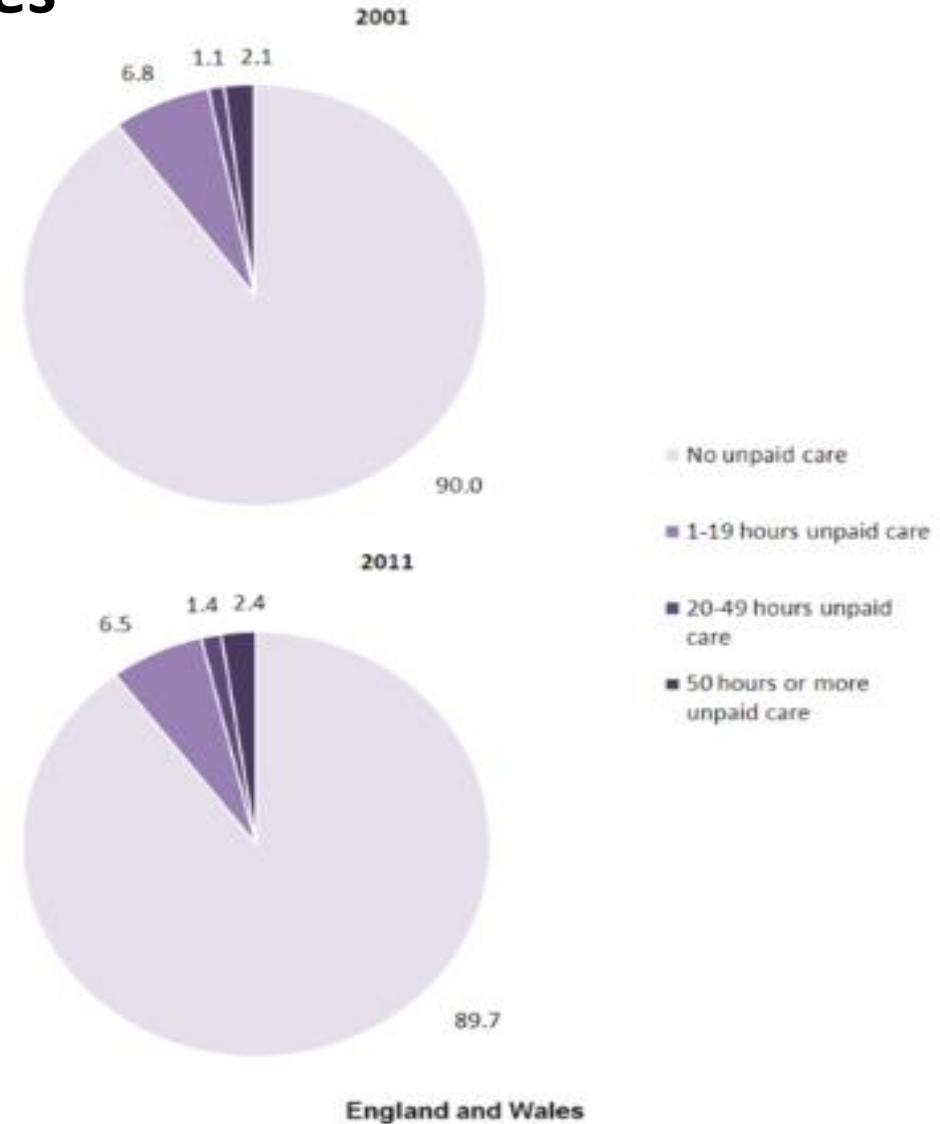
Neighbours

Informal carers face many challenges including but not limited to :

- Financial Burdens
- Bad Health
- Depression, anxiousness and stress

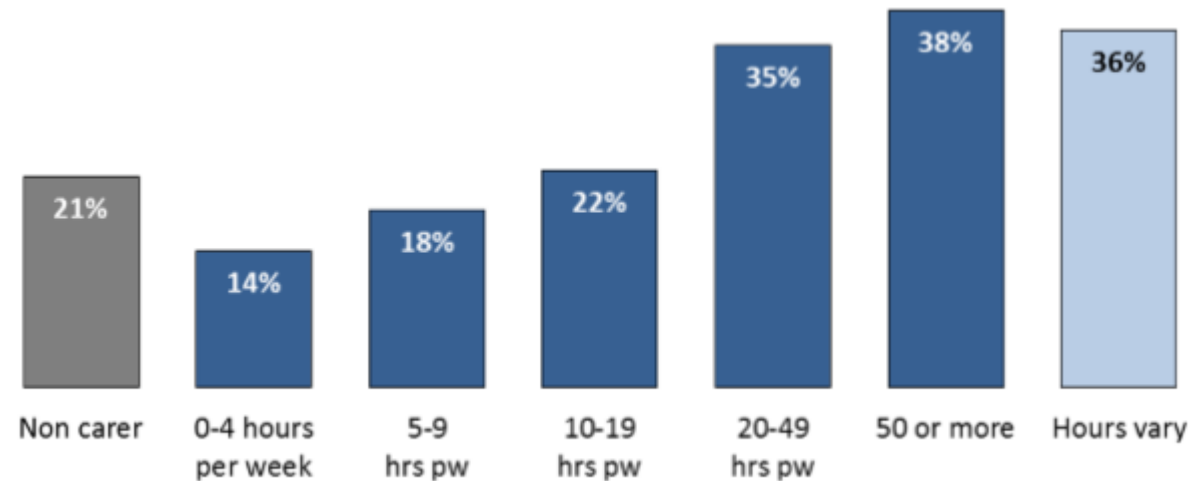
The Figures

- ‘More than half (51%) believe they ‘don’t know’ a single friend or family member, looking after a loved one, despite 1 in 10 people in the UK being carers.’ Carers UK (2017).
- In 1985 the Government carried out the first large-scale survey of informal carers. This survey revealed that 15% of the UK population over 16 were providing care (Crinson, 2007).
- In 2011 there were 5.8 million people in England and Wales with caring responsibilities representing one tenth of the population (Office for National Statistics, 2013).
- In 2016 it is reported that 12% of women and 8% of men were informal carers (Aldridge and Hughes 2016).



Care and Poverty

Poverty rate among working-age by number of hours caring a week



Source: Family Resources Survey, average for 2011/12 to 2013/14

Aldridge & Hughes (2016)

Maslow will argue that two of the basic needs are physiological needs and safety. Informal carers who are struggling financially are unable to fulfil these basic needs preventing them being motivated to achieve self-actualisation.

Pushing people into poverty as a result of their caring duties causing those carers to be excluded from society? Labelling them as Ruth Levitas' describes as SID by denying them social integration

Caring and working

‘Caring can impose a heavy financial, physical and psychological strain on carers’ (Crimson, 2007).

There are 4.1 million carers in England, 2.3 of whom are in paid employment.

It is estimated 315,000 of those workers have left work to undertake caring duties

Those from Asian backgrounds are more likely to provide care due to their ‘cultural expectations about the role of women and adult children’

Pickard (2016)

If we are to accept what Ruth Levitas says about social integration are we denying those from different cultures to be excluded from society?

Caring and Mental and Physical Health

In 2011 390,000 carers reported being in bad health (Carers UK, 2015).

- 54% of carers said they suffered with depression
- 77% felt more anxious
- 83% felt more stressed

A study carried out by Shultz in 1999 carried out over a four year period linked caregiving with early death.

The General Household Survey carried out in 2000 found that 24% of carer had to carry out physically demanding tasks.
(Carers UK 2004).

A 2014 survey of carers resulted in carers revealing that 49% of them felt that society did not think about them at all
(Carers UK 2013).

After the Cared for person has gone

Once the caring duties have ended the impact on the carer has not gone.

- Research has found that when caring starts and when it ends are key times for mental health related problems
(Carers UK, 2004).
- The NHS guidance recognises that this is a problem and advises carers to seek this 'opportunity to see old friends again, to take up old hobbies and learn something new' BUT this is only after it has provided the reader with the formalities of registering the death and although the information was reviewed in 2015 and was due for review on 15 January 2017 it has not yet been done.

Policy

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1996 – only for those providing more than 20 hours care a week
1999- Labour Government implemented a national strategy for Carers entitled Caring about Carers (Crimson, 2007).

Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 – introduced voucher scheme for carers to have short term breaks (Crimson, 2007).

The Carers (Equal Opportunities Act) 2004- ‘begun as a private members bill and supported by the lobby group for carers, Carers UK’ (Crimson, 2007). It was used to inform carers that they were entitled to an assessment of their needs. The act was supposed to promote interaction between informal carers and the Council so that they could work together; it was to support carers to engage in education and hobbies.

Current Policy

England

v

Wales

Carers Act 2014
2014

Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales)

DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
THE NEEDS OF CARERS

TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF CARERS

‘a person who provides or intends to provide
care for an adult or disabled child’.

Section 40 ‘Duty to support needs of an adult
carer’

‘Where it appears to a local authority that a
carer may have needs for support, the
authority must assess’

(SSWB(W)A 2014)

The Needs of the Cared for Person

‘Loss of independence can create tremendous frustration, feelings of uselessness, and sadness, due to a sense of loss of control in one’s life’
Myageingparent.com (2017).

Falls and loss of independence in the elderly can cause depression.
Scaf-Klomp *et al* (2003).

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Images

Image 1 : Unknown (undated) *Care in Ireland*. Available at : <http://www.ehospice.com/default.aspx?tabid=10686&ArticleId=1495> (Accessed : 16 January 2018).