



The State of Unpaid Caring in Leeds

Annual Survey 2023

LGBTQ+ briefing



About

Carers Leeds

3 in 5 of us will provide unpaid care at some point in our lives.

Carers Leeds believes all care counts.

What is an unpaid carer?

An unpaid carer is someone who provides help and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who couldn't manage without their help. This could be due to illness, disability, mental health problems or substance misuse.

Established in 1996, Carers Leeds is a charity that provides information, advice and support to unpaid adult and parent carers across our city.

This includes our Advice Line, carers support groups, one to one support and support in hospitals. Some of our services are universal – open to all carers – and some are targeted at specific groups of carers. Our services are provided to communities throughout Leeds.

We work in partnership with others to deliver our services and to influence them to act to benefit unpaid carers. This involves those working in health, social care and employers.

Introduction

At the end of 2023, Carers Leeds conducted its second annual survey of unpaid carers, aged 16 and over in Leeds.

We had 679 responses. 52 respondents identified as LGBTQ+. Most were working age and just under 50% of respondents were White British, with the remainder from diverse ethnic communities.

Just over half considered themselves to have a disability. Most were caring for their partner, sibling or children. The majority had been caring for between 2-9 years and provided between 20-49 hours of care per week.

This briefing is a summary of the key findings from LGBTQ+ unpaid carers in Leeds: what they are most concerned about; their experiences; and what matters most to them.

Unpaid care is valuable

To care for someone else, is an inherently valuable thing to do. We know caring can impact positively on the quality of life of the person receiving care, and that the value of unpaid across England and Wales is equivalent to a second NHS.

Providing unpaid care can be positive and rewarding for unpaid carers too, as reflected in some of the survey responses from LGBTQ+ unpaid carers.

Caring can come at a cost to those providing it

The responses from LGBTQ+ unpaid carers echo the story told in the [State of Unpaid Caring in Leeds](#) (2023) – that providing unpaid care can have a negative impact on carers' health and wellbeing, relationships and finances.

THE TOP 3 CONCERNS FOR LGBTQ+ CARERS

These findings differ from the top three concerns across the total, 679, survey responses. These were my own health and wellbeing; changing needs of the person I care for and money and the cost of living.

- 1** Accessing health services
- 2** Being able to have regular breaks from caring
- 3** Getting support from paid for carers

Key Findings

- 47% of LGBTQ+ unpaid carers said that caring had a negative impact on their physical health. 60% said that caring had a negative impact on their mental health.
- Using ONS measures of wellbeing, 18.5% of LGBTQ+ unpaid carers reported low levels of life satisfaction and 54.5% reported high levels of anxiety. This is particularly stark, when compared to the wellbeing figures for the adult population of Leeds, which are 4% and 20% respectively.
- Just over a third of LGBTQ+ carers said they experienced poor sleep most or all the time; and a third said they experienced feelings of guilt most or all the time.
- Just over 50% of LGBTQ+ carers said they didn't have enough meaningful contact with family and friends. 45% said that they didn't regularly participate in social activities and 20% of LGBTQ+ carers said they always or often felt lonely.
- The most common answers to what might help with your social life and time for yourself was: support from my family and friends and support with paid care for the person I care for.
- When it comes to accessing support services, common barriers cited by LGBTQ+ unpaid carers were not being able to find services in our area that meet our needs, cost of care services being too high and ongoing concerns about COVID-19.
- 43% of LGBTQ+ unpaid carers who are not working, would like to be. Ideas for what would help balance being a carer and paid work were an understanding line manager or employer; ability to take time off (paid or unpaid carers leave); and affordable and accessible paid care for the person they care for.
- A third of LGBTQ+ carers were struggling to make ends meet, were worried about monthly living costs and whether they could manage in the future. A significant proportion had gone without essentials in the last 12 months: an indication that they may be living in poverty.
- 20% had visited a food bank and others had been unable to keep their home warm; not had essential dental treatment or gone without prescription or over the counter medication (around 30%).

Conclusion

It is important we tell the real story of care in Leeds, so that we understand how best as a city to respond.

Carers Leeds is committed to using the findings from this briefing and the wider survey report to help improve the lives of those providing unpaid care in Leeds.

'I was very close to my late father and enjoyed his company, so it was a privilege to co-ordinate and provide his care.'

Unpaid Carer

Scan to read
to our full
survey



Whilst some of the issues and experiences of carers are universal, we want to highlight the specific issues and experiences of LGBTQ+ unpaid carers.

We will work with others to ensure that when it comes to accessing health services, opportunities for carer breaks and accessing paid care, we pay particular attention to the concerns of LGBTQ+ unpaid carers.

Furthermore, briefings like these form part of Carers Leeds wider approach to providing an inclusive information, advice and support service that all carers, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, can feel confident and safe to access.

If you wish to discuss any of our findings in more detail or want to know more about our work, please email comms@carersleeds.org.uk.



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