# Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England – Briefing for Network Partners

## Summary

The [Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England](http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30045) (SACE) is a survey that takes place once every two years. The survey covers unpaid carers aged 18 or over, caring for a person aged 18 or over and is conducted by councils. Just over 55,000 carers took part in the survey.

This is a summary of the key findings from the survey.[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Key findings

* 58.5% of carers spend more than 35 hours per week providing care and 36% provide care for over 100 hours per week
* 90% of carers aged 85 and over care for someone aged 75 or over
* 42% of carers reported feeling depressed as a result of their caring role
* 23% said their caring role led to them developing their own health condition, with 20% saying caring made an existing condition worse
* 48.5% said they had some social contact but not enough and a further 16% reported having little social contact and feel socially isolated

## Information about carers and their role

The survey found that the largest proportion of carers are aged 55 – 64 at 24%, with carers aged 18 – 24 represent the smallest group at 1.5%.

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| **Age range** | **Percentage of sample** |
| 85+ | 7% |
| 75 – 84 | 17% |
| 65 – 74 | 21.5% |
| 55-64 | 24% |
| 45 – 54 | 19% |
| 35 – 44 | 7% |
| 25 – 34 | 3% |
| 18 – 24 | 1.5% |

## Support needs of the person receiving care

It is important to note that the support needs required will be specific to each individual and carers will often have to manage multiple support needs for the person, or persons, they care for.

* Most carers (53%) reported that they were caring for someone with a physical disability

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| **Support needs of the care for person** | **Percentage** |
| Alcohol or drug dependency | 2% |
| Terminal illness | 5% |
| Long standing illness | 40% |
| Learning disability or difficulty | 19% |
| Problems connected with ageing | 35% |
| Mental health problems | 21% |
| Sight or hearing loss | 30% |
| Physical disability | 53% |
| Dementia | 35% |

### Activities undertaken by carers

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| **Activity** | **Percentage** |
| Keeping an eye on the person with care needs | 91% |
| Helping with paperwork or financial matter | 85% |
| Helping to deal with (social) care services and benefits | 85% |
| Emotional support | 84% |
| Keeping the person with care needs company | 83% |
| Taking the person with care needs out | 76% |
| Giving medicines | 76% |
| Personal care | 69% |
| Physical help | 58% |

### Age of carer caring for someone with dementia

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| **Age range of carer** | **Percentage caring for someone with dementia** |
| 18 – 24 | 9% |
| 25 – 34 | 15% |
| 35 – 44 | 19% |
| 45 – 54 | 26% |
| 55 – 64 | 31% |
| 65 – 74 | 34% |
| 75 – 84 | 47% |
| 85+ | 54% |

## Carers’ own health

We know that providing care can have a detrimental impact on a carer’s own health.

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| **Impact on carer’s health as a result of caring role** | **Percentage** |
| Feeling tired | 76% |
| Disturbed sleep | 64% |
| Feeling of stress | 43% |
| Feeling depressed | 42% |
| Short tempered | 42% |
| Physical strain (e.g. back pain) | 33% |
| Developed own health condition | 23% |
| Made existing condition worse | 20% |

### Time providing care

The length of time a carer has been caring is heavily dependent on the reason the person they care for needs that support. For example, if a carer provide care for a person with learning difficulties they are more likely to be caring for many years.

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| **Length of time as a carer** | **Percentage** |
| 20 years or more | 21.5% |
| 15 – 20 years | 7.5% |
| 10 – 15 years | 11% |
| 5 – 10 years | 23% |
| 3 – 5 years | 16% |
| 1 – 3 years | 15% |
| Less than a year | 3% |

### Number of hours carers spend in their caring role

The majority of carers (58.5%) spend more than 35 hours per week providing care. Over one-third of carers (36%) provide care for more than 100 hours per week.

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| **Time spent each week in caring role (hours)** | **Percentage** |
| 0 – 9 | 6% |
| 10 – 19 | 7% |
| 20 – 34 | 7% |
| 35 – 49 | 8% |
| 50 – 74 | 7% |
| 75 – 99 | 8% |
| 100 + | 36% |
| Other | 12% |
| Varies – 20 hours or more | 7% |
| Varies – under 20 hours per week | 3% |

## Satisfaction with social services

Over 70% of carers surveyed said they were satisfied with the support they and the person they cared for received from social services. The survey asked carers “Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support or services you and the person you care for have received from social services in the last 12 months?”

* 71% were extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support they received
* 13.%% were extremely, very or quite dissatisfied
* 15.5% who were neither satisfied or dissatisfied

## Social contact and isolation

Loneliness is linked to poor mental and physical health. The survey asked carers; “Thinking about how much social contact you’ve had with people you like, which of the following statements best describes your social situation”. It found that:

* 35.5% of carers reported they have as much social contact as they want with people they like
* 48.5% of carers said they have some social contact but not enough
* 16% reported they have little social contact and feel socially isolated

## How easy is it to find information about support?

Access to information should help carers and the people they carte for have greater choice and control over their lives. The survey asked “In the last 12 months, have you found it easy or difficult to find information and advice about support, services or benefits?”

Overall excluding those that did not try to find information and advice, the survey found that:

* 17% of carers found it very easy to find
* 47% found it fairly easy,
* 24% found it fairly difficult
* 12% found it very difficult to find

## Discussions about the support or services provided to the person with care needs

The SACE survey recognises that carers should be respected as equal partners in service design for the individual(s) they care for as this improve the outcomes for both the carer and the cared for person. The survey asked carers, “In the last 12 months, do you feel you have been involved or consulted as much as you wanted to be, in discussions about the support or services provided to the person you care for?”

Excluding carers that reported there had been no discussions that there were aware of, the survey found:

* 39.5% of carers reported they always felt involved or consulted
* 31.% usually felt involved or consulted
* 22% sometime felt involved or consulted
* 7.5% never felt involved or consulted.

## Carer reported quality of life score

The Carer-reported quality of life score gives an overarching view of the quality of life of carers. The measure combines individual responses to six questions measuring different outcomes relating to overall quality of life. The scale is 0 to 12, with 12 being the highest measure on the scale.

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| **Carer report quality of life scale** | **Percentage of carers** |
| 0-2 | 3% |
| 3 | 4% |
| 4 | 5.5% |
| 5 | 7.5% |
| 6 | 10.5% |
| 7 | 14.5% |
| 8 | 14.5% |
| 9 | 12% |
| 10 | 9.5% |
| 11 | 6.5% |
| 12 | 11% |

The full document, including the raw data, data breakdown and information about the methodology, of the survey can be found [here](http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30045).

**Queries and further information** Please contact Ramzi Suleiman, Policy and Campaigns Officer, [rsuleiman@carers.org](mailto:rsuleiman@carers.org) 020 7922 7754 / 07909 967 862

1. For the purposes of the briefing, percentages have been rounded to the nearest 0.5% [↑](#footnote-ref-1)