

Research report

June 2016

Creating an
enabling future
for *carers*
in the workplace



The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has 140,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

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Contents

Introduction	2
Foreword from CIPD	3
Foreword from Westfield Health	4
Executive summary	5
Employer survey	7
Summary of findings	11
Qualitative research	12
Summary of findings	21
Recommendations	22
Appendices	23

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This report was written by Claire McCartney with contributions from Rachel Suff and Dianah Worman, all from the CIPD.

Introduction

Carers are employees with significant caring responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of relatives or friends who are older, disabled or seriously ill who are unable to care for themselves.

The issue of working carers is of great importance to society, the economy and to organisations at large. The number of carers in the UK is set to grow from 6 million to 9 million in the next 30 years (Carers UK 2015a). There are currently over 3 million working carers in the UK and changing demographics and an ageing population mean that three in five people will end up caring for someone at some point in their lives (George 2001).

We know that life can be very challenging for working carers in the UK, with one in six giving up work or reducing their hours to care and one in five having seen their work negatively impacted as a result of a caring responsibility (Carers UK 2015b).

This research therefore seeks to help normalise the issue of workplace carers by exploring what it feels like to be a working carer and contrast this with current employer practices. We explore how organisations can better support/empower working carers and avoid the often unnecessary waste of talent to corporate life when they feel unable to continue to juggle their caring and work responsibilities.

The CIPD, working with YouGov, conducted qualitative and quantitative research into the issue of working carers in April and May 2016.

Four in-depth online focus groups were run in April 2016 with a cross-section of 23 working carers who varied in workplace seniority, industry and sector, age, gender, geographical location and short- and long-term caring responsibilities.

A survey of 554 senior HR professionals, weighted to be representative of the UK business population, was conducted in May 2016. More details of the research methodology can be found in the Appendices.

Foreword from the CIPD

The issue of working carers is of great importance to society, the economy and to organisations in general. It is set to grow in importance further as the number of working carers continues to rapidly increase. We know for instance that by 2017 the number of older people needing care is predicted to outstrip the number of adult offspring able to provide this. (McNeil and Hunter 2014). That makes organisations' responses to working carers ever more important.

We believe this research is important because it explores the perspectives of the people at the heart of this issue – the carers themselves – and seeks to understand what it feels like to be a working carer and the challenges working carers face in juggling work with caring responsibilities. It contrasts this perspective with a snapshot of current employer practice around three areas: carers' policies and measurement, the support provided to carers and the impact of carers' provisions.

The findings of this research suggest that both employers and working carers are most appreciative of an organisational approach that gives employees with caring responsibilities permission to respond as they need rather than a hand-holding response. As such, we believe that organisations need to foster an open and inclusive culture where employees feel supported and empowered to respond to situations as they need, as far as possible.

But there also needs to be a focus on employer policy (formal or informal) when it comes to supporting the needs of working carers. Almost two-fifths of organisations in this research do not have a carers' policy and have no plans to introduce one. We believe that carers' policies need not be prescriptive and help to legitimise the situation of working carers and send a clear message to employees that the organisation will support them. Our findings also suggest that attention to the carers' agenda is particularly needed in the private sector, which is lagging behind the public sector in particular on a number of these important issues and workplace provisions for carers.

Ultimately, organisations need to be responsive to the growing issue of workplace carers to stop the unnecessary loss of talent to corporate life and to help improve work and working lives – something that we are passionate about at the CIPD.

Claire McCartney

Adviser, Resourcing and Talent Planning, CIPD

Foreword from Westfield Health

We're pleased to be supporting *Creating an Enabling Future for Carers in the Workplace* in partnership with the CIPD. The findings articulate a need for employers to recognise the increase in the number of carer responsibilities within the workplace and the impact it is having on both the employer and employee.

Demographic trends driving growth of working carers

Demographic change means that we are all juggling increasingly complex family lives with increasingly demanding working lives. With an ageing population and people living longer than ever before, many employees are finding themselves part of the 'sandwich generation' – balancing work with looking after their own children and possibly grandchildren, along with caring for older family members.

Over 3 million workers in the UK provide informal care to sick or older parents or dependants while juggling work (Carers UK 2015b). This is expected to rise as three in five people will end up caring for someone at some point in their lives (George 2001). In fact, one in six are already giving up work or reducing their hours to provide care (Carers UK 2015b). This is no longer an emerging trend; this is now a reality for many UK workers and their families.

What is the impact of this growing trend for both the employee and employer?

For the employee, caring is impacting on their working life, as

one in five have seen their work disrupted as a result of a caring responsibility; in particular, caring for both children and older loved ones is negatively affecting the employee's ability to earn, along with restricting opportunities for career progression.

For the employer, caring responsibilities impact levels of absence and productivity. In addition, it's also impacting employees' health and well-being, through issues such as tiredness, exhaustion and lack of concentration as employees are dealing with the struggles of balancing work and caring responsibilities.

With so many UK workers now facing these struggles, employers must recognise that supporting working carers is the right thing to do as a good employer.

For most employers, the issue is not yet 'front of mind'

Workplaces have not yet fully recognised the impact of this demographic shift, and at the same time state funding of social care is not keeping pace with demand, causing even more workers to struggle with the balance of work with caring responsibilities.

It's no surprise that eldercare is becoming one of the fastest growing employee benefits and needs to be on every employer's agenda.

How can employers help?

Help your business to manage and support your valued employees and their families on their ageing journey.

Creating a carers' policy can help to provide collaborative support, along with creating a culture that openly supports working carers, as 15% of employees have felt uncomfortable broaching the subject of changing working patterns, or accommodating caring responsibilities with their employer (Westfield Health 2016). Providing training to line managers to help them effectively support working carers is also essential, along with creating flexible working which can enable people to stay in work.

Very few employers are measuring how many of their staff have caring responsibilities. In fact, only 26% of employers in the UK do have a formal written policy for supporting employees who are carers. Encouragingly, of those that do, 45% say that it has made a positive difference to their organisation's culture.

For employers it's time to recognise that the problem is most likely bigger than they think, and offering flexibility around working hours and providing support will be particularly valued.

Fiona Lowe

Head of HR & People Strategy,
Westfield Health

Executive summary

Our qualitative research with carers shows that caring is associated with providing physical and emotional care; while many view themselves as carers, others see themselves simply as 'helping' others, or 'doing their duty'. Experiences of caring vary depending on a range of factors: age, health status and relationship with the carer all play a role; for instance caring for an adult child with complex needs versus an elderly relative requires different skillsets. Carers find that maintaining a work-life balance is a struggle; care and work responsibilities leave little time to enjoy life.

When it comes to caring in the workplace, our employer survey shows that over a quarter (26%) of employers have a formal written policy and 8% have an informal, verbal policy aimed at the needs of carers, but 38% don't have a policy or plans to develop one.

Carers find that employers are generally open to discussing caring responsibilities with their employees; offering flexibility around working hours, and broader support, is particularly valued. The employer survey supports this and organisations are most likely to support carers by offering: flexible leave arrangements (49%), flexible work arrangements (48%), use of telephone and private time for calls (32%), counselling (22%) and information and advice via employee assistance programmes (22%).

However, more work is needed when it comes to employers understanding the number of carers in their workforce (just 20% measure this) and in providing training to line managers to help them support carers (only 13% currently provide this). More work is needed in the private sector too, where employers are significantly more likely to say they don't have a carers' policy or plans to develop one and are significantly less likely than the public sector to measure carers in their workforce and provide training for line managers to support carers.

There's an appreciation by carers for organisations that give them the permission to respond as they need, rather than ones that actively intervene in employees' situations. Employers are also most likely to indicate that they support this type of response to the needs of working carers.

Areas of concern for working carers are career progression and finances. Some carers, in an attempt to juggle work and caring responsibilities, have had to reduce their hours and this is felt to restrict their earning power and opportunities for career progression. While there's some awareness of the Carer's Allowance amongst carers in this research, very few are claiming (largely due to eligibility issues), with most feeling that it is financially very limited, given the demands of caring duties. Carers in this research would welcome greater financial support by the state in the future.

Encouragingly employers recognise that supporting carers is the right thing to do and has a business case. The top five reasons why organisations support carers at work are: it's the right thing to do as a good employer (65%), it improves work-life balance (60%), it improves morale/engagement (58%), it improves retention (53%) and it reduces absenteeism (50%).

Almost half (45%) of employers think the steps their organisation has taken to support carers have made a positive difference to their organisation's culture and this rises even further to 66% of those that have a policy aimed at the needs of carers.

We turn now to our key calls to action on the issue of working carers for employers and the HR profession, as well as recommendations for change within government and the wider public policy landscape.

Employers and HR

Given that employers and working carers are most appreciative of an organisational approach that gives employees with caring responsibilities permission to respond as they need rather than a hand-holding response, organisations should try to create and nurture a culture that is inclusive and empowering of working carers, for example:

- Foster an open and inclusive culture where employees feel supported and empowered to respond to situations as they need as far as possible.

- Ensure that line managers have the confidence to have sensitive conversations with employees and empower them to tailor their working arrangements to suit their individual caring needs wherever possible.
- Encourage line managers to hold development and career conversations with working carers to ensure their careers are not negatively impacted.
- Ensure that senior leaders will lead on this agenda and visibly champion the needs of working carers.
- Consult carers and consider developing a carers' network in the organisation to provide peer support.
- Consider providing counselling and other well-being support to carers if needed.
- Train line managers so that they understand the demands that working carers experience and are aware of the support available to them.

Government and policy-makers

Government, as an enabler, should encourage wider debate about the importance of supporting working carers and more actively promote the business case among employers so that they act now to avoid losing valuable working carers and older workers who will increasingly have eldercare responsibilities.

Finally, government should also take heed of the impact on the financial independence of people who are informal carers. There are short- and long-term implications for their financial well-being. They are likely to have to face a reduction in immediate income (if they need to reduce their hours or give up work altogether) and their longer-term capacity to build up pension provisions and savings for older age. At a national level, against the backdrop of the ageing population, poverty in old age is more rather than less likely to result, putting increased pressures on public provisions and services.

It is also important to create and promote a carers' policy, formal or informal, covering the organisational support available to carers, to help legitimise the situation of working carers and send a clear message to staff that the organisation will support them. Develop and implement the right tools and support for working carers, including:

- Active promotion of a flexible working policy that is responsive to the needs of people with caring responsibilities that can be unexpected and typically do not fall into a predictable and regular pattern.
- Attractive working situations that take into account people's caring responsibilities and enable them to stay in work.
- Introduce a paid and/or unpaid leave policy enabling employees to take up to a number of days off per annum for their caring responsibilities.
- Develop guidance and/or a section of the intranet where working carers can be signposted to external sources of support.

The evidence shows that freedom to act appropriately is both essential and preferred from the point of view of employers and employees. Principles and values that will foster the right behaviours and responses should be promoted to guide activity. This will enable employers to be agile in responding to changing needs and circumstances in ways that are helpful, appropriate and practical and in tune with carers' and business needs.

There needs to be more concerted action by government, in collaboration with business and employee bodies, to encourage more active promotion of flexible working by employers to their workforce.

Government should develop a stronger evidence base and act as a repository of good practice case studies showcasing how employers can accommodate working carers – sometimes small changes can make a big difference to people. They should also support the provision of easily accessible information and guidance to help employees help those in need of care.

Employer survey

Carers' policies and measurement

In this section of the survey we examine to what extent employers have policies aimed at the needs of working carers, whether they are aware of the number of working carers in their organisations and what they provide in terms of paid and unpaid leave.

don't have a policy or plans to develop one. The public sector is significantly more likely to have a formal written policy than the private and voluntary sectors and the private sector is significantly more likely than the other sectors to say they don't have a policy or plans to develop one.

Over a quarter (26%) of employers have a formal written policy and 8% have an informal, verbal policy aimed at the needs of carers. A further 7% are currently developing a policy or will be doing so in the next 12 months and 10% say their response to carers is covered in another policy. However, 38%

Table 1: Does your organisation have a policy aimed at the needs of carers? (%)

	All	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector
Yes, a formal written policy	26	18	52	26
Yes, an informal, verbal policy	8	8	5	16
No, but a policy is currently being developed	2	3	1	3
No, but we plan to begin developing a policy in the next 12 months	4	5	3	3
No, but our approach to carers is covered in another policy	10	9	10	24
No - we do not have a policy or plans to develop one	38	46	17	23
Don't know	11	12	11	6

Base: 554, private sector: 345, public sector: 162, voluntary sector: 47

When it comes to measurement, 20% of employers measure how many of their employees have caring responsibilities, 70% don't measure this and 10% don't know whether they measure this. Private sector organisations are significantly less likely than public sector organisations to measure how many of their employees have caring responsibilities.

Of those organisations that measure the number of carers in their workforce and remember when they did this – 33% said this was in 2016, 25% in 2015 and 4% in 2014.

At the last measure, 17% of organisations had 1–5% of carers, 13% of organisations had 6–10%, 12% of organisations had 11–20%, 6% of organisations had 21–40% and 10% had 51+% of carers in their workforce.

When it comes to offering carers paid and unpaid leave to help them cope with their caring responsibilities, a third (33%) of

organisations offer paid leave and nearly three-fifths (59%) offer unpaid leave. Private sector employers are significantly less likely than public sector employers to offer paid leave to carers and significantly less likely than public and voluntary sector employers to offer unpaid leave.

In relation to the number of days' paid and unpaid leave currently offered by employers, over three-fifths (62%) offer 0–6 days' paid leave and 0–10 days' unpaid leave for carers.

Support provided to carers

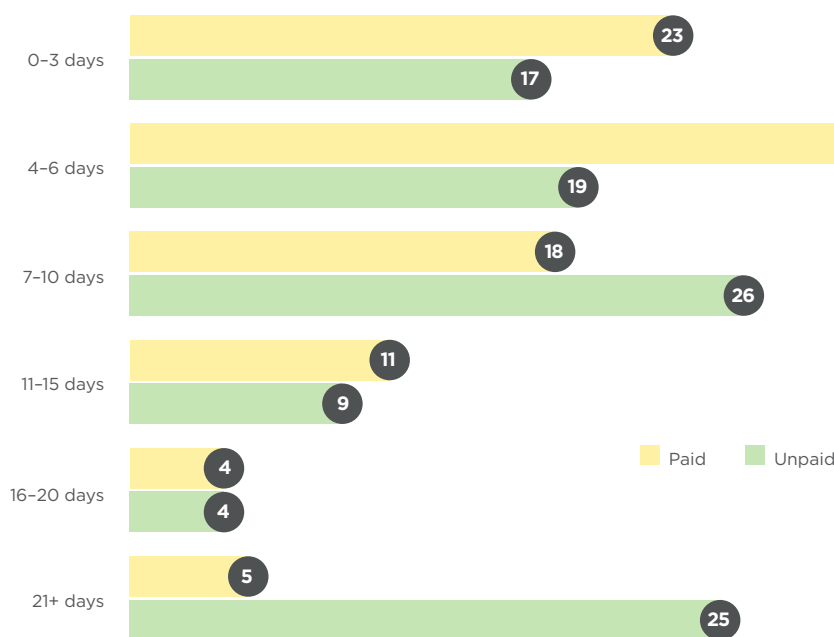
In this section of the survey we examine the employer support provided to working carers either through specific workplace provisions or through creating an enabling open culture which is responsive to the needs of carers.

Employers are most likely to support carers by offering: flexible leave arrangements (49%), flexible work arrangements (48%), use

of telephone and private time for calls (32%), counselling (22%) and information and advice via employee assistance programmes (22%). They are least likely to provide financial information and/or power of attorney information (3%), a dedicated car parking space (5%), carers' awareness days (6%), a buddy/mentor (6%) and a carers' network/forum (6%). The public sector are significantly more likely than the private sector to provide the majority of these provisions.

When it comes to the type of support approach favoured by employers for carers, there is much greater support (62%) for 'an organisation that gives employees with caring responsibilities permission to respond as they need (with minimal involvement in their personal lives)' as opposed to (18%) 'an organisation that is highly engaged in/supportive of employees with caring responsibilities (a hand-holding response to employees with caring responsibilities)'.

Figure 1: Approximately how many days of leave per year are carers offered in your organisation to help them cope with their responsibilities? (%)



Base: 382

Table 2: In which of the following ways, if any, does your organisation offer support for employees with caring responsibilities? (%)

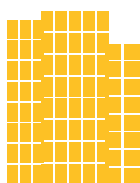
	All	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector
Flexible leave arrangements	49	43	63	72
Flexible working arrangements (beyond statutory requirements)	48	41	68	62
Use of telephone and private time to make or receive calls	32	30	39	45
Counselling	22	15	44	34
Information and advice via employee assistance programme	22	18	35	28
Signposting to information about external sources of support via intranet	16	11	32	27
Carers' network/forum	6	4	14	4
Colleague buddy/mentor	6	5	8	9
Carers' awareness days	6	4	10	3
Dedicated car parking space close to the workplace	5	5	7	2
Financial information and/or power of attorney information	3	3	4	7
Other	2	2	2	3
None of these – my organisation does not offer any form of support for employees with caring responsibilities	23	28	7	11
Don't know	9	10	11	4

Base: 554, private sector: 345, public sector: 162, voluntary sector: 47

Figure 2: Organisational responses to carers



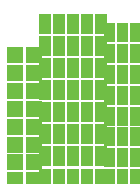
62% prefer the response of **Organisation 1**



Organisation 1: Gives employees with caring responsibilities permission to respond as they need (with minimal involvement in their personal lives)



18% prefer the response of **Organisation 2**



Organisation 2: Highly engaged in/supportive of employees with caring responsibilities (a hand-holding response to employees with caring responsibilities)



11% prefer neither and



10% don't know

Almost half (47%) of employers rate their cultures as open when it comes to employees talking with line managers about their caring responsibilities, while 19% believe they are not open (26% say they are neither open nor closed and 8% don't know). Private sector employers are significantly more likely to say their cultures are not open compared with public and voluntary sectors.

Just 13% of organisations provide training to line managers to help them support carers. Public sector employers are significantly more likely to provide training than private sector employers.

Impact of carers' provisions

This section of the survey explores the top reasons why employers support carers at work as well as the impact of provisions and

whether employers think the steps their organisation has taken to support carers have made a positive difference to their organisation's culture.

The top five reasons why organisations support carers at work are: it's the right thing to do as a good employer (65%), it improves work-life balance (60%), it improves morale/engagement (58%), it improves retention (53%) and it reduces absenteeism (50%). Employers are least likely to say they support working carers because managers in our organisation have pressed for this (4%), in response to government asking employers to support working carers (7%) and employee or trade union representatives have pressed for this (8%). Sector differences show that public sector employers are significantly

more likely than private sector employers to say their organisation supports carers because of: supporting equal opportunities/diversity, employee or trade union representatives have pressed for this and in response to government asking employers to support working carers.

Finally, almost half (45%) of employers think the steps their organisation has taken to support carers have made a positive difference to their organisation's culture. This rises to 66% of employers who have a policy aimed at the needs of carers. Just over a third (34%) say the steps their organisation has taken has made no difference to their organisation's culture and a small number of organisations (6%) believe it has caused problems for the culture, with 15% unsure.

Figure 3: Which of the following, if any, are reasons why your organisation supports carers at work? (%)



Summary of findings

- Over a quarter (26%) of employers have a formal written policy and 8% have an informal, verbal policy aimed at the needs of carers, but 38% don't have a policy or plans to develop one.
- Just 20% of employers measure how many of their employees have caring responsibilities.
- A third (33%) offer paid leave and nearly three-fifths (59%) offer unpaid leave.
- Employers are most likely to support carers by offering: flexible leave arrangements (49%), flexible work arrangements (48%), use of telephone and private time for calls (32%), counselling (22%) and information and advice via employee assistance programmes (22%).
- The top five reasons why organisations support carers at work are: it's the right thing to do as a good employer (65%), it improves work-life balance (60%), it improves morale/engagement (58%), it improves retention (53%) and it reduces absenteeism (50%).
- Just 13% of organisations provide training to line managers to help them support carers.
- Almost half (45%) of employers think the steps their organisation has taken to support carers have made a positive difference to their organisation's culture (this rises to 66% who have a policy aimed at the needs of carers).
- Private sector employers are significantly more likely to say they don't have a carers' policy or plans to develop one and are significantly less likely than the public sector to measure carers in their workforce and provide training for line managers to support carers.

Qualitative research

In this part of the research four in-depth online focus groups were conducted with a cross-section of 23 working carers. We investigated a number of pertinent issues with carers, including: perceptions of caring duties and impact on work-life balance and well-being, caring and the workplace – the current experience of carers and needs for the future and, finally, the impact of caring on finances.

Perceptions of caring duties and impact on work-life balance

In this section the research explores the challenges associated with work-life balance for carers and looks at how this differs by age and work seniority. It also looks at how carers define what they do and whether they view themselves as ‘carers’. It investigates experiences of caring and some of the rewarding and more challenging aspects of caring.

Figure 4: Across the sample, a good work-life balance is seen as hard to achieve; most struggle to maintain an equilibrium

Junior level – younger	Junior level – older	Senior level – younger	Senior level – older
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of the ‘ideal balance’ – it’s the ability to juggle work responsibilities to ensure there’s time to meet the family’s needs. • Caring for children and adults is challenging – many in this group have multiple caring duties (eg toddlers, parents/grandparents), which is difficult when coupled with work. • Work can be an escape – for some, the opportunity to get out of the home and into the workplace can bring a sense of respite. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus over what ‘balance’ looks like – it’s about having time to fulfil work duties, earn money but have the time for themselves/their families. • A constant juggling act – most feel that they have to work hard to keep a balance; it can be tiring, ‘stressful’ and a ‘constant battle’. • An understanding employer is key – some praise their supportive workplaces (esp. public sector, eg civil service), while others struggle to leave their work behind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly cynical view of ‘work-family’ balance – a balance is felt to be almost unachievable; ability to fit a busy job around family/caring duties can be hard. • Very challenging – esp. for those caring for people with complex needs; the need to be ‘on call’ at all hours can impact work and life. • ‘Tailoring’ work is key – working from home, switching to PT hours or the flexibility of running own business, gives them greater ability to manage responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong agreement over ‘work-family balance’ – as in other groups, it’s seen as a way to enjoy all elements of life: work, family and free time – with time for all. • A fine balance, for most – fitting everything into daily life is challenging, but is achievable with careful planning. • Work takes lesser precedence – most are established in their careers/in roles that allow them to shape work around caring duties; this gives them greater control.



Balancing work and life is a continual challenge for many carers, and requires organisation and effort; older senior-level carers have the greatest balance.

Figure 5: ‘Caring’ is associated with physical and emotional care, and, for many, responsibility; not all consider themselves to be a ‘carer’

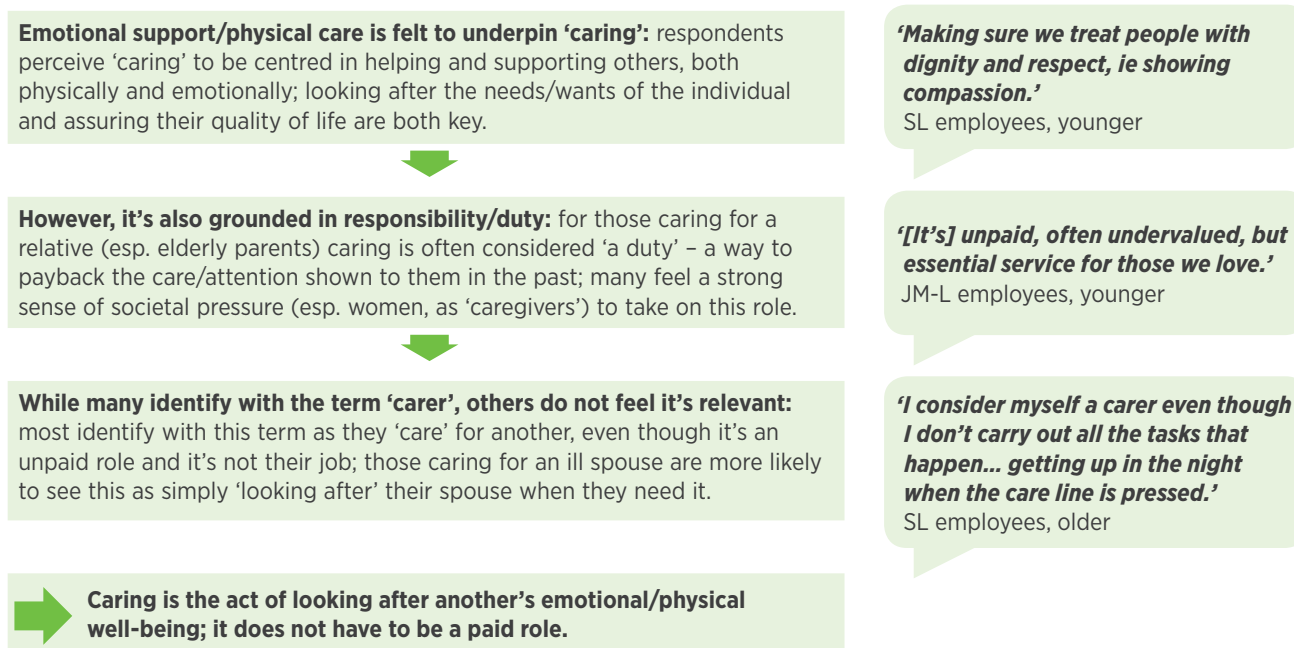


Figure 6: Experiences of caring vary depending on the age of the person being cared for, their relationship with the carer, and their health status

Older vs. younger than the carer	Close relative vs. neighbour/friend	Complex vs. less complex needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for younger adults (eg children/siblings) has its own challenges; adult children, expected to ‘fly the nest’, can get very frustrated, which can be physically/emotionally difficult to deal with. • Individuals caring for siblings with complex needs also face issues; being effectively ‘on call’ can impact their lives. • Caring for elderly relatives/spouses can be difficult; however, caring is more ‘expected’ in old age, where it’s seen as a familial duty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closer the relative, the greater the attachment/more emotive the experience is; caring for a spouse may be viewed as ‘helping in their time of need’ rather than ‘caring’ <i>per se</i>. • There is a strong sense of responsibility in caring for parents/grandparents; often it’s the ‘right’ thing to do. • Just a minority care for non-relatives (often neighbours), often on a ‘part-time’/ad hoc basis, likely to be less impactful on their lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for those with mental health issues, such as schizophrenia, autism, dementia, etc, is both physically and emotionally taxing, particularly when dealing with challenging or unpredictable behaviour. • In contrast, caring for elderly people/those suffering from reduced mobility is likely to have greater <i>physical</i> challenges (eg because of lifting/carrying etc).

While all have caring responsibilities, these vary considerably depending on their situation, and that of the person they care for; support needs can, therefore, be very different.

It’s important to recognise the impact that age, relationship and health status have on the carer (physically, mentally and emotionally); this will impact on the support they require.

→ Those caring for family members/those with complex needs are likely to require the greatest levels of support.

Figure 7: Being thanked and appreciated is a rewarding element of caring; dealing with complex needs and difficult behaviour is more challenging

Caring – the rewards

- **Feeling appreciated** – receiving a simple ‘thank you’, a hug or a smile is felt to be a reward in itself for carers; they’re making a difference.
- **Ensuring quality of life** – by offering time, care and attention they can be sure that they’re helping as best they can – contributing to and ensuring quality of life.
- **‘Doing right’ by that person** – knowing that they’re repaying parents/grandparents for the care they’ve received is a strong positive for some.

Caring – the issues

- **Dealing with challenging behaviour** – can be very difficult, especially if the challenge is a physical one (eg young adults hitting out).
- **‘Losing’ the real person** – caring for a close relative who is being ‘taken over’ by an illness (eg dementia, terminal illness) is difficult – the carer may not be fully recognised/acknowledged, which can be painful.
- **Lacking family support** – some feel that they have been forced to take on the greater share of caring duties, which can cause some frustration.



While caring has its rewards, these can be undermined by the challenges.

Caring and the impact on well-being

This section of the research explores the physical and emotional impact that caring can have on people's well-being and the need for many carers for greater help from external sources such as the Government and health services.

Figure 8: Well-being is associated with being in good physical, emotional and mental health; caring can take its toll on this

Well-being is linked to good health – both in mind and body; while all acknowledge its importance, many feel that it can be difficult to achieve.

- Carers are mostly focused on the well-being of the person that they're caring for; work, caring and family life is very time-consuming, and juggling all of these elements can impact on their own well-being.

Tiredness is common

Many state that tiredness/exhaustion is an ongoing issue – regardless of seniority/job role – as combining work and caring is a challenge; some have started to share out responsibilities in a bid to address this.

There's little recognition

Some feel that those with caring responsibilities aren't acknowledged for the work they do; there's frustration at doing an unpaid job and 'saving' the Government money in the caring arena.

Lack of time for others a concern

Most feel that they should be spending more time with the person they care for (and with wider family) but struggle with this because of work commitments; some feel a strong sense of guilt as a result.

Juggling work/caring is tough

A minority are concerned that their work will suffer; the need for flexibility (eg 'dropping everything' to care for a person) can be challenging, and individuals are concerned that their tiredness may impact performance.

➔ The physical and emotional effects of caring need to be recognised; there's scope for support to be offered at work more broadly to address this.

Figure 9: More help at home – via public services – would be welcomed by many, and help to alleviate stress

Support/assistance	Care assessment/funding	External support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help on hand – there's a space for semi-respite care, with trusted individuals on hand to look after the dependant, to give the carer some time to themselves. • Ad hoc assistance – the opportunity for occasional help – eg if unable to get time off work – is also requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter assessment – better, quicker home assessments needed so that interventions are put in place as/when needed. • Funding made available – carers realise their value – and how much they save the Government – and there are many requests for better financial support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater external support – via the Government and public services for carers; carers need to be acknowledged and supported in their role. • Health service interventions – more help with physical care and supplying care facilities (eg beds/ stair lifts) is demanded.

'Someone you can trust to call in and just sit and have a chat with the person who's in care.'
SL employees, older

'Home assessments should be carried out more quickly and physical support mechanisms put in place.'
SL employees, older

'At home, better-funded public provision of services, and funding of [them].'
SL employees, younger

➔ Greater help from external sources is requested by carers; occasional help at home would take away some of the burden of caring.

Caring and the workplace: the current experience and needs for the future

This section looks at carers' experiences of talking to their employers about their caring responsibilities and their understanding and awareness of any carer policies at work. It also looks at the difference that sector and seniority can make to the issue of caring at work as well as the potential impact on career progression. It also explores the type of organisational support carers would like in the future.

Figure 10: The majority have spoken to their employers about their caring responsibilities, but few are familiar with their caring policy

Employers are broadly seen to be open to care-related discussions: the vast majority discussed their responsibilities with their employers (esp. managers) to positive effect; most have been supported and have been given the opportunity to work flexibly when needed.



Sharing with colleagues is slightly more mixed: some actively discuss with colleagues (eg if their colleagues are in a similar position), while others prefer not to share/feel it's not necessary; few, however, feel that their caring responsibilities have impacted on colleague relationships.



Awareness/understanding of employer caring policy is very limited: while many assume that their employer has a caring policy, none have a strong understanding of what this may entail; caring policies do not appear to be very visible amongst this audience at present.



Very limited knowledge/understanding of employer caring policies at present; more can be done to promote these in companies.

'We have an "open door" policy at work so in practice it's quite easy to have a quiet word... get time off work.'
JM-L employees, younger

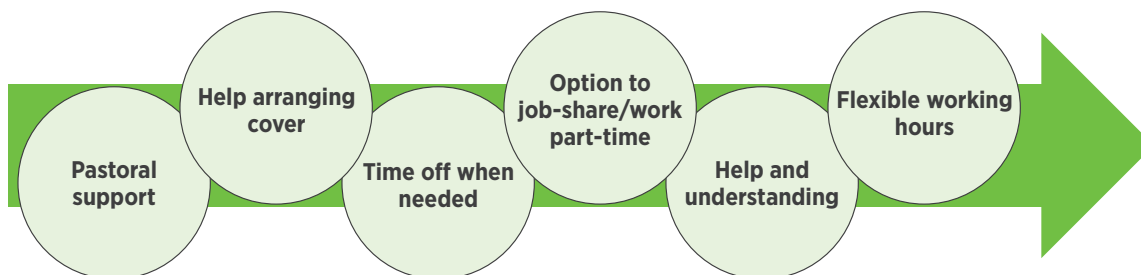
'Most colleagues also have some caring responsibility. It seems to be the way of the world...'
SL employees, younger

'No I do not but I think my manager is as supportive as he could be... if he wasn't I'd look at the organisation's more formal policies.'
JM-L employees, younger

Figure 11: Many feel that they are being given the support they need by their employer; flexible working hours are particularly welcomed

Those who have spoken to employers about their caring responsibilities are generally very positive about their experiences.

- Many feel that they have been listened to and that their workplaces have offered them the help, support and flexibility they need – for example, allowing them to work flexible hours, take time off, or job-share where necessary.
- Sector/industry can have an impact, however; those working in the public sector are particularly positive about the support available, and feel that their employers have good records when it comes to supporting employees with caring responsibilities.



Seniority can have an impact on employees' experiences; those in managerial roles/running their own businesses may not see the need to divulge information.

- Some of those in senior roles (esp. those aged 45–70) feel that it's inappropriate to share their responsibilities in the workplace, especially with colleagues, because of their position in the company; they also recognise that they have obligations to their employees so may not be able to work flexibly if it will be detrimental to their employees.

➔ Support is available in the workplace at present; however, senior execs may struggle to discuss their needs/get the support they need.

Figure 12: Balancing caring/work responsibilities can, however, be a challenge; some feel that this has impacted their career development

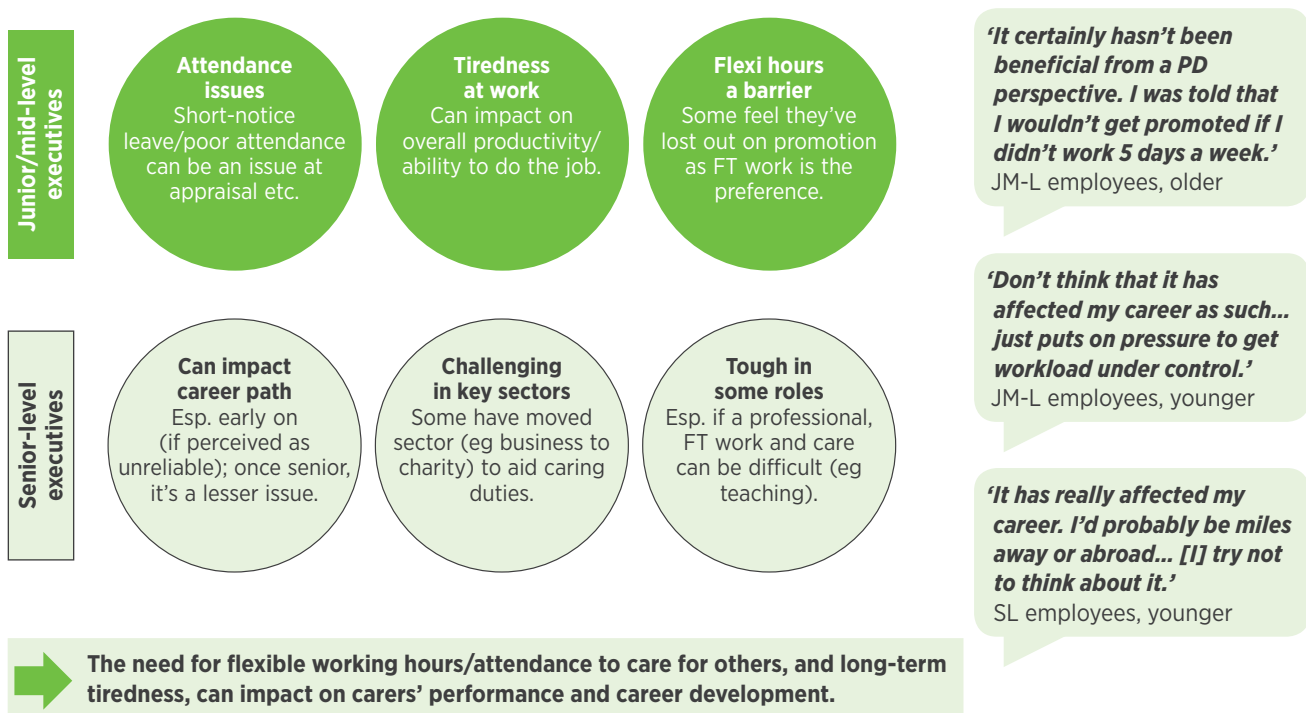
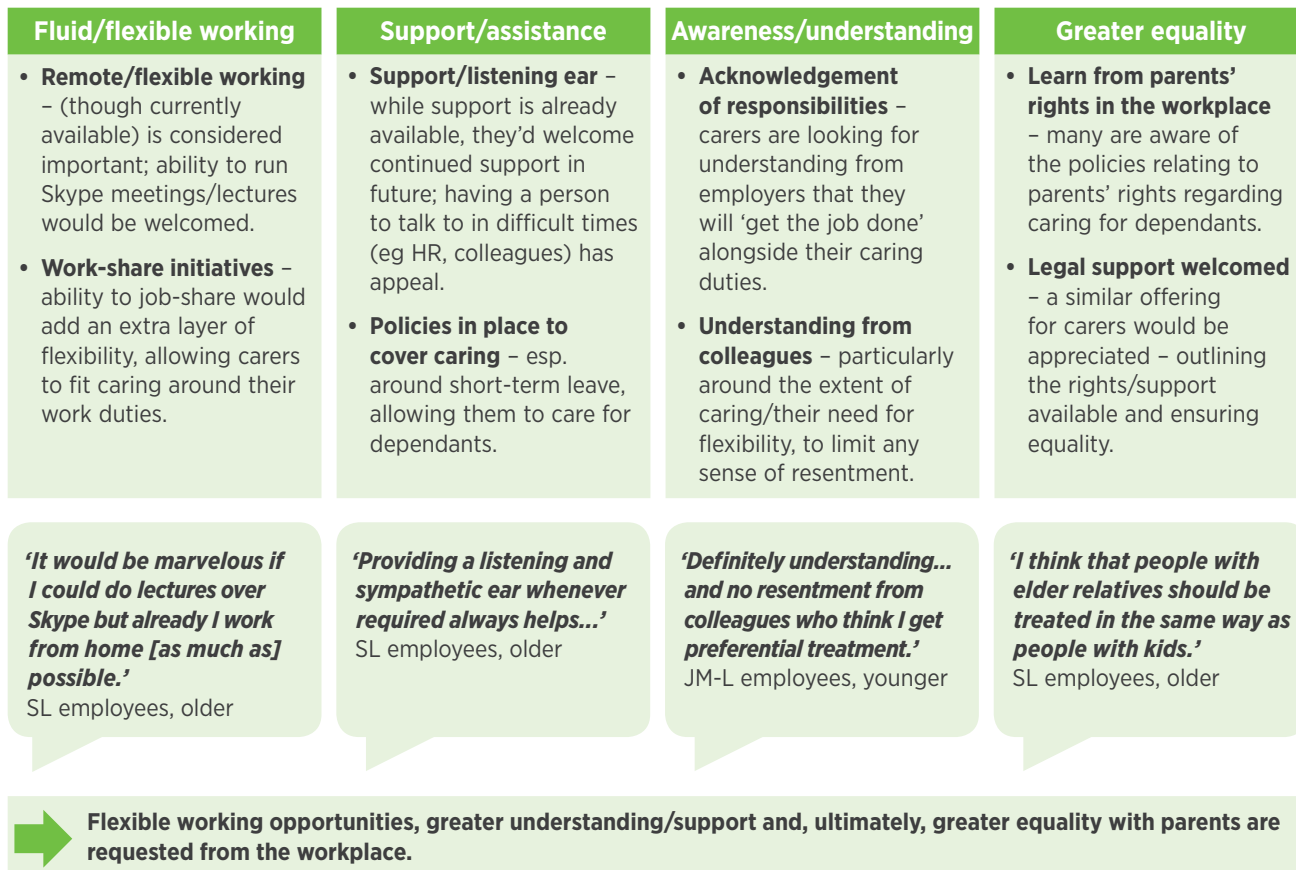


Figure 13: There's warmth for an organisation that gives carers permission to respond as they need, rather than one that actively intervenes



Figure 14: More help at work would be welcomed by some carers – especially equal rights for carers and parents



The impact of caring on finances

This final section explores awareness and take-up of the Carer's Allowance, the overall impact of caring on short-term and long-term finances as well as desired sources of financial support and advice.

Figure 15: While many are aware of the Carer's Allowance, few are currently eligible or claiming; respondents have mixed feelings about this

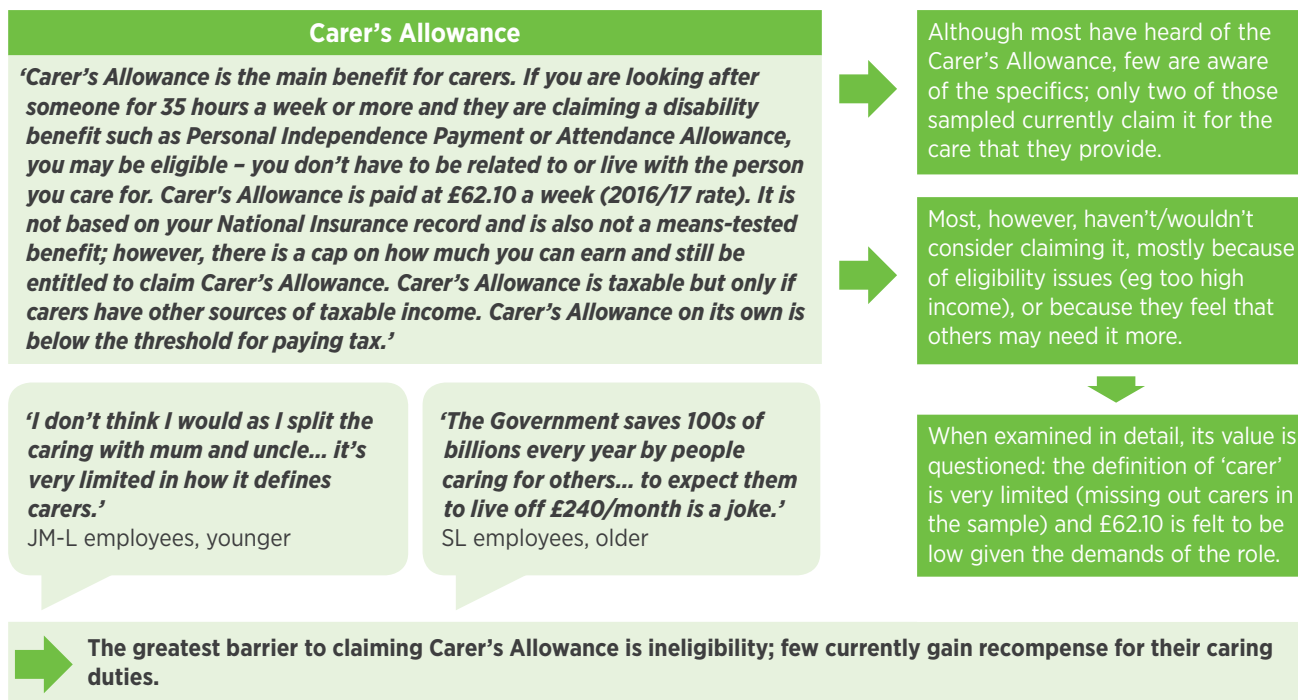


Figure 16: Many feel that they've experienced financial issues as a result of their caring duties; those being cared for can also face financial problems

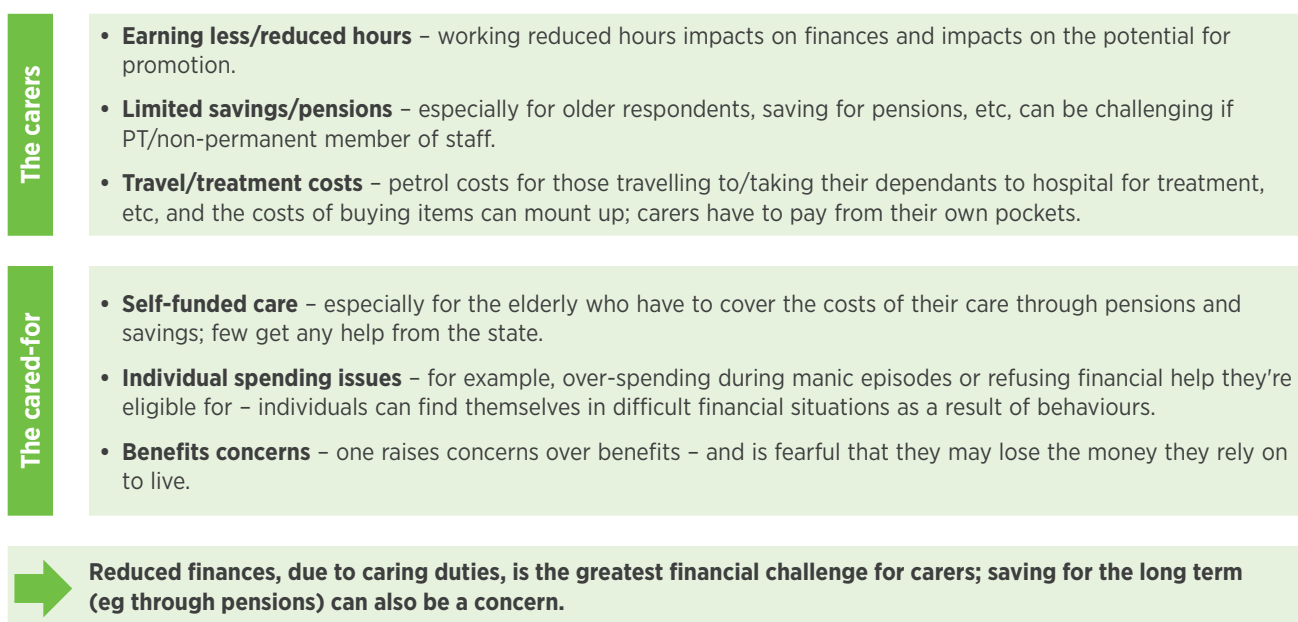
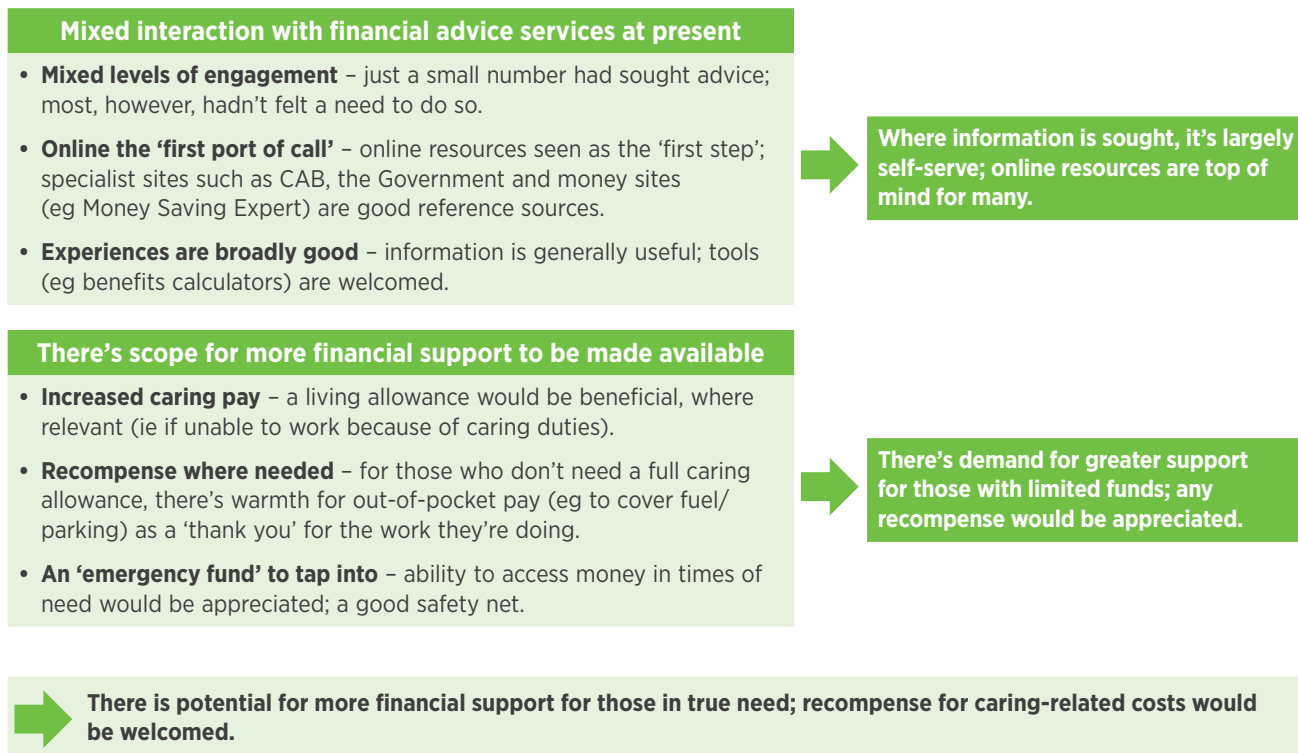


Figure 17: While few have sought financial advice/support in the past, many feel that there is a place for this in the future



Summary of findings

- Maintaining a work-family balance is a struggle; care/work responsibilities leave little time to enjoy life.
- Caring is associated with providing physical and emotional care; while many view themselves as carers (as in, a person who provides care), others see themselves simply as 'helping' others, or 'doing their duty'.
- Experiences of caring vary depending on a range of factors: age, health status and relationship with the cared-for all play a role; caring for an adult child with complex needs vs. an elderly relative requires different skillsets.
- Caring can impact on well-being: tiredness/exhaustion, lack of time, lack of recognition, and the struggles of balancing work/other responsibilities are considered the greatest challenges.
- Informal coping strategies and support networks are currently used by many; taking some 'time out for themselves' or sharing responsibilities with others can help to alleviate stress.
- Employers are generally open to discussing caring responsibilities with their employees; offering flexibility around working hours, and broader support, is particularly valued.
- There's warmth for organisations that gives carers permission to respond as they need, rather than ones that actively intervene in employees' situations; support, at a distance, is demanded.
- Many feel that caring has impacted on their working life; reduced hours, in particular, is felt to restrict earning power and opportunities for career progression.
- While there's some awareness of the Carer's Allowance amongst this sample, very few are claiming (largely because of eligibility issues); most feel that it is financially very limited, given the demands of caring duties.
- Greater financial support would be welcomed in future; a living wage for the most in need, plus out-of-pocket expenses and access to an 'emergency' fund, are all suggested.

Recommendations

We turn now to our key calls to action on the issue of working carers for employers and the HR profession, as well as recommendations for change within government and the wider public policy landscape.

Employers and HR

Given that employers and working carers are most appreciative of an organisational approach that gives employees with caring responsibilities permission to respond as they need rather than a hand-holding response, organisations should try to create and nurture a culture that is inclusive and empowering of working carers, for example:

- Foster an open and inclusive culture where employees feel supported and empowered to respond to situations as they need as far as possible.
- Ensure that line managers have the confidence to have sensitive conversations with employees and empower them to tailor their working arrangements to suit their individual caring needs wherever possible.
- Encourage line managers to hold development and career conversations with working carers to ensure their careers are not negatively impacted.
- Ensure that senior leaders will lead on this agenda and visibly champion the needs of working carers.
- Consult carers and consider developing a carers' network in the organisation to provide peer support.

It is also important to create and promote a carers' policy, formal or

informal, covering the organisational support available to carers, to help legitimise the situation of working carers and send a clear message to staff that the organisation will support them. Develop and implement the right tools and support for working carers, including:

- Active promotion of a flexible working policy that is responsive to the needs of people with caring responsibilities that can be unexpected and typically do not fall into a predictable and regular pattern.
- Attractive working situations that take into account people's caring responsibilities and enable them to stay in work.
- Introduce a paid and/or unpaid leave policy enabling employees to take up to a number of days off per annum for their caring responsibilities.
- Develop guidance and/or a section of the intranet where working carers can be signposted to external sources of support.
- Consider providing counselling and other well-being support to carers if needed.
- Train line managers so that they understand the demands that working carers experience and are aware of the support available to them.

Government and policy-makers

Government, as an enabler, should encourage wider debate about the importance of supporting working carers and more actively promote the business case among employers so that they act now to avoid losing valuable working carers and older workers who will increasingly have eldercare responsibilities.

The evidence shows that freedom to act appropriately is both essential and preferred from the point of view of employers and employees. Principles and values that will foster the right behaviours and responses should be promoted to guide activity. This will enable employers to be agile in responding to changing needs and circumstances in ways that are helpful, appropriate and practical and in tune with carers' and business needs.

There needs to be more concerted action by government, in collaboration with business and employee bodies, to encourage more active promotion of flexible working by employers to their workforce.

Government should develop a stronger evidence base and act as a repository of good practice case studies showcasing how employers can accommodate working carers – sometimes small changes can make a big difference to people. They should also support the provision of easily accessible information and guidance to help employees help those in need of care.

Finally, government should also take heed of the impact on the financial independence of people who are informal carers. There are short- and long-term implications for their financial well-being. They are likely to have to face a reduction in immediate income (if they need to reduce their hours or give up work altogether) and their longer-term capacity to build up pension provisions and savings for older age. At a national level, against the backdrop of the ageing population, poverty in old age is more rather than less likely to result, putting increased pressures on public provisions and services.

Appendix 1: Sample and method

1 Quantative method

A survey of 554 senior HR professionals, weighted to be representative of the UK business population, was conducted in May 2016.

This survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of 800,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys.

An email was sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample according to the sample definition, inviting them to take part in the survey and providing a link to the survey.

The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry-accepted data.

2 Qualitative method

Figure 18: Qualitative sample and method

- Four online focus groups were conducted with carers (caring for another adult) in work, recruited from the YouGov online panel, on 13 and 14 April 2016:

1

Junior-level employees – older

- All caring for an adult
- All junior-level/mid-level employees
- Aged 45–65
- 5 respondents

2

Junior-level employees – younger

- All caring for an adult
- All junior-level/mid-level employees
- Aged 25–44
- 6 respondents

3

Senior-level employees – younger

- All caring for an adult
- All senior-level employees
- Aged 25–44
- 6 respondents

4

Senior-level employees – older

- All caring for an adult
- All senior-level employees
- Aged 45–65
- 6 respondents

- **Additional recruitment criteria included:**

- Mix of gender/location
- Mix of short-term (up to 12 months) and long-term (12 months+) carers
- Mix of industry/sector

Appendix 2: Carer case studies

Case study 1: Lorraine, 47, sales person (older, junior-/mid-level employee)

Meet Lorraine and her family: Lorraine is married and cares for her grown-up son, who is autistic, and her mother-in-law, who has dementia.

Working situation: She's worked for a small company for 10 years.

Caring experience: Her son is 18, is 6'7" and suffers from genetic autism and other behavioural problems; he lives at home.

'[I'm] constantly mentally tired and sometimes physically; it doesn't help when you're unwell yourself.'

'You expect your children to grow up and fly the nest... we are all positive people but sometimes the mask drops.'

Current experience	Challenges/issues	Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At-home and distance carer – she cares for her son, who lives at home, and her mother-in-law, who lives elsewhere. • Long-term carer – her son has very complex needs, which he's had from birth; he was diagnosed as autistic at 2 years old and has needed care since. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She struggles to manage her son – he's a tall and powerful adolescent who doesn't know his own strength; he's difficult to deal with. • She's often physically exhausted – working and caring leaves her very tired; she's been on anti-depressants for 16 years but 'has to keep on going'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling is hard to come by – her son's been on the waiting list for CBT for a long time, which is very frustrating. • Health & social care need to join up – it's difficult to get the help she/her son require; a joined-up service would be more fit for purpose/effective overall.

Case study 2: Charles, 45, manager in a bank (older, junior-/mid-level employee)

Meet Charles and his family: Charles has two daughters and is the primary carer for his elderly parents.

Working situation: He's been a manager in a bank for 7 years.

Caring experience: His parents are elderly, and his father has Parkinson's disease; he's been caring for them for the past year.

'[Caring is] unpaid, often undervalued, but an essential service for those we love.'

'I don't get paid but I do it out of love. I guess my moral compass is that with my parents they've given me so much, it's a pleasure.'

Current experience	Challenges/issues	Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance carer – his parents live 36 miles away; he offers care as/when they need his help. • Caring in the short term – he's only been caring for his parents for the past year; he's found his employer to be very supportive so far – allowing him to work flexibly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing parents emasculated – seeing his parents as they are now (undemonstrative) compared with their active/chatty past selves, is very frustrating. • It's very tiring – with so much to do in so little time, it can be trialling; a free day would be a pleasure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursement would be welcome – given the amount of travel he has to do, he'd appreciate money to cover costs. • More awareness/understanding – he feels it's important for carers to be understood/accepted for the work they do; this would be a positive.

Case study 3: David, 28, office clerk (younger, junior-/mid-level employee)

Meet David and his family: David lives at home with his parents and his grandma, who has Alzheimer's.

Working situation: He's an office clerk who deals with the company's admin.

Caring experience: His grandma is 91, and was diagnosed a year ago after going to hospital with a broken hip; his family provide the majority of care.

'Since she has moved in, in some ways it's easier... though she does need just about everything doing for her now.'

Current experience	Challenges/issues	Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At-home carer – his grandma has lived with his family since her diagnosis; they used to care for her at her home before (eg cooking meals). • Support available – he shares caring duties with his mum, uncle and with professional carers, who help to dress her in the mornings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of support available – when his mum and uncle are around, caring is easier; it's much tougher when it's just him on his own. • Dealing with issues is hard – esp. when lots of things happen at once/ need to be sorted out, it can be very tough and become 'too much'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible financial support key – he feels that financial help should be available, but fit to individuals' needs. • Flexibility at work is important – having the opportunity to work flexibly/work around caring is key for him; this would allow carers to fulfil all of their duties.

'It can be very draining just trying to stay positive and keep well to be able to look after my grandma.'

Case study 4: Mark, 53, university professor (older, senior-level employee)

Meet Mark and his family: Mark is married and has two children; he cares for his disabled mother, who is 86.

Working situation: He's been a university professor for almost 30 years.

Caring experience: His mother has very complex needs – she's bedbound, has dementia, and a number of other disabilities.

'Physically I'm fine... I'm a tough nut but my wife says she notices that I sometimes get a bit depressed.'

Current experience	Challenges/issues	Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-home carer – Mark's mum lives with them in their home – in a bedroom converted from the dining room. • Receives support – he has help from his wife, and from paid carers (who deal with personal care/cleaning), along with community nurses – a real help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is limited, esp. for the family – the demands of caring mean that there's little time left over for 'fun' activities. • Dementia is challenging – it can be overwhelming to deal with (eg if she's confused/scared), emotional (eg when she doesn't recognise him) and draining. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater flexibility – though he's able to work flexibly already, the ability to lecture via Skype would be the ultimate. • Better recompense for carers – while he's financially sound, he'd like better financial support for carers in need of it; current offerings are poor.

'There should definitely be support in all areas for carers that need it... and yes, Carer's Allowance should be enough to live on.'

Case study 5: Susie, 37, business owner (younger, senior-level employee)

Meet Susie and her family: Susie is married and cares for her 72-year-old father.

Working situation: She has her own company, which she’s been running for 7 years; she now employs 9 people, spread between 3 offices.

Caring experience: Her father has terminal cancer and other health issues; he still wants to maintain his independence, so can be very frustrating to deal with.

‘I wouldn’t use the word carer to describe myself. It’s just something I do because it needs to be done and no one else seems interested.’

Current experience	Challenges/issues	Support required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distance carer – she doesn’t live with her father so she has to travel to see him; the distance is manageable, though. • Short-term care – she’s been caring for her father for 2 years; however, his health has recently deteriorated, with the diagnosis of cancer in January. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing work and life is tough – the situation is finely balanced, and could easily collapse. • She feels obligated to her employees – she felt pressure to leave work to care for her father but had 9 people’s livelihoods to consider; she encourages a flexible working culture for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father hasn’t accepted help – though eligible for financial help, he has refused to accept it, which is frustrating. • Carers should be acknowledged – if society took a wider perspective, the value of caring would be recognised; carers’ duties would be understood.

‘Had I done so [left work] it would have meant winding down my business and making eight people redundant.’

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