

Document published by: Carers Week **Date published:** June 2017

Original Document: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NEXT-STEPS-ON-THE-NHS-FIVE-YEAR-FORWARD-VIEW.pdf>

Purpose of document

In the UK, more than 6.5 million people are carers, usually for a friend or family member who is elderly, disabled or seriously ill. Carers do an incredible job providing a great amount of unpaid care to loved ones. However, the reality is that their contribution is not properly recognised by society and too often goes unnoticed. In respect of this, a group of large charities including Age UK, Carers UK and Independent Age, set up a campaign theme to '*build a carer friendly community*'. It is marked annually by the charity Carers Week which is the UK's annual awareness campaign dedicated to raising awareness of caring, highlighting the challenges that carers face and recognising the contribution that carers throughout the UK make to families and communities. This year, the 12th-18th June marked the return of Carers Week along with the publication of a research summary by the charity to gather, reveal and understand perceptions about how unpaid care is valued by society and expectations of becoming a carer.

Summary of contents

The report discusses key findings from a public opinion poll commissioned by Carers Week which asked:

- How sufficiently valued unpaid carers are by society.
- Public estimates of how likely they are to take on the role of a carer for a loved one who is frail or facing long-term illness or disability.
- Main worries about becoming a carer.
- Where the public would seek support with a caring role among people with no experience of caring.

Summary of outcomes

The research revealed some interesting findings. It shows that 74% of the public who were polled think that carers *are not* valued enough by society. Only 28% of people with *no experience* of caring think it's *likely* they will take on the role of a carer while 50% think it's *unlikely* they will ever become a carer. The top 3 main worries about becoming a carer include affordability of care (46%), the impact of finances (46%) and coping with the stress of caring (43%). The government, business, care services and the wider public have their part to play in recognising the contribution of carers to society and prioritising their needs by ensuring that they have a voice and receive the right support needed to maintain a work-life balance. More work needs to be done to recognise the care challenges from a financial and society perspective, and to break down barriers and stereotypes about what being a carer involves.

Summary of recommendations

- The new Government should set out a new strategy for carers to include an action plan for improving public knowledge and understanding of being a carer, along with ways to provide better support for unpaid carers and which highlight the value of unpaid care.
- The NHS, care, education bodies, community services, business and employers should re-evaluate how they recognise and value the responsibilities and contribution of carers, and take action to ensure that they make themselves and their work more carer aware and carer friendly.

Further information and resources

Carers Week website

<http://www.carersweek.org/>