

FINANCE COMMITTEE

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND AGEING POPULATION INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM CARERS SCOTLAND

1. Carers Scotland is a charity set up to support the thousands of people who care for an elderly partner, sick friend or disabled family member. Carers Scotland is the Scottish nation office of Carers UK. Caring is part of life. Three in five of us will provide unpaid care for someone at some point in our lives. However, without the right support the personal cost of caring can be high with many carers experiencing poor health, poverty and disadvantage. Carers Scotland helps carers and campaigns to make their lives better.

Key facts about carers

- There are 660,000 carers in Scotland - 1 in 8 of the population
- 110,000 people provide over 50 hours of care per week
- The main carers' benefit is worth just £58.45 for a minimum of 35 hours.
- Three quarters of carers are struggling to pay utility bills and more than half are cutting back on food and heating to make ends meet.¹
- People from lower socio-economic backgrounds² and in areas of multiple deprivation³ are more likely to need and to provide care.
- Unpaid carers and young carers are more likely to suffer poor physical and mental health, particularly those who are providing intensive levels of care. This affects their ability to care.⁴

2. Carers Scotland welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee for the above inquiry. Our submission does not seek to repeat the well-rehearsed arguments and evidence in relation to demography and our ageing population but instead considers some issues around caring and the future.

3. The role of carers is significant in the delivery of care and support. Currently the cost to replace the care provided by carers would be more than £10 billion each year⁵. Carers are critical in enabling older and disabled people to live safely in their own homes and communities. With a growing ageing population, the need for unpaid care will also increase. It is estimated that by 2037, there will be 1 million carers in Scotland⁶.

4. Demographic change will mean that more people will be juggling increasingly complex family lives, with increasingly demanding working lives. To respond to this

¹ Carers Scotland & Carers UK: Carers in Crisis (2008)

² EHRC, How Fair is Britain (2010)

³ Scottish Government & CoSLA, Caring Together – The Carers Strategy for Scotland (2010) and Scottish Household Survey

⁴ Carers Scotland & Carers UK: Carers in Crisis (2008)

⁵ Carers UK: Value of Caring (2011)

⁶ Carers UK: It Could Be You (2001)

we need to reshape our economy, workplaces and services to fit the needs of modern families.

It is cost effective to support all carers

5. Caring for someone can be emotionally and physically demanding. Intervention as early as possible and access to preventative services, including regular breaks from caring, can prevent carers and their families struggling on until they can no longer cope (and therefore require statutory service intervention). Supporting carers reduces admission and re-admission to hospital or residential care and helps people to remain independent for longer; carers are able to continue caring in good health and have reduced risk of facing physical or emotional exhaustion. Support for carers, for example, from local carers' centres and other organisations supporting carers and, a preventative focus in health and social care can reduce pressure on local services. Direct carer support is preventative and cost effective, for example, a recent study⁷ showing that £5 million of investment in dedicated carer support services achieved over £70 million in social return and cost savings.

6. This study⁸ also showed that timely support for carers provides savings to statutory budgets. The study highlighted key research which found that having a supported carer, even with low level support, enables people to stay at home longer, reduces admission to residential care and can reduce hospital bed stays and can enhance reablement and independence of patients.

7. Moreover, support for carers can help prevent and reduce ill health amongst carers, and the associated costs to health and social care services. A recent survey of carers⁹ found that 87% reported that caring has had a negative impact on their mental health and 83% on their physical health, with 64% blaming their poor health on a lack of practical support. Cuts to public spending are having an impact on carers' health and wellbeing, causing additional stress and worry. For example, 40% of carers reported that the stress of waiting for financial and practical help had an impact on their health and wellbeing.

8. However, interventions to support carers, for example by providing breaks from caring can improve carers' health and sustain them in caring. For example, carers are half as likely to suffer from poor mental health if they are able to take a break from caring.¹⁰ This has been recognised by the Scottish Government who in *Caring Together*¹¹ noted: *"By preventing breakdown of the valuable support that carers provide, not only is the cost of repairing carers' own health avoided, but the additional cost of providing alternative care for the people they support is avoided too."*

⁷ Princess Royal Trust for Carers: Commission a Carers Centre, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010)

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ Carers Week: In Sickness and in Health (2012)

¹⁰ Partners in Care, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, GSK and Q2 Research (2004)

¹¹ Scottish Government & CoSLA, *Caring Together – The Carers Strategy for Scotland* (2010)

9. Consideration therefore should be given to ensuring that carers have access to the support and resources they require to continue to care without detriment to their health, wellbeing and quality of life. To ensure that carers have access to assessment and therefore support at the earliest stage, it may be beneficial to consider the approach that is being proposed in England within the Draft Care and Support Bill¹². At present, only to eligible carers i.e. carers who provide substantial and regular care are entitled to a Carers Assessment. This provides no route to offer preventative support to carers with lower level caring responsibilities or to plan for future requirements, for example, expected changes in the cared-for person's condition, transitions etc, nor to have a system to plan for review or emergency.

10. The Bill proposes a way forward in examining how carers' assessments can be used to better support carers in their caring role. It will create a single duty for local authorities to undertake carers' assessments. It will replace existing law (including the Carers Act 1995) and will remove the requirement that the carer must be providing "a substantial amount of care on a regular basis". This will mean more carers are able to access an assessment, and that the duty is comparable to that for the people they support. The aim of this assessment will be to consider the impact of caring on the carer and to determine whether the carer has support needs and what those needs may be. It must also consider other important issues, such as whether the carer is able or willing to carry on caring, or whether they want to work.

11. When enacted, this proposes to create a new duty for local authorities to meet carers' eligible needs for support, following a Carers Assessment. The local authority must determine what their support needs are, and whether those needs are 'eligible'. The local authority and the carer will work together to identify the type of support the carer might benefit from. This might include helping the carer to take a break from their caring responsibilities, such as getting help with housework or gardening, buying a laptop to keep in touch with family and friends, or becoming a member of a gym so they can look after their own health and wellbeing. Where the best way to meet a carer's needs is by providing care and support directly to the person that they care for, e.g. by providing replacement care to allow the carer to take a break, the draft bill will enable local authorities to provide this support.

It is important to support carers to sustain employment

12. There is an equally robust economic case for supporting carers in employment. Within the UK a growing shortage of skilled workers is affecting organisations large and small. Figures from the British Chamber of Commerce show that over half of small firms in the service sector have reported facing difficulty in recruiting staff with the right skills. At the same time the City and Guilds predict that the professions of teaching and medicine, the construction industry and call centres are all set to suffer from worsening skills shortages in the next 15 years. The study also predicts that care workers and nurses will be particularly hard to recruit as the population gets older and demand for their services increases¹³.

¹² Draft Care and Support Bill – Law for Carers http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/07/2900021-Fact-sheet-5-v1_1W-21.pdf

¹³ City & Guilds. (2005) .*Rare Species – Critical Skills for Tomorrow's Future*.

13. This demographic trend towards an ageing population will also have a profound effect on unpaid carers. The need for carers will inevitably increase at the same time as it is predicted that over the next 20 years the UK economy will need another 2 million people in the workforce. This means that employers will need to widen their recruitment pool at the same time that society will see an increase in the need for care¹⁴.

14. Carers leaving employment involves high cost to the public purse. A recent study by the London School of Economics¹⁵ found that in England, the public expenditure costs of carers leaving employment in England amounted to £1.3 billion a year. This is made up of the cost of Carers Allowance of £0.3 billion and lost tax revenues of £1.0 billion (based on median full time earnings of £538 for men and £439 for women and part time earnings of £142 for men and £157 for women). There is no reason to believe that costs to public expenditure in Scotland would be significantly different, when adjusted to reflect population.

15. This is a conservative figure as it based only on the costs of Carers Allowance and lost tax revenue. Figures would be higher if carers are in receipt of other benefits e.g. income support and if lost national insurance is included.

16. In Scotland, approximately 178,000 people take up a caring role each year and 3 in 5 of us will become carers at some point in our lives. Taking on a caring role shouldn't mean a poorer quality of life or financial hardship; it should not mean that you have to give up work to care. A similar proportion of people will also cease caring and this means that many will be back in the position of seeking employment, perhaps after many years out of the job market.

17. Supporting individuals who take up caring, helping them to make that contribution and to lead a normal life outside of caring is an essential part of the solutions needed for the challenges ahead¹⁶.

18. By sustaining and supporting relatives and friends who cannot manage on their own without help, unpaid carers make a vital contribution to social care provision in Scotland, one that is increasing year on year. Yet instead of being recognised and rewarded for the contribution they make they are often penalised through having to leave paid employment.

19. Many carers do juggle caring and employment – over 250,000 people in Scotland.¹⁷ However across the UK, more than half of carers have given up work to care. That would equate to over 300,000 people in Scotland. Carers retire earlier than their peers and employment rates are less than those for the wider population – the employment rate in Scotland was 73.9% in September 2009 whilst the employment rate for carers was approximately 67%.

¹⁴ TUC. (2004) *Full Employment – the next steps*,

¹⁵ Dr Linda Pickard: Public expenditure costs of carers leaving employment (2012)

¹⁶ Carers UK. *A Manifesto for Carers*. (2005)

¹⁷ Census 2001

20. Many carers have had to reduce hours of work, move into a lower skilled job or turn down promotion or opportunities to allow some flexibility to manage caring and work responsibilities. Research estimated that carers lose out on an average of £11,822 per annum as a consequence.¹⁸ Giving up work in order to care results in an immediate loss of income as well as affecting carers' ability to build up pensions or savings for the future. This will have a direct impact on the future retirement and changes of a healthy life in older age for the three in five of us who will become carers.

The Business Case

21. There is an overwhelming business case for supporting carers. Research¹⁹ has evidenced that business organisations, large and small, benefit significantly from the introduction of flexible working practices. Labour turnover is substantially reduced and the reputation of the organisation is enhanced as its status as a 'good employer' grows. It has access to a more diverse workforce, is better able to compete in a 24/7 global economy, and ultimately customers and service users benefit.

22. Achieving business goals and improving work-life balance go hand in hand. When employers and employees work together to design the solution best suited to their needs then both the organisation and employees benefit. The benefits include:

- recruitment and retention of valued employees (The peak age for caring is between 45 and 64. Carers are therefore amongst the most skilled and experienced employees in organisations²⁰)
- increased return on investment and training and savings on recruitment and retraining costs
- improved morale, reduced stress, absenteeism and sick leave
- improved performance, productivity and service delivery

23. For example, 75% of BT's 100,000 workforce work flexibly. This flexibility has provided the organisation with tangible benefits including an estimated saving of £5 million in recruitment costs by retaining 99% of their female employees who take maternity leave, an estimated £5-6 million extra in terms of productive time saved through homeworking, an a 25% reduction in stress-related absence in its Customer Service Centres.

24. Within BT there is a culture of flexibility and support for carers. Approximately 15,000 of the employees have caring responsibilities. BT has a carers' policy which includes a definition of a carer and employees are encouraged to access information on local services via Carers UK and Help the Aged. BT has supported the establishment of Employers for Carers²¹, an interest group of like-minded employers which aims to identify and promote to employers and policy makers the business benefits of supporting carers in the workplace.

¹⁸ Out of Pocket (2007), Carers UK

¹⁹ Bucker L and Yendle S, Who Cares Wins: The social and business benefits of supporting working carers" (2006), Carers UK

²⁰ Census 2001

²¹ Employers for Carers - www.employersforcarers.org

25. These benefits can be achieved by organisations which ensure that their policies support carers in their workforce. If carers fail to reconcile their priorities at work and home they may eventually leave paid employment²². Evidence shows that relatively simple actions, often building on existing policies and practices, have a disproportionately beneficial impact on the ability of employees to balance work and home responsibilities²³. This is true of small as well as large organisations.

26. The Scottish Government has, through the Carers Strategy²⁴, expressed a wish to work with employers in Scotland to develop an Employers Kitemark which will recognise those employers supporting carers effectively and will help promote best practice. Carers UK and Carers Scotland are working with employers across the UK through the Employers for Carers²⁵ network. This network of employers across sectors is working to promote and develop best practice in supporting carers in employment.

Services and support

27. Flexibility and support for carers to remain in or return to work is only one part of the equation for the future. Social care support for carers in employment is low with only 4% of carers working full time and 6% working part time being offered a carers assessment or a review of their needs for social care support²⁶

28. As noted early, effective services and support provided at the earliest stage are needed not only to sustain carers' health and wellbeing and to help them continue to care but also to enable them to remain in employment. Research by Carers UK has established that of those carers have to give up work because of their caring responsibilities; one in three of those who are not currently in paid employment would return to work if the right alternative care was available²⁷. Moreover, more recent research²⁸ identified key factors that carers gave as the cause of giving up work to care or reducing hours.

29. These were:

- support services were not flexible enough
- the person they cared for did not qualify for support
- there were no suitable services in their area
- services were too expensive
- services were not reliable enough

30. Individuals, families and employers should have the right to expect an infrastructure of support for care which enables people to sustain care within families

²² DTI *Work Life Balance. The Business Case.*

²³ Stephen Wexler. *Carers in employment. A report on the development of policies to support carers at work.* The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

²⁴ Scottish Government: *Caring Together: Strategy for Carers in Scotland* (2010)

²⁵ www.employersforcarers.org

²⁶ 2009/10 Survey of Carers in Households

²⁷ Carers UK (2003) *Missed Opportunities; the impact of new rights for carers.*

²⁸ Carers UK: *State of Caring* (2011)

and relationships while continuing productive working lives. This will be increasingly important as people are expected to care more and wonder longer in the face of an ageing population and a growing pensions bill.²⁹

Older carers will need more support

31. It should be recognised that, whilst the population of very old older people increases so too will the number of older carers. There are over 110,000 older carers in Scotland i.e. carers aged 60 or over. 39% (almost 43,000) care for 50 hour or more each week. There are over 2,500 carers aged 85 and over.³⁰ This will increase and it is likely that individuals as well as retiring later will also be caring much longer into older age.

32. Caring places significant demands on the health of older carers, particularly for those carers aged 75 and over. These demands increase further for those caring for 50 hours or more each week. Of those older carers aged 75 and over currently caring, 25% are in poor health whilst the proportion of carers in poor health increases to 30% at aged 85 and over.

33. Moreover, older carers who have left work early in order to care experience significant financial disadvantage in older age. 65% of carers reported that they were worse off since becoming a carer (compared to 41% for younger carers). This clearly demonstrates the importance of supporting those carers that want to work as the best way of securing the financial security of carers.

34. Carers UK's research, through its Action for Carers and Employment project, has also identified that older carers use work for social reasons, quality of life as well as for income. Fewer than 5% - or one in twenty - of all the respondents in this survey were currently in employment and caring. This is a much lower rate of employment than the overall pensioner population. A good illustration of this is that nationally nearly one in three women aged 60-64 is working (30%) compared to just one in ten of the female carers in this age group³¹.

35. Planning for the future should therefore consider the requirements of older carers, particularly in ensuring that these carers have access to appropriate support and have the opportunity, should they wish, to remain in employment.

There are opportunities to stimulate future care and improve quality

36. Finally, recent research by Carers UK³², argued that statutory service provision is only part of the picture. Increasing numbers of families are sourcing and paying for independently provided services (from voluntary and independent providers) and almost all are paying for low level preventative services that local authorities no longer provide. Instead of seeing demographic change as a drain,

²⁹ Carers UK: Growing the Care Market: Turning a demographic challenge into an economic opportunity (2012)

³⁰ Census 2001

³¹ Labour Force Survey, Spring 2004

³² Carers UK: Growing the Care Market: Turning a demographic challenge into an economic opportunity (2012)

stimulating a mixed care and support economy has the opportunity bring about economic growth. People are more often paying someone else to carry out a range of domestic and care tasks in order to free them up for other demands. Recent European Commission figures showed that if every working person in the EU – 215 million – bought just one hour a week of the tasks they are struggling to provide, it would create 5.5 million jobs in “lifestyle and homecare services”.

37. As with childcare, a mixed economy in care for older and disabled people could offer individuals better opportunities to work flexibly around other family commitments, but it could also present new and diverse opportunities for small business providing family support services. There are already existing examples of care worker co-operatives and social enterprise set up to provide “whole family care”, joining up domestic support with childcare and care for older and disabled relatives – all provided by the same staff. Social enterprises which re-invest profits in their services and communities are well placed to respond to wider community as well as client needs and to look at new and innovative ways of delivering social impact.

38. This is also the natural territory for the voluntary and third sector which could be a market leader in the development and delivery of new service models, including those which integrate health and care technologies. The better, more affordable and more widely accessible the service, the more demand there will be for it, the more demand for it the more competition and the better the quality. Demand and supply will be the best driver of transformation.

39. Self-Directed Support is a key component of this picture. It will stimulate the care market by enabling individuals and their carers to have more choice and control over the services and support they wish to receive. Put simply, if services do not meet individual need, people will not purchase them. However, local authorities have a key role to play in stimulating a sufficient supply of services in their local area, including supporting and encouraging all sectors to develop services.

Conclusion

40. In conclusion, whilst demographic change does present significant challenges, it also should present opportunities to deliver services and support in different ways and improve supply and quality. The ongoing debate must recognise the assets of older people, particular the significant role of older carers. With recognition and support where they need it, carers are part of the solution not only for the future of care and as part of our current and future workforce.