

# Results from the Session 6 Scottish Parliament Caring Responsibilities Survey

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), on behalf of the Gender Sensitive Parliament Advisory Group, issued a survey to Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to gather data on the carer and child-carer statuses of MSPs in the Session 6 Scottish Parliament. The survey ran from 10 October to 7 November 2025.

## Key findings and summary data

A total of 48 responses were received, representing a 37% return rate from MSPs. Of these respondents, 54% identified as women, and none reported considering themselves trans or having a trans history.

The average age of respondents was 52 years. 34% of respondents were under 50, 60% were 50 or older, and 6% did not report their age.

## Caring responsibilities for children

### Responsibility for children spending 50% or more time in respondent's household

38% of respondents reported caring for children who spend half or more of their time in the respondent's household. Of those, 50% of affirmative responses were made by women. Respondents with children living primarily in their household were younger than the overall sample (mean age of 46 years versus 52 years overall).

Among respondents with children living primarily in their household, most reported caring for one child (56%), while caring for two children (39%) was also common. Only one respondent (6%) reported caring for three children.

Respondents were asked to provide the years of birth of each child who spends half or more of their time in the respondent's household.

- 22% of the children reported were 0-4 years old.
- 26% were 5–9 years old.
- 19% were 10–14 years old.
- 33% were 15–18 years old.

### Responsibility for children spending less than half of time in respondent's household

8% of respondents reported caring for children who spend less than half of their time in the respondent's household. Of those, 75% of affirmative responses were made

by women. Respondents with children living partially in their household were a similar age to the overall sample (mean age of 51 years versus 52 years overall).

Respondents with children living partially in their household reported caring for one child (75%) or two children (25%).

Respondents were asked to provide the years of birth for each child who spends less than half of their time in the respondent's household. The five children reported were all aged five or younger.

### **Childcare responsibilities in Parliament**

All respondents were asked how often childcare needs resulted in bringing children into Parliament. The majority (73%) reported "Never", while the remainder selected "Rarely" (13%), "Occasionally" (8%), "Always" (2%), or skipped the question (4%).

Of those who gave an affirmative response (Rarely, Occasionally, Frequently or Always), 45% were women. Affirmative responses skewed younger than the overall sample (mean age 45 years versus 52 years). 73% of affirmative responses to this question were made by respondents under 50, compared to only 38% of respondents in the full dataset falling in this age range.

### **Caring responsibilities for adults**

42% of respondents reported providing unpaid support or care for an adult friend, family member or neighbour who needs help due to illness (including mental ill health), disability, or problems of old age. Of those, 60% of affirmative responses were made by women. Respondents with caring responsibilities for adults were a similar age to the overall sample (mean age of 54 years versus 52 years overall).

Among respondents with adult caring responsibilities, the majority cared for one adult (60%), while smaller proportions reported caring for two (15%), three (20%), or four (5%) adults.

Respondents were asked to indicate the relationship(s) of the person or people they support and could select more than one category. The percentages therefore represent the proportion of carers supporting each type of relationship rather than adding up to 100%. Among those with caring responsibilities for adults, most (95%) cared for a family member. Additionally, 15% cared for a friend (either exclusively or alongside family), and 5% cared for a neighbour in addition to family.