



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# Carers Action Plan 2018 - 2020

Supporting carers today

June 2018

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# Carers Action Plan 2018 - 2020

Supporting carers today

**Prepared by the Department of Health and Social Care**

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# Foreword

Every year, more and more people take on a caring role. The enormous contribution of our country's carers not only makes an invaluable difference to the people they support, it is an integral part of our health and social care system and it deserves to be better recognised.

To doctors, carers are the experts-by-experience turning treatment plans into reality. To pharmaceutical companies, they can be an important influence towards the achievement of treatment success. To the people they help, they are the indispensable family members, friends, and neighbours that make each day possible. Within our communities they are vital partners, bridging the gap between local health and care services.

What none of us must forget is that carers have their own needs too. We must be alert and responsive to those needs, or we risk compromising their health and wellbeing and – by association – the recipients of their care.

Many of us will be a carer at some stage in our lives. Today around 1 in 10 of the population are carers ([Census, 2011](#)). The role can come about unexpectedly and many will put their own lives on hold to help someone close to them. While for most carers the experience of looking after someone close is rewarding and undoubtedly has an immeasurable impact on the people they care for, the hours can be long and their work is hard. Caring can take a toll on the carer's own health, relationships and finances.

The value and importance of carers to health and social care and broader society is ever-increasing with our ageing population. One estimate suggests that the number of disabled older adults (65+) receiving informal care in England will increase from around 2.2 million in 2015 to around 3.5 million by 2035, which represents an increase of 63% ([Wittenburg and Hu, 2015](#)). In the UK this care is worth billions of pounds to the economy each year.

However, too often carers feel they are on their own, do not feel respected, valued and supported for the huge contribution they make. They feel that what they do is sometimes taken for granted and overlooked, which often takes a toll on their own wellbeing. Not only do carers face emotional challenges but they sometimes navigate through complex systems with little formal guidance and direction ([Carers Call for Evidence 2016 -Government response to the carers call for evidence](#)).

Carers need to be recognised and valued. Carers need access to information and support to provide the best care they can. Carers need to be helped to balance their caring responsibilities with their own employment and to preserve their personal health and wellbeing. That is why we are publishing this Carers Action Plan. It sets out the practical actions we plan to take over the next two years working together across government and with partners beyond government.

As a mark of the Government's commitment to carers, we, Ministers from the Government Equalities Office, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education have contributed to and are investing in this action plan, which we have signed alongside the Department of Health and Social Care.

The Government recognises that there is still more to do. That is why the needs of carers will also be central to the forthcoming social care green paper. Carers are vital partners in the health and social care system and a sustainable settlement for social care will simply not be possible without focusing on how our society supports carers.

Each of us must also do our bit to help recognise, value, support and celebrate carers, who make an amazing contribution looking after so many people in need of help and support.

**Caroline Dinenage MP**



*Minister of State for Care*



**Department  
of Health &  
Social Care**

**Victoria Atkins MP**

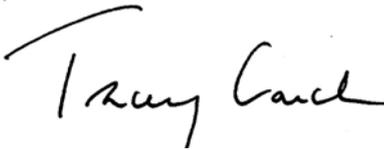


*Minister for Women*



**Government  
Equalities Office**

**Tracey Crouch MP**



*Minister for Sports & Civil Society*



**Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport**

**Andrew Griffiths MP**



*Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility*



**Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy**

**Sarah Newton MP**



*Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work*



**Department  
for Work &  
Pensions**

**Nadhim Zahawi MP**



*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families*



**Department  
for Education**

# Introduction

## The Carers Action Plan

This action plan outlines the cross-government programme of work to support carers in England over the next two years and builds on the [National Carers Strategy](#). It retains the strategic vision for recognising, valuing and supporting carers from 2008, which has been the vision of successive governments. It sets out this Government's commitment to supporting carers through 64 actions across five priorities emerging from the carers' Call for Evidence. The actions focus on delivery and tangible progress that can be made in the near future, and give visibility to the wide range of work that is planned or already underway across government to support carers, their families and those they care for.

Although the term "carer" is defined in very specific terms for the purposes of the [Care Act 2014](#), and for the purposes of claiming some benefits, this action plan recognises carers in a far broader sense. Thinking too narrowly risks people not getting the recognition and support they need. For the purposes of this action plan, a carer is considered to be anyone who spends time looking after or helping a friend, family member or neighbour who, because of their health and care needs, would find it difficult to cope without this help regardless of age or whether they identify as a carer.

The action plan builds on the Care Act 2014, a historic piece of legislation which introduced important new rights for carers, putting them on the same footing as the people for whom they care. Carers now have legal rights to an assessment of, and support for, their needs where eligible. Alongside the Care Act 2014, the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) extended the right to a needs assessment to all young carers, regardless of who they care for or the type of care provided. This means that when a child is identified as a young carer, the needs of everyone in the family will be considered, triggering both children's and adult's support services.

Government is committed to supporting carers to provide care as they would wish, and to do so in a way that takes account of their own health and wellbeing, access to education, employment and life chances. However, some solutions reach beyond the health and care system, and indeed beyond the influence of Government. We also need businesses, local communities, the voluntary sector and individuals to play their part in addressing these challenges to make sure that caring is everybody's business.

At the root of this is the need to raise the profile of carers and caring – so that all of us recognise and value the contribution carers make within our families, communities, workplaces and society.

## The Call for Evidence

In 2016, the Government launched a carers' Call for Evidence consultation, to which there were 6,802 responses. Carers told us about the pride and satisfaction they take in their caring roles, but also the many practical frustrations and difficulties they face and the profound impact caring can have on their own health, employment and lives outside caring.

A summary of the responses to this consultation is published alongside the action plan.

In developing this plan we have drawn on the thousands of responses, including those heard at focus groups and other events designed to capture carers' views. Five primary themes emerged from our analysis of the responses and these are reflected in the structure and contents of the action plan.

- **Services and systems that work for carers** - Carers often have extensive contact with the health and social care system, so it is important that services value and involve carers. Services and systems need to be aware of the diversity of carers and their circumstances, from an elderly neighbour, to a young adult carer even to someone serving in the armed forces. There is no such thing as a "typical carer". They also need to be responsive and flexible, recognising and supporting carers at different stages in the caring journey.
- **Employment and financial wellbeing** - Many carers told us about the difficulties they face balancing work and performing a caring role, and at the same time how they are struggling to make ends meet leading to financial hardship putting further pressure on them. Where an employer is made aware of an employee with caring responsibilities, employers can take simple, but effective action to enable carers to balance their caring and employment responsibilities. It makes good business sense to consider what flexible working practices might help both the employer and employee.
- **Supporting young carers** - Young carers can suffer with poorer health and wellbeing, often missing out on education and training opportunities. Improved identification of young carers, to enable assessments that identify support needs alongside flexible educational opportunities are vital to providing support so that young carers are able to access opportunities and have the same life chances as other young people without caring responsibilities.
- **Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society** - Many carers will have little contact with services for carers, and will not be receiving formal support in their caring role. It is therefore vital that we work with partners beyond government to raise awareness of caring among the wider population to build carer friendly communities.
- **Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers** - This helps to better understand what solutions would be most effective and helpful for carers, to strengthen areas where we identified gaps in knowledge through our Call for Evidence and to ensure that the development and delivery of future policies are informed by a strong evidence base.

The Call for Evidence was launched in preparation for a Carers Strategy. However, the announcement of a social care green paper, for publication this summer, presented an opportunity to take a more fundamental approach to tackling the challenges carers face. We will, therefore, consider them alongside our strategy for social care.

That said, we also recognise that there are specific actions needed to improve support for carers now. For this reason, we are bringing forward this action plan, setting out a cross-government programme of targeted work to be carried out over the next two years.

The action plan puts a focus on current delivery ahead of the forthcoming green paper and gives visibility to the work that is being done or is planned within government.

## Introduction

### Making progress

We are committed to ensuring delivery of the programme of work on carers within the action plan. That is why the Minister for Care, Caroline Dinenage, will chair a review of progress on the commitments in the action plan twice a year.

At this stage the Department of Health and Social Care will provide a substantive update on many of the actions set out in the plan, and take stock of plans for future activity, in the wider context of the green paper.

Alongside this we will continue to work in partnership with carers organisations and a wide range of other stakeholders to ensure the actions set out in this plan are appropriately targeted and designed to achieve maximum impact, and to understand the progress made in supporting carers.

We want this action plan to improve the health and wellbeing of carers and to support a better experience for them. We will therefore seek to understand the extent to which these actions help to:

- Increase the number of employers who are aware of caring and the impact this has on their workforce;
- Support health and social care professionals to be better at identifying, valuing and working with carers;
- Improve access to appropriate support for carers, including respite care and carers breaks;
- Improve the evidence base on carers to inform future policy and decisions;
- Ensure that the needs of carers are recognised in relevant government strategies such as *Fuller Working Lives*, *Improving Lives: the Future of Work, Health and Disability and Loneliness*.

### Looking forward - the social care green paper

The action plan will deliver improvements for carers but it is not the whole story. We also want carers to be at the heart of the social care green paper. Carers are vital partners in the health and social care system and the needs of carers will be an important part of our new social care strategy.

A sustainable social care system for the future is simply not possible without focusing on how our society supports carers. By considering the issues facing carers side by side with our strategy for social care, we will be able to take a more fundamental approach to the issues.

The green paper will also address other areas of importance to carers, including improving the quality of care, increasing personalisation and ensuring a sustainable financial system for care.

# Chapter 1- Services and systems that work for carers

It is essential that all carers are recognised and supported by public services. In the Call for Evidence, 89% of the 6,275 participants who responded to this question felt strongly that it was important adult carers received better services and support in future. Carers pointed to the need for services that value and involve carers, because feeling respected and listened to is important to them.

Carers often have extensive contact with the health and social care system. They highlighted the importance of having their expertise recognised by the people they interact with in these services, so that their views are taken into account in decision making. Carers also talked about the importance of awareness raising and training for health and social care professionals, so that they can help to identify carers and be proactive in providing information and support.

We also heard that while carers frequently report the same difficulties, such as lack of time and energy or a lack of understanding from others, the impact of these factors depended on their particular circumstances and the nature of their caring role. They felt that services and systems needed to be flexible and responsive, to ensure they can recognise and support individuals across the full range of diverse caring roles, at different stages in the caring journey.

Many carers described how they feel tired and less resilient physically and mentally, and reported the value of inexpensive opportunities for respite or sitting services so they could try to balance life outside caring.

The actions below target the way health and care systems support carers. They are designed to improve awareness and understanding among health professionals and social workers, and work with local government to ensure carers are able to access the support they are entitled to, including a specific action on respite care.

"This year especially has been very hard for me. I was happy my doctor noticed this and offered me counselling at the surgery where I felt comfortable" (Kerry, West Midlands).

## Raising awareness of and promoting best practice amongst health professionals

**These actions seek to improve health professionals' awareness and identification of carers so that carers feel that they are listened to and their views are appropriately taken into account when the person they care for is in a healthcare setting. In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care has committed to reviewing the implementation of the Care Act in 2019.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
1.1	NHS England (NHSE) will work with the Care Quality Commission on the development of quality standards for carer-friendly GP practices, and is developing a framework of questions (quality markers) that can be used by doctors' surgeries to demonstrate how effective they are in recognising and supporting carers. The questions and ideas have been taken from what carers, and their representatives, have told NHS England matters to them.	NHSE	Spring 2019

1.2	<p>NHS England is working with system and voluntary sector partners to identify exemplar bereavement care pathways focusing on improving the identification of and support for carers in relation to end of life care and bereavement. The work will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scoping exemplar models for end of life and bereavement support for carers of all ages;</li><li>• Working with voluntary sector partners to scope and understand the work of end of life care volunteer networks, including bereavement care, and strengthen the bonds that support dying people in their own communities; and</li><li>• The development of commissioning support resources to connect commissioning processes to local population intelligence and positive practice models.</li></ul>	NHSE	March 2019
1.3	<p>NHS England and the Ministry of Defence will work to improve support for armed forces carers, in keeping with the intent of the Armed Forces Covenant, whereby service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged as a consequence of service in the armed forces. NHS England will jointly raise awareness of the health-related aspects of support for carers in the armed forces and will make sure this work reaches relevant stakeholders at their annual armed forces carers conferences.</p> <p>The Ministry of Defence and NHS England will continue to work together to support armed forces carers, particularly through the work of the Ministry of Defence on the UK armed forces families strategy and work regarding safeguarding. The commitment to the Covenant considers adult, young adult and young carers, and acknowledges the need to best support a community that often does not have access to broader familial support. A holistic approach to armed forces carers recognises the need for timely access to care and services.</p> <p>Further details about armed forces healthcare in the NHS is here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/NHSE/ENGLAND/MILITARYHEALTHCARE/Pages/Militaryhealthcare.aspx">https://www.nhs.uk/NHSE/ENGLAND/MILITARYHEALTHCARE/Pages/Militaryhealthcare.aspx</a></p> <p>Information about the UK armed forces and families strategy is here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-armed-forces-families-strategy">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-armed-forces-families-strategy</a></p>	NHSE / MoD	Ongoing

1.4	NHS England is working on a project to identify exemplar models for identification of and support for older carers and carers of people with dementia. The findings of the scoping work on exemplar models will be shared via NHS England networks and will look to identify key factors that will enable positive practice to be spread.	NHSE	March 2019
1.5	As part of the programme of work on implementation of the Dementia 2020 Challenge:	NHSE	Review 2018  Delivery 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS England is working to ensure that GPs are playing a leading role in ensuring coordination and continuity of care for people with dementia and their carers. The next phase will be to establish a nationally agreed set of codes for the dementia care plan in 2018.</li> </ul>	SfC, HEE, AS, ADASS	Review 2018  Delivery 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills for Care (SfC) is working in partnership with Health Education England (HEE), Alzheimer's Society (AS), and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) to ensure that people with dementia and their carers are supported by health and care staff that have undertaken appropriate levels of dementia awareness and training. Progress will be assessed as part of the review of implementation of the Dementia 2020 Challenge in late 2018.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is working with the Dementia Action Alliance to increase the numbers of hospitals who have signed up to the Dementia Friendly Hospitals Charter: <a href="https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/joint_work/dementia_friendly_hospitals">https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/joint_work/dementia_friendly_hospitals</a> and to explore options for increasing the number of volunteers in hospitals to support people with dementia.</li> </ul>	DHSC	Delivery 2020
1.6	Public Health England (PHE) is working with internal and external partners, including a carers' organisation, to develop a 'productive healthy ageing' action plan, with a focus on reducing health inequalities. This action plan will promote productive healthy ageing and dementia risk reduction messages, including those that impact on carers.	PHE	2018/19
1.7	Health Education England will work with unpaid carers and their representative organisations to consider healthcare education and training needs for unpaid carers, to empower and equip them with the knowledge and skills they need. Early work is underway between Health Education England and Carers UK to	HEE & DHSC	Autumn 2018

develop actions to be included in the Health and Social Care Workforce strategy in the summer of 2018.

## Raising awareness amongst social workers

These actions seek to improve social workers' awareness and identification of carers so that carers feel they are properly listened to and that their views are appropriately taken into account.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
1.8	The Department of Health and Social Care and Research in Practice for Adults (RiPfA) will support implementation of social work practice guidance with carers with Principal Social Workers and Carers leads. This will involve following up on the carers resources published in 2017 to see how well they have been implemented and what more is needed to improve social work practice with carers.	DHSC / RiPfA	2018/19
1.9	The Department of Health and Social Care will consult on and publish a knowledge and skills statement for social work supervisors to improve the quality of practice including practice with carers.	DHSC	2018/19
1.10	The Department of Health and Social Care will work with the Principal Social Workers network to undertake an awareness raising campaign of best social work practice with carers through the Chief Social Worker for Adults' communications with the sector. This will include agreeing ways to evidence the impact of the campaign e.g. social care customer surveys and increasing numbers of carers' assessments.	DHSC	2018/19
1.11	The Department of Health and Social Care has worked with the James Lind Alliance to involve carers in agreeing research priorities for social work with adults, to better understand which social work interventions and approaches work and why. This will help to make sure that future research answers the questions that are important for social workers and the people they work with. It will also inform social work practice development and decisions, enabling carers and others to receive the best possible social work support.	DHSC / James Lind Alliance	Autumn 2018

## Supporting requirements of the 2014 Care Act and the 2014 Children and Families Act

These actions seek to support carers to benefit fully from the support, information and advice they are entitled to under both Acts.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
1.12	The Department of Health and Social Care will work with local government on a sector-led improvement programme of work focused on the implementation of the Care Act duties for carers.	DHSC	2018/19 & 2019/20
1.13	The Department of Health and Social Care will fund a project on actions to promote best practice for local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, and other service providers and commissioners on carer breaks and respite care. This will include promotion of the existing option for carers and individuals to use personal budgets or direct payments to help pay for alternative care arrangements while carers take a break.	DHSC	2018/19
1.14	The Department of Health and Social Care will fund a project to support parent carers to navigate the transition from child to adult services as their child approaches the age of 18.	DHSC	2019/20

## Personalisation

These actions seek to ensure that individuals are able to access health and social care services in a way that is personal to them. This includes using holistic approaches when considering the needs of unpaid carers.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
1.15	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England have recently launched a consultation on extending legal rights for personal health budgets and integrated personal budgets, to groups who we believe could benefit from access to a more personalised approach to their health and care.</p> <p>More personalised and integrated commissioning offers an opportunity to develop a more person-centred and integrated approach when identifying, assessing, and supporting the health and wellbeing needs of both the individual, and any carers involved.</p> <p>The outcome of this joint assessment can then be incorporated into a single, integrated plan, to make sure that the needs of both the individual and carer are met. Personalised approaches can also deliver transformational change by working with carers as expert care partners; fundamental in the planning, design and shaping of services.</p>	DHSC	2018/19

The consultation can be responded to at <https://consultations.dh.gov.uk/commissioning-integration-and-transformation/extending-rights-to-personalised-budgets>. **The closing date for submissions is 8 June 2018, with a response due in summer.**

1.16	Three pilots in Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire have recently been announced that will test a more integrated, single assessment process. Over the next two years, every single person accessing adult social care in these three areas will be given a joint health and social care assessment - including a needs assessment, and subsequently a single, joint plan that will meet the bespoke needs of the individual. All assessments and plans will take into account the role, health and wellbeing of their carers as a fundamental part of the process.	DHSC	2018/19 & 2019/20
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## Mental Health Act 1983 and supporting carers

This action considers how support for carers of people subject to the Mental Health Act 1983 could be improved.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
1.17	<p>The independent review of the Mental Health Act 1983 will consider further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to improve dignity and respect for service users and carers; and</li> <li>• Other mechanisms through which the carers, families and friends of people who are detained can be supported to be involved in the care of the person they support.</li> </ul>	DHSC	End 2018
	<p>The review's interim report can be found here:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-mental-health-act-interim-report">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-mental-health-act-interim-report</a></p>		

## Chapter 2 Employment and financial wellbeing

Around one in nine working people are also carers ([Census, 2011](#)) and indeed the largest proportion of carers are in employment, whether full or part time. Yet we know that many carers experience substantial challenges in balancing employment and their caring responsibilities.

Through our Call for Evidence, carers told us how important they thought it was to support working carers. Many carers spoke about how difficult they found it to balance work, look after their own health and wellbeing and perform a caring role, and in some cases how they needed to give up work altogether because there were no alternatives.

Feedback highlighted the practical challenges of maintaining employment, the positive and negative treatment experienced from employers, and a desire for more flexible working.

Financial support and advice is of primary importance to adult carers. There was evidence of the short and long term impacts on carers and their finances from having to make compromises around work. Most of the responses that mentioned financial support wanted advice about where to find more information about benefits, grants and financial management.

The actions here seek to address a number of these themes, through initiatives to support employers to improve working practices and flexible working to help carers to stay in work, as well as to support carers returning to work and improving advice on financial support for carers.

"I have been able to negotiate my own flexible working pattern that now enables me to work full-time. Previously I was unable to do this and for eight years I had to work just 12 hours per week in order to be able to manage my daughter's care. Employers need to recognise better the importance of flexible working and to offer paid time off with regard to the additional education or medical appointments that carers usually need" (Rachel, Yorkshire and Humberside).

### Improve working practices

**These actions seek to raise the profile of carers with employers and encourage employers to improve their working practices, to enable carers to continue to work alongside their caring role.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
2.1	The Department of Health and Social Care has been working with Employers for Carers to develop a carer-friendly employer benchmarking scheme. The scheme will have three levels and will help employers to measure the robustness of their support arrangements for carers and to identify their outcomes. A pilot will be completed in July 2018. Following that, the Department of Health and Social Care and Employers for Carers will work together to roll out and promote a self-sustaining employer benchmarking scheme available to all employers.	DHSC	July 2018
2.2	The Department of Health and Social Care has worked with Employers for Carers on extending their umbrella membership model which enables local authorities to engage local small and medium-sized enterprises by making their	DHSC	Ongoing

resources available for them free of charge.

Employers for Carers is extending umbrella membership to an additional ten local councils in order to influence and support more small and medium enterprises to implement workplace policies and culture.

In addition to benefitting local councils, small and medium enterprises in their localities and working age carers, the project is seeking to capture the impacts in those local areas to help develop the evidence base and influence further local authorities and local employers to pay to join Employers for Carers. <http://www.employersforcarers.org/about-us/efc-umbrella-membership>

<b>2.3</b>	<p>The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) are considering the question of dedicated employment rights for carers alongside existing employment rights (such as the right to request flexible working and the right to time off for family and dependents).</p> <p>We have set up an official level working group (the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and HM Treasury) to work on this.</p> <p>This includes considering the crucial questions that arise around introducing dedicated employment rights with the support of analysts so that any emerging carers leave proposal is most effective.</p>	BEIS, DHSC & DWP	2018/19 & 2019/20
<b>2.4</b>	<p>Civil Service Employee Policy (CSEP) is working in partnership with Departments in building on existing policies and processes to support carers working in the Civil Service. The Civil Service will encourage greater use of the carer's passport and the wider adoption by Departments of a carers' charter, bringing together the support they offer. Civil Service Employee Policy will be working closely with the Charity for Civil Servants and all Government Departments.</p>	CSEP, Cabinet Office	June 2018
<b>2.5</b>	<p>A Ministry of Defence "Defence People with a Significant Illness" project is in the process of creating policy to support both carers in the armed forces and the management overseeing them. To understand the demographic for this, the Ministry of Defence launched an Armed Forces Carer's Survey in May 2018 and will form from this, an Armed Forces Carers working group. Results are expected shortly.</p>	MOD	Ongoing
<b>2.6</b>	<p>The Department for Work and Pensions is working with Business in the Community to continue to share best practice of carer policies and practices, such as that of Aviva, utilising our relationship with Business in the Community and the Business Champion for Older Workers, particularly in the</p>	DWP	Ongoing

context of Fuller Working Lives.

2.7	<p>NHS Improvement is working with NHS England on retention of carers in the NHS workforce. NHS Improvement, as part of the national retention programme, is working in partnership with Carers UK and will be running masterclasses on how the NHS can be a more carer friendly employer and encouraging greater family and carer flexibility in employment practice. This links to the direct support programme involving over 100 trusts, which seeks to ensure flexible employment practices are in place. NHS England will then build on this approach in primary care. This will help to improve recognition and support for carers in the workforce, and improve retention.</p>	NHS Improvement/ NHSE	Summer 2018
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## Flexible working

**These actions seek to specifically promote flexible working and its benefits to employers to increase the opportunities for carers to return to work or continue to work alongside their caring role.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
2.8	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care is working with Timewise Foundation on a project to promote best practice in the use of employment flexibilities to support carers. In April, Timewise launched a new Carers' Hub. The hub is a one-stop shop for support, advice and flexible job opportunities to help carers balance their responsibilities with fulfilling careers, as well as offering best practice guidance on flexible working and flexible hiring practices, in order to help employers find and keep talented employees who want or need to work in this way. Both partners will continue to promote, disseminate and evaluate the scheme: <a href="https://www.timewisejobs.co.uk/caring-for-a-relative/">https://www.timewisejobs.co.uk/caring-for-a-relative/</a>.</p>	DHSC	2018/19
2.9	<p>In the Government's response to the Taylor Review of modern employment practices the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a flexible working taskforce. The taskforce will tackle issues around flexible working that are key to improving the recruitment, retention and progression of informal carers and other groups. There will also be an evaluation of the right to request flexible working which will take place in 2019. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-taylor-review-of-modern-working-practices">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-taylor-review-of-modern-working-practices</a>.</p>	BEIS	2018/19

## Returning to work

**These actions seek to provide support and training to carers to help them to return to work, and at a level that is commensurate with their skills and experience.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
2.10	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care is working with Carers</p>	DHSC	2018/19

UK to develop an e-learning resource which will help carers to recognise the skills they have developed through caring and to think about ways in which they can use these skills.

The resource looks at opportunities for learning, volunteering and work. Carers UK is now exploring the possibility of peer validation of the learning through digital credentialing and considering potential delivery mechanisms for the roll out of the e-learning including, for example, through its networks, the Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus) and City & Guilds.

**2.11** The Government Equalities Office (GEO) is working to support people who have taken time out of the labour market for caring – whether as parents, or carers – to return to paid work at a level commensurate with their skills and experience. There are four new returner programmes in the public sector for allied health professionals, social workers, those that wish to become civil servants and teachers. The first three programmes have launched already and the teaching programme will launch later this year.

GEO 2018/19

**2.12** The Government Equalities Office is working with employers to increase opportunities for returners in the private sector. It has launched a £1.5m fund to support projects across England aimed at returners of all skill levels and backgrounds. The first set of grants will be awarded in Summer 2018.

GEO Summer 2018

The Government Equalities Office is working with employers across the private sector to understand how returners can be supported. It has published best practice guidance and a toolkit to help employers run effective returner programmes, and has commissioned a toolkit to support returners to get back into paid employment. The toolkit for returners will be published this summer.

For best practice guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/set-up-a-returner-programme>

For the toolkit:

<https://www.womensbusinesscouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/toolkit-Women-in-businessv.7.pdf>

**2.13** The Government Equalities Office has commissioned research to understand more about returners. This includes qualitative research among employers who have run returner programmes and analysis of the call for evidence.

GEO 2018/19

The majority of the responses to the call for evidence were from returners and potential returners highlighting the barriers they face in returning to work and the support they may require to get back into the workplace.

The reports were published in March 2018. Further quantitative analysis of returners will be published and publicly available and

should help employers to access the returner talent pool and returners to get back into meaningful work.

2.14	<p>To support the objectives of the Government Equalities Office to raise awareness of the returner talent pool and create new high quality work opportunities for returners, they are to act as sponsor for two returner awards as part of the Working Families Best Practice Awards and Working Mums Top Employer Awards. The awards seek to reward employers who exhibit best practice in the way they run their returner programmes and support those who have been out of paid work due to caring responsibilities back into the workplace.</p> <p>For Working Families Best Practice Awards:  <a href="https://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/employers/bestpracticeawards/">https://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/employers/bestpracticeawards/</a></p> <p>For Working Mums Top Employer Awards:  <a href="https://www.workingmums.co.uk/top-employer-awards/categories/best-for-returners/">https://www.workingmums.co.uk/top-employer-awards/categories/best-for-returners/</a></p>	GEO	2018
2.15	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Work and Pensions are working in partnership through the joint Work and Health Unit on taking forward the strategy <i>“Improving Lives – the Future of Work, Health and Disability”</i>, which sets out the Government's commitment to see 1 million more disabled people in work over the next 10 years. This will benefit carers, including improving advice and support for employers, helping to create healthier and more inclusive workplaces.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability</a></p>	DHSC & DWP	2018/19
2.16	<p>The Department for Work and Pensions is working with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to create a package of analysis and research across government aiming to understand the key barriers for carers remaining in and returning to employment. This will aim to support policy priorities and identify target areas for potential intervention.</p>	DWP	Ongoing

## Financial support

These actions seek to ensure carers have access to financial support when they need it.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
2.17	<p>The Department for Work and Pensions will ensure that benefits for carers (including Carer's Allowance and Universal Credit) meet the needs of carers and support employment for those carers who are able to work.</p>	DWP	Ongoing

<b>2.18</b>	The Department for Work and Pensions will review and improve the information and signposting available to carers who visit Jobcentres to seek support in finding employment.	DWP	Ongoing
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## Chapter 3 Supporting young carers

The Government is committed to making sure young carers are not left behind. While some caring can be rewarding for young carers, they can experience poorer mental and physical health, and miss out on opportunities in education and employment as a result of their caring responsibilities.

The Call for Evidence highlighted that more needs to be done to support young carers. In their responses 400 current or past young carers (67% of respondents) told us that they had not received any support as young carers.

Suggestions for supporting young carers included groups to share experiences, mental health support or counselling, information provision through schools and educational establishments, and flexible educational support and careers planning.

The actions aim to do this by focusing on improving the identification of young carers; improving their educational opportunities and outcomes; providing support to young carers, particularly to vulnerable children; and improving access to services. In supporting the transition for young adult carers, Government seeks to identify and disseminate effective approaches to transition assessments that will translate into support that enables young adult carers to make positive transitions between the ages of 16-24.

"When I was a young carer, my mother had agoraphobia and couldn't leave the house and she also suffered with depression. I didn't understand it but was left for ages with her. I had no siblings and my father worked as a long-distance lorry driver. I had little or no support but didn't know I needed the help. I thought everyone else lived like I did" (John, Yorkshire and Humberside).

### Identification of young carers

**These actions seek to improve identification of young carers to enable them to get early access to support services, and enable safeguarding arrangements to be put in place quickly where necessary.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
3.1	The Department of Health and Social Care is working with Carers Trust on a young carers identification project which will develop and deliver a 'train the trainer' model to support local areas to identify potential young carers and enable individuals working with them to engage sensitively and signpost them to relevant services. Both partners will continue to promote, disseminate and evaluate the model. The materials for the model can be freely accessed from the Carers Trust Professionals website: <a href="https://professionals.carers.org/">https://professionals.carers.org/</a> .	DHSC	2018/19
3.2	We will conduct a review of best practice in identification of young carers and access to support. The review will involve experts and look at existing practice, as well as identifying good practice and opportunities for improvement, and will report back by Easter 2019. It will build on existing work, including the young carers identification project, led by DHSC and the Carers Trust.	DHSC/ DfE	Easter 2019

3.3	The Department for Education (DfE) will improve information sharing to safeguard vulnerable children. This will support stronger multi-agency working between practitioners and enable better assessments and decision making within children's social care. Better information sharing across agencies will help to identify children who are young carers.	DfE	Ongoing
3.4	The Department of Health and Social Care will fund a project which focuses on young carers from disadvantaged and seldom heard groups, to increase the timely identification of particularly hidden young carers and to support better identification among Black, Asian and minority ethnic families.	DHSC	2019/20

### Improving educational opportunities and outcomes

These actions seek to improve young carers' educational opportunities and outcomes to enable them to achieve their full potential.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
3.5	<p>The Department for Education is undertaking a review of <i>Children in Need</i>, which includes young carers, to understand the challenges these pupils face and the support that best improves their educational outcomes, both in and out of school.</p> <p>The findings from the review will inform how best to support Children in Need in order that they achieve their full potential.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-children-in-need">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-children-in-need</a></p>	DfE	Ongoing
3.6	<p>The Learning and Work Institute (LWI) and the Department for Work and Pensions launched customer information materials setting out the rules for students claiming Carer's Allowance in September 2017. The impact of this activity will be evaluated and consideration given to further activity in due course.</p> <p><a href="http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/carers-allowance-leaflets-and-posters/">http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/carers-allowance-leaflets-and-posters/</a></p>	LWI & DWP	Summer 2018

### Improving access to support services

These actions seek to improve young carers' access to support services to make sure they are properly supported at an early stage and interventions are put in place promptly where necessary.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
3.7	NHS England will embed and develop the Young Carer Health Champions programme, which was established to support improved confidence in using health services, promote health and wellbeing, and develop the capacity of young carers to participate in the planning and development of young carer friendly services.	NHSE	2018/19

3.8	<p>The mental health needs of young carers were recognised in the recent Green Paper, <i>Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health</i>, which closed for consultation on 2 March 2018.</p> <p>The Green Paper will improve the offer of mental health support for all children and young people, recognising the need for early intervention and prevention. The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education are analysing consultation responses and will publish a government response in due course.</p>	DHSC	2018/19
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## Transition for young adult carers

**This action seeks to improve support for young adult carers to enable them to make positive transitions between the ages of 16-24**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
3.9	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care will fund a project on transitions for young adult carers. The project will look to identify and disseminate effective practices to support and enable young adult carers to make positive transitions between the ages of 16-24, and identify the types of practical and emotional support that can enable a young adult carer to achieve a positive transition.</p>	DHSC	2018/19

# Chapter 4 Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society

Many carers have little contact with services for carers and are not receiving formal support in their caring role. It is, therefore, vital that we work with partners beyond government to raise awareness of caring among the wider population to build carer friendly communities.

Responses to the Call for Evidence emphasised the importance of working with the voluntary and community sector. Charities were highlighted as a source of information and support for carers. There was also a desire for carer-led and community-led support, with carers saying they would value local action groups, social activities and peer support.

Carers also felt there was a need to raise awareness among employers, the public and professionals so that people are more aware of what carers do and how important their role is for the community and the economy.

They described some of the practical frustrations they face when trying to use businesses and services. This can include fitting appointments around caring responsibilities and difficulty accessing businesses and services flexibly to reflect the fact that caring roles do not fit within regular working patterns. Many of these may not seem substantial in themselves, but collectively and over time make some caring roles more challenging than they need to be.

The actions set out in this chapter aim to raise awareness of caring to build carer-friendly communities that recognise carers, and better support them, including in employment and in combating loneliness.

They also seek to encourage innovation, working across government and with our partners in the voluntary and community sector to look beyond statutory services and find creative ways to support carers.

In *Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability* and the *Industrial Strategy* the Government has set out how it expects the use of technology to help disabled people live more independently in future. Improved use of assistive technology will have benefits for those who are providing care.

"Without information and advice about my parents' dementia, services available locally and benefits/legal advice, I would not have been able to cope for as long as I did and give the best support to them" (Sue, North West).

## Technology and innovation

**These actions seek to raise societal awareness of carers and help create carer friendly communities by using innovative ideas supported by technology to improve carers' everyday experiences.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
4.1	The Department of Health and Social Care will launch a £0.5 million Carer Innovations Fund to identify and promote creative and cost-effective models that look beyond statutory services to develop carer friendly communities. For example, this could include providing advice and information for carers, use of technology to assist caring responsibilities, early intervention and crisis prevention support.	DHSC	Summer 2018

4.2	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care have funded work in partnership with Carers UK and Digital Health and Care Alliance on a project to support greater awareness (of the availability and potential of technology and products to support carers) among carers, support groups, commissioners, health professionals, local authorities, service providers and potential developers of technologies. The Department of Health and Social Care will continue to promote, disseminate and evaluate the work.</p> <p>For professionals - Digital Health and Care Alliance:  <a href="https://dhaca.org.uk/carers-tech-toolkit/">https://dhaca.org.uk/carers-tech-toolkit/</a></p> <p>For carers - Carers UK: <a href="http://www.carersuk.org/tech">http://www.carersuk.org/tech</a></p>	DHSC	2018/19
4.3	<p>The Government has launched an Ageing Grand Challenge which will aim to catalyse joint working between government, industry and civil society. In aiming to support society to age better and improve quality of life, the Grand Challenge will explore how it can support carers better through innovation and new ways of working. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/live-longer-better-healthier-new-innovation-funding">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/live-longer-better-healthier-new-innovation-funding</a></p>	BEIS	Ongoing
4.4	<p>The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund 'Healthy Ageing' programme will invest £98 million in innovations aimed at supporting people to age well, including looking at innovations which can support people to have happier, healthier and more independent lives.</p> <p>Many of these innovations should be applicable to people of any age. Through developing new technologies and approaches to support individuals, it will provide carers with reassurance and new ways to support those they care for.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund-joint-research-and-innovation#healthy-ageing">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund-joint-research-and-innovation#healthy-ageing</a></p>	BEIS	Ongoing

## Recognition of carers

These actions seek to increase recognition of carers in society and their local communities and to improve their everyday experiences.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
4.5	<p>In partnership with Carers UK and Carers Trust, the Department of Health and Social Care funded a project to develop a national Carer Passport project (recognition of carers which aids them to access services and community facilities). This included the development and promotion of a toolkit and resources for local organisations and systems to develop their own Carer Passport offer. The Department of Health and Social Care will continue to promote, disseminate and evaluate the scheme.</p> <p><a href="https://carerpassport.uk/">https://carerpassport.uk/</a></p>	DHSC	2018/19

4.6	NHS England will sponsor a "System-led Support for Carers Award" for clinical commissioning groups and local authority integrated commissioning for carers and a Royal College of Nursing Institute Award for "Commitment to Carers".	NHSE	2018/19
4.7	The Department of Health and Social Care is researching ways in which to improve provision of Changing Places toilets in healthcare settings. These toilets have extra equipment and space compared to standard accessible toilets, to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple disabilities. Increasing provision would improve the experience of disabled people, their families and carers when accessing health services.	DHSC	2018/19

## Community engagement

These actions seek to improve the way communities understand and support carers to improve carers' their experiences, health and wellbeing.

No.		Lead	Delivery date
4.8	<p>The Office for Civil Society (within DCMS) is supporting an End of Life Social Action tool-kit to support more social action and volunteering at end of life, which is based on work with Hospice UK and seven local providers.</p> <p>The tool-kit provides practical guidance for those providing volunteer befriending services. This will allow volunteers to train to visit people in their homes to provide a range of non-medical support i.e. emotional and practical support, which will complement the support provided by carers.</p>	DCMS	2018
4.9	The Office for Civil Society is looking at ways to use social action to encourage better self-care for people living with long-term conditions and/or mental health issues. The Office for Civil Society will consider carers and former carers as part of this work.	DCMS	Ongoing
4.10	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care will work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to reflect issues affecting carers in the forthcoming Civil Society Strategy.</p> <p>The Civil Society Strategy will help shape government's work with and for civil society over the next ten years. It intends to support public policy across government. At its core, the Civil Society Strategy is about building opportunity and optimism and unlocking potential.</p>	DHSC & DCMS	Autumn 2018

<b>4.11</b>	As part of the programme of work on implementation of the Dementia 2020 Challenge, the Department of Health and Social Care is leading on a Citizens Engagement Programme to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers. Progress will be assessed in late 2018.	DHSC	Review 2018 Delivery 2020
<b>4.12</b>	The Department for Education has provided grant support for Parent Carer Forums since 2008 to help ensure they have a voice in local decision making on policy and service delivery for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education is providing a further £4.6m to these forums up until March 2020.	DfE	2018/19 & 2019/20
<b>4.13</b>	Public Health England will be running a national public mental health campaign to help people become better informed about mental health. The campaign will use interactive content, including a series of videos, to support and encourage self-help and support of others, including signposting to organisations who can provide advice and support on factors which may influence their mental health, including being a carer.	PHE	2018/19

## Loneliness

**This action seeks to better understand how loneliness affects carers and find ways to combat it.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
<b>4.14</b>	We know that, as a group, carers are particularly susceptible to experiencing loneliness and as such they will be considered in the development of the cross-government loneliness strategy.	DCMS	2018/19

# Chapter 5 Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers

The Call for Evidence has provided a rich and informative evidence base on the experience of carers across the country and the changes they would like to see. The process has also revealed gaps in our knowledge and we recognise that there is more we can do to develop the evidence base.

We know that as our population continues to age and more people live longer, the numbers of people providing unpaid care will also increase. Therefore it is increasingly important to do full justice to the role carers play so that future policies to ensure carers are supported are underpinned by a strong evidence base.

The following actions seek to strengthen the information on unpaid carers to make sure that future policies are informed by a strong evidence base and are able to take into account the wide range of caring roles provided by unpaid carers.

"I do feel there is a lack of understanding generally about the huge impact that caring can bring" (Carer, West Midlands).

## Research to improve the evidence base

**These actions seek to improve the information and data available on carers to ensure that future strategies are informed by a strong evidence base.**

No.		Lead	Delivery date
5.1	<p>The Department of Health and Social Care will fund research to improve the information available on carers to ensure that future strategies and project work are informed by a strong evidence base. It will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring the primary drivers influencing the availability of unpaid carers;</li> <li>• aiming to produce projections of the numbers of informal carers;</li> <li>• taking forward work on the economics of informal care; and</li> <li>• exploring evidence on the costs and benefits of informal care.</li> </ul>	DHSC	2018/19 & 2019/20
5.2	The Department of Health and Social Care will carry out insight work exploring attitudes to informal care and factors influencing propensity to care.	DHSC	2018/19 & 2019/20
5.3	The Department of Health and Social Care, in partnership with NHS Digital, will commission survey data on experiences of carers in England (to update on 2009/10 Survey of Carers in Households	DHSC	2019/20

5.4	The Department of Health and Social Care will work with NHS Digital, the Local Government Association/Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, and NHS England to improve existing data sources on carers, including the biannual Personal Social Services (PSS) Survey of Carers and the NHS General Practice patient survey.	DHSC	2018/19 & 2019/20
5.5	The Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Government Equalities Office will carry out digital discovery work to understand the extent to which carers' needs are currently met by the information available to them online, with a particular focus on combining caring and working. They will work closely with a range of information providers, including GOV.UK, Carers Direct and third sector organisations, as well as other government departments (including the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) to identify improvements to the information offer.	DHSC, GEO, BEIS & DWP	2018/19 & 2019/20
5.6	The Open University is working in partnership with DHSC to maintain the currency of the international Carer-Related Research and Evidence Exchange Network. This is a freely accessible resource which provides up to date organised information and evidence about carers and meets the need for multidisciplinary knowledge exchange nationally and internationally around carer research evidence, practice, policy and innovation. <a href="http://www.open.ac.uk/caren">www.open.ac.uk/caren</a>	Open University /DHSC	Ongoing

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