



8-14 JUNE 2009

Carers... the UK's secret service

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Thousands of events across the UK

Thousands of events take place throughout the UK this week, supporting and celebrating carers achievements. In every

part of the nation carers are:

- Raising awareness about their and their needs
- Seeking out *hidden carers*, with the aim of enabling them to access support and services
- Celebrating the contribution

that carers make to those they care for, and to their communities

- Campaigning to influence and inform opinion-formers and decision-makers, who can have such an effect on carers'

quality of life

Every carer's role and experience is different, but every one of the UK's six million carers knows that carers need, and deserve, better support and services, not just this week but every week.

Two new surveys reveal important results

- YouGov poll ranks carers alongside nurses and firefighters
- Carers Week research highlights carers at breaking point

The results of two new surveys have been announced for the start of Carers Week 2009.

The results show that carers feel they go unrecognised or ignored by different groups in society, and this has a significant negative impact on their lives. The general public are also unaware how many carers there are in the UK although they do recognise the valuable contribution that carers make.

A survey conducted by YouGov questioned over 2,000 people about their beliefs and attitudes towards carers.

When asked to estimate the number of

carers in the UK, 8 out of 10 were unable to pick the correct figure of 6 million, with almost three-quarters (71%) underestimating by over 4.5 million.

There was some good news, however, as the survey also revealed that the public ranked carers alongside the emergency services in terms of their contribution to society. Six out of seven people (86%) believe that carers make a valuable contribution, behind only nurses (91%) and firefighters (90%).

The overwhelming majority also agree that carers' benefits are far too low, with over three-quarters (76%) stating that the current

level of Carers' Allowance is unreasonable.

Meanwhile, the Carers Week survey revealed the shocking number of carers who have been pushed to extreme levels of stress and depression as a result of caring. Almost three-quarters (74%) of carers told us that they feel that they have reached breaking point.

Over a third (41%) of carers stated that 'frustration with bureaucracy' pushed them to breaking point, often the complex and lengthy procedures for welfare benefits, healthcare and social services. Other factors include a deterioration in the health of the person

Which, if any, of the following do you think are valuable contributors to society?

	Nurses	Firefighters	Unpaid carers	Plumbers	Royal Family	Politicians	Bankers	Footballers
UK	91%	90%	86%	46%	27%	14%	12%	5%
Scotland	95%	94%	94%	59%	21%	18%	11%	7%
Northern Ireland	95%	95%	86%	46%	22%	14%	11%	5%
Wales	90%	90%	90%	45%	28%	7%	6%	3%
East of England	96%	91%	86%	42%	28%	13%	15%	5%
East Midlands	88%	85%	80%	46%	24%	15%	11%	5%
London	86%	87%	83%	47%	27%	20%	18%	7%
North East	90%	93%	76%	42%	33%	14%	2%	2%
North West	89%	86%	83%	40%	21%	15%	11%	7%
South East	90%	89%	88%	46%	35%	13%	13%	5%
South West	93%	89%	85%	49%	27%	15%	10%	4%
West Midlands	89%	89%	85%	45%	25%	10%	10%	6%
Yorkshire & Humberside	92%	94%	90%	49%	28%	11%	11%	5%

YouGov survey

Do you feel you have ever reached breaking point?

	Yes	No
UK	74%	26%
Scotland	77%	23%
Northern Ireland	66%	34%
Wales	76%	24%
East of England	66%	34%
East Midlands	77%	23%
London	72%	28%
North East	83%	17%
North West	74%	26%
South East	72%	28%
South West	72%	28%
West Midlands	70%	30%
Yorkshire & Humberside	81%	19%

Carers Week survey

being cared for, lack of sleep and financial worries.

For most carers, 'practical support' would – or did – make the difference when they were at breaking point, with 'just having someone to talk to' a close second. Nearly a third (31%) say that more money would make a difference – hardly surprising given that Carers Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind at

just £53.10 per week.

A massive 8 out of 10 carers feel that their role is overlooked or ignored by professionals, who include GPs, social workers and hospital staff. Three-quarters of all carers also feel that their role is unrecognised by family members and friends.

Almost two-thirds (63%) of carers say that their lives are made 'much more difficult' as a

result of being overlooked or ignored. More than half (54%) say that being overlooked has affected their health and a slightly higher number (55%) say that it has left them worse off financially.

The ten charities who organise Carers Week are calling on the Government to do more to support carers, along with other organisations such as the NHS, which can do so much to

improve carers' lives.

1. Fieldwork for the YouGov survey was undertaken between 5–7 May 2009. The survey was carried out online. Total sample size was 2,109 adults. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).
2. 1,941 carers took part in the Carers Week survey, both online and by post, which was carried out between 22 January–25 March 2009.

Do you think Carers Allowance (£53.10) is a reasonable amount to support carers who are unable to work?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree total	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree total
UK	3%	6%	9%	33%	43%	76%
Scotland	3%	4%	7%	30%	50%	80%
Northern Ireland	1%	1%	2%	31%	57%	88%
Wales	2%	5%	7%	27%	51%	78%
East of England	3%	5%	8%	33%	42%	75%
East Midlands	3%	4%	7%	38%	35%	73%
London	5%	6%	11%	31%	40%	71%
North East	3%	11%	14%	22%	56%	78%
North West	0%	8%	8%	32%	42%	74%
South East	6%	7%	13%	34%	40%	74%
South West	3%	5%	8%	35%	43%	78%
West Midlands	3%	4%	7%	41%	39%	80%
Yorkshire & Humberside	1%	5%	6%	33%	43%	76%

Respondents who answered 'Don't know' or 'Neither agree or disagree' have been excluded.

YouGov survey

What impact has being overlooked or ignored had on your life?

	Has made it much more difficult	Has made it slightly more difficult	Has had no impact	Has made it slightly easier	Has made it much easier
UK	63%	31%	6%	1%	0%
Scotland	63%	26%	9%	1%	1%
Northern Ireland	63%	33%	5%	0%	0%
Wales	58%	33%	7%	1%	0%
East of England	58%	34%	6%	2%	0%
East Midlands	62%	32%	5%	1%	0%
London	60%	31%	8%	0%	0%
North East	66%	29%	4%	0%	0%
North West	63%	26%	9%	1%	1%
South East	65%	29%	5%	0%	0%
South West	61%	33%	6%	1%	0%
West Midlands	67%	30%	2%	0%	2%
Yorkshire & Humberside	65%	30%	5%	0%	0%

Carers Week survey

CARERS INVITED TO JOIN ONLINE Q+A EVENT WITH GOVERNMENT MINISTERS

Carers Week has organised a live Q+A event for carers, who can take part wherever they are, as long as they have access to a computer and the internet. The event takes place on Tuesday 9th June, 1-2pm, with:

Phil Hope, Minister of State for Care Services, and Jonathan Shaw, Minister for Disabled People

Carers interested in seeing the answers the Ministers give to questions - all from carers - should contact manager@carersweek.org and we will send details about how to register. The event is being hosted by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.



Over 50 MPs teamed up with TV and radio presenter Jonathan Dimbleby just before Carers Week, to support this year's theme Carers... the UK's secret service and call for carers to receive greater recognition for the work they carry out.

Speaking at the House of Commons, Jonathan Dimbleby, who has personal experience of being a carer, said:

"Just imagine for a moment what would happen if carers ceased to care and simply gave up. There would be no-one to

look after millions of frail, elderly and disabled people. It would be a nightmare: chaos, panic and much worse.

"Of course carers would never behave like that. They are motivated by love, duty and compassion. But those of us who have been in that role, even for a short time, know how testing and draining it can be. That is why Britain's 'secret service' must not be forgotten, ignored or exploited."

Picture shows Jonathan Dimbleby with Carers Week 2009 parliamentary champion, Anne McGuire MP.

Don't forget to send us press cuttings and pictures from your events

Please let us have copies of your press cuttings, leaflets and photographs. This will help us to assess and improve the support we offer year on year. Send to Carers Week, 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX



Party Leaders support Carers Week



"I am delighted to support Carers Week. It is a valuable opportunity for organisations across all sectors to recognise and promote the increasingly important role that carers play in our society.

"I am pleased to say that carers are a higher priority for Government than ever before. We will continue to work closely with the NHS, councils, Jobcentre Plus, employers, schools and the third sector to improve the lives of carers. We want to give carers greater control over their health, wellbeing and working life, and to give them more opportunities to have a life outside of caring."

Gordon Brown



"I am delighted to welcome this year's Carers Week.

"This is an important occasion for recognising publicly the huge amount of time, effort and devotion which Britain's carers contribute, away from the glare of publicity, week in, week out.

"It helps us to acknowledge the sacrifices carers make in order to improve the lives of

others, and to thank them for all they do.

"And it reminds us that helping carers is one of the best ways to help those they are caring for."

David Cameron



"It is with great pleasure that I lend my full support to Carers Week 2009. Being a carer is an extremely challenging experience, and the sacrifices and contributions that carers in the UK make sadly often go unrecognised.

"The work carried out by Carers Week is invaluable not only in providing support for the many 'hidden' carers across the country, but more generally in raising awareness of the variety of issues which affect those six million people who care for vulnerable relatives or friends.

"I would like to take this opportunity to commend all those involved in Carers Week 2009. It is fantastic that so many UK charities have joined the partnership and I wish all those participating an enjoyable and successful week."

Nick Clegg

Carers Week national partners

CARERS UK

the voice of carers

Carers UK is an organisation of carers fighting to end the ill health, poverty and discrimination faced by carers. We improve carers' lives by providing information and advice, and campaigning for change.

CarersLine freephone 0808 808 7777

www.carersuk.org



Counsel and Care is the national charity working with older people, their families and carers to get the best care and support. We provide personalised, in-depth advice and information, which informs our research and campaigning work.

0845 300 7585

www.counselandcare.org.uk



Crossroads Caring for Carers is the leading provider of practical support for carers. Our service is about improving the lives of carers by giving them time to be themselves and have a break from their caring responsibilities.

0845 450 0350

www.crossroads.org.uk

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer. We provide practical, medical, emotional and financial support; listen to people affected by cancer and work together for better cancer care.

Macmillan CancerLine freephone

0808 808 2020

www.macmillan.org.uk



Multiple Sclerosis Society

The MS Society's Carers Programme aims to support carers of people with MS through leaflet and web-based information as well as partnership working with carers organisations.

MS Helpline 0808 800 8000

www.mssociety.org.uk



The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers provides quality information, advice and support services to carers of all ages through a network of Carers' Centres, young carers services and interactive websites.

0844 800 4361

www.carers.org



Vitalise provides essential breaks for disabled people and carers at accessible UK centres, also day services, home care and holidays for visually impaired people.

0845 345 1970

www.vitalise.org.uk



WRVS helps older people to stay independent and get more out of life. Our volunteers provide practical support to older people at home, help them stay active in their community, offer assistance in an emergency and provide support in hospital.

029 2073 9000

www.wrvs.org.uk

Carers Week national supporters

Help the Hospices

020 7520 8892

www.helpthehospices.org.uk

Parkinson's Disease Society

0808 800 0303

www.parkinsons.org.uk



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CARERS... THE UK'S SECRET SERVICE

Supporting the UK's six million carers

CARERS UK
the voice of carers

counsel + care
for older people, their families and carers

CROSSROADS
Caring
Carers



Help the
Hospices

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.**
CANCER SUPPORT

MS

Parkinson's
Disease Society

FRAX
The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers

vitalise
essential health
for disabled people
and carers

W R V S
helping older people
get more out of life