

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

**2nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Thursday, 2
September 2021**

Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland) Bill Written Submissions

All published written submissions received can be found here: [Published responses for Carer's Allowance Supplement \(Scotland\) Bill - Scottish Parliament - Citizen Space](#)

The submissions from those giving evidence today are attached in full:

[Family Fund](#)

[National Carer Organisations](#)

[Lanarkshire Carers](#)

[Scottish Government](#)

**Clerks to the Committee
30 August 2021**

Submitted to Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland) Bill
Submitted on 2021-08-11 12:20:51

About you

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3 What is your name?

Name:
Salena Begley MBE

4 What is your email address?

Email:
[REDACTED]

5 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Organisation :
Family Fund

Additional payment of the Carer's Allowance Supplement

6 What are your views on the increased payment of the Carer's Allowance Supplement?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Family Fund welcomes the increased payment of the Carer's Allowance Supplement. Family Fund provides grants and support to families on a low income raising a disabled or seriously ill child or children. Our research into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic clearly evidences the need for increased financial support for Carers. In addition Carers tell us that not only would this provide immediate practical assistance but would also represent a welcome acknowledgment of the value of their role as a Carer.

"Any extra financial support is welcome. Your 'job' is varied, it's emotionally and physically demanding. There's no choice, no reward, so to have it recognised financially is welcome."

However, both our research and feedback from Carers tell us that this financial support alone will be insufficient to ensure that Carers are adequately supported with the challenges faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, citing the need for this to be one element of range of personalised, timely provision which needs to be consistently available across Scotland.

Family Fund's research into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic found that 78% of families in Scotland reported that their overall financial situation had gotten worse as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Half of families (50%) surveyed have seen their income fall as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. As evidenced by the research, these falls in income hit within the first month of the pandemic (March 2020) and have continued since then. The reasons for these falls in income as a result of the coronavirus pandemic are varied. Family members being furloughed (28%), working fewer hours (19%), having to stop working (19%), as well reductions in benefits (21%), were all identified a significant reasons behind their falls in income.

Carers were already disadvantaged financially prior to the pandemic, due to a combination of factors, including access to secure, adequately paid flexible employment and additional disability related costs (such as higher energy and transport costs). In 2019 alone, a third of families (36%) we supported saw their household income fall.

The pandemic and resultant restrictions further exacerbated the financial inequality experienced by Carers, with the situation of falling incomes compounded for many families of disabled children and young people by increasing household costs. Four in five families (84%) reported that their household bills and costs have increased during the coronavirus pandemic. Of those families reporting increased household costs, nearly all pointed to increased food (97%) and energy costs (96%), driven largely by spending more time at home with their children. As a result of these increasing costs almost nine in 10 families (91%) are reporting struggling or falling behind on their household bills. Energy costs come out top of the bills families are finding it difficult to pay, with half of families (53%) reporting this to be a struggle, followed by Council Tax (34%), and broadband costs (28%).

Taking the above into account, a concern that remains is the financial pressures that Carers are currently facing may mean the additional payment is

quickly swallowed up by outstanding and urgent household bills.

" It's very welcome, but if it just covers bills, it isn't adequate"

7 Do you agree with increasing the December payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement?

Yes

Please provide the reasons for your answer in this text box. :

Family Fund agrees with increasing the December payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement. However, it is clear from our research findings regarding the impact of Covid-19 and feedback from Carers that many Carer's ability to use this to directly benefit their own wellbeing will be severely restricted, both by the current financial situation and by the lack of wider support and services.

"The money is very welcome and handy in December, most Carers struggle after the summer but it goes on Christmas and gifts for others, rather than yourself. [It] would be good to have more services available over the holidays, things like respite, leisure services and accessible sporting activities."

"The timing is good as it's near Christmas. It's better than nothing "

" It's always nice to get more money and Christmas is a time when you're struggling, it's always tough, especially as I'm a lone parent"

As the year has gone on, an increasing proportion of families have reported depleting savings. In March 2020, almost a third of families (32%) reported their savings had decreased, but by February 2021 this had increased to almost three in five families (59%). The lack of a financial safety net for families to fall back upon is evidenced by seven in 10 families (72%) now reporting having no savings and investments.

8 What impact do you think the increased payment will have?

Please enter your response in the text box provided. :

It's likely that the increased payment will support Carers with the additional costs which they experience over the winter months and at Christmas, particularly given that many will not have recovered financially from the impact of the pandemic. It may help Carers to reconnect with others over this period and to avoid getting into or further into debt. Family Fund's research found that as a result of the pandemic, an increasing proportion of families have reported depleting savings. In March 2020, almost a third of families (32%) reported their savings had decreased, but by February 2021 this had increased to almost three in five families (59%). The lack of a financial safety net for families to fall back upon is evidenced by seven in 10 families (72%) now reporting having no savings and investments.

Where there is a dearth of other support for Carers and those they care for, the positive impact of this increased payment may be limited as it may be difficult for Carers to use the additional payment to more directly support their own physical and mental health or to reduce the isolation they may experience as a Carer.

During the pandemic the families we support in Scotland experienced a significant and detrimental loss of formal and informal support , with 80% reporting that the overall support available to them had decreased since the beginning of the pandemic.

Whilst some services have recommenced delivery of support, this is taking time and the impact of not receiving this support continues to be experienced by Carers but in relation to their own and their children's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

" All the support was unavailable, it was just me and my child. It was not easy, especially early on, making sense of it, no job, no routine. My child needs routine."

" It was the perfect storm for my son and there's no point of contact anymore. "

" Money's nice, but practical support would have helped more."

"If my mental health goes- that's it, as I am the one holding it all together. "

A lot of the time, you just want someone to talk to, not anti-depressants. I'm exhausted through lack of sleep but there is nowhere else (other than the GP) to turn to."

9 Do you have any views on the Bill's Financial Memorandum?

Please enter your response in the text box provided.:

10 Do you consider the increased payment the best way to support unpaid carers with the challenges faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Not sure

Are there alternative approaches which you consider would be more appropriate?:

The increased payment is clearly needed and welcome. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has not only impacted upon Carers financially, it has also had a detrimental impact upon their health and wellbeing.

Furthermore, Carers often put the needs of those they care for before their own, and without adequate, accessible support being available for them Carers will always struggle to have the information, means, opportunity and resources available to address their own health and wellbeing needs.

" You need the right information at the right time. It's not just because of Covid. A lot of people are struggling to know what's out there and get practical support.

" It's difficult to stand up for your kids and be that person. It's taken a long time for me to say I am a Carer. I need other people to recognise my role as a Carer and value it."

" Carers need opportunities that take you away from your caring role and be yourself. like extra leisure and recreational activities or a night in a hotel. "

Flexible, personalised support is valued by Carers.

" I was able to use a grant from the Carer's Centre to get 'Hello Fresh' regularly. It's given me a break and my son has even tried new things, when he normally wouldn't."

" Connection with other Carers helps as you don't need to explain things. Things like going on a trip, or having a gym buddy and getting a cup of tea together afterwards."

Whilst the wellbeing of parent carers of disabled was already significantly lower than that of the general UK population, Family Fund's research results suggest the coronavirus pandemic has caused their wellbeing to deteriorate further. As such, an increased payment of the Carers Allowance Supplement provides an important acknowledgment of the role of Carers in society but risks having limited impact upon Carer health and wellbeing. It also risks being viewed as tokenistic if it is not followed up with sustained, consistent support and resources for both Carers and those they care for across Scotland.

" The money just isn't spent on you at all. We(Carers) are not able to benefit. It's welcome but I'd value just being able to have something for yourself. I'm caring for 3 people and we never get to go anywhere. You don't have anything to look forward to. "

" You just have to get on, often there is no one else who could do it and society does not provide for them, so Carers need recognised and acknowledged and enabled to do their 'job' which would be highly costly to society otherwise. Each Carer needs space and acknowledgment."

Despite most of the Coronavirus restrictions now being lifted, the pandemic continues to bring an element of uncertainty and insecurity into our lives. Future developments in relation to Social Security benefits and other aspects of Carer support should seek to bring enhanced levels of security to the lives of Carers and those to whom they provide care and support.

" We've had to move several times between private lets and you always worry you won't get your deposit back. With benefits too you always worry they'll be taken away. There's that sense of insecurity. "

Regulation making power for the Scottish Government

11 What level of parliamentary scrutiny do you think there should be for any future increases to the amount of Carer's Allowance Supplement?

What level of scrutiny should there be?:

Why should it be at this level?:

Other views on the Bill

12 Do you have any other views on the Bill?

Please enter your response in the text box provided.:

Evaluation

13 Was this views submission tool easy to use?

Extremely easy to use

Why did you feel it was, or was not, easy to use?:

The ability to save and return was very useful.

14 Do you think this Call for Views submission tool provides a good way for you to get involved in the work of Parliament?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer?:

Yes, the Call for Views submission tool provides a good way for Family Fund to share the voices of the families of disabled and seriously ill children and young people we support.

It also provides a means for individuals and families to share their views independently as and when they are available to do so within the specific timescales. This flexibility is a welcome feature, especially for those with caring responsibilities.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL SECURITY COMMITTEE
CARER'S ALLOWANCE SUPPLEMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL
SUBMISSION FROM NATIONAL CARER ORGANISATIONS**

Introduction

The National Carer Organisations welcome the opportunity to respond to this call for evidence. We are very supportive of the intention to provide an additional amount in the December Carer's Allowance Supplement payment and of the power to bring forward additional payments in future. The Committee has, of course, a key role to play in scrutinising this and any future additional payments as does the Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS).

From the outset, it is vital that the Bill progresses and payments are not delayed. As we will go on to outline, unpaid carers very much appreciate the support of Carer's Allowance Supplement and many believe this is a good way to recognise the huge contribution of unpaid carers during COVID-19, and indeed their contribution to Scottish society each and every day.

However, the majority of Scotland's 1.1 million unpaid carers will not benefit. This does not mean that we should not move forward promptly with increasing the payment to those that do, but rather than this is an important juncture to lay out the disadvantage faced by unpaid carers during COVID-19 and in their everyday lives and take the opportunity to set out some initial ideas on how the Scottish Government can seek to mitigate these alongside potential opportunities for the Committee to examine how we can begin to address these in the short, medium and long term.

Carers' Survey

In evidencing our response to the Bill, the National Carer Organisations undertook a short survey with unpaid carers where we asked their views on the Bill. We have attached the full responses in Appendix 1. 633 unpaid carers responded to the survey of whom 70% are unpaid carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance with the remaining 30% ineligible for the benefit.

Views on increasing the December payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement

Overall, 93.1% were in favour of the proposal to pay an increased amount of the supplement. Unsurprisingly, a higher proportion (97.5%) of those in receipt of Carer's Allowance, who would receive the supplement, were in favour. However, amongst unpaid carers not in receipt of Carer's Allowance or the supplement, high levels (82.9%) were in favour.

Unpaid carers talked about the difference Carer's Allowance Supplement has made to them already but also what difference this double payment will make to them financially and, importantly, in recognising the significant extra care that they have provided during the

pandemic (and continue to do so). With large numbers of unpaid carers taking on more care¹² during the pandemic, this is an important recognition.

“My carers allowance is just about covering my outgoings. The supplement will mean I will be able to pay some things, like replacing my broken laptop and be able to send gifts to my kids which would be really difficult otherwise. It sounds like luxuries but it makes the winter look bearable. It really helps my morale to think it will be there later in the year.”

“You don't have spare cash when on benefits, the carers allowance supplement is like winning the lottery.”

“A thank you to the Scottish Government for acknowledging carers and trying to help with the only way they can at the moment.”

“Carer's Supplement makes a massive difference, even to make you feel appreciated when unable to work due to child's needs.”

“After having to give up my semi-professional career 2 years ago to look after my son the drop in my finances has been huge and debilitating! An increase in payments is very much needed.”

Views on whether this is the best way to support carers with the challenges of COVID-19

The majority of unpaid carers (67.7%) surveyed felt that a double payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement is the best way to support them during the pandemic. However, this represented 77% of those who were receiving the supplement but saw a far smaller proportion (47%) of those *not* receiving the supplement agree with this view. Some pointed out that only some unpaid carers, around 10%, of the total unpaid carer population are eligible for Carer's Allowance Supplement:

“Every penny directly paid to unpaid carers is welcome but only 10% of carers are eligible, the stipulations that you cannot be a full-time student and the earnings limit preclude so many people who often work in excess of a 50 hours a week on top of their other commitments not just because of love but because they have no choice as social care SDS assessments can take years, yes years.”

“Another unfair proposal by the Scottish Government. How many pensioners care for loved ones without any support and not entitled to benefits, living on basic pension and the majority in fuel poverty. The costs of caring include heating, adjustments to home, beds/mattresses, transport, special diets and incontinence products just as basic requirements, if not assessed for social care, carers have to meet costs

¹ 87% of carers reported that they are providing more care and 8 in 10 said the care needs had increased.

Caring Behind Closed Doors, Carers UK/Carers Scotland, October 2020
https://www.carersuk.org/images/News_and_campaigns/Caring_Behind_Closed_Doors_Oct20.pdf

² 90% of carers are providing more care. The person(s) I care for needs have intensified 46%²

Covid-19 in Scotland: The impact on unpaid carers and carer service support workers, Carers Trust Scotland, July 2021
<https://carers.org/downloads/scotland-pdfs/covid-19-in-scotland.pdf>

themselves as well as toll on own health. The majority of elderly carers, are not entitled to carers allowance and miss out. A great proportion of Scottish unpaid carers are the elderly.”

“Carers who have previously applied or received carers allowance but due to the underlying claim/overlapping benefit rule we lose out on the supplement others get. Surely something can be put in place so we don’t miss out in these circumstances.”

However, whilst many unpaid carers are in agreement that this is the best way to support unpaid carers with the challenges faced as a result of COVID-19, a significant minority, almost a third, were not in agreement or were unsure.

Some carers went on to note that they believed that this should become a permanent increase.

“Actually, it should be doubled permanently, if the government had to pay for outside agencies to do the work of carers it would cost a lot more. Carers are completely undervalued and forgotten about.”

“As much as a double payment this year will be welcomed - there should be more support long term. I firmly believe the supplement is a great idea but not enough long term.”

Funding has been made available by the Scottish Government to, for example, deliver flexible grants to help unpaid carers and young carers have time out from caring or to support their wellbeing, to support the work of carers centres/services and for online mental health measures. And of course, in June last year a similar double payment of Carer’s Allowance Supplement was made.

We welcome this support but many unpaid carers remain isolated and exhausted by the demands placed upon them. The pandemic has had a massive impact on unpaid carers. As mentioned earlier, research by Carers Scotland³ found that 87% of unpaid carers were providing more care and this was further evidenced by a recent report⁴ from Carers Trust Scotland who found 90% of unpaid carers were providing more care. Not only have unpaid carers been providing more care, but the care they have provided has been more demanding with 8 in 10 saying the care needs of the person they care for have increased.

This increase in care and levels of care provided has continued throughout the pandemic, placing significant demands on unpaid carers’ physical and mental health, finances and employment. For example, 29% of unpaid carers in *Caring Behind Closed Doors*⁵ said that they were struggling to make ends meet and 7% had had to give up work to care. In research published during Carers Week, 71% of unpaid carers in Scotland reported not

³ Caring Behind Closed Doors, Carers UK/Carers Scotland, October 2020
https://www.carersuk.org/images/News_and_campaigns/Caring_Behind_Closed_Doors_Oct20.pdf

⁴ Covid-19 in Scotland: The impact on unpaid carers and carer service support workers, Carers Trust Scotland, July 2021
<https://carers.org/downloads/scotland-pdfs/covid-19-in-scotland.pdf>

⁵ Caring Behind Closed Doors, Carers UK/Carers Scotland, October 2020
https://www.carersuk.org/images/News_and_campaigns/Caring_Behind_Closed_Doors_Oct20.pdf

being able to take a break during the pandemic. Over three quarters (77%) reporting feeling exhausted and worn out, with 7 in 10 (72%) saying that their mental health had got worse because of a lack of breaks and 72% of unpaid carers said their physical health had deteriorated.

A survey of young carers and young adult carers by Carers Trust Scotland⁶ highlighted the impact of the pandemic. To focus on young adult carers in the survey (who would be within the age range for this supplement) 63.6% said that they were providing at least 10 hours more care per week. Nearly 20% of these young adult carers reported an increase of 30 hours or more in the amount of time they spend caring per week and almost 15% said they are now spending over 90 hours a week caring for a family member or friend. The impact on their wellbeing because of the pandemic is stark, with 68% saying their mental health is worse, 76% saying they are more stressed and 73% feeling less connected. 85% are worried about the future.

Further views on the Bill

We do not have further views on the Bill itself but rather wish to set out thoughts on what both the Scottish Parliament and Government can do to ensure that unpaid carers are not further disadvantaged.

Moving forward

A COVID-19 recovery plan for unpaid carers

We set out the impact to make the Committee aware of just how damaging the pandemic has been to unpaid carers. It has stretched unpaid carers to limit and beyond (and continues to do so) and has exacerbated existing impacts and inequalities. It will take much work across all policy areas – care, education, health, social security, employability and more - to even begin to restore unpaid carers to what was a low starting base of wellbeing. Whilst we know that the Scottish Government is making efforts to ensure that there is such a cross cutting view of the needs of unpaid carers which started before the pandemic⁷. The National Carer Organisations believe that the Scottish Government needs to develop a COVID-19 recovery action plan specifically for unpaid carers, built with unpaid carers, alongside a similar action plan for young carers.

This would be a positive starting point and a strong statement of Scotland's commitment to ensuring that unpaid carers are supported and rewarded for a role that is vital to the wellbeing of our society. There is an opportunity within this to identify "quick wins" that will help unpaid carers recover, even as the pandemic continues, to build on this important additional Carer's Allowance Supplement. Within the survey report appended, unpaid carers set out some ideas of things that could help them now.

We would also note that whilst the easing of COVID restrictions has felt a welcome relief to many, for a significant minority of the country, it has brought increased anxiety and a return to informal shielding. With the numbers of individuals caring reaching 1.1 million over the pandemic, this will impact on many unpaid carers and the people they care for.

⁶ 2020 Vision: Hear Me, See Me, Support Me and don't Forget Me, Carers Trust Scotland 2020
<https://carers.org/young-carer-and-young-adult-carer-coronavirus-research/our-survey-on-the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-in-scotland>

⁷ <https://consult.gov.scot/health-and-social-care/carers-strategic-policy-statement/>

There is a need for any COVID-19 recovery plan to recognise that for as long as COVID remains at high levels, despite the success of the vaccination programme, many individuals remain at higher risk and thus they and their unpaid carers will require support financially, practically and with employment as we go forward. Without knowing what the pandemic holds for us, this may be required consistently and/or in response to the particular variants in circulation and their impacts.

Alongside this, moving into the Autumn and Winter period, unpaid carers are concerned about a resurgence of COVID19 pressures on NHS and social care, which may lead to further reductions in care packages leading to more demands on carers. How is this going to be addressed in any remobilization plans?

Scottish Carer's Assistance and other financial support

Within our survey of unpaid carers for this Bill, unpaid carers made some specific suggestions as we move forward to deliver Scottish Carer's Assistance. This includes expanding eligibility, increasing the level of the benefit, recognising those unpaid carers with more than one caring role and providing support for those who are not currently eligible.

This reflects the National Carer Organisations Manifesto for Carers and Young Carers⁸ (ref developed from the views of unpaid carers). This calls for a full reform of Carer's Allowance, in order to support unpaid carers better, including those in employment or education. The new benefit should recognise that caring impacts on health, employment etc at 20 hours per week or more and it should seek to address the overlapping benefit rule that disadvantages unpaid carers receiving other entitlements, such as State Pension.

"Remove the rule that if you work and earn over a certain amount you can't claim carers allowance. I work so excluded from claiming. My child's needs don't magically disappear because I work. As soon as I leave work, I deliver care to a child with complex physical disabilities and rather unstable diabetes day and overnight. Having more than one child it's easy to compare the additional support that is required when disabilities are present. Of course, I do it because as a parent that's what you do however it is all consuming and expensive to manage. I genuinely believe that should be recognised and supported and may keep more parents in the situation in work which would not only benefit them and their family but society as a whole."

"I wish students could claim carers allowance. I am a student nurse. Yes, I get a bursary but it does not cover the care I need to pay for, for my autistic daughter."

"I think it ought to be given to pensionable age carers because caring gets harder with age as do cared for people's disabilities. I see how my mum has no choice but to neglect herself. She doesn't get to spend time with her grandchildren like normal granny's - she is taking care of my dad 24/7. And in the time, she has cared for him he has progressively got more disabled and more difficult to manage while she has aged and grown frail and thin. She will be worked to death looking after him. And it won't be long. She is only 66."

⁸ <https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/policy/manifesto-2021>

“Most carers are also on benefits; your standard carers allowance is subtracted from the benefit leaving no financial difference for the job you do. Carers need to be properly recognised and paid a living wage equivalently.”

For those unpaid carers who are not eligible, there is an opportunity to develop, for example, a Carers Recognition Payment with the supplement providing a model for delivery.

Finally, a small proportion of unpaid carers responding to our survey raised the issue of having no access to benefits or cannot access Carer’s Allowance due to residency conditions. This can occur, for example, where an individual or the person they care for has not been habitually resident in Scotland for a sufficient time or is subject to certain immigration controls. The unpaid carer quoted below provides an example of this.

“They should consider the unpaid carers, who are not eligible for Carer’s Allowance, due to the fact, that the disabled person they care for (in my case-24-hour care, by myself -no respite- for my adult severely disabled son), has No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Hence, he has no disability award letter. Albeit the unpaid carer is a British citizen, and the cared for is here legally, I struggle every day to put food on our table, and keep our utilities on. Both my son and myself had COVID. I still had to care for him despite having COVID, I had no choice and no money. Carer’s Allowance along with a supplement would have allowed me to bring someone in to help us. We are both still suffering from the effects of having COVID.”

Other examples include where someone has returned to Scotland to provide care to an elderly parent. They may not be entitled to Carer’s Allowance, despite saving the public purse considerable amounts of money by providing care until they have been resident for a period of time. The Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament should consider measures to address these issues.

Scottish Carer’s Assistance should be a passport to other supports. The unpaid carer below makes the suggestion of free dental treatment and we are aware the Scottish Government plans to expand eligibility, beginning with young people. We would suggest that there is an opportunity to include unpaid carers in the early tranches of expansion. Furthermore, unpaid carers have also highlighted examples where help could be provided such as council tax reductions, free glasses and leisure access and concessionary travel.

“Free dental included with Carer’s Allowance. It’s so expensive and would help us stay healthy in order to ensure we are at our best to fulfil our caring role.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, we welcome the Bill and the proposal to provide a double Carer’s Allowance Supplement in December and we hope the Committee will support this and enable it to be paid on time.

We invite the Committee to consider in its work programme how it can best support carers in the short, medium and long term. The National Carer Organisations would be happy to offer to help support Committee members to meet and engage directly with unpaid carers as part of this work.

10 August 2021

Fiona Collie

Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Carers Scotland on behalf of the National Carer Organisations

Contacts:

- Fiona Collie, Carers Scotland
- Claire Cairns, Coalition of Carers in Scotland
- Kate Hogarth, Shared Care Scotland
- Suzanne Munday, MECOPP
- Paul Traynor, Carers Trust Scotland

The National Carer Organisations are Carers Scotland, Carers Trust Scotland, the Coalition of Carers in Scotland, Crossroads Caring Scotland, MECOPP, Shared Care Scotland, and the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance.

Together we have a shared vision that all Scotland's unpaid carers will feel valued, included and supported as equal partners in the provision of care. The NCOs aim to achieve this through the representation of unpaid carers and giving them a voice at a national level.

We believe we can deliver more for unpaid carers by working together to share our knowledge and experience, and by focusing our collective efforts on achieving improvements in areas of policy and practice that are of greatest concern to unpaid carers.

Appendix 1

Carer responses to the Carer's Allowance Supplement Bill**1. Background – what we did**

We put together a short survey about the Bill for unpaid carers to respond to. We asked unpaid carers whether an increase in Carer's Allowance Supplement in December was a good idea and also whether there were other ways in which the Scottish Government could have supported unpaid carers during the pandemic. We also allowed space in the survey for unpaid carers to feed back any other comment that they wanted to share about the Carer's Allowance Supplement Bill.

The survey was live between 27 July – 2 August 2021 and received 633 responses from unpaid carers. Out of those 633 carers, 70% were unpaid carers who receive Carer's Allowance and the remaining 30% were unpaid carers who were not eligible for Carer's Allowance.

2. Findings – what we found**Do carers agree with the proposal to double the carers allowance supplement payment in December?**

We asked unpaid carers whether they agreed with the proposal to double the Carer's Allowance Supplement payment in December.

Overall, 93.1% of all unpaid carers who responded to the survey agreed with the proposal to double the Carer's Allowance Supplement in December. 2.1% said that they didn't agree with the proposals, and 4.9% were unsure.

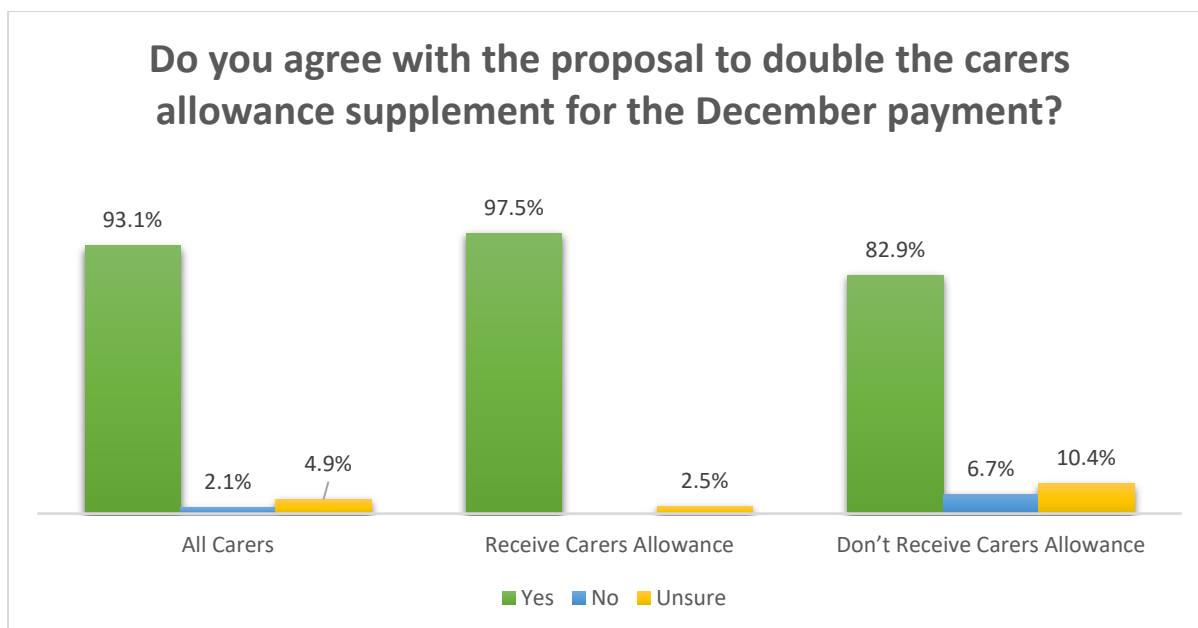
If we break this figure down by unpaid carers who get Carer's Allowance vs unpaid carers who don't get Carer's Allowance then we find that:

Out of the carers who receive carers allowance

- 97.5% said yes, they agree with the proposal
- 2.5% said they were unsure about the proposal
- None of the carers disagreed with the proposal

Out of the carers who did not receive carers allowance:

- 82.9% said yes, they agree with the proposal
- 10.4% said they were unsure about the proposal
- 6.7% said that they disagreed with the proposal



Feedback from Carers who receive Carer's Allowance

Those in receipt of Carer's Allowance were more likely to support the proposal to double Carer's Allowance Supplement payment in December and were very much grateful for the additional financial support, as reflected in the comments:

- *A great help*
- *A thank you to the Scottish Government for acknowledging Carers and trying to help with the only way they can at the moment.*
- *Anything we get is a bonus it goes towards making life a bit easier.*
- *Carer's Supplement makes a massive difference, even to make you feel appreciated when unable to work due to child's needs.*
- *Carers allowance supplement has help both me and my son financially during covid a lot especially since I've had to spend more money on getting things to do at home to keep him entertained without this, I wouldn't have been able to do this*
- *CAS is a valuable token of gesture towards Unpaid Carers*
- *Had to buy extra things to keep myself and kids busy during lockdown, so the extra money will help greatly*
- *You don't have spare cash when on benefits, the carers allowance supplement is like winning the lottery*
- *This extra money is a godsend when you have two registered disabled children in your family, it can pay for extra days out, clothing and sadly bills*
- *My carers allowance is just about covering my outgoings. The supplement will mean I will be able to pay some things, like replacing my broken laptop and be able to send gifts to my kids which would be really difficult otherwise. It sounds like luxuries but it makes the winter look bearable. It really helps my moral to think it will be there later in the year.*

Those in receipt of Carer's Allowance also shared some additional thoughts about the proposal to increase the December Carer's Allowance Supplement payment. There were some common themes which we have summarised here:

There should be a permanent increase in carer's allowance/carer's allowance supplement

- *A welcome payment to support carers. Maybe spread it out to 4 extra payments over the year.*
- *Actually, it should be doubled permanently, if the government had to pay for outside agencies to do the work of Carers it would cost a lot more. Carers are completely undervalued and forgotten about*
- *As much as a double payment this year will be welcomed - there should be more support long term. I firmly believe the supplement is a great idea but not enough long term.*
- *At the moment we receive around £67 per week. Caring for someone for 40+ hours per week is so much less than minimum wage which is the law but we are not classed as working just caring*
- *After having to give up my semi-professional career 2 years ago to look after my son the drop in my finances has been huge and debilitating! An increase in payments is very much needed.*
- *Carer's allowance is a big help to family finances. If it were to be raised it would be wonderful.*
- *Carers Allowance should always be Double every month us Carers are not paid enough for the caring roll we do for loved ones is 24/7 we don't get a day off or go home for the weekend it's mentally and physically exhausting*
- *Carer's allowance should fall within the same level as the national living wage.*

Carer's allowance needs reforming

- *Carer's allowance should be assessed on the level of care given i.e. someone who provides a high level of care (i.e. personal care, moving and handling and assistance to eat etc) 24hrs a day is paid the same as someone who does a much lower level of care etc.*
- *I appreciate the extra little help this gives me although I feel carers allowance should be more and you should be able to get it for more than one person as I was looking after both my parents who have dementia and other illnesses for years and was only getting paid it for dad until his death last year then I had to reapply for to be mums Carer even though I'd looked after them both for over ten years*
- *Yes. I do not agree that the amount of carers allowance is deducted from universal credit payment. Not my fault I can't work as I need to be home for my son.*
- *You can't go over 128-pound a with carers allowance it's not fair especially if you have a small pension very low income to try and live on, we don't want to be paid thousands just to manage better government should know the cap 128 a week should be higher than it is just now why should we struggle and worry if we might go over the amount not realistic should be considered also.*

- *What about multiple carers. I care for my son (child), daughter (18 yrs) & my mother who are all disabled. Being a multiple carer seems to be ignored in terms of all support.*
- *That all unpaid Carers get the payment and that the UC/CA distinction is removed in order to do so. I think DWP would need to provide more information in order to make that work.*
- *I'm an unpaid carer for my adult son. Next year, I will perform exactly the same care for him as I did last year. Next year I will not receive carers allowance as I receive my pension. Attendance allowance doesn't help or situation. When will this anomaly be rectified?*

There should be recognition for all carers (regardless of whether they receive carers allowance or not)

- *All Carers deserve to be recognised paid or unpaid as unpaid carers give up their time to care for their loved ones as they don't want to see them struggle. Myself I am a paid carer looking after my disable wife with spina bifida, during this time it has been challenging along with my own mental health, my health during this has affected me emotionally to the point at times I feel like what's the point on living. All carers paid or unpaid deserve to be recognised*
- *It's a great idea. Carers who work over the allowance or who study should also get the supplement.*
- *It should be offered to all registered carers. I receive carers allowance for looking after my son. My partner works but receives carers element on uc too for being a carer to our other son but no carers supplement because he has to work as well as being a fulltime carer to our kids to be able to support our family.*

Better support for carers

- *Extra Regular support would be nice, too. A one-off double payment isn't exactly much for carers who often get forgotten about*
- *Free dental included with carers allowance. It's so expensive and would help us stay healthy in order to ensure we are at our best to fulfil our caring role*
- *It's good that we are recognised but it doesn't make up the impact of damage caused over that time I have 3 disabled children and an adult with disability at home, I am the main person for all of them, I've had to stop working and claim carers. It's not recognised what I've lost as a person to be a carer. Not just financially but all over impact.*

Feedback from carers who do not receive Carer's Allowance

Comments from those who **do not receive Carer's Allowance** reflected (not surprisingly) the need to consider unpaid carers who are unable to claim Carer's Allowance due to the earning threshold, student status, or because they are in receipt of a state pension or other income related benefits. We have summarised the comments from unpaid carers who don't receive Carer's Allowance - many of these mirrored the same concerns and issues raised by carers who receive Carer's Allowance:

Increase the amount of carer's allowance and carer's allowance supplement

- *Increase the amount paid to unpaid carers permanently by a higher amount. Identify when people need more than one carer and make a second carer eligible for carers allowance too.*
- *It's a gesture, not a permanent solution to a growing problem. Carer's allowance should be higher and carers should be allowed to claim it regardless of their other income.*
- *Carer's allowance is woefully low and the supplement is a welcome addition although a better monthly rate would be preferable*

Additional financial/practical support should be available to carers who are unable to claim carers allowance

- *I think every unpaid carer should get something not only those who receive carers Allowance. It's unfair to those of us who also work and provide many hours of care to our loved ones.*
- *Not all people qualify for a carers allowance but still need help with bills and expenses*
- *What about parent carers that do not meet the criteria to claim carers allowance?*
- *Unpaid carers often work- (usual low paid employment) then go home to caring role – no financial support for them. If u care regardless of circumstance you should receive financial support if you wish to claim it. Real support is needed not tokenism A Bill should make a lasting difference for all. Better ways to spend money- even the carers centres can't offer much support due to cuts Sort yourselves out instead of pretending to care about carers actually offer real life improvements for people*
- *How can someone with "no recourse to public funds" as part of their visa conditions access ANY help?*
- *Hi I'm not against help but let's help with the Carers who don't qualify because they work, they still have to care for loved ones so really, they should be awarded CA as well it would be a lot more expensive if they had to put loved ones in care homes please help all Carers not just some Thanks*
- *I think the whole system requires reviewed and updated. As a mum and a nurse and a Carer to an ash daughter and elderly father with dementia. I do not meet the criteria for any financial supports. The carers Assessment is not fit for purpose when I had mine done it was patronising and unsuitable for anyone who works as anything offered was during this time.*
- *They should consider the unpaid Carers, who are not eligible for Carer's allowance, due to the fact, that the disabled person they care for (in my case-24-hour care, by myself - no respite- for my adult severely disabled son), has No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Hence, he has no disability award letter. Albeit the unpaid carer is a British citizen, and the cared for is here legally. I struggle every day to put food on our table, and keep our utilities on. Both my son and myself had Covid, I still had to care for him despite having covid, I had no choice and no money. Carers Allowance along with a supplement would have allowed me to bring someone in to help us. We are both still suffering from the effects of having Covid.*

Expand the eligibility criteria for carers allowance so more carers are able to claim

- *Also needs to be recognition that parents who work are still carers and can often have to combine work with significant care duties-but they are not entitled to carers allowance.*

- *Remove the Rule that if you work and earn over a certain amount you can't claim carers allowance. I work so excluded from claiming. My child's needs don't magically disappear because I work. As soon as I leave work I delivery care to a child with complex physical disabilities and rather unstable diabetes day and overnight. Having more than one child it's easy to compare the additional support that is required when disabilities are present. Of course, I do it because as a parent that's what you do however it is all consuming and expensive to manage. I genuinely believe that should be recognised and supported and may keep more parents in the situation in work which would not only benefit them and their family but society as a whole.*
- *Not all unpaid carers get the allowance for example I am a full-time student and don't qualify*
- *Increase weekly amount Carer can earn before not being eligible to claim it a whole group of carers are missing out on the payment as they have to work but still care for someone when not working, I find it hard that just because you have to work & are not able to claim carers allowance you are being penalised, yet again, you are still caring for someone though for every hour you are not working.*
- *I wish students could claim carers allowance. I am a student nurse, yes, I get a bursary but it does not cover the care I need to pay for, for my autistic daughter.*
- *Only thing i would say is carers allowance should be based on circumstances just because I work i don't get it but i also care for my son at work because he works with me for that reason*
- *Just like Pip. Carer's allowance should not be means tested.*
- *Carers Allowance should be in line with Job seekers allowance and the limit to paid work should be raised to enable more people to be eligible. Many people provide substantial care and still work full time.*
- *Parents of severely disabled children/adults who work are being penalised because they work during school hours/day centre hours meaning they are not entitled to carers allowance or this supplement*
- *I think it ought to be given to pensionable age carers because caring gets harder with age as do cared for people's disabilities. I see how my mum has no choice but to neglect herself. She doesn't get to spend time with her grandchildren like normal granny's - she is taking care of my dad 24/7. And in the time, she has cared for him he has progressively got more disabled and more difficult to manage while she has aged and grown frail and thin. She will be worked to death looking after him. And it won't be long. She is only 66.*
- *We have 4 children who all have additional needs. 3 claim dla or pip at a rate that would allow us to claim carers. However, as we both work, we cannot claim*

Do carers agree that the double payment in December is the best way to support carers during the pandemic?

We also asked unpaid carers whether the extra Carer's Allowance Supplement payment in December was the best way to support unpaid carers with the extra challenges they faced during the pandemic.

Overall, 67.6% of the unpaid carers who responded to the survey said that yes, increasing Carer's Allowance Supplement in December was the best way to support unpaid carers during the pandemic. 16.6% said that they didn't think that this was the best way to support

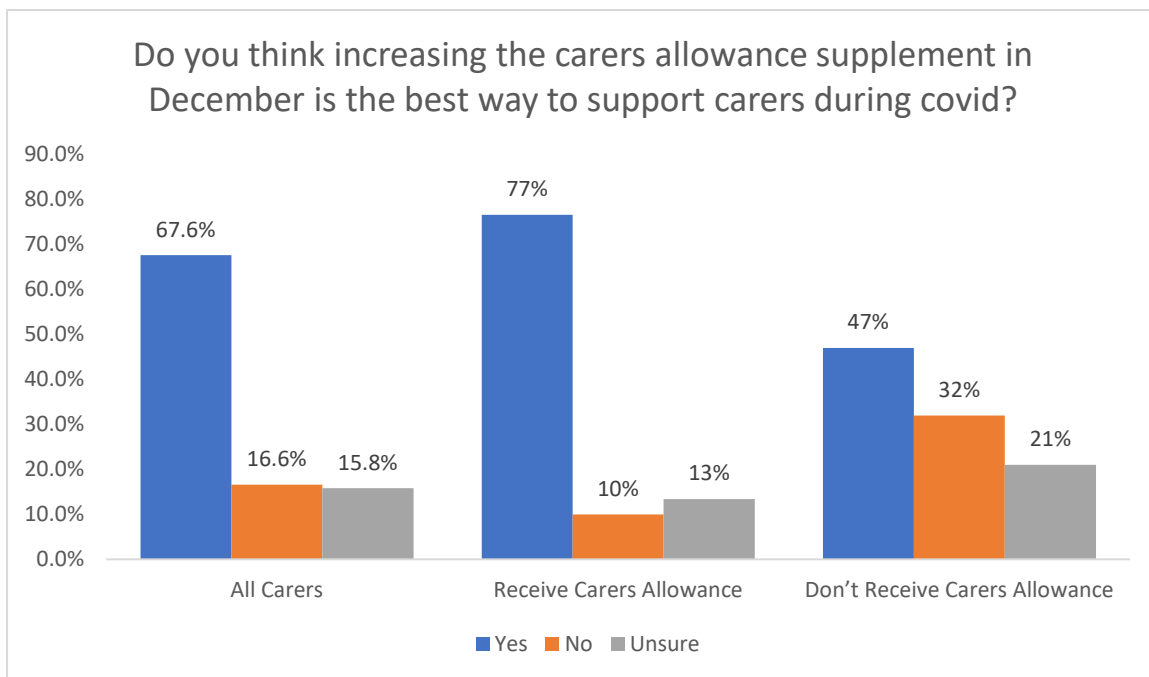
unpaid carers during the pandemic, and 15.8% were unsure if this was the best way to support unpaid carers during the pandemic.

Out of the carers who received carers allowance

- 77% said yes, increasing the carers allowance supplement was the best way to support carers during the pandemic
- 10% said that no, this wasn't the best way to support carers during the pandemic.
- 13% said they were unsure whether this was the best way to support carers during the pandemic

Out of the carers who did not receive carers allowance:

- 47% said yes, increasing the carers allowance supplement was the best way to support carers during the pandemic
- 32% said that no, this wasn't the best way to support carers during the pandemic.
- 21% said they were unsure whether this was the best way to support carers during the pandemic



We asked unpaid carers for ideas on how the Scottish Government could better support unpaid carers during the pandemic (other than double the Carer's Allowance Supplement payment in December). The responses did not vary much between unpaid carers who receive Carer's Allowance and those who don't. So, we have summarised the **responses from all unpaid carers** into a number of key recurring themes.

Increase the carers allowance/carers allowance supplement permanently

- *Upping the weekly money and it not affect other benefits*

- *To increase the amount of carers allowance as a lot of people have to give up jobs to care and this affects the household income and saves the government a lot of money because they don't then have to provide day care for those people*
- *They could increase the amount of Carers Allowance weekly, and then stop the Universal Credit taking more out of people's payments for it.*
- *The cost of living has gone up dramatically so maybe it should be increased to allow us to live better rather than watching every penny 18-year-olds get more money on jobseekers that we do and if you own your own house the struggle is real*
- *Substantially increase CA permanently. Our household income decreased by two thirds when husband became ill and I his carer. We would both prefer to still be working full time. I provide 24-hour care thus saving the LA the cost of a nursing care placement. I do not feel valued at all.*
- *Increase carer's allowance - it's the lowest benefit. We are fobbed off with 'You choose not to work... this is not a substitute for work' by the UK government. Come on Scotland prove you value of real work caring and raise the rate of carers allowance to reflect the real hours we work every week with no time off, on call 24 hours a day.*
- *I'm a carer for an 83yr old parent with chronic heart failure almost blind and deaf and he's disabled. I am unable to work because of this. There's only 1 wage comes in to our house and we sometimes get universal credit every other month. We are up to our eyes in debt and are robbing peter to pay Paul. There are no other benefits we can apply for. Carers allowance weekly just isn't fair I worked my whole life. £67 .60 does not even meet my family shopping bill, I have a 12 Yr old son whose missed out on so much because I'm caring for his grandfather.*

Changes to carers allowance

- *Most carers are also on Benefits, your standard carers allowance is subtracted from the benefit leaving no financial difference for the job you do. Carers need to be properly recognised and paid a living wage equivalently.*
- *Help every week not just twice a year. I personally do over 70 hours a week looking after 2 people with very complex needs and one needs manual handling which I have to do on my own. I struggle with finding time to spend with my own family as am always at my cares home do everything from personal care to housework to gardening also all meds etc on my own. Last holiday I had was in 2019 when I had a week with my family before that it was 8 years since a holiday. My health is getting worse as I am so exhausted and in constant pain with sore back and shoulder. Help would be nice and pay that represents what I actually do. If you look after 2 people full time you should be paid for looking after both the people not just one.*
- *Get rid of the earnings limit for carers allowance*
- *Every penny directly paid to unpaid carers is welcome but only 10% of carers are eligible, the stipulations that you cannot be a full-time student and the earnings limit preclude so many people who often work in excess of a 50 hours a week on top of their other commitments not just because of love but because they have no choice as social care SDS assessments can take years, yes years.*
- *I'm entitled to carers allowance but due to being esa I don't get paid it I get a top up on my esa but I think I should still be entitled to the extra payments*
- *I've got to work part time financially and because of this I lose out in carers allowance even though I still care full time for my son*

- *Even those who have to work as well as be a carer should be allowed some payment regardless of earnings. Then they might not need to work such long hours, or can pay someone to do something for or with the cared person.*
- *Another unfair proposal by the Scottish Government. How many pensioners care for loved ones without any support and not entitled to benefits, living on basic pension and the majority in fuel poverty. The costs of caring include heating, adjustments to home, beds/mattresses, transport, special diets and incontinence products just as basic requirements, if not assessed for social care, carers have to meet costs themselves as well as toll on own health. The majority of elderly carers, are not entitled to carers allowance and miss out. A great proportion of Scottish unpaid carers are the elderly.*
- *Carers who have previously applied or received carers allowance but due to the underlying claim/overlapping benefit rule we lose out on the supplement others get. Surely something can be put in place so we don't miss out in these circumstances.*
- *All carers should get carers allowance Regardless of earnings just like DLA & PIP. I earn 5 more than 128 and lose out on carers allowance and the supplement. My daughter suffers because of this. She has a lifetime disability.*
- *Whole carers allowance should be updated. For instance, I do not get because I receive a widowed parent's allowance. However, if my husband had divorced me and paid same amount in child payments as the widow's allowance, I'd be eligible to receive the carers allowance for my disabled son. Scandalous that his death instead of a choice prevents us receiving much needed help!*

Remove barriers to employment for unpaid carers

- *Carer's allowance is greatly appreciated, however, why not look at removing barriers to work so we don't have to rely on benefits. We need after school club/breakfast club provision for disabled young people in special schools, guaranteed holiday club type activities in school holidays, decent day care for our adults with disabilities. All this would allow carers to compete in the market place for jobs alongside non carers. This would mean we would have decent pensions and financial provision for our old age and therefore be less reliant on benefits when we are older and in better position to care for our young people. Of course, we must respect that for some carers work is not an option due to the extent of their caring obligations where they have to support their child in hospital stays, appointments, administering medication during the night, etc. And they should be getting better respite and relevant person-centred support too.*

Practical support for carers

- *We need more support from Carers Centres & not based on a postcode lottery. We need proper care plans for carers.*
- *Vouchers*
- *There has been no support from anyone the money is a huge help but the reality is unless critical i.e. will die zero care or carer support and this needs addressed beyond a payment that will offer a small relief for a few weeks.*
- *Support groups, opening centres where carers can go to relax*
- *Support the provision of more opportunities in the community*
- *Support carers with emotional and mental health. Been confined for so long and getting no help will impact massively on carers*

- Offer more contact support to unpaid carers also, money doesn't always help everyone, some people just need extra support.
- More support (emotional & practical) as well as financial help
- Further funding for respite. Funding childcare aimed at special need children. Having a grant system for goods or items that the government could purchase at cost that is available to anyone with an underlying entitlement to Carers allowance regardless of they receive it.
- Free bus pass it's ok to say u can travel as a companion but the person I care for was isolating cost me a lot in fares
- Extra money does not stop burnout & exhaustion in unpaid carers, better support in social care does. Local Authorities have not even complied with COVID 19 Guidance of Self-Directed Support for flexibility usage of budgets, instead they have clawed them back. Many unpaid carers also have no Adult Carers Support Plans in their own right either, with the choice of the 4 options of Self-Directed Support to meet their practical needs.
- carers who don't normally qualify for carers to receive some kind of gratuity payment as they also have been through covid

Better support for the person they are caring for

- Some carers have had to decrease working hours as adult services haven't fully opened or are not starting new referrals. This means that social work budgets are not being used but carers income has decreased in order to provide full time care. It's a great start but surely there could be a compromise with funding.
- Restarting activities, support groups and especially CAMHS waiting times
- More money should be going to respite, after school clubs etc to provide time out for carers rather than money which I imagine I'll probably spend on kids Christmas which while obviously helps me out probably not what its intended for.
- Increase budgets to social care so parent Carers can actually get the support they need. My local area has 2.5 OTs within the children with disabilities team to deal with all the disabled children and families. It is not good enough
- Getting NHS clinics back up and running and also social care services such as social support & respite plus looking at how to help children who have regressed their skills due to the lack of support during Covid
- Close the accountability gap. Ensure councils put adequate services and support in place for disabled people
- Whilst the money is a huge help financially the best way to support unpaid carers is to stop reducing the services the person, they care for requires. This has the biggest impact on a carer.
- We need respite i.e., Daycentre which we've heard in Aberdeen are not opening again. Unpaid carers are at breaking point and are not being listened to what they need to help loved ones and our caring role. I am begging the Scottish government to rethink about the changes that's being made and listen and act on what unpaid carers are saying. We have rights and so has our loved ones. Anyone caring for someone with Dementia knows how hard things can be they need stimulation and being in with people like them. A sitting service is not what most carers want although we keep getting told that's what we asked for. Every other unpaid Carer I have spoken to in groups I attend do not want sitting service we are all in the same agreement we need places where we know our loved ones are safe and enjoying themselves, we get some

well-earned respite. Most carers will appreciate a bit of extra money but priority has to be respite.

- *Unpaid carers need a break. No respite or day care for 18mths. our physical and mental health is shocking. Money is good but action of respite would be better*

Shubhanna Hussain-Ahmed

Coalition of Carers in Scotland on behalf National Carer Organisation

Submitted to Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland) Bill
Submitted on 2021-08-11 16:37:04

About you

1 Please read the privacy notice below and tick the box below to show that you understand how the data you provide will be used as set out in the policy.

I have read and understood how the personal data I provide will be used.

2 How your response will be published

I would like my response to be published in its entirety

3 What is your name?

Name:
Ailsa Tweedie

4 What is your email address?

Email:
[REDACTED]

5 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Organisation :
Lanarkshire Carers

Additional payment of the Carer's Allowance Supplement

6 What are your views on the increased payment of the Carer's Allowance Supplement?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Lanarkshire Carers supports the Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland) Bill and its intention to provide carers who receive the Carer's Allowance Supplement with extra financial support, because of the extra burden the pandemic may have placed on them and due to the loss of income and increased costs many have faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recipients of Carer's Allowance Supplement tend to be in the bottom half of income deciles and are more likely to be living below the poverty line, due to an income threshold which means that recipients cannot earn more than £128 per week (after deductions) through paid work (during 2020-21). Recipients are also unable to be in full-time education or studying for more than 21 hours per week at a College or University. During our consultation and focus groups, carers expressed their appreciation for the double payment:

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"The increased payment is always welcome as carers incur a lot of extra expenses from caring, and more so during the pandemic, as was my experience, as I'm sure the same for many others."

"It's an amazing scheme, without it during the pandemic we would have struggled with certain things."

"It is much appreciated in these difficult times."

"I agree with it there are so many expenses connected to being a carer this would really help. I make just over the threshold to receive carers allowance and therefore don't qualify for this supplement, but it would be such a help if I did."

However, since June 2020, it has been widely acknowledged that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that there has been an increase in the number of unpaid carers in Scotland by 53%, Carers Scotland estimates that there are now over 1 million unpaid carers in Scotland, a rise of 400,000 since 2015.

It has been estimated by the Scottish Government that 91,000 unpaid carers will receive the December 2021 double payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement; out of over 1 million unpaid carers in Scotland. This equates to 9.1% of unpaid carers in Scotland, and the Scottish Fiscal Commission estimates the cost of the double payment to all eligible recipients is forecast to be approximately £21 million of public funds.

During our consultation, many carers who are not eligible to receive the Carer's Allowance Supplement expressed the opinion that they feel that the additional strain placed on them during the pandemic has gone unnoticed by the Scottish Government.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"I'm disappointed that those that already receive carers allowance are getting even more money and support yet I have to work and struggle with my caring role and receive absolutely no income or support for it."

"As much as it's appreciated, it is also insulting. I pay care providers more in two hours than I get in carers allowance for a week."

"I think the Carer's supplement is an insult to people who provide care 24 hours a day to relatives who would otherwise be costing the taxpayer an arm and a leg, in Health and Social Care costs."

"I work and I earn £7 over the entitlement for Carer's Allowance."

"Well deserved, however for people like myself who work part-time and is over the threshold, I think it's a shame. We care 24/7 alongside juggling our caring responsibility."

"I think it should be open to every carer regardless of work status. ... Just because I already work doesn't mean I should not be entitled to it as I still provide 35+ hours of care per week on top of my full-time job, so why should I not get a payment for it?"

"Having a caring role disadvantages so many carers. Carers picked up the slack during the pandemic."

During our consultation and focus groups, many carers expressed the opinion that this one-off double payment, while appreciated was also a short-term fix when carers desperately needed a solution to support them in their caring roles in the long term.

Scottish Government's Caring Together: The Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010 – 2015

"With the ageing population, the number of carers is expected to grow to an estimated 1 million by 2037."

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that there are now over 1 million unpaid carers in Scotland, seventeen years earlier than expected.

7 Do you agree with increasing the December payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement?

Yes

Please provide the reasons for your answer in this text box. :

Lanarkshire Carers agrees in principle with the double payment in December 2021 to eligible recipients. As already outlined, many are likely to be living below the poverty line and hit the hardest during the pandemic due to the loss of income and increased costs that many will have faced. During our consultation and focus groups, a majority of carers agreed with the double payment.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"Yes, it gives carer's a much-needed boost in those winter months."

"Yes, it can be a difficult time for carers who have sacrificed jobs and careers to care for loved ones."

"Yes, although it should have been earlier in the year."

"Yes, but many have given up well-paid jobs to care for their loved ones."

"Yes, I do. Without carers, those needing care and support would not be able to live as full a life, as they do. Life would be immeasurably tougher. Carers need some support and help themselves. This payment helps them either to have a break or obtain some support. To give them some time out."

8 What impact do you think the increased payment will have?

Please enter your response in the text box provided. :

This double payment is only targeting 9.1% of unpaid carers in Scotland, we believe that more needs to be done to provide support to those who are not eligible to receive this double payment. This was also a common theme during our consultation and focus groups.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"No - paying the supplement for the coronavirus element in December excludes the oldest carers who have shouldered the burden right through the pandemic. It should be backdated to June, a year after the first coronavirus payment, or to August when restrictions ease. I am one of the oldest cohorts, and I will reach state pension age and lose the Carer's Allowance before the October qualifying date for a December payment.

The people who have kept going through the pandemic - who are even more exhausted and isolated in this second year - deserve the coronavirus supplement and should not lose out because of their age. I don't oppose the other supplement being paid in December, but it would be grossly unfair for the Scottish Government to delay paying a coronavirus supplement at such a late point that those who have done the carrying all this time are penalised."

"As a carer that works, I have absolutely no voice and no support at all. I am completely invisible."

"What is the point? No, I do not agree with it. It is not money we need, it is help and assistance."

"It's gesture politics, a one-off increase that is less than the £500 that the NHS, care workers and Personal Assistant's received as a bonus payment."

9 Do you have any views on the Bill's Financial Memorandum?

Please enter your response in the text box provided.:

The Scottish Fiscal Commission estimates the cost of the double payment to all eligible recipients is forecast to be approximately £21 million of public funds to target 9.1% of unpaid carers in Scotland. As a Carers Centre providing direct information, advice and support to carers living in Lanarkshire, we welcomed the Scottish Government's continued investment to provide support remotely during the pandemic and an extra £750,000 invested in the 'Time to Live' scheme to allow carers to take virtual short breaks away from caring.

We are also aware that the provision of the Carer's Allowance Supplement of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 was originally intended as a short-term measure until Carer's Allowance for unpaid carers in Scotland was replaced by a new Carer's Assistance benefit, and that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that this has caused delays to the Scottish Government's plan to introduce the new Carer's Assistance benefit.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"I think the bill is a great way forward for the Scottish Government to create a form of financial support that truly works and supports carers in Scotland. I hope in the future the Scottish Government will change the rules of Carer's Allowance to allow carers to work or study and pursue other aspirations and goals aside from caring, without losing the financial support from Carer's Allowance."

"I believe people on low incomes especially deserve it but all unpaid carers should receive help."

"The document covers a lot of points that should open the policy of the Scottish Government to enable the support to continue to be paid and increased over time."

"I think it seems a fair assessment and also makes you as a carer feel more valued."

"I think it's great we are getting seen for what we do, as this virus has been a nightmare for everyone."

However, during our consultation and focus groups, the majority of carers whilst welcoming the double payment, also raised the important question of why the Scottish Government were only doing this as a one-off payment instead of looking at raising the overall amount going forward.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"I think carers deserve more money than this bill suggests. Most carers work more than a 40 hour week and should receive payment as a full-time employee."

"What about those that aren't entitled to carers allowance but still actually have a full-time caring role? Why are they still invisible?"

"I don't understand why only one of the 2 annual supplement payments is increased."

"There is no mention of Carers who work. You either are a carer or are not. Income should have no impact on whether you are rewarded for this very hard job! Why is my time and hard work and exhaustion and exclusion any less important than someone who does not work?"

"I would like all carers to get the supplement. I am an unpaid carer and don't receive carers allowance or this supplement, it would really help me."

"It should be paid to all no matter their age or financial circumstances it's a payment to recognise what carers do."

"Please look to amend qualifying limits as many are just missing out."

"It's well-intentioned, but it doesn't reflect what's actually needed."

10 Do you consider the increased payment the best way to support unpaid carers with the challenges faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

No

Are there alternative approaches which you consider would be more appropriate?:

Lanarkshire Carers believes that the one-off double payment is a short-term solution to provide only 9.1% of unpaid carers in Scotland with extra financial support. The majority of carers are now providing more care than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that there are now over 1 million unpaid carers in Scotland, seventeen years earlier than expected. We believe that more needs to be done to support carers who are not eligible to receive the Carer's Allowance Supplement payment.

The need for self-isolation or shielding, the closure of respite and day-care services and reduced support from social care providers have had a

disproportionate effect on carers. Many of whom were already providing substantial hours of care every week.

During our consultation and focus groups, carers who are eligible for the Carer's Allowance Supplement welcomed the one-off double payment but thought that it was just a starting point.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"I believe it is one of the best ways to support carers but the government could use other powers to provide increases across other benefits that carers receive."

"Yes, I do. I strongly agree with this I can't go and get a job as I need to care for my son 24/7."

"Yes, the financial difficulties and challenges are overwhelming at times."

"I think it's a start. Being a carer is hard work every day for all carers and as most carers will tell you, every day is different. Some days you wonder how you have made it to the end of the day in one piece. It's harder still when you work and have other children to take care of or other family members."

"I think it's a start. It's been really hard throughout the pandemic my son hasn't had much support from CAMH's at all so life has been very hard going."

Carers raised the issue of needing to get respite and day-care services back up and running as part of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 recovery plan to ensure that they can take a much-needed break from caring. Due to the pandemic, many carers are taking on longer and more intense caring roles and this has had a hugely detrimental effect on their overall physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"I do think it gives us recognition of how hard it has been for us. I think money isn't the only solution as we need all of our other services up and running to help more with the physical side."

"Yes, although they need more emotional support and respite."

"For some people yes, for me, it would be more respite."

"I consider it one way to support unpaid carers, but more needs to be done in terms of respite and day centres."

"It is good but the best way in my opinion is to open up more services that are disappearing every day."

"No, I would rather see respite facilities to give exhausted carers the chance of a few days break. That would also help support the carers who do not receive Carer's Allowance."

Throughout our consultation and focus groups, carers who have been caring throughout the pandemic and have an underlying entitlement or are not eligible to receive the Carer's Allowance Supplement payment have said that they do not agree that this is the best way to support them.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"Definitely not! The carer role is difficult, isolating, and emotional, in my case not a lot of support."

"No, but it helps a bit. But not enough has been done for carers during the pandemic."

"I think a complete overhaul of how full-time carers are paid and are supported is needed. The system right now is simply just not good enough."

"Unpaid carers work so hard and we are underpaid for the work we do. We have carers allowance but then, on the other hand, we are penalised for it and have money deducted from other benefits. We didn't choose to be unpaid carers!"

"It's not relevant to me and thousands of other carers contributing to society and the tax system by working!"

"No, there can be more done in regards to helping unpaid carers with more help with benefits and having the carers allowance as a non-deductible payment as a source of income."

"If all unpaid carers get the money that would be a better result, including the ones on universal credit."

Regulation making power for the Scottish Government

11 What level of parliamentary scrutiny do you think there should be for any future increases to the amount of Carer's Allowance Supplement?

What level of scrutiny should there be?:

Lanarkshire Carers believes that there should be parliamentary scrutiny at a super-affirmative level when spending public funds.

Why should it be at this level?:

We agree with carers, who throughout our consultation and focus groups agreed that the Scottish Government needed to listen to the voices of carers as experts by experience when making decisions and actively consult with them.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"There should always be parliamentary scrutiny to ensure that carers allowance supplement is working to give carers the maximum financial support and increases truly reflect the costs of living and the added costs of caring."

"The fullest that can be given. Maybe then, the voice of the invisible carer like myself as I am not entitled to carer's allowance may be heard and I may get some sort of support."

"Reasonable but positive scrutiny by those who know our contribution and value."

"It should be overseen by an independent agency. ... Possibly a Health and Social Care advisory committee or even additional Welfare/Human Rights organisation to make sure things are done fairly for everyone who provides unpaid care. The government should be accountable as they are for any other paid employment."

"It should be reviewed regularly so we are not forgotten about again."

"I think there should be an assessment of needs done more regularly and this should be reflected in the increases awarded."

Many carers during our consultation and focus groups expressed the opinion that the Scottish Government needed to appreciate the contribution that all unpaid carers make to our society and the challenges associated with this. They also felt that more needed to be done to support carers who cannot currently access Carer's Allowance.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"I think carer's voices should be heard."

"I think they need to look at what exactly carers do and the fact for most it's a 24/7 job with services reduced and it's difficult for them to get help when required. In addition, I think they should get financial recognition for jobs they have given up to do a caring role."

"The ordinary person has to be listened to. Regarding getting help financially or any other form of help, I feel that there never is that level of down to earth thoughts of how all this financial help is dealt with."

"Parliament should realise unpaid carers save them billions of pounds every year."

"I think that parliament needs to understand the challenges of being a carer."

"I don't know, but I think it's an important issue considering these carers are sometimes keeping the people they care for out of the care system, which is an even bigger financial burden on the Government and taxpayers."

Other views on the Bill

12 Do you have any other views on the Bill?

Please enter your response in the text box provided.:

Lanarkshire Carers believes that the Bill intends to provide carers who receive the Carer's Allowance Supplement with extra financial support, because of the extra burden the pandemic may have placed on them and due to the loss of income and increased costs many have faced, will be achieved.

However, we believe that this will only reach a small proportion of unpaid carers, and does not address nor plan to reach any additional carers out with those who receive the Carer's Allowance Supplement. We are aware that public consultation has begun for the new Scottish Carer's Assistance benefit and the National Care Service, and we plan to actively consult with carers on both to ensure that the Scottish Government include and listen to unpaid carers.

Throughout our consultation and focus groups, agreed with this.

Comments from Consultation Survey and Focus Groups

"Most carers are neglecting their own lives to do their job. More specialised support and maybe look at how the lack of financial help is detrimental to the carer's health."

"I hope the bill creates a form of Carer's Allowance that truly supports and works for carers and ensures that the increased payments continue and are not just for hardship times. Alternatively, that Carer's Allowance is increased to a greater amount to recognise that carers are already in hardship without the added impact of pandemics."

"I think that it should not matter what your income is, if you are working full-time and looking after a family member you should still be paid Carer's Allowance."

“Carers need to be supported financially, some respite for themselves. A body to listen and ask are you ok?”

“Carer’s Allowance should not be means-tested. Either you care or you do not! I had to reduce my hours to job-share to meet the needs of my disabled child, significantly affecting my family’s income. ... The government do not recognise my contribution unless I choose to give up my job and solely claim benefits.”

“Carers have been invisible for years; we have been expected to look after relatives with no thought to ourselves. I had to give up a job that I loved through poor health, & now care for my husband. The isolation & mental strain is awful.”

“Why does it always have to be the disabled and carers that have to fight for everything? The government give you things in one hand and take them away in another.”

Lanarkshire Carers also believes that the Scottish Government should consider the current universal basic income scheme trial that the Welsh Government are currently piloting as a similar idea that could be enacted in Scotland. This would mean that the Scottish Government would ensure that every adult in Scotland would receive a universal basic income and seek to address the growing levels of poverty.

Evaluation

13 Was this views submission tool easy to use?

Easy to use

Why did you feel it was, or was not, easy to use?:

14 Do you think this Call for Views submission tool provides a good way for you to get involved in the work of Parliament?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer?:

Would like the ability to upload word/pdf version of our submission that has already been drafted.



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Neil Gray MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

10 August 2021

Dear Neil

Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland) Bill

Thank you for letter and invitation to give evidence on the Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland) Bill ("the Bill").

As noted in my letter of 16 June 2021, the Scottish Government is committed to supporting unpaid carers. We want to protect their health and wellbeing so they can continue to care if they wish to and have a life of their own alongside caring. We invest more than £350 million a year in supporting carers through Carer's Allowance, Carer's Allowance Supplement and the Young Carer Grant.

We introduced the Carer's Allowance Supplement in September 2018 and it has subsequently paid out £129 million to more than 113,000 carers since its launch. The Payment is made twice a year in June and December and the current value is £231.40.

We recognise the added pressures that carers have had to deal with as a result of the coronavirus pandemic which is why we delivered an additional payment in 2020 and plan to do so again this year. Your support of the expedited timetable for the Bill is much appreciated as it is critical to ensuring this further financial support is provided to eligible carers in December 2021.

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Please find attached (**Annex A**) the further information requested in your letter. I look forward to giving evidence to the Committee on 2 September 2021. Prior to this, my officials and I would be happy provide any further information that Members might require to aid the Committee's consideration and scrutiny of the Bill.

Best regards

BEN MACPHERSON

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Annex A

Scottish Carer's Assistance

You asked about progress on the development of Scottish Carer's Assistance, the replacement benefit for Carer's Allowance. A range of work has been carried out to hear from carers and the organisations who support them about ways in which our benefit can best meet the needs of unpaid carers. This includes discussions with our Carer Benefits Advisory Group (CBAG), taking advice from the independent Disability and Carer Benefits Expert Advisory Group (DACBEAG), research with our Experience Panels, and an evaluation of our Carer's Allowance Supplement.

This work has identified a number of areas in which the existing Carer's Allowance benefit could be improved. We have used this feedback to develop draft aims for Scottish Carer's Assistance, which have also been designed to contribute to our overall vision for unpaid carers. This vision, set out in the draft Carers Strategic Policy Statement¹, is that carers '*are supported on a consistent basis to allow them to continue caring, if that is their wish, in good health and wellbeing, allowing for a life of their own outside of caring*'. We shared these draft aims in a discussion paper published in March of this year².

We have also used what we have heard to develop a set of options for how Scottish Carer's Assistance could improve support for unpaid carers in future. Options have been developed to address what we have heard are the key issues with the existing benefit, and include the commitment to extend the time for which Scottish Carer's Assistance will be paid after a cared for person has passed away.

There are a number of areas we have heard that carers would like to change, but it may not be feasible to deliver all of these changes at once. Therefore decisions on proposals for Scottish Carer's Assistance will be supported by a Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) process. The MCA process will assess the options for change against a set of criteria which will be based on the aims for Scottish Carer's Assistance and the social security principles. As part of this process we have held series of internal and external discussion events this summer to take feedback on the draft aims and options for Scottish Carer's Assistance, and the criteria to be used in assessing options. Following the MCA process we will carry out a public consultation on proposals for Scottish Carer's Assistance.

As you have noted in your letter, to ensure a safe and secure transition of benefits for carers already in receipt of Carer's Allowance, changes to eligibility criteria for Scottish Carer's Assistance will not be made before the end of 'case transfer'. To support this safe and secure transfer we also intend to continue to pay Carer's Allowance Supplement separately until case transfer is complete. We will then integrate Carer's Allowance Supplement with Scottish Carer's Assistance.

When all eligible carers in Scotland are receiving Scottish Carer's Assistance from Social Security Scotland instead of Carer's Allowance from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), we will be able to make changes to eligibility criteria. However, as Carer's Allowance

¹ Draft Carers Strategic Policy Statement, Scottish Government, September 2019
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-strategic-policy-statement-draft-consultation/>

² Scottish Carer's Assistance: Discussion Paper, March 2021 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-carers-assistance-discussion-paper/pages/1/>

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is the most complex benefit being devolved in terms of its links with support which will remain reserved to the UK Government, we will need to take into account potential impacts on reserved support.

In particular, we need to consider very carefully that if the eligibility criteria for our benefit were to become very different from UK Carer's Allowance, we would need to reach agreements with the DWP about how our benefit would be treated by their systems so carers are not penalised. Many carers receive extra amounts in means-tested benefits because they are in receipt of Carer's Allowance, including important support for living costs, such as Housing Benefit. It is vital carers in receipt of Scottish Carer's Assistance do not lose other reserved benefit support which is currently linked to Carer's Allowance, or we risk carers being worse off when our aim is to ensure carers will be better off as a result of changes we make.

While we will not be making eligibility changes to Scottish Carer's Assistance until after the end of case transfer, we are committed to making improvements to how we deliver this support from day one, including by working with carers on the design of all aspects of the benefit, including application processes and systems.

Social Security Scotland's local delivery services will also allow us to reach more carers and offer face to face support for applications. We are also working to ensure Scottish Carer's Assistance will align better with wider carer support, and to use the introduction of this new benefit to make sure carers are given information on the wider support available to them.

Additional payments for people with multiple caring roles

We are committed to providing extra support to people in receipt of Carer's Allowance who are caring for more than one disabled child. Work had progressed on the development of this support, known as the Carer's Additional Child Payment, but had to be paused due to the coronavirus pandemic. Resources were refocused on frontline delivery, to ensure we could continue to provide the existing support people rely on, as well as delivering vital new support including the Child Winter Heating Assistance and the Scottish Child Payment.

We are now considering how the additional support can be delivered as part of Scottish Carer's Assistance, as well as how best to extend this to meet our commitment to provide extra support to those caring for more than one disabled person of any age. This development work is being carried out in parallel with the work to consider options for Scottish Carer's Assistance, and we will consult on the detailed policy for this additional support as part of the public consultation on Scottish Carer's Assistance.

Wider support for unpaid carers

The Bill itself is part of the Scottish Government's commitment to a wide range of support for unpaid carers. The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 introduced the right for all carers to an adult carer support plan or young carer statement to identify each carer's personal outcomes and needs for support. This year's budget contains an additional £28.5 million in the local government settlement for Carers Act implementation. Added to similar (baselined) increases in previous years since the Act came into force in April 2018, this brings the total additional investment for 2021-22 to £68 million per year.

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We have accepted the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, many of which are designed to improve carer support, including the establishment of a National Care Service. We are engaging with partners, including COSLA and Health and Social Care Partnerships, over what more they can do now to ensure carers receive the support they need.

As you will know, across government, we are committed to a number of other actions to support carers. This includes introducing a £1.4 million holiday voucher scheme which will provide thousands of vouchers for short breaks and days out to carers, people with disabilities and families on low incomes, investing in carer centres, and making sure carers are given information on the variety of support available to them.

Alongside this we are funding Carers Trust Scotland to develop resources and work with education professionals to improve awareness, identification and support for young carers in schools, linked to young carers' rights to support under the Carers Act. We have also funded the update of the Equal Partners in Care learning resource in partnership with NHS Education for Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council. This is an e-resource primarily for workforce to help staff with carer identification and awareness.

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