

Caring Behind Closed Doors: 6 Months On

In a survey published in October 2020, Carers UK looked closely at the continued impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on unpaid carers. The results were worrying...

Key Findings:

- 4 in 5 unpaid carers (81%) are currently providing more care than before lockdown.
- More than three quarters (78%) of carers reported that the needs of the person they care for have increased recently.
- Most carers (64%) have not been able to take any breaks at all in the last six months. More than half (58%) of carers have seen their physical health impacted by caring through the pandemic.
- 64% said their mental health has worsened and they were reaching crisis point

Carers UK carried out an online survey between 11th September and 28th September 2020.

A total of 5,904 carers and former carers responded to the survey. This included 5,583 current carers and 321 former carers. Compared to the carer population as a whole, respondents to this survey were more likely to be female and caring for a high number of hours every week.

Read the full survey at:
<https://www.carersuk.org>

This fact sheet explores ways we can help adult carers during the COVID crisis.

Updated November 2020


Caring in Quarantine

The COVID-19 crisis has had a huge impact on adult carers shielding with the person they care for.

Carers may be caring for relatives experiencing a range of conditions some of which will be exacerbated by the current situation. Whilst this crisis continues, it is likely that adult carers health and wellbeing will be increasingly impacted by their caring roles and lack of respite and support. Identifying adult carers is the first step towards ensuring they are supported.

A survey undertaken by Carers UK found:

- 70% of unpaid carers are providing more care due to COVID-19
- Unpaid carers are providing an additional 10 hours of care
- 55% of carers feel overwhelmed and worried they will burn out
- Local services have been reduced/closed (e.g. day care)
- Carers are worried about paid health and social care staff having contact with the person they care for
- Health and social care providers have reduced the personal care they provide
- Carers have given up work to care during covid or have been furloughed



"Prior to this outbreak, I could rely on other family members getting involved in taking my wife's shopping, or out for coffee, etc, giving me a break and some free time to do activities just for myself. Coronavirus now means I have that responsibility for 100% of the time."

Financial pressures affecting carers during COVID-19

- 38% of carers said that they are worried about their financial situation
- 81% of 5,047 carers surveyed said they are spending more money because of:

Food deliveries

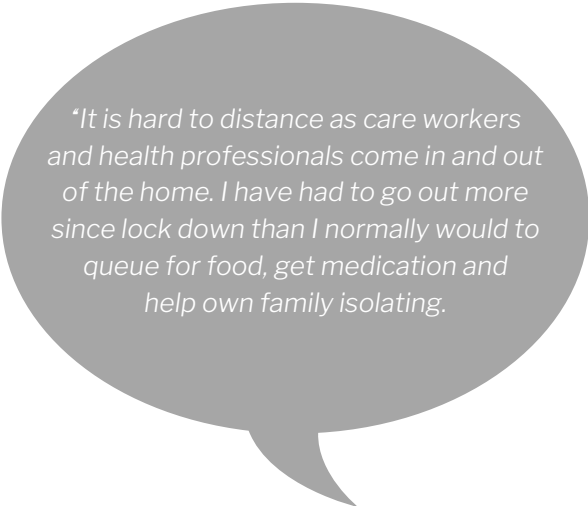
Having fewer choices about what to buy

Household bills

Technology to keep in touch with the person they care for

Equipment

Social care support



"It is hard to distance as care workers and health professionals come in and out of the home. I have had to go out more since lock down than I normally would to queue for food, get medication and help own family isolating."

Carers increased worries during COVID-19

- Confusion about government guidance
- Unable to put a contingency plan in place
- Unable to visit if the person they care for goes into hospital
- Difficulties with hospital discharge
- Unable to provide 'end of life' care and support
- Additional stresses if bereaved
- Fears about social care services being unable to cope
- Impact on Local Authority budget – possible cuts in future support

What are the local issues facing carers in North Tyneside?

- General COVID-19 anxiety and being unclear about what the latest rules and guidance are
- Difficulties with shopping - some shops are taking people off their online shopping list, revising their definition of 'vulnerable', or, the carer has to take the person they care for shopping but some shops only allow one person in at time
- Carer not able to take a break
- Person cared for not understanding what is going on - why they can't go out, go to day centres etc so becoming agitated and upset
- Anxiety about the risk of having formal services coming into the house
- Practical difficulties around having to shield/ cared for or carer showing symptoms
- Unable to access telephone or online support as the person cared for is in the house so unable to speak freely
- Ongoing issues with hospital discharge
- Worries about the safety of the person cared for in a care home
- Issues with moving home
- Difficulties with getting tradespeople to do essential work
- Unable to access online support/services

What do carers need from professionals?

- Help with contingency planning in case they aren't able to provide care
- Clear and specific guidance from the Government for unpaid carers
- Better personal protective equipment (PPE) for unpaid carers and social care staff
- Identification in order to be able to prove that they are a carer.
- Someone to talk to
- Advice about benefit entitlements
- More support from Local Authorities/GP and local services
- Someone to talk to
- More support in the community e.g. from local volunteers
- Paid leave or flexibility from their employer to support the person they care for
- Recognition of the role of unpaid carers and the value of their role
- Monitoring the impact of reduced services on carers and their families in terms of carers' health and well-being, ability to care, in order to avoid burnout
- To be listened to and an understanding of the individual circumstances of their family
- Support to be reinstated as soon as possible
- Help carers access advice and information
- Ensure systems are in place for carers to provide access to food and reduce the challenges carers face in getting food
- Explore creative ways to support carers such as technology

We've supported 1361 carers since lockdown, but referrals from professionals are significantly down.

Who are you working with that could use our help?

The COVID-19 crisis has had a huge impact on adult carers

**North Tyneside Carers' Centre has supported 1361 carers since lockdown,
we need your help to reach more.**

Our Advice Line (0191 643 2298) is open
as usual for information, advice and support:

Monday to Wednesday: 10am – 4pm

Thursday: 1pm – 4pm


Friday: 10am – 4pm

Email: enquiries@northtynesidecarers.co.uk

Live Chat is available during office hours on our website at www.northtynesidecarers.co.uk

How we are supporting carers

- Telephone check ins
- Online support groups
- Resources on our website
- Online wellbeing sessions
- Self paced e-learning
- Online workshops
- Digital/IT support to get online
- Regular COVID-19 bulletin
- Advice line and live chat




"The Carers' Centre has been like the back bone for carers, I am so pleased to have found you as the support has been a massive help and I no longer feel like I am floundering..... The regular calls during this (lockdown) have really helped"

How we are supporting professionals

Professionals have statutory responsibilities to support and identify carers. We can help you meet carers' needs:

- Webinars
- Resources on our website
- Bespoke carer awareness training delivered remotely
- Self paced e-learning
- Regular COVID-19 bulletin
- Advice and information



"Thanks for arranging this meeting it was great to see everyone, feels like a bit of normality spotted in the day."