



**WIRRAL  
INTELLIGENCE  
SERVICE**

# Unpaid Carers Briefing: Supplementary Content

**Wirral Intelligence Service**

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## Unpaid Carers Briefing: Supplementary Content

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## Introduction

This report has been produced as a supplementary document to the recent [Census 2021: Unpaid Carers Briefing](#) report published in September 2023. Additional Census information, plus data and evidence from other sources, is available within this report.

## Survey of Adult Carers in England

### Overview of the Survey

The Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) is a biennial survey conducted by Councils with Adult Social Services responsibilities (CASSRs). The survey seeks the opinions of unpaid carers aged 18 or over, caring for a person aged 18 or over, on a number of topics that are considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside their caring role. The latest survey was completed in 2021/22.

### Key Findings

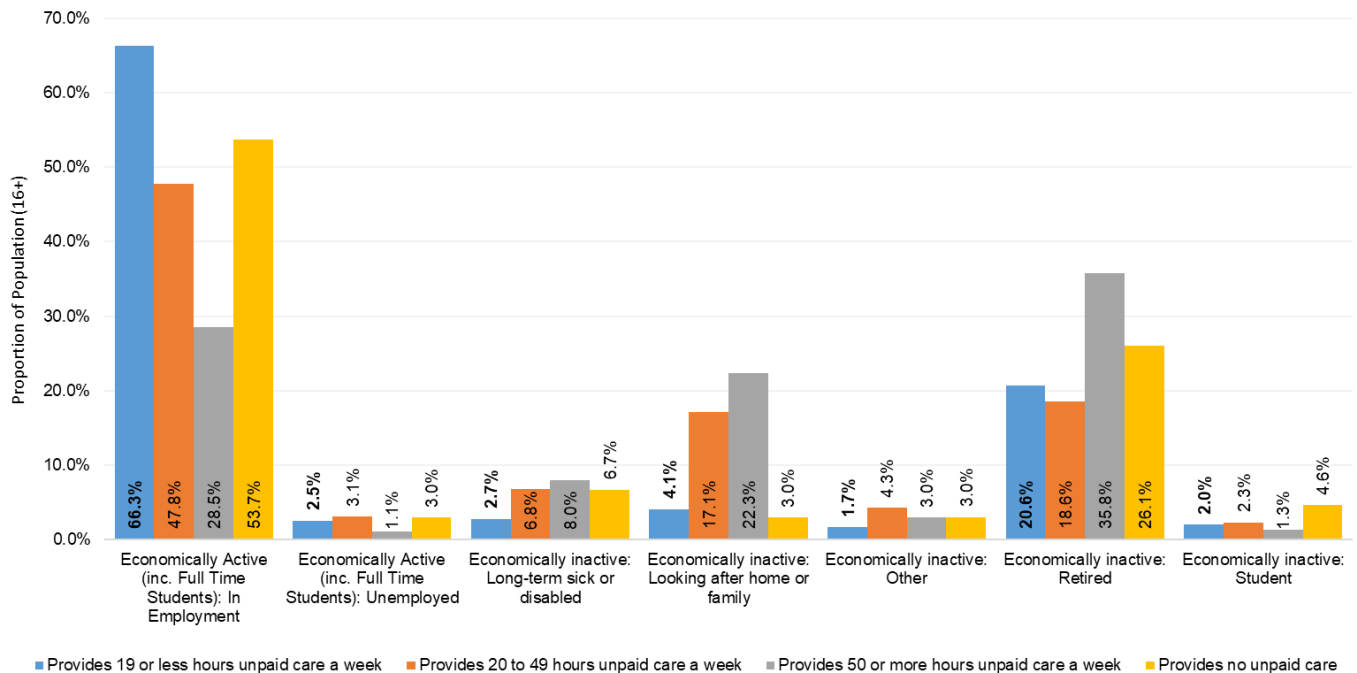
- Nationally, over a third of carers who had received support or services felt they were very or extremely satisfied (36.3%). This compares to just under a third in Wirral (31.2%).
- Almost two thirds of carers in Wirral (63.0%) reported that their caring role had not caused any financial difficulties over the last 12 months (2021/22), this was an increase from 54.8% in 2018/19 and 53.5% in 2016/17. Nationally, this figure was 57.2% in 2021/22.
- The proportion of carers who felt they had as much social contact as they want with the people, they like has increased each year in Wirral, from 33.2% in 2016/17, to 33.2% in 2018/19 to finally 34.9% in 2021/22. The opposite effect was shown nationally, however, with a steady decline each year. In 2018/19, the proportion of carers who felt they had as much social contact as they want with the people, they like was 32.5%, whilst in 2021/22, this figure was 28.0%.
- The proportion of carers who have little social contact with people and feel socially isolated has gradually increased each year in Wirral, however. In 2016/17 this proportion was 12.5%, in 2018/19 this figure was 13.5% whilst finally in 2021/22 this figure 14.3%. This is still lower than national figures however, whereby the proportion of carers who have little social contact with people and feel socially isolated was 20.9% in 2021/22.
- Finally, the proportion of carers that feel they have encouragement and support was shown to increase in the latest survey in Wirral from 35.1% in 2018/19 to 39.9% in 2021/22. This was, however, not as high as in 2016/17 when the proportion was 40.1%.

The latest report for more information is available on the [NHS Digital website](#).

## Unpaid Carers by Economic Activity

The more hours of unpaid care a carer provides per week, the less likely they are to be economically active (see **Figure 1**). For example, of those who provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week, only 29.6% were economically active in Wirral. This compares to those who provide 19 hours or less unpaid care a week, whereby 68.8% were economically active.

**Figure 1: Unpaid Carers by Economic Activity**



Source: Census 2021, via [Custom Dataset function](#)

## Carers by GP

Between 2013 and 2023 there were 17,379 Wirral residents recorded as being a Carer by their GP surgery (5.1% of the Wirral population). Of these, 99.3% of those Carers (n=17,264) were recorded as being aged 18 and over.

Consequently, **Table 1** below shows the percentage of carers aged 18 (rather than all ages), by practice. It should be noted, however, that the current figure of 17,379 Carers may not be accurate as the numbers for each year have been cumulatively calculate and can therefore not into account recording errors and that simply Carers may not be identified by practices.

For example, people who were recorded as being a Carer in 2013 may not still be performing their role, but their GP records have not been updated, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people's caring roles increased to support family members.

**Table 1:** Rate of registered patients recorded as being a Carer by practice, Wirral, 2013-2023

| Organisation Code | Practice Name                   | Percentage of Carers - 18+ (%) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| N85025            | St Hilary Group Practice        | 10.7%                          |
| N85028            | Moreton Cross Group Practice    | 10.1%                          |
| N85005            | Eastham Group Practice          | 9.6%                           |
| N85617            | Spital Surgery                  | 9.6%                           |
| N85015            | Devaney Medical Centre          | 9.6%                           |
| N85018            | Villa Medical Centre            | 9.5%                           |
| N85047            | Orchard Surgery                 | 9.2%                           |
| N85017            | Cavendish Medical Centre        | 8.5%                           |
| N85002            | Marine Lake Medical Practice    | 7.9%                           |
| N85006            | Civic Medical Centre            | 7.7%                           |
| N85633            | Church Road Medical Practice    | 7.7%                           |
| N85024            | Somerville Medical Centre       | 7.3%                           |
| N85022            | Holmlands Medical Centre        | 7.3%                           |
| N85016            | Riverside Surgery               | 6.9%                           |
| N85648            | Blackheath Medical Centre       | 6.7%                           |
| N85048            | Moreton Medical Centre          | 6.3%                           |
| N85032            | Greasby Group Practice          | 6.0%                           |
| N85629            | Egremont Medical Centre         | 6.0%                           |
| N85054            | Kings Lane Medical Practice     | 5.9%                           |
| N85643            | Prenton Medical Centre          | 5.9%                           |
| N85031            | Gladstone Medical Centre        | 5.7%                           |
| N85640            | Leasowe Medical Practice        | 5.6%                           |
| N85052            | Grove Road Surgery              | 5.5%                           |
| N85057            | Teehey Lane Surgery             | 5.5%                           |
| N85634            | Vittoria Medical Centre (K)     | 5.5%                           |
| N85046            | Hoylake Road Medical Centre     | 5.5%                           |
| N85013            | Upton Group Practice            | 5.4%                           |
| N85038            | Vittoria Medical Centre (G)     | 5.3%                           |
| N85012            | St Georges Medical Centre       | 5.2%                           |
| N85020            | St Catherine's Surgery          | 5.1%                           |
| N85044            | Claughton Medical Centre        | 5.0%                           |
| N85008            | West Wirral Group Practice      | 5.0%                           |
| N85027            | Central Park Medical Centre     | 5.0%                           |
| N85616            | Liscard Group Practice          | 5.0%                           |
| N85059            | Hoylake & Meols Medical Centre  | 4.9%                           |
| N85625            | Miriam Primary Care Group       | 4.8%                           |
| N85037            | Heatherlands Medical Centre     | 4.8%                           |
| N85023            | Manor Health Centre             | 4.6%                           |
| N85051            | Sunlight Group Practice         | 4.6%                           |
| N85019            | Whetstone Lane Medical Centre   | 4.6%                           |
| N85007            | Heswall & Pensby Group Practice | 4.4%                           |
| N85009            | Commonfield Road Surgery        | 4.2%                           |
| N85021            | Hamilton Medical Centre         | 3.7%                           |
| N85620            | Fegan & Partners                | 2.9%                           |

Source: Wirral ICB (internal data only) and NHS Digital, 2023

## Young Carers

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks someone who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. As well as those caring for parents, they may also support brothers, sisters, elderly relatives or even friends too. Research suggests that 10% of all children are providing high or very high levels of care.

If young carers are not identified at an early stage, then they often end up taking on inappropriate and excessive levels of caring responsibilities. A recent survey by the charity Caring Together found that on average young carers were caring for 3 years before receiving any support, and there were some caring for more than 10 years. This can have a significant impact on their education, health and future opportunities:

- 27% of young carers aged 11-15 miss school or experience educational difficulties
- 1 in 4 young carers have reported being bullied because of their caring role
- There are over 1500 young carers aged 5-7 nationally providing more than 50 hours of care a week
- At least a third of young carers said their caring role resulted in them either 'always' or 'usually' feeling 'worried,' 'lonely' or 'stressed'<sup>1</sup>

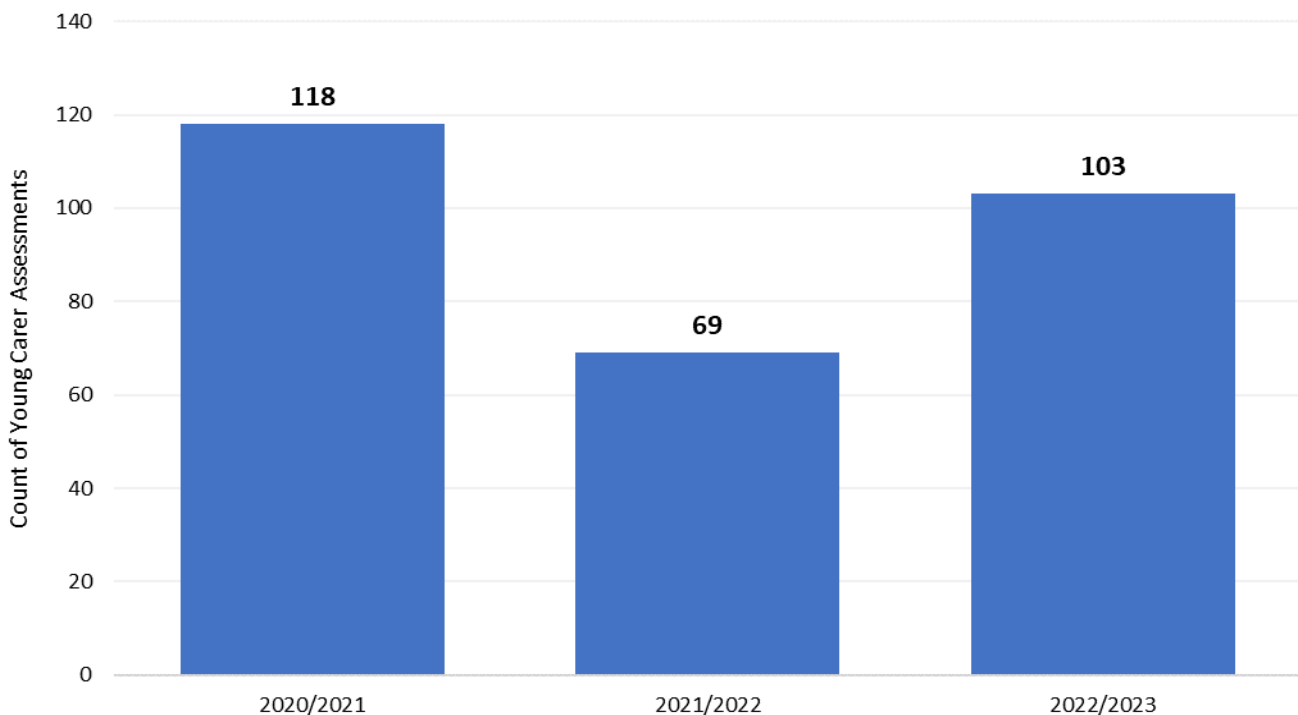
## Young Carer Assessments

Young carers have legal rights to assessments and support. Schools can play a key role in ensuring that pupils and families are aware of their rights to assessment and might be best placed to support them in requesting one.

A Young Carers Needs Assessment under s17ZA of the Children Act 1989 is designed to ensure that young carers are not taking on inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities. They are available to any young carer who requests one, no matter who they care for or how much care they provide.

**Figure 2** below shows the number of young Carer assessments completed in Wirral in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

**Figure 2:** Number of Young Carer Assessments in Wirral, 2020/21 – 2022/23



**Source:** Wirral Council Children and Young People's Team (internal data only)

<sup>1</sup> Young Carers Alliance, 2024

## National Policies

### NHS Long Term Plan

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

#### Commitment to carers deliverables 2020-2024

- Identifying and supporting carers, particularly those from vulnerable communities
- Adoption of carers passports/introduction of quality markers in secondary care
- Ability to share caring status with healthcare professionals wherever they present via electronic health record
- Carers understand the out-of-hours options that are available to them and have appropriate back-up support in place for when they need it
- Young carer “top tips” for general practice to include preventative health approaches, social prescribing and timely referral to local support service
- Introducing best practice quality markers for primary care

### The NHS in England at 75: priorities for the future (2023)

[The-NHS-in-England-at-75-priorities-for-the-future.pdf \(longtermplan.nhs.uk\)](https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/the-nhs-in-england-at-75-priorities-for-the-future.pdf)

- Where are we now, what is the context?  
Wider determinants of health and wellbeing: and while the NHS relies heavily on around five million unpaid carers who support family and friends each day in England, these carers need more support.
- Where is the NHS going? Shaping the future of healthcare  
Personalisation and participation: Patients and carers should be fully involved in decision making about treatment options based on an understanding of risks and benefits.
- Creating the conditions for change  
“A strong message from NHS@75 was that unpaid carers are the unsung heroes of health and social care and have faced many of the same pressures as staff during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Better supporting carers is essential and any diminution in their contribution would place even greater burdens on an already over stretched health and social care system. Building on the work done during COVID-19, the NHS should aim to better identify and support unpaid carers, and the Government can increase its support too.”  
Carers Voice:  
“Often the carers’ agenda is seen as a moral issue, but it is actually economic. The NHS is doing more work than it needs to because it is not supporting carers enough.”

### Care Act 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

- All carers are entitled to a carer’s assessment of their needs independent of the person they care for - yearly or when circumstances change. Young carers are entitled to a young carer’s assessment. No thresholds need to be met ahead of the assessment. (...*local authorities must assess*)

- Local carer organisations provide information and advice to all carers (*.... A local authority must establish and maintain a service for providing people in its area with information and advice relating to care and support for adults and support for carers.*)
- Carers will be entitled for financial support if they meet the national eligibility criteria (carers' allowance). (*.... A local authority must tell the which (if any) of the needs that it is going to meet may be met by direct payments...*)
- Most carer organisations support carers to create and document a contingency plan (emergency/ back-up plan - many names but same concept) for times should the carer be unable to care. (*...a local authority must prepare a support plan for the adult concerned...*)
- Young carers have a right to services that support them and enable them to live a full life, as well as protecting them from excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities (children's legislation)

## Health and Care Act 2022

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/31/contents/enacted>

- Duty on NHS to co-operate with local authorities (Care Act re-emphasise)
- Duty on NHS England to consult carers and other relevant representatives affecting commissioning or policy decisions affecting services. (I14245 Health & Care Act)
- Duty on Integrated Care Boards to promote the involvement of each carer, where appropriate, in relation to decisions about diagnosis, treatment and care and to consult carers in commissioning or policy decisions affecting services (I4236 Health & Care Act)
- Duty of NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts to involve carers, where appropriate, in planning for hospital discharge as soon as is feasible. (Section 91 Health & Care Act)

## National guidance with relevance to carers

[NHS England » Working in partnership with people and communities: statutory guidance](#)

[NHS England » A shared commitment by health and care organisations to improve experience of care](#)

[NHS England » Framework for patient and public participation in specialised commissioning](#)  
[People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Adult social care system reform: next steps to put People at the Heart of Care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Hospital discharge and community support guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Regional Policies

### Cheshire and Mersey Health and Care Partnership (ICP) Interim Strategy 2023-2028

[cheshire-merseyside-draft-interim-hcp-strategy-2023.pdf \(cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk\)](#)

#### Carers are mentioned:

- Carers as core members of the Cheshire & Merseyside Health and Care Partnership
- Voices of carers of children and young people to inform ongoing design and delivery of the Children and Young People's Transformation Programme



- Consideration for the inclusion of young carers to reduce health inequalities for children and young people
- Support for carers for people with dementia
- Appropriate development and training for carers

### **Paragraph on carers in Section 7- Improve population health and healthcare**

Scoping work across Cheshire and Merseyside in July 2022 estimated that there are around 60,000 adult carers registered with commissioned carer support organisations, while more than 3,500 young carers are registered with local commissioned young carer services.

A new strategic system-wide Carers Partnership Group for Cheshire and Merseyside has been established with representation from local authorities, voluntary sector organisations, NHS England, providers and carers with lived experience. Supported by the NHS England national / regional carers team, it reports into the Health and Care Partnership Board. Our mission is to work in partnership with carers and carer support organisations to develop and implement a Carers Strategic Framework for Cheshire and Merseyside. The vision is for all carers in Cheshire and Merseyside to have the support they need and recognition they deserve.

In line with the NHS Long Term Plan, they will:

- Identify and support carers, particularly those from vulnerable communities
- Adopt carers passports / introduce best practice quality markers in primary and secondary care
- Share caring status with healthcare professionals wherever they present via electronic health record
- Ensure carers understand the out-of-hours options available to them via 'contingency planning' conversations and have appropriate back-up support in place for when they need it. Electronic health records will enable professionals to know when and how to call those plans into action when they are needed
- Implement young carer "top tips" for general practice to include preventative health approaches, social prescribing and timely referral to local support services

### **Cheshire & Mersey Joint Forward Plan 2023- 2028**

[Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](#)

Summary Joint Forward Plan:

"We are committed to working with those with lived experience to understand the impact of health inequalities and to support us in designing and implementing solutions to address these. For example, supporting unpaid carers is an essential contribution to narrow health inequalities in access, outcomes & experiences. Our vision is for all carers in Cheshire and Merseyside to have the support they need and recognition they deserve."

### **Supporting information Joint Forward Plan Chapter 4**

[Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan 2023-28](#)

#### **4.7 Supporting our Carers**

"Supporting carers is an essential contribution to narrow health inequalities in access, outcomes and experiences. Furthermore, there is evidence for ethnic and socio-economic inequalities for carers. Support and inclusion of young carers will lead to better chances in life for children and young people. The newly established Carers Partnership Group for Cheshire and Merseyside will build on existing local carer strategies at Place.

The Carers Partnership Group will work with established carer networks and provide added value by showcasing innovative practice, supporting consistency and standardisation, and enabling the translation of best practice into evidence-based business cases.

The Carers Partnership Board will involve carers and their representatives as expert partners in care. Unpaid carers can be systematically missed in data sources. Paucity of data and other evidence can itself be a significant barrier to the provision of effective, targeted and integrated care. We will improve the identification of hidden carers, and the recording and sharing of carers data. Reliable data is essential to provide evidence on progress in our commitment to carers. We also know that an increased focus is required on supporting young carers, with more than half (53%) of young carers and young adult carers recently surveyed, stating that the amount of time they spend caring per week has increased in the past year.

## Contact Details

For further details please contact: [wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk)

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