

## Carers Week 2020 - June 8-14

# Time To Care



## Celebrating the work of carers across the UK



**Do you have a family member, friend or neighbour who cannot manage without your support?**

Caring for someone who relies on you can sometimes bring practical and emotional impacts which may affect your health and wellbeing.

- Do you get enough sleep?
- Is your health affected?
- Are you thinking about giving up work to care?
- Do you get any time to yourself?
- Do you worry about what would happen to the person you care for if something should happen to you?

Do you relate to any of the above?  
If so, we may be able to help please get in touch.

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# A message from local MP Nigel Evans

“Ordinarily Carers Week is a time to highlight the role and challenges that unpaid carers face. I know that during the current times many have become carers who weren't previously, and for those who already were, things have become much harder. We always want to provide the best care possible for those we look after or love, and I know that Covid-19 has made this more challenging to achieve. However, the often unacknowledged support that carers across the country provide to loved ones is nothing short of inspiring, and I give my heartfelt thanks to everyone who is caring for another during this difficult time.

**Nigel Evans MP**

House of Commons, Westminster SW1A 0AA

**[evansn@parliament.uk](mailto:evansn@parliament.uk)**

**020 7219 6939**

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Helen Walker, chief executive Carers UK

# Making carers visible for Carers Week 2020

**F**or many people who are caring unpaid for a family member or friend who has disability, physical or mental illness or needing extra help as they grow older, it is a hugely rewarding aspect of their life – but caring can also bring its challenges at the best of times. Carers will tell you that providing care requires a lot of love, patience and understanding, coupled with persistence, adaptability and comprehensive project management skills.

There are an estimated 6.5 million people in the UK caring unpaid for loved ones, but Carers UK believes the real number during the pandemic could be far higher. For many of them, the Covid-19 outbreak has added to already significant challenges of caring for someone, bringing carers a great amount of stress as they worry about keeping themselves and the person

they care for safe.

Unpaid carers have had to make difficult decisions during the pandemic, making tricky choices about money, work and the health and safety of those they care for. A Carers UK survey of unpaid carers during the Covid-19 lockdown showed that the majority of unpaid carers are now having to provide even more care for their loved ones during the crisis.

For some carers, it means providing more intense care in their own home, helping with personal care, getting washed, dressed, preparing meals, helping around the home, administering medication and more. It could mean caring round the clock, without any sight of a break on the horizon.

For others, it means doing more to ensure family and friends living at a distance are properly supported, have the food, medication and reassurance

they need to continue living independently.

For Carers Week 2020, taking place between June 8-14, Carers UK is joining forces with Age UK, Carers Trust, Motor Neurone Disease Association, Oxfam GB and Rethink Mental Illness in a bid to Make Caring Visible and formally recognise the vital role of unpaid carers in the UK's fight against coronavirus. This year, the awareness campaign is supported by British Gas and Nutricia.

Carers Week 2020 is a chance for communities to come together to recognise the huge contribution unpaid carers have made, and continue to make, in keeping some of society's most vulnerable people safe and well during the pandemic. We are encouraging people to show solidarity with carers who for the large part are caring behind closed doors.

### How can you recognise and support unpaid carers in your community?

- If you know someone who is caring for a friend or family member, give them a call or drop them an email to let them know you are there for them. You could ask them how they are doing and what support they would find useful.
- Show your support for carers! Add your voice to Carers Week by visiting [carersweek.org](http://carersweek.org).
- Spread the word about Carers Week and caring on social media using our hashtag #CarersWeek. Follow Carers Week on Twitter and Facebook to see what others are doing to celebrate.
- Contact your local MP and ask them to show their support for unpaid carers during Carers Week.

Find out more about Carers Week 2020 and how you can get involved at [carersweek.org](http://carersweek.org).

Are you an unpaid carer with a question about caring? Call Carers UK's helpline on 0808 808 777 (Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm) or email [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org).

If you have particular concerns about caring through the Covid-19 outbreak, or are looking for practical advice, find Carers UK's guidance at [carersuk.org/coronavirus](http://carersuk.org/coronavirus).

## Carers Week 2020 - June 8-14

# Career paths into caring

**A**s the population ages, there is a growing need for healthcare professionals and carers, in all four corners of the UK. Now, more than ever, maybe the time has come for you to consider a career in care. If you desire a career where you can make a real and positive impact, then you should consider moving into the care sector. Such a career brings with it a whole host of benefits that you might not have considered.

### Getting started couldn't be easier

A career in care places the emphasis on the people, so while it is always helpful to have previous experience working in a caring environment, it is by no means essential. Contrary to popular belief, you do not need any form of official qualification to apply for a job in healthcare, with companies typically offering on the job guidance and regular training sessions to ensure that you're able to care for your patients in the most effective ways possible. Basic English and maths skills are all that are required.

Care work is also a great stepping stone for anyone looking to further their career in the medical or nursing

sector, offering the chance to obtain qualifications that will see you progress such as a Diploma in Health and Social Care. So, not only will you soon be fully trained and entirely equipped to deal with your responsibilities, you'll also be able to add some qualifications to your CV.

### Not looking for a 9-5 job?

Regardless of location, the skills of care workers are essential for thousands of people to live their lives as independently as possible, so the help that care workers provide is needed 24/7. This can create a fantastic opportunity for anyone looking beyond the standard 9-5 routine that might not work for everyone's lifestyle.

The innate flexibility of care work means that those working within the sector can fit their career around any other commitments they might have; perhaps you've got childcare to consider or you're a student who needs to find a job that works around your studies.

No matter your other obligations, care work can work for you.



### What does it involve?

Care workers help vulnerable people to manage their everyday lives, so there are a wide range of tasks to undertake each day. Whether you're delivering emotional, physical or social support in their own homes or within a residential home, these tasks are a vital aspect of a carer's role.

### This can include:

**Personal care:** dressing, using the toilet and washing.

**Socialisation:** making conversation, listening, and understanding.

**Mealtimes:** preparing food, feeding, and cleaning up.

**General tasks:** housework, washing and shopping.

### Making an impact

There aren't many careers where you can directly see the difference you make within the lives of others. A career in care can be a highly rewarding enterprise, allowing you to build strong relationships with people you would never have otherwise had the chance to meet and be assured that your patients will always remember and appreciate the amazing work that you do.

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# Show your generous side

Caring is something that is going to affect each and every one of us in our lifetime, whether that's because you've chosen to become a carer, professionally or to help out family, or you get to the stage where you need care yourself. Showing appreciation for their efforts, especially in today's climate, will give you an understanding of what it means to care for your loved ones.

**What is a carer?**

A carer is someone who provides assistance and support, either physically, mentally or both, to a family member or close friend who might have a disability, some form of mental or physical illness, a substance misuse issue, or someone who just needs some extra help as they grow older.

Taking on the role of carer can be quite a sudden shift; perhaps someone in the family has had an accident or a child is born with a disability, requiring extra attention. It could also be that you find yourself taking on additional caring responsibilities over time, seeing as your parents aren't able to manage on their own any longer or your

partner's mental or physical wellbeing progressively worsens.

The amount of help required and the type of support they provide can vary significantly depending on each person and their needs, ranging from a few hours a week in order to run errands such as preparing meals or picking up prescriptions, to providing emotional or personal care, day and night.

But this isn't all. Carers can also help with the more personal aspects of life, such as getting someone dressed for their day, helping them get to the bathroom, administering and monitoring their medication and even turning them in their sleep. They're also there to help with the everyday tasks that most of us take for granted, such as providing help with the shopping, laundry, cleaning, cooking, filling in forms or managing money.

Across the UK there are millions of people taking on this role for an ill, frail, or disabled family member or friend, and while they would most likely just refer to themselves as being a husband, a wife, a mum, a dad, a son, a daughter, a friend or a good neighbour, they are carers performing these unpaid



The need to care for someone can, in some cases, happen quite quickly

tasks in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their loved ones.

Taking on the role of carer can be a huge source of satisfaction in people's

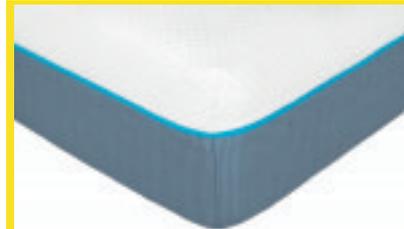
lives, it can help to strengthen the relationship between the caregiver and the recipient of care, and it can teach you a wide range of skills and inform you of potential you weren't even

aware you had. However, it can also have a significant impact, and without the right support it can even cause ill health and social isolation.



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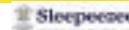
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Joyce

# Joyce tells us about a life caring solo in a pandemic

**B**eing a carer comes in many guises, from paid full or part-time healthcare professionals who go into the home or provide day or longer respite care elsewhere to volunteers from charities and, increasingly, members of the family. Age UK brings us an insight into one such family carer – this is Joyce's story.

My name is Joyce, I'm 75. My husband, David, is 77 and he had a very severe and serious stroke.

His whole left side is paralysed, and he had to have care as he could no longer do anything for himself.

I do get some help from my children (I've got three children and four grandchildren) who all work full time. From teachers, to train drivers, to

office workers... they all work full time. So, obviously, they can't be here a great deal.

The majority of the time, I'm on my own. I look after David 24/7. It's a very hard task.

I was getting three days day care for some respite care for David. For the foreseeable future, with this coronavirus, this is going to stop. So, I don't really know how I'm going to be cope because I'm going to be isolated totally. I'm going to struggle but I'm going to have to try and carry on as best as I can. But this is where I'm struggling to cope, this is where we're going to start hitting problems.

When David had his stroke, it changed our lives dramatically. It was like a light being switched out. He was a very fit man, he used to go crown green

bowling four times a week, he used to cycle eight or nine miles into our nearest town, we used to walk a lot in the country together.

All of a sudden, this one day, this switch just switched off and everything absolutely changed. It wasn't only David's life that changed, but also my life, the children's lives, everything. You can't even think about how people manage until you're in this kind of situation. It suddenly makes you realise how on earth people have been managing.

### My routine during the outbreak

I get up at 6:30 in the morning, get showered and get dressed. Make a cup of tea. Then, I go into David, sit him up and give him a cup of tea. I get him up, take him to the bathroom, toilet him, shave him, shower him, dress him, put

him in his wheelchair, take him into the living room.

Then I put the TV on for him while I make his breakfast. Then, it's general housecleaning, toileting David regularly throughout the day, washing his hands as much as I can. I just try to keep David comfortable and keep his spirits up wherever I can, while also trying to keep mine up to. It's not easy right now, given the circumstances, but it's what we've got to do!

David is getting on OK, but he's a little bit despondent and fed up already. He used to go to day care three times a week, which got him out a little bit. He felt like he was getting out and it gave him something to talk about. It's also a break from each other for a few hours. The day care isn't going to happen for at least three months, so I don't know

what the implications for David are going to be.

I'm only one, there are millions who are probably in a worse situation than I am. These people are forgotten, particularly the carers. Age UK are there for them. Age UK makes you feel that you're connected to someone, that somebody does care.

Unless people are in this situation, you don't totally understand what it feels like. You can feel very alone. It's so nice to have a different conversation with someone else. Things like that can be vital to people.

Age UK supported Joyce to share her experience of caring to raise awareness for Carers Week. The charity provides information and advice on many topics related to later life. Visit [ageuk.org.uk](http://ageuk.org.uk) or call 0800 678 1602.

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# Lend a helping hand to carers



Support the people in your community who are caring for others

Every high street, every community service, every leisure facility has a role to play in making sure they are accessible to carers. Many are in a perfect position to make a difference by recognising carers and connecting them to the help and support available.

The most important step any organisation or individual can take towards being carer friendly is to adopt a carer friendly attitude. Such an attitude recognises the contribution carers make to their families and communities and seeks to remove the barriers which can leave carers feeling excluded, whoever and wherever they are.

Here are some practical ideas for using Carers Week to remove these barriers from within families and every corner of the community.

### Community groups

Around one in eight members of your community group could be caring at any given time. These numbers will be higher if you have older people or women in your group, for example (though four out of 10 carers are men).

Many people with caring responsibilities don't think of themselves as carers, and they can often miss out on advice and information.

- Talk about caring for relatives and close friends at one of your meetings.

- Provide leaflets at your next group meeting.
- Send round email links to support and information.
- Invite someone along to talk to the group about caring.
- Recognise that some of your group members might have difficulty attending meetings or taking part in activities. Are there ways that you could help make it possible? Could you offer lifts to and from meetings? Could they happen at different times to make it possible for them to attend?

### Local businesses

Many local businesses have been forced to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and if you are running a business these are scary times, but if you can spare a thought, chances are one at least one in eight of your customers is a carer, and you can help by:

- Ensure your business is disability and dementia friendly. This really helps to improve carers' lives.
- Advertise the things you do have, such as flexible home delivery, free entry for carers if they are with a disabled person, or different or flexible appointment times.
- Put up posters for Carers Week, if you can, and have a few leaflets around.

### Carers' families

Families and friends are an essential source of support for carers, providing emotional and practical help with their caring role.

Not all carers find it easy to talk to relatives and friends about the care they are providing, and the strain it places on them. The stresses and pressures of caring can make it difficult to maintain relationships with friends and relatives.

If a family member has taken on a caring role, you may feel a mixture of guilt and relief that they are doing that role rather than you. These feelings and relationships are complicated and can be awkward.

But if you avoid them by withdrawing from the relationship or pretending that caring has no impact on your family member, then it's time to get things out in the open.

As carers' friends and family members, Carers Week gives you a great opportunity to talk to them about their caring role, understand what they do and its impact on them, practically and emotionally. Find out about simple things you can do to help:

- Ask a simple question to a carer among your friends and family members. What is caring like for you? Then listen.
- Find out about the technology available to help co-ordinate care among larger groups of people, or enable caring to take place at a distance

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