



### A quarter of unpaid carers suffer damaged personal relationships as pandemic increases caring demands

- Relationships with partners most impacted by providing unpaid care for elderly relatives
- 56% suffer negative impact on their mental health as a result of their care demands
- Pandemic increases the burden for nearly half (46%) of unpaid carers

One in four (25%) unpaid carers supporting elderly loved-ones say that these caring responsibilities have negatively impacted their social relationships, a survey of 1,000 unpaid carers from **retirement specialist Just Group** finds, with the pandemic also increasing the amount of care they provide.

Of the unpaid carers who had experienced issues, four in 10 (40%) said providing care had caused problems in their relationship with their partner, with damaged friendships impacting 38%. A further quarter (25%) said their relationships with their siblings had suffered.

The pandemic is likely to have exacerbated these issues with nearly half (46%) of all unpaid carers, and 50% of women, providing a greater amount of care, while the vast majority (84%) also stated that the virus has made them more worried about the person they care for.

“Providing care for elderly relatives or loved ones is a major undertaking in terms of both time and money,” said **Stephen Lowe, group communications director at retirement specialist Just Group**. “It is little surprise that it strains relationships with our nearest and dearest.

“The pandemic has placed yet another burden on unpaid carers who have been forced to navigate the extraordinary restrictions and additional stresses of the past 15 months with many having to increase the amount of care they provide.”

Caring also has a strong emotional impact with the majority of unpaid carers suffering from the stresses of providing care: 56% stated that it has had a negative impact on their mental health and 52% that they feel more anxious. Only one in 10 believe that it has had a positive impact on their mental health.

On a more positive note, three-fifths of unpaid carers (60%) feel like they are performing a social purpose and more than three-quarters (77%) are glad that they are providing care rather than somebody else with just 7% disagreeing.

“The workload of providing care and its knock-on consequences, particularly through the pandemic, are extracting an immense toll from unpaid carers in this country,” said **Stephen Lowe**.

“Meanwhile, the government is still dragging its heels on bringing forward reforms that would give people the clarity to plan for later life care. For the wellbeing of unpaid carers up and down this country, it is time they came good on their promise to bring forward proposals for reform in this Parliament.”

#### About the research

Research conducted among 2,003 UK adults aged 45-75 (of which 1,002 were unpaid carers) by Opinium for Just Group between 10-16 November 2020

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