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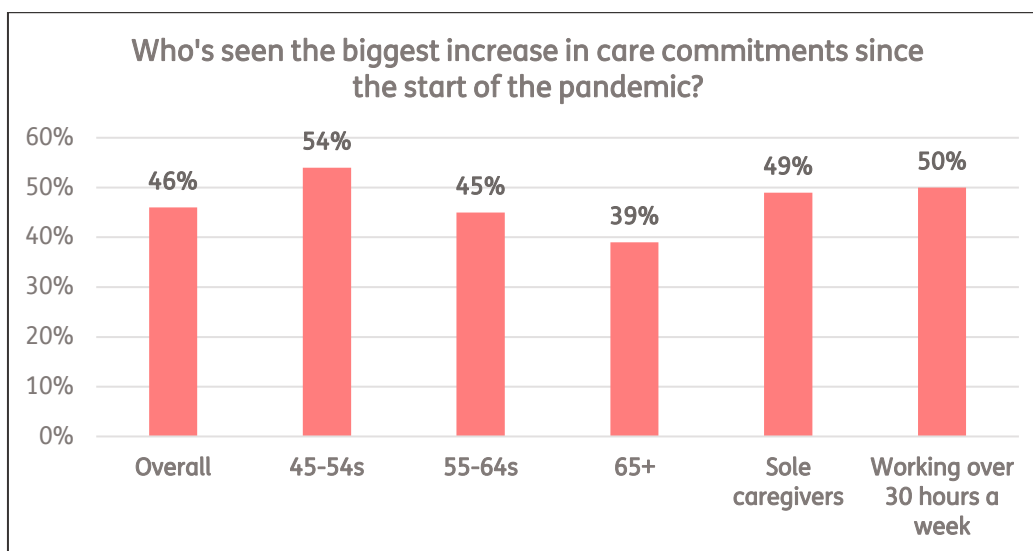
Care burden increases for nearly half of family carers through pandemic

- Nearly half (46%) of people providing care to elderly relatives or friends increased the amount of time they dedicated to loved ones during coronavirus lockdowns
- The increase in caring duties has fallen hard on sole caregivers and full-time workers
- Lockdowns also accelerated the use of technology in caring: four-in-ten began to arrange food deliveries online, and two-in-ten started using video calls to speak to their relatives

New figures show that family carers have been put under an increased burden since the start of the pandemic, with nearly half of people (46%) providing informal care for elderly family or friends saying it has led to an increase in the number of hours they spend caring.

The research¹ from retirement specialist **Just Group** found that the burden has not fallen equally: younger caregivers have seen the greatest rise in time commitment, with over half (54%) of 45-54s reporting an increase, compared to 45% for the 55-64 age group and 39% of over-65s.

The increase in time spent caring has impacted those bearing a heavy care burden; with half (49%) of sole caregivers saying they have spent more hours caring, and half (50%) of those working full-time (over 30 hours a week) also seeing an increase in time commitments.



The adoption of technology has accelerated over the last year, with four-in-ten (41%) saying their use of technology and the internet had changed or increased since the coronavirus restrictions came into force.

The greatest change in the use of technology was by those using it to arrange shopping deliveries online for the person they care for, with four in 10 (42%) saying they had adopted this. An extra two-in-ten (18%) are also now using video calling apps such as FaceTime to speak with the person they care for. Smaller numbers have begun using apps to enable them to control heating remotely (6%), movement monitoring systems (5%) and online apps to co-ordinate with other carers.

Stephen Lowe, group communications director at retirement specialist **Just Group**, commented: “The last year has been tough for so many people and we know that the burden has not been spread evenly. For those with care commitments, it has compounded what is likely to be an already difficult situation.

“This highlights the importance of planning ahead and organising formal care as we approach later life. Relying on already-stretched relatives can be hard on both the carer and the person they care for.

“People should not shy away from having those conversations with loved ones about how best to make plans and provisions for formal care in later life – and the government should not shy away from enacting the long-overdue reforms they are expected to announce in the Queen’s Speech in May, which will give people the certainty needed to have the confidence to take action.”

Enquiries

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Notes to Editors:

References

1 - Research conducted by Opinium for Just Group: 2,003 UK adults aged 45-75 (including 1,002 carers) surveyed 10th - 16th November 2020

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