



Unpaid carers provide an average of 26 hours of care a week to elderly relatives

- More than a quarter (28%) provide 30+ hours support a week, 7% do over 100 hours finds new research by Just Group
- One in four (24%) reduce working hours or stop work altogether to provide care
- Four in ten say providing care has impacted their relationship with their partner and a third feel more socially isolated

Unpaid carers supporting their elderly loved-ones spend an average of 26 hours every week providing care, the equivalent of more than three full working days, research from retirement specialist **Just Group** finds.

While the majority of carers (72%) provide less than thirty hours a week, this still leaves more than a quarter (28%) providing more than thirty hours a week of caring duties. Seven per cent said they provided more than 100 hours of care every week.

The survey of 1,000 unpaid carers¹ revealed that providing unpaid care has a knock-on impact on people's working lives. A quarter (24%) of unpaid carers stated that they had reduced working hours or stopped work altogether to support an elderly relative or relative-in-law.

"Informal care is a big commitment of time and money that millions of people up and down the country are making for their loved-ones," said **Stephen Lowe, group communications director at retirement specialist Just Group**.

"Providing 26 hours a week unpaid care often carries serious consequences for carers' finances and career prospects, especially at a time when they themselves may already be juggling other family commitments and financial plans, such as preparing for retirement or helping with childcare."

When asked how providing informal care had impacted their social relationships, the responses are sobering. A third of carers (33%) said they felt more socially isolated as a result and more than four in 10 (42%) said they turned down social opportunities in order to provide care.

Care duties also damage close personal relationships with 40% saying the toll had caused problems in their relationship with their partner, 38% stating it had damaged friendships and a quarter (25%) of people had suffered problems with their siblings. Comments included:

- *"We argue quite a lot about the time that I spend with my mother. We have had to cancel holidays due to my caring requirements which has again led to heated arguments and also led to a trial separation";*
- *"I spend so much time caring that now after 3-4 years many of my friends have stopped phoning me";*
- *"I no longer see friends now as I have little free time. Although I have one day each week free, I am quite often using that day to physically recover from caring duties";*
- *"My siblings are not aware of how difficult my mother can be and I think that they don't believe I do enough."*

Despite the stresses, three quarters (77%) of unpaid carers agreed that they were glad they were providing care rather than someone else, with only 7% disagreeing.

"This research reveals the hidden financial and emotional cost carried by those who care for elderly relatives or friends," said **Stephen Lowe**. "People are soldiering on but it's clear many people feel they are near breaking point.

"Until there is a clear policy from government that helps people plan for later life, this is unlikely to change. The government has promised reforms and, after years of delays, it is a matter of urgency that they follow through on their pledge."

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Notes to Editors:

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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