



**Make Carers Count**  
**The Carers Trust Network**  
**Strategic Framework**

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# Introduction

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Anyone could be a carer – a 15-year-old girl looking after a parent with an alcohol problem, a 40-year-old man caring for his partner who has terminal cancer, or an 80-year-old woman looking after her husband who has Alzheimer's disease.

A carer is anyone who cares, **unpaid**, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

The public and carers themselves struggle with the concept of being a carer, it's a little understood term yet **three in five** of us are likely to become carers at some point in our lives.

- Carers provide a huge quantity of care, and care for a wide range of conditions as well as completing practical tasks, nursing tasks and giving emotional support and friendship.
- Caring can make you physically and emotionally exhausted and often leads to stress, depression and other mental health issues together with physical issues such as back pain.
- Caring can affect your relationship with your partner or other family members and sometimes leads to relationship breakdown.
- Caring can be very isolating and lead to poverty if you have to give up work to care or are managing on benefits.
- Young carers can find it hard to go to school/college/university or keep up with course work. They are frequently bullied because of their caring role and can find it difficult to make or keep friends.

As our population ages, medical advances continue and the state draws back, the pressing demands on carers will increase significantly. We need to address this now through investment in high quality carer support to ensure caring does not disadvantage people.

Building on our expertise with policy makers and Governments, The Carers Trust Network, made up of Carers Trust and 150 independently managed Network Partner members, is well positioned to champion the cause of caring. With a presence in over 80% of local authority areas, a legacy going back over 40 years, a staff group of over 7,000 people and a **combined** turnover of over £164m we have the reach and expertise to tackle one of the UK's biggest challenges. With seven million **unpaid carers** in the UK today (an estimated one in ten people) predicted to rise to ten million by 2030, declining central Government funding and increasingly cash-strapped local authority resources, the services The Carers Trust Network provides have never been more needed. We need to grow and diversify our funding and transform the ways in which we deliver services in order to reach more carers in need. Your support in helping us to do this will make all the difference.

By 2021, you can support us in changing the landscape for the UK's **unpaid carers** so that:

- The value of carers will be more widely recognised.
- More carers will have been identified.
- They will be receiving more and better quality support.

Our vision is to ensure that **unpaid carers** count and can access the help they need to live their lives.

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# Impact

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As we deliver our Make Carers Count Strategic Framework over the next five years, we will evaluate and measure our performance to ensure investment in The Carers Trust Network delivers the impact required for carers.

We believe we will achieve more for carers by working in closer alignment across The Carers Trust Network, using our size, shape, skills and experience to tackle the issues head on and effect lasting change.

## Involvement

You can help us to ensure that by 2021:

- Carers have a voice in the decisions that matter most to them.
- The value of carers will be recognised as integral to the provision of care.
- More carers can access breaks and other services that they so desperately need.
- A duty to identify carers within all relevant public services has been agreed.
- The Carers Trust Network will be represented in all parts of the UK.
- New strategic alliances will deliver effective and new services for carers.

Together we will deliver a better future for the UK's seven million carers of today and ten million carers of tomorrow.

To find out more  
visit [Carers.org](http://Carers.org).



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# Focussing on the **identification and support of carers** within key groups

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## **Supporting carers caring for someone with mental health issues**

“To be away was just peace and you can come home and you can start again ... that break from repetitiveness is just unbelievable.”

Gwen is 72 and cares for her 44-year-old daughter who has had mental health problems since she was 16. Gwen received a grant of £500 from Carers Trust to enable her and her daughter to go on holiday to Bournemouth.



## **Supporting older carers**

“I’m a regular visitor to Carers Trust’s online chat forum – Carers Space. It’s a lifeline. I love it, it really helps break the loneliness and I look forward to the regular chats. Give it a go, you’ll find everyone welcoming and supportive.”

Jeanette is 73 and cares for her daughter Cathrine who is 48. Cathrine has Down’s syndrome, epilepsy and hypothyroidism, she is profoundly deaf, and was diagnosed with dementia ten years ago.



People will always care, but we believe that caring should not come at a cost to a carer’s health and wellbeing, or result in poverty. Together, we can help make carers count.

## Supporting carers of people with dementia

“The thought of becoming a carer or retiring had never crossed my mind. I was busy working and enjoying it. I’m now getting help from my local Carers Trust Network Partner which enables me to purchase respite care. This means I can get a break and go out.”

Esmond is in his 60s and cares for his elderly mother who has dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.



## Supporting young carers

“I do a lot of housework, cleaning, cooking and giving Mum her medicine. I get a break when I go to my carers centre [run by a Carers Trust Network Partner]. They take me out every fortnight to their club where I get to meet friends and other people in the same situation as me. I still worry about Mum when I’m there but it is good to get a break and just be me sometimes.”

12-year-old Charlie has been caring for her mother since she was eight years old, when her mother was badly injured in a car crash.



## Supporting young adult carers

“The help I have received from the centre has assisted me to understand and cope with my mum’s illness. It has been life changing in so many ways.”

Sarah, 25 has been looking after her mother and her younger sister since the age of five. Her mother has early onset dementia as well as diabetes, neuropathy, mobility problems and partial blindness and her sister has had behavioural problems and alcohol and substance misuse issues.



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# Make Carers Count

## The Carers Trust Network Strategic Framework

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Our Strategic Framework aims to identify, support and involve more carers by:

- Championing carers.
- Providing services to carers in all parts of the UK.
- Creating transformational partnerships.

To achieve our aspirations for carers we will strengthen The Carers Trust Network by growing sustainably and strengthening our capabilities. We will ensure our provider network is effective, efficient and offers best value to commissioners and funders while delivering services that carers can trust.

### Championing carers

Carers save the UK economy over £132bn a year. They are also a major asset within health and social care systems, partners in the provision of care and experts in the delivery of care. In exchange for their relentless support, we believe carers should be provided with good quality services for themselves, in particular breaks and emotional support, and that they should not be disadvantaged as a result of delivering their caring activities.

To improve awareness, perception and support for carers we will:

- Empower carers, mobilising their concerns as a key public health issue.
- Shine a spotlight on the social and economic value of caring and the true cost to carers as partners in the provision of care.
- Press for high standards of local carer services particularly respite care and carer breaks.
- Promote a requirement for key public services to identify carers.

## Providing services for carers across the UK

Carers continue to tell us that finding support can be difficult, time consuming and stressful. We need to focus on helping carers find the support they require to live a life outside of caring wherever they are and wherever the person they care for lives. We want this access to support to be consistent across all parts of the UK and for the support to be of the right quality.

To provide more and better services for carers we will:

- Ensure The Carers Trust Network has a presence in every part of the UK.
- Provide a consistent route to carer support throughout the UK.
- Create, deliver and promote innovative and scalable service models across the UK.

## Create transformational partnerships

Working with others will increase the likelihood of funding, solve key strategic issues and provide the opportunity to develop evidence bases for new forms of service delivery which can be developed and replicated. We will use our influence, expertise and size to establish and build on existing partnerships that help us to identify carers, prioritise their needs and provide improved access to services.

To reach more carers we will:

- Build partnerships with national organisations, focussing on the identification and support of carers within key groups.
- Build strategic alliances to deliver new services for carers.

To find out more about how you can make carers count, visit [Carers.org](https://www.carers.org) or call us on 0300 772 9600.



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