

**Carers in your
Workforce Matter**

1. Recruiting, employing
and retaining unpaid
carers in the social
care workforce



Carers can be defined as someone who 'spends a significant proportion of their life providing unpaid support to family or potentially friends. This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems'.¹ Such carers are not to be confused with paid carers (often described as care workers, senior care workers, community support, outreach workers and personal assistants). However, those employed in such roles may also be carers in their own time for friends or family.

Many employers in the social care field are well aware of the important contribution that unpaid carers make to the lives of many people. The support that carers provide is vital to enable many to have a continued quality of life within their own home.

Many people employed by social care organisations are also unpaid carers. Caring can affect anyone, from the chief executive to the handyman:

3 million people in the UK are currently combining paid work with unpaid caring²

Being an unpaid carer can prove challenging when combined with paid employment. Some unpaid carers may be leaving work early to care for someone or arriving at work already having completed several hours of caring. Others may be trying to fit in their caring duties whilst on their lunch break. Some will be faced daily with trying to meet the often unpredictable needs of the cared for person.

1 in 5 carers feel forced to give up work completely³

¹ 'Carers at The Heart of the 21st Century' Department of Health, 2008.

² Facts about Carers, Carers UK, published on Carers UK website (2009).

³ We care. Do you? (2005) Carers UK.

“We pay for care to cover the times we are at work, all other times such as evenings and weekends, we do the caring”.⁴

Male carer, working full-time

“My sister used to be Mum’s main carer and it got too much and she cut off and wouldn’t communicate . . . I am now on the phone all the time and not getting much rest trying to sort out all the problems of a newly implemented care plan. It is a constant battle”.⁵

Female carer, working part-time



⁴ Caring at a Distance: Bridging the Gap, Employers for Carers, Carers UK and Nomura, 2011.

⁵ Caring at a Distance: Bridging the Gap. Employers for Carers, Carers UK and Nomura, 2011.

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