



Carers in Dorset

We are in the middle of [Carers Week](#), which runs from 11th-17th June. The focus this year is on supporting carers to be 'Healthy and Connected'. Research has found that 57% of carers have lost touch with family and friends, over a third (36%) feel uncomfortable talking to friends about caring¹ and one in five carers are forced to give up work due to the demands of caring².

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of the role of carers, highlighting the challenges that they face and recognising the value they have for families, friends and their communities.

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 support³. Information about carers mostly comes from the Census and the Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England.

Big Numbers

- 12%** Of Dorset's population provide unpaid care
- Only 1%** Of Dorset's adult carers receive Carer's Allowance
- 29%** Of adults being cared for are 85+
- 830** 0-15yr olds provide unpaid care
- 7.8** Quality of life score (out of 12) for Dorset carers. National average is 7.7

Box 1: Population of Carers



12% of the population of Dorset provide unpaid care⁴. The figure is similar across the districts/boroughs with the lowest figure of 11% occurring in North Dorset and the highest of 13% in Purbeck. 87% of carers live with the person they care for⁵ and more women over the age of 50 provide unpaid care than any other demographic⁴.

Dorset has an aging population, with a projected increase in the over 85s of almost 20% in the next 10 years⁶. 61% of those being cared for in Dorset are aged 75+ , this compares with 53% nationally⁴.

As people get older they are more in need of care. At the age of 65, a woman in Dorset will spend on average 41% of the rest of her life in poorer health, a man in Dorset 44%. The majority of carers in Dorset are retired⁷.

2011 Census data shows that the majority of carers themselves are over the age of 50 while the Survey of Adult Carers in England shows that 72% of respondents are retired.



According to Office for National Statistics figures, carers save the UK economy £132 billion per year, an average of £19,336 per carer. Only 1% of adult carers in Dorset receive carer's allowance of an average weekly payment of £62.58⁸.

The number of people claiming carer's allowance has increased by 71% over the last 10 years⁸.

Census 2011 figures show that the majority of unpaid carers provide 1-19 hours of care a week, with over 20% providing 50 or more hours. The 2016/17 Survey of Adult Carers shows that 50% of adult carers in Dorset provide over 100 hours a week.



There are about 700,000 young carers in the UK—about one in 12 secondary aged pupils. In Dorset 2% (830) of unpaid carers are under the age of 16. Over 120 Dorset children provide more than 20 hours per week of unpaid care⁴.



Box 2: Health of carers



Providing care and support can have a detrimental impact on the health of the carer themselves; 74% of those who provide unpaid care are in very good or good health compared to 82% of those who do not provide care⁴.

Of those who provide unpaid care in Dorset, 9% have themselves a disability of some kind⁴.



Of those who have bad or very bad health, 6% provide unpaid care⁴.



The Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England is a survey that is conducted every other year by Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities. Although for many carers, caring can have positive and rewarding aspects, there are lots of reasons why caring can also leave you needing support³.

The results of the survey can give us an indication of the impact caring has on people's lives. The results found that the majority of respondents in Dorset:

- do some of the things they value or enjoy with their time but not enough
- have some control over their daily life but not enough
- have some social contact with people but not enough
- feel they have some encouragement and support but not enough.

When asked specifically about whether their caring role resulted in their health being affected in certain ways, the results showed:

81% feeling tired 43% feeling depressed 10% loss of appetite 71% disturbed sleep
62% general feeling of stress 36% physical strain 49% short tempered/irritable 28% had to see own GP
22% developed own health condition 20% made an existing condition worse

What are we doing about it?

77% of carers who received support or services from Social Services were extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support or services they received⁵. However, 30% of those surveyed have not tried to find information or advice about support, services or benefits⁵.

The council offers a range of services for carers through the Carers Information Service, these include

- information and advice about carers' services including local support groups
- a carer's discount card which offers a range of discounts on goods and services in around 500 Dorset businesses
- a copy of Caring Matters, a Dorset-wide magazine for carers
- access to training on matters such as first aid, dealing with memory loss and dementia.

In 2016, the Government launched a carers' Call for Evidence consultation which has resulted in a five point action plan covering the following areas

- Services and systems that work for carers
- Employment and financial wellbeing
- Supporting young carers
- Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
- Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers¹⁰.

Sources:

¹ [Alone and Caring: Isolation, loneliness and the impact of caring on relationships](#). CarersUK

² [Carers—the Facts](#) CarersUK making life better for carers

³ [carerstrust action.help.advice](#)

⁴ Census 2011

⁵ Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England 2016/17

⁶ 2016 based Sub –National Population Projections, Office for National Statistics

⁷ Health state life expectancies, 2014-2016, Office for National Statistics

⁸ DWP benefits Payments—Carers Allowance 2017

⁹ [My life My Care](#)

¹⁰ [Carers Action Plan 2018-2020](#), Dept. of Health & Social Care