

# Carers in bedfordshire

**CARERS SURVEY  
2025**



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# INTRODUCTION

In Bedfordshire, we estimate there are over 40,000 Unpaid Carers—people who provide vital care to family, friends, and neighbours, often without recognition or rest. That's around 1 in 5 adults in our community quietly holding up the health and wellbeing of others.

The value of this care is immense. Nationally, Unpaid Carers save the UK an estimated £184 billion each year—more than the entire NHS budget. But behind this figure lies a more personal truth: caring comes at a cost.

This year, over 600 Carers shared their experiences with us through our 2025 survey. We are deeply grateful to each of you who took the time to respond. Your voices are powerful, and your stories, whether of strength, struggle, or both, are shaping how we move forward.

Our Carers Panel, Board of Trustees, and staff team have read your responses with care and attention. You've told us about the emotional and physical toll of caring, the financial pressures, and the difficulty of accessing support. Many of you are providing care day and night, often with little time for yourselves. And yet, you continue to show extraordinary resilience.

We've also heard from Carers who find joy and meaning in their role. This diversity of experience is important. While we cannot take away all the pain or pressure, we are committed to making Bedfordshire the best place to be a Carer—a place where your contribution is recognised not just in words, but in actions, services, and practical support.

Carers are not asking for the world. They're asking to be seen, supported practically, and given the space to look after their own health, relationships, and employment. Above all, they want services that respond to them as people — not systems that push them from pillar to post.

This survey is more than a snapshot. It's a call to action. It will guide how we design services, advocate for change, and work together—Carers, professionals, and communities—to build a system that truly values and supports you.

Thank you for your honesty, your time and your trust.

**CHRIS STELLING**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# CARERS PANEL COMMENT

In his introduction, Chris Stelling (CEO of CIB) highlights the estimated £184 billion that unpaid Carers contribute to the UK economy. However, the survey results presented in this report clearly illustrate the personal costs that come with being a Carer.

As Carers' Panel members, we are both current and former Carers and understand first-hand how caring affects every aspect of life — from careers and independence to health, financial stability, energy, and mental wellbeing. Your thoughtful responses to the survey provide deeper insight into the ongoing and evolving challenges Carers face.

Equally important, the survey demonstrates that Carers in Bedfordshire is truly listening. The findings from the previous 2023 survey of Carers have already influenced their strategy, and the outcomes from the 2025 survey will once again help shape the services and support the charity offers.

## JOINT COMMENT

*The Carers Panel*





# SUMMARY

This year, 687 Carers shared their experiences with us – from young people just starting out, to those who've been caring for decades. Thank you for your honesty. What you told us is helping shape the future of support for Carers in Bedfordshire.

## The Big Picture

- 51% of Carers provide more than 71 hours of care each week
- 41% say their finances have worsened this year
- Half report a decline in mental and physical health
- 69% can't take a longer break when they need one
- Many feel unrecognised, overwhelmed, and alone

## What Carers Need

### ✓ To Be Recognised and Valued

Carers want real acknowledgement for their role — not just kind words.

- Priority access to healthcare
- Someone to care for loved ones while they attend appointments
- Respect and practical support from services

### ✓ Responsive, Practical Help

Carers told us: signposting isn't enough.

- Tailored support in times of crisis
- Help with forms, transport, and care planning
- Services that work together, not in silos

### ✓ Breaks that Work

A break isn't a luxury — it's a health need.

- Flexible respite that fits their needs
- Clearer information and funding
- Day centres need reviewing – many no longer meet Carers' needs

### ✓ Support for Their Own Health

Carers want their wellbeing taken seriously.

- GP recognition should lead to action
- Access to emotional and psychological support

### ✓ Help to Stay in Work

Carers often juggle paid work and caring.

- Clear guidance on employment rights
- Practical help to stay in or return to work

### ✓ Early and Ongoing Support

Many Carers reach breaking point before they get help.

- Earlier identification
- Proactive contact
- Timely, meaningful Carers Assessments

We're using everything you told us to improve our services and speak up for Carers across the county.

Thank you for sharing your story.



# SUMMARY

687

Carers took the time to share their experiences



Similar amount of responses to our last survey.

30%

of respondents say that they have a disability themselves.

23%

of respondents are male



78%

of Carers have told their GP they are in a caring role



49%

of Carers find their caring role impacts their ability to work.



50%

of Carers often or always feel stressed as a result of caring.



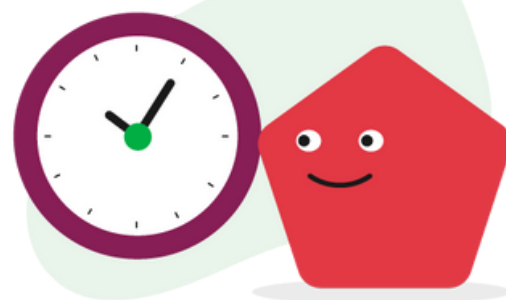
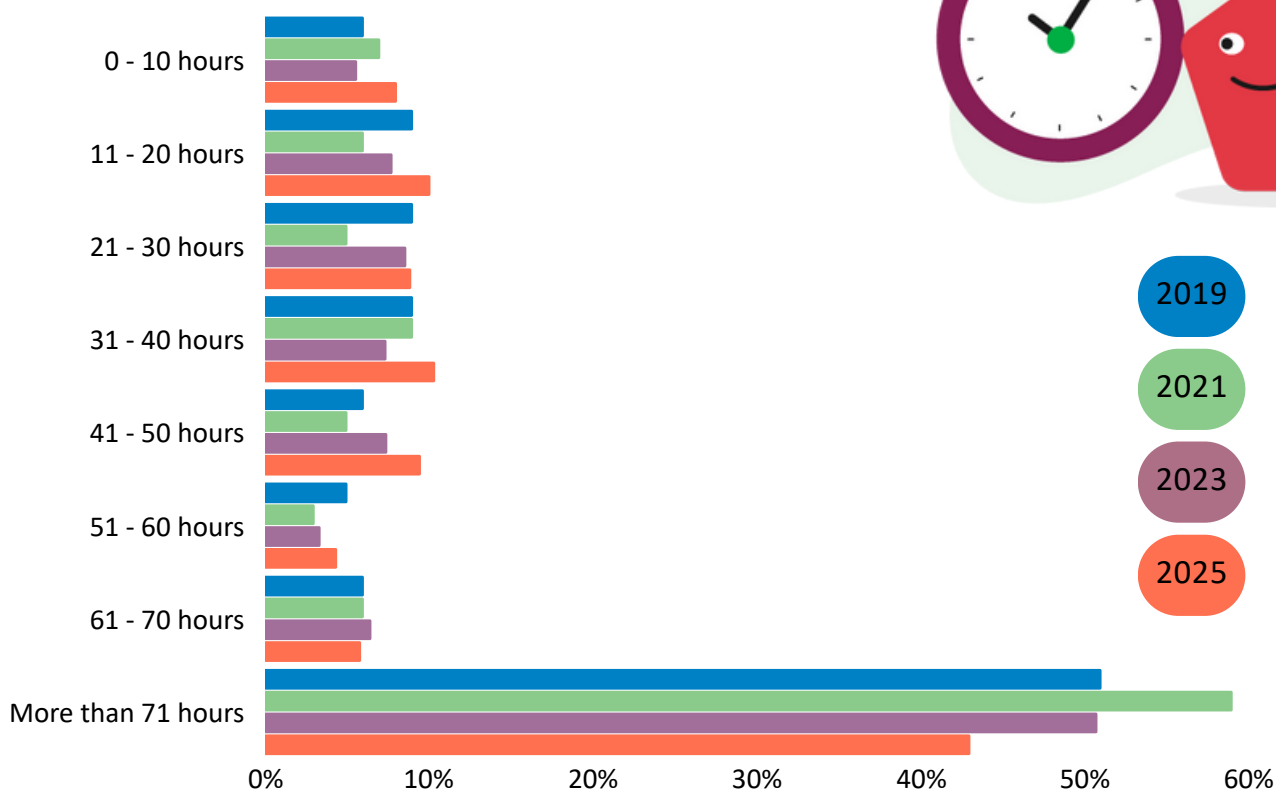
26%

of Carers provide care during the night



# WHO ARE YOU?

## How many hours do you spend caring per week?



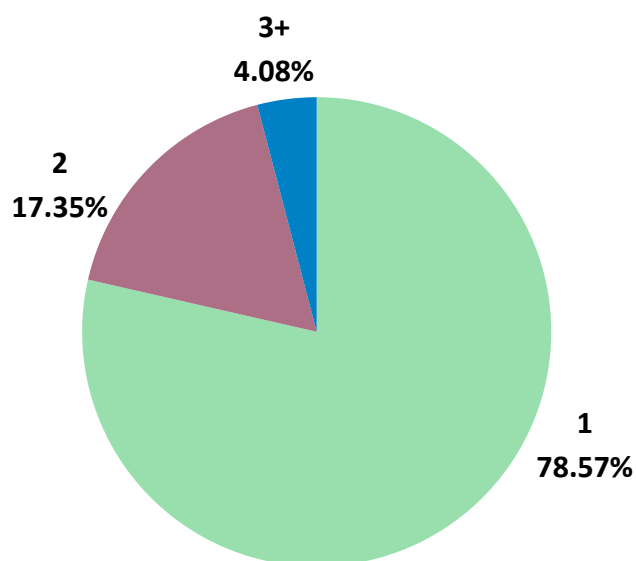
2019

2021

2023

2025

## How many people do you care for?



“

Make each day 48 hours long and I might get everything done.

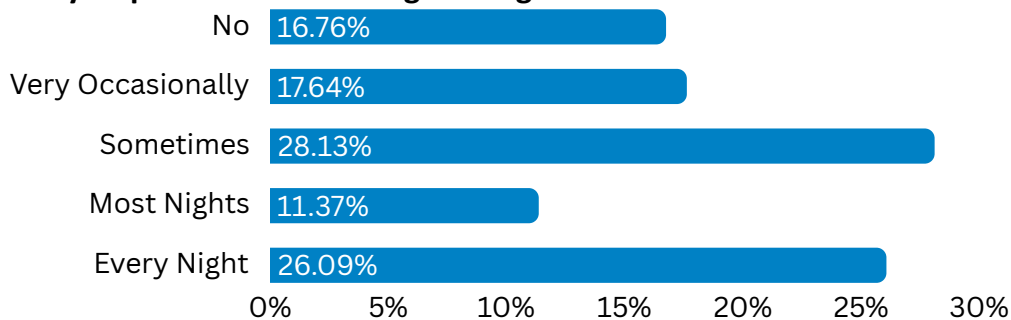
”



Carers with a disability are more likely to care for multiple people (27%) than those without a disability (18%).

# WHO ARE YOU?

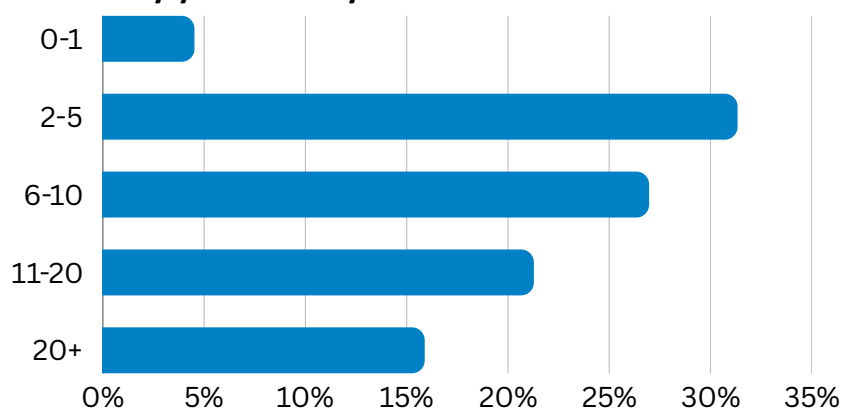
## Do you provide care during the night?



## How long?

43% of female Carers aged 40 and over have been providing care for more than 11 years, with 19% having cared for over 20 years.

## How many years have you been a Carer?



“...Most Carers don't actually realise how much caring they do because half the tasks they do they just take for granted and don't consider them part of their caring role.”

## Working?

80%

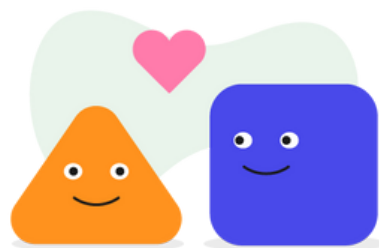
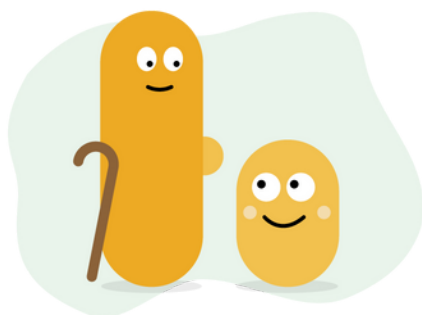
of male Carers are retired or not working compared to 60% of female Carers.



## Through the night



Asian or Asian British Carers are more likely (38%) to provide care every night.

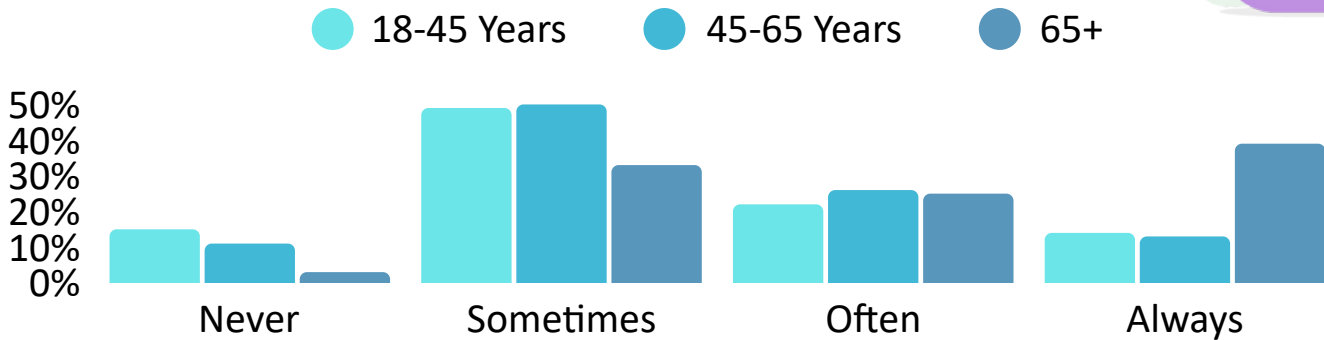




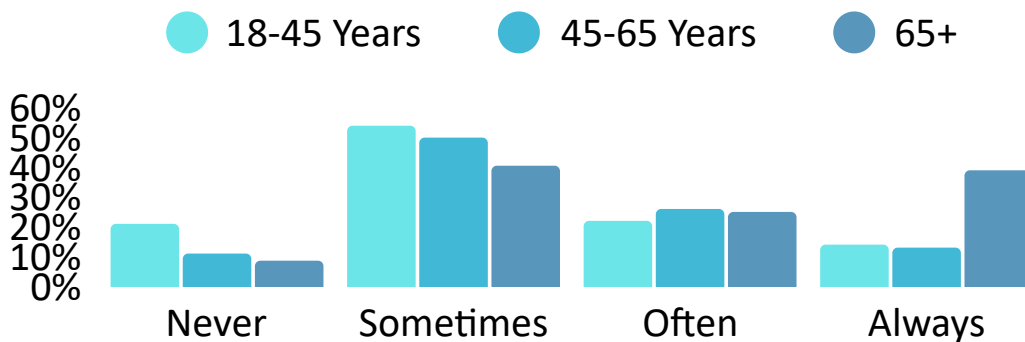
# FINANCIAL HEALTH



I can pay for the things we need now



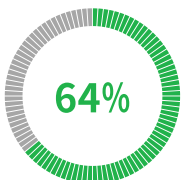
I can pay for the things we may need in the future



“

With so many cuts to care services and benefits I am worried about our ability to live independently.

”



of Carers don't know how to get financial assistance for a short break.

## Older Carers Better Off



Older Carers report better financial health than those under 65 – 51% of over-65s say they can 'often' or 'always' **afford future needs**, compared to 25% of younger Carers.

## Financial Situation Compared to Last Year



**41%** Said their financial situation got worse in the last year



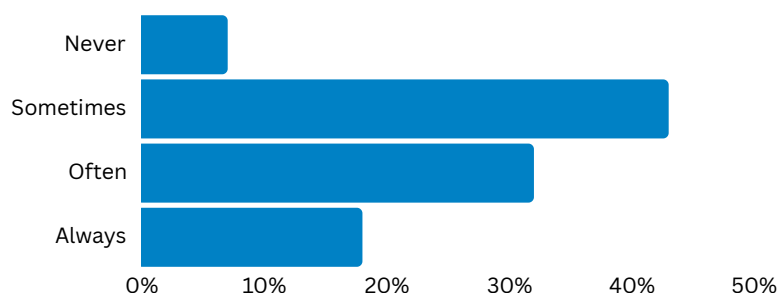
**56%** Stayed the same



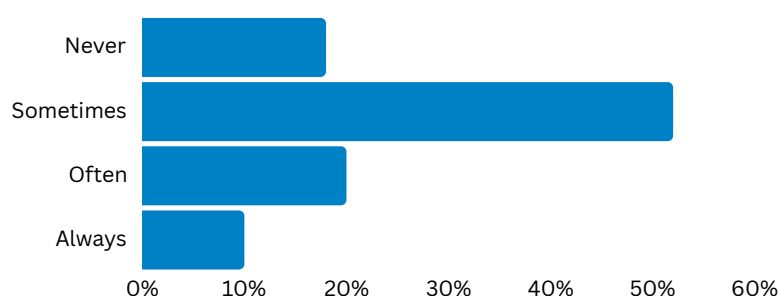
**3%** Got better

# MENTAL HEALTH

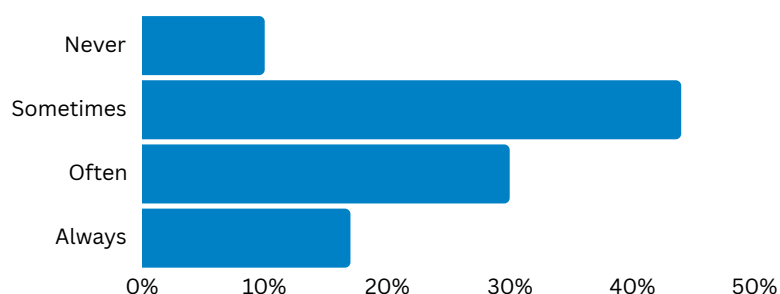
## I feel stressed as a result of caring



## I feel depressed due to caring



## I am mentally exhausted by caring



“

I feel I am also dying slowly with no immediate future to enjoy the few active years I may have myself. **I am no longer me**, but a shadow living my husbands life

”

## Carer Stress



Carers whose health worsened due to their caring role are more likely to always feel **stressed**.

“

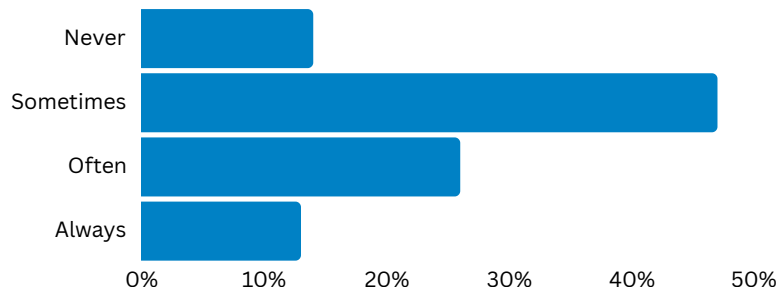
Both children have unstable mental health problems so care needs to vary a lot. My **mental health declines** and I don't feel motivated to reach out for help.

”

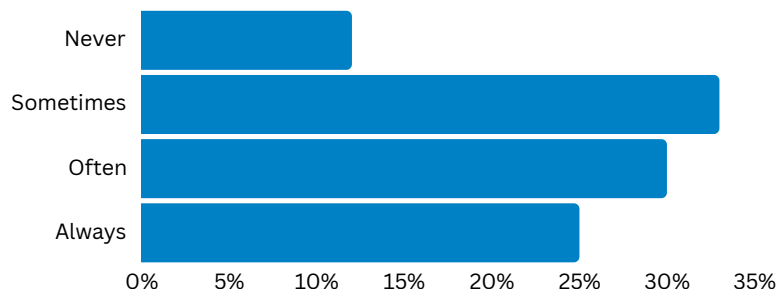


# MENTAL HEALTH

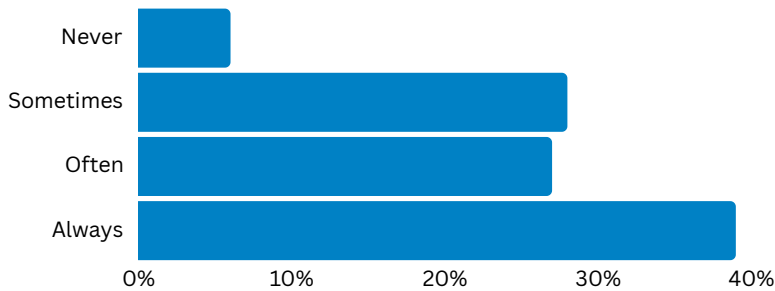
I have a good level of emotional support



I feel I have no control over my own life

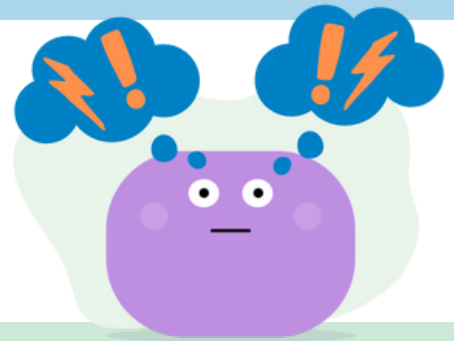


My social life has suffered because of caring



## Emotional Support Helps

Of the 12% of Carers who always had strong emotional support, 10% said they rarely or never felt stressed. Among those with only occasional support, just 2% reported never feeling **stressed**.



“

Fight to reduce the stigma for Carers... their work is hard, under acknowledged, under recognised and often not a choice. Giving up careers to stay at home as a Carer is **isolating**, hard work and detrimental to both physical and mental health.

”

“

A Carers life can be **so lonely**, in spite of efforts of family and friends who pop in to help or ferry you around. The actual 24hr care is demanding which only we see and know about.

”

## Mental Health Compared to Last Year



**50%** Said their mental health got worse in the last year



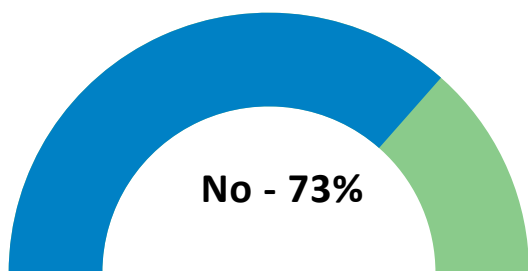
**46%** Stayed the same



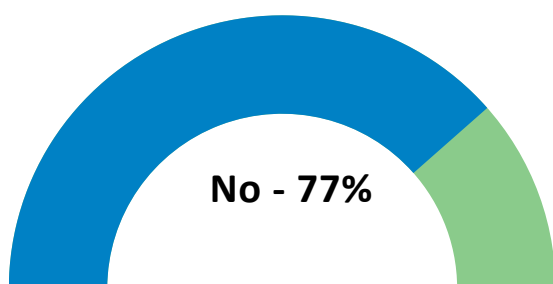
**4%** Got better

# TIME FOR YOURSELF

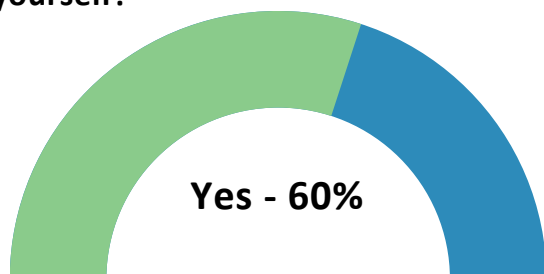
Do current day care centre or community services meet your needs for respite?



Do you feel you can take an overnight break at a time that suits you?



Do you feel you can get a regular time (2-4 hours) away from your caring role, to do something for yourself?



87%

of Carers in Central Bedfordshire

&

69%

in Bedford Borough say

**existing day centres** do not meet their respite needs.

## Taking a Break

Among the 77% of Carers who reported being unable to access a **suitable overnight break**, 85% stated that day centres do not meet their needs, and 66% said they do not know how to access financial assistance to take a break.

“

**Day services** to be reinstated - there used to be lots more opportunities where people could go out up to 5 days per week.

”

63%

of full-time working Carers get **regular breaks from caring** — nearly 2 in 3.

“

I would create **respite centres** in pleasant surroundings which offered flexible services and accessible accommodation for both the person cared for and their supporting family - a chance to get out of the house but be safe and have other people take on the tasks of special diets and management of routine medical matters.

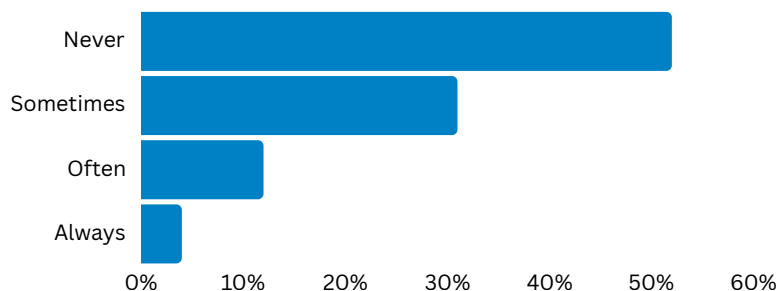
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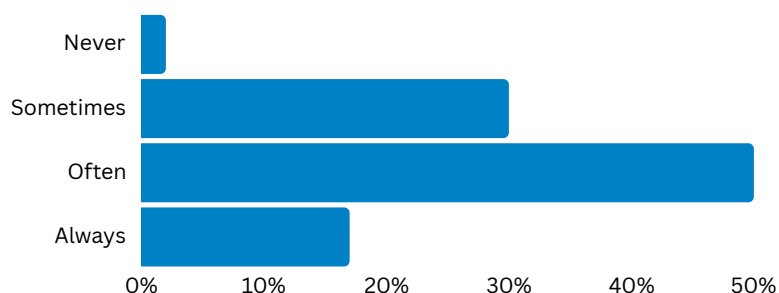


# MANAGING YOUR CARING

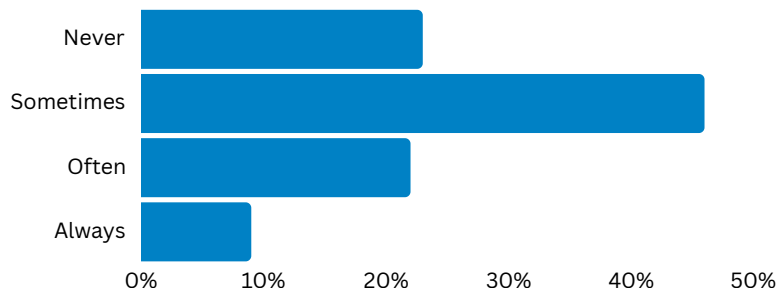
I experience physical or verbal abuse from the person I care for



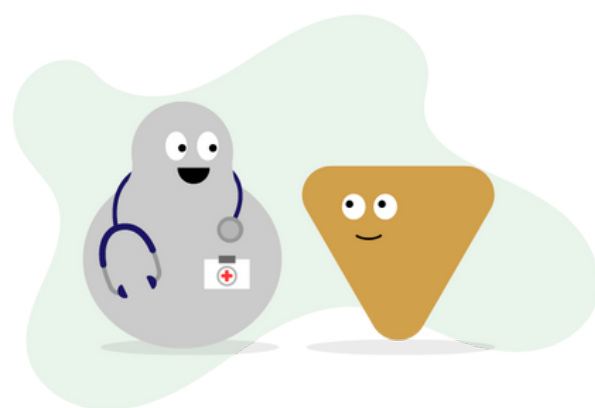
I can manage most situations with the person I care for



I am happy with the professional support provided to me



Those that experience physical or verbal **abuse** feel they have less choice about the future and have a health condition that is made worse by caring.



“

We need to be given more time to be **listened to** by professionals.

”

“

I'd like to have **my expertise/ knowledge** of person I care for taken into account when he has a doctor's appointment or is hospitalised rather than being brushed aside as I'm not a "professional"

”

## Relationships



**56%** Said their relationships stayed the same in the last year



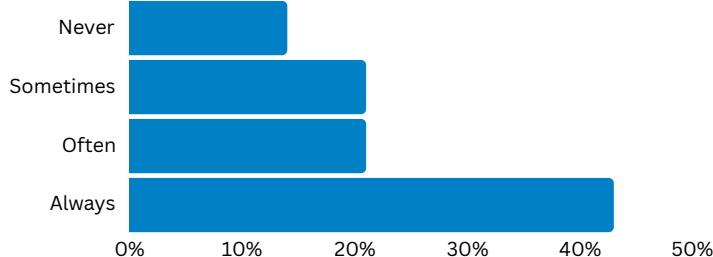
**38%** Got worse



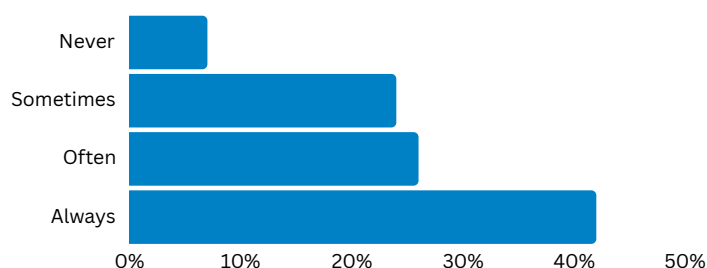
**6%** Got better

# THE FUTURE

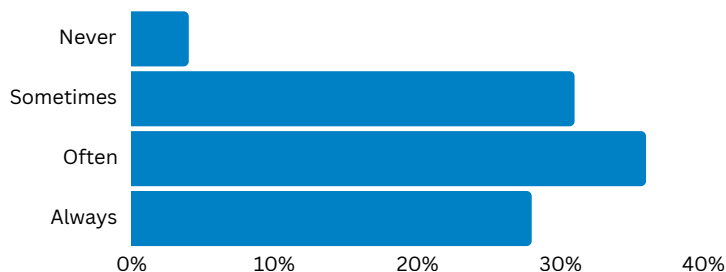
I worry about the future of the person I care for after I am gone



I feel I have less choice about my future due to caring



I feel I am able to improve the life of the person I am looking after



“

Carers need help to **plan for the future** from younger age. Provide bereavement support to Carer/ person being cared for.

”

## What will happen?



70% of Carers under the age of 35 reported that they ‘always’ or ‘often’ **worry about the future** of the person they care for after they are gone, compared to 63% of carers aged over 35.

“

I feel very unhappy about the role of Carer being forced on me. I’m the worst person in the world to fulfil this role; I don’t want the responsibility and resent the toll it’s going to take on me. I’ve had enough of dementia (mother and mother-in-law both had it) for one lifetime. I don’t want to talk about it and I certainly don’t want to socialise with other people in a similar situation. I just want to get on with my life.

”

### Your ability to care



63%

Said their ability to care has got worse over the past year



33%

Stayed the same



3%

Got better

# CHANGES IN THE LAST YEAR

## Financial Situation



**41%** Said their financial situation got worse in the last year



**56%** Stayed the same



**3%** Got better

## Education



**77%** Said their education situation stayed the same in the last year



**19%** Got worse



**4%** Got better

## Mental Health



**50%** Said their mental health got worse in the last year



**45%** Stayed the same



**4%** Got better

## Your ability to care



**63%** Said their ability to care has got worse in the last year

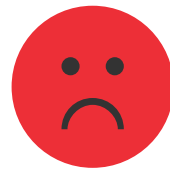


**33%** Stayed the same



**3%** Got better

## Physical Health



**53%** Said their physical health got worse in the last year



**45%** Stayed the same



**2%** Got better

## Employment



**58%** Said their employment situation stayed the same in the last year



**38%** Got worse



**3%** Got better

## Relationships



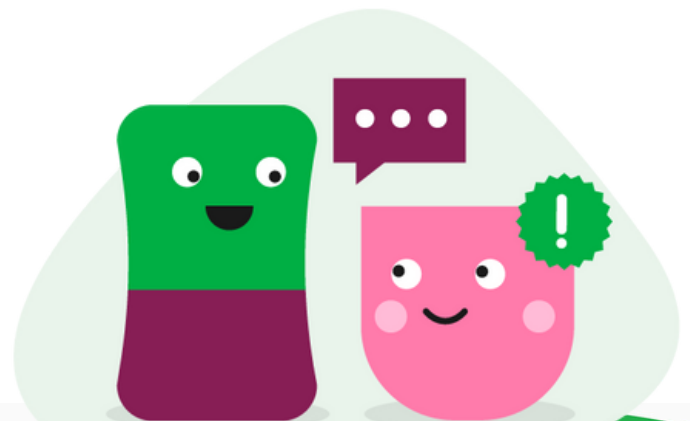
**56%** Said their relationships stayed the same in the last year



**38%** Got worse



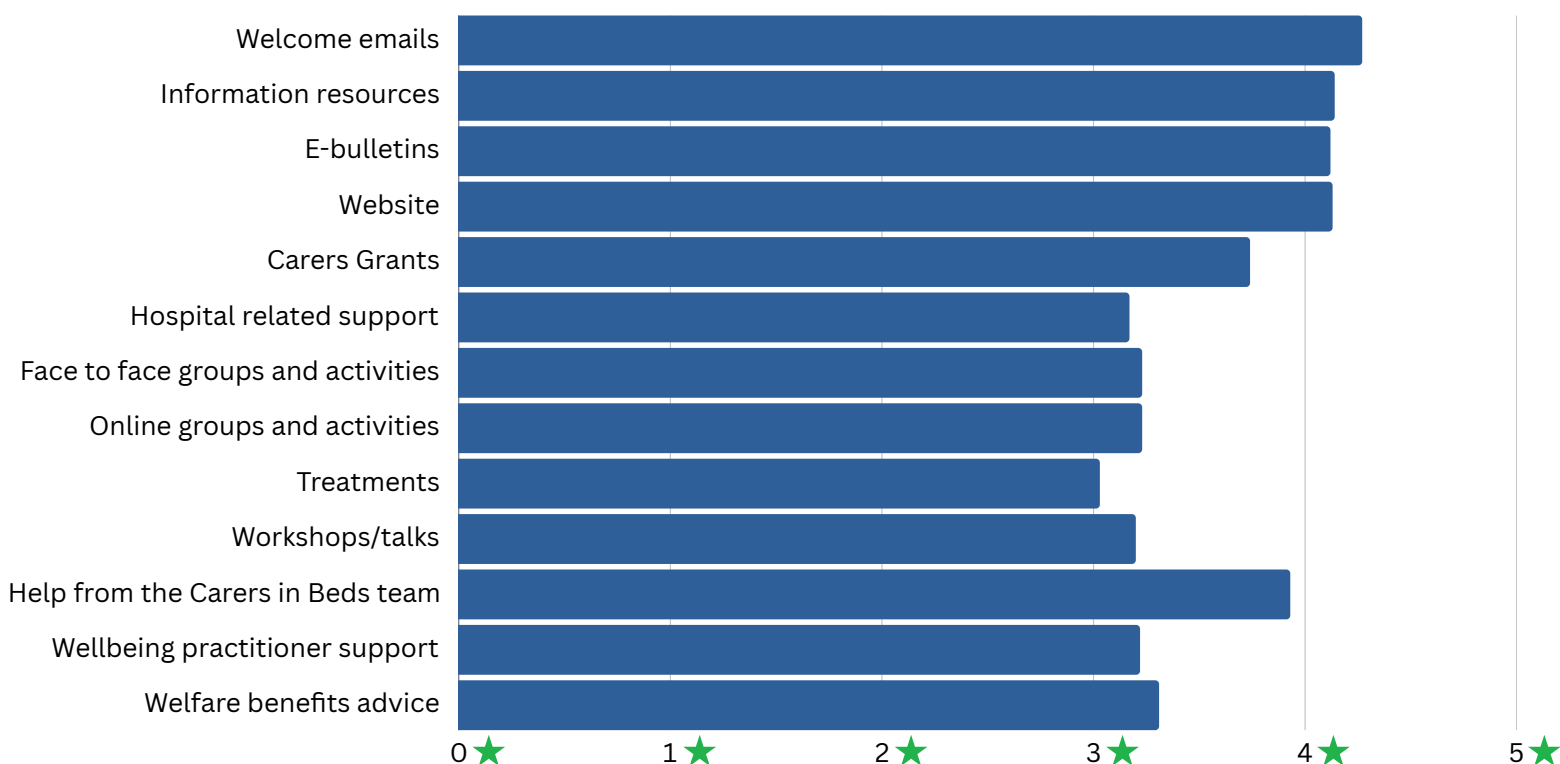
**6%** Got better





# HOW I FEEL ABOUT CARERS IN BEDFORDSHIRE SERVICES

## Most helpful Carers in Bedfordshire Services



### Navigating Services

Carers continue to face challenges in navigating the services they require. While many report being able to access information online, there remains a clear need for **practical, face-to-face, and tangible support**.

Numerous Carers expressed concern that there is an over-reliance on signposting, with insufficient coordination and integration across services.

“

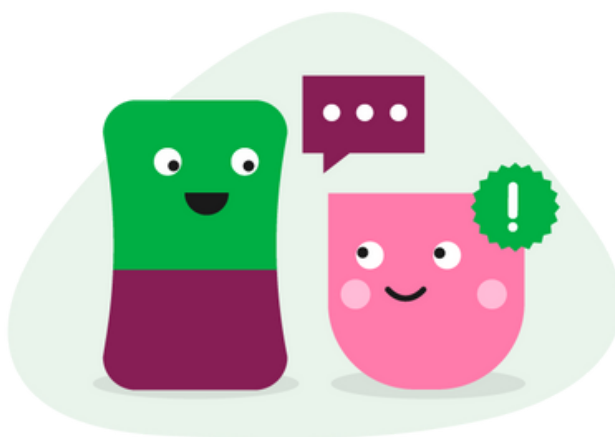
Thank you so, so much for your support. The work you do is vital to making Carers feel less alone, **providing practical and emotional support** and I know your services are there when I need them.

”

“

If every county had a "Carers in..." I feel confident it would lower the incidents of poor mental health among Carers. Let's make "Carers in..." nationwide, and then global!

”



# AREAS OF SUPPORT THAT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL

(In order of preference)

## 2023

Practical information when I have a specific problem

1

A listening ear

2

Help to find and use other services

3

Planning for the future

Carer-friendly health and social care services which acknowledge value me

Planning for an emergency

Groups and activities for me as a Carer

Groups and activities for me and the person I care for

Information and training on the diagnosis of the person I care for

Support to try digital technologies to help me in my caring role

Employment, education and training support

## 2025

Information and advice when I have a specific problem

1

A listening ear

2

Help to find and use other services

3

Planning for the future

Professional psychological and emotional support

Information and training on conditions

Groups and activities for me as a Carer

Support with welfare benefits

Groups and activities for me and the person I care for

Carer-friendly health and social care services which value me

Help when at the hospital

Support with digital technologies to help in my caring role

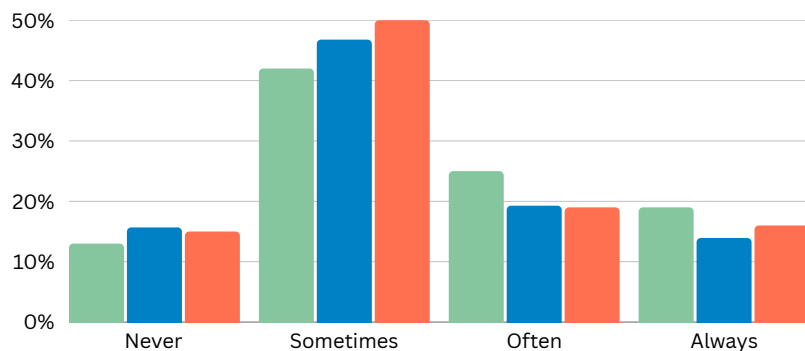
Training, employment and education support

What's most important to me?



# COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS SURVEYS - FINANCE

## I can pay for things we may need in the future



2021

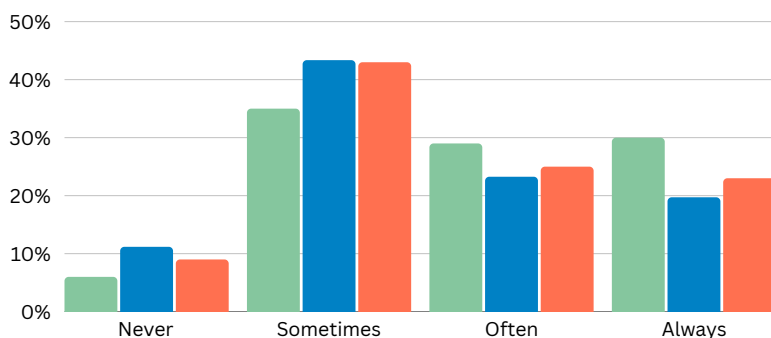
2023

2025



**Increase in Carers who can sometimes or always pay for things in the future**

## I can pay for things we need now



2021

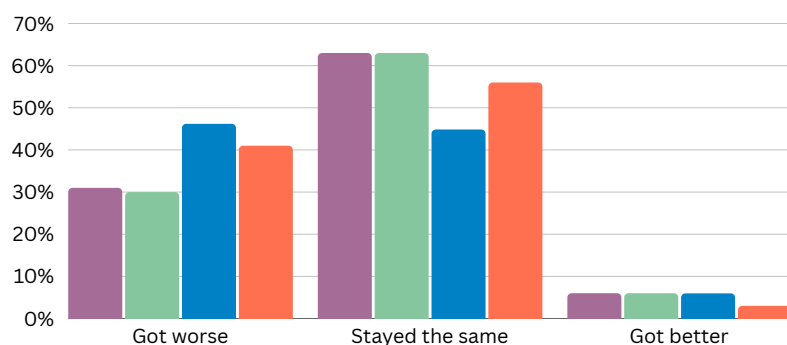
2023

2025



**Increase in Carers who can often or always pay for things now**

## How has your financial situation changed over the last year



2019

2021

2023

2025

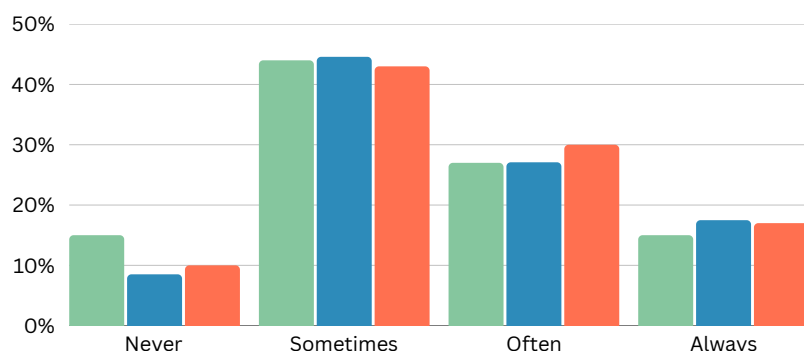


**Decrease in Carers who said that their financial situation had got worse**



# COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS SURVEYS - MENTAL HEALTH

## I am mentally exhausted by caring



2021

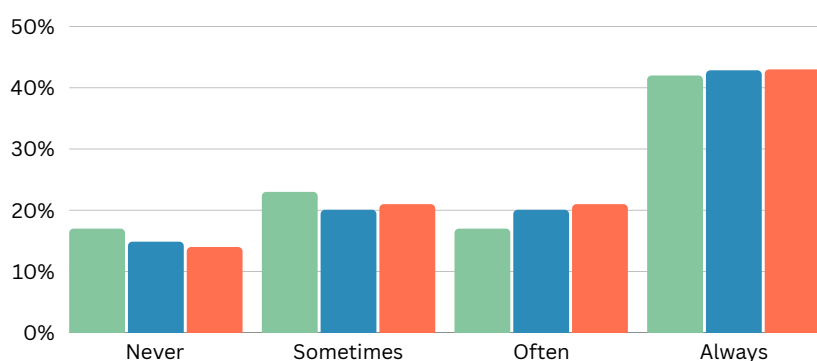
2023

2025



**Mental exhaustion is often a concern for Carers**

## I worry about the future of the person I care for after I am gone



2021

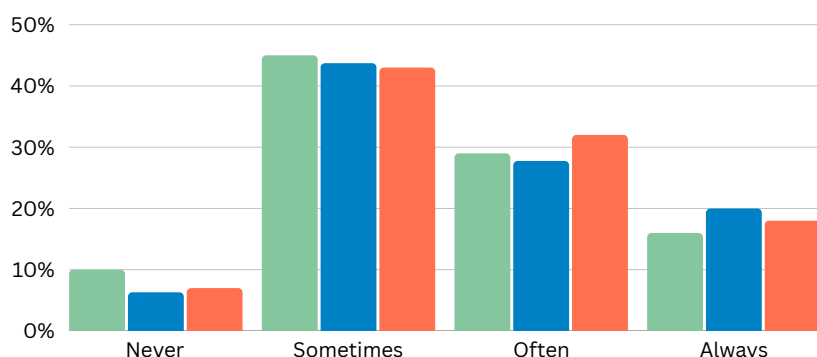
2023

2025



**Broadly stayed the same but still remains a top concern for Carers**

## I feel stressed as a result of caring



2021

2023

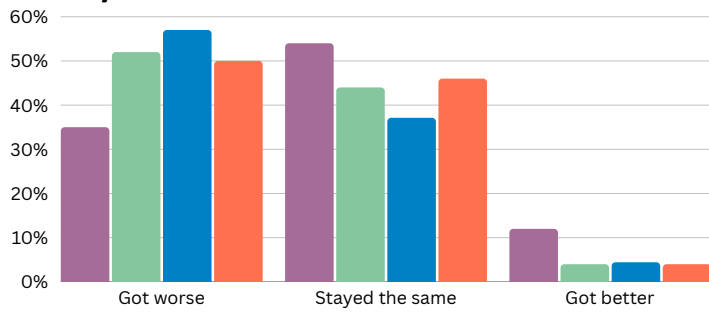
2025



**Stress is still a major concern for Carers**

# COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS SURVEYS - MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

## How has your mental health changed over the last year



2019

2021

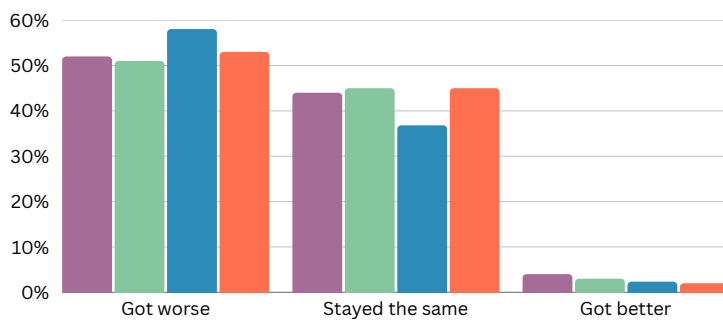
2023

2025



**Mental health has largely stayed the same**

## How has your physical health changed over the last year?



2019

2021

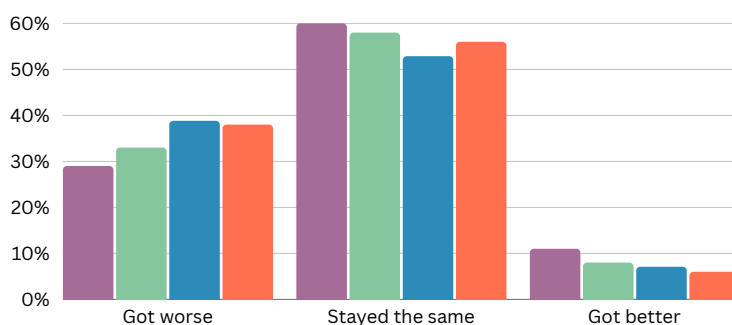
2023

2025



**Physical health has got worse or stayed the same**

## How have your relationships and friendships changed over the last year?



2019

2021

2023

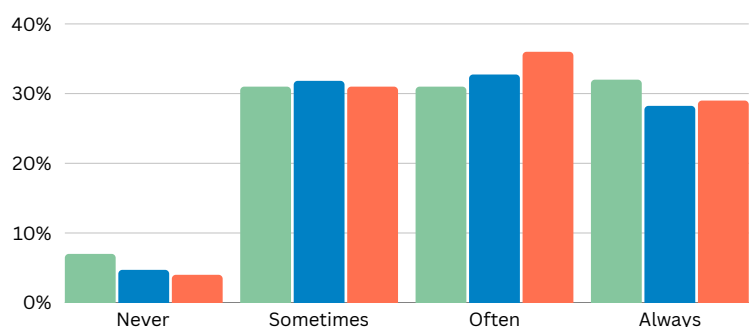
2025



**Carers report that their relationships stayed the same or got worse**

# COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS SURVEYS - YOUR CARING ROLE

## I feel I am able to improve the life of the person I am looking after



2021

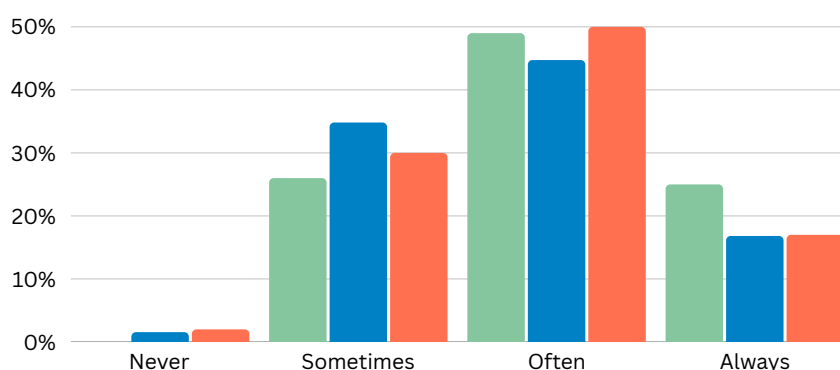
2023

2025



Carers say they often or always improve the life of the person they are caring for

## I can manage most situations with the person I care for



2021

2023

2025



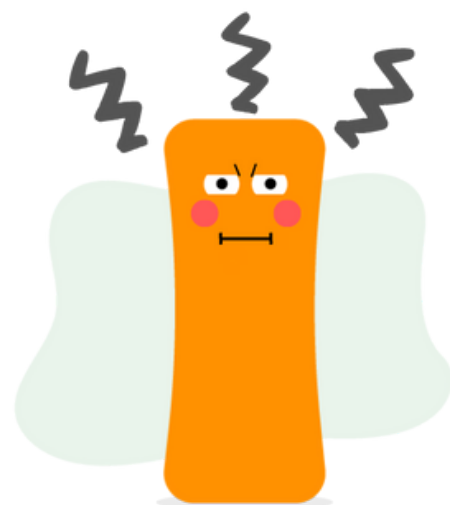
Carers say they often or always manage situations with the person they care for

“

I am sure there are lots of help out there and my experience is there is a lot of written advice available. When you are exhausted with the physicality of caring for a stroke survivor with life changing conditions you do not want that. You need **practical help**.

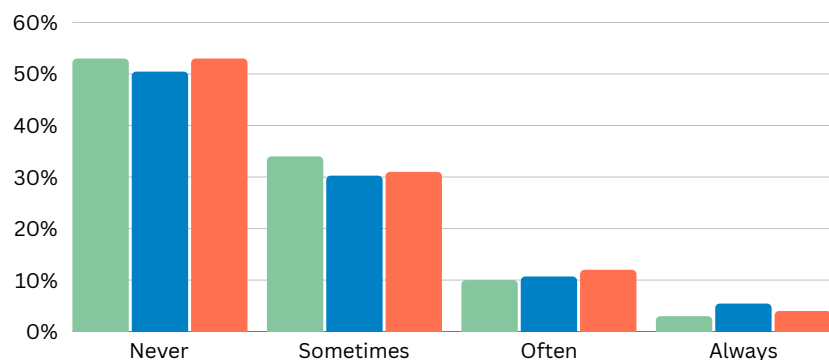
**Meaningful respite** and appropriate facilities that you can afford once you become unable to carry on.

”



# COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS SURVEYS - YOUR CARING ROLE

## I experience physical or verbal abuse from the person I care for



2021

2023

2025

**Broadly this  
has stayed  
the same as  
previous  
years**

## What is your experience?



“

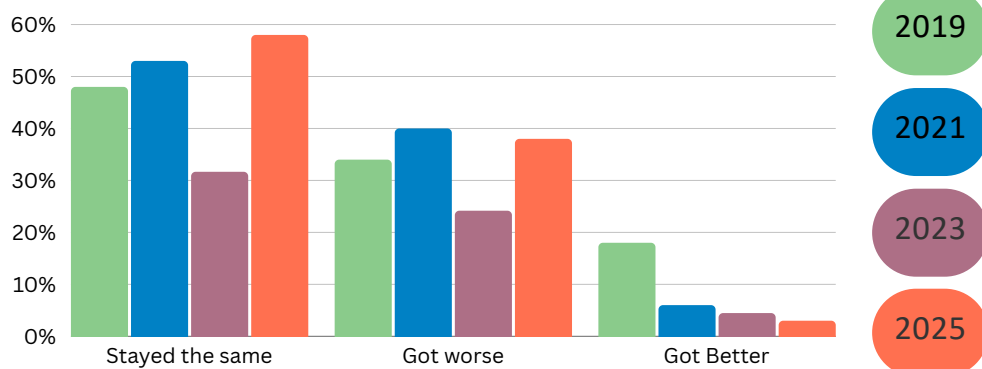
With such diverse circumstances it is hard for you to be the panacea for everyone. When you care for someone with demanding mental issues, your life is no longer your own and it is very hard to maintain your own personality whilst the verbal and non verbal abuse is fired at you at every opportunity... What I see is that at a time of life when you want to enjoy the fruits of your labours, sit down and read a book... it is all being stripped away by having to manage someone else's life and illness. Whilst I have been filling this in, I have been sworn at, things been removed from my office because he has decided he does not like them being there, he has demanded pain killers, new shoes (not that he wears them)... in fact anything he can think of to gain my attention, which was not entirely on him. When you cannot even go to the bathroom without being grilled about where you are going and what you are doing is enough to try anyones patience, and this is 24/7.

”



# COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS SURVEYS - YOUR CARING ROLE

How has your work situation changed over the past year?



Carers' working lives got worse or stayed the same

## What is your experience?

“I have worked incredibly hard for 25 years to be in a position to be able to dictate the 'terms' of how I work to fit with my caring responsibilities. I won't say I'm 'fortunate' because it's been a hard slog of performing over and above my role to gain trust and autonomy in what I do. Not everyone is in that position. Where they have no voice to negotiate their employment, Carers cannot thrive. Where work has to be 'on-site' and cannot be worked remotely, Carers cannot thrive. The world of work needs a radical re-think to accommodate both Carers, and the people they care for.”

“

I would ensure all workplaces have **more understanding** of unpaid Carers and would allow flexible working and/or the opportunity to work from home when it is needed.

”



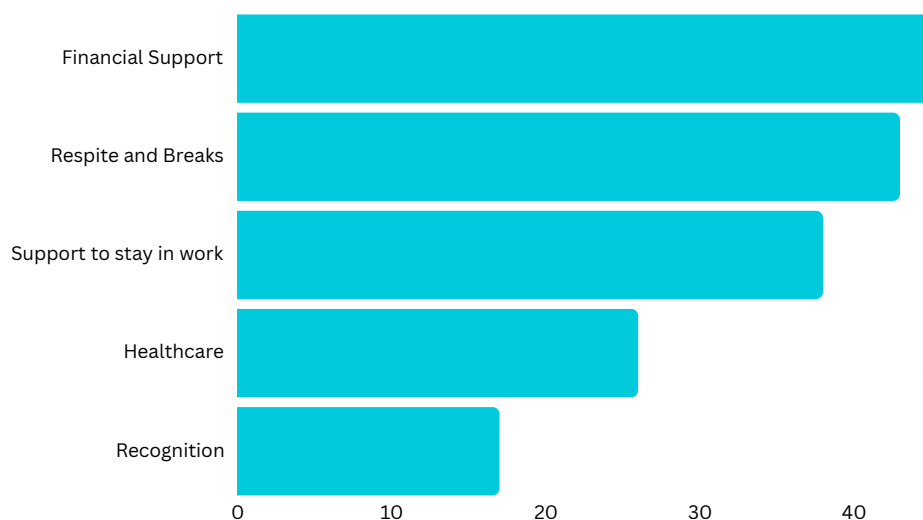
“

As I work full time and 9 to 5 I can't attend any of the in person events because they are during work hours and I need to save my holiday for when caring things come up unexpectedly so I can't use this service and would welcome something I could do. Online meeting do not work for me as I become withdrawn and distant.

”

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE IN CHARGE?

## Areas that Carers most want to change



If I were in charge...



## COMMENTS



## INFORMATION COMMENTS

Give them the info they need, when they need it, to get the best support (for them and the person they care for) in a simple, easy to understand way. A simple Step by step guide for Parent Carers would be good. Most of us don't have a clue!

I would create a centralised place where any Carer could found information and receive help accessing any support needed. Right now getting support for my children often means I have to first find out that such option exists and then fight for it.

Carers need more support. Respect and Training

I miss my regular phone calls I used to receive it made me feel better

Better access to local carer details, it is quite a time consuming difficult process to find carers.

When my husband was discharged from hospital into my care, everyone kept saying look after yourself, be careful of your back, without giving any information or training on how to use equipment supplied, or how to dress and/or change his incontinence pads. I have had to learn to do that myself, particularly when I have experienced back ache.

I would also have liked help and support (maybe recognition) when I started taking X to the hospital. why didn't one of the nurses tell me I was a Carer and there was help out there for me?

Ideally have a dedicated support worker with regular, if infrequent, contact to check how progressing and offering advice

# FINANCE AND ADVOCACY COMMENTS

Charities such as Carers in Beds help prop up overwhelmed Carers Services they use and underfunded budgets. Everyone is drawing from a near empty pot and this situation cannot be ignored forever.

Anyone can become disabled in one life changing second, minute of their life, something to think about if you believe this is someone else's problem :(

With the black hole, limited budget the Government keeps telling us about, Carers know services have needed to be squeezed, but we feel there is not a lot left to be cut. However, it's a self defeating approach as when Carers are not valued and supported, propping up other services they will become ill. need to be cared for themselves, costly additional care will need to be provided, and so the cycle of neglect and insufficient resources will continue. Carers deserve respect, respite, a fair income to live on whilst saving other services valuable funding.

No-one in the Government wants to hear this of course but I would formally recognise Carers and pay them for the role they have in caring for anyone with high support needs.

In a dream world advocate at commissioning levels about the amount of hours that unpaid Carers put in, often picking up after professionals. Our views and opinions are relevant and we should be heard we are living it not dropping in every few weeks and asking the cared for person how things are.

Make a financially viable for a Carer to give up paid work if they need to. I returned to full time work just over 4 years ago, a couple of years after my dad went into the care home. I would say that we are still 'paying the price' for my career break of 7 years as I could not pay into my teacher pension and had to do some re-training & go back on a lower pay scale.

## RESPIRE COMMENTS



Access to support for Carers who are unable to get to groups, or who can't access support during 'regular' hours, acknowledging how isolating caring can be.

I would create respite centres in pleasant surroundings which offered flexible services and accessible accommodation for both the person cared for and their supporting family - a chance to get out of the house but be safe and have other people take on the tasks of special diets and management of routine medical matters.

A sitting service to enable the Carer to attend the activities on offer

...If I were in charge, I would build on that by making it easier to access meaningful, regular respite and practical, consistent support. For many Carers, it's not just about one-off breaks, but knowing there is something reliable in place to stop burnout building up.

I would do more for 19 to 25 yr olds as I feel every short breaks, in the hoildays are mostly up to 17 yrd olds.

# BARRIERS TO RESPITE COMMENTS



We have asked about respite care but been told the availability and waiting lists mean it will not happen. We can pay for someone to stay in our home we've been told, but this then means we also have to pay to stay somewhere else, which makes it financially prohibitive. I only get away to stay with friends or family, and can't go with my partner as they stay to care for our child. We would very much like to spend time together, even for just one night.

Accessing safe places that are suitable for all the family. Being able to transport his mobility scooter is not practical

Dad wouldn't like respite care

I am always on call and need to be ready to go at a moments notice, I never turn off my phone or don't have it with me and check it constantly

I don't have the physical capacity to take myself off for an overnight break and now my Mum requires assistance I can't leave the kids with her.

I don't even have time for a lunch hour. I'm always either working or caring/parenting the two boys or caring for my friend who is 98 or helping care for my own Mum.

The only time I get respite is when she goes into hospital.

I have 3 children and a husband with needs, I don't get a break enough from one or 2 people to spend enough time with the other. It's hard. I would like time with my husband and time alone. Nothing feels achievable.

We have 4 hours per child per week. It's new, it takes the pressure off but it doesn't give me a real break. It's for 1 child at once so there is not an opportunity to be alone or relax.

Overnight respite care in particular is a myth as far as we're concerned.

I'm very out of touch because I'm on my own I feel less confident to make steps as I see potential scenarios of discomfort. I feel guilt I'm not doing enough every holiday break. I never join a rush I'd go without especially when the price is extortionate.





# BARRIERS TO RESPITE COMMENTS



Due to having a feeding tube, even when my son has been in education you are on call and get called frequently to support. Even getting him to college, transport does not allow a tube so I do the college run which is 4 journeys a day.

Finding time out between caring and working is challenging

I don't live with the person I care for so I don't feel I need a break from caring as it's fairly low level compared to many, however the mental pressure of always being 'on call' and there's no one else who could help can cause anxiety.

Sunflower house had been amazing and given us a boost to have some respite from our youngest. We do also have an older daughter however that we care for (1 of us is Carer for each child). The older child needs constant support and checks in regularly through text even when we're away. Unfortunately she isn't eligible for respite or other support.

Any breaks I do get I am often too exhausted to do anything

No we don't qualify for any respite

During my normal day I have to work all hours between school runs to meet my working hour requirements.

I don't have many breaks during the day. If I am able to get my daughter into school I use that time to care for my dad. If she doesn't go in I have to work visiting my dad around when my mum can support as my husband works away Monday to Friday.

When you are exhausted with the physicality of caring for a stroke survivor with life changing conditions you do not want that. You need practical help. Meaningful respite and appropriate facilities that you can afford once you become unable to carry on.

When his dad has him it's nice and peacefully, but often he brings him back early or like this weekend returned to the house twice to get things interrupting my day off.



The support, in the short time I have been sorting care and assistance for my mum has been exceptional. What a great bunch of people you have. Thank you

The Carers Grant gives me a lifeline as I know I have something to look forward to and I cannot thank you all enough for the support I have been given at a time when I was so desperate. Thank you

Thank you for the up to date information that I receive in the form of e-mails and magazines also training and pamper events

I am so grateful for the wonderful people in the Carers office in South Wing. They made such a difference to me when my father was in South Wing. Having a kind cheerful practical person to listen.

Thank you so, so much for your support. The work you do is vital to making Carers feel less alone, providing practical and emotional support and I know your services are there when I need them.

I think you do a good job although I don't attend any of the get togethers mainly because they are lunchtime which I am not able to do. I do feel a huge sense of relief knowing if I have a major issue I can contact yourselves for help and/or advice.

Thank you for being there. even when I get emails from yourself about something completely irrelevant to me, it's just a reminder you are there, and I am grateful for that.

Your organisation is invaluable in helping and supporting Carers and former Carers. Far more help and support is still needed for this cohort from GP's, various health officials and Government.

Thank you for being there for us!





Thanks for all you do - advocating to improve preparing for adult hood moves from children to adults services would be really helpful- especially for those Carers who are caring for adult children with SEND

The Carers vouchers have been brilliant. Having help with house work and outside has been a huge blessing thank you

Thanks for the good work, keep it up

Thankyou for all you do and being there

I think Carers in Bedfordshire are a wonderful organisation and are undervalued.

However, as a 'fully paid up member' I'd like to say a huge thank you for all that you do! If every county had a "Carers in..." I feel confident it would lower the incidents of poor mental health among Carers. Let's make "Carers in..." nationwide, and then global!

I think you are doing a great job thank you for everything you do for Carers x

Just a big thank you for the pro-active news, updates and course options, suggestions and help.

Just a big thank you for the pro-active news, updates and course options, suggestions and help.

Carers in Bedfordshire have been a great support to us over the years. Thank you.

Just want to thank you for the many services you provide. The listening ear and just the support whenever needed. Absolutely exceptional.

Thank-you for still being around.



# CONCLUSION

This survey offers a powerful insight into the lives of unpaid Carers today. While there are examples of excellent practice and signs of progress, such as increased recognition by GPs. These improvements have yet to translate into better health and wellbeing outcomes for Carers themselves.

Carers continue to tell us they do not feel valued in the way they need. They want the freedom to remain in work, the ability to take proper breaks, and access to practical, timely support — not just signposting. Where Carers benefit from structured support, including respite, their physical and mental health outcomes are significantly better.

Carers have told us they want to attend more of our events, but sometimes the demands of caring or lack of suitable arrangements make it difficult. That's why we're committed to making our services and events more accessible — whether that means creating more flexible options, welcoming the person they care for too, or offering practical support to connect Carers with organisations who can give them a break.

It's easy to point to pressures elsewhere in the system — in health, social care, or beyond — but from experience, we know that the commitment to Carers exists across the board. The real issue is that, politically and structurally, there is still no permission to value Carers in the way that's truly needed.

We're proud that our strategy, *Moving Forward for Change*, reflects these realities. We're confident we're placing our energy and resources in the right places. But change of this scale cannot be delivered by one organisation alone. It will take collaboration across local authorities, health services, and the voluntary sector to create a system that not only recognises Carers, but actually works for them.

A bolder, more radical approach is now needed. One that puts Carers at the centre — not just in principle, but in practice. What's required now is local leadership: the courage to act decisively, rather than waiting for national policy or permission to catch up.

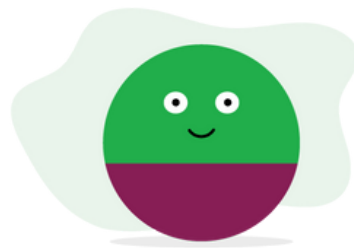


**Chris Stelling**

Chief Executive Officer

# MOVING FORWARD

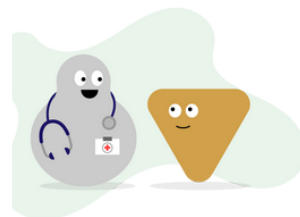
This survey and subsequent report highlight the continuing need for support for Carers. There are many ways which you can help us at Carers in Bedfordshire to continue to support unpaid Carers in every way we can. Listed below are some of the ways you can get involved and offer support too.



## For Professionals

As a professional you are in a unique position to be able to not only identify Carers but to also help support them by directing them towards services including Carers in Bedfordshire.

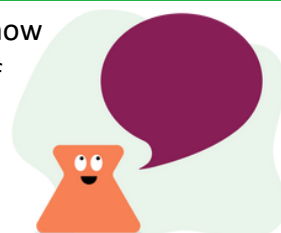
If you would benefit from Carer Awareness training then get in touch with us. We have an online Carer Awareness training programme specifically aimed at Primary Care Staff available in our online learning hub [here](#) where you can hear from local Carers about best practice.



If you would like resources, leaflets or posters then let us know and we can send these to you.

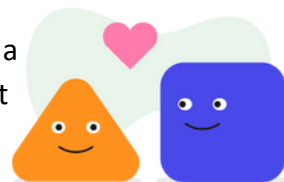
## Carers Panel & Carers Voice

As a Carer you have a unique insight, join with other Carers to use your voice and let us know how we can improve life for all Carers. The Carers Panel meets regularly with our Board of Trustees so they get to hear the voice of Carers when they make decisions that affect the charity. Carers Voice is a group of Carers who want to be heard without the need for a commitment. If you are interested in joining the Carers Panel or Carers Voice email Carol Solaiman at [carol.solaiman@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:carol.solaiman@carersinbeds.org.uk) or call her on 07462 153060.



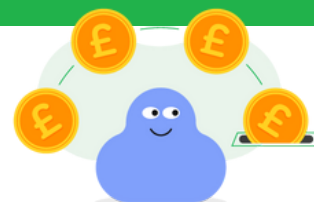
## Volunteer

If you would like to volunteer your time and skills to support the work we do then we have a range of opportunities available. Please email our Volunteer Co-ordinator Carol Solaiman at [carol.solaiman@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:carol.solaiman@carersinbeds.org.uk) or call her on 07462 153060.



## Fundraising

As a charity we rely on fundraising. You can help. Do you have any fundraising ideas? Does your company support local charities? Do you want to arrange a fun run or cake sale? If you would like to get involved in fundraising, or just have a good fundraising tip email: [fundraising@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@carersinbeds.org.uk)





# Carers

## in bedfordshire



[www.carersinbeds.org.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.org.uk)

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