

Survey of Adult Carers Analysis

Introduction

Every two years NHS Digital, the analytics function in Department of Health and Social Care, directs Local Authorities to conduct a national survey of adult carers. The latest survey took place in Autumn 2023 and the results were published nationally in late June 2024. The previous survey took place in the Autumn of 2021, after being postponed a year due to Covid.

We sent out 1365 surveys in 2023 and received 500 responses, a response rate of **37%**. This was lower than the **40%** response rate we had for the survey undertaken in 2021.

A questionnaire template was provided by NHS Digital. The questionnaire is divided into six sections:

1. Section 1: About the person you care for
2. Section 2: About your needs and experiences of support
3. Section 3: The impact of caring and your quality of life
4. Section 4: Information and advice quality
5. Section 5: Arrangement of support and services in the last 12 months
6. Section 6: About yourself

Who were the carers?

Demographics

The demography of the carers known to the Council has always been predominantly female. In 2023, **67.9%** of carers in Cambridgeshire were female and **32.1%** were male, which is similar to national proportions (**68.6%** female and **30.7%** male). The biggest group of carers were aged 55-64 (**26.4%**), followed by those aged 75-84 (**21.0%**), and those aged 65-74 (**20.4%**). These three age bands were also the largest nationally. **91.5%** of carers in the sample were white British. This has reduced from 2021 (**94.9%**) but remains much higher than the proportion of white British carers nationally.

Employment

59.9% of carers responding were retired, an increase from **54.3%** in 2021, and slightly higher than the **58.3%** of respondents nationally. **30.1%** are employed or self-employed full time or part time, a notable increase on the last three carer surveys (**21.9%** in 2021, **23.9%** in 2018, and **23.5%** in 2016). **6.7%** were doing voluntary work, a small increase on **6.3%** in 2021. **12.6%** were not in paid employment, a decrease from **21.7%** in 2021.

15.35% of carers indicated that they were not in paid employment because of their caring responsibilities. This was a big decrease on **26.3%** in 2021; however, the high

percentage in 2021 may be reflective of the impact of Covid (in 2018, **18.8%** indicated that they were not in paid employment due to their caring responsibilities).











Of those who were in employment **16.6%** felt supported by their employer (up from **11.1%** in the previous survey)

Health

The proportion of carers who stated they had a health condition or disability decreased in all categories (physical impairment or disability, sight or hearing loss, mental health problem or illness, learning disability or difficulty, long-standing illness, or “other”) compared with 2021. The biggest decrease was in those who stated they had a mental health problem or illness, down to **10.7%** in 2023 compared with **19.2%** in 2021. The proportion of carers who declared themselves to have no health condition or disability rose to **44.6%**, from **33.8%** in 2021.

In contrast, national results showed an increase in the proportion of carers who stated they had a health condition or disability, in all categories except “long-standing illness” or “other” which decreased marginally. The proportion declaring no health condition or disability was **38.9%** nationally, lower than in Cambridgeshire (**44.6%**).

The table below illustrates the carers responses to how they felt their caring role had impacted on their own health, with responses from 2021 shown for comparison.

Impact on health	2021	2023	Change
Feeling tired	75.6%	76.6%	
Feeling depressed	49.6%	47.5%	
Loss of appetite	8.3%	11.4%	
Disturbed sleep	68.1%	65.8%	
General feeling of stress	65.7%	62.9%	
Physical strain (e.g. back)	34.3%	35.3%	
Short tempered / irritable	47.6%	44.0%	
Had to see own GP	21.7%	25.7%	
Developed my own health condition	22.4%	20.3%	
Made an existing condition worse	24.4%	19.9%	
Other	2.8%	3.9%	
No, none of these	9.4%	8.1%	

Caring arrangements

63.6% of carers lived with the person they were caring for, a significant drop from **77.1%** in 2021.

Only **17.5%** of respondents had been looking after the person they cared for 20 years or more, a significant decrease from **47.7%** in 2021. The largest group was those who had been caring for between 5 and 10 years (**25.6%**). Nationally, those

caring for over 20 years made up the largest group in 2018 and 2021 and remained the largest group in 2023 at **24.8%**.

The majority of respondents, **26.4%**, care for someone for 100 or more hours a week, although this percentage had reduced since 2021 (**34.8%**). This was also the most frequent response nationally at **36.2%**. There was a comparatively even split between other caring hour ranges, with the next most common being 0-9 hours per week at **11.2%**.

In relation to the type of care provided, the highest results were for 'other practical help' (**92.6%**) similar to 2021 (**94.9%**), and 'keeping an eye on them to see if they are all right' (**91.8**), also similar to 2021 (**91.7%**). Helping with paperwork or financial matters at **90.3%** was also common and slightly higher than in 2021 (**89.0%**).

Who were they caring for?

As in 2016 and 2018, the largest age groups cared for were 75-84 (**26.0%**) and 85+ (**36.6%**). This was a significant increase from 2021, when **19.7%** were aged 75-84 and **18.1%** were aged 85+. The percentage aged 25-34 dropped sharply to **4.7%** from **17.7%** in 2021 and the 35-44 age group decreased to **4.7%** from **10.2%**. The most notable change was the high proportion of cared-for people in the 85+ age group, as the proportions in other age groups, while differing from the 2021 survey, are broadly similar to 2016 and 2018.

The most common reason for the cared for person requiring support was due to a physical disability. This was the same in 2021, however the proportion has decreased from **53.1%** to **49.3%**. The percentage with dementia rose significantly from **26.6%** in 2021 to **40.3%** in 2023, as did the percentage with problems connected to ageing (**35.4%** in 2023 compared with **25.4%** in 2021). The percentage with a learning disability or difficulty fell steeply to **20.0%** from **45.7%** in 2021; however, it was similar in 2018 (**19.4%**) and 2016 (**20.5%**).

The change in support reasons is likely to be related to the larger proportion of cared-for people in older age groups compared with the 2021 survey. This differing make up of the cared-for cohort in comparison to last year is likely to be reflected in responses to certain survey questions.

56.7% of the people cared for received funding from the Council, up from **24.2%** in 2021. The proportion of cared-for people with home care / home help rose steeply from **35.2%** in 2021 to **46.3%** in 2023.

Carers support

The proportion of carers who did not have a formal carer assessment or review in the year fell slightly, from **86.5%** in 2021 to **85.5%** in 2023.








15.2% of those cared for had received a breaks service to allow the carer to take a break at short notice or in an emergency, down from **19.5%** in 2021. **18.5%** had used a breaks service for longer than 24 hours, a significant decrease from **34.9%** in 2021, but broadly in line with 2018 (**20.5%**) and 2016 (**16.9%**). **26.8%** reported having had support from a carers group in the last 12 months, up from **22.6%** in 2021.

Carers experience – Headline results.

Key Improvements from the Previous Survey were as follows:

Overall satisfaction with services received by the cared for person - Of those who received support from Social Services in the last 12 months, the percentage who were “extremely satisfied” increased slightly to **13.6%**, from **13.4%** in 2021. The percentage who were “very satisfied” also increased, from **21.0%** to **25.7%**. The percentages of people who were “quite dissatisfied”, “very dissatisfied” or “extremely dissatisfied” with support services all decreased from 2021. **15.9%** of respondents said they did not receive report from Social Services, up from **10.8%** in 2021.




How we compare

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support or services you and the person you care for have received from Social Services in the last 12 months? <i>Excluding those who answered "We have not received any support or services from Social Services in the last 12 months"</i>	Natio nal	Cambridges hire compared to England	Change since 2021
I am extremely satisfied	13.1%	13.6% Better	
I am very satisfied	23.7%	25.7% Better	
I am quite satisfied	30.3%	28.9% Worse	
I am neither satisfied or dissatisfied	17.4%	18.2%	
I am quite dissatisfied	7.5%	7.5% Same	
I am very dissatisfied	3.6%	2.4% Better	
I am extremely dissatisfied	4.4%	3.6% Better	

Having control over daily life – The percentage of carers who reported having as much control over their daily life as they wanted increased from **19.4%** in 2021 to **24.9%**. Those who stated they did not have enough control over daily life fell from




63.6% to 59.4%. This improvement may be in part due in part to Covid; however, the figures are also an improvement on the 2018 survey results. The percentage who reported having no control over their daily life fell from **17.0% to 15.7%**, although it is still marginally above the national percentage.

How we compare

Which of the following statements best describes how much control you have over your daily life?	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
I have as much control over my daily life as I want	21.5%	24.9% Better	
I have some control over my daily life but not enough	63.3%	59.4% Better	
I have no control over my daily life	15.1%	15.7% Worse	

Looking after myself – In respect of getting enough sleep or eating, the proportion of carers who felt they looked after themselves rose from **46.8%** in 2021 to **50.3%** in 2023. Those who felt they only sometimes looked after themselves well enough fell from **33.2%** to **28.8%**. However, there was a slight increase in the proportion of carers who felt they were neglecting themselves, from **20.0%** to **20.8%**.




How we compare

Thinking about how much time you have to look after yourself – in terms of getting enough sleep or eating well – which statement best describes your present situation?	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
I look after myself	46.7%	50.3% Better	
Sometimes I look after myself well enough	33.1%	28.8% Better	
I feel I am neglecting myself	20.2%	20.8% Worse	





Personal safety – The percentage of carers with no worries about their personal safety increased from **79.4%** to **84.7%**, and the percentage with some worries fell from **18.2%** to **12.2%**. However, there is a small but increasing proportion of carers who are extremely worried about their personal safety (**3.1%** in 2023 compared with **2.4%** in 2021).

How we compare

Thinking about your personal safety, which statement best describes your present situation?	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
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I have no worries about my personal safety	81.0%	84.7% Better	
I have some worries about my personal safety	17.2%	12.2% Better	
I am extremely worried about my personal safety	1.9%	3.1% Worse	

Helpfulness of information and advice – the results in respect of the helpfulness of information and advice have improved from 2021. A similar proportion of carers (**69%**) sought out information and advice. Of those who sought advice, **25.9%** found it “very helpful” compared to **24.6%** in 2021. The percentage who found it “quite helpful” rose from **55.0%** to **57.6%**. The percentage who found the advice “quite unhelpful” or “very unhelpful” has fallen.

In the last 12 months, how helpful has the information and advice you received been? <i>Excluding those who did not try to find information or advice</i>	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
Very helpful	28.2%	25.9% Worse	
Quite helpful	57.0%	57.6% Better	
Quite unhelpful	10.8%	12.9% Worse	
Very unhelpful	4.0%	3.5% Better	

Social contact – A greater percentage of carers felt they had as much social contact as they wanted with people they liked, **34.0%**, up from **27.6%** in 2021. The percentage who had some social contact but not enough has decreased to **48.4%** from **53.9%** in 2021. There was also a reduction in the percentage of carers who stated that they had little social contact and felt socially isolated, (**17.6%**). This was lower than in 2021 (**18.5%**), 2018 (**19.4%**) and 2016 (**17.7%**).

How we compare

Thinking about how much social contact you’ve had with people you like, which statement best describes your social situation?	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
I have as much contact as I want with people I like	30.0%	34.0% Better	
I have some social contact with people but not enough	51.2%	48.4% Better	
I have little social contact with people and feel socially isolated.	18.7%	17.6% Better	





Loneliness – This year a new question was asked: “How often do you feel lonely?”. Responses indicate that carers in Cambridgeshire felt less lonely than carers nationally: **11.4%** felt lonely “Often or always” (**13.3%** nationally), and **28.2%** felt lonely “Some of the time” (**30.8%** nationally). **16.6%** of carers reported never feeling lonely, compared with **14.5%** nationally.

How often do you feel lonely?	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
Often or always	13.3%	11.4% Better	-
Some of the time	30.8%	28.2% Better	-
Occasionally	26.1%	29.0%	-
Hardly ever	15.4%	14.8% Worse	-
Never	14.5%	16.6% Better	-

Key areas where results have worsened from the previous survey were as follows:





Access to information and advice – A similar proportion of carers sought advice in 2023 compared to 2021, about **69%**. Of those who sought advice, the percentage who found it “very easy to find” fell from **13.5%** in 2021 to **12.6%** in 2023, while the percentage who found it “fairly easy to find” increased from **39.8%** in 2021 to **44.9%** in 2023. **13.5%** found it “Very difficult to find”, an increase from **11.7%** in 2021. Responses to this question were more positive nationally than in Cambridgeshire.

How we compare

In the last 12 months, have you found it easy or difficult to find information and advice about support, services or benefits. <i>Excluding those who did not try to find information or advice</i>	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
Very easy to find	13.5%	12.6% Worse	
Fairly easy to find	45.5%	44.9% Worse	
Fairly difficult to find	28.2%	29.0% Worse	
Very difficult to find	12.7%	13.5% Worse	




Carers feeling consulted with – Questions in relation to carers engagement with care and support planning for the person they supported were not as positive as in 2021. The proportion who had not been aware of any discussions in the last 12 months has decreased slightly, from **21.7%** in 2021 to **20.7%** in 2023. Of those who were aware of discussions taking place, the proportion of carers who said they “always felt involved or consulted” fell from **42.4%** to **40.4%** and those who “usually felt involved or consulted” fell from **33.2%** to **32.0%**. The percentage who only

“sometimes felt involved or consulted” increased from **19.7%** in 2021 to **26.8%** in 2023. However, a smaller percentage of carers reported that they “never felt involved or consulted”, down to **5.2%** from **7.6%** in 2021.

In the last 12 months, do you feel you have been involved or consulted as much as you want to be, in discussions about the support provided to the person you care for? <i>Excluding those who were not aware of any discussions</i>	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
I always felt involved or consulted	36.9%	40.4% Better	
I usually felt involved or consulted	29.5%	27.6% Worse	
I sometimes felt involved or consulted	25.1%	26.8% Worse	
I never felt involved or consulted	8.4%	5.2% Better	

Financial difficulties – The percentage of carers reporting no financial difficulties caused by their caring role in the last 12 months fell from **58.3%** in 2021 to **56.6%** in 2023. Those responding that they had faced a financial impact to some extent has increased from **33.7%** in 2021 to **35.8%** in 2023. However, those reporting a lot of financial difficulties fell slightly, from **7.9%** to **7.5%**. National responses show an increase in the proportion of carers experiencing financial difficulties.

How we compare

In the last 12 months, has caring caused you financial difficulties?	National	Cambridgeshire compared to England	Change since 2021
No financial difficulties	53.4%	56.6% Better	
Yes, to some extent	36.6%	35.8% Better	
Yes, a lot	10.0%	7.5% Better	

Comments from carers

Below is a small sample of the some of the many additional comments included by carers

Theme: Access to Support

I have received great help and signposting to all sorts of services to support my elderly mother- much appreciated. This has happened as a result of case review via

social care for elderly. Brilliant service. A brief/easy to understand definition sheet would be helpful, it is hard to navigate benefit claims etc when not aware of what is around/who provides funds etc

As a first time carer it was difficult to know where to go first and what should be the priority order of needs..

Being a carer its extremely difficult to have time to make calls to services and end up spending more time waiting for an answer after going through the options. When you need help and advice you need to call just one number and one person, not be pushed from pillar to post.

Becoming a carer when you are elderly especially if you live in a more rural community is especially hard. You very quickly become isolated and there are little or no local services to help.

Theme: Systems

From the moment the services were involved I felt supported and involved in any decisions and choice was provided. The adult support coordinator was really proactive and supportive, she made the whole experience of reaching out for support much better and easy to navigate.

The application for social care funding was dealt with efficiently although a slight delay. Main difficulty is finding organisations that can help and for them to have sufficient staff and time to provide the pa service. Difficult to find suitable activities and social events for the young person

I would be grateful for the periodic phone calls to ask how I am and how my elderly mother whom I'm looking after is progressing etc. I feel something like this would be supportive.

I worry that the care and financial support mum received is in direct relation to my ability to fill in, often quite complex forms.

Theme: Caring Role

I look after both of my parents who are both in their late 90's. Without the help of social services, carers, OT and the rest of my family they would not be able to be in their house of 69 years. So thank you!

My mums current care package allows a good balance for me to offer support and.....meet her current needs. I do not feel overwhelmed as I feel sharing her care needs works for her and me.... The support of the social worker at her care reviews has been excellent. I am so happy with all the services in place for my mum, and feel this shared care ensures my mum is at the centre of her care.

I do not think that my care alone is sufficient to meet the young person's needs and because of this, over the past year the young person's needs have become more intense and had a greater impact on my health and wellbeing.