

# Track the Act

## Briefing 5

Monitoring the 4<sup>th</sup> year of  
implementation of the Social  
Services and Well-being  
(Wales) Act 2014





# Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the public perception of health and social care and its importance. The active support shown by communities across Wales for the weekly ‘clap for carers’ and the rainbows that appeared in many windows rightly highlighted society’s support for this critical work.

Legislation passed in Wales in 2014 was ground-breaking in creating a legal duty on local authorities to carry out needs assessments for carers and to meet their eligible needs.

Nevertheless, unpaid carers, the vital third pillar of how care and support is provided in Wales, have remained largely unrecognised despite their selfless contribution during the pandemic.

As we consider the recovery from COVID-19, it is important to reflect on how support for unpaid carers and those they care for was delivered previously. This is an opportunity to learn what was working well and what needs to be changed and actioned for the future.

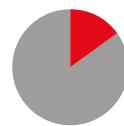
Track the Act is our annual programme monitoring the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act<sup>1</sup> which was passed in 2014. The Act created a legal duty on local authorities in Wales to assess carers’ needs and to meet their eligible needs. The evidence presented in this briefing includes survey results from 620 carers and information from all Local Authorities and Local Health Boards for the April 2019 to March 2020 time period.

Our Track the Act 5 research shows that even before the pandemic, implementation of the Act was still not working. **The vast majority of carers were not getting their needs assessed or getting the support needed. Whilst there was some positive feedback from carers on experiences of health and social care services across Wales, the comments we received were overwhelmingly negative. We believe that the failure to properly implement the well-intentioned legislation is continuing to breach carers’ rights.**

Many have no choice about whether they are ‘willing and able’ to care or what level of caring they undertake. Their ability to have a life outside of caring is compromised and their health is adversely impacted.

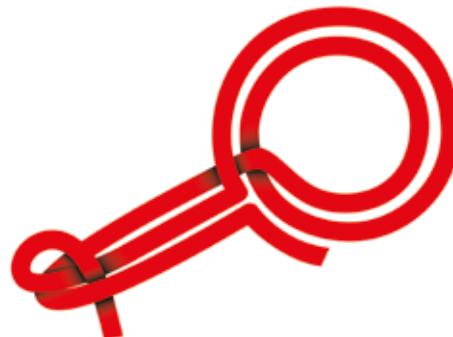
**15%**

of carers who responded saying they had received a carers needs assessment



Evidence not only shows that the Act has failed to make the impact intended, with only 15% of carers who responded saying they had received a carers needs assessment (only 4% of the carer population if looking at local authority data) but things have deteriorated significantly for our carers, with fewer carers receiving information and support than last year. This is before the drastic increase in the numbers caring as a result of the pandemic.

**In last year’s briefing, we recommended that urgent action was needed from Welsh Government to address the key areas of support needed for carers in their forthcoming ‘Strategic Action Plan for Carers’. This action plan has been delayed due to the pandemic and a consultation on what should be included will now take place this Autumn.** In addition, the scheduled rollout in April 2020 of the new local authority performance measures, that would have introduced standardised reporting mechanisms for each authority to collect carer data, has been scaled back.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>

Last year, the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee also considered the Act and its impact on carers. They published their inquiry report in November 2019<sup>2</sup>. Their evidence and recommendations reinforced and echoed our previous analysis and recommendations. We were disappointed with the Welsh Government's response to the Committee findings. We believe the response was bland, lacking concrete commitment to improvement and not meaningful enough in recognising the vital role of carers in Welsh society.

The findings in our Track the Act 5 research paint a worrying picture about the fragility of support to carers before the pressures of COVID-19 hit. Expectations raised by the Act have not been met, as support and services have not materialised. This has demoralised carers and made a difficult situation even worse.

It is time the role and contribution of unpaid carers as the third pillar of our health and care system is properly acknowledged. We need to be open about the deficiencies in the Act's implementation and work together to ensure that systems work properly and seamlessly so that carers rights become a reality and they get the support they deserve. Carers need to be confident that the systems and services are in place, to support them to continue to care for the most vulnerable.

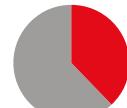
When we reach the national clap for carers day next March, we want to ensure that we all recognise and thank the hundreds of thousands of unpaid carers in our families, across our communities, towns and cities and that they feel acknowledged for the huge contribution they make.

**Claire Morgan**  
Director  
**Carers Wales**

## Key Findings

- Only 38% of unpaid carers those who responded to our survey said they have seen or been given information to help them care before the pandemic, a drop of 7% since last year. This despite this being legal requirement of the Act since 2014
- 85% of carers had not had a Carers needs Assessment in the year before March 2020, despite having a legal entitlement to one.
- More than two fifths (41%) had not heard of a carer's needs assessment before doing the survey
- Nearly two thirds (62%) say they are caring alone
- Only 10% of carers have received information or advice services from local authorities over the period

**38%**



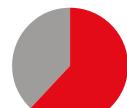
of unpaid carers said they have seen or been given information to help them care before the pandemic

**85%**



of carers had not had a Carers needs Assessment in the year before March 2020

**62%**



say they are caring alone

<sup>2</sup> <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld12887/cr-ld12887%20-e.pdf>

# Recommendations

## Welsh Government:

### Recommendation:

**The Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers needs focus on its strategic role in moving carers rights forward and planning support services for unpaid carers. The focus needs to change from operational activity updates to how best to plan on a national basis, particularly given the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19.**

**As the Government develops its Action Plan for Carers, we are calling on them to consider the following recommendations;**

- Acknowledge that unpaid carers are the third pillar of our health and social care system in Wales and as such ensure they are included in cross-organisational planning, at the national, regional and local level.
- Action our call from last year for a standardisation of the Carers Needs Assessment process
- Action our call from last year to ensure consistency in what support carers can access in each local authority across Wales
- Action our call from last year to introduce a minimum service expectation based on eligibility criteria
- Mandatory carers awareness training rolled out across Health and Social Care to ensure better understanding of the needs and aspirations of carers and those being cared for
- Ensure longer term funding cycles for regional and local carers services and pro-actively promote mainstreaming of funded projects
- A large scale and coordinated awareness campaign to improve carer and carers' rights awareness.

## Local Authorities:

- All frontline staff to be trained in carer awareness to enable them to identify and recognise carers
- Systems to be put in place to routinely identify carers and signpost them to sources of information and advice
- All advice providers to ensure they explore the carer's caring responsibilities and situation before advice is given.

### In delivering or contracting Carers Needs Assessments:

- Improve access to assessment
- Introduce a simplified re-assessment process for those most in need
- Ensure clarity about the language and status of a Carers Need's Assessment, given this is a legal right for carers. Avoid confusion with the use of the What Matter's Conversation and ensure that carers are made aware when an assessment is being undertaken
- Ensure contingency planning for carers is provided as a minimum, regardless of whether they meet the eligibility criteria for any other services
- Provisions provided under Carers Needs Assessments need to be more flexible and person-centred considering other needs alongside carer breaks.

## Local Health Boards:

- All staff to be trained in carer awareness to enable them to identify and recognise carers
- Systems to be put in place to routinely identify carers and signpost them to sources of information and advice
- Ensure data gathering to be put in place to identify carer needs and access to healthcare.

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# 1. Background

Since the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act), Carers Wales has annually reviewed its delivery as it relates to carers.

**The Act should now be fully embedded and places the following duties on local authorities:**

- Unpaid carers in Wales have equal legal rights for support as the people they look after
- Local authorities should meet a carer's eligible needs following a carer needs assessment
- Local authorities must ensure that they have information, advice and assistance services in place and clearly signposting so carers can get the right information at the right time
- Local authorities must promote the development of not for profit private organisations to provide care and support and support for carers and preventative services
- Local authorities are required to promote the well-being of both people 'in need' and of their carers

We have gathered feedback from carers and local authorities, to consider whether practices have changed and what help and support carers can expect. Given the importance of health in identifying and supporting carers, we have also sought feedback from local health boards.

As in previous years, it is not our intention to provide a complete and detailed evaluation of the Act. Our responsibility is to give carers a voice, challenge shortfalls, highlight good practice and make recommendations on what improvements are needed to ensure that the Act is effective at making life better for carers.

Whilst we welcome the action on our recommendations from last year regarding the development of standardised performance measures for local authorities and an awareness campaign through GP surgeries, we are disappointed with the lack of action on the majority of our calls for action.

Since last year's briefing the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee has published the findings of their inquiry into the impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to carers. We welcomed the inquiry report and its recommendations which reinforce our previous analysis of the implementation of the Act.



Five years on from the passing of legislation that was meant to be transformative for the lives of carers, the results are, at best, underwhelming.<sup>3</sup>



We endorse their recommendations, and the urgency in which they called for action from Welsh Government.



Given the lack of impact of the legislation to date and the scale of the future challenge, we believe that the Welsh Government needs to demonstrate stronger national leadership in support for carers. It needs to provide stronger direction to Local Authorities and Regional Partnership Boards in the planning and delivery of services to carers, and needs to be more actively involved in the oversight of this.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s96075/Report%20%20Caring%20for%20our%20Future%20An%20inquiry%20into%20the%20impact%20of%20the%20Social%20Services%20and%20Well-being%20Wa.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s96075/Report%20-%20Caring%20for%20our%20Future%20An%20inquiry%20into%20the%20impact%20of%20the%20Social%20Services%20and%20Well-being%20Wa.pdf>

## 2. Our research approach

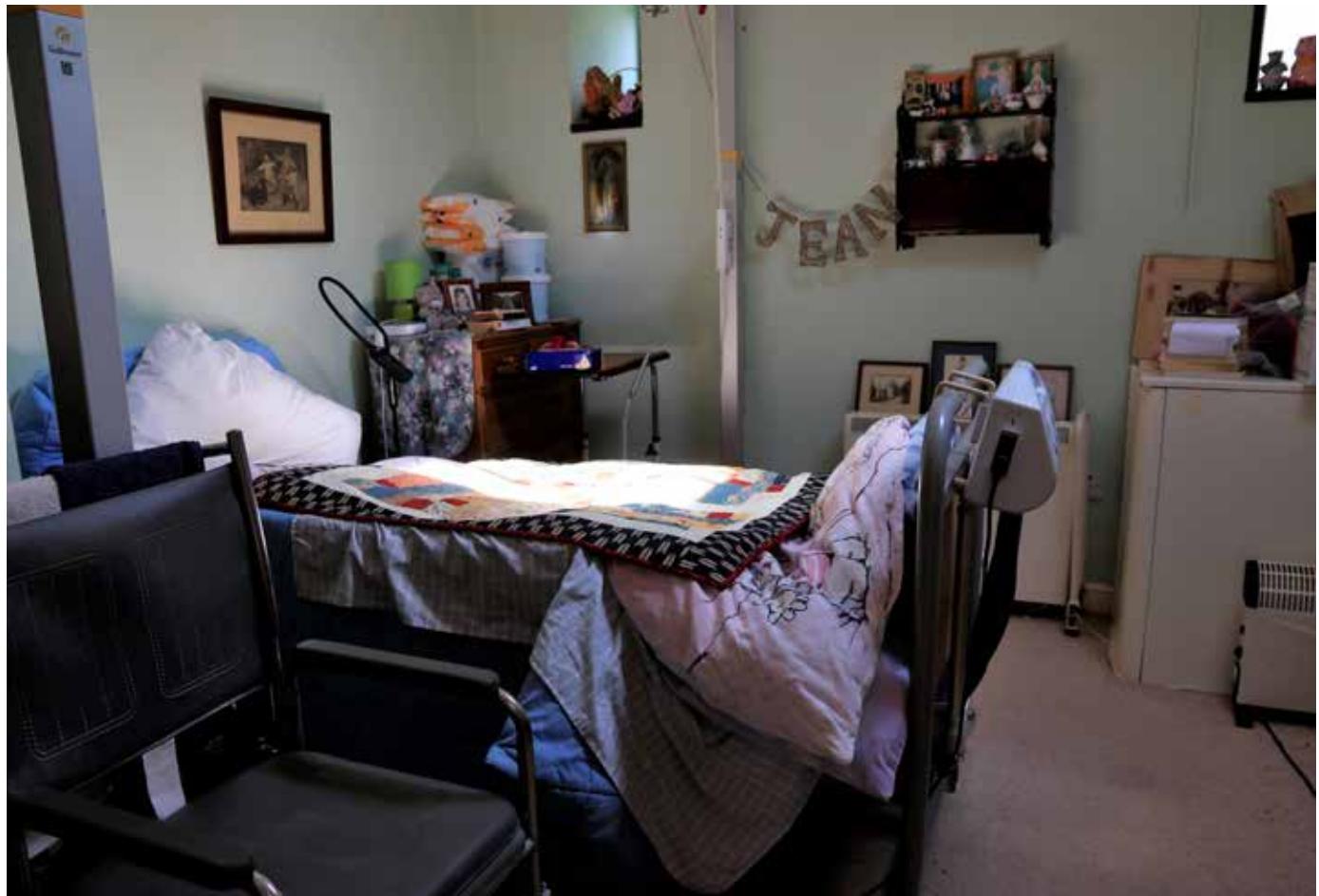
Our methodology is as follows and has been consistent with previous years.

### We have:

- Collated direct feedback from carers through our Track the Act survey, asking about their experiences of Advice, Information and Assistance, Carers Needs Assessments and whether or not they received any support
- Sought and received information directly from local authorities and local health boards, regarding their work with carers. Due to the timing of our information request, we included a question about how they had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been included in a separate briefing.
- Analysed statistics published by the Welsh Government
- Analysed how wider policy context affects the rights of carers

### We have presented the research findings as follows:

- Track the Act Carers Survey results
- Feedback received from local authorities
- Feedback received from local health boards



### 3. Carers survey results

We are pleased that more carers than ever presented evidence to us this year, with 620 carers, representing all 22 local authority areas, completing the survey. We would like to thank those who responded and shared their experiences.

#### Of current carers who responded to this survey:

**100%**

All are over 18



**75%**

are caring for more than 35 hours per week



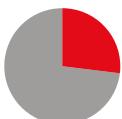
**92%**

caring for parent, partner or child



**27%**

caring for more than one person



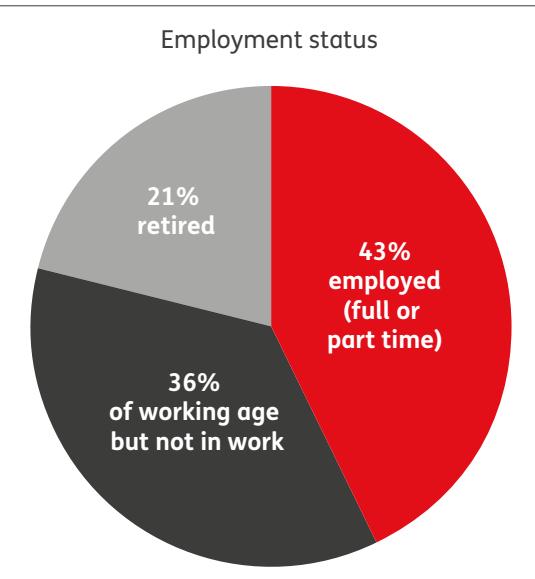
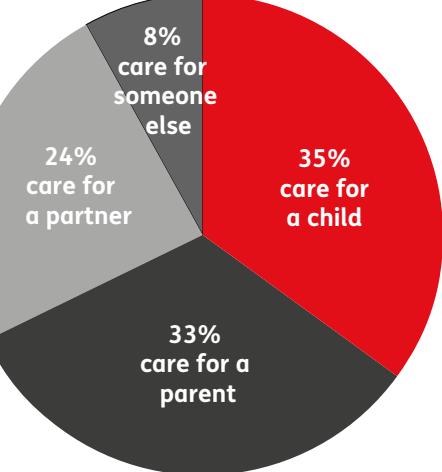
**79%**

are of working age



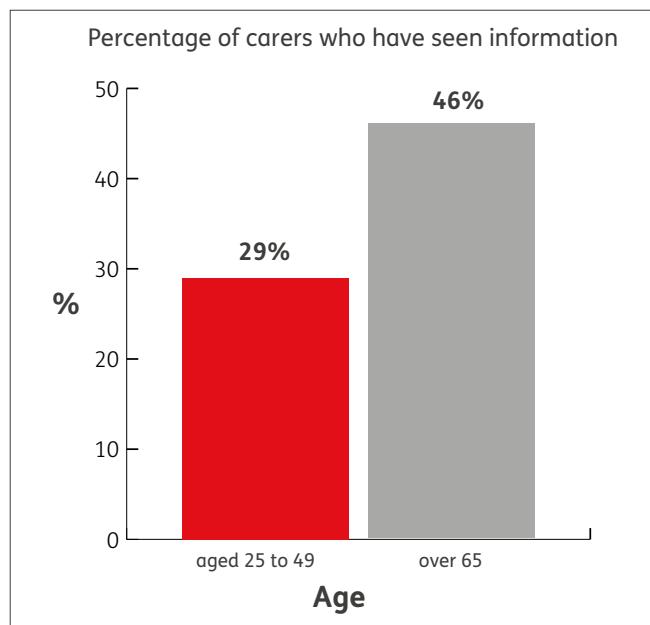
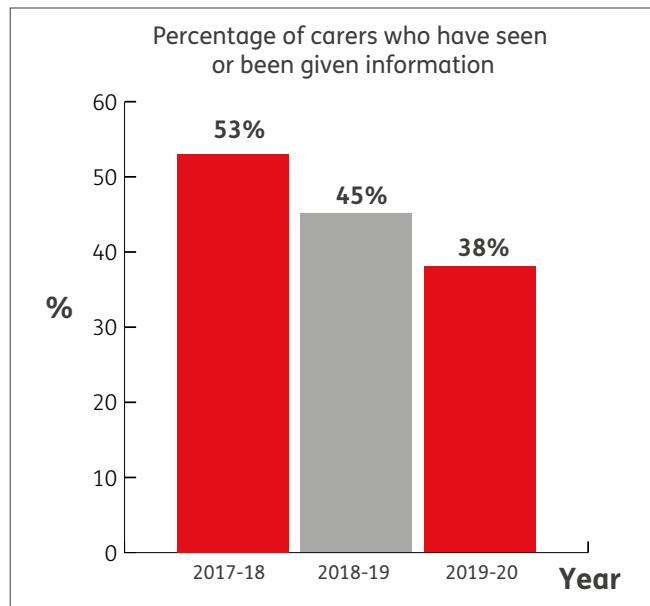
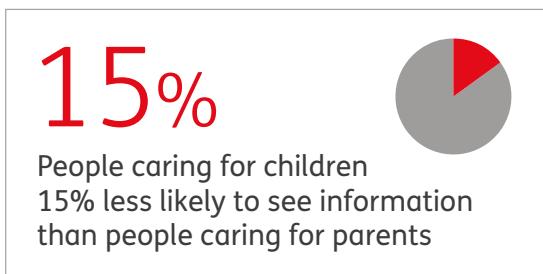
**48%**

caring for those under 18 or over 80



## 3.1 Information

The survey was open from September 2019 until March the 10th 2020, and was closed before the additional pressures of Covid-19 lockdown were felt on carers and the changes imposed by the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.



Accessing relevant information can have a significant impact on carers' lives. Those who see or are given information are more likely to achieve positive wellbeing goals and personal outcomes as defined in the Act. Carers are less likely to need a more formal assessment, if they have been able to access help and informal support earlier in the caring journey.

Those who miss out on information could face difficulties such as financial hardship, developing poor physical and mental health, struggling or being unable to maintain all or some aspects of their caring role and have difficulty balancing work with caring.

**Most concerning is that only a third (32%) of carers who are of working age, but not in employment, have seen information related to their caring role.**

This is likely to be the group with the most intensive caring role given to their inability to work in addition to care. This should be a priority audience for information however this survey clearly indicates that the methodology of disseminating information is failing to hit this important demographic.

This strongly suggests that an overhaul in how information is provided is a necessary step to help reach the Act's goal of providing preventative measures and early intervention therefore increasing carers resilience before the need for crisis support.

The importance of information to carers was highlighted by the survey respondents as nearly 9 in 10 of carers (88%) have indicated that they would wish to access information in the future.

We asked carers where they had seen information and how useful that information was. By a significant majority, the most common source was carer charities at either a national or local level, followed by medical settings including GP surgeries and hospitals and then local authority information.

| How likely a carer is to see information? | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Parent                                    | 46%        |
| Partner                                   | 38%        |
| Child                                     | 31%        |

**Considering the Act has a mandate that local authorities should be providing information for carers, we question why these are not at the top of this list.**

- 4 in 5 (80%) of carers found the information they viewed as helpful or useful
- carer charities were the highest rated with 87% finding their information helpful or useful
- 3 in 4 carers (76%) found local authorities' information helpful or useful
- 91% found info by Social workers useful
- 53% found info in medical settings (GP surgeries, hospitals) useful

Our evidence also shows that carers who report seeing information go on to seek further information from other sources. The survey indicated that on average carers sought information from two or three other sources after receiving the initial information.

We asked those who had received information if they found the information provided helpful or useful. On average 71% of carers found the information useful but there were distinct differences in the satisfaction levels depending on who provided the information.

Carer charities and disability charities were considered the best for providing information with an 85% satisfaction rating. 75% of respondents said that local authority information was useful or helpful. However those accessing information through the NHS were less satisfied with the information provided, with only 54% saying that it was useful or helpful. This highlights the importance of third sector organisations in delivering the Act.

Identifying and recognising carers is still a challenge, as many carers do not self-identify. As a result, local authority Information, Advice and Assistance services need to be effectively publicised and there needs to be proactive identification of carers through frontline staff.

This continues a trend from previous Track The Act surveys of information found within medical settings being below the standard of other sources of information. This is a particular concern as medical settings are frequently visited by carers and the most common place for a carer to become, or realise they have become, a carer.

BB

Any problems or questions I need to ask I just telephone my social worker, whom I have formed a good relationship with and she helps me and provides me with the answer and solves my problems

DD

BB

Dementia is a progressive disease so different information is needed at different stages

DD

BB

I feel isolated and I feel lost. I do not know who to ask for help. I am tired beyond words

DD

BB

The Carers Centre is a good place to get the support you require and probably don't know about

DD

BB

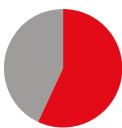
I do not feel as alone now. I know there are more things out there than I knew

DD

### Track the Act respondents 2019-2020

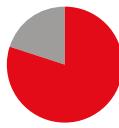
## 3.2 Advice and assistance

**42%**



of carers received advice in the last 12 months.  
A drop of 3% from last year.

**80%**



On average 80% of carers were satisfied with the advice they received

| Caring for | Percentage received advice |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Parent     | <b>48%</b>                 |
| Partner    | <b>42%</b>                 |
| Child      | <b>37%</b>                 |

Advice is when organisations' work co-productively with a carer to explore their situation and the options available to them to meet their personal and wellbeing outcomes. It is imperative that carers understand what is available to them and that they are actively involved in making decisions about what matters to them and the personal outcomes they wish to achieve. Advice is generally provided face to face or over the telephone.

Concerningly nearly 1 in 5 (18%) of carers were not asked about their caring role before being given advice. As each caring role differs vastly, this most basic requisite could be why some advice is not being found useful by carers.

When carers were asked about how satisfied they were with the advice they received, only just over half (54%) were happy with the advice from local authorities and two thirds (66%) were happy with the advice they received for their caring role in medical settings.



In previous years I have received support and advice from the Local Authority IAA service and from the charity aligned to my mum's illness which has really been amazing



### Carers were asked

### Percentage of carers who said this improved the situation

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Did advice help you continue your caring role?         | <b>73%</b> |
| Did advice help with your caring role?                 | <b>63%</b> |
| Did advice support your life outside your caring role? | <b>58%</b> |

This is a worrying trend as these are probably the two of the most likely places for an unpaid carer identify that they are a carer. Advice at this stage is critical as preventative measures can support carers before the need for statutory services and reduce the chances of crisis interventions.

Advice is vital to achieve the Act's ethos of prevention but few carers are happy with the advice they have been given.



No one seems to be forthcoming with information, advice and guidance I have requested though GP, referrals have conveniently gone missing



### 3.3 Carers needs assessments

A carer's needs assessment is a legal entitlement for all carers. Where it appears to a local authority that a carer may have needs for support, they must assess whether the carer has needs for support (or are likely to do so in the future) and what those needs are.

As highlighted by the Welsh Government's Social Services Activity report, as many as half of carers turn down assessments. **When asked, only 8% of carers in this survey turned down an assessment, many of these said they refused an assessment as they did not see the value of it.**

Due to the low number of carers who had actually received an assessment, the following numbers can only be assessed as representing the experiences of those who answered this part of the survey. However, there are concerning trends to this data, which is supported by significant anecdotal evidence relating to how carer's needs assessments are being conducted.

The need for emergency planning has been highlighted by the COVID-19 restrictions. Many carers had to make monumental changes to protect themselves and their loved ones during lockdown. A carer who has had a needs assessment should have more confidence in their contingency plan, but only 44% of respondents say that emergency planning was discussed during their assessment.

**86%**

of carers had not received a carer's needs assessment in the financial year 2019/20

**72%**

had not received or been offered a carer's needs assessment since the beginning of the Act

**2in5**



carers had not heard about carer's needs assessments before filling in this survey

**6in10**



carers had not heard about carer's needs assessments before filling in this survey

## What carers said about Carer's Assessments

No point, there is nothing to help me

Nobody understands what my caring role entails. I'm offered the chance to go on a spa day or similar sometimes but that's not possible. I need practical help, not occasional days out that I can't go on anyway

Because it made no difference to me

I don't see the point, as always the same battle and lack of support

I haven't requested another one due to a bad experience when my last one was carried out

We were treated with respect and it was very helpful, but I still don't have the help which was recommended. I was also given two more weeks of respite care to be taken before the end of March, but the local council care home is full until next June and I can't find a private one who can help

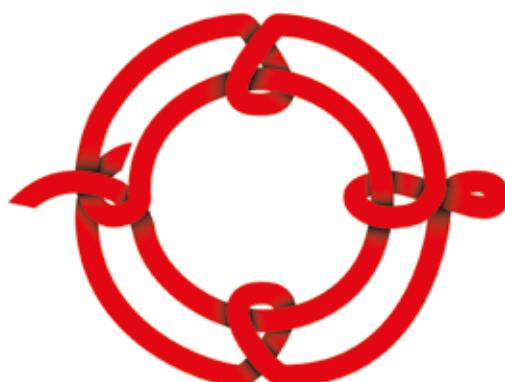
The re-assessment process is disgusting and the months you are left without answers is a huge cause of stress and upset because your life is being left in a limbo. There needs to be a timescale on these things

Assessment brings an impartial overview to the caring situation. Can generate a different approach and make the carer aware of other approaches, help and support

The social workers are clearly under great pressure with the number of cases they have to handle

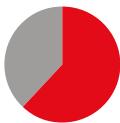
I have found it very difficult to find out what I am entitled to. It seems that those who can help are more interested in saving money rather than helping the people who need it

### Track the Act respondents 2019-2020



## 3.4 Support

**62%**



of carers say they are caring with no support. This is an increase from 57% last year.

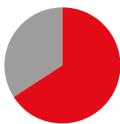
Carers are not a homogeneous group of people. All will have varying caring responsibilities and different needs, at different times, dependent on their own personal circumstances. Many carers will not require substantial or statutory support but may have informal or third sector support in place to help them continue with their caring role. This support will often differ at different stages of their caring journey.

**The most common source of support is friends and family with more than 2 in 5 (44%) seeing support from them.** This means there are potentially many more carers who are providing care but do not identify themselves as such.

However, nearly two thirds (62%) of carers consider themselves to be doing their caring role with no support at all. A 5% increase from the last report. This highlights that the majority of carers feel they are performing their role alone which puts them under additional pressure and stops them from reaching their own well-being goals.

| Types of Support carers are accessing             | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Council care package for the person they care for | 14%        |
| Paying for support from their own finances        | 13%        |
| Free support from charities                       | 5%         |
| Council care package for the carer                | 2%         |

**66%**



saying that support increases their wellbeing



We have been promised up to 6 weeks respite, but none has been delivered in 2 years



I do not get any support for my elderly father, I am the only person who does anything for him, it is getting extremely difficult, I've had to go part time in my job because I was exhausted



Having direct payments for my son enabled us to set up an excellent package of care for him whilst also addressing some of ours at the same time



Our local social services always say they have 'not enough funds' to help



It is a losing battle to get any help or support. It makes me feel let down and exasperated on top of the way I already feel



It is an exhausting, too often unseen and unsupported labour of love



**Track the Act respondents 2019-2020**



## 4. Local authority data

All 22 local authorities provided information on how they are implementing the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act for unpaid carers. We would like to thank each local authority who all provided evidence for this year's briefing. The information requested was for the period April 2019 – March 2020. All information received by Carers Wales has been presented as interpreted by the local authority. The responses were not in a standardised format and different methodology had been applied to provide the data. Where necessary, some data has been combined to create a total figure.

Each local authority response can be found in full on the Carers Wales website.

**We asked each local authority how many carers were:**

- Provided with Information and advice (IA)
- Had a carer's needs assessment/what matters conversation and an existing assessment reviewed (CAN/WMC)
- Received support or direct payments via a support plan

| County             | Carer Population | IAA                     | CNA/WMC                        | Support                            |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Anglesey           | 8042             | 1793                    | 550                            | 103                                |
| Blaenau Gwent      | 8752             | 2964                    | 343                            | 91                                 |
| Bridgend           | 17919            | 861                     | 534                            | 106                                |
| Caerphilly         | 22721            | 1837                    | 1517                           | 68                                 |
| Cardiff            | 35005            | 1883                    | 837                            | 51                                 |
| Carmarthenshire    | 23989            | 3370                    | 1065                           | 664                                |
| Ceredigion         | 8603             | 1736                    | 936                            | 115                                |
| Conwy              | 13605            | 612                     | 1693                           | 417                                |
| Denbighshire       | 11631            | 477                     | 1224                           | 19                                 |
| Flintshire         | 17643            | 5960                    | 1557                           | 641                                |
| Gwynedd            | 12443            | 2165                    | 53                             | 20                                 |
| Merthyr Tydfil     | 7427             | 3                       | 76                             | 31                                 |
| Monmouthshire      | 11491            | Not easily quantifiable | 299                            | 132                                |
| Neath Port Talbot  | 20365            | 725                     | 256                            | Unable to provide due to IT system |
| Newport            | 16604            | 1952                    | 1136                           | 125                                |
| Pembrokeshire      | 15195            | 3000                    | Unable to provide due to Covid | Unable to provide due to Covid     |
| Powys              | 16154            | 4058                    | 844                            | 66                                 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | 29640            | 297                     | 522                            | 80                                 |
| Swansea            | 30349            | Not easily quantifiable | 588                            | 83                                 |
| Torfaen            | 15575            | 475                     | 155                            | 8                                  |
| Vale of Glamorgan  | 11929            | Unable to provide       | 241                            | 12                                 |
| Wrexham            | 15148            | 930                     | 220                            | 135                                |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>370230</b>    | <b>35098</b>            | <b>14646</b>                   | <b>2967</b>                        |

\* Pembrokeshire could only provide figures to the nearest round figure

## 4.1 Information and advice

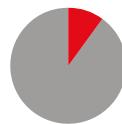
**19 of the 22 local authorities were able to provide data on how many carers received information and advice totalling 35,098 occurrences. This is a 31% increase on last year but equates to approximately only 10% of the carer population in Wales.**

We are unable to determine from the data whether this represents more activity or better reporting methodology. There is significant variance too in how and what data each Local Authority collates and can report on.

We hope that the new Welsh Government performance measures introduced in April 2020 will provide more accurate information moving forward, as they will have a standardised way of recording information throughout Wales.

**10%**

Only 10% of the caring population have been provided with information and advice services



## 4.2 Carers needs assessment

**There were 14,646 Carers Needs Assessments (or What Matters conversations) according to the 21 of 22 local authorities who were able to provide data for the financial year 19/20. This is a decrease of 4,068 from the numbers reported last year. A drop of more than 1/5 (22%). This equates to approximately only 4% of the carer population in Wales**

The number of assessments (or What Matters Conversations) were down across the board with particularly notable decreases in Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea all reporting less than half the total completed in the previous year. The only local authority to improve the was Newport who reported a 1500% increase (71 to 1136).

**Two local authorities, Swansea and Torfaen, reported the number of carers who rejected assessments or conversations. The rejection rate was 70% and 68% respectively. These figures are in stark contrast with the 8% of carers who completed the carer survey who have said they have rejected assessments or conversations.** This raises serious questions how assessments and conversations are being discussed with carers and, from our carer survey feedback, the increased disillusionment that the process does not represent an effective way for carers to gain further support.

Another significant question that the information provided raises is how many carers are being supported by combined assessments and whether these are effectively supporting the carer's unique needs. Multiple

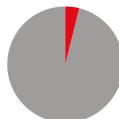
local authorities highlighted that they were unable to distinguish when a carer is being supported by a disabled persons' needs assessment while others may or may not have included this data when reporting.

There are two distinct areas of concern arising from this information. If a local authority cannot distinguish when a carer is being supported, it is significantly more difficult to obtain independent information if and when a carer's situation has changed. It also means that it is more difficult to ascertain whether a carer's wishes and rights have been correctly implemented during the process.

We accept that combined assessments are the best solution to support some carers and cared for people. Feedback supplied by Swansea council shows that this process can work well for both parties in need of support. However, we suggest there needs to be consideration about how these joint assessments are processed and categorised, so that there is clarity about what support is being provided for the carer as well as the cared for.

**4%**

Only 4% of the carer population received a Carer's Needs Assessment



## 4.3 Support

**20 of the 22 local authorities provided information on the number of carers getting support or direct payments (totalling 2,967 incidences) following an assessment.**

A direct comparison to last year's figures is not possible due to the differences in reporting however this number represents just 0.008% of carers in Wales according to the 2011 census (which is likely to be a significant underestimate). Of those who reported for 2018/19 and 2019/20, only 7 authorities increased the total number of services or direct payments to carers.

The percentage of those who received a support plan or direct payments after an assessment also varies considerably. Carmarthenshire evidenced that 664 of the 1065 who had an assessment received a support package (62%) while only 68 of 1517 (4%) did in Caerphilly. From the additional evidence provided by local authorities, it can be determined that part of the reason for this discrepancy is that the local authorities who are doing more What Matter's Conversations are less likely to provide a support plan than those who are predominantly doing Carer's Needs Assessments.

There is confusion also surrounding the different terminology used by different local authorities. Some use a 'What Matter's Conversation' as a precursor to a Carer's Needs Assessment, whilst others use a 'What Matter's Conversation' as their legal Carer's Needs Assessment. This adds to the confusion about whether carers have received their assessment. Local Authorities should explain the legal status of their conversation and assessment with each carer.

**All 22 local authorities provided information on the services they provide or commission to carers. For a detailed breakdown please visit the Carers Wales website.**

The services provided by local authorities varies significantly. To a certain extent this is to be expected as services represent the carer population of the local area, but we have ongoing concerns about the postcode lottery for carers.

We also have continued concerns that certain local authorities have a concentration on light-touch wellbeing events over more substantial, practical day to day support. However, it is interesting to see that some councils, notably Ynys Mon have made the shift towards providing more specialist financial aid and future planning support for carers.

There are positive developments in emergency planning showcased by some local authorities. Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Denbighshire have all put together emergency card offerings so carers can have an officially designated person to contact if they are ill. Importantly Denbighshire also highlight that if there is no one to take over caring responsibilities, there will be an automatic contact with their social services team to supply support.

This service should be rolled out to all carers with or without a support plan in Wales. The reassurance of knowing that if something happens that there will be support for their loved one is a key element to a carers psychological support and wellbeing.

Multiple local authorities have also highlighted the beginnings of advocacy services. This includes Gwent Advocacy service supported Blaenau Gwent and Newport amongst others, Eiriol advocacy program in Carmarthenshire and Denbighshire in-house advocacy program.

Advocacy has been difficult to access since the commencement of the Act as indicated by all five Track The Act carers surveys and this has been a key recommendation throughout. The launch of these programs is a distinct positive step forward and we will be monitoring how these are continued to be funded and developed.

More concerningly is that carers breaks are the most notable statutory commissioned service beyond a carers needs assessment. The ethos of the Act was to support the wellbeing of the carer with a flexible, person-centred approach. Whilst the provision of carer breaks are critical for carers, the lack of suggested other approaches across all local authority responses strongly suggests that the carers needs assessment has become a route to a carer break only.

**Carer breaks are essential to the personal wellbeing of carers but we are deeply concerned that this has become the only area of consideration for assessments.**

On a positive note, many local authorities are either providing or commissioning third sector partners to deliver small grants for carers. This can be seen within the regional partnership in the Greater Gwent Area, in North East Wales through NEWCIS and on a county basis in Swansea and Carmarthenshire.

This direct funding for carers has the potential to have a substantial positive effect on carers and their ability to complete their personal goals.

Another positive development is the solidification of working relationships with carers in the development of services.

Most local authorities have evidenced working with carers through formal or informal forums at either a local authority or local health board level. Carers being brought into coproduce elements of carer services is constructive.

It is disappointing to see that 9 of the 19 local authorities (47%) who have reported on this question are offering less than 100 support packages in a carer's own right. This lack of direct support may be a considerable reason why confidence amongst carers in the assessments may be diminishing and why so many assessments have been rejected in the sample size from the previous section.

| County             | Carer Population | Percentage of carers to see or receive IA | Percentage of carers to receive CNA/WMC | Percentage of carers to receive Support |
|--------------------|------------------|---|---|---|
| Anglesey           | 8042             | 22%                                       | 7%                                      | 1.3%                                    |
| Blaenau Gwent      | 8752             | 34%                                       | 4%                                      | 1%                                      |
| Bridgend           | 17919            | 5%  | 3%                                      | 0.6%                                    |
| Caerphilly         | 22721            | 8%  | 7%                                      | 0.3%                                    |
| Cardiff            | 35005            | 5%  | 2%                                      | 0.1%                                    |
| Carmarthenshire    | 23989            | 14%                                       | 4%                                      | 2.8%                                    |
| Ceredigion         | 8603             | 20%                                       | 11%                                     | 1.3%                                    |
| Conwy              | 13605            | 17%                                       | 12%                                     | 3.1%                                    |
| Denbighshire       | 11631            | 4%  | 11%                                     | 0.2%                                    |
| Flintshire         | 17643            | 34%                                       | 9%                                      | 3.6%                                    |
| Gwynedd            | 12443            | 17%                                       | <1%                                     | 0.2%                                    |
| Merthyr Tydfil     | 7427             | <1%                                       | 1%                                      | 0.4%                                    |
| Monmouthshire      | 11491            | Not easily quantifiable                   | 3%                                      | 1.1%                                    |
| Neath Port Talbot  | 20365            | 4%  | 1%                                      | Unable to provide due to IT system      |
| Newport            | 16604            | 12%                                       | 7%                                      | 0.8%                                    |
| Pembrokeshire      | 15195            | 20%                                       | Unable to provide due to Covid          | Unable to provide due to Covid          |
| Powys              | 16154            | 25%                                       | 5%                                      | 0.4%                                    |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | 29640            | 1%  | 2%                                      | 0.3%                                    |
| Swansea            | 30349            | Not easily quantifiable                   | 2%                                      | 0.3%                                    |
| Torfaen            | 15575            | 3%  | 1%                                      | 0.1%                                    |
| Vale of Glamorgan  | 11929            | Unable to provide                         | 2%                                      | 0.1%                                    |
| Wrexham            | 15148            | 6%  | 1%                                      | 0.9%                                    |

## 5. Local health board data

We asked the Local Health Boards what funding was allocated to services and support for unpaid carers in 2019/20 and what services were provided. We also asked them if these were existing or new services. All the local health boards provided information and we thank them for taking the time to respond. Full responses can be found on the Carers Wales website.

| <b>Local Health Board</b>   | <b>Service examples given</b>   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Aneurin Bevan</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dementia Flexible Respite Project</li> <li>• 93 GP carer champions identified in surgeries across ABUHB</li> <li>• Launched a Regional Carers Hub</li> <li>• Dementia training to include carers</li> <li>• New advocacy helpline Gwent Access to Advocacy</li> <li>• Young carers in school programme</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Betsi Cadwalader</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carer Hospital Facilitator posts (Ysbyty Gwynedd, Glan Clwyd and Wrexham Maelor)</li> <li>• Action for Children bespoke breaks for young carers</li> <li>• NEWCIS funding for carer workshops</li> <li>• TIDE development programme for dementia carers to empower and equip them to influence service development at all levels</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Cardiff and the Vale</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cardiff Carers Team outreach work in health settings to identify carers</li> <li>• Carer Awareness sessions across the health board with staff</li> <li>• GP carer accreditation to ensure carers are provided with practical and emotional support, as well as helping them to navigate the services that are available to them.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Cwm Taf Morgannwg</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carer awareness through primary care clusters</li> <li>• RCT Carers Support Project</li> <li>• Carer Hospital Discharge Project</li> <li>• Specific projects commissioned from third sector services including Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil, Challenging Behaviours Support, Carers STAR Project</li> <li>• Young carers cookery classes</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Hywel Dda</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers Information Service funding allocation</li> <li>• Services and support commissioned for young and young adult carers</li> <li>• Information and outreach services in hospitals</li> <li>• Continued roll out of GP Investors in Carers</li> <li>• Carers register at GP surgeries</li> <li>• Carer confident benchmarking scheme for employers</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Powys Teaching</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Hafal for emergency respite</li> <li>• Powys Carers Service Credu Connect</li> <li>• Carers scheme provides information, advice and assistance, support training and skills development, respite, transport and community support.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Swansea Bay</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neath Port Talbot Parent Carer Transition Link Officer</li> <li>• Chinese in Wales Association – You are not alone</li> <li>• Swansea Carers Centre dementia project</li> <li>• Swansea Carers Centre Emergency Respite</li> <li>• Neath Port Talbot Carers GP drop in sessions and GP accreditation and hospital link</li> <li>• Neath Port Talbot Carers Single Point of Access Carers Triage</li> </ul> |

**It is positive to see the range of projects being delivered to support unpaid carers.**

We believe that Welsh Government strategies including “**A Healthier Wales**” and “**Prosperity for All**” will have a significant impact on carers. There is a focus on achieving joined up seamless services, improving the health and well-being of individuals in Wales and providing care closer to home.

If these objectives are to be realised, then embedding a greater understanding of unpaid care and the needs of carers into meaningful planning and delivery of health services is needed.





# Our mission is to make life better for carers



**We give expert advice,**  
information and support



**We connect carers** so  
no-one has to care alone



**We campaign** together  
for lasting change



**We innovate** to find new ways  
to reach and support carers



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