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**Centre
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Policy breakfast: Support for working carers

**Co-hosted by Wendy Chamberlain, MP
and the Centre for Care**

**One year on from the introduction of unpaid carer's leave,
we discuss support for working carers to balance caring
responsibilities with employment, including the case for a
statutory right to paid carer's leave.**

**Wednesday 19th March 2025
08.30am - 10.30am
Churchill Room, the House of Commons**

AGENDA

One year on from the introduction of unpaid carer's leave, we discuss support for working carers to balance caring responsibilities with employment, including the case for a statutory right to paid carer's leave.

08:30 - 08:45	Arrival and breakfast
08:45 - 08:50	Wendy Chamberlain MP Welcome, introductions and aims for the event
08:50 - 09:00	Liz Dew and Jemma Walker Reflections from personal experiences of juggling work and care
09:00 - 09:20	Professor Kate Hamblin and Dr Maria Petrillo Centre for Care presentation: What does the research evidence tell us? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does supporting working carers matter? • What can we learn from other countries that have introduced paid or compensated carer's leave?
09:20 - 09:30	Questions to presenters
09:30 - 10:30	Facilitated roundtable discussion (<i>Please note Chatham House rules apply</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is our collective vision for change? 2. How can we make this happen? What are our policy options?

SUPPORTING UNPAID CARERS TO JUGGLE WORK AND CARE



Wendy Chamberlain MP

5.8 million people in the UK are unpaid carers,¹ with 12,000 people becoming carers every day.² Indeed, caring is something that will impact us all at some stage, whether we are caregiving or being cared for.

In 2024, research by the Centre for Care estimated that the value of the support provided by unpaid carers in the UK is a staggering £184 billion.³ In light of this, it is shocking that 1.2 million unpaid carers live in poverty, with 400,000 of those living in deep poverty.⁴

Perhaps this figure ought to be no surprise, when an estimated 600 unpaid carers give up paid work every day to provide care. Employment is a vital lifeline for unpaid carers, not only for financial security but for a sense of self. However, balancing work and caring, with its unpredictable nature, can just be too much.

I am proud to have passed the Carer's Leave Act in 2023, giving unpaid carers the statutory right to take up to 5 days of unpaid care from work each year. A small step, to help unpaid carers keep all their many plates spinning.

However, this is not the end of the line. Two years' after being passed, we need to know how the Act is being implemented, what impact it is having, and what further changes are needed to provide our incredible unpaid carers the support they need and deserve to stay in work.

¹ Petrillo, M., Zhang, J. and Bennett, M.R. (2024) [Valuing Carers 2021/22: the value of unpaid care in the UK](#). London: Carers UK.

² Petrillo, M., Bennett, M.R., and Pryce, G. (2022) [Cycles of caring: transitions in and out of unpaid care](#). London: Carers UK.

³ Petrillo, M., Zhang, J. and Bennett, M.R. (2024a) [Valuing Carers 2021/22: the value of unpaid care in the UK](#). London: Carers UK.

⁴ Wyjadłowska, J., Beebe, M., Tibbles, M., and Oakley, M. (2024) . [Poverty and financial hardship of unpaid carers in the UK](#). A WPI Economics Report for Carers UK.

Professor Kate Hamblin and Dr Maria Petrillo, Centre for Care

Most of us are likely to have caring responsibilities at some point in our lives: women have a 70% chance of being a carer as an adult and men have a 60% chance.⁵ This is likely to happen at a time when we are also in paid work, potentially at a point in our careers when we have accrued many years of skills and experience. Indeed, our research highlights that over half of women have been carers by age 46, and over half of men by 57.⁶

Both caring and employment contribute to the productivity of the UK economy. Our economies and public services rely on unpaid carers – the value of unpaid care is £184 billion to the UK economy per year.⁷ At the same time, carers report that caring can be beneficial to their own wellbeing. However, it is not without costs – carers experience a ‘triple penalty’ in terms of their own finances, relationships and health.⁸ Staying in paid work can help to mitigate these penalties providing positive outcomes including an enhanced income, social connections and a sense of identity.⁹ Yet it can be extremely challenging and our research highlights that often combining work and care negatively impacts income, job progression, free time and working hours.¹⁰ In this short overview, we will explore some of the challenges working carers face, the inequalities they experience, and also examine how other countries are supporting working carers through paid leave schemes.



Professor Kate Hamblin,
Director, Centre for Care



Dr Maria Petrillo,
Researcher,
Centre for Care

⁵ Zhang, Y. and Bennett, M.R. (2019) [Will I care? The likelihood of being a carer in adult life](#), London: Carers UK

⁶ Petrillo, M., Zhang, J. and Bennett, M.R. (2024) [Valuing Carers 2021/22: the value of unpaid care in the UK](#), London: Carers UK.

⁷ Petrillo, M., Zhang, J. and Bennett, M.R. (2024) [Valuing Carers 2021/22: the value of unpaid care in the UK](#), London: Carers UK

⁸ Keating, N., McGregor, J. A., & Yeandle, S. (2021). [Sustainable care: theorising the wellbeing of caregivers to older persons](#). *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 5(4), 611-630.

⁹ Watkins, M. and Overton, L. (2024). [The cost of caring: a scoping review of qualitative evidence on the financial wellbeing implications of unpaid care to older adults](#). *Ageing & Society*, online preview

¹⁰ Petrillo, M., Ibarra, D. V., Rahal, C., Zhang, Y., Pryce, G., & Bennett, M. R. (2024b). [Estimating the Cost of Informal Care with a Novel Two-Stage Approach to Individual Synthetic Control](#). arXiv preprint arXiv:2411.10314.

WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD IT MAKE TO PEOPLE JUGGLING WORK AND CARE?



Jemma, NHS employee and unpaid carer:

“Paid carers leave is needed to help and support us to carry on juggling both work and care. It makes good financial sense as it keeps people in work and disabled people at home and away from already stretched hospital beds. It prevents carers from financial hardship for simply caring for a loved one. Caring often falls to women, paid carers leave would help break down this barrier and for women to be able to work, if this is what they choose to do. It would also improve the wellbeing of carers, meaning there would be less breakdown of care. We would be able to take our holidays as leave and not use them all for caring”.



Liz, University employee and unpaid carer

“Work is really important to me as it contributes to my sense of identity and purpose. I derive a huge amount of pride from knowing that I’m doing an excellent job.

“If everybody had the same legal rights to work flexibly, and to take paid carers leave, then it would be normalised and feel like a regular part of life and not a huge inconvenience. I would feel more relaxed about changing jobs in the future. If I had access to 5 days paid carers leave I could take my child to appointments without losing my annual leave, enabling me to spend more quality time with them in their school holidays. I would be less stressed.

“I recognise that the experiences I have of caring for my disabled child have enhanced my abilities in the workplace. I am an excellent employee, because of my caring experience, not despite it”.



Amanda Rawlings, Chief People Officer
University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust

"University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust offers paid carers leave to employees. The Trust has a thriving and striving Carers Staff Network which champions the needs of working carers and supports the Trust to be understanding and responsive. The Network has guided the Trust to implement paid carers leave and develop the Carers Guidance and Passport. Paid carers leave has supported staff retention and staff report they feel well supported by the Trust and their line manager.

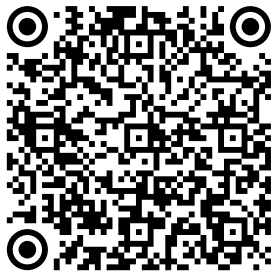
The Carers Guidance and Passport provides a framework for supportive conversations between working carers and their line manager, to explore and understand the challenges, and identify appropriate support, workplace adjustments and The Trust has signed the Carers Pledge and has worked in partnership with the Derbyshire Carers Association to be noted and achieve accreditation as a Carer Friendly Employer."

RELEVANT REPORTS AND EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Carers UK



'Taking the next steps for working carers – introducing a new right to paid Carer's Leave' (2024)



'State of Caring 2024: the impact of unpaid caring on employment' (2024)



'The Carer's Leave Act 2023: Six months on' (2025)

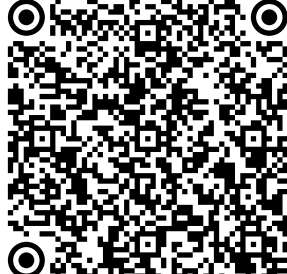


'Juggling work and care, a growing issue' (2019)

Other organisations



Business Disability Forum - submitted evidence to the BEIS consultation on carer's leave in August 2020



The Carers Trust- report 'Unpaid Carers with Health Needs in the Workplace' (2024)



Womens Budget Group published 'The Feminist Future of Work' (2024)



CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) published 'Supporting working carers: How employers and employees can benefit' (2020)



**Centre
for Care**

The Centre for Care is an ESRC-funded research centre, which co-produces excellent research on care topics that really matter. We work closely with partner organisations in the care sector including Carers UK, and people with lived experience. The Centre for Care links experts on care in 5 universities, 3 major charities including Carers UK, SCIE, National Children's Bureau as well and the UK's Office for National Statistics.

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