

Carers Pathway Forum Meeting - Guidance and Support for unpaid carers during Covid-19.

Islington Carers Hub invited unpaid carers to take part in the Carers Pathway Forum meeting, on Tuesday 4th August to discuss their experience of caring during the Covid-19 period.

What we presented

Islington Carers Hub presented the following information within the meeting, to give a wider view of the sorts of issues that carers nationwide have been experiencing.

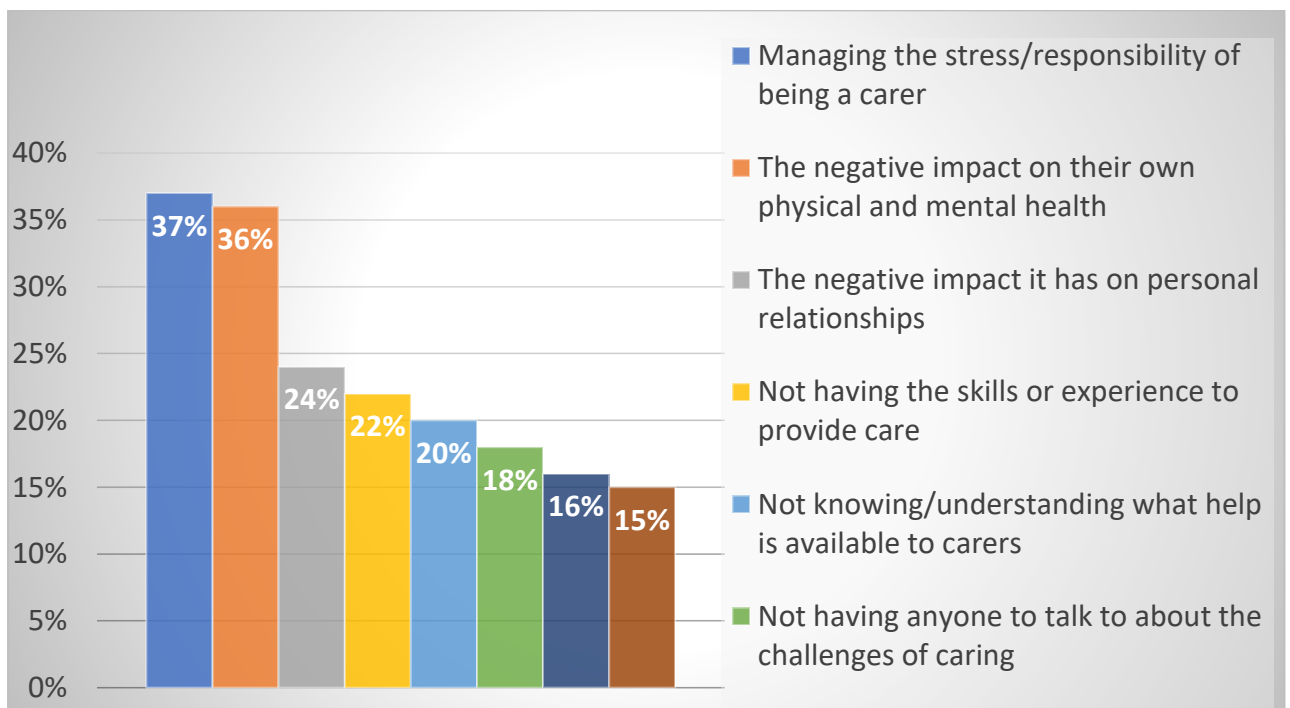
A recent survey by YouGov, in conjunction with Carers Week, and statistics from the Office National Statistics, highlight the issues that Carers have been coping with over the Covid-19 period.

People across the UK have been pulling together during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic with significant increases in the number of people providing unpaid caring support.

From making an extra meal, to buying essentials, almost half (48%) of people in the UK said that they provided help or support to someone outside of their household in the first month of lockdown in April 2020.

Although using a slightly different definition, this is a substantial increase since before the pandemic where just over 1 in 10 (11%) adults reported providing some regular service or help for a sick, disabled, or elderly person not living with them during 2017 to 2018.

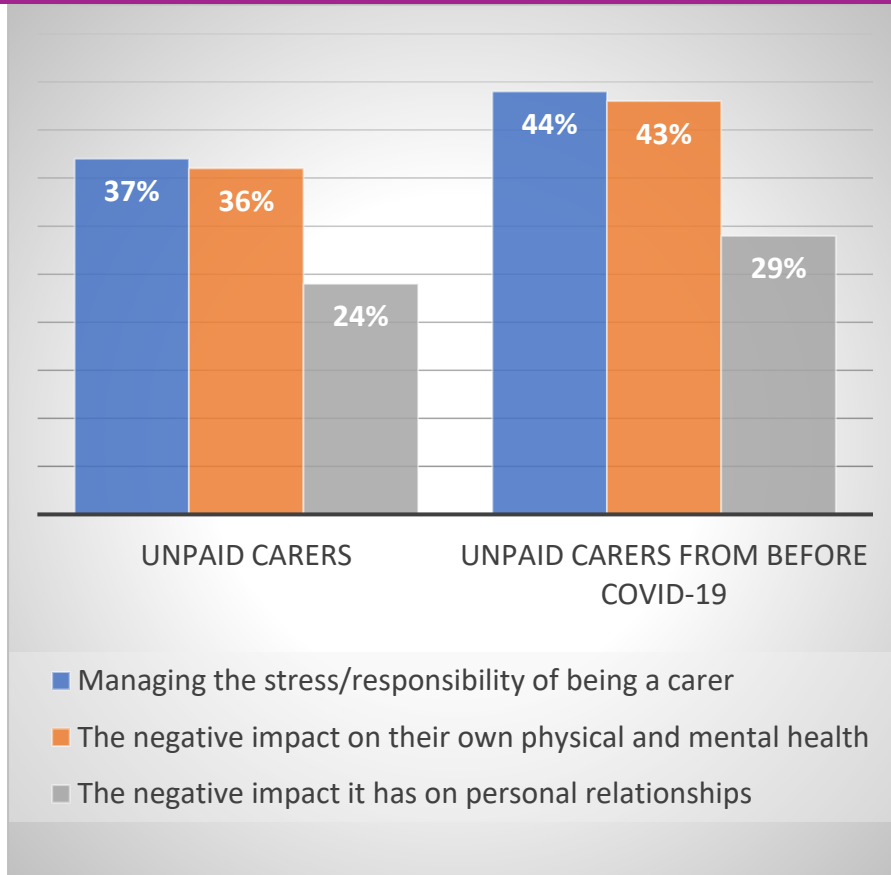
Concerns amongst unpaid carers (carers week polling with YouGov)



Difference between carers, caring from before Covid-19 and new carers

Unpaid carers, who were already caring before the coronavirus outbreak, were more likely than new carers to report that they have worries associated with their caring role. This will reflect the fact that many will have been caring for several years.

See the graph below based on information from the Office National Statistics.



Common issues experienced by Carers during Covid-19 / reported by Office National Statistics.

- Shopping was the most common support provided in April 2020.
- The likelihood of caring varies by age, sex, ethnicity and parental status.
- Carers providing help and support have seen the largest change in reporting poor mental health during Covid.
- Carers providing help or support are more likely than those who are not, to report feeling worse or much worse than usual on most wellbeing questions.
- Shielding and lockdown measures have prevented some people providing care to others.

- Carers who look after people they live with have also been affected by the pandemic.
- The most common worry of carers was feeling worried about the future.
- Staying in touch with family and friends is a main coping strategy for both carers and non-carers.

How Islington Carers Hub has helped Carers during Covid-19

This is a breakdown of the most common support that we've provided, in order of the number of people supported for that issue:

Case Work Action Sub Category

Shopping
Other
Carers Information Pack
Registration - Carers
Carers Assessment - General
Social Activities (Non AUKI) - General
Carer Assessment Self Supported
Benefit Check - General
Emergency Carers Card
Care Provision (General)
Flexible Breaks Fund Support
Emergency carers card application
Respite (Carers)
Domestic Support - General
Emotional Support
Get Help - AUKI Magazine
Carers Allowance
Direct Payments Personal Budgets
Social Activities (AUKI)
Housing Transfer
Power of Attorney
Resident Support Scheme - RSS
Counselling/Talking Therapies
Health Conditions
Needs Assessment (Social Services) - Cared For
Housing General
OT Services
Telecare
Work Preparation and Training
Attendance Allowance - DWP
Befriending
Day/Community Centres

The Carers Pathway Forum Meeting

The meeting resulted in a lively discussion, with the following feedback from carers:

- **Concern about virus transmission from external carers:** people were prepared to try and cope without any external carers because of concerns about the transmission of Covid.
- **Service priority for carers:** that people who providing unpaid care should have priority for services in the same way as key workers or people shielding received priority for things like shopping.
- **Proof of being a carer for dedicated shopping times:** letter proving that someone's a carer / Carers Emergency Card not consistently accepted, e.g. in supermarkets, and not online.
- **Questions about PPE equipment:** observation that many carers don't know how to use PPE equipment properly; concerns that facemasks are frightening to people with dementia; concerns about the low levels of people using facemasks on public transport correctly.
- **Carers Allowance is perceived to be low:** carers said that the Carers Allowance is not sufficiently adequate.

We'll feed this back to the local authority to explore possible solutions.

Please look out for the date of the next Carers Pathway meeting, and Carers Support Group meetings.