

## **‘GRANNANNYING’ IS THE WORD AS FIVE MILLION GRANDPARENTS TAKE ON CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Two-fifths (40%)<sup>[i]</sup> of the nation’s grandparents over the age of 50 – five million<sup>[ii]</sup> – have provided regular childcare for their grandchildren, according to a new YouGov poll for leading older people’s Charity Age UK.

*The new research, published by Age UK ahead of national Grandparents’ Day this Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> October), shines a light on the unique relationship between the older and younger generations, demonstrating the wide ranging benefits of keeping the generations connected. Highlighting the prevalence of ‘grannanning’ in today’s society,<sup>[iii]</sup> the new findings show that many of the nation’s 14 million grandparents<sup>[iv]</sup> are now playing a pivotal role in their grandchildren’s day-to-day lives.*

The survey revealed that the vast majority (89%) of the five million grandparents who provide(d) regular care<sup>[v]</sup> do so at least once a week, with one in 10 (12%) looking after their grandchildren at least once a day, a fifth (18%) looking after them 4-6 times a week, and two-fifths (38%) looking after them 2-3 times a week. Just over half (51%) of these grandparents providing regular care did so for up to five years and a further 28% did so for between 5-10 years, with well over half (57%) saying their help had enabled their own child/children to work more to support their family.<sup>[vi]</sup>

The findings show that the vast majority of grandparents surveyed that provide(d) regular care for their grandchildren also felt huge benefits from spending this time with their grandchildren, with half (50%) saying it kept them physically and mentally active, 14% admitting it stopped them from feeling lonely, and almost two-fifths (38%) admitting it gave them a sense of purpose. Nearly all (88%) said they enjoyed the time spent with their grandchildren and the opportunity to watch them flourish.<sup>[vii]</sup>

The findings reveal that almost nine out of 10 (89%) of all grandparents across the UK – including those who do not provide regular childcare – feel close to their grandchildren, with around a third (33%) of those playing the role of confidant for grandchildren with worries or problems. And while the same proportion also find themselves asked for advice and practical tips such as recipes and how to mend things, over a quarter (28%) said their grandchildren also provide practical help such as support with technology if they need it.<sup>[viii]</sup>

**Grandmother and Age UK supporter, Gloria Hunniford, said:** *“Being a grandparent is such a vital part of my life and I love having a close bond with my grandchildren. They bring me endless joy but on occasions we have helped each other through some very difficult times. Having watched them grow means so much to me and has given me a purpose when I needed it most.*

*“Grandparents’ Day is all about celebrating those whom we care about in our lives and taking time to recognise how important they are. It’s crucial that we do everything we possibly can to look after our loved ones so do your bit and help support Age UK to help make sure older people can love later life.”*

To mark Grandparents’ Day this Sunday and honour the millions of grandparents across the UK, Age UK is asking the nation to share photos of their grandparents along with a few words about a special memory on social media using the hashtag #Grandpics. For each photo uploaded, Age UK suggests a £5 online donation towards the Charity to help it support older people. For more information go to [www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/grandpics](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/grandpics).

The money raised will help Age UK to continue providing advice, support and companionship to older people who need it most, from helping the Charity support its local Age UK partners to deliver hands-on local services such as lunch clubs and home safety checks, to funding hugely important national work like its free information and advice line,<sup>[ix]</sup> campaigning and research.

**Age UK’s Charity Director, Caroline Abrahams, said:** *“Many grandparents play a vital role in the care of their grandchildren, and families across the country are clearly enjoying the benefits of the trend towards ‘grannanning’. With the majority of grandparents who provide childcare looking after their grandchildren at least once a week, it’s clear to see how such wonderfully close and long-lasting bonds can develop and it’s no wonder that so many grandparents have become their grandchildren’s confidant.*

*“This Grandparents’ Day is a perfect opportunity to recognise and celebrate the contribution of these very special people, whilst also helping us to raise vital funds to support older people all year round.”*

Age UK is also calling on grandparents who are under State Pension Age<sup>[x]</sup> and providing regular childcare to grandchildren under the age of 12 to see if they are entitled to claim National Insurance (NI) credits which could top up their State Pension.<sup>[xi]</sup> For more

information, people can contact the Charity's advice line, Age UK Advice, on Freephone 0800 169 65 65 or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) to download a [State Pension](#) factsheet free of charge.

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<sup>[i]</sup> All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc for Age UK. Total sample size was 1,048 UK grandparents aged 50 and over, of which 421 provided regular care for their grandchildren. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th - 31st August 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 50+).

<sup>[ii]</sup> There is an estimated total of 12.5 million grandparents in the UK over the age of 50: [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later\\_Life\\_UK\\_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true) (page 3). 40% of that figure is five million. Calculation done by Age UK, using YouGov data.

<sup>[iii]</sup> 'Grannannyng' – a phrase to describe the trend towards grandparents providing vital support on a day-to-day basis to their grandchildren.

<sup>[iv]</sup> There is an estimated total of 14 million grandparents in the UK – 12.5 million of this number are aged 50 and over. [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later\\_Life\\_UK\\_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true) (page 3).

<sup>[v]</sup> 40% of the estimated 12.5 million grandparents over the age of 50 in the UK figure is five million. Calculation done by Age UK, using YouGov data.

<sup>[vi]</sup> All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc for Age UK. Total sample size was 1,048 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th - 31st August 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

<sup>[vii]</sup> Ibid

<sup>[viii]</sup> Ibid

<sup>[ix]</sup> Last year, Age UK helped over five million older people with information and advice on a broad range of issues such as claiming benefits, housing options, paying for care and support, staying healthy, and making the most of the internet. People can call the Charity's advice line, Age UK Advice, on Freephone 0800 169 65 65.

<sup>[x]</sup> <https://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/about-pensions/the-state-pension/know-your-state-pension-age>

<sup>[xi]</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-insurance-credits-for-adults-who-care-for-a-child-under-12-fact-sheet/specified-adult-childcare-credits-fact-sheet>. A Freedom of Information (FOI) request earlier this year found that in the 12 months to September 2016, only 1,298 grandparents took advantage of the government scheme which allows them to receive transferred NI credits – despite an estimated 100,000 being eligible. Source: <https://www.royallondon.com/about/media/news/2017/january/grandparents-who-help-their-daughters-get-back-to-work-after-childbirth-are-missing-out-on-thousands-of-pounds/>

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**TWO-FIFTHS OF GRANDPARENTS PROVIDING REGULAR CHILDCARE  
BELIEVE THEIR FAMILY WOULD STRUGGLE FINANCIALLY WITHOUT THEIR  
HELP**

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Two million grandparents over the age of 50<sup>[xi]</sup> – two-fifths (40%) of all those who have provided regular childcare for their grandchildren<sup>[xi]</sup> – feel the family would have struggled financially without their help, according to a new YouGov poll for leading older people’s Charity Age UK.

*The new research, published by Age UK ahead of national Grandparents’ Day this Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> October), highlights the vital role played by the nation’s 14 million grandparents<sup>[xi]</sup> in enabling parents to work.*

The Charity’s new research found that well over half (57%) of grandparents surveyed providing regular childcare believe their help has enabled their own children to work more to support their family. Had they been unable to look after their grandchildren, a fifth (20%) of grandparents who have provided regular care feel the parents would have been unable to continue working, over a third (35%) felt they would have had to reduce their hours, and over half (54%) said the parents would have had to pay for formal childcare.<sup>[xi]</sup>

The survey also reveals the huge time commitment given by many grandparents, with the vast majority (89%) of those who provide or provided regular care doing so at least once a week, with one in 10 (12%) looking after their grandchildren at least once a day, a fifth (18%) looking after them 4-6 times a week, and almost two-fifths (38%) looking after them 2-3 times a week. Just over half (51%) of the grandparents who provided regular care for their grandchildren did so for up to five years and a further 28% did so for between 5-10 years.<sup>[xi]</sup>

Further demonstrating the commitment of grandparents across the country, the research reveals that just over a fifth (22%) of those who provided regular care for their grandchildren stopped work or reduced their hours in order to do so<sup>[xi]</sup> – **prompting Age UK to call on grandparents who are under State Pension Age<sup>[xi]</sup> and regularly looking after grandchildren under the age of 12 to see if they are entitled to claim National Insurance (NI) credits which could help to build up their State Pension.**<sup>[xi]</sup>

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A Freedom of Information (FOI) request earlier this year found that in the 12 months to September 2016, only 1,298 grandparents took advantage of the government scheme which allows them to receive transferred NI credits – despite an estimated 100,000 being eligible.<sup>[xi]</sup>

**Age UK’s Charity Director, Caroline Abrahams, said:** *"Many grandparents play a vital role in the care of their grandchildren, enabling their own children to stay in work and provide for the family. But many are unaware that they could be claiming extra credits to boost their State Pension which could make a significant difference to their retirement income. We’d like to hear from any grandparents who are providing regular care for their grandchildren and in their mid-60s or younger in case they are entitled to apply for NI credits."*

Age UK is urging any grandparent who thinks they may be entitled to get in touch by calling the Charity’s advice line, Age UK Advice, on Freephone 0800 169 6565 or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) to download a [State Pension](#) factsheet free of charge.

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### **Notes to editors**

<sup>[xi]</sup> Calculated by Age UK, using YouGov data. Two million is 40% of the five million who provide(d) regular childcare. The percentages are from the YouGov data and the grossed figures are based on the total number of grandparents aged 50 and over in the UK and calculated by Age UK.

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later\\_Life\\_UK\\_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true) (page 3).

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<sup>[xi]</sup> There is an estimated total of 14 million grandparents in the UK – 12.5 million of this number are aged 50 and over. [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later\\_Life\\_UK\\_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=true) (page 3).

<sup>[xi]</sup> Ibid

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<sup>[xi]</sup> <https://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/about-pensions/the-state-pension/know-your-state-pension-age>

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[xi] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-insurance-credits-for-adults-who-care-for-a-child-under-12-fact-sheet/specified-adult-childcare-credits-fact-sheet>

[xi] FOI source: <https://www.royallondon.com/about/media/news/2017/january/grandparents-who-help-their-daughters-get-back-to-work-after-childbirth-are-missing-out-on-thousands-of-pounds/>

### **Age UK**

We work with our national partners, Age Scotland, Age Cymru and Age NI and our local Age UK partners in England (together the Age UK Family). We also work internationally for people in later life as a member of the DEC and with our sister charity Help Age International.

Age UK believes that everyone should have the opportunity to make the most of later life, whatever their circumstances. We provide free information, advice and support to over six million people; commercial products and services to over one million customers; and research and campaign on the issues that matter to people in later life. Our work focuses on five key areas: money matters, health and well-being, home and care, work and training and leisure and lifestyle.

Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (registered charity number 1128267 and company number 6825798). Age Concern England and Help the Aged (both registered charities), and their trading and other associated companies merged on the 1st April 2009. Together they have formed the Age UK Group ("we"). Charitable services are offered through Age UK and commercial products are offered by the Charity's trading companies, which donate their net profits to Age UK (the Charity).

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