

Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap



About us

Employers for Carers (EfC) is an exciting, innovative and growing service for employers. Chaired by BT and supported by the specialist knowledge of Carers UK, its key purpose is to provide practical, "on hands", help to employers to support the one in seven carers in their workforce. Launched in January 2009 as an employers' membership forum, EfC now has over 50 member organisations, representing at least one million employees across the public and private sectors. Member services include a dedicated website with a range of practical resources, networking facilities, model policies and case studies, resources for employees and access to expert training and consultancy. For further information please visit www.employersforcarers.org.

Carers UK is a charity set up to help the millions of people who care for family or friends. At some point in our lives every one of us will look after an older relative, a sick friend or a disabled family member. Six million people in the UK are caring now but whilst caring is part and parcel of life, without the right support the personal costs can be high. Carers UK supports carers, provides information and advice about caring, delivers training and consultancy services and campaigns to make life better for carers. For more details please visit www.carersuk.org.

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Executive Summary

Caring is an issue which affects every family in the UK, and at some point in our lives we will all care for a loved one or need care ourselves. With our ageing population and workforce – and increasing mobility through employment – managing caring at a distance is also moving centre stage as a business issue.

Within the UK:

- Three million people juggle paid work with unpaid caring responsibilities – one in seven people in any workplace – and this number is set to increase by half as much again in the next 25 years.
- 90% of working carers are aged 30 plus (in their prime employment years) and the peak age for caring is 45-64 when many employees will have gained valuable skills and experience.
- One in six people give up work to care – a real loss both to employers and families.

Globally:

- There are 125 million informal carers in Europe. 41% of those caring for an older person are in paid work.
- In the US the informal carer population stands at 44.4 million, 59% of whom are in full or part time work.
- Within Canada distance working carers – those caring for someone they don't live with or near – are more likely to fall out of paid work than co-resident carers.

This report, *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap*, arises from the first ever research survey undertaken of employers and employees on this topic. The survey was undertaken during April and May 2011 by the Employers for Carers forum (which is administered and supported by the charity Carers UK) in association with leading global investment bank, Nomura.

'Managing caring at a distance' was defined as supporting/caring unpaid for an ill, frail or disabled relative, partner or friend who may be living in another part of the town, region, country or the world.

The aim of the **Employer survey** was to identify practical ways in which employers, in conjunction with external support services, can best support their "at a distance" carer employees. Employers were invited to respond and to encourage their workforce to take part in the parallel anonymous employee survey. The aim of the **Employee survey** was to gain a fuller understanding of the challenges faced by employees who are managing caring at a distance in order to identify and recommend solutions to facilitate better support.

Both surveys were conducted online, with all information being treated in absolute confidence.

Key findings

Employer survey:

52 employer organisations took part in the survey from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors.

Support offered to carers:

- A clear majority of employers (70%) said that they had not identified the particular needs of employees who are managing caring at a distance.
- Most (95%) stated that they offered flexible working arrangements to employees and 78% said that they provided flexible leave.
- Over three quarters (76%) said that they offered other types of practical support such as an Employee Assistance Programme and/or support to manage stress.
- Two thirds (66%) said that they signpost information about caring and related issues or organise/take part in awareness raising events (61%).
- Other types of support included a specific policy for carers (39%), an employee carers' network (34%) and publicity of support available for carers.
- A relatively small number (17%) provided training and support to managers.

Employers' support needs:

- The vast majority (83%) were seeking more practical help from external care and support services, with three quarters (75%) wanting easier access to practical tools and information to help signpost employees to external support.
- 70% wanted to identify clearer, more accessible public information for employees about where they can get help and services for the person they are caring for.
- Other identified priorities were:
 - local information about how and where working carers can seek support (68%);
 - information about supportive technology (60%); and
 - practical tools and information to support and maintain in-house employee networks to encourage peer to peer support (60%).

Employee survey

982 individuals who were caring at a distance took part in the survey; two thirds were female and one third were male, with the majority (60%) aged 40-54. Ethnicity broadly reflected that of the general UK population.

Impact of caring on capacity to work

- Only 10% of respondents said that caring had had no impact on their capacity to work and that they felt confident about coping in the future.
- Nearly half of carers (43%) indicated that their work had been negatively affected by caring and that they felt tired, stressed and anxious.
- One in three carers (33%) were worried that caring might have an impact on their capacity to work in the future although it had had no impact to date.
- Almost one in four (23%) had changed their working pattern to care.
- 14% had reduced their hours and 10% had taken on a less senior role to care.

Support provided by distance carers:

- The majority (69%) were caring for an older relative, around one in five for a son or daughter and around one in ten for their spouse or partner.
- One in ten cared for more than one person; those aged 40-54 were far more likely to do this (61%) than any others and women of this age almost twice as likely as men.
- The majority (82%) were providing emotional support (mostly in combination with other forms of support) and (also 82%) regular practical help such as managing care arrangements, shopping and housework.
- A large number (75%) were also helping with paperwork and financial matters.
- Other types of support included: managing medication (49%), supporting leisure activities (44%), assisting with personal care (41%) and providing physical help such as assisting with getting up and walking (38%).
- Most carers (three fifths) provided between 1-19 hours care per week, with one fifth providing 20-34 hours and a further fifth providing 35 or more; strikingly, 46% of the latter group were also working full time.

Current support for distance carers outside the workplace:

- Nearly a quarter (23%) of carers said that they received very little help or no help.
- Of the 77% of carers who received some kind of help, support from relatives, friends or neighbours was the most common form reported (57%); however, some reported a lack of support and that caring had had a negative impact on family relationships.
- Other types of support reported by around a quarter of carers included: equipment in the home of the person they were caring for (28%); practical support from care workers (26%); support for care management (25%); and use of assistive technology (23%).
- A small minority (7%) received carers' breaks.

Current support for distance carers within the workplace:

- Flexible working arrangements was, as expected, the most commonly available type of support cited by carers (43%).
- Around a quarter of carers mentioned the following: a specific policy for carers at work (28%), practical support such as an Employee Assistance Programme or support to manage stress (27%), an employee network for carers (25%), and flexible leave arrangements (25%).
- Interestingly, only 6% of carers mentioned training of managers in carer awareness and implementing support.
- Nearly one in five (19%) were not sure about the type of support available and a similar number (18%) reported that they were not receiving any workplace support.
- Three quarters (73%) had informed their employer/line manager about their caring responsibilities but it is not known whether this was in a formal or informal context.

Distance carers' support needs within the workplace:

- Nearly half (48%) of carers wanted to see better information about what workplace support was available, and, related to this, more publicity about/recognition of caring issues in the workplace (44%).
- Other key issues identified were more flexible arrangements for working hours and patterns (44%) and more flexible arrangements for leave (38%).
- Carers also wanted to have: information that can be accessed online from work, home or elsewhere (29%), signposting to external sources of support (23%), a link up with other employees in a similar situation (21%), other practical workplace support such as counselling, Employee Assistance Programmes, stress management help, etc (20%).
- One in five (20%) felt that the support they currently received was adequate and at the right level to help them manage.

Distance carers' support needs outside the workplace:

- A clear majority of carers (62%) said that they wanted clearer and easier access to information about where to get help and services for the person they were caring for.
- Over a third of carers wanted more help from care services/care workers (37%), more support for care management/coordination (35%) and better access to local information about getting support as a carer, eg to get a break from caring (35%).
- One third (33%) also needed more support for household chores for the person they were caring for.
- Interestingly, just over a fifth wanted help to get appropriate equipment (aids and adaptations) for the person they were caring for (22%) and help to get supportive technology (also 22%).

Key issues

Supporting the "sandwich generation"

One key issue which emerges from the survey is the pressure on what is often described as the "sandwich generation". This includes people – often women – who are combining care for an older relative (usually a parent or parent in law and often at a distance) with a range of other responsibilities such as looking after their own children or caring for another family member or friend. It is striking that:

- The majority of respondents to the employee survey (60%) were within this age range (ie between 40-54).
- The majority (69%) of (all) respondents to the survey were caring for an older relative; and those aged 40-54 were far more likely to care for more than one person than other carers (61% as opposed to the average of 10%).
- Women within this age range (40-54) were also almost twice as likely as men to care for more than one person.

There is an implication here for employers in terms of retaining their staff within this age group, many of whom will have gained valuable skills and experience. Service providers and government policy makers also need to ensure that care and support services are accessible and flexible to fit around twenty first century working patterns.

Responding to the cumulative effects of caring

Another issue which the survey highlights is the cumulative pressures of caring upon employees. Caring does not just have a physical component associated with practical, "transactional", activities such as personal care and practical support for someone; there is also the mental component associated with stress, anxiety and tiredness. It is striking that:

- Nearly half of survey respondents (43%) indicated that their work had been negatively affected by caring and that they felt tired, stressed and anxious.
- Even where respondents said that caring had had no impact on their capacity to work to date, as many as one in three were worried that it might in the future.
- The number of respondents providing emotional support to family members or friends was very high (82%), which raises the question how can carers themselves be supported to maintain their own mental health and wellbeing?

While carers may manage to combine work and care – often running on adrenalin – the survey demonstrates that they do need support to sustain this dual role. There is an implication here for employers in terms of supporting employees to manage stress and maintain their health and wellbeing and for service providers and Government to ensure that carers have the external back up they need from care and support services.

Recommendations

With these issues in mind, we make the following recommendations for practical solutions to facilitate better support for employees who are managing caring at a distance. The recommendations include action for Government, local authorities, service providers and employers to take. Caring touches every aspect of our lives; it cannot be supported by only one party but demands an integrated response – caring is everybody's business.

We believe there should be:

- *Accessible and easy to navigate information about external sources of care and support.* This should be readily available at both national and local level - including online - to people combining care with busy working lives. Accessibility and navigation is particularly important for distance carers as they often have to find information about care services, for example, in a different local authority area from where they live. Information should be provided at national and local level by: Government departments, JobcentrePlus, local authorities, other care providers, local advice services and disability, condition specific and older people's organisations.
- *Linked with this, there must be a sufficient supply of care and support services* in order to support distance carers to work and care. Services need to be affordable, reliable, portable and flexible in order to fit around people's working patterns. They also need to offer a range of support as articulated in responses to the survey, which highlighted issues such as help from care workers, support for care management/co-ordination, help with household tasks and support in taking a break from caring. There is clearly an unmet need among working carers for further support from external services. Growing the supply of care and support services is therefore an issue which needs to be considered as a priority at local and national level, by both local authorities and national government.
- *Better promotion of supportive technologies* which can help both the person who is being cared for and the distance carer. Just over a fifth (22%) of survey respondents wanted help to get supportive technology such as telecare or remote health monitoring and a similar number mentioned appropriate equipment in the home such as aids and adaptations. These technologies need to be available for the majority of people who are "self funders" and who pay for their care, as well as those who receive social care services from their local authority.

- *Tools to manage stress and build resilience.* The high percentage (82%) of employees reporting that they provide emotional support to family members or friends raises the question about the emotional pressures on carers themselves. As mentioned above, the response to the survey suggests that providing this form of support to a relative or friend can often be the most stressful part of caring. Practical tools to help employees manage this and build personal resilience should be made available in a number of ways, including in the workplace, or accessible from home or elsewhere. They should be provided by employers with the assistance of employer support organisations such as employers' forums, Employee Assistance Programmes and occupational health providers etc. Employers for Carers (EfC), for example, has longstanding experience of providing such support for employees in the workplace, along with carer awareness training for managers. Service providers, including local authorities and health organisations, should also offer support to carers in this way as well as ensuring that carers can access breaks. At national level, Government should also play a role by leading the way as an employer and as a service provider via the promotion and dissemination of practical information and support through information services. Carers UK is developing tools to help manage stress and build resilience.
- *Practical toolkits for employers to support employee carers' networks.* Linked with the above, and in view of the relatively high proportion (60%) of employers who stated that they would like help to do this, practical tools should be provided to employers to help them to support employee carers' networks. Evidence suggests that these networks can play a valuable role in providing peer to peer support which is helpful both to employee and employer. EfC, in partnership with Carers UK, is developing its current work to facilitate the sharing of information between employee networks so that distance carers – and employers – can benefit from this exchange. Government can also play a key role in leading by example as an employer and in promoting wider awareness.
- *More support for line managers to implement carer friendly practices.* The relatively low percentage (17%) of employers reporting that they provide training and support for managers and the disparity between what many organisations appear to have "on paper" and the reported experience of employees suggests that there is a reality and implementation gap in many workplaces between policy and practice. Training and toolkits, like the one developed with employers by EfC, to support line managers to deal with caring issues – including distance caring - should be more widely available in the workplace. Toolkits such as this are best when they are practically focussed with case study examples to bring the issues alive to managers who may not yet have had direct experience of caring. Employer support organisations such as employers' forums and organisations providing HR or occupational health support should assist employers to use and implement these tools.
- *Active change management and culture change within the workplace.* The findings suggest a disconnect between employer policy and employee experience in line with previous surveys. The fact that three quarters of employees surveyed said that their line manager was aware of their caring responsibilities but nearly one in five (19%) were not sure about the type of support available and a similar number (18%) reported that they were not receiving any workplace support, suggests that there is a communications gap. While employers may have circulated information about workplace support to all managers and staff, this disconnect suggests that such messages have not been really understood or embedded in the workplace. Communication of carer support needs to be backed up by active change management strategies in the workplace, including carer awareness training for line managers and staff, in order to achieve real culture change. EfC and Carers UK have longstanding experience of developing and delivering carer awareness training, including information about the business benefits of supporting carers, in order to achieve culture change within the workplace. Employer support and training organisations can also play a key role in implementing and embedding carer support in the workplace, as can Government by leading by example as an employer and promoting wider public awareness.

Employers

Most people's lives will include at least one episode of caring. Already one in seven employees in any workplace will be caring for someone who is ill, frail or has a disability. But with the number of carers in the UK set to rise from six million to nine million over the next 30 years, the proportion of working carers is likely to increase significantly.

Already 90% of working carers are aged 30 plus - employees in their prime employment years. The peak age for caring is 45-64 when many employees will have gained valuable skills and experience. This is also a global issue, with these statistics reflected across Europe and internationally. In the current global economic climate there has never been a more important time to focus on the benefits of retaining skilled workers rather than incurring the costs of recruiting and retraining new staff.

An increasing number of employers are recognising the issue and are taking steps to better understand and meet the complex needs of employees with caring responsibilities.

The aim of this study was to assess the kind of support and policies that employers are using and to explore whether those are sufficient to enable employees who manage care at distance to juggle work and care. In addition we tried to evaluate what type of support employers themselves require in order to better understand the needs of carers and, therefore, to be able to design and offer a useful mix of support to their employees.

The total number of employers who responded to the survey was 52. Although the relatively moderate number of responses reminds us to treat any generalisations cautiously, employers' responses offered a valuable insight into issues such as workplace support, extent of recognition of carer needs, etc.

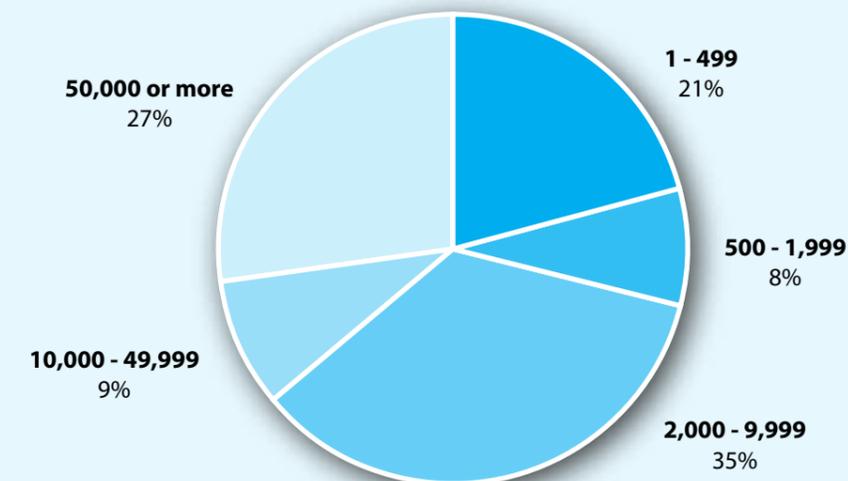
Sector

A wide range of sectors has been identified among respondents with employers coming from the Public, Private and Voluntary and Community sectors. Within the Private sector employers operated within a good blend of industries such as IT, Telecommunications, Retail, Banking and Financial Services, Media, Housing, Pharmaceutical and Professional Services. Within the Public sector, Government and Local Government Departments as well as the Health Care sector were well represented.

Number of employees

Figure 1.1 Number of employees

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

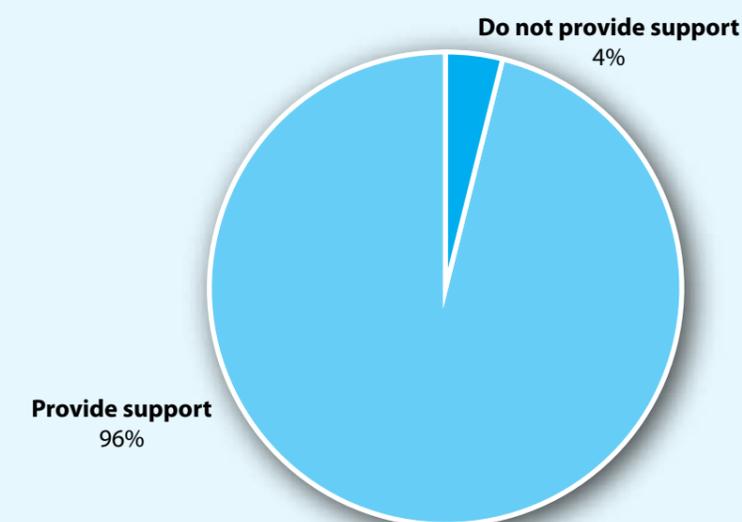


Support to employees with caring responsibilities

Most employers indicated that they do offer some kind of support system(s) in order to respond to the needs of employees with caring responsibilities. While this is encouraging an important factor to take into consideration is that employers who do have such support mechanisms in place would generally have been more likely to take part in the survey in the first place as it would have been easier for them to recognise and relate to the subject. This might have resulted in an over-representation of employers providing some kind of support.

Figure 1.2 Percentage of employers providing support to employees with caring responsibilities

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Type of support provided by employers

We asked employers to identify the type of support available to employees who are juggling work and care.

As expected, most employers (95%) stated that they offer flexible working arrangements to employees, while a significant number (78%) of them offered flexible leave arrangements.

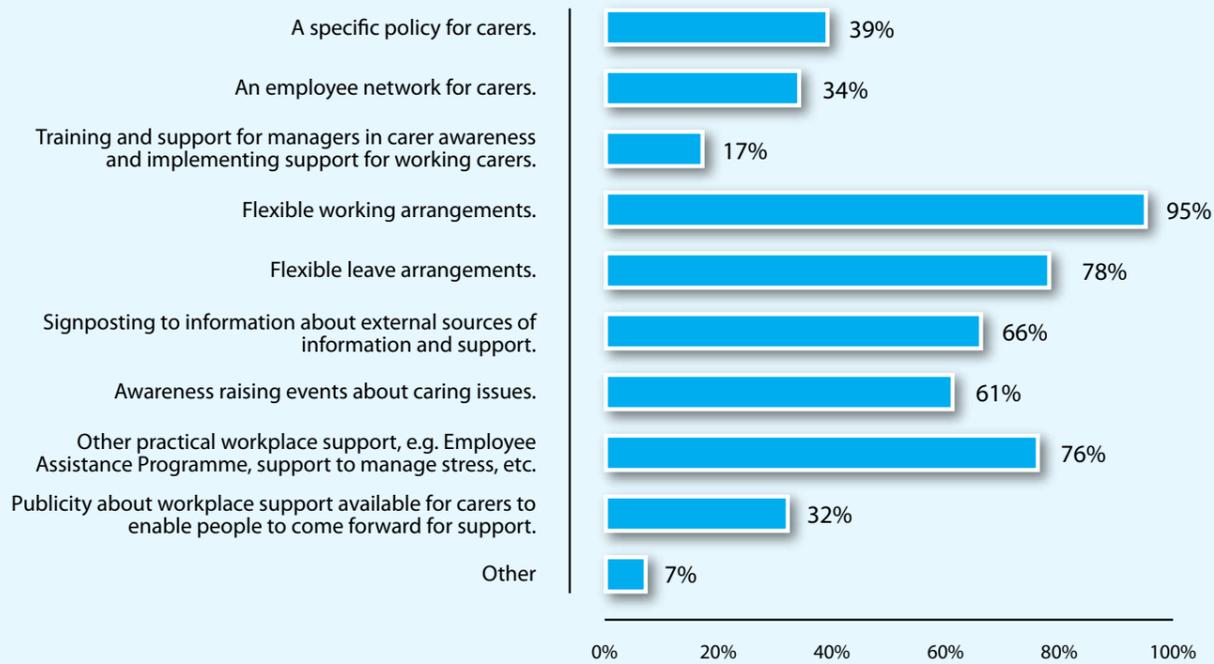
Over three quarters (76%) of employers offered other types of practical support, such as an Employee Assistance Programme and/or support to manage stress. Two thirds (66%) of employers indicated that they signpost to information about caring, health and financial issues, while a similar percentage (61%) reported that they organise or take part in awareness raising events such as the national Carers Week.

Other types of support included a specific policy for carers (39%), an employee network for carers (34%) and publicity of support available for carers to enable staff to come forward and seek support.

A smaller percentage of employers (17%) said that they take extra measures to assist working carers by providing training and support to managers regarding caring issues. Other types of support involved "Carers Needs Assessments" by managers, however, only a small minority (2%) identified such practices.

Figure 1.3 Type of support provided by employers

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Types of flexible working and leave arrangements

We encouraged employers who said that they offered flexible working and leave arrangements to further describe the type of policies in place.

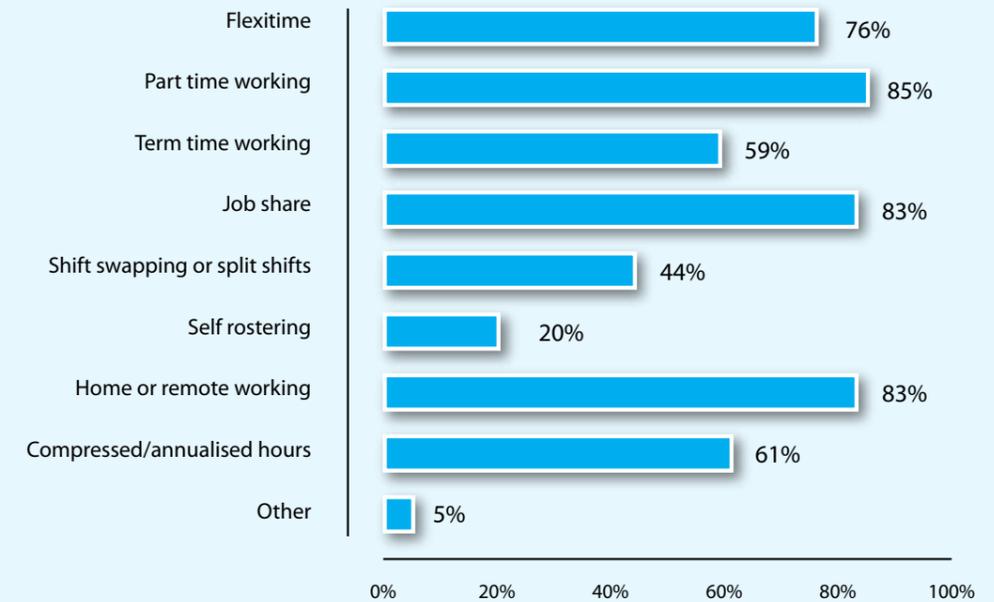
Flexible working

Part time working, job share and home or remote working were the most popular practices with 85%, 83% and 83% of employers respectively stating that they offer this type of support. Flexitime was another popular policy with more than three quarters of employers offering it (76%).

Other types of flexible working arrangements included compressed/annualised hours (61%), term time working (59%), shift swapping or split shifts (44%) and self rostering (20%).

Figure 1.4 Type of flexible working arrangements provided by employers

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

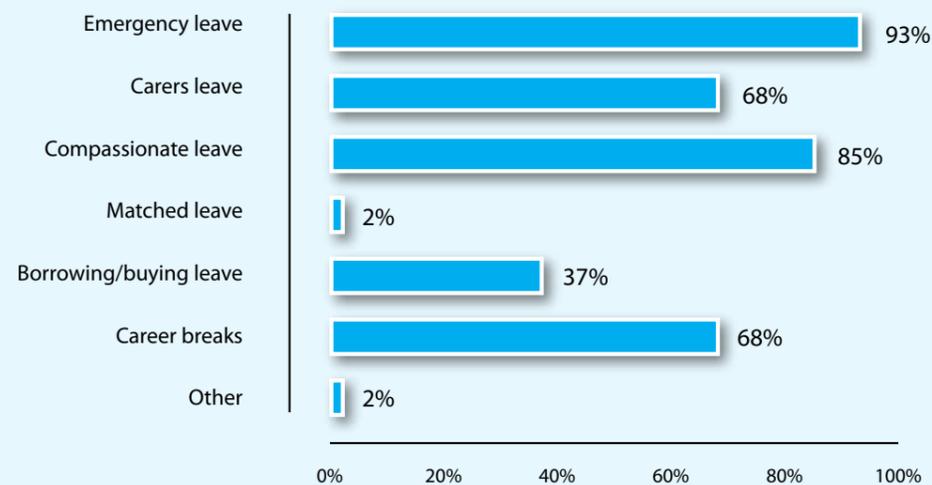


Flexible leave arrangements

Emergency leave was the most popular practice among employers with 93% of respondents stating that they offer such an option. A further 85% of employers offer compassionate leave and an encouraging 68% offer carers leave. Other types of leave options included career breaks (68%), borrowing/buying leave (37%) and matched leave (2%).

Figure 1.5 Type of flexible leave arrangements provided by employers

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Some employers further explained that certain flexible working and leave arrangements were dependent on the role of an employee within the organisation, while others indicated that although flexible working and leave arrangements were in place, implementation of a number of policies was difficult in reality as they were currently facing staff shortages.

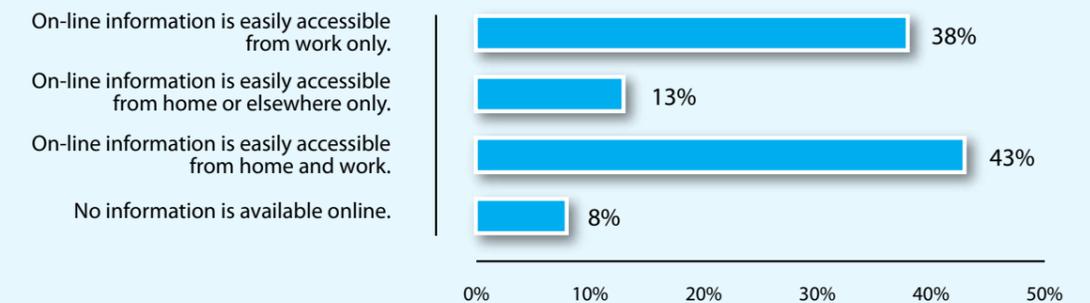
On-line availability and ease of accessibility of workplace support information

We asked employers whether they made workplace support information and resources available on-line and how easily accessible this information was for employees.

An encouraging 43% stated that on-line information is available and that it can be accessed both from the workplace as well as remotely from home or elsewhere. Another 38% stated that they do provide on-line information but it can only be accessed from work, while 13% of the respondents said that although on-line information is available, it has to be accessed outside the workplace (from home or elsewhere). A large minority of employers reported that they do not provide any on-line information (8%).

Figure 1.6 On-line availability and ease of accessibility of workplace support information

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



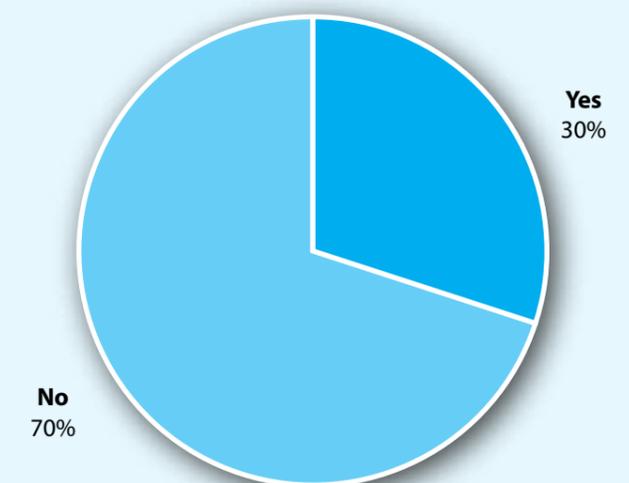
Identification of working carers' needs

We encouraged employers to tell us whether they have identified the particular needs of employees who are managing care at a distance. Although 30% of employers said that they have identified such needs an overwhelming 70% responded that they have not.

Among employers who reported that they tried to respond to the specific needs of staff who manage care at distance, respondents indicated that they allow flexibility to managers to assess individual support needs, consent to flexible start and finish hours, offer special time out schemes and remote working and have trained staff to support and advise.

Figure 1.7 Employers' responses when asked whether they had identified the particular needs of employees who are managing care at distance

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Support needs of employers

We asked employers to tell us what type of support would enable them to respond better to the needs of employees who are managing care at distance.

The majority (83%) of employers were seeking more practical help from external care and support services which will help to ensure that employees with caring responsibilities are supported to stay in work and can juggle work and care.

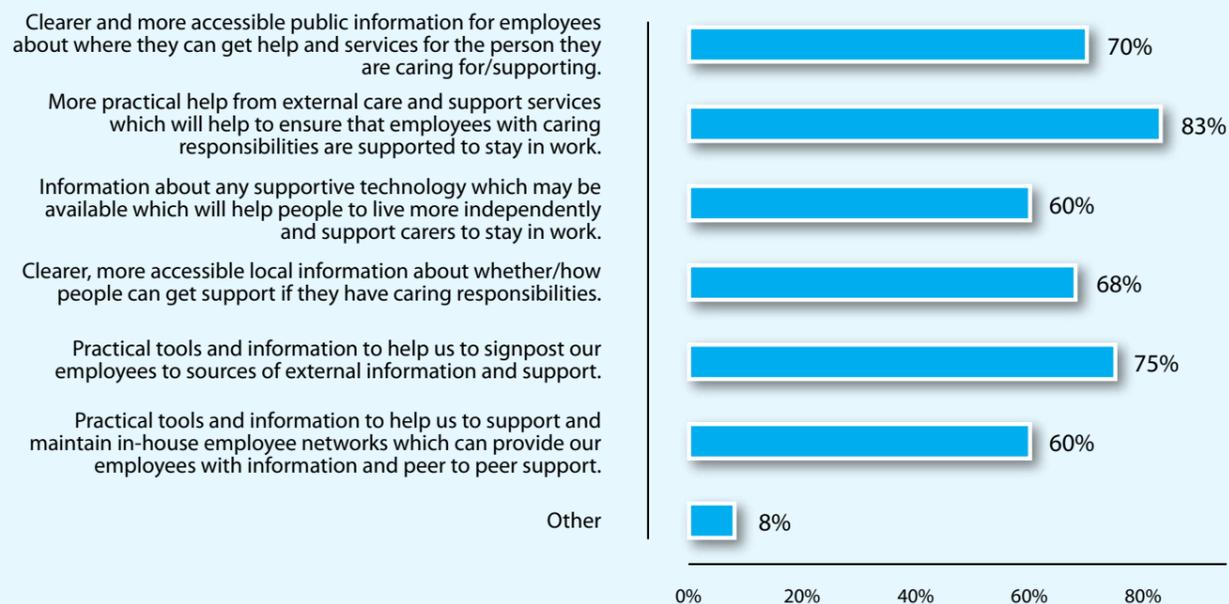
Three quarters (75%) of employers wish to have easier access to practical tools and information to help signpost employees to sources of external information and support.

A significant 70% would like to be able to identify clearer and more accessible public information for employees about where they can get help and services for the person they are caring for.

Information about supportive technology (60%), available local information about how and where working carers can seek support (68%) and practical tools and information to support and maintain in-house employee networks and thus encourage peer to peer support (60%) were evidently important among respondents.

Figure 1.8 Support requirements of employers in order to better respond to the needs of employees who are managing care at distance

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Employees

According to the 2001 Census, there are six million carers in the UK – one in eight adults – 57% of whom are female and 42% male. Over a million people care for more than one person and 1.25 million people provide over 50 hours of care per week. The peak age of caring is 45-64.

Two thirds (66%) of carers are of working age and 90% of working carers are aged 30+ – people in their prime employment years. There are three million working carers in the UK – one in seven in every workforce. Over 1.5 million carers work full time, among them almost 185,000 caring for 50+ hours per week.

Juggling the demands of caring with the responsibilities of a paid job can be difficult. People often feel pulled in two directions and as many as one in five people with significant caring responsibilities give up work to care.

Having explored what support employers are reporting to be offering working carers, this study aimed at assessing how this support is perceived by employees who manage care at a distance. We wanted to know whether working carers are informed about the different support types within the workplace and whether, or to what extent, they find this support sufficient to enable them juggle work and care.

A total of 982 people who are managing care at a distance took part in this survey. The survey was initially designed to address solely working carers. However, it was evident that a number of people who have combined work and care but have recently left work also shared valuable opinions. We therefore included in our analysis those carers who had recently retired, been made redundant, or left work to care.

Age of carers

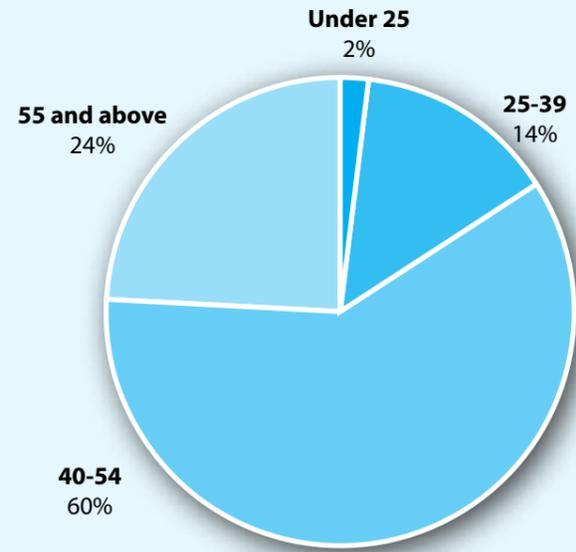
Consistent with the peak age for caring, the majority of the respondents (60%) belonged to the 40-54 age group, a group also known as the sandwich generation with people often caring both for elderly parents and younger children.

About one quarter of the carers (24%) were aged over 55 and another 14% were aged between 25-39.

As expected, a small minority (2%) of our sample was aged under 25 years.

Figure 2.1 Age of carers

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

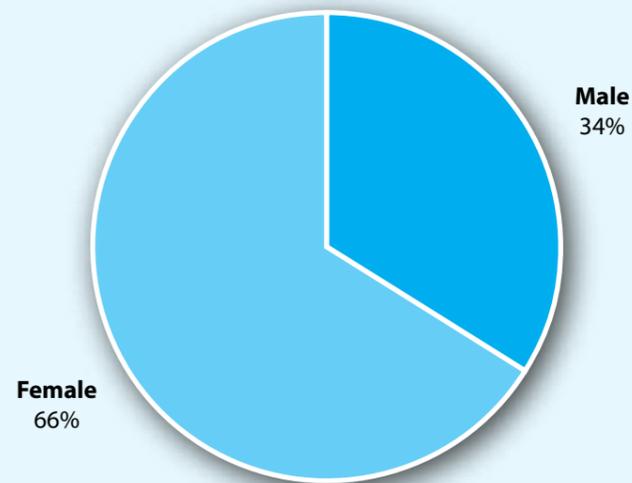


Gender of carers

In terms of gender, carers who participated in the survey somewhat deviated from the national average. Women were over-represented with 66% of carers in our sample being females and 34% males (National average: 58% females and 42% males).

Figure 2.2 Gender of carers

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

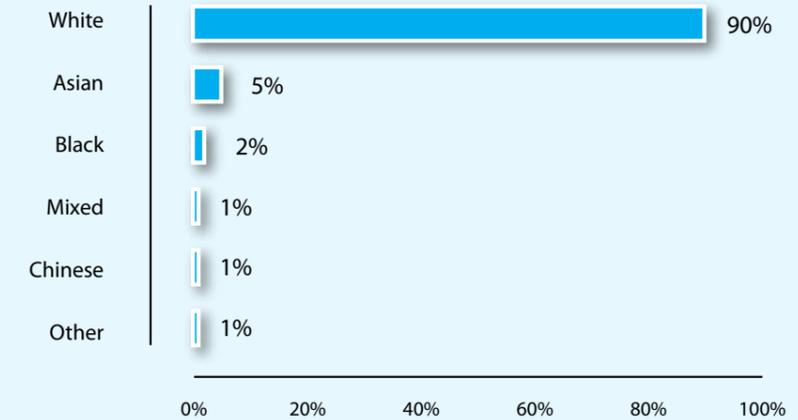


Ethnicity of carers

The majority of carers in our sample came from a white ethnic background (90%). Another 5% of them were Asian, 2% black, 1% Chinese and 1% from a mixed background. This distribution broadly reflects quite well both the general population in the UK as well as the ethnic distribution among the six million carers in the UK.

Figure 2.3 Ethnicity of carers

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Working carers

Most working carers in our sample were employed full time (77%), while another 21% were working part time. Only a small 2% of carers were self employed. A small majority of carers (46%) were employed in the private sector. Two in five carers (40%) were working in the public sector, while 15% of carers were employed in the not-for-profit sector.

Figure 2.4 Working carers by type of work

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

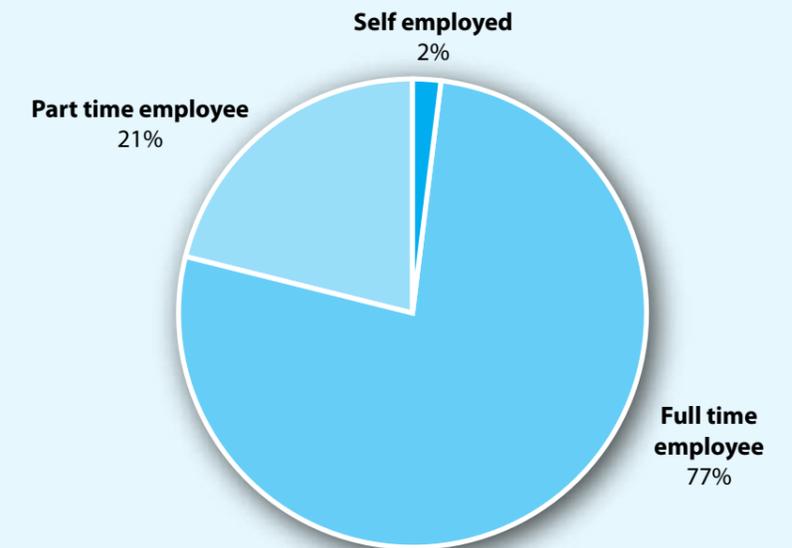
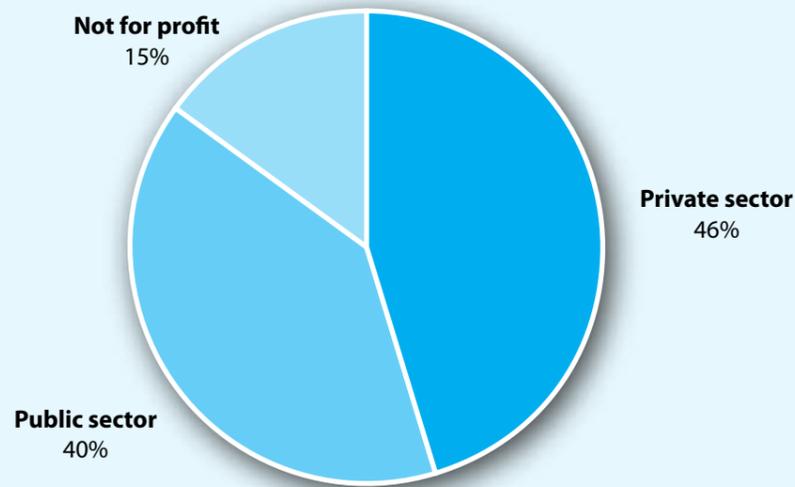


Figure 2.5 Working carers by sector of work

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



The above percentage totals do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

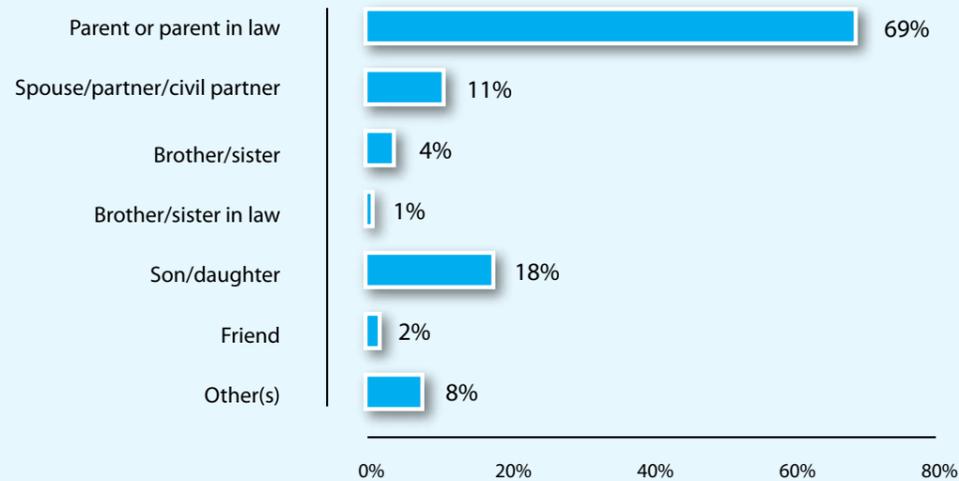
Who do carers care for?

Most of the carers in our study (69%) were caring for an older person (parent or parent in law). About one in five, (18%), were supporting/caring for a son or daughter, while around one in ten, (11%), were supporting their spouse, partner or civil partner. Fewer people were caring for a sibling (4%) or a brother or sister in law (1%).

A large minority of carers (8%) said that they cared for someone else, including aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, grandparents or cousins.

Figure 2.6 Who are carers caring for

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



There were a number of respondents who cared for more than one person (10%), including cases where one person cared for three or four people at the same time. Men and women were equally likely to care for more than one person.

Carers aged between 40-54 years were far more likely to care for more than one person than any other age group (61%). In this age group women were almost twice as likely to care for more than one person (65%) compared to men (35%).

Those aged less than 40 or more than 55 years were less likely to care for more than one person (18% and 20% respectively). Within these age groups men and women were equally likely to care for more than one person. No one who was aged under 25 in our sample cared for more than one person.

Figure 2.7 How many people do carers care for

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

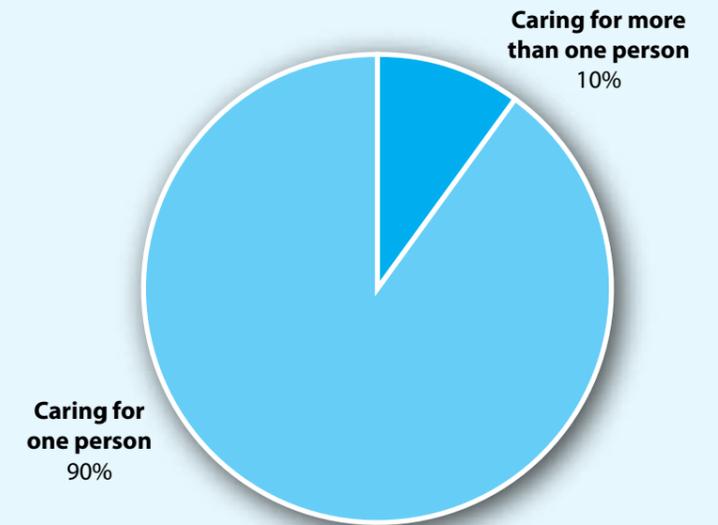


Figure 2.8 People caring for more than one person by gender

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

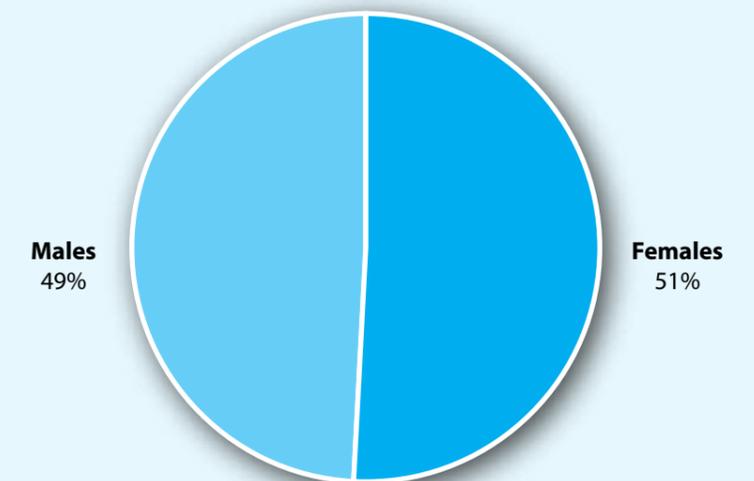
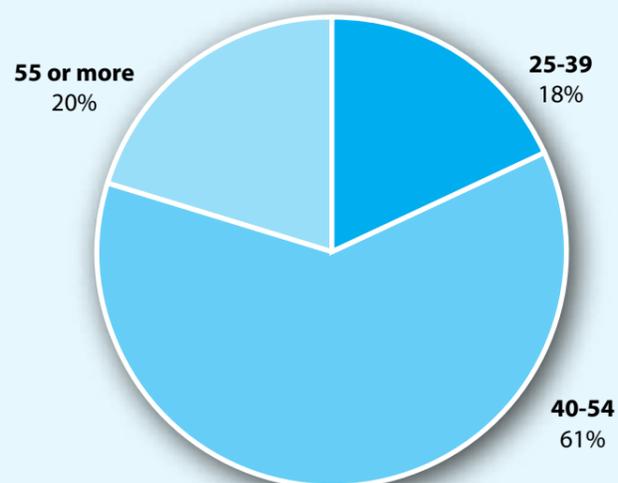


Figure 2.9 People caring for more than one person by age

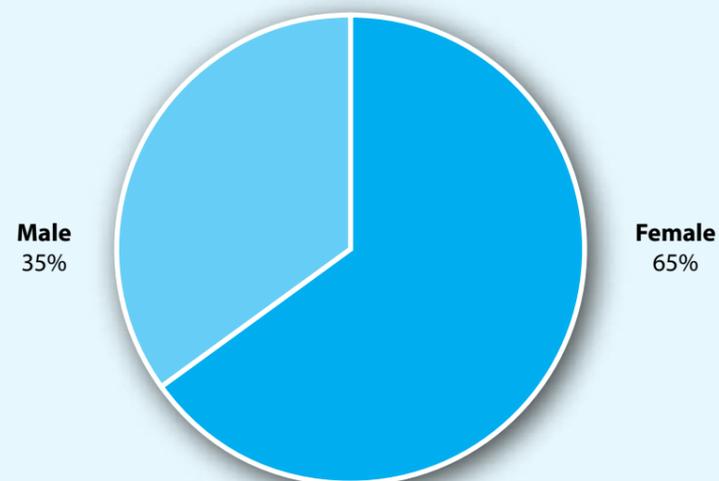
Source: Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.



The above percentage totals do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 2.10 People caring for more than one person by gender (40-54 age group)

Source: Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.



Type of help/support provided by carers

Providing emotional support seems to be common among carers with 82% of them indicating that they offer this type of support. However, only 6% of carers reported that they were solely providing emotional support. For most of them emotional support seems to be one of the many ways they support the person they care for.

Another 82% of carers said that on a regular basis they provide practical help such as preparing or ordering meals, shopping, housework and managing health and social care arrangements (including travelling to and from appointments). Just over three quarters (76%) of carers also said that they help with paperwork and financial matters (filling in forms, dealing with bills, etc.).

Other types of support included managing medication (49%), participating in leisure activities (44%), assisting with personal care such as dressing, bathing, washing, feeding, etc. (41%) and providing physical help such as assisting with walking, getting up and moving around, etc. (38%).

A number of respondents described additional kinds of support which involved financial contributions, legal representation, regular visits to keep someone company or other activities such as taking someone on holiday, providing technical support and house maintenance or giving the primary carer regular breaks.

"Giving my sister a break, who lives closer than I do, for 3-4 days every month means huge amounts of juggling work commitments and family commitments every two weeks."

Female, 40-54 age group, working full time.

"I live at a distance from my parents, I visit weekly to enable my dad to visit my mum who lives in a nursing home. On occasion I also do other things [...], helping with paperwork, shopping, etc. as necessary. My brother lives closer and we manage things between us"

Female, 40-54 age group, working full time.

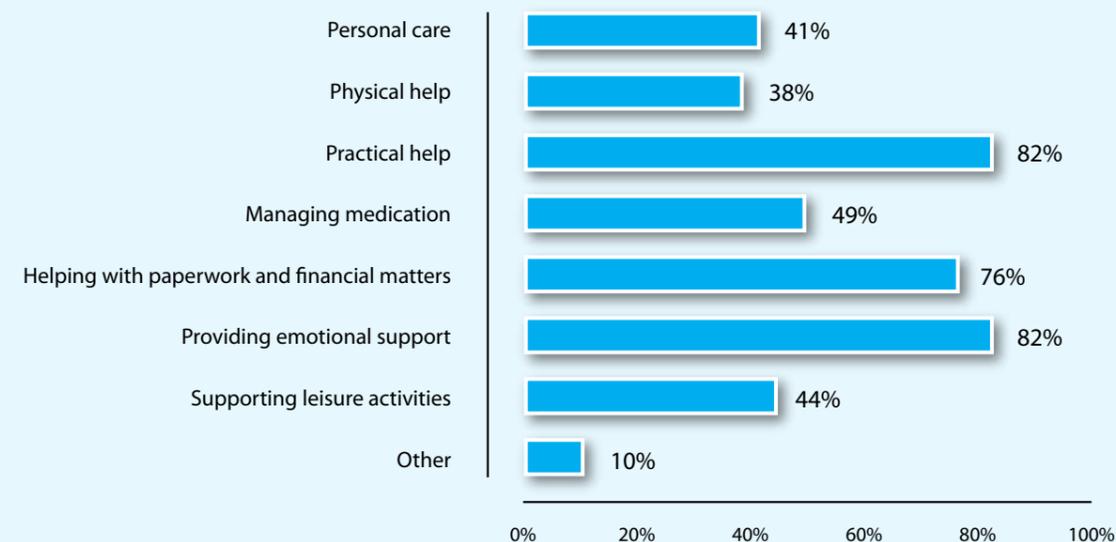
Some carers explained that their caring responsibilities vary due to the nature of the condition of the person they support, which increases the challenge of juggling work and care.

"With my mum's condition I never know from one day to the next what care I will need to be providing or whether I will have to go out in the middle of the night because of possible hospital admission."

Female, 55 or above age group, working full time.

Figure 2.11 Type of support provided by carers

Source: Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.



Hours of caring per week

Most carers (59%) provide between 1-19 hours of care per week. People providing more hours of care per week were equally distributed between those caring between 20-34 hours (20%) and those caring for 35 or more hours (21%).

As the hours of care increase the likelihood of working full time seems to drop. Over 70% of carers who provided between 1-19 hours of care per week were working full time although the numbers dropped the longer hours they cared for someone. Of those caring between 20-34 hours 60% were full time employees. There was, however, still a staggering 46% of people caring more from than 35 hours per week and working full time.

Figure 2.12 Hours of caring provided per week

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

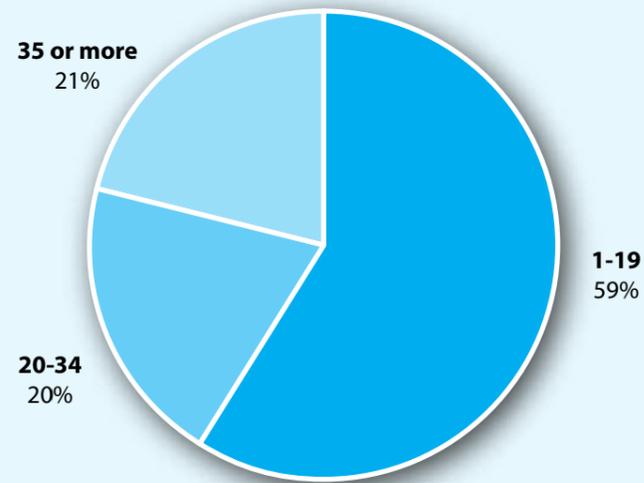
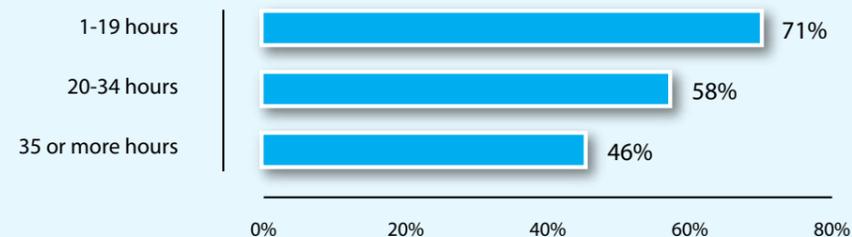


Figure 2.13 Carers in full time employment by hours of care per week

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*

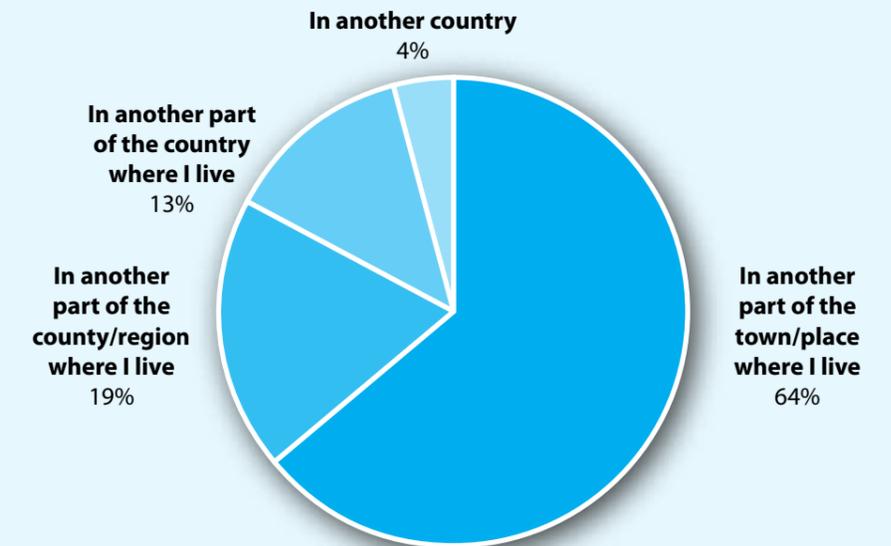


Distance caring

We asked carers how close they lived to the person(s) they were supporting. About two out of three carers (64%) lived in the same town/place as the person they cared for. One in five (19%) said they cared for someone in another part of the county they lived, while a little more than one in ten (13%) said they cared for someone living in the same country, however at a greater distance. A quite small 4% of the respondents cared for someone who lived in another country.

Figure 2.14 Where does the person you care for live?

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Support outside the workplace

Working carers reported a range of types of support that enable them to juggle work and care. This may include or combine the support of their social network (family and friends), workplace support (support from people such as managers and colleagues as well as workplace policies) and the support of various agencies (local or national).

In terms of support provided outside the workplace, over three quarters of carers (77%) could identify at least one source of external support. However, a worrying 23% said that they received very little help or no help at all. Among those carers the majority (88%) said that they received no help at all.

Among those who stated that they received some kind of help, support from relatives, friends or neighbours was evidently the most popular source (57%).

Other types of support included equipment installed in the home of the person they cared for (28%), practical support from care workers (26%), support for care management or care co-ordination, for example from social services (25%) and use of assistive technology such as alarms, sensors or remote health monitoring (23%).

A small minority of carers (7%) mentioned that they received breaks from caring.

A number of people indicated that they pay for part, or all of, the help they receive outside the workplace:

"I receive paid help from a neighbour."

Male, 55 or above age group, working full time

"For household chores we pay for a cleaner and gardener."

Female, 40-54 age group, working full time

"We pay for care to cover the times we are at work, all other times such as evenings and weekends we do the caring."

Male, 40-54 age group, working full time

Some working carers indicated the need for a comprehensive formal policy around carers:

"Definitive policy from the government regarding valuing carers' contributions to caring. Formalisation of caring responsibilities to be protected and given the same/more considerations than for child care. Protection of annual leave and pension rights etc."

Female, 40-54 age group, working full time

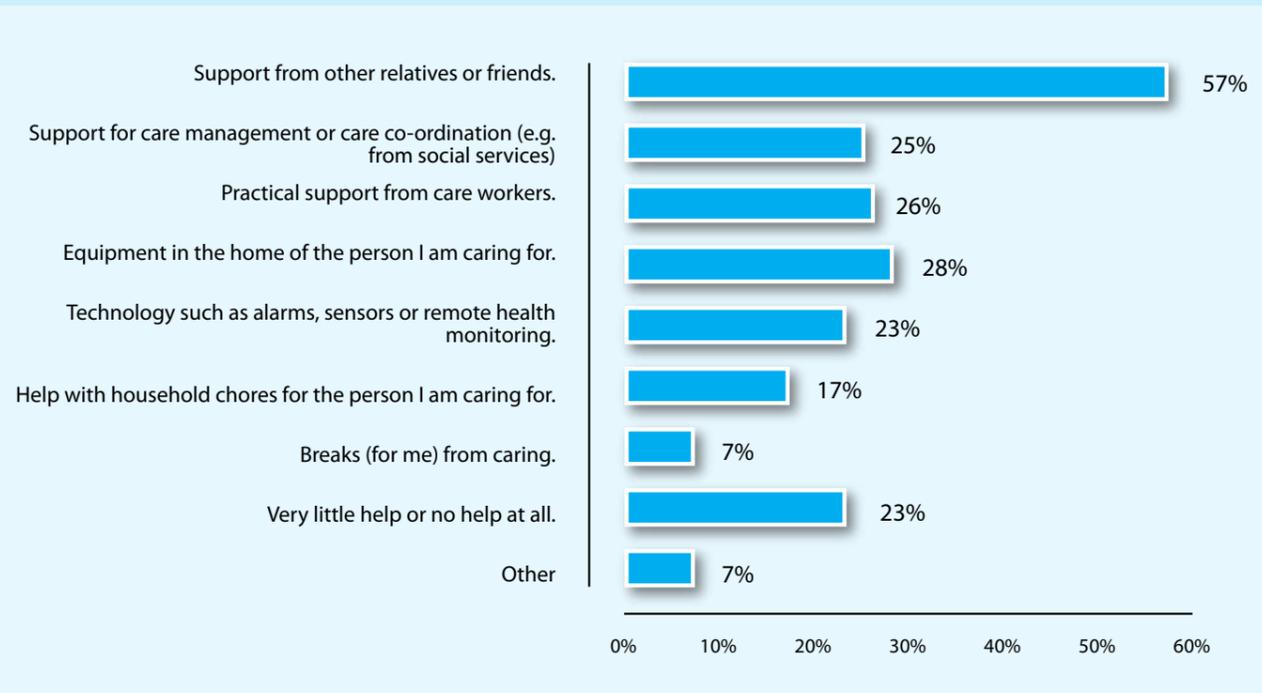
Caring can be a very complex situation, often with negative effects on family relationships. Some carers indicated they do not receive adequate support from family members which has negatively affected their family relationships:

"My sister used to be mum's main carer and it got too much and she cut off and wouldn't communicate. I think she thought this would make me take up all responsibility. This is proving impossible and very wearing on me. I am now on the phone all the time and not getting much rest trying to sort out all the problems of a newly implemented care plan. It is a constant battle."

Female, 55 or above age group, working part time

Figure 2.15 Sources of support outside the workplace

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Impact of caring at people's capacity to work

We asked carers what impact caring had on their ability to meet work demands. A rather small number of carers (10%) said that caring had no impact on their ability to work and that they felt confident about being able to cope in the future.

A significant 43% of carers indicated that they still work as they did before having caring responsibilities; however their work has been negatively affected and they feel tired, stressed and anxious.

"The anxiety and stress caused by caring is having a negative effect on my ability to work. I am at present under the GP. If only the rest of the family would pull together there would be so much less pressure. Any problems they are always passed onto me to sort out."

Female, 40-54 age group, working full time

One in three working carers (33%) said that caring has no impact on their capacity to work, though they feel worried that it probably will in the future.

"My company withdrew the flexible working agreement from a number of staff. Despite them saying they are a caring organisation you have to go through many loopholes before allowances will be made."

Female, 55 or above age group, working full time

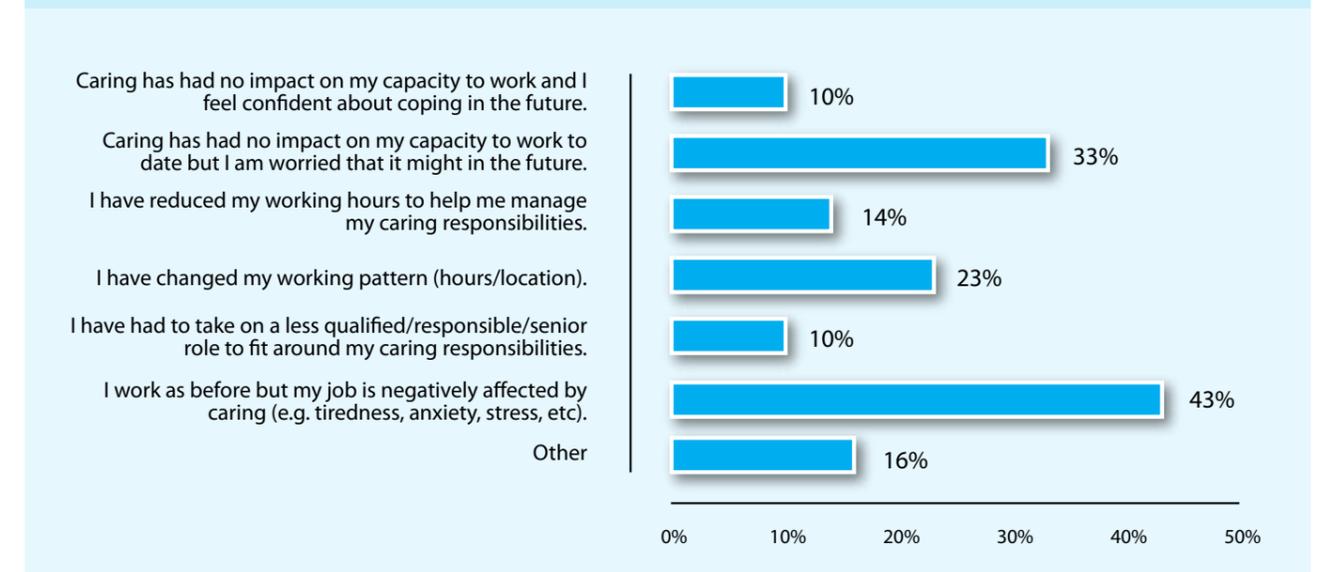
Almost one in four people (23%) argued that they had changed their working pattern in order to be able to respond to both their caring responsibilities and the demands of their job, while 14% said that they had to reduce their hours of work in order to cope. One in ten (10%) carers pointed out that in order to fit around their caring responsibilities they had to take on a less senior role.

"I have recently decided to give up my London based job as I found it too much to care for my relative, run my own home and cover a demanding role in London. Employers seem to be compassionate with employees in respect of childcare needs but not with employees who have responsibility for an elderly parent."

Female, 40-54 age group, working part time

Figure 2.16 Impact of caring on capacity to work

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



"I worked for a small local charity in a senior role and even with flexible part time working it was virtually impossible to do the job and cover the unpredictable care issues involved as the main carer for my mother. Hence a complete job change was required (reduced hours and responsibility)."

Female, 55 or above age group, working part time

Difficulties of getting, and staying at, work, not being able to further career, hindered education and feeling isolated were also mentioned by carers. Some carers argued that caring responsibilities consumed all of their annual leave, allowing no space to take time off for themselves. Although a number of carers referred positively to company policies and workplace support, some of them expressed concerns about many policies "staying on paper" or being somewhat difficult or slow to implement. Carers also explained that often quality of support comes down to individual managers:

"Many years ago my caring responsibilities did negatively affect my job because of my then unsympathetic colleagues and manager. However, since then, because I have more sympathetic colleagues and managers, and have systems and support arrangements in place, caring has had considerably less impact on my capacity to work and has helped me to feel confident, knowing that on the occasions when there are crises, I can get the special leave and support required to meet caring emergencies."

Male, 50 or above age group, working full time

Support in the workplace

In terms of workplace support practices, flexible working arrangements were, as expected, the most popular type of support offered by employers, with 43% of respondents indicating that such an option existed within their workplace. Almost one in three carers (28%) said that there was a specific policy for carers at work and one quarter of them (25%) said they received support through an employee network for carers.

Another 25% of carers said flexible leave arrangements were available at work, while 27% pointed out other types of practical support such as an Employee Assistance Programme, support to manage stress, etc.

"Management is quite understanding and offered to reduce my hours to enable me work, otherwise think I would have given up working."

Female, 40-54 age group, working part time

Smaller numbers of carers mentioned other types of support available in the workplace which included awareness raising about caring issues (22%), signposting to information about external sources of support (13%), publicity about available workplace support to enable carers to come forward for support (10%) and training of managers in carer awareness and in implementing support for working carers (6%).

A significant minority of carers (19%) were not sure about the type of support available at their workplace; however, some of them argued that as they felt able to cope they did not seek support.

Also noteworthy was the 18% of carers who reported that they were not receiving any type of support from their workplace; however, some of these carers were self-employed.

"Although my organisation provides support for carers, my head of department was not supportive, and most of my colleagues don't seem to have a clue, and this is in a hospital."

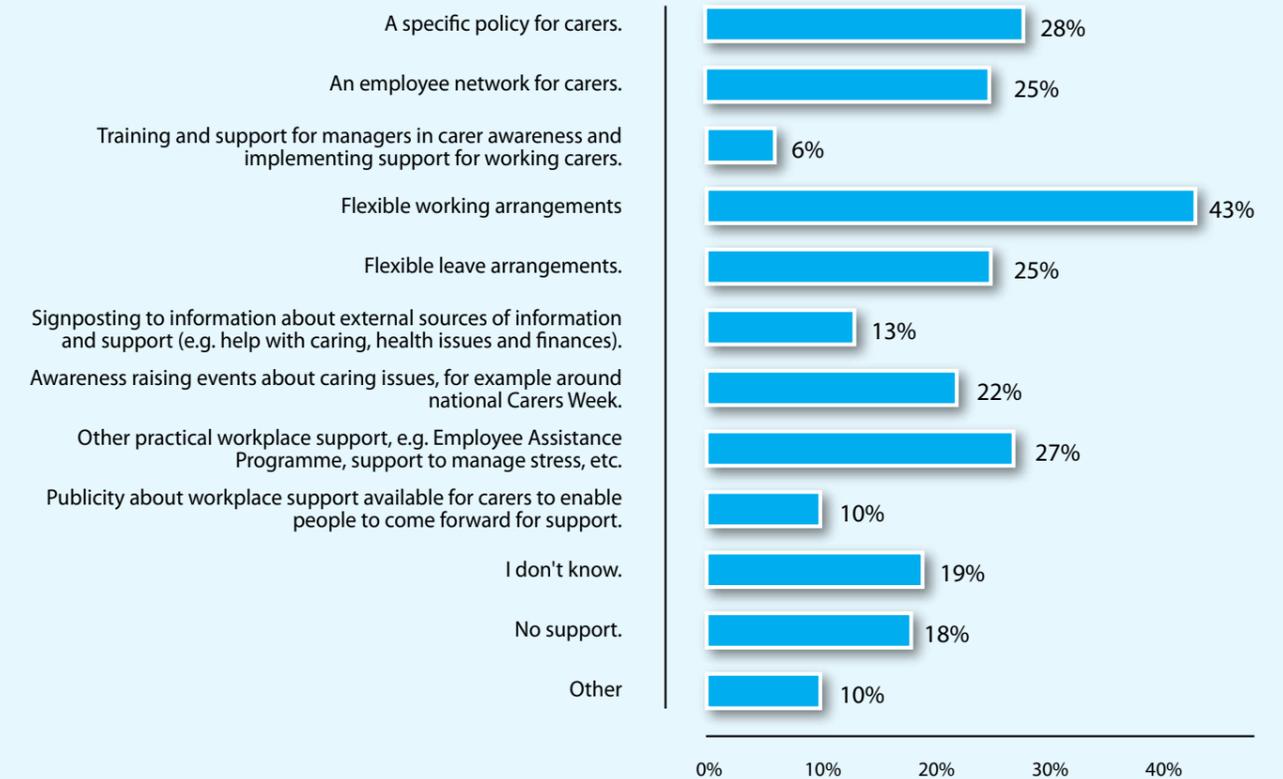
Female, 55 or above age group, working part time

"I have become self-employed in order to work more flexibly and care for my mother."

Female, 55 or above age group, self-employed

Figure 2.17 Type of support available in the workplace for employees with caring responsibilities

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Workplace support needs of working carers

In terms of further employer support, carers identified a mix of different kinds of help which would assist them to combine work and care.

Better information about available workplace support was the most popular demand among employees with caring responsibilities (48%). Equally important seemed to be publicity about recognition of caring issues in the workplace so that people feel more comfortable to ask for help (44%) and more flexible arrangements for working hours and patterns (44%).

Other types of support included more flexible leave arrangements (38%), signposting to external sources of information (23%), information easily accessible from work (29%), linking with other employees in a similar situation (21%) and support such as counselling, Employee Assistance Programmes, stress management tools, etc. (20%).

An encouraging 20% of working carers argued that the support available in the workplace is adequate and at the right level to help them manage.

Support levels and quality depending on the individual line managers was again a concern among carers:

"Make managers aware of carers needs [...]."

Male, 50 or above age group, working full time

A number of carers explained that, although practical workplace support was a particularly important, almost determining factor for being able to combine work and care, they felt that they were falling behind on emotional support. Assistance from specialised personnel, line managers and peer to peer support, perhaps through a carers' network, all seemed to be practices of value to carers.

"Ability to not feel alone in the workplace. Someone else to talk to, who understands from experience."

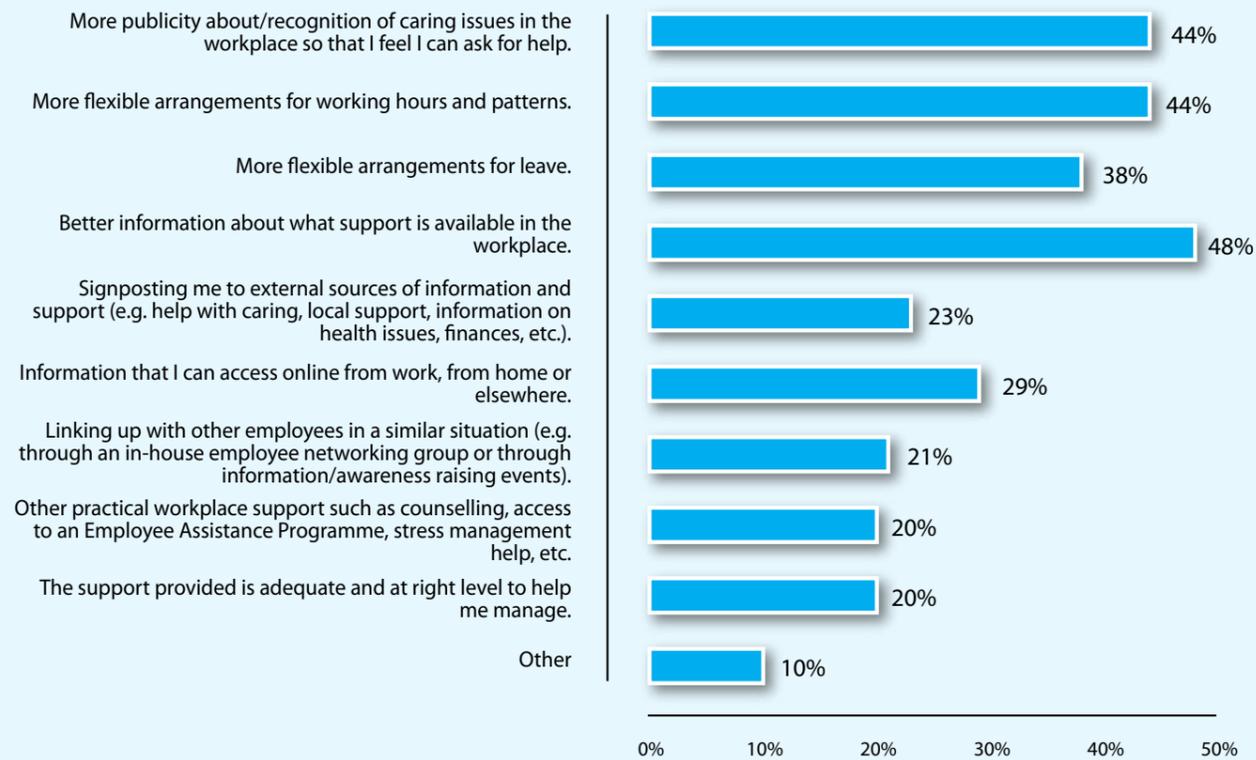
Female, 40-54 age group, working full time

"Somebody who I can go to and say I am having a really bad day without feeling judged and also to be able to do this without worrying about losing my job."

Female, 40-54 age group, working full time

Figure 2.18 Workplace support needs for employees who manage care at distance

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Out of work support needs of working carers

In terms of out of work support most working carers seemed to lack access to useful, comprehensive information sources about where they can get help and services for the person they were caring for (62%). More help from carer services/care workers for the person they were supporting (37%) was also a priority among working carers.

Over one third of carers (35%) wished for more support with care management/co-ordination and another 35% wanted clearer and easier access to local information regarding support with taking a break from caring.

One third (33%) of carers highlighted that they needed more support with household chores for the person they were supporting.

Interestingly, just over one in five respondents (22%) required more help on how to get appropriate equipment for the person they cared for, while another 22% were interested in the way supportive technology might help them to better manage care.

A large minority of carers (14%) discussed other types of help such as fairer income support, better services and communication mechanisms from health providers, emergency support and care substitutes to enable carers to take short breaks and a "one stop information shop" to reduce confusion and time spent on searching for help.

"Getting a small carers allowance to make up for the hours I can't work in paid employment while allowing me to continue to do some work."

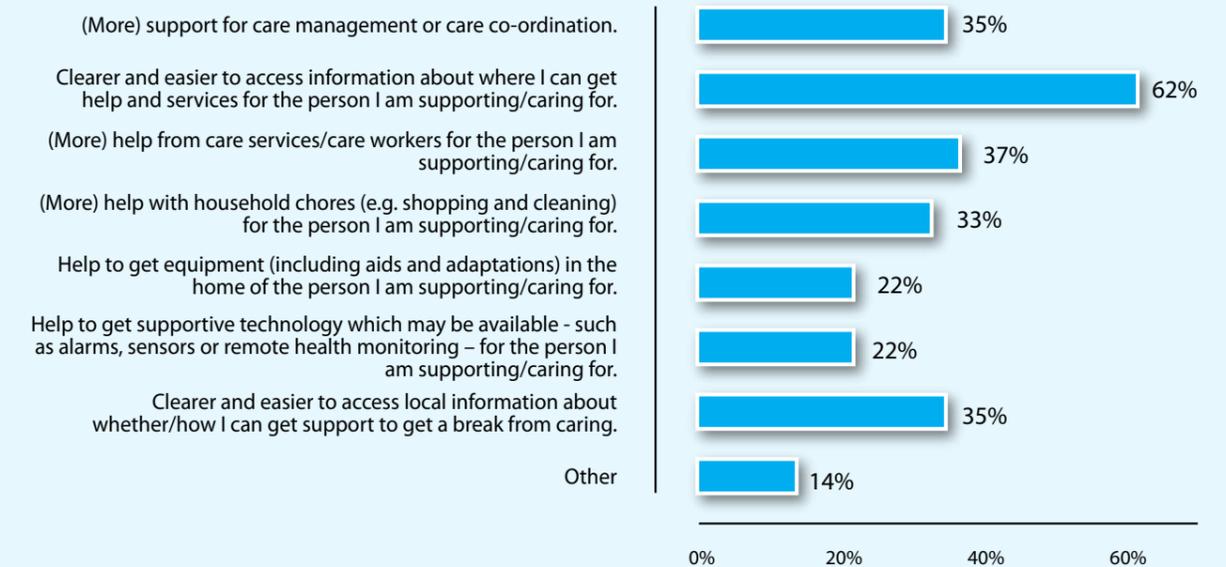
Female, 40-54 age group, working part time

"More understanding and support from health professionals, better communication methods i.e. email, more flexible services and more funding for organisations that provide respite [...]."

Female, 25-39 age group, working full time

Figure 2.19 Out of work support needs for employees who manage care at distance

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



"Substitute care for regular short breaks off from caring."

Female, 40-54 age group, working part time

"A "one-stop" contact point for all the help listed above, so that practical and financial help can be accessed by one liaison-point. Currently, one has to fight to find out where to get help and whom to contact."

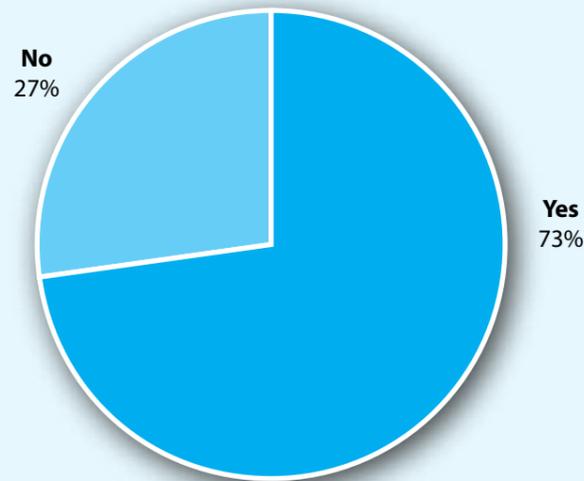
Female, 40-54 age group, working full time

Do carers inform their employers?

When asked whether they had informed their employer or line manager about their caring responsibilities, 73% of the respondents told us that they had. Whether that was done in a formal or informal context however was not entirely clear.

Figure 2.20 Is your employer or line manager informed about your caring responsibilities?

Source: *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap Survey, Employers for Carers 2011.*



Appendix 1: Research Methods

The *Caring at a Distance: bridging the gap* study (2011) was carried out by the Employers for Carers forum and Carers UK in association with leading global investment bank, Nomura.

The study used two sets of questionnaires that were administered on-line:

- One questionnaire targeting employers that was designed to identify practices and awareness and explore what would help employers to better support their staff to manage work and care.
- One questionnaire targeting working carers or carers who had left work but had combined work and care in the recent past. This questionnaire sought to investigate carers' demographic characteristics, caring responsibilities, services accessed and support required in and out of the workplace.

The data both for employers and employees were collected over a three week period (April-May 2011). A sample size of 52 employers and 982 carers was achieved.

All questionnaire responses were entered in an electronic database and subjected to further analysis.



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