



*you care for them, we care for you*

# **The experiences of unpaid carers during the Covid-19 pandemic**

*March 2020  
to March 2022*

## **Appendix 2: About the Participants**



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## Appendix 2: About the Participants

The survey consisted of two online questionnaires, and two sets of semi-structured interviews, which were carried out from mid February to mid-May 2022:

- 327 people replied to the online questionnaire targeting unpaid carers
- 31 people who are currently unpaid carers participated in semi-structured interviews
- 57 people who are currently members of staff or volunteers with Carers' Resource completed an online questionnaire
- 12 Carers' Resource employees participated in in-depth qualitative interviews, six of whom were also unpaid carers.

### A note on the statistics reported in this study

The results from the 327 questionnaires completed by unpaid carers were the primary source of quantitative data. Six of the respondents were not currently unpaid carers, and while they were filtered out of the responses, the figure remains in the total population. Some respondents skipped some questions but we felt there was sufficient value in what they did tell us to include their questionnaire in the survey. Any statistics reported are based on actual responses to individual questions.

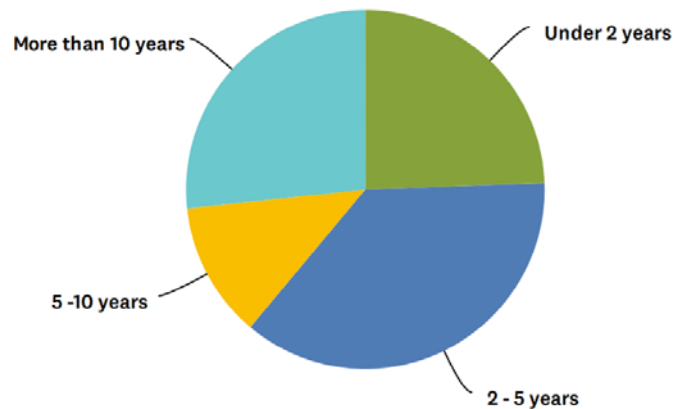
The survey work is based on a self-selected sample of carers, staff and volunteers who agreed to participate in the study. Combined with the scale of the study and the response rate, the research provides a snapshot of the Bradford, Harrogate and Craven unpaid carer population. Caution should therefore be applied if using this research to infer any wider statistical analysis.

The quantitative data from the online questionnaire members of staff or volunteers was not added to the statistical analysis in this report. Where the information from that part of the research has been used, it has been clearly labelled to ensure it is distinct.

### Respondents who are unpaid carers

327 people took part in the online survey. 321 of these were currently unpaid carers.

While 89% of respondents were unpaid carers before the pandemic began, 13% said that they had only just become a carer immediately before the pandemic. These participants were asked to reflect on their experiences before 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, through to spring 2022.



**Chart 6: how long have you been an unpaid carer?**

11% of respondents took on caring responsibilities after March 2020. These participants were asked how their circumstances changed to result in them taking on caring responsibilities, and whether the pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions, played a role.

*“My husband had a stroke in 2020, and came home in the February 2020. We had four of six planned appointments with Occupational Health, and then the pandemic started. I did do some things for my dad before the pandemic, as he was already quite frail and elderly, but it is only really since the first lockdown that I started to do more to support him. It is only really recently that I started to think that looking after my husband and my dad means that I am a carer.”*

*“My mum has Alzheimer’s and her condition deteriorated slightly so I took on more of a caring role for her.”*

*“My mum became more confused with changes to her routine and restrictions put in place at the beginning of the pandemic. She needed more reassurance and support during the daytime. I gradually provided more support to her and eventually reduced my hours at work significantly to provide daily help. I now claim Carers Allowance [since Nov 2021].”*

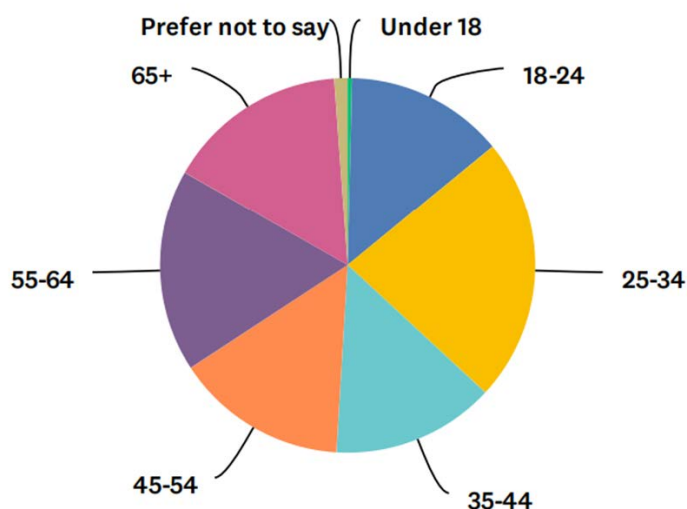
Carers UK estimate that overnight, an additional 4.5 million people became unpaid carers in March 2020, meaning 1 in 4 (26%) UK adults were providing unpaid care to an older, disabled or ill relative or friend at the height of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

27% of respondents said they had been a carer for more than ten years. As would be intuitively anticipated, older respondents were more likely to have been a carer for longer. And those aged 25-34 were most likely to say they became a carer during the pandemic.

<sup>1</sup> Carers UK: State of Caring in 2021.

**Table 1: what is your age group?**

Age		Age	
18-24	14%	45-54	15%
25-34	23%	55-64	17%
34-44	14%	65+	16%



**Table 2: who are you currently an unpaid carer for?**

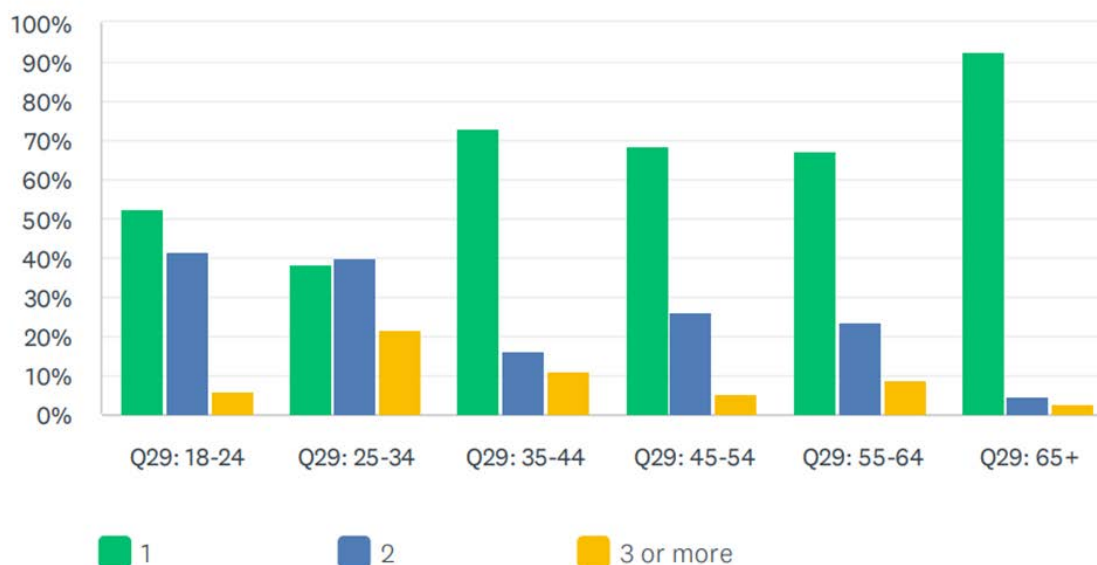
Family	85%	Family or Friend outside the area	14%
Friend	24%		
Neighbour	14%		

Respondents were also asked how many individuals they provided care for.

As chart 7 illustrates, 98% of respondents who were over 65 years of age look after a single family member.

By contrast, a higher proportion of the younger respondents said they support more than one person, who may be family, friend or neighbour, suggesting they have multiple caring responsibilities and more complex living arrangements.

**Chart 7: How many people do you provide unpaid care for? Shown by age of respondent**



**Table 3: What is your ethnicity?**

White (any)	59%	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	7%
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	18%	Another ethnic group	2%
Asian or Asian British	12%	Prefer not to say	2%

According to the 2011 census<sup>2</sup>, the breakdown of the Yorkshire and Humber population by ethnic group was: White (any) 86%; Asian, or Asian British 6%; Black, African, Caribbean or Black British 1%; and Mixed or multiple ethnic groups 1%.<sup>3</sup> Respondents to this survey, therefore, are not a representative sample of the population of Bradford, Harrogate and Craven districts by ethnic group<sup>4</sup>.

Looking at the ethnic background and age of online respondents, older cohorts (54 years and older) tended to be White ethnicity by a large proportion.

While a 2013 report from the Children's Society suggested that young carers were 1.5 times more likely to be from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, the percentage of young unpaid carers who said their ethnicity was Black, African, Caribbean or Black British was higher than anticipated.

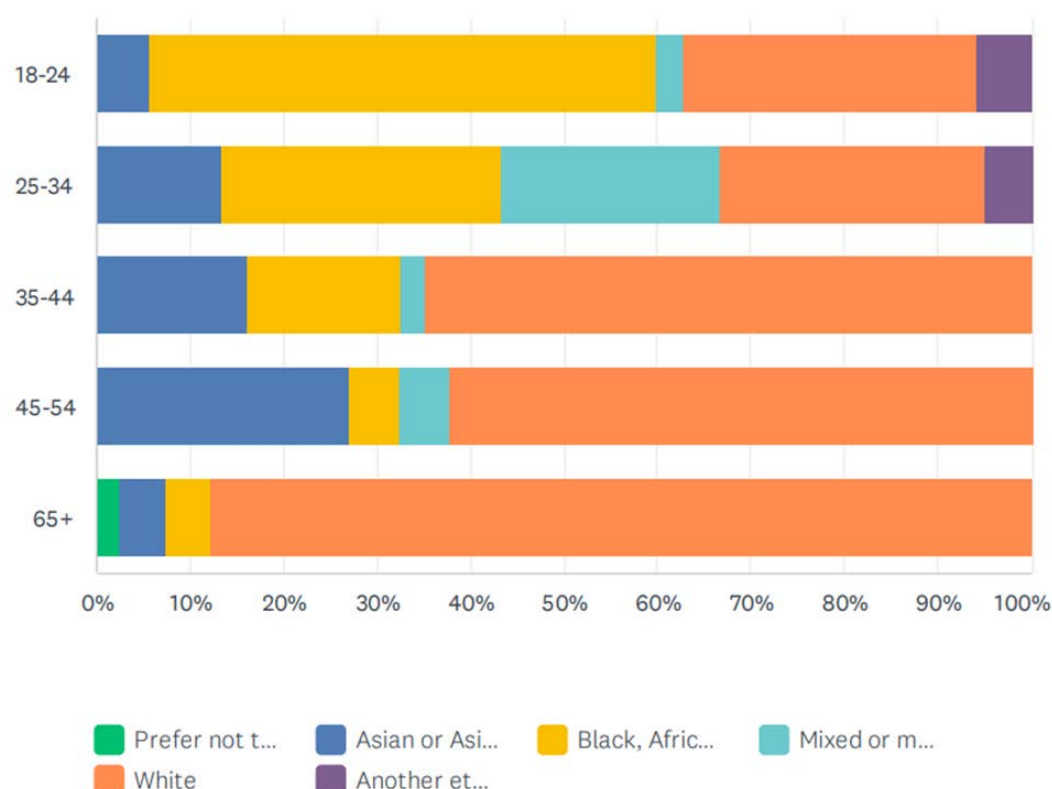
This is clear to see when illustrated in chart 8.

<sup>2</sup> The results of the 2021 census of the UK population will not be published until 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics "Census gives insights into characteristics of Yorkshire and the Humber population"

<sup>4</sup> The proportion of the population from Black and Minority Ethnic groups will have increased since the 2011 census

The online access to the survey was publicised through Carers' Resource social media accounts, and that it is likely that the questionnaire was picked up beyond the primary target geography. (Data cleansing was undertaken before analysis to remove more than 100 responses that were clearly identifiable as being outside the target audience through the use of disqualifying questions). That may account for this seeming disparity.



**Chart 8: what is your ethnicity? Shown by age**

It is, however, feasible that an interest or campaigning group re-posted the details of the questionnaire on social media, and were keen to ensure their views and opinions were represented.

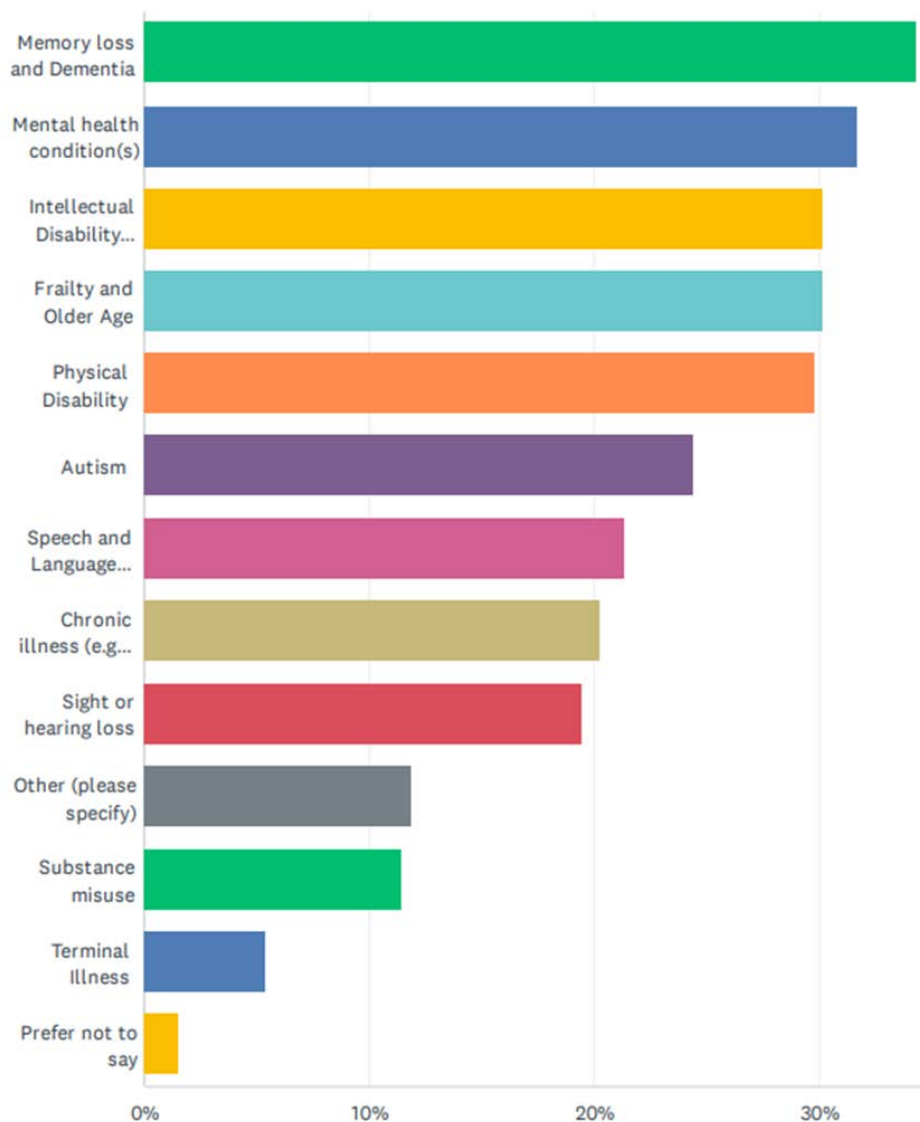
The potential skewed responses are significantly fewer than 19 and 18 individuals in the 18-24 age group and 25-34 group respectively (and some, if not all, may be in the target audience), and so have been included in the opinion data gathered. However, the data regarding ethnicity should be treated with caution.

This underlines the note on the limitations of this survey work: the quantitative data in this report is for illustrative purposes, a snapshot rather than a statistically representative sample of unpaid carers in Bradford, Harrogate and Craven districts.

### **The cared-for**

Unpaid carers who completed the questionnaire were asked what conditions and health issues the person they care for experiences. There were differences across the age groups, with older cohorts more commonly caring for physical disability, memory loss and dementia, frailty and older age.

**Chart 9: the conditions or health issues that the cared-for person experiences (all responses)**



**Table 4: the conditions or health issues of the cared-for, by age of the unpaid carer**

Age Group	The condition or health issue of the person(s) they care for
18-24	56% said Intellectual Disability, & 47% speech and language disorder
25-34	37% said Intellectual Disability, & 35% memory loss and dementia
35-44	43% autism, and 35% mental health condition
45-54	42% said mental health and the same percentage said autism



55=64	57% physical disability, 43% frailty and older age
65+	56% memory loss and dementia, and 44% physical disability

## Staff & volunteer respondents

46 current members of Carers' Resource staff completed an online questionnaire; and 11 current volunteers (eight respondents were neither staff nor volunteers, and were disqualified from continuing with the questionnaire).

As already noted, the statistical analysis is drawn from quantitative data from unpaid carers responses. Where stats from Carers' Resource staff/volunteers are used, this has been clearly labelled.

Three-quarters of these respondents had experience working for or volunteering with Carers' Resource prior to 2020, and during the subsequent two years. They were able to give their opinions on the way that the support for carers, and the services for the cared-for that help carers, had changed and fluctuated throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

13 of the 57 were also unpaid carers. They typically cared for one family member, who lived on their own.

Staff and volunteers were asked whether they thought that support for carers and the services that their cared-for received that helped the carer had changed at the start of the pandemic. As shown in table 5, while many thought that there was overall reduction across all services, this was not as stark as in the opinions of interviews with carers, staff and volunteers.

Questionnaire participants did offer a qualifying comment: their answers took account of the changing means of delivery, from face to face to phone and other virtual options.

Only a very small number of staff/volunteers thought that there had been any increase in support for unpaid carers as the pandemic began, and that was from family, friends or neighbours.

**Table 5: changes in support and service availability at the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic** (Staff and volunteer questionnaire)

Day Care	68% said it stopped completely
Respite Care	49% said it stopped completely
Family/Friends	57% said support decreased
GP/Nurse	89% said access decreased



Hospital	76% said access decreased
Social Services	81% said support decreased
Carers' Resource	24% said access decreased <sup>5</sup>
Paid-for Care	54% said it decreased
Sitting Services	50% said it decreased
Support Groups	55% said these stopped completely
After school support	42% said this decreased.

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<sup>5</sup> Taking into account the shift to phone and online access

**Sources:**

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