

carers



SUPPORT FOR THE
ISLAND'S CARERS

healthwatch

Isle of Wight

Registering with your GP as an Unpaid Carer: A Toolkit

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Introduction

Background

Healthwatch Isle of Wight is the only 'consumer champion' for people using local health and social care services, with statutory powers. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to people's feedback and improve standards of care.

Over the last 12 months, we have received feedback from unpaid carers, about their experiences with healthcare services, their own mental and physical health and the challenges their caring responsibilities presents.

In putting together this toolkit, we worked closely with Carers IW and local GP surgeries to listen to the views of unpaid carers, GPs and Patient Participation Groups.

An Island Look

An unpaid Carer is defined by the NHS as: *"A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid."*¹

Many carers don't see themselves as such, as they believe that caring for family or friends 'doesn't count', or that it doesn't take up much time.

According to the 2021 census, there are over 19,000 carers on the Isle of Wight.

Unpaid carers can come in any form and can be of any age – it is estimated that the Isle of Wight currently has around 300 young carers (those aged 18 and under).²

Caring responsibilities can have an adverse effect on health, both physical and mental. These risks are increased with the level of the

care that person gives. This can lead to the carer themselves becoming ill, or unable to continue their caring responsibilities and lead to the cared for person being admitted to hospital or residential care.

Nationally, unpaid carers have been estimated to have a value of £530 million per day. ³ It is not unreasonable, therefore, to state that unpaid carers are invaluable and that there is a great need to provide them with support when needed. The NHS put together a 'Commitment to Carers' ⁴, describing them as 'vital'.

On the Isle of Wight, the Isle of Wight Council, together with Isle of Wight Integrated Care System and Isle of Wight NHS Trust have created a new Carers Strategy (2023-2028), which lists their number 1 priority as 'Ensuring all island unpaid carers are recognised.' ²

Key Facts :

**19,757
Unpaid
carers on
the Isle of
Wight**

**Over 300
Young
Carers
(Under 18)**

**Gender Split
for Carers
(2011):**

**59% female
41% male**

**Nationally, care
provided by
unpaid carers
is valued at
£193bn**

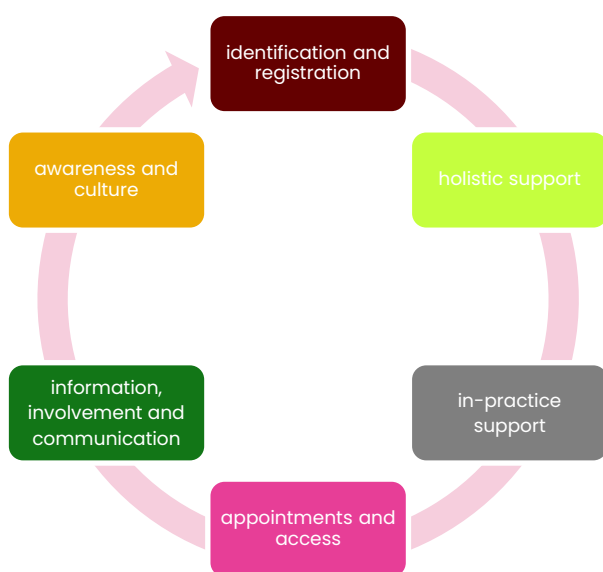
**Average age
for Carers
Assessment
on IOW is 68
years old.**

**The number of
unpaid carers
is rising due to
many factors.**

A GP Perspective

The NHS states that ‘Primary Care has a unique opportunity to make a telling contribution to improving the lives of Carers.’⁵

GP surgeries are often the ‘front line’ when it comes to caring and, as such, are well placed to help, support and signpost where appropriate. NHS England/ NHS Improvements have identified 6 quality markers that General Practice should focus on regarding the identification and support of unpaid carers.⁶



This is a focus on a holistic approach to support for unpaid carers, which goes beyond medical intervention.

It provides help, signposting and support. More than this, it highlights the importance and value the NHS places on unpaid Carers.

Unpaid Carers are encouraged to register with their GPs in order to take advantage of this. The aim of people registering is to enable the surgery to take their specific needs into account and provide allowances where necessary.

There are multiple benefits of registering with a GP as an unpaid carer, not least because the surgery will be able to provide ‘double appointments’ so that both the carer and the person they care for can be seen at the same time. It also provides the GP with an insight into the carer’s needs and enables them to support them better, by providing annual health checks and flu vaccinations, discussion about mental health and support with benefits and prescriptions.

Feedback

We met with unpaid carers groups, contacted GP surgeries on the Isle of Wight and discussed the topic with various Patient Participation Groups. For the most parts, there were similar themes that ran through all groups.

Practice Managers told us that when registering new patients, people are asked if they have caring responsibilities, and if so, they are 'coded' on their system as an unpaid carer, and that is flagged up when interacting with them. There is a form for the patient to complete if they would like to register as a carer at a later date, as exemplified below:

Are you a Carer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – Informal/Unpaid Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – Occupational/Paid Carer	

It was recognised that during the Covid pandemic, more people registered as unpaid carers, as they were priority for vaccinations.

It was also mentioned that surgeries found it difficult to identify when people stopped being unpaid carers but they understood that this was a sensitive topic.

A few surgeries detailed 'opportunistic' registration of carers, and others felt that there was more that they could do in order to promote the importance of this.

Feedback gathered from Patient Participation Groups⁷ highlighted the biggest barrier stopping people from registering as an unpaid carer: 'What is an unpaid carer?' Many did not understand that caring responsibilities for family and friends still counted. In particular, caring for parents or spouses was 'just something they did', and they didn't identify themselves as being a carer.

Many weren't aware of benefits or the opportunities of registering with their GP as an unpaid carer, but could see how this would be helpful.

In conclusion, when looking at a Comms Toolkit for GP Practices, the focus should be on 2 distinct areas:

- 1: Helping carers identify themselves as an unpaid carer.
- 2: Highlighting the ease and benefits of registering as a carer with the surgery.

Communication Toolkit

Identify as a Carer

Facebook text: (same for design 1 & 2)

Do you look after a family member, friend or friend who needs extra help due to an illness, frailty, disability, or mental health issue? If the answer is yes, you may be considered an unpaid carer.

You could be a Carer if you:

- ✓ Help someone wash, dress or eat.
- ✓ Take them to appointments regularly
- ✓ Spend time caring for that person - anything from a few hours to all day and night.

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Instagram text: (same for design 1 & 2)

Do you look after a family member, friend or friend who needs extra help due to an illness, frailty, disability, or mental health issue? If the answer is yes, you may be considered an unpaid carer'.

#healthwatchiow #carers_uk

You could be a Carer if you:

- ✓ Help someone wash, dress or eat.
- ✓ Take them to appointments regularly
- ✓ Spend time caring for that person - anything from a few hours to all day and night.

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Register with your Surgery as an unpaid carer

Facebook Text: (same for design 1 & 2)

Did you know that you could get extra support from your GP if you are registered as an unpaid carer? Get in touch with your local surgery now to let them know. You are not alone.



Instagram Text: (same for design 1 & 2)

Did you know that you could get extra support from your GP if you are registered as an unpaid carer? Get in touch with your local surgery now to let them know. You are not alone.
#healthwatchiow #carers_uk



Video Comms

A short video of why it is important to register with a GP as an unpaid carer is told from the perspective of an unpaid carer and a GP. Both videos are around 2 - 4 minutes in length.



All comms and video material are available by emailing enquiries@healthwatchisleofwight.co.uk

Videos can be accessed by these links:

<https://youtu.be/WtohRNnWiac>

<https://youtu.be/oMIm0Dylixo>

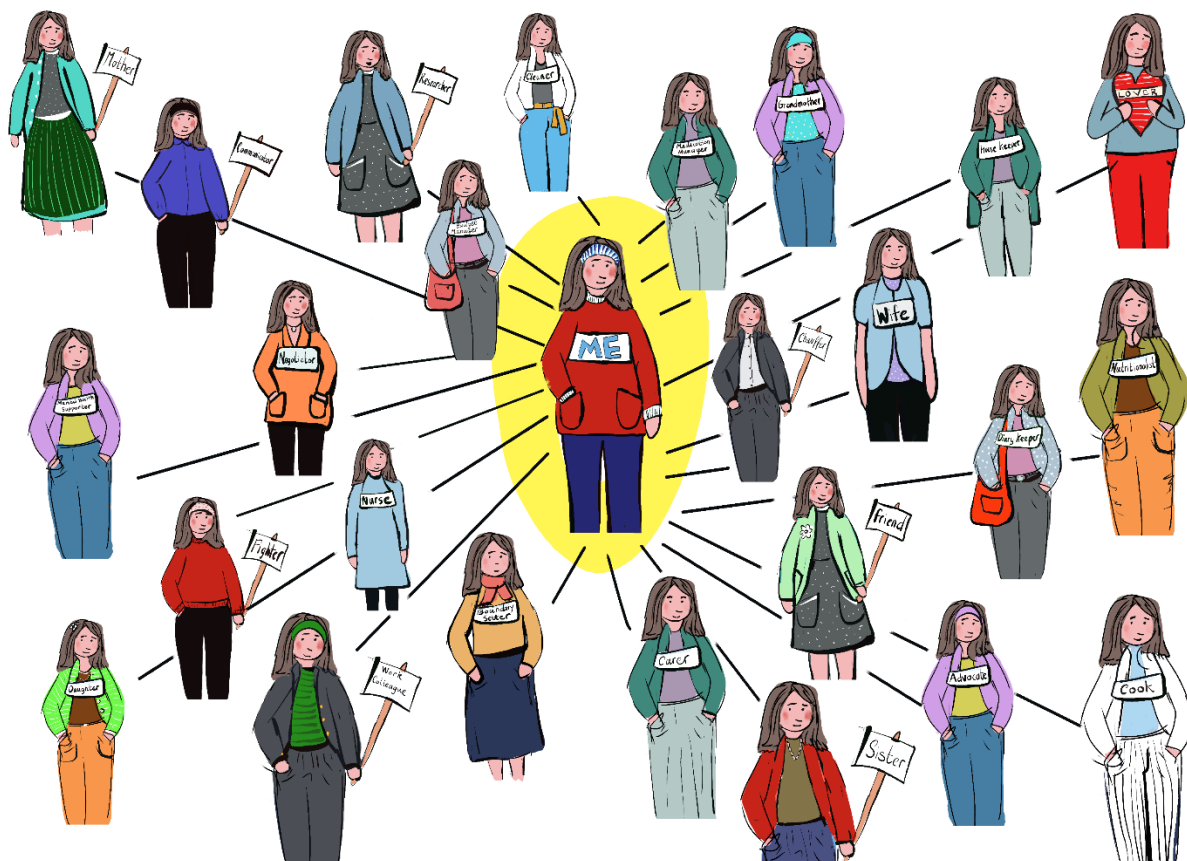
Are you an Unpaid carer looking after someone?

Are you registered with your GP?

If your GP knows you are a carer they can provide you with support, advice & information.

You are also entitled to a free flu jab.

Ask reception for a GP Unpaid Carer Registration Form



If you need support, please ring Carers IW on 533173



Are you looking
after someone?

Recognising & Supporting Unpaid Carers in the Community

Are you registered with your GP?

If your GP knows you are an unpaid carer
they can provide you with support, advice &
information.

You are also entitled to a free flu jab.

GP UNPAID CARER REGISTRATION FORM – I AM AN UNPAID CARER AND WANT MY GP TO RECORD THIS

Telling your GP surgery that you are an unpaid Carer can give you access to a free seasonal flu vaccination and additional support from your GP.

Name:			
Address:			
D.O.B			
Contact Numbers:	Landline:		
	Mobile:		
	Email:		
Name of your GP:			
Is the person you care for registered at the same GP Surgery as you?	Yes	No	
If the person you care for registered at a different surgery, then please state which one.			
Name of the person you care for:			
D.O.B of the person you care for:			
Have you got LPA Health for the person you care for	YES	NO – you need to complete letter of consent with the person you care for – PTO	
Letter of consent from cared for person (If you do not have LPA for them)	YES	NO	
Are you registered with Carers IW as the only formal unpaid carer for them	YES	NO	
Your relationship to the person you care for:			
Are you the next of kin for the person you care for?	YES	NO	
Are you the emergency contact for the patient you care for	YES	NO	
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	918G is a carer	918F has a carer	
CODES:	READ		

When I am no longer an unpaid carer for this patient, I will inform my GP surgery.

Permission Date:

Signed:

UNPAID CARER – PATIENT CONSENT FORM

Agreement for a carer to have access to a patient's personal details

PATIENT DETAILS

Name	Date of Birth
Address	
Post Code	Telephone
GP Surgery	

CARER DETAILS

Name	
Address	
Post Code	Telephone
GP Surgery	

I give permission for my carer to have access to my medical records and personal details held by the Practice and to discuss any medical concerns with the Practice.

I understand that my doctor may override this authority at any time, and that this permission will remain in force until the end of
(give a date or state medical condition/treatment,)
Or until cancelled by me in writing (Delete as appropriate)

Signed.....(Patient) Date.....

I will treat the information confidentially, not disclose to a third party without agreement, and only use the information in the patient's best interest.

Signed(Carer) Date.....

Additional Resources

There are a wide range of resources, both locally and nationally to help support Carers.

- **Carers IW** – 01983 533173 – Carers IW Centre, Riverside Centre, The Quay, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 2QR
- **Carers UK** – 0207 3784999 – 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LQ
- **Citizens Advice Isle of Wight** – 0800 1448848 – Isle Help Advice Centre, County Hall, High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD
- **People Matter IW** – 01983 685348 – 1-2 Bernard Way, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5YL
- **Age UK (Isle of Wight)** – 01983 525282 – 147 High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1TY
- **Living Well Team** – 01983 240732 www.LWEH.org.uk
- **Mountbatten Neighbours** – 01983 217368 – email: info@mountbatten.org.uk

References

1. NHS Website - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/comm-carers/carers/>
2. Isle of Wight Carers Strategy – 2023 to 2028 - <https://iow.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11059/6d%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%205068ASC%20Carers%20Strategy%20003.pdf>
3. Carers UK – Carers UK, Unseen and Undervalued, 2020
4. NHS Commitment to Carers - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/commitment-to-carers-may14.pdf>
5. An Integrated approach to identifying and assessing Carer health and wellbeing - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/identifying-assessing-carer-hlth-wellbeing.pdf>
6. Supporting Carers in General Practice, a Framework of Quality Markers - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/supporting-carers-in-general-practice-a-framework-of-quality-markers/>
7. Patient Participation Groups consulted – East Cowes & Newport Health Centre



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