

Manifesto for Carers in Scotland



National Carer Organisations



1 in 6 of Scotland's population is an unpaid carer. CARERS HAVE VOTES.

We are calling on all candidates in the local council elections to agree to:

- **Protect funding for carer support & ensure there are adequate resources to implement the Carers Act**
- **Increase efforts to improve short breaks provision**
- **Promote better, preventative support for carers of all ages**
- **Improve financial support for carers**
- **Support carers in and into employment**

Protect funding for carer support & ensure there are adequate resources to implement the Carers Act

The Carers Act will provide carers with new rights and entitlements, including the right to support, based on eligibility criteria. It is essential that the Act has a strong financial footing and that sufficient resources are available to fully implement the new duties. Councils will need to invest both new and existing resources in carer support, building on and expanding the carer support that already exists in their area.

We call on all candidates to:

- **Protect and resource local carer support services to manage the increasing demands on their services.**
- **Ensure that resources provided to implement the Carers Act are used for that purpose and are in addition to the current local investment in carer support.**

Carers contribute

£10.8bn
of unpaid care in
Scotland each year

The number of adults in
need of care is expected
to increase

30%
by 2026 as our
population ages

Investing in support for
carers now will mean
they can continue
in their caring role,
protecting the health
of the people they care
for and securing the
longevity of our social
care system.

Increase efforts to improve short breaks provision

Providing short break opportunities for carers and cared-for people is vital to sustaining the caring relationship and the health and well-being of carers. However government data and other research shows the availability and choice of short breaks across Scotland varies considerably, and there is growing evidence of significant cuts to existing levels of service provision.

We call on all candidates to:

- Ensure that short breaks provision is effective, properly resourced and is meeting the needs of carers and those they care for.
- Ensure that carers are fully engaged in deciding the future shape and direction of short break provision in their local area.

Promote better, preventative support for carers of all ages

Early support for carers, including access to regular breaks, enables people to balance their caring responsibilities with other commitments and life goals. It also makes economic sense, as it is an effective way to sustain the caring role and ensure people do not reach breaking point.

We call on all candidates to:

- Adequately fund your local carer support organisations to cope with increasing demands.

Improve financial support for carers

Caring significantly affects carers' finances. A third of carers are struggling to pay utility bills, 47% have been in debt and half are struggling to make ends meet, cutting back on food and heating as a result. This impact on finances can also carry on long after the caring role has ended, as the gap between carers' income and outgoings frequently results in a rapid loss of savings and an inability to contribute to a private pension.

We call on all candidates to:

- Extend concessionary travel to carers in your area.
- Explore the availability of energy efficiency and energy schemes to carers in your area.
- Ensure that money advice and information services are available to enable carers to maximise their income.

Support carers in and into employment

More than half of carers of working age combine paid employment with caring, but it can often be difficult to juggle these responsibilities. Many carers find that their career and promotion opportunities are affected, that they have to reduce hours or give up work all together.

Carers who have given up work to care also find it difficult to return to the workplace. Almost a third of carers have been out of the workplace for 10 years or more. A quarter of carers not currently in work say they would like to return to work and almost two thirds would like to when their caring role has ended.

We call on all candidates to:

- Ensure your council is a Carer Positive employer and applies for accreditation.
- Work with local employers and suppliers to encourage them to become Carer Positive employers.
- Incorporate specific and measurable actions for families with a disabled child into the Childcare Strategy in your area.
- Consider developing a dedicated employability programme for carers in your area.

About the National Carer Organisations

The National Carer Organisations are brought together by a shared vision that all Scotland's unpaid carers will be valued, included and supported as equal partners in the provision of care and will be able to enjoy a life outside of caring.

They are Carers Scotland, the Coalition of Carers in Scotland, Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP), Carers Trust Scotland, the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance, Crossroads Caring Scotland and Shared Care Scotland.

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