

# SCOTINFORM



## VOCAL Carer Survey 2017

Report on the full data set  
28 February, 2018

# Purpose of the Survey

- To obtain a profile of VOCAL carers
  - To assess satisfaction with services currently offered
  - To assess interest in other potential services and developments
  - To understand VOCAL's impact
  - To understand the impact of caring more broadly, in three areas:
    - Health and Wellbeing
    - Money and Work
    - Time away from Caring
  - The findings are to be used to inform VOCAL's strategic planning and to assist with communicating with stakeholders.
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# Methodology

Questionnaire design informed by:

- Previous surveys
- Briefing meeting
- Workshops in Edinburgh and Midlothian with a range of stakeholders to test out content and terminology

Different questionnaire for Edinburgh and Midlothian to reflect separate service delivery and funding mechanisms

Questionnaire mailed out to VOCAL distribution list (post and email)

Paper returns were inputted by Scotinform

Link was also shared on social media

The opportunity to enter a prize draw was offered as an incentive

Thank you to VOCAL staff and volunteers for supporting the process

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## Response Rate

7,984 surveys were distributed in Edinburgh, with 915 returns received. This represents a response rate of 12%

2,391 surveys were distributed in Midlothian, with 313 returns received. This represents a response rate of 13%

The response rate is slightly lower than in 2015 (14%), but the number of responses achieved is higher – 1,228 returns, compared with 1,095 in 2015.

61% of respondents replied to the paper format of the survey. 21% responded to the email.

Increasing the use of electronic communications would improve the environmental and resource efficiency of the process, but must be carefully balanced against the characteristics of carers.

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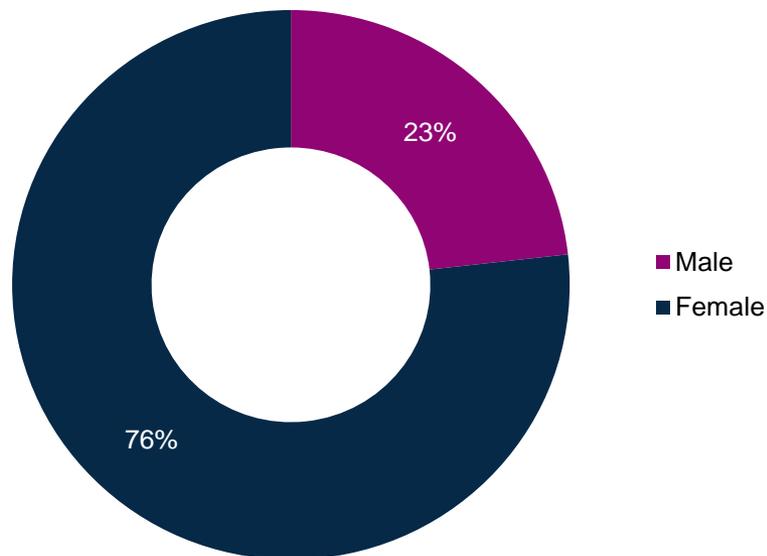
# Reporting

In this report, an “Edinburgh respondent” refers to someone who completed the survey and is caring for somebody living in Edinburgh. A “Midlothian respondent” refers to someone who completed the survey and is caring for somebody living in Midlothian.

Please note:

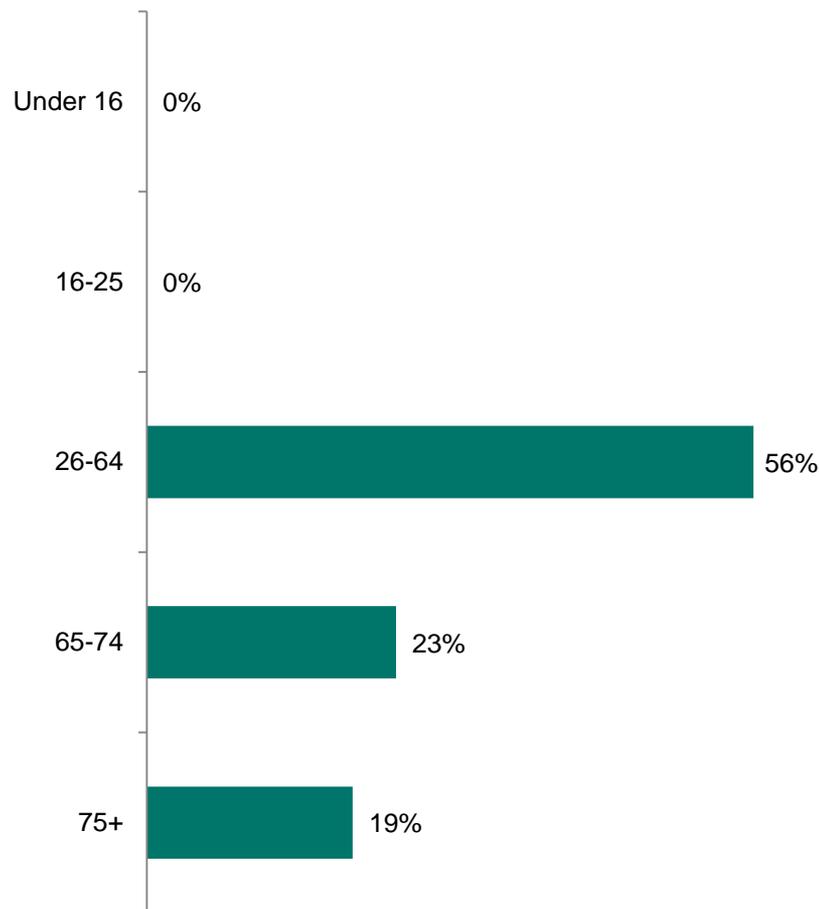
- Where percentages do not total 100% this may be due to non-responses and/or rounding
- Where percentages exceed 100% this is due to multiple responses
- Unless otherwise stated, the reporting base is all respondents (1,228)
- Open-ended feedback is identified with 

# Carer Characteristics – Gender



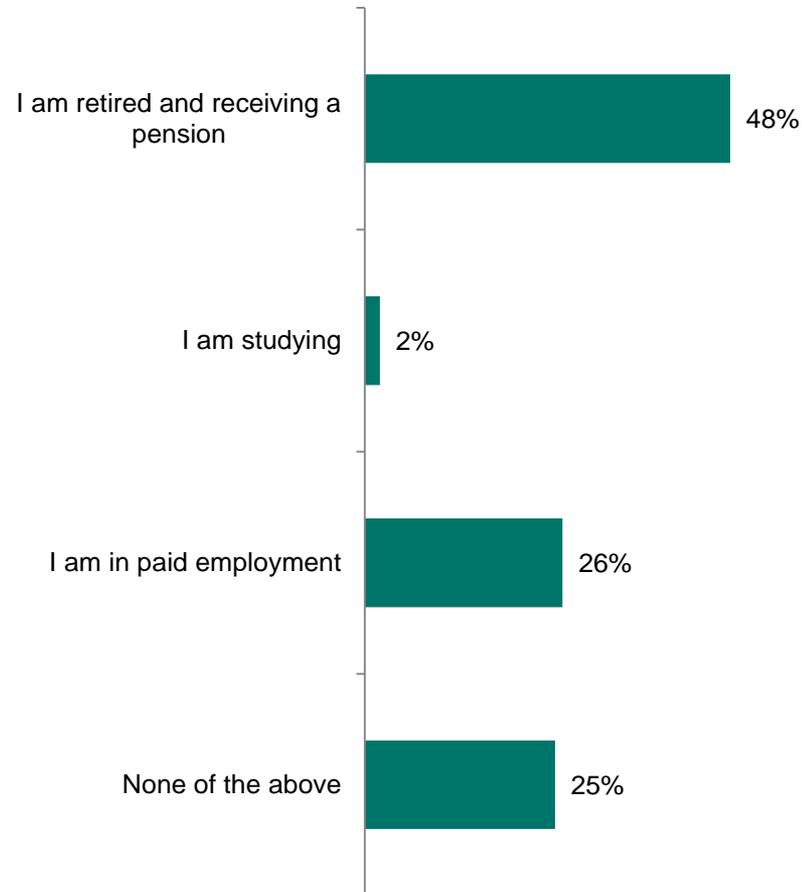
- Three quarters of respondents were female
- This is consistent with the 2015 survey
- No significant differences by respondent types

## Carer Characteristics – Age



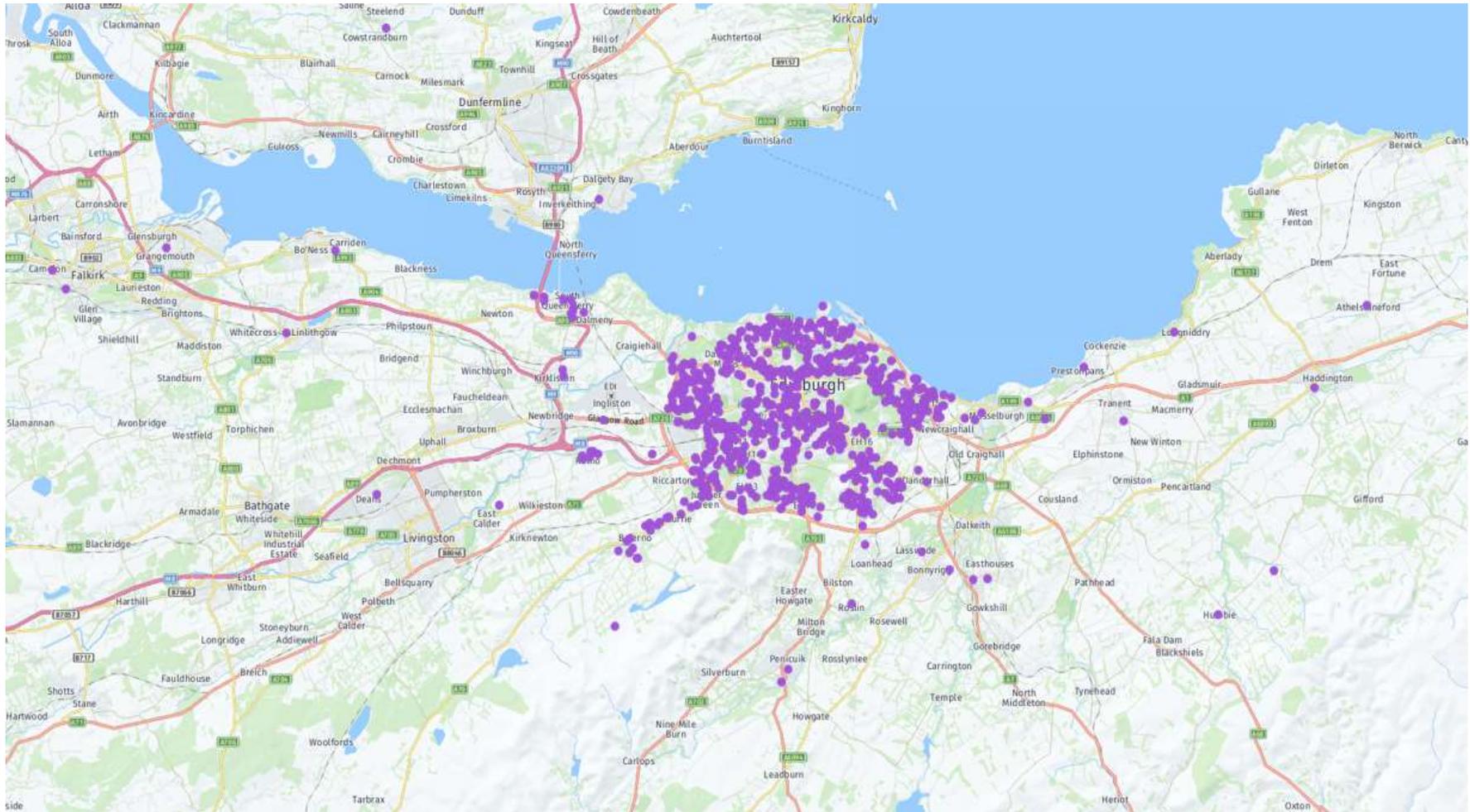
- Sample divided between those of working age and those of retirement age.
- Proportion of working age respondents slightly higher in Midlothian (62%).
- Carers of people of working age more likely to also be working age.
- Maybe more younger carers than in 2015?

# Carer Characteristics – Economic Status

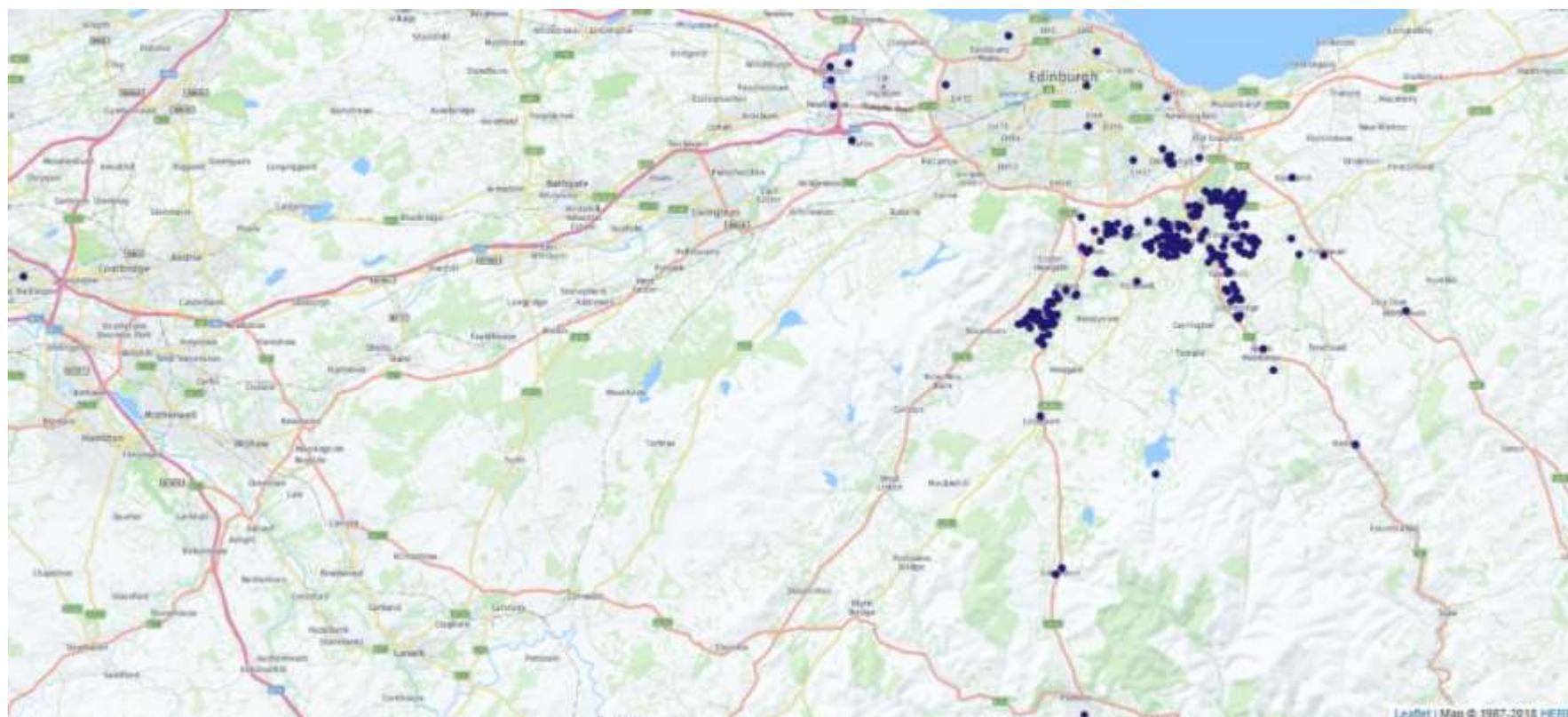


- A quarter of the sample is in paid employment.
- More retirees in Edinburgh (50%) than in Midlothian (42%).
- Men were more likely to be retired (63%) than women (44%)

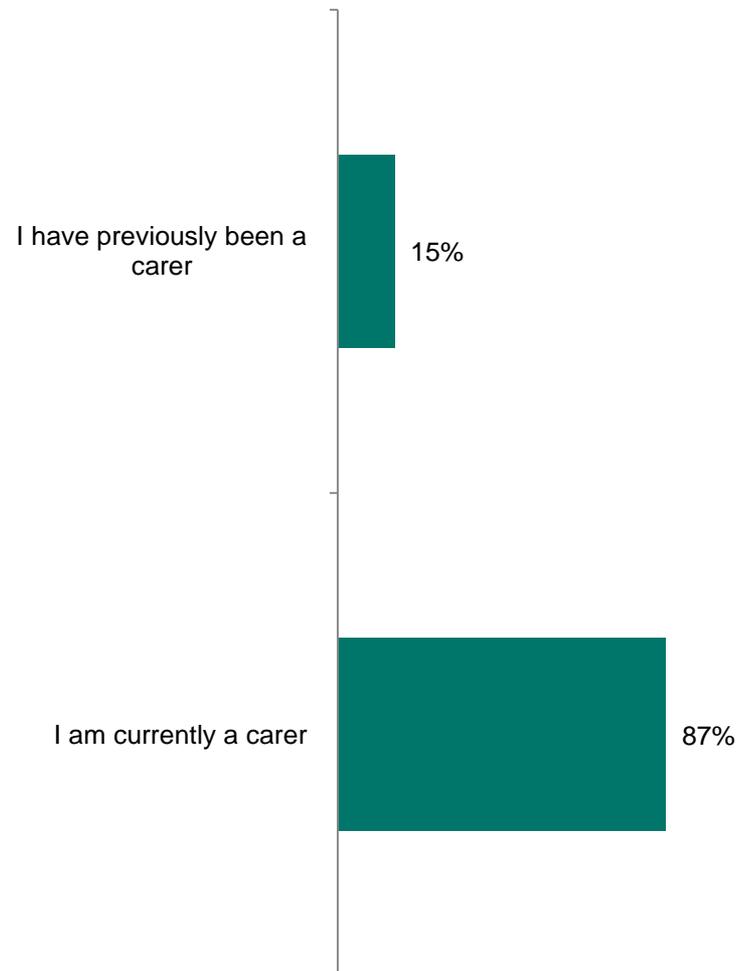
# Carer Characteristics – Location (Edinburgh)



# Carer Characteristics – Location (Midlothian)

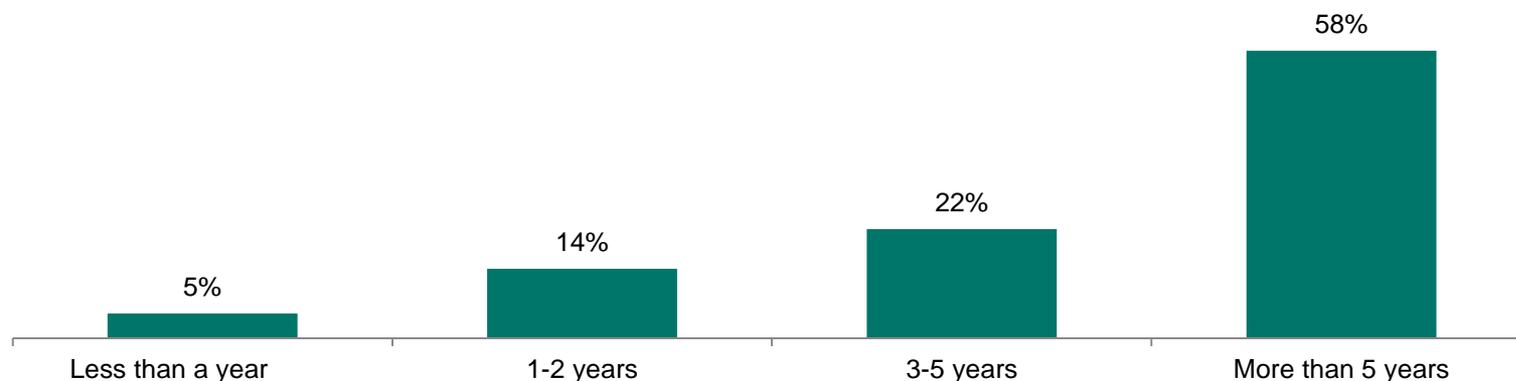


# Carer Characteristics – Caring



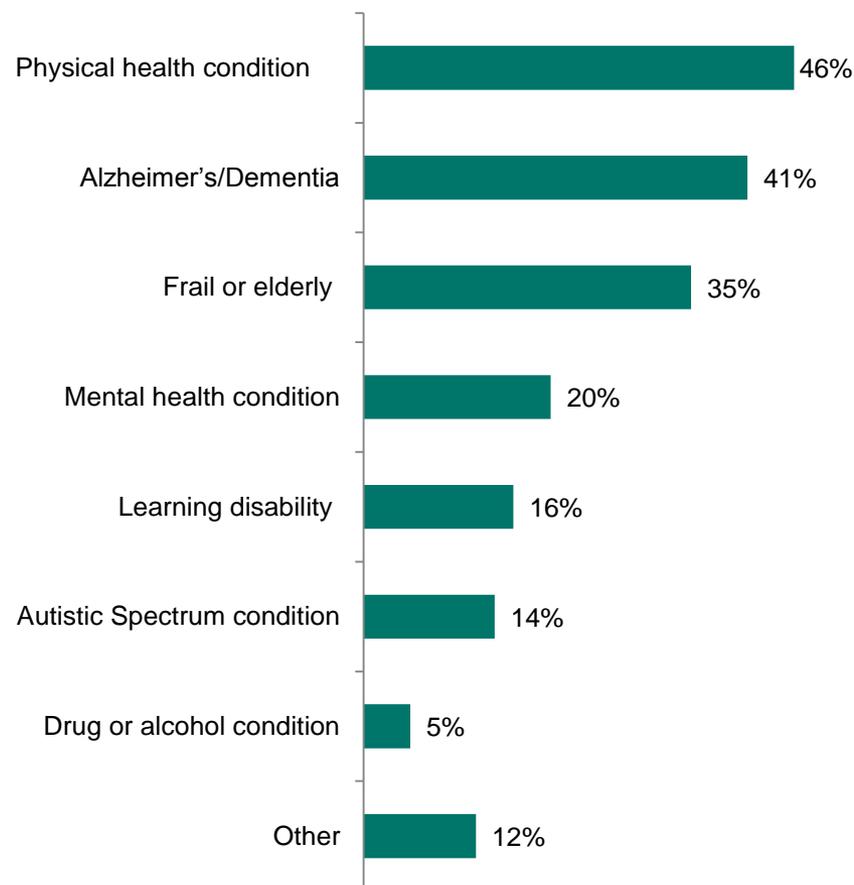
- Nearly 90% of respondents see themselves as having an active caring role right now.
- Consistent with 2015 surveys.
- No significant difference by geography or gender.

## Sample Characteristics – Duration of Care



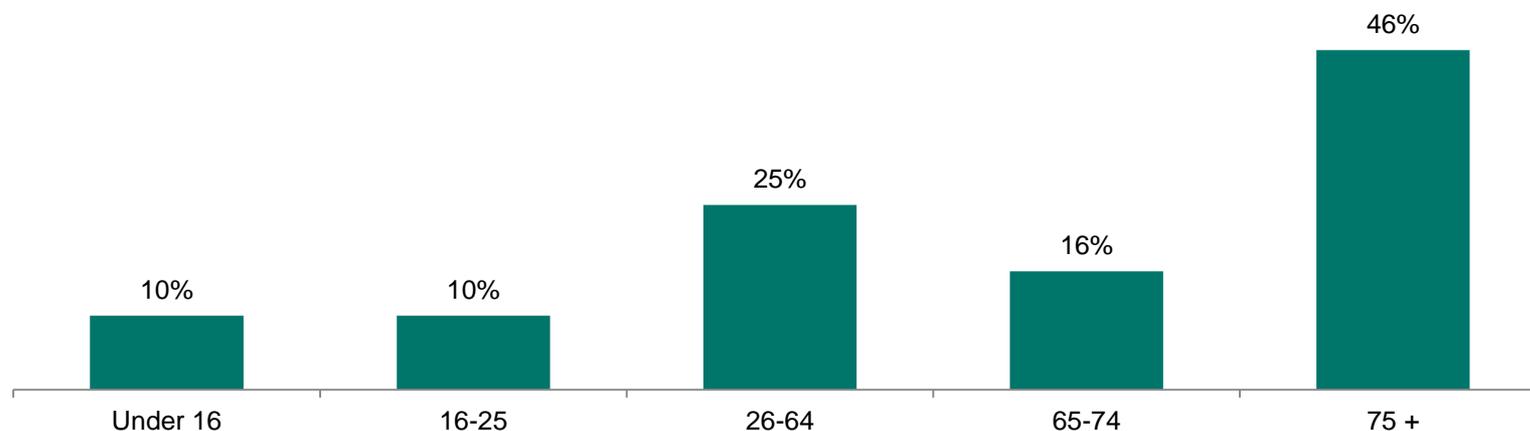
- Nearly two-thirds have been caring for more than 5 years.
- Long-term carers are often looking after younger people
- No significant differences by location.
- The proportion of new carers was slightly higher for respondents aged over 75.

## Sample Characteristics – Conditions cared for



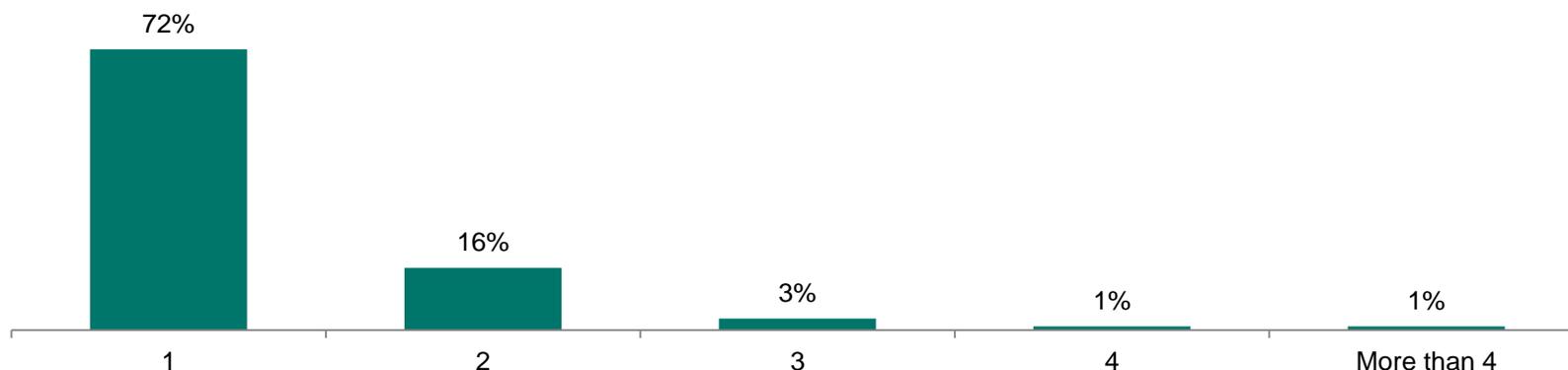
- Similar profile of conditions cared for in both geographies.
- Midlothian: Alzheimer's/Dementia 37%, mental health condition 22%, learning disability 20%.
- Differences according to duration of care and the age of the person being cared for.

# Carer Characteristics – Age of Person



- Nearly half of carers are looking after someone over the age of 75.
- 49% in Edinburgh, 38% in Midlothian.
- One-third of long term carers are looking after someone aged 26-64
- 75% of carers aged over 75 are looking after someone the same age

# Carer Characteristics – Number of People



- Most carers are caring for one individual.
- Proportion of respondents caring for 1 person is slightly lower than in 2015 (75% for both areas).
- Multi-caring is higher for long term carers (20%), those caring for children (31%), and carers aged 26-64 (21%).

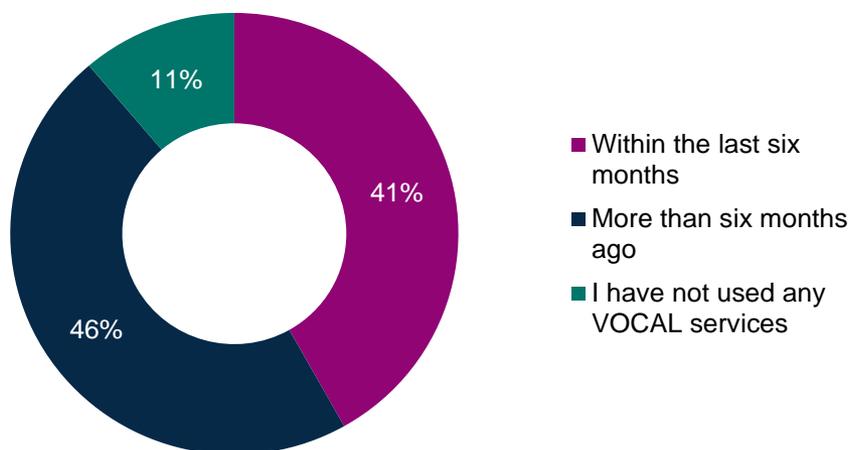
## Carer Characteristics – Attitude to the internet

- 61% of respondents say they are confident about using the internet to find information and support.
  - 62% in Edinburgh, 58% in Midlothian.
  - Slightly lower than in 2015 – due to question change?
  - Confidence is higher for carers looking after children (71%), carers aged under 26-64 (73%), and carers in paid employment (75).
  - It is lower for men (56%), those aged over 75 (34%) and retirees (51%).
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# Carer Characteristics - Summary

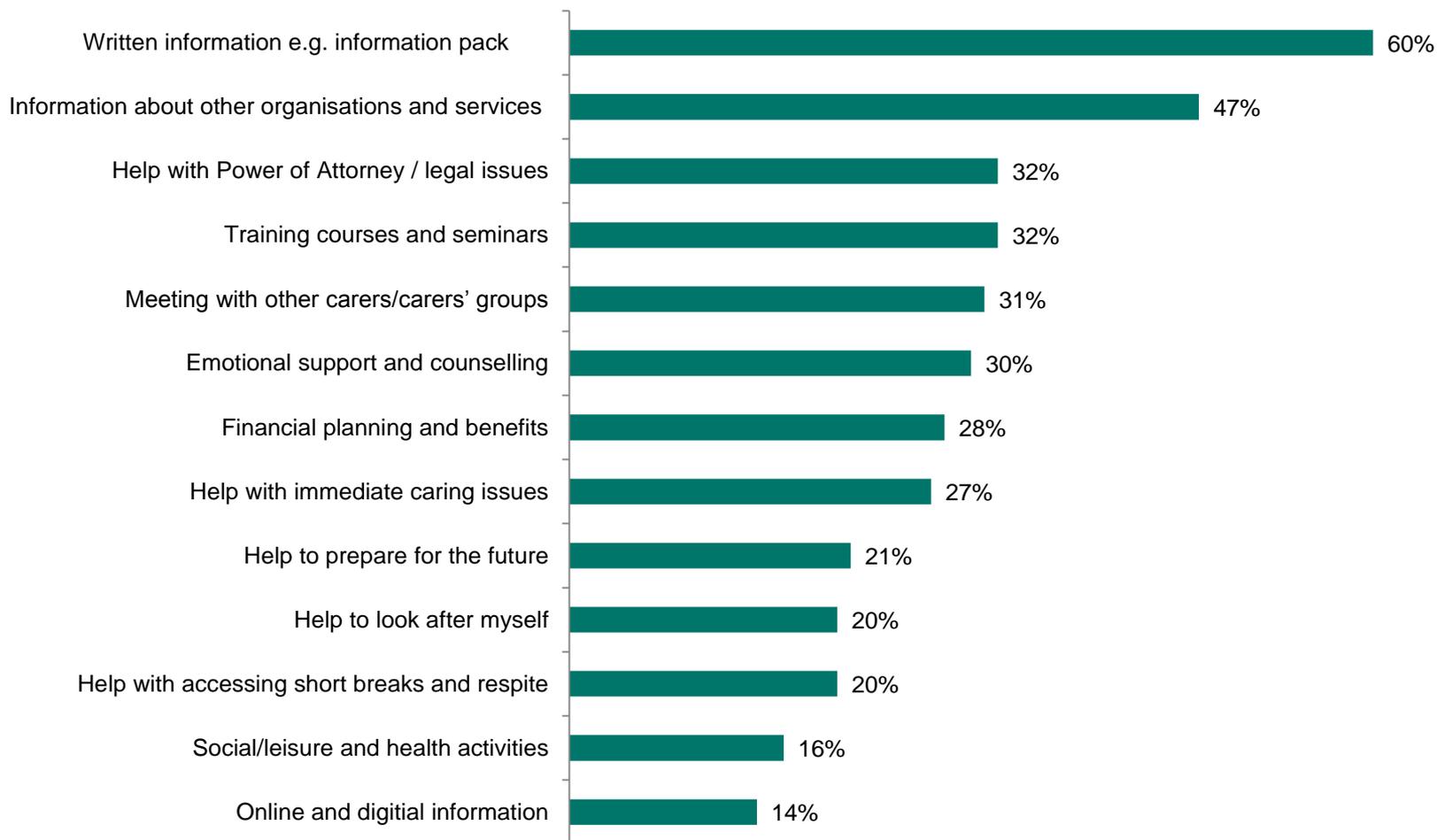
- Carers are predominantly female.
  - Even split between carers of working age and older carers.
  - Midlothian age profile slightly younger.
  - A quarter of carers are in paid employment.
  - Caring often transcends Local Authority boundaries.
  - 60% of VOCAL carers have been caring for more than 5 years.
  - Long-term carers have a slightly different profile.
  - 46% of carers are looking after someone aged 75+.
  - Varying responses to using the internet to support caring
  - Marginal differences from 2015
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# Engagement with VOCAL Services

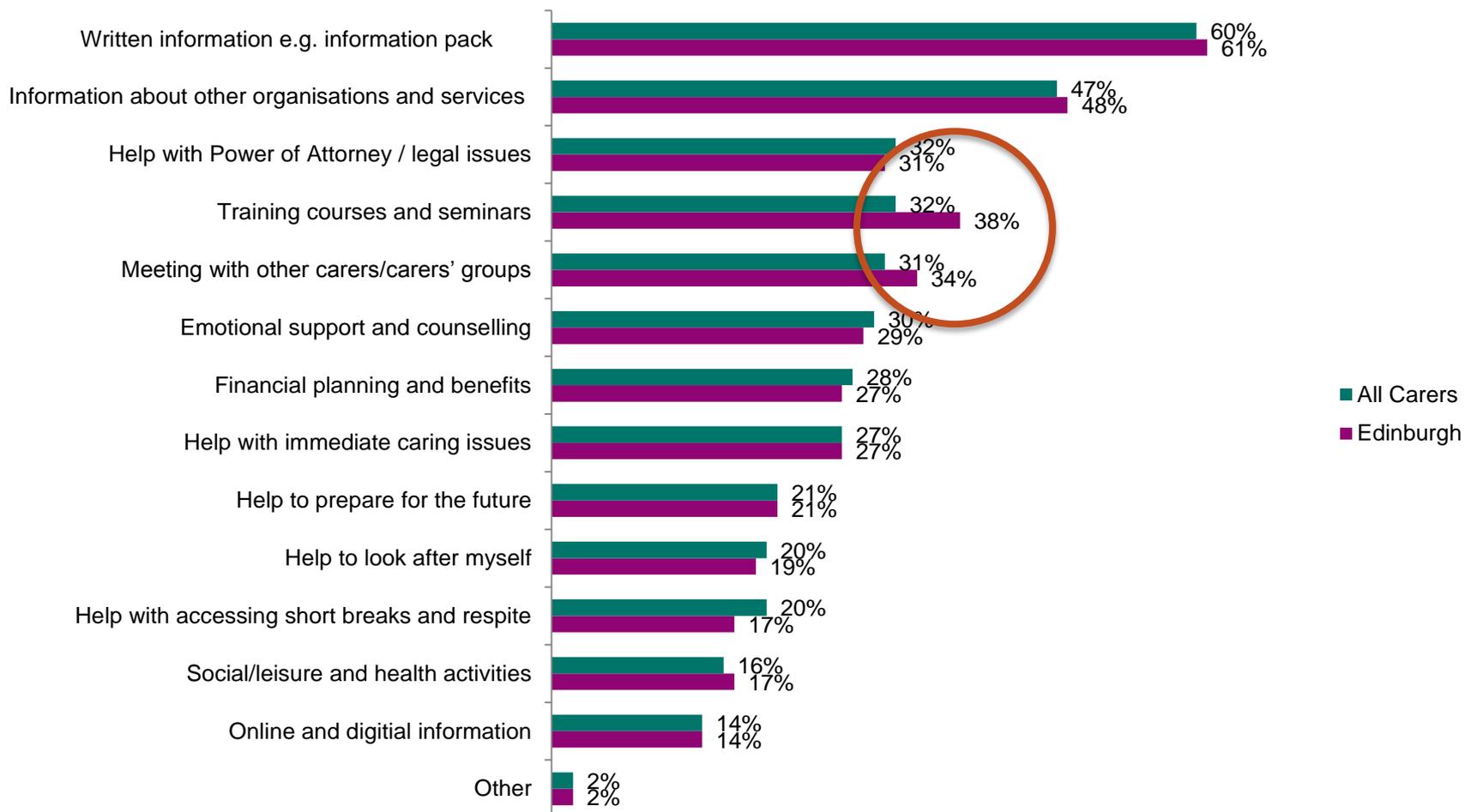


- More recent users in Midlothian (45%) than in Edinburgh (40%).
- Proportion of Edinburgh recent contacts slightly lower than in 2015.
- Respondents were less likely to have used VOCAL if they had been caring for less than 2 years (14%) or if they were aged over 75 (22)%

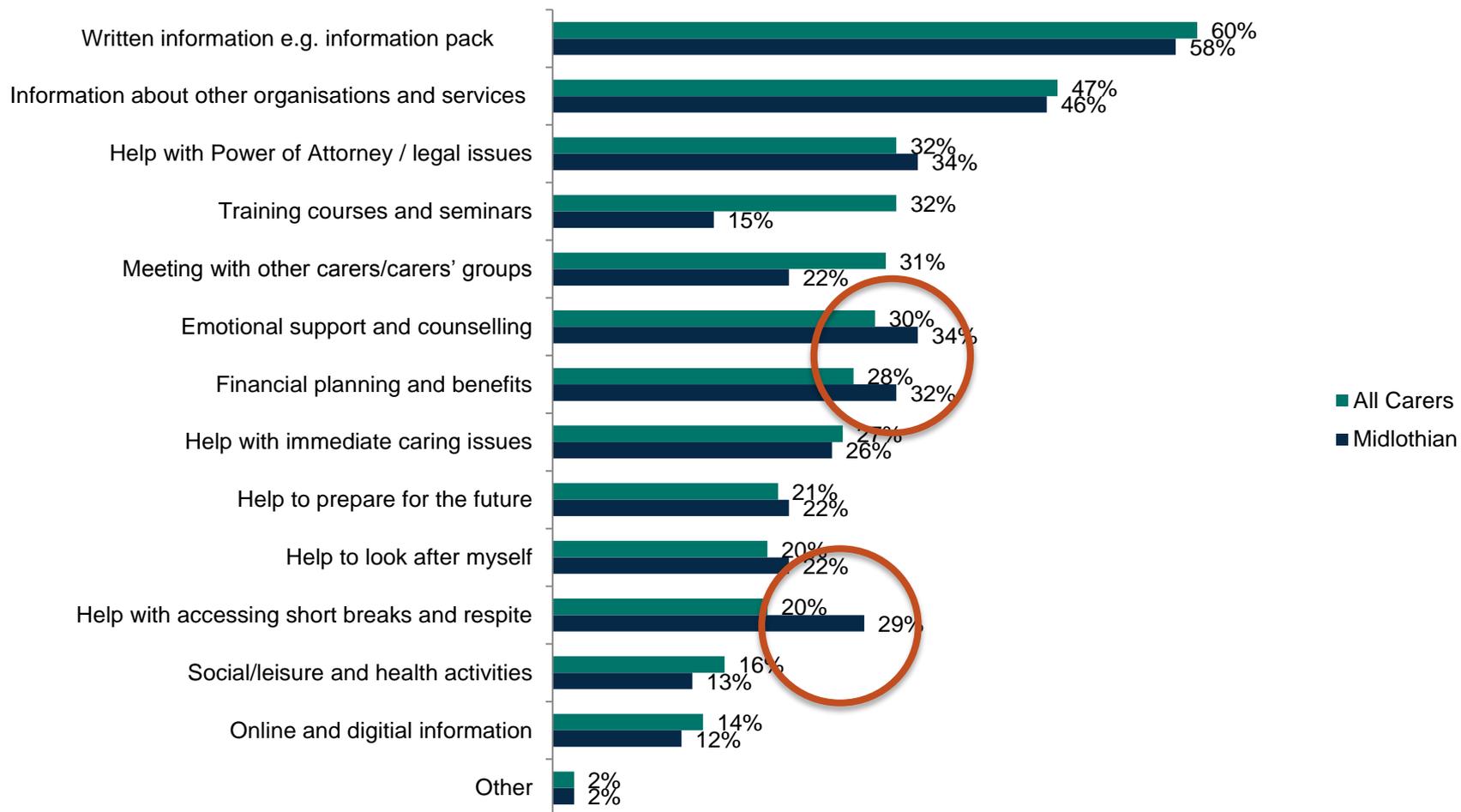
# Services Found Useful: All Carers



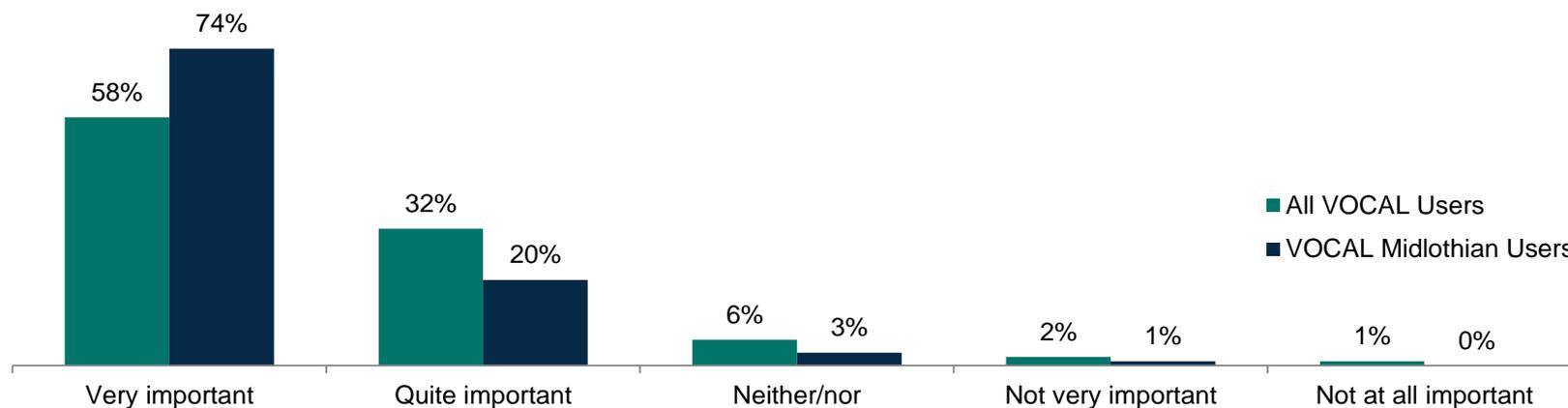
# Services Found Useful Reflect Local Provision: VOCAL Edinburgh



# Services Found Useful Reflect Local Provision: VOCAL Midlothian

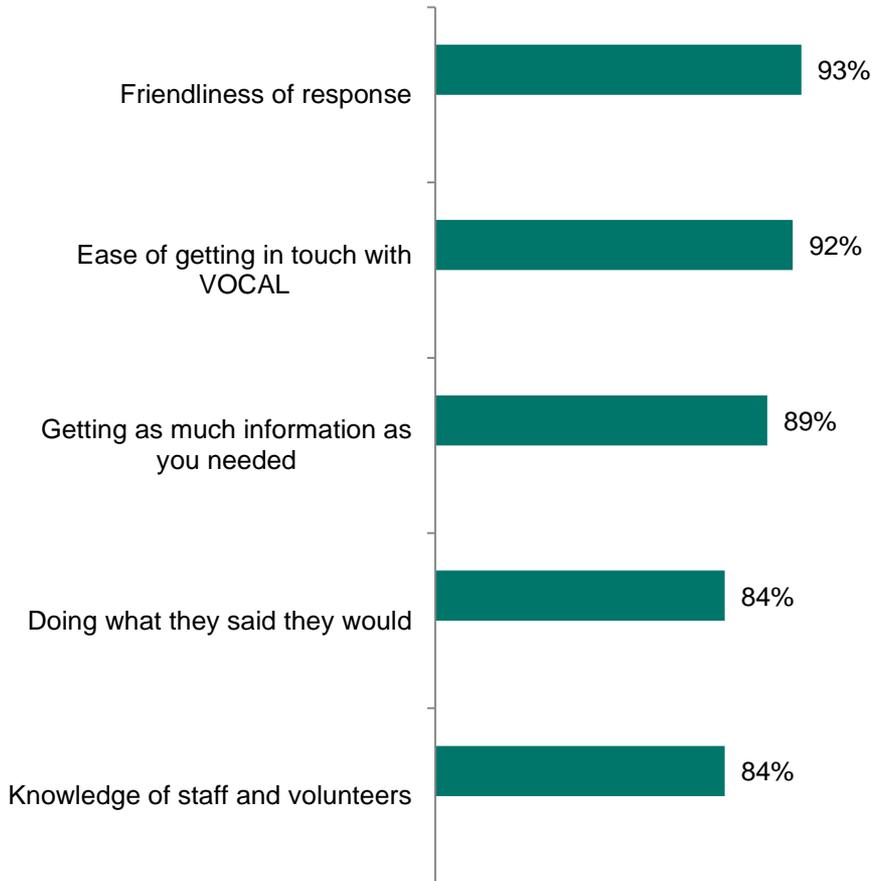


# Importance of Local Services



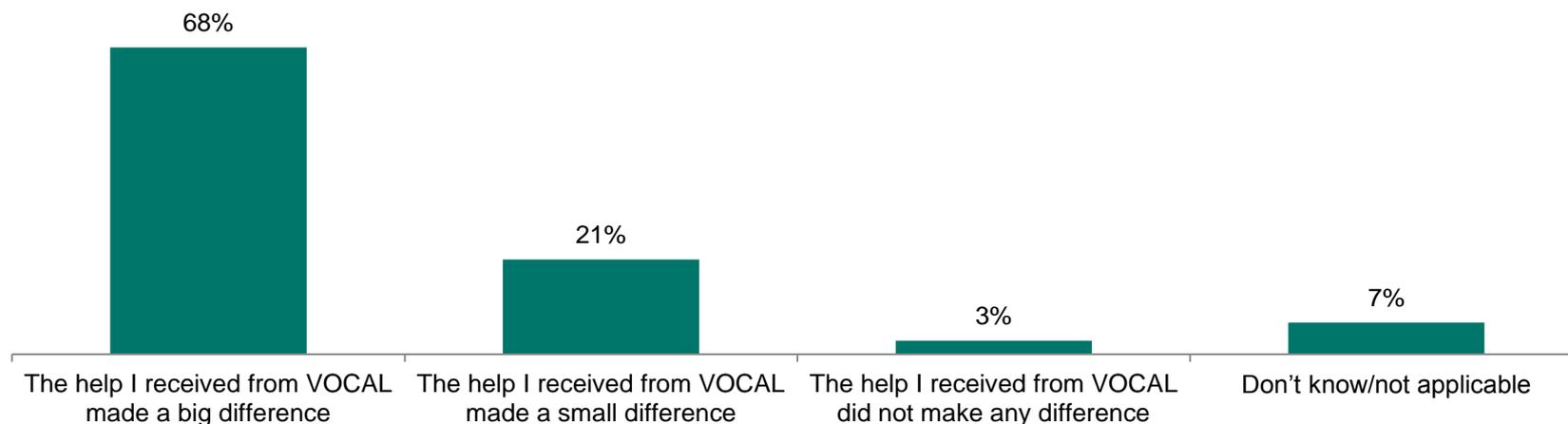
- Local services are vital, particularly for Midlothian carers.
- Local services are more important for carers of younger people, women, and younger carers.

# Satisfaction Ratings: “Good” or “Excellent”



- Excellent performance!
- Most respondents rate VOCAL as “excellent”
- Friendliness of staff performed particularly well – 74% excellent
- Consistent performance across geographies
- Consistent with previous high performance

# Impact of VOCAL



- You make a difference!
- “Big difference” figures: Edinburgh 65%, Midlothian 75%.
- Edinburgh performance consistent with 2015, Midlothian slightly up.
- High impact reported for carers aged 26-64 (73%) and in paid employment (74%).

“Makes me feel supported, understood and listened to”

“Confidence for the future”

“Counselling saved my sanity”

“The information helped me to make the right decisions”

“Felt less isolated”

“Got a care package in place”

“Helped me manage my caring role and caring for myself”

Reduced stress greatly”

“VOCAL has provided love and advice, someone to talk to when the silence at home becomes impossible”

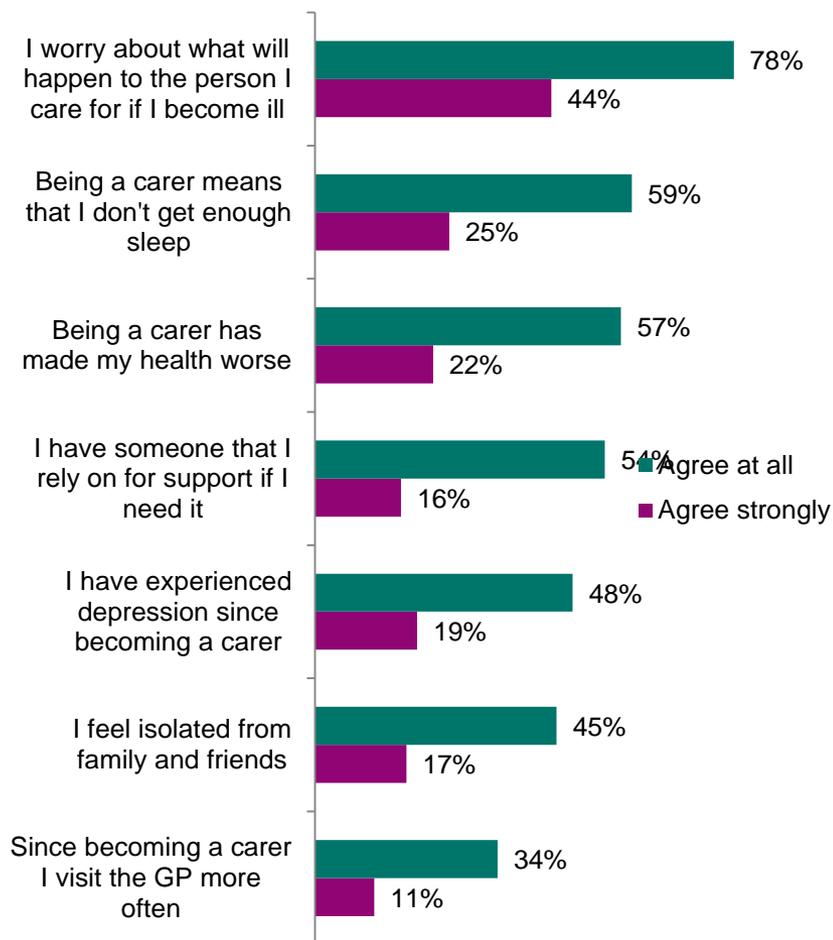
“Made new friends in the same position”

“I got a much-needed weekend of respite”

# Satisfaction with VOCAL - Summary

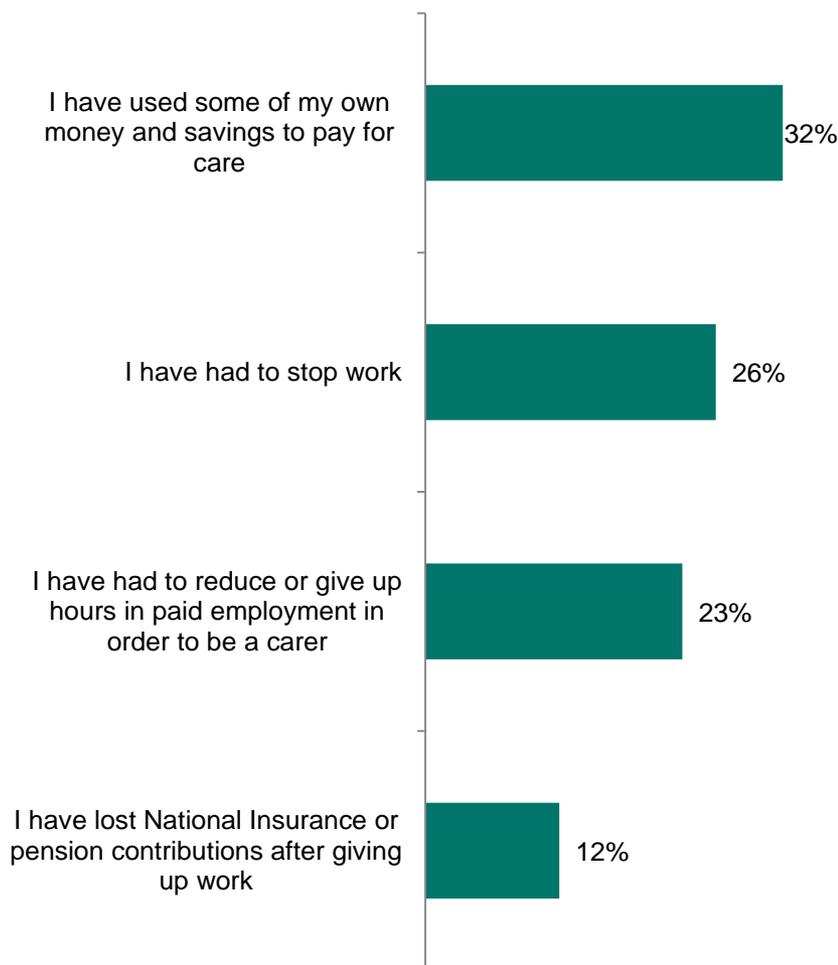
- Highly satisfied cohort of carers.
  - Nearly half have engaged with VOCAL in the past six months.
  - Some geographical variation in terms of services found useful – probably reflecting the balance of services currently provided.
  - Carers value the provision of services locally.
  - Satisfaction ratings are excellent, particularly in terms of friendliness of staff and in Midlothian generally!
  - Two thirds of carers (three-quarters in Midlothian) say that you make a big difference.
  - Continued strong performance from 2015.
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# Health and Wellbeing



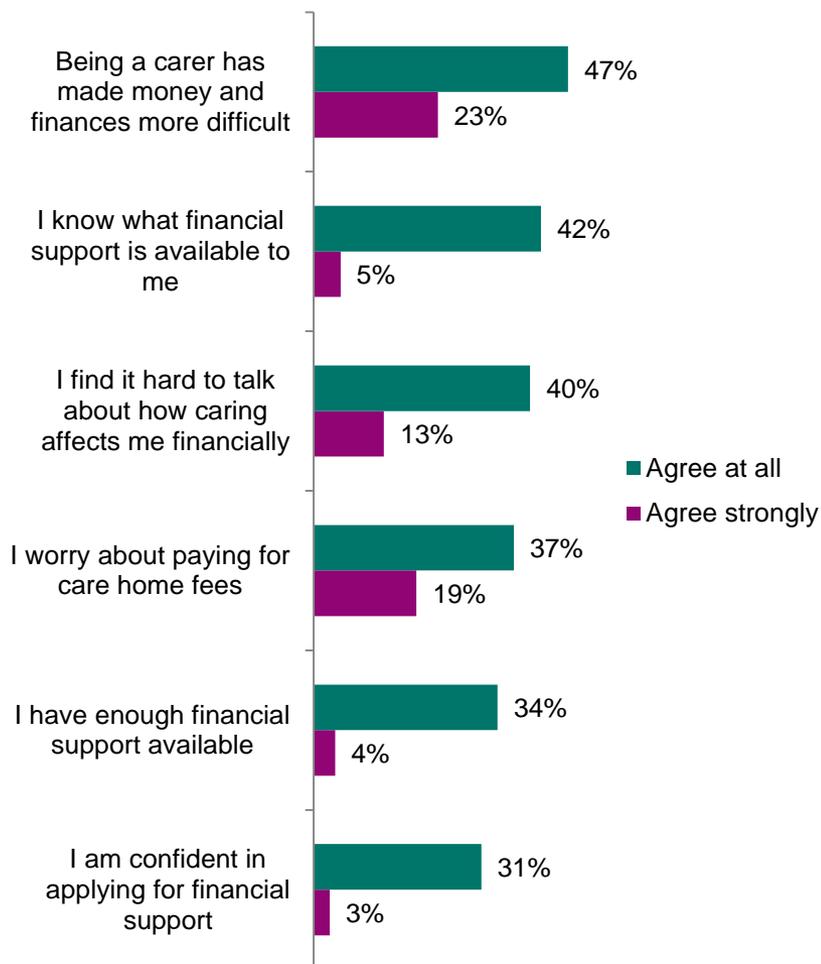
- 57% say “being a carer has made my health worse”
- Increases to 68% for those who have not accessed VOCAL services (NB small sample)
- Impact on health increases with duration of care
- Carers of young people are more likely to say their health has been impacted
- Priorities: contingency planning and sleep.

# Cost of Caring



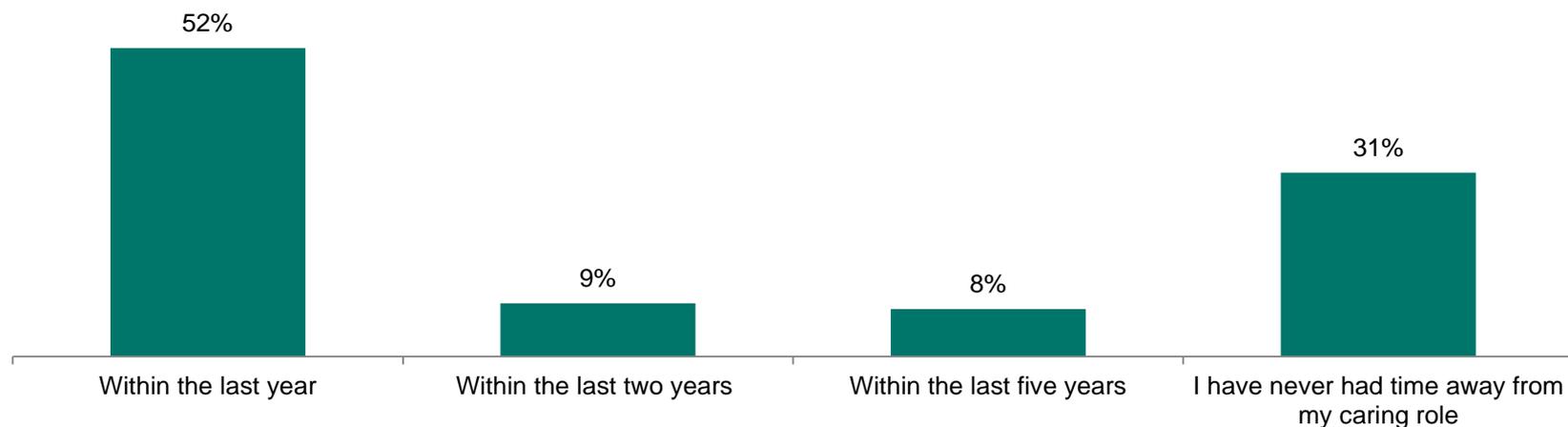
- Nearly a third of carers are financing care themselves.
- Proportion dipping into savings is higher for long term carers (37%), men (43%), carers of children (40%).
- A quarter have had to stop working: higher for long-term carers (30%), carers of children (51%).
- A quarter have had to reduce working hours: higher for carers of children and young people.
- NI losses illustrate long-term impact

# Money and Work



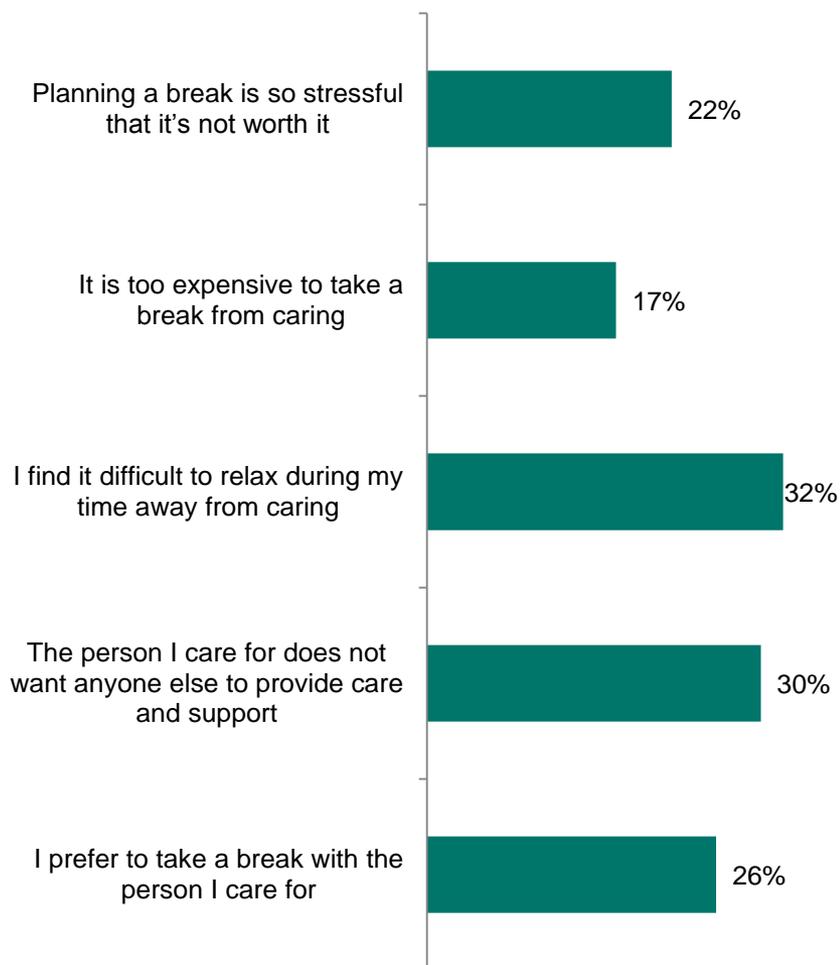
- 47% say money and finances are more difficult as a result of caring.
- Increases to 58% for people who have not accessed VOCAL services.
- Impact on £ is higher for long-term carers (54%), carers of young people (77%) and people of working age (62%).
- Priorities: supporting the application process, securing adequate support, future planning for care home fees.

# Time Away From Caring



- Only half of carers feel that they have had time away from caring in the past year.
- A third of carers have never had time away.
- Time away is important – 43% of respondents say that it makes it much easier for them to continue caring.

# Caring Preferences

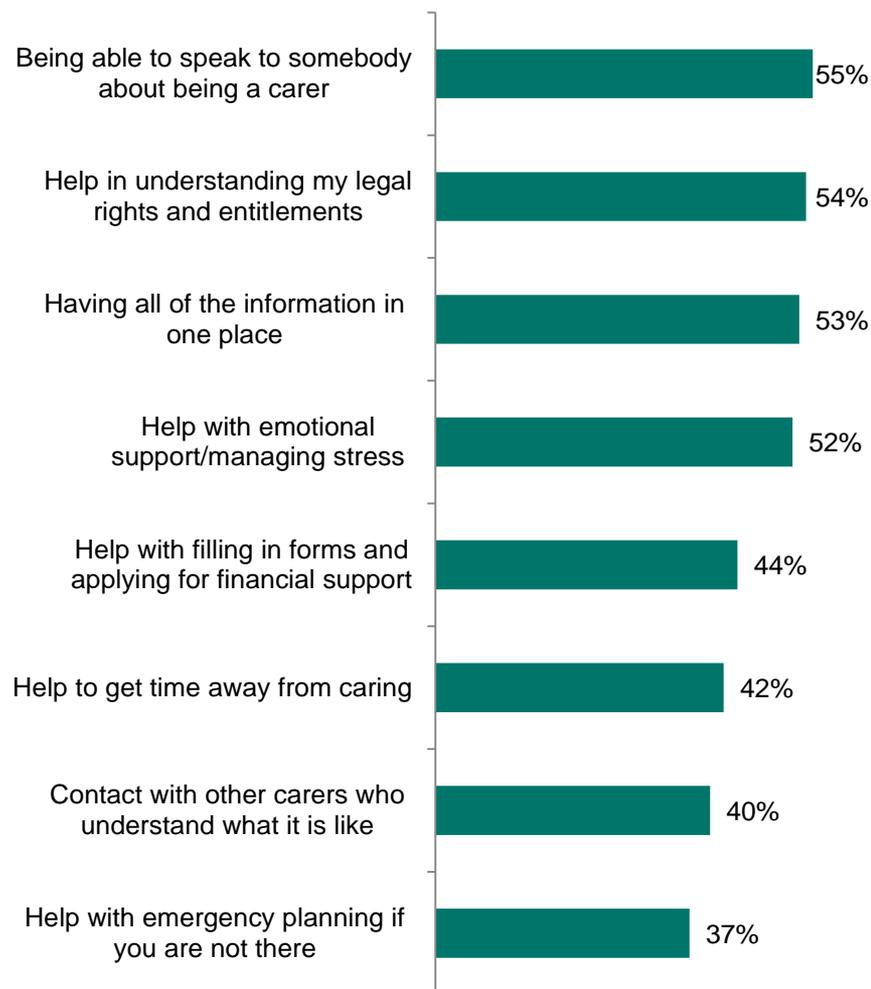


- Most people would like time away from the person being cared for.
- New carers, carers of children, and men are more likely to want to take a break with the person they care for.
- The main barriers to effective time away are: being able to relax, the preferences of the person being cared for, and the stress involved with planning a break.
- Carers of children are least likely to relax during time away from caring.
- Preference for a particular carer increases with age.
- Planning is particularly stressful for carers of children and young people.

## Context: Summary

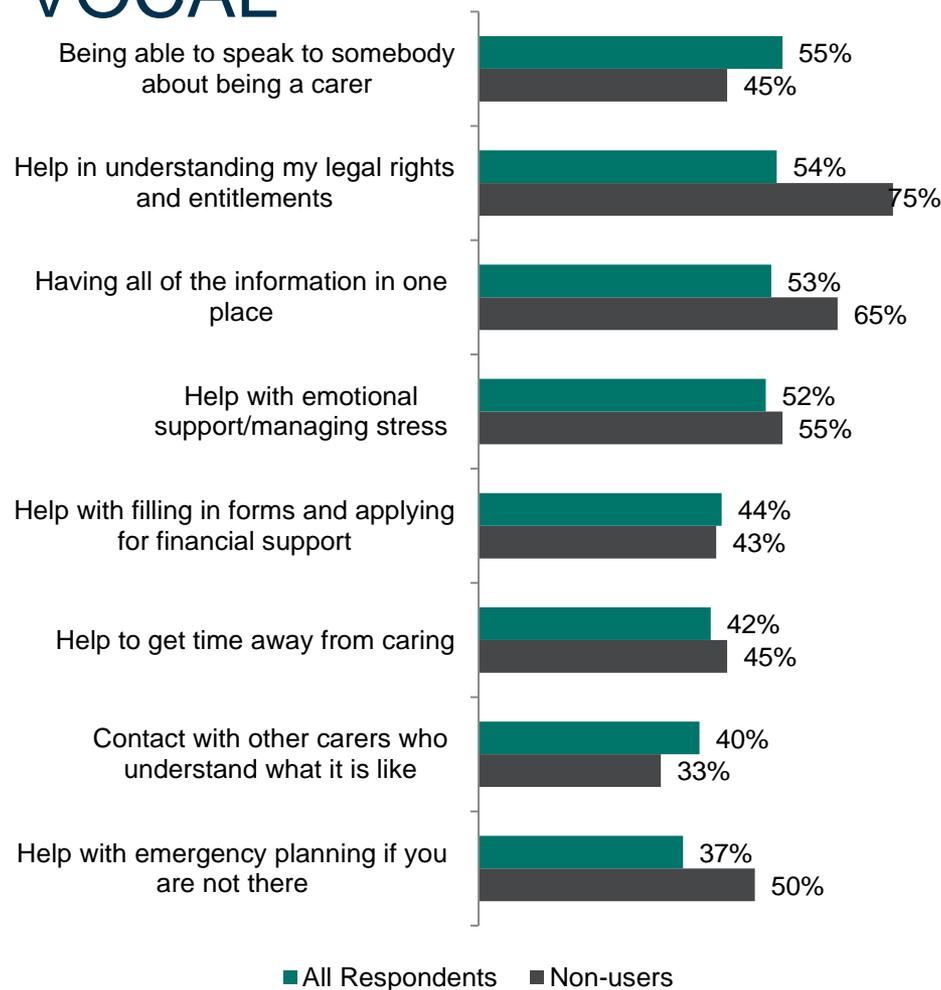
- Caring has significant impacts on health and finances.
  - Impacts are short- and long-term.
  - Carers engaged with VOCAL appear to be experiencing fewer negative impacts (caution: small sample!).
  - Concern for the future and a lack of sleep are the main health impacts.
  - Carers stop work, reduce hours and use their own money to finance care.
  - Money worries focus on applying for support, having enough money, and paying for care home fees.
  - Time away from caring can have a positive impact on carers.
  - Only half of carers have had any time away in the past year.
  - Barriers include the carer being unable to relax, the preferences of the person being cared for, and the stress of planning time away.
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# Future Support



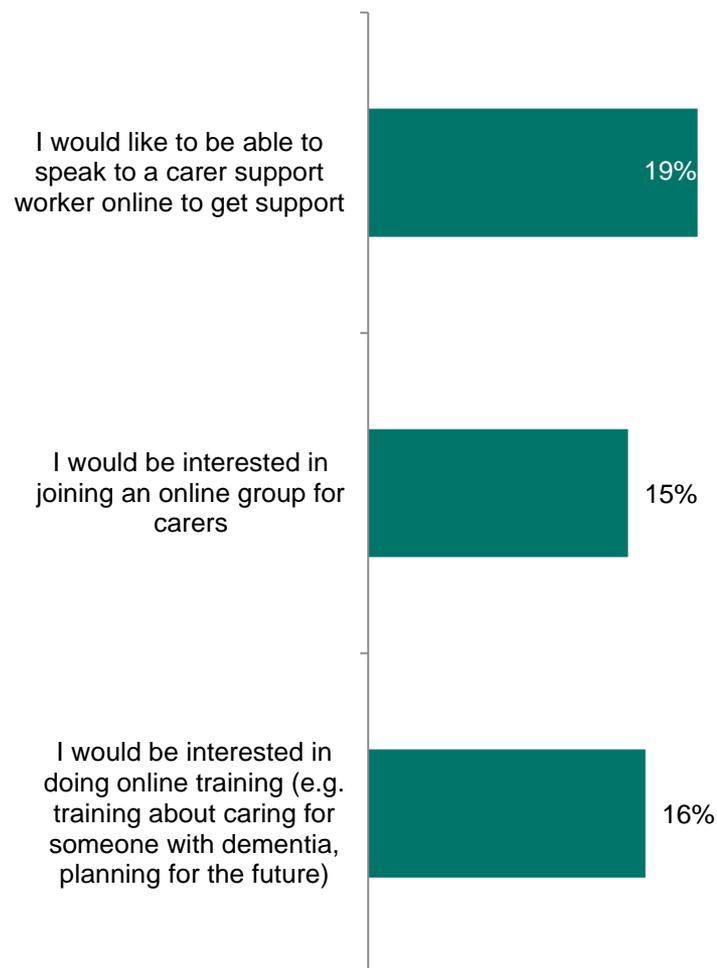
- Suggested areas of support largely reflect the list of useful services already being experienced by VOCAL carers.
- VOCAL Edinburgh users show more interest in contact with other carers (43%) than VOCAL Midlothian carers (33%).
- VOCAL Midlothian carers more likely to ask for help filling in forms (49%) than VOCAL Edinburgh carers (42%).

# Future Support: Respondents not engaged with VOCAL



- Graph shows the interest levels of carers who have not previously engaged with VOCAL.
- CAUTION: small sample size! (40) – indicative
- More interest in legal rights, emotional support and emergency planning.

# Future Support: Online



- Relatively low levels of interest in online provision.
- No variation across geography.
- Higher interest from those not currently using VOCAL – opportunity?
- Care worker online: new carers, carers of children, people in paid employment, carers not working or retired would all be interested.
- Online group for carers: people caring for children and working age carers are a strong target.
- Online training: carers of between 1-5 years, caring for someone over the age of 75, aged 26-64 and in employment all strong targets.

## Future Support: Leith

- Asked for opinions on new facility in Leith (Edinburgh survey only)
  - 214 responses – 32 suggestions!
  - 48 people said to keep it the same as the current offer
  - 23 asked for dedicated parking
  - 20 suggested a café
  - 17 suggested drop-in sessions and 8 suggested providing support outside office hours.
  - 15 asked for more general purpose and flexible space – with an emphasis on it being bright and welcoming.
  - Note that 13 respondents said they didn't like the new location: migration strategy.
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## Future Support: Summary

- Existing users like what you are doing now and want to see it continued.
  - Some evidence that non-users would respond well to online support and provision of “basic” information.
  - More of the same at Leith, but with improved access and greater flexibility.
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