Headlines

- Currently, 1 in 10 of the population provides unpaid care for someone with poor health or disability.
- One in four of these carers (almost 3% of the total population) provide 50+ hours of care. That is just under 5000 people in North Lincolnshire. This represents a 30% growth since 2001.
- The population of North Lincolnshire is ageing, and at a faster rate than nationally.
- By 2020 the number of residents aged 80+ will be more than 10,500 in North Lincolnshire, 30% more than there are currently. The number of people aged 90+ will be almost 2,300 in 2020, 79% more than there are currently.
- It is estimated that demand for care will rise rapidly in line with this trend, putting additional pressure on the working age population.
- This trend is already apparent in North Lincolnshire; since 2001 the number of carers has grown by 14%. This is faster than the general growth in the population during that period which was just under 10%.
- The largest growth has occurred in the highest unpaid care category i.e. those providing 50+ hours a week.
- More than half of the growth in carers, 69% has occurred in our rural areas, where a significant proportion of our older population now reside.
- Whilst female carers continue to outnumber male carers, the proportion of men providing unpaid care is growing. Amongst the 25-49 age group male carers outnumber women.
- 80% of the caring population are of working age.
- The peak age for caring is 45-64 years of age, when people are the peak of their employment career and earning capacity.
- Currently there are 1590 working age carers in North Lincolnshire who are unable to work who are claiming out of work benefits.
• National research shows that many carers would work if they were able to. However this depends on the availability of the right type of support services in the community and the willingness and ability of employers to enable their workforce to combine work with their caring responsibilities.

• Local authorities, Health and Wellbeing Boards and health and social care partnerships have a key role in stimulating and shaping the local care market in ways that better meet working carers’ needs.

• Many employers already recognise the importance of enabling flexible working for carers, much as they already do for working parents. They also recognise the need for more quality and affordable support services for carers, as well as for working parents of dependent children. However, flexible working practices are still not the norm.

• The local authority and health and wellbeing board have a key role in providing information to employers and championing this issue. Local business partnerships are also in a key position to promote best practice amongst partner organisations.

**Why is this important?**

• The provision of unpaid care is becoming increasingly common as the population ages, with the demand for informal unpaid care provided by spouses and adult children, projected to double in number over the next 30 years.

• The provision of unpaid care is a significant social policy issue, not only because carers are a vital source of local (unpaid) care provision, but also because of the impact on employment, income and physical and mental health and wellbeing of carers, many of whom are of working age.

• Nationally it has been estimated that by the year 2050, three times more people of working age will have to juggle caring responsibilities with full or part time work.

• The impact of this is likely to be felt much sooner than this. By 2017 it is estimated that the UK will reach a ‘tipping point’ for care when the numbers of older people needing care will outstrip the numbers of working age family members currently available to meet that demand.

• In North Lincolnshire, the number of people of pensionable age relative to those of working age has been rising year on year, in spite of a recent growth in the working age population. Currently the ratio of working age to pensioner population in North Lincolnshire is just above 3:1, compared with 4:1 nationally. By 2020 this is projected to fall below 3:1.
Carers leaving work to care because they feel they have few other options results is an unwanted loss of talent, meaning that employers are likely to incur additional recruitment and productivity costs.

The public expenditure costs in terms of carers’ allowances and lost tax revenues are also likely to be significant.

In North Lincolnshire, there are currently 1590 adults of working age who are unable to work due to caring responsibilities who are claiming out of work benefits, (February 2013).

As the population ages, and the number of carers providing more hours of unpaid care rises, the effects of losing carers from the workforce will grow.

Whilst it is difficult to quantify accurately the amount of savings to public services that unpaid carers provide, it is clear that without the 2.9% of the local population currently providing the 50+ hours a week unpaid care, the costs to families and public services would be significant.

What’s the local picture and how do we compare?

According to the 2011 Census, there were just over 18,000 people providing unpaid care for relatives or friends in North Lincolnshire. This represents 10.8% of the population, a rate similar to the national average of 10.3%. This is a 14% growth in the absolute number of carers in the North Lincolnshire population since 2001, although the proportion of residents that carers represent has remained unchanged over the last decade, at just under 11% of the population. This is a faster pace of growth than amongst the general population, which grew by just under 10%. Across the country as a whole, the growth in carers between 2011-11 was also 14% over this period.

Figure 1: Carers in North Lincolnshire and England

Source: ONS, 2011 Census
North Lincolnshire has an older than average population, and one which is set to grow more rapidly than nationally. Currently the ratio of 16-64 year olds to 65+ in the population is 3.3:1 in North Lincolnshire, compared with 4.0:1 nationally. This ratio is due to fall further between now and 2020, in spite of a projected growth in the working age population. This is because the 70+ is projected to grow at an even faster rate during this period.

In order to reflect the recent changes in education and pensions, the graph below shows the projected ratio of people aged 18-69 to people aged 70+ in North Lincolnshire between now and 2020. As it illustrates the major change is likely to occur in 2017 onwards, even with a rise in the state pensionable age.

**Figure 2: ratio of 18-69 year olds to 70+s in North Lincs 2011-2020**

![Graph showing ratio of 18-69 year olds to 70+s in North Lincs 2011-2020]

Source: ONS 2011 Census

**Provision of unpaid care**

The largest absolute growth has been amongst the number of people providing 50+ hours unpaid care a week, which has risen by 30% in the last 10 years, although the proportion of the population that this group represents remains relatively unchanged at just under 3% of the population, (2.8%).
Figure 3: Provision of unpaid care in North Lincolnshire, 2001-2011

Which groups are most affected?

Women

Whilst the number of male carers is growing year on year, women still make up more than half, (58%) of all people providing unpaid care locally and nationally. Nevertheless, almost 1 in 10 men and 1 in 8 women in North Lincolnshire provide unpaid care.

Figure 4: Number of people providing unpaid care in North Lincolnshire, 2011
Women are also more likely to care for longer. Currently 27% of female carers provide at least 50 hours unpaid care a week, compared with 25% male carers.

**Table 1: provision of unpaid care in North Lincolnshire**

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<th>Hours per week</th>
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Source: ONS, Census 2011

**People in their middle years**

Nationally, and locally, carers tend to be middle aged and older, the largest proportion and number of carers being amongst adults aged 45-64 years, people who are often at the peak of their career and earning capacity. Although women generally provide a higher share of unpaid care than men, this varies by age group, with male carers aged 25-49 years outnumbering women in that age group.

People aged 65+ provide the largest number of care hours per week, with 6.4% of this age group, (1849 in number) providing more than 50 hours unpaid care a week, compared with 2.5% of those aged 25-49 years. This age group are also more likely to be in poor health themselves.

**Figure 5: Provision of unpaid care in North Lincolnshire by age of carer, 2011**
People approaching retirement age in employment

The greater the caring responsibilities the less likely carers of working age are to be in employment. Working women provide a greater share of unpaid care than working men, with 13% of working women providing some form of care, compared with 9.5% men. The highest levels of unpaid care amongst people of working age are amongst women who work part time. Even though the employment details of carers in North Lincolnshire are not available, it is likely that this follows the national pattern.

National data suggests that becoming an unpaid carer in your 50s increases your chances of leaving the labour market for good. In a recent national survey conducted on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions, 22% of working age carers said that caring had negatively impacted on their work and career prospects, whilst a third of working age carers said they had given up work or reduced their hours because services for their relatives were either too expensive or were inadequate. Of this latter group a fifth was between £10 and £15k a year worse off as a result, with a further fifth losing between £15-20k a year. This reflects the age and skills of working age carers, who tend to be older, more skilled and better paid than the rest of the workforce. This group are thus more likely to have developed the skills that employers need to succeed.

Impact on health

Caring is also associated with both physical and mental health problems, the greater the number of hours of unpaid care provided, the worse the health reported. Indeed, people providing 50+ hours of unpaid care a week are almost 2.5 times more likely to report being in bad or very bad health. A recent analysis of the 2011 Census data on carers by the Office of National Statistics also suggests that caring 50 or more hours a week, especially whilst in employment, is likely to be more hazardous to women’s health than to men’s.

Where are carers located?

As one might expect, carers tend to be located in areas where there is a high density of:

- Older people, especially those aged 75+
- People with limiting long term illnesses and disabilities
Deprivation – which in itself is linked to poor health and disability

In North Lincolnshire, more than half, 55% of carers are residents of rural market towns and villages, reflecting the older age profile of these areas.

**Figure 6: Distribution of carers in North Lincolnshire by locality 2011**

![Distribution of carers in North Lincolnshire by locality 2011](image)

Source: ONS, Census 2011

Moreover, whilst the number of carers has grown almost everywhere in North Lincolnshire over the last 10 years, the largest absolute growth has been observed in the rural wards of Brigg, Barton, Ferry, Axholme Central, Ridge, as well as in Ashby in Scunthorpe North (See appendix table X).
What are our key assets/strengths?

- North Lincolnshire has a long established Carers Support Service within the voluntary sector which provides advice and support for carers.
- Other active support services and groups include the Alzheimers’ Society, Empathy, MIND and ReThink Carer’s Support for people who care for those with serious mental health problems.
- A well-established Carer’s Partnership which advocates on behalf of carers locally.
- North Lincolnshire also has a protocol for allocating Carer break funding in order to support carers to have a break away from their caring role. This initiative has been extremely well received by carers locally.
- A growing working age population of carers also presents a unique business and employment development opportunity in the care and support service sector. National research shows that people working and caring from a distance place significant value on services that support the independence of the people they care for, including befriending, gardening and domestic services, as well as technology services.

What’s changed since 2012?

- The Carers Advisory Partnership continues to play a key role in “driving forward” and acting on behalf of carers. They have successfully lobbied NHS North Lincolnshire CCG to release additional monies to develop carer services.
A range of new services for carers has been commissioned by NLC and the CSU. These include GP liaison and a hospital liaison worker.

There is due to be a significant financial investment by the CSU following the agreement from NHS North Lincolnshire to support services for carers as identified within the NHS operating framework – this funding has, in the first instance, been agreed until 2015.

What are the views of local people/carers?

- In addition to local carer’s forums, a number of one off consultation/research studies have taken place over the years which have sought the views of local unpaid carers.
- The most recent was conducted in 2012 by the University of Leeds, reporting in March 2013. Previous surveys include that summarised in the local report, ‘Is Knackarered a medical condition’, 2010.
- Carers of working age said they struggled to combine employment with caring and felt more could be done to educate employers about best practice in retaining carers in employment.
- Those without family support felt that a buddying or befriending system, currently in development in other service areas, and specifically with carers of people with significant mental health needs, could be rolled out across all carers groups.
- Accessing health provision for themselves can also be problematic for carers. Many of those questioned in the Leeds research felt that health care providers could be more flexible when offering appointments to carers, because of constraints on their time, especially those in employment.
- Whilst a key service offered to carers by the Carers Support Service is education support and training, many local carers said they are unaware of the support that is available locally to enhance their education and training. This is in spite of very positive feedback from carers who have accessed the ‘Caring with Confidence’ course delivered at the Carers Support Centre in Brigg.
- Many carers said they were unable to access this and other useful training because of constraints on their time, and lack of flexibility in terms of the time and venue where training was delivered.
- Carers’ preferences were for short courses which helped them in their caring role – e.g. in understanding better, the medical or mental health conditions of their relatives.
• Young carers also require training and support which wraps around the school day.
• Many carers, especially those of working age were also unaware of the benefits that assistive technology could bring, or how to access them.
• The Council and CCG have consulted with local carers about the findings of this research.

**What are our future needs?**

• The number of carers is likely to grow exponentially alongside the natural growth in the population. Estimates are for a growth of between 9%-15% more carers in the population, between now and 2020.
• To date the largest growth in carers has been in the rural areas of North Lincolnshire, especially the market towns of Barton, Brigg and Epworth and surrounding areas. This trend is likely to continue, suggesting the need for a strong network of services and informal support across North Lincolnshire including a number of key rural locations.
• The vast majority of carers are of working age, including more than 60% of those providing 50+ hours a week of unpaid care. Increasing the working potential of people with caring responsibilities whether in full or part time employment will require a broader range of community support services than is currently available as well as more flexible employment opportunities. This might include peer support and informal befriending services for carers.
• People of working age make up the majority of carers, hence the need to urgently review and promote flexible working policy and practice, especially for those who may be within 10-15 years of retirement age, the key age for increasing caring responsibilities.

**What are the key issues for commissioners to consider?**

• Improving information dissemination and promotion of support services to carers.
• Developing a robust and effective support service for carers making best use of 3rd sector expertise and resources, especially in our rural areas where demand is likely to increase.
• Promoting best employment practice for working carers amongst North Lincolnshire’s major employers.
• Stimulating a broader range of support services in the local market place for local working age carers.
• Ensuring carer’s needs are highlighted in the Annual Market Position Statement.

Links to evidence base

Web links to data observatory and ONS

References


Office of National Statistics (ONS) ‘The gender gap in unpaid care provision. Is there an impact on health and economic position (ONS), 2013,


Turner, Wright, Wigfield, ‘Research Summary: Support Needs of Carers in North Lincolnshire, 2013’ CIRCLE, (Centre for International Research on care, labour and equalities), University of Leeds

Authors

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Karen Whitby – Team Manager -Family Carers, North Lincolnshire Council
## Appendix Table 1: Provision of unpaid care in North Lincolnshire by ward, 2001-11

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<th>IMD score</th>
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