



Talk to Us about Carers

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (HWNN) is an independent organisation that helps people get the best from their local health and care services.

Between February and June 2019 we undertook a Question of the Month survey to gain a greater understanding of people's awareness of what a 'carer' is. We also asked whether carers had undertaken a Carer's Assessment, and if not, why not, and whether they felt listened to by health professionals.

In 2014 The Care Act gave '*local authorities a responsibility to assess a carer's needs for support and what those needs may be*'. This is done through a Carer's Assessment. The local authority has to offer support and an assessment (if required) if a carer appears to need care and support, regardless of their income or savings or whether the council thinks they will qualify for support from the local authority. The assessment considers the impact of caring on the carer, whether the carer is able or willing to carry on caring, would like to work, study or do more socially. Once the assessment is complete, '*the local authority must decide whether the carer's needs are 'eligible' for support from the local authority*'. If eligible, '*the local authority and the carer will agree a support plan.*' (Care Act 2014 Factsheet 8 gov.uk)

According to the Census 2011, 90,698 people from Nottinghamshire County said they were unpaid carers and 26,954 were from Nottingham City. In the last financial year 1,760 Carer's Assessments were completed by Nottinghamshire County Council and 1,279 by Nottinghamshire Carers Hub for Nottingham City. In addition the Councils have done substantial work consulting on and drafting the new Carers strategy and the new contracts to deliver support to carers through Nottinghamshire Carers Hub.

The questions we asked were:

Are you a Carer?

Carers provide regular unpaid care for a family member, friend or partner who is unwell, elderly or disabled.

Reading the statement above, do you now think of yourself as a Carer?

Have you had a Carer's Assessment?

If you have not had an assessment, do you know why not?

What could be done locally to make your life better as a carer?

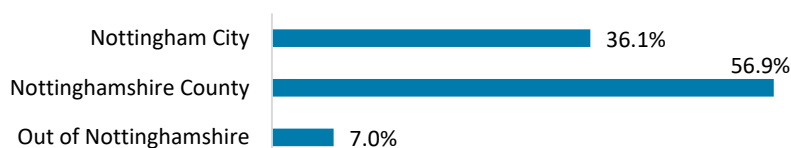
Do you feel professionals listen to/recognise your knowledge of the person you care for?

Responses to this survey were from local people across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County gathered through face to face public events such as 'Talk to Us' points and through an online SNAP survey linked to our website.

The total number of responses received was 371 with 36.1% (n=134) being received from citizens of Nottingham City and 56.9% (n=211) from Nottinghamshire County residents.

Completed Responses	No.	%
Nottingham City	134	36.1%
Nottinghamshire County	211	56.9%
Out of Nottinghamshire	26	7.0%
Total	371	100%

Table 1 – source all respondents (n=371)



NB: The out of area responses were not analysed within this report.

Participants were asked the following questions:

Are you a Carer?

Response	No.	%
Yes	167	48.4%
No	156	45.2%
Not answered	11	3.2%
Not sure	11	3.2%
Total	345	100%

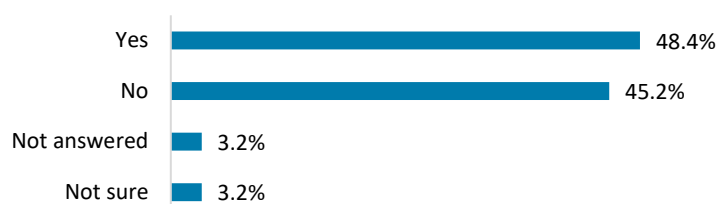


Table 2 – source respondents who are residents of Nottingham or Nottinghamshire (n=345)

Carers provide regular unpaid care for a family member, friend or partner who is unwell, elderly or disabled.

Reading the statement above, do you now think of yourself as a Carer?

Response	No.	%
Yes	168	48.7%
No	144	41.7%
Not answered	33	9.6%
Total	345	100%

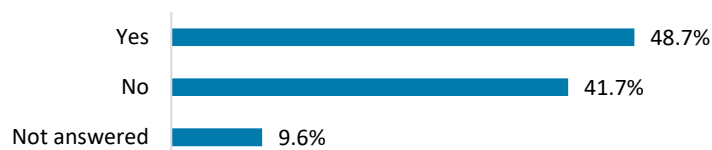


Table 3 – source respondents who are residents of Nottingham or Nottinghamshire (n=345)

Out of the 345 participants 48.7% (n=168) now answered 'yes' they thought of themselves as a carer and 41.7% (n=144) did not. 9.6% (n=33) did not provide an answer to this question.

What could be done locally to make your life better as a carer?

Out of the 168 participants who identified as a carer, the main suggestion given (37 people) as to what could be done locally was to provide more support, for example: *'professional help'*, *'meeting up with others - sharing experiences'*, *'someone to talk to'* and *'more social activities for carers and the people they look after to reduce isolation'*

The second theme that emerged (12 respondents) was more understanding and recognition as to the carer's situation: *'I sometimes think I need a sign above my head to point at me and say, 'I'm a carer, I need you to work around us' and 'a bit more understanding by every service that I can't get anywhere without making a lot of arrangements to leave the person I care for behind if I have to go somewhere alone'*

A further 12 people suggested more information would be helpful on support, services, respite care, local support groups and caring: *'more accessible information in one place and knowing where to find it and what is available'*

8 people said they were in need of respite care. 7 people talked about needing more financial support. Lastly, information for carers of someone living with dementia was mentioned by 7 people.

Have you had a Carer's Assessment?

Response	No.	%
Yes	65	38.7%
No	84	50%
Not sure	13	7.7%
Not answered	6	3.6%
Total	168	100%

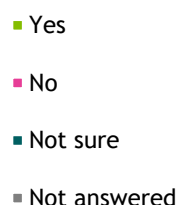


Table 4 – source respondents who are carers and residents of Nottingham or Nottinghamshire (n=345)

Out of the 168 participants who identified as a carer 50% (n=84) said they had not had a Carer's Assessment, 38.7% (n=65) said yes they had and 7.7% (n=13) were not sure. 3.6% (n=6) did not provide an answer. For those who had not received an assessment; 21 people commented they were not aware of the Carer's Assessment, 13 people said they didn't think they would qualify and therefore had not

applied, 9 people had not got round to applying and 6 people felt it was ‘pointless’ and ‘waste of time, no support afterwards.’ Other reasons given are below:

‘I’ve not heard of a Carers Assessment’, ‘don’t want one. I don’t think I/we are at that stage yet’, ‘time is a factor - I work full time’, ‘I wasn’t aware of the assessment until today’, ‘there is no value to them’, ‘didn’t know I could’, ‘never been contacted in relation to this’, ‘I am working’, ‘don’t know who to contact’ and ‘I was told it was not worth it’.

Do you feel professionals listen to/recognise your knowledge of the person you care for?

Response	No.	%
Yes	91	54.2%
No	56	33.3%
Not answered	21	12.5%
Total	168	100%

- Yes
- No
- Not answered



Table 5 – source respondents who are carers and residents of Nottingham or Nottinghamshire (n=345)

Out of the 168 participants who identified as carers 54.2% (n=91) answered ‘yes’ they felt professionals listen to and recognize the knowledge of the person they care for. Some of the reasons given were as follows:

‘Our doctors, nurses and physios have been wonderful in explaining things and where to go for help’, ‘I do feel that there is help available and I have felt supported by professionals so far. I am still learning’, ‘I am now the appointed person and they recognise that’, ‘When she went for her last consultation for MS, he spoke to and consulted me - I didn’t feel like I was just there to listen in’, ‘Most of the professionals were pleased to speak to someone with in depth knowledge, especially when my father was no longer able to talk’ and ‘They take in consideration my concerns and listen to my reports’.

12.5% (n=21) did not provide an answer. 33.3% (n=56) said they don’t feel listened to. Some of the reasons given were as follows:

‘Because they tell me what they think I need and not what I ask for’, ‘mostly it’s tick boxing and money saving’, ‘Apart from a note on my GP record I don’t think that anyone knows that I am a carer’, ‘They don’t think of us as able. They are professionals. They know better than us,’ and ‘just passed round the system - no one actually does anything to help’.

Conclusions

Carers want more support and information

Of the 345 respondents just under half (48.7%, n=168) thought of themselves as a carer after reading the carer’s definition. When asked what could be done locally to make their life as a carer better, carers most commonly suggested - more support for themselves and the person they are caring for, information and services being more accessible, more recognition and understanding by services of the carer’s role, and having respite care to give them a break from their duties as a carer.

Many Carers are not receiving a Carer’s Assessment

Of the 48.7% (n=168) of respondents who thought of themselves as a carer 50% (n= 84) had not received a Carer’s Assessment. The most common reason behind not having an assessment was not knowing of its existence - 21 people were not aware of the Carer’s Assessment.

These results indicate that half of respondents who would categorise themselves as a carer are yet to receive a Carer’s Assessment which could perhaps explain their reduced accessibility to services, information and support.

A third of carers do not feel that professionals listen to them and recognise their knowledge of the person they care for

Out of the 168 respondents 54.2% (n=91) felt listened to by professionals. This group felt supported, that things are explained clearly to them and that their knowledge is taken into account. Those who feel that professionals do not listen to them, felt ignored and passed around the system without actually receiving any direct help, whether this was because the professionals do not see the carer as capable or because of insufficient funding is unclear.

Recommendations

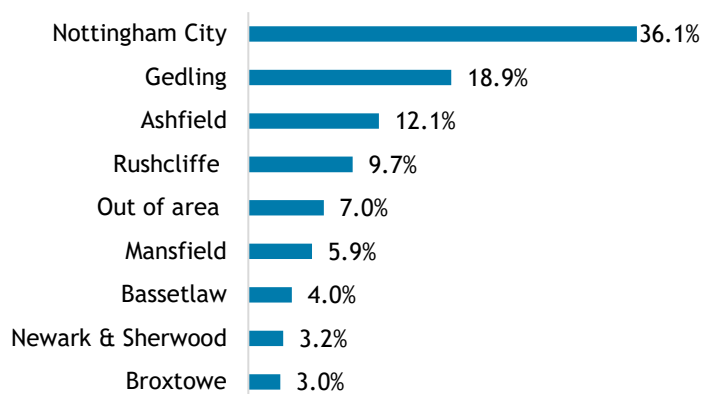
- Encourage carers to inform their GP that they are carers so that this is flagged on their notes and they can be easily identified by the surgery.
- CCGs to actively support the distribution of the 'Information for Carers 2019' booklet provided by Nottinghamshire County Council to all GP practices.
- CCGs particularly in mid and north Nottinghamshire to identify, train and equip Carer Champions in each GP surgery.
- Carer Champions to manage their carers list and proactively support carers for example by giving them the Carers Hub leaflet, referring them to the Carers Hub, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council for support and a Carer's Assessment if required.
- Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council to actively promote their carers support service and the Carers Hub who are commissioned to provide support and carry out assessments.
- Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council to display the questions in the Carer's Assessment on their website for transparency.
- GP staff to listen more proactively to carers who have knowledge about the people they care for.

Who answered our Question of the Month?

In total, we received 371 responses to our survey. 36.1% (n=134) were from Nottingham City and 56.9% (n=211) from Nottinghamshire County. 7.0% (n=26) were from outside of Nottinghamshire.

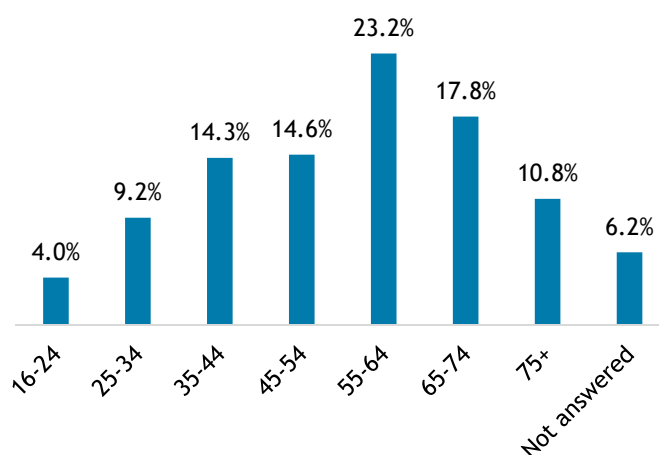
District	No.	%
Nottingham City	134	36.1%
Gedling	70	18.9%
Ashfield	45	12.1%
Rushcliffe	36	9.7%
Out of area	26	7.0%
Mansfield	22	5.9%
Bassetlaw	15	4.0%
Newark & Sherwood	12	3.2%
Broxtowe	11	3.0%
Total	371	100%

Table 6 - Source: all respondents (n=371)



Age Group	No.	%
Under 16	0	0%
16 - 24	15	4.0%
25 - 34	34	9.2%
35 - 44	53	14.3%
45 - 54	54	14.6%
55 - 64	86	23.2%
65 - 74	66	17.8%
75+	40	10.8%
Not answered	23	6.2%
Total	371	100%

Table 7 - Source: all respondents (n=371)



Gender	No.	%
Female	267	72.0%
Male	90	24.3%
Not answered	14	3.8%
Total	371	100%

Table 8 - Source: all respondents (n=371)



Ethnicity	No.	%
White	290	78.2%
Not answered	21	5.7%
Asian	19	5.1%
Black	18	4.9%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic	8	2.2%
Prefer not to say	7	1.9%
Other	5	1.3%
Arab	3	0.8%
Total	371	100%

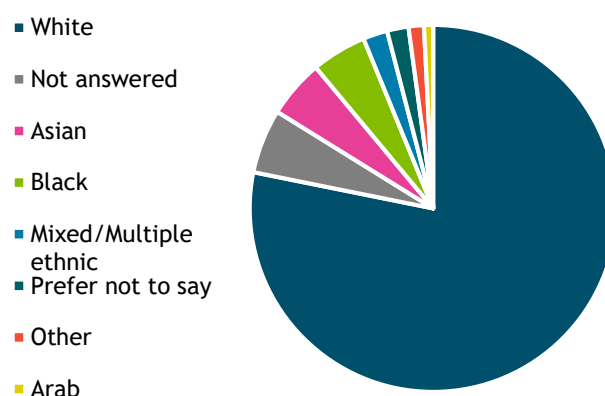


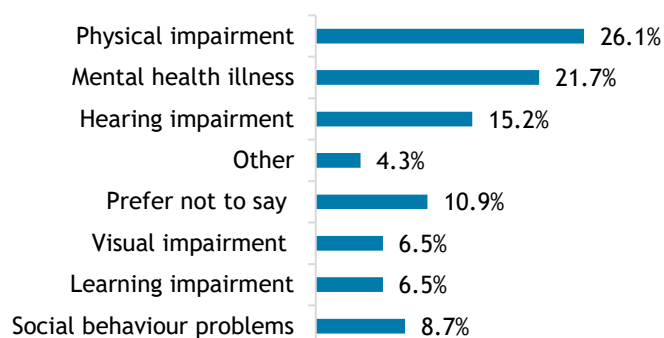
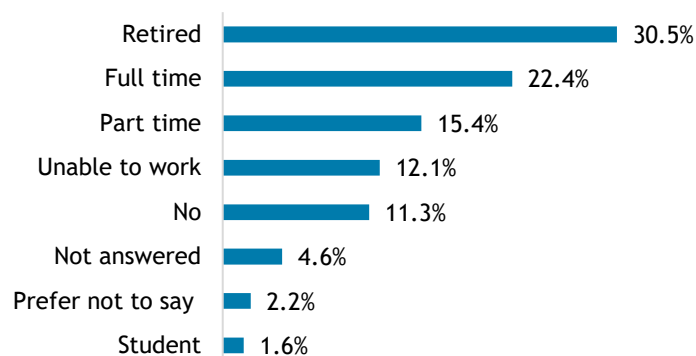
Table 9 - Source: all respondents (n=371)

Employment status	No.	%
Retired	113	30.5%
Full time	83	22.4%
Part time	57	15.4%
Unable to work	45	12.1%
No	42	11.3%
Not answered	17	4.6%
Prefer not to say	8	2.2%
student	6	1.6%
Total	371	100%

Table 10 - Source: all respondents (n=371)

Disability	No.	%
Physical impairment	12	26.1%
Mental Health condition	10	21.7%
Hearing impairment	7	15.2%
Other	2	4.3%
Prefer not to say	5	10.9%
Visual impairment	3	6.5%
Learning impairment	3	6.5%
Social/behavioural problems	4	8.7%
Total	46	100%

Table 11 - Source: all respondents (n=46)



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