

State of Caring 2025

Thinking ahead – supporting carers to manage their finances

November 2025



About this research

Carers UK carried out an online survey with unpaid carers between June and August 2025. A total of 10,539 carers responded.

The survey was promoted extensively amongst both carers and organisations supporting carers. It was shared on the Carers UK website, on Carers UK social media channels, and with Carers UK members, volunteers, previous survey respondents, campaigners, affiliates, Employers for Carers members, and other organisations.

This survey is not a representative survey.

This report summarises carers' responses. As not everyone completed every question in the survey, some figures are based on responses from less than 10,539 people.

Of respondents to the survey:

- 93% are currently providing care, and 7% are former carers.
- Of those currently providing care, 66% are in England, 20% are in Scotland, 10% are in Wales, and 4% in Northern Ireland.
- Of those currently caring, 15% are caring for 19 hours or less, 24% are caring for 20-49 hours, and 61% are caring for 50 or more hours a week.
- 3% of respondents are aged 34 and under, 64% are aged 35-64, and 33% are aged 65 and over.
- 82% of respondents are female; 18% are male.
- 90% of respondents are White British.
- 90% of respondents are heterosexual/straight, 5% are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, or preferred to self-describe their sexual orientation, 5% did not want to say.
- 30% of respondents have a disability.

Thanks

Carers UK would like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out this survey, as well as the carers who helped us to test the survey.

Your responses will be used in all our policy and campaigning work over the next year.

We are very grateful to all the carers who shared their experiences with us.



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Foreword

Caring for a loved one is one of the most meaningful responsibilities any of us can undertake. Yet, for the nearly 6 million unpaid carers across the UK, it is one of the most complex.

Balancing professional responsibilities, personal wellbeing, and family commitments is never easy. When financial pressures are added into the mix, from reduced working hours and unexpected costs to the need for longer-term planning, the challenge becomes even greater.

Caring responsibilities can fall on anyone at any time, and at HSBC we recognise that carers are a vital part of our workforce and the communities we serve. But too often, they face barriers in accessing the support they need to manage their financial lives with confidence. These barriers can take many forms: limited time to seek advice, lack of tailored resources or simply not knowing where to turn for trusted guidance. We also understand that some carers may feel embarrassed about asking for help or worry about the future with uncertainty about the future of their dependent. It is vital that we address these barriers so more carers can receive the help they need.

By listening to carers and understanding their lived experiences, we can identify opportunities to develop better financial tools and stronger policies.

We recently launched a new resource to help carers improve their financial health, manage the finances of their dependants and plan for the future and we are pleased to sponsor this new research by Carers UK.

We hope this report sparks dialogue and raises awareness for carers on their rights, and the tools available to them.



CMinashi

Carolanne Minashi

Global Head of Inclusion, HSBC



Introduction

Throughout the UK, 5.8 million people are providing unpaid care to family members and friends who are disabled, older or who have a chronic health condition and need support.¹



The number of hours of unpaid care provided has increased over the past 10 years,² and the economic value of unpaid care is now a staggering £184 billion a year.³ Although carers' contributions are essential in supporting our health and social care systems, caring often comes at a significant personal cost, especially when adequate support is not available.

WPI Economics research commissioned by Carers UK found that 1.2 million unpaid carers are in poverty, and 400,000 are in deep poverty.⁴ Carers often end up giving up paid employment or reducing working hours to care. This has a significant impact on income, as well as carers' ability to contribute to a pension and save for the future. Carers UK's report about the cost of caring, published in October 2025,

found that half (51%) of carers are worried about living costs and whether they can manage in the future, and 60% feel anxious or stressed when they think about their financial situation.⁵

When carers face increasing financial pressures, often as a result of the extra costs of care and the rise in the cost of living, many fall into debt. Carers UK's report about the cost of caring found that a third (32%) of all carers had taken out a loan from the bank, used credit cards, or used a bank account overdraft because of their caring role.⁶ It is crucial that carers receive the support they need in managing their finances, so they feel confident about making financial decisions now and planning for the future.

¹ Carers UK analysis of Census data

² ONS (2023) *Unpaid care, England and Wales: Census 2021*

³ Petrillo, M., Zhang, J. and Bennett, M. (2024). *Valuing Carers 2021/22: the value of unpaid care in the UK*

⁴ WPI Economics (2024) *Poverty and financial hardship of unpaid carers in the UK*

⁵ Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring 2025. The cost of caring - the impact of caring across carers' lives*

⁶ Ibid



Financial education is not a solution on its own. Carers need more tangible financial support, and more opportunities to increase their income and earnings potential and ability to save for their retirement. Carers UK has continually called for a rise in Carer's Allowance, as well as more workplace support such as new legislation for paid Carer's Leave to help carers maximise their income through paid employment. However, evidence shows that financial resources and guidance are also important in helping carers cope with the increased cost of living, and to feel more secure about their finances in the future.

This new research by Carers UK, sponsored by HSBC, shows that many carers – particularly those who are struggling financially – are not accessing any financial guidance or resources, and do not know where to go to seek help. While many carers are capable of budgeting effectively, even when they are dealing with difficult circumstances, a significant proportion do not feel confident about this. Concerningly, many carers need more guidance about what financial benefits they are entitled to. The social security system can be complex and difficult to navigate for carers, who are already busy caring and juggling other responsibilities. As a result, many miss out on the support that is available to them.

The publication of this report coincides with Carers Rights Day 2025 – a key opportunity to empower carers to use their rights and entitlements, and to access essential support. This research focuses on carers' awareness of the financial support they can access, but there are many other areas where carers need more information and advice, from understanding carers' rights in the workplace, to knowing what support carers are entitled to from local authorities.

Carers will only know what their rights are when they have identified themselves as an unpaid carer. When people realise they are caring, they are more likely to look into what support is available. Yet research has shown that it can take many years to self-identify as a carer: previous Carers UK research found that 51% of carers took over a year to recognise their caring role.⁷ Carers UK's goal is to halve the time it takes for carers to recognise themselves as carers.

To ensure that more carers know about their rights and entitlements, and what support is available, we must collectively raise awareness of caring across all areas of society so that people recognise that they are caring, and are able to get the help, guidance and support they need.

⁷ Carers UK (2022) *State of Caring 2022: a snapshot of caring in the UK*

Executive summary

This research is based on State of Caring 2025, a Carers UK survey with over 10,500 unpaid carers who are providing unpaid care to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older.



The survey found that many carers want and need more support with managing their finances, particularly in relation to knowing what social security benefits they are entitled to, coping with the cost of living through budgeting and saving money, and planning for the future by arranging power of attorney and preparing for retirement at an earlier stage.

Concerningly, many carers who are struggling financially do not feel confident about managing their finances, are not accessing financial guidance and resources, and do not know where to go to seek help. Many carers said they would have made different decisions in the past if they'd had more financial guidance at the time, such as contributing more to their pension, staying in paid employment for longer, and saving for the future at an earlier stage.

- **Many carers – and particularly those who are struggling financially – do not feel confident about managing their finances both now and in the future.** A third of carers (33%) struggling to make ends meet said they are not confident about making decisions about their future finances, and a quarter (26%) said they are not confident about how to budget and manage their everyday spending.
- **Many carers are not accessing any financial guidance or resources that might help them manage their finances, or the finances of the person they care for.** 63% of carers who are struggling to make ends meet said they had not accessed any financial guidance or resources in the last 12 months.

63%

of carers who are struggling to make ends meet said they had not accessed any financial guidance or resources in the last 12 months



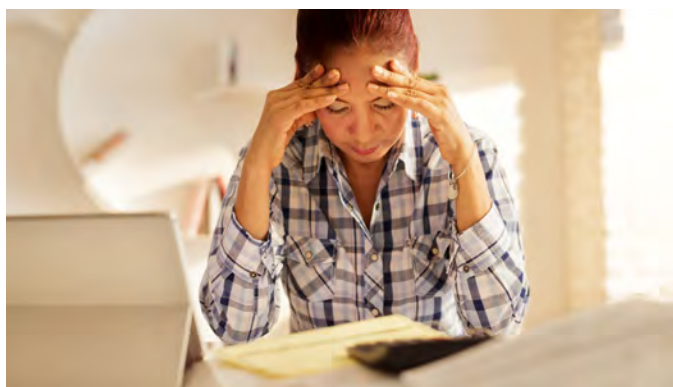
- **A significant proportion of carers do not know what social security benefits they are entitled to, and this is the main area where carers need more support.** 41% of all carers do not know what social security benefits they are entitled to and over a quarter (26%) of carers said they need help working out what benefits they might be able to access from the social security system.
- **Cost of living is a big concern for carers, and many need support with budgeting and managing spending.** A third of all carers (37%) said they do not feel confident they will be able to cope with increases in the cost of living, and a fifth (22%) need more support with coping with the cost of living (eg how to reduce spending and save money on groceries and energy bills).
- **Carers struggling financially are even more worried about coping with the cost of living:** three quarters of carers (76%) struggling to make ends meet said they do not feel confident they will be able to cope with increases in the cost of living, and 42% said they need help with reducing spending and saving money.
- **Carers who are struggling financially also need help with dealing with the impact that financial challenges have on their mental health.** 37% of carers struggling to make ends meet said they need help with dealing with mental health issues which have been caused or worsened by their financial situation.
- **Carers need more support with planning for the future.** A fifth of carers (20%) said they need more help with arranging power of attorney, and 17% need more support with planning for retirement.
- **Many carers said they would have made different decisions in the past if they'd had more financial guidance at the time,** such as contributing more to their pension, staying in paid employment for longer, and saving for the future at an earlier stage.
- **Carers do not always know where to go for help.** A third (34%) of carers struggling to make ends meet said they didn't know where to go to get financial guidance. 20% said they wouldn't know where to go if they needed help managing their finances at the moment, and 24% said they wouldn't know where to go if they needed help with financial planning for the future.
- **If carers needed help, they would be most likely to use an internet search engine in the first instance, rather than contacting a charity or bank directly.** 42% of carers said they would use an internet search engine if they needed help with managing finances now, and 40% said they'd use an internet search engine if they needed help with financial planning in the future.
- **Some carers find advice charities helpful.** For carers who had accessed financial guidance and resources, the most common source of information and support was an advice charity (eg Citizens Advice, StepChange, National Energy Advice, National Debtline). 10% of carers had sought help from an advice charity, rising to a fifth (20%) of those struggling to make ends meet.
- **In terms of support from banks, many carers said they would benefit from face-to-face and personalised advice.** 37% of all carers said they would find 1:1 support from an adviser in a bank helpful, increasing to 41% of those struggling to make ends meet.

41% 

of all carers do not know what social security benefits they are entitled to



- **Many carers are reluctant to ask for help, and there is a stigma around this**, with carers often feeling embarrassed about sharing information about their finances. Some carers also have concerns about their data and are worried about privacy and confidentiality.
- **Younger carers, female carers, ethnic minority carers and LGB+ carers*** are less likely to feel confident about managing their finances, and are more likely to say that more support would be helpful.
- **Carers' priorities for support vary by demographic factors:** younger carers are more likely to need more support with managing the impact of financial challenges on their mental health, while older carers are more likely to need more support with protecting themselves from financial abuse. A higher proportion of female carers said they need more support with planning for retirement, compared with male carers (18% vs 13%).
- **Financial guidance is not enough on its own**, as many carers need more financial support from the social security system. Carers UK's report about the cost of caring found that over half of carers (54%) need more financial support, rising to 84% of carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance, 85% of carers in receipt of Universal Credit, and 83% of carers struggling to make ends meet.⁸
- **Carers need to know where they can access guidance across a range of topics as well as managing finances**, including coping with caring responsibilities, knowing what support might be available from their local authority, and understanding what help is available in the workplace. 55% of carers said they needed to know what support might be available and how to access it – one of most common areas where carers say they need more help.



34%



of carers struggling to make ends meet said they didn't know where to go to get financial guidance

Clarification of terminology

This research focuses predominantly on financial guidance. This means information about financial products and services, the social security system, tips and support on budgeting and planning for the future. Financial guidance is different from financial advice, which is information given about a specific financial product that directs people to making a specific decision. Financial advice is regulated and can only be provided by someone who is qualified to do so, whereas financial guidance is offered by a range of different organisations.

More information about the difference between financial advice and guidance is provided by the Financial Conduct Authority at:

fca.org.uk/publication/research/fawg-consumer-explanations-advice-guidance.pdf

* The survey included separate questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. We are unable to compare responses by gender identity as the sample size for carers whose gender is not the same as the one assigned at birth is too small. Carers UK previously published research about the challenges faced by trans carers. In this report, we have used the term LGB+ to refer to carers who indicated in the question on sexual orientation that they have a minority sexual orientation.

8 Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring 2025. The cost of caring - the impact of caring across carers' lives*

Key recommendations

Carers UK recommends that:

The UK Government should:

- Develop a new National Carers Strategy which clearly sets out the Government's future commitments to supporting carers.
- Begin a review of the current support provided to unpaid carers through the social security system and consider an increase to the level of Carer's Allowance and the value of Carer Element, Carer Premium and Carer Addition.
- Take steps to improve carers' financial resilience in retirement by carrying out a review of pension rules for carers, implementing a set of initiatives to allow carers to achieve similar pension levels as non-carers, and considering additional financial support to carers of State Pension age.
- Introduce a new statutory right to five days of paid Carer's Leave per year to better enable carers to juggle work and care.
- Ensure that the advice sector for statutory benefits and entitlements is sufficiently funded.
- Develop the plan for the National Care Service and deliver much-needed funding to help stabilise social care.
- Improve carers' understanding of which social security benefits they are entitled to by providing clear guidance on eligibility rules.
- Ensure that housing policies fully recognise and consider the specific challenges faced by unpaid carers and the people they care for.
- Use relevant awareness campaigns to help unpaid carers understand their rights and entitlements, and know what support is available.

UK Finance should:

- Support its members through raising awareness of the need for more financial guidance and support for carers and facilitate the sharing of existing practices and ideas across the industry.
- Consider an industry-wide campaign focused on financial guidance for carers, raising awareness of support that is available.

Local authorities and the NHS should:

- Ensure that carers are systematically identified and signposted to further information, support and advice, including in relation to their own health.

Banks and financial institutions should:

- Ensure that financial guidance considers the needs of unpaid carers, including those from under-represented groups, and develop public awareness programmes to raise awareness of the support available.

Local carers organisations should:

- Continue to promote information, advice and guidance to unpaid carers, including in relation to managing finances, and continue to help people recognise they are caring, so that carers understand their rights and entitlements and know what support is available.

All of us can play a part in supporting carers. The general public can:

- Help raise awareness of caring by supporting people to realise they are caring, and signposting them to advice, guidance and support if they need it. Listen to carers' experiences, and recognise the challenges that carers can face.

Background



Carer poverty and financial hardship in context

WPI Economics research commissioned by Carers UK found that 1.2 million unpaid carers are in poverty, and 400,000 are in deep poverty.⁹ Those who care for 35 or more hours per week and those who care for multiple people are even more likely to be in poverty. There is also a disproportionate impact on women, who are more likely to provide unpaid care, and who are more likely to be in poverty as a result.

Carers often have to give up paid employment or reduce working hours to care, and being out of work is the single strongest quantitative predictor of poverty for unpaid carers.¹⁰ An estimated 600 people a day give up work to provide unpaid care,¹¹ which has a significant impact on income, and also leads to carers being under-pensioned. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that unpaid carers experience an average pay penalty of £414 a month,¹² and that 28% of carers are living in poverty compared with 20% of those with no caring responsibilities.¹³

Concerningly, there is also insufficient support from the social security system to help mitigate the impact of giving up work to care: Carer's Allowance – the main benefit for carers – is the lowest benefit of its kind (£83.30 per week in 2025/26).

Carers often have additional monthly costs, from needing to heat their home for longer periods, to buying personal care products and accompanying the person they care for to medical appointments. Many carers struggle to pay for essentials, and some are taking drastic measures to keep on top of their finances, from skipping meals to using food banks.¹⁴ Carers UK's report about the cost of caring found that a fifth (21%) of carers are struggling to make ends meet, and three quarters (74%) are worried about the impact their caring role will have on their finances in the future.¹⁵

⁹ WPI Economics (2024) *Poverty and financial hardship of unpaid carers in the UK*

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Carers UK (2019) *Juggling work and unpaid care*

¹² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2023) *The caring penalty*

¹³ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2025) *UK Poverty 2025: the essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK*

¹⁴ Carers UK (2024) *State of Caring: the impact of caring on finances*

¹⁵ Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring 2025. The cost of caring - the impact of caring across carers' lives*

As a result of these challenges, it can be difficult for carers to plan and save for the future.¹⁶ It can also be challenging for carers to afford hobbies or activities that improve wellbeing, and many carers feel they are unable to enjoy their life because of this. Carers UK's report about the cost of caring found that over half (56%) of carers struggling to make ends meet said they had bad or very bad mental health, compared with a fifth (21%) of those not struggling with their finances.¹⁷

Supporting carers to manage their finances

Carers often experience financial difficulties and fall into debt for reasons that are well beyond their control. As explained above, carers have additional costs of care, receive insufficient financial support from the social security system, and often have to give up paid employment to care. However, skills and confidence can also play a part in managing finances: research by the Centre for Social Justice found that 44% of adults said that their situation would improve with more financial education.¹⁸

Skills and confidence can also affect people's engagement with financial planning for the future. Research carried out for the Financial Capability Strategy for the UK found that although income levels influence people's engagement with retirement planning, attitudes are also a factor – those who do not feel confident about planning are less likely to do so.¹⁹

It is important to note that many carers are capable of budgeting and managing their finances, and do not need any support, even when they are dealing with difficult circumstances. It is also important to

bear in mind that financial education is not a solution on its own. Carers need much more support from Government, and Carers UK has continually called for a comprehensive review of social security support for carers, as well as an increase in the value of Carer's Allowance and associated benefits, and a review of the eligibility criteria for Carer's Allowance.

However, research suggests that there is a need to support carers in managing their finances, and value in doing so. UK financial literacy remains persistently low, and 39% of UK adults – around 20 million people – do not feel confident managing money.²⁰ There are significant inequalities, with young people and older people, those with low incomes or educational attainment, and people from an ethnic minority background particularly vulnerable to the risks of financial illiteracy.²¹ Women are more likely to provide care²² and more likely to be financially vulnerable,²³ but are one and a half times more likely to report low financial capability (ie knowledge of financial matters and confidence managing money) than men.^{24,25}

There are many different organisations offering financial guidance and support, including banks and building societies, charities, guidance services, and private sector companies. Financial guidance can help people deal with financial challenges,²⁶ reduce the likelihood of people falling into debt,²⁷ and help people plan for the future.²⁸

Without sufficient support, people with financial difficulties are more likely to experience stress and depression.²⁹ Research by the Financial Conduct Authority found that 40% of adults with credit or loans suffer anxiety/stress because of their debt.³⁰ While low income is the primary cause of stress, low skills and lack of understanding around basic financial concepts play a significant role in perpetuating money stress.³¹

¹⁶ Carers UK (2024) *State of Caring: the impact of caring on finances*

¹⁷ Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring 2025. The cost of caring - the impact of caring across carers' lives*

¹⁸ Centre for Social Justice (2022) *On the money: a roadmap for lifelong financial learning*

¹⁹ Financial Capability Strategy for the UK (2018) *Building the financial capability of UK adults: findings from the 2018 Adult Financial Capability Survey*

²⁰ UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing. *Key statistics on UK financial capability*

²¹ London Foundation for Banking and Finance (2025) *Accelerating progress: financial capability in the UK: research report 2025*

²² ONS (2023) *Unpaid care by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021*

²³ Fair4allfinance (2025) *60% of people in financially vulnerable circumstances in the UK are women*

²⁴ Financial Conduct Authority (2024) *Financial Lives 2024: key findings from the FCA's financial lives May 2024 survey*

²⁵ Financial Capability Strategy for the UK. *Women face unique life challenges which can affect their long-term financial wellbeing*

²⁶ Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center (2020) *The stability and predictive power of financial literacy: evidence from longitudinal data*

²⁷ Disney, R. and Gathergood, J. (2013) *Financial literacy and consumer credit portfolios*

²⁸ Fornero, E. and Lo Prete, A. (2023) *Financial education: from better personal finance to improved citizenship*

²⁹ Vittengl, J. (2024) *Low household income, financial literacy, or financial health: Which is the strongest risk factor and outcome of depressive symptomatology?*

³⁰ Financial Conduct Authority (2024) *Financial Lives 2024: key findings from the FCA's financial lives May 2024 survey*

³¹ Centre for Social Justice (2022) *On the money: a roadmap for lifelong financial learning*



Yet while there are clear benefits in providing financial guidance, there is no central source or resource available to find or access services, some services are not genuine, and regulation and quality control is an issue.³² In addition, people are not always engaged with these services unless things are going badly,³³ but evidence suggests that interventions are most effective when they come early, before key financial decisions are made.³⁴ Stigma around debt and shame around low financial literacy can also mean that people struggle to ask for help and may become isolated.³⁵

Some studies have recommended that interventions offering financial guidance and support should be tailored to the audience, relevant to individual circumstances and life stages. Currently only 4% of financial literacy projects are tailored to women, and just 2% are tailored to people from an ethnic minority background.³⁶ A study by the ABI found that 73% of participants made a decision leading to a better financial outcome when guidance was personalised to individual circumstances, compared to 14% who saw generic guidance.³⁷

It is also important that people receive support in a format that suits them. Adults in poor health, for example, can find it more difficult to interact with providers due to their illness/condition, and many have specific accessibility requirements that need to be met.³⁸ For carers, targeted support is particularly important. Carers face specific challenges such as finding it hard to plan for the future because of the uncertainty of caring, not being able to contribute to a pension due to the extra costs of care or leaving paid employment, and lacking the time to research different financial products due to the demands of caring.

40% 

of adults with credit or loans suffer anxiety/stress because of their debt

³² London Foundation for Banking and Finance (2025) *Accelerating progress: financial capability in the UK: research report 2025*

³³ Financial Capability Strategy for the UK (2018) *Building the financial capability of UK adults: findings from the 2018 Adult Financial Capability Survey*

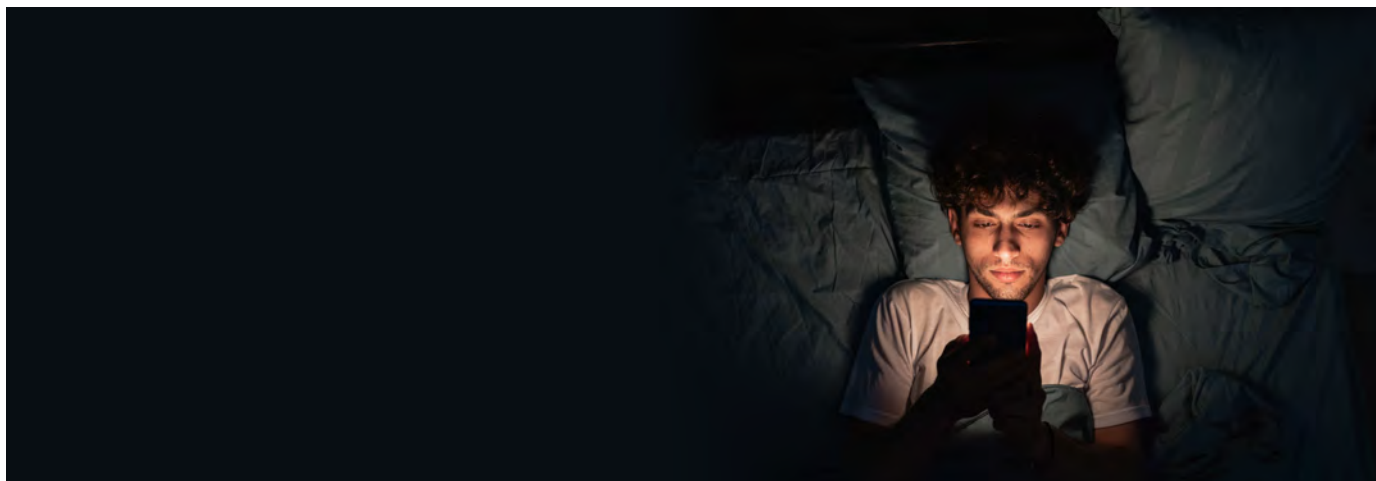
³⁴ London Foundation for Banking and Finance (2025) *Accelerating progress: financial capability in the UK: research report 2025*

³⁵ Centre for Social Justice (2022) *On the money: a roadmap for lifelong financial learning*

³⁶ London Foundation for Banking and Finance (2025) *Accelerating progress: financial capability in the UK: research report 2025*

³⁷ The ABI (2023) *Consumer research on personalised guidance*

³⁸ Financial Conduct Authority (2024) *Financial Lives 2024: key findings from the FCA's financial lives May 2024 survey*



Studies have found that financial guidance should be easier to access. Research and knowledge seeking can help people make informed financial decisions but financial research can be time-consuming, and many people can feel intimidated by the sheer volume of information available.³⁹ People can also feel overwhelmed when they have to interact with providers and avoid making financial decisions as a result.⁴⁰ Financial research is even more difficult for unpaid carers who already often spend many hours per month doing administrative tasks relating to caring.⁴¹ These tasks can often be stressful, especially when carers find it difficult to find the information they need. Carers UK's State of Caring 2024 survey found that 57% of carers feel overwhelmed often or always, and 38% of those who felt overwhelmed said this was because of dealing with all the administration involved in caring.⁴²

Research by Consumer Finance found that many people rely first and foremost on those close to them for financial information, and most frequently seek information from family and friends.⁴³ In particular, spouses or partners were seen as a trusted sounding board, while older people also saw their adult children as a valuable source of guidance. This has implications for carers who will often be asked to support the person they care for with their finances. It is critical that unpaid carers feel confident in managing their finances, both for themselves and the person they care for.

Social media is also a common source of information: a survey by Capital Alone found that more people are now using social media platforms to find financial guidance, yet three quarters (74%) of those who had done so lost money or experienced an undesired outcome.⁴⁴ Young people in particular are relying on social media, with a quarter of those aged 18-24 using social media for financial guidance.⁴⁵

³⁹ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (2015) *Financial wellbeing: the goal of financial education*

⁴⁰ Financial Conduct Authority (2024) *Financial Lives 2024: key findings from the FCA's financial lives May 2024 survey*

⁴¹ Carers UK (2025) *A fresh approach to supporting unpaid carers*

⁴² Carers UK (2025) *The impact of caring on carers' mental health and the need for breaks*

⁴³ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (2015) *Financial wellbeing: the goal of financial education*

⁴⁴ Capital One (2024) *Social media finance report*

⁴⁵ Deloitte (2023) *Young people turn to social media for financial guidance*

The need to support carers with managing their finances



Carers' confidence in managing finances both now and in the future

Although over half of carers (55%) feel confident about making decisions about their future finances, and 69% feel confident about how to budget and manage everyday spending, those struggling financially are less confident about this.

A third of carers (33%) struggling to make ends meet said they were not confident about making decisions about their future finances, and a quarter (26%) said they were not confident about how to budget and manage everyday spending.

Many carers (37%) are also not feeling confident about coping with the cost of living. Again, this is even more of a concern for those struggling to make ends meet, where 76% said they do not feel confident about this, and only 6% feel confident.

33%



of carers who are struggling to make ends meet said they are not confident about making decisions about their future finances

26%



of carers who are struggling to make ends meet said they are not confident about how to budget and manage their everyday spending

Table 1: Carers' confidence about managing finances (source: State of Caring 2025)

Statement	All carers		Carers struggling to make ends meet	
	% of carers who agree	% who disagreed	% of carers who agree	% who disagreed
<i>I feel confident about making decisions about my future finances</i>	55%	17%	35%	33%
<i>I feel confident about how to budget and manage my everyday spending</i>	69%	9%	45%	26%
<i>I feel confident that I will be able to cope with increases in the cost of living</i>	30%	37%	6%	76%

Carers' knowledge of the social security system

Concerningly, a significant proportion of carers (41%) are not aware what social security benefits they are entitled to. Those struggling financially were even less likely to know this: nearly half (45%) of carers struggling to make ends meet do not know what social security benefits they are entitled to. This means that, worryingly, many carers are not receiving the financial support from the social security system that would help them to cope with the cost of care.

41%



of carers are not aware what social security benefits they are entitled to



Table 2: Carers' knowledge of the social security system (source: State of Caring 2025)

Statement	All carers		Carers struggling to make ends meet	
	% of carers who agree	% who disagreed	% of carers who agree	% who disagreed
<i>I know what social security benefits I am entitled to and how to access these</i>	30%	41%	29%	45%

Other research has also highlighted the complexity of the social security system, and the fact that many carers are not aware what support is available.⁴⁶ A recent Carers UK report found, for example, that many older carers over State Pension age are missing out on key financial entitlements such as Pension Credit because of a confusing benefits system.⁴⁷ The rules around Carer's Allowance and related benefits can be complex, making it difficult for some to navigate the process, and many carers are also worried about misunderstanding eligibility rules, potentially resulting in overpayments and significant debt.⁴⁸



The areas where carers need more support

In the State of Caring 2025 survey, carers were asked to select up to five areas where they needed more support in relation to managing their finances. The most common area where carers said more support was needed was in relation to the social security system. Over a quarter (26%) of carers said they needed help working out what benefits they might be able to access from the social security system.

The second most common area carers needed more support with was help with coping with the rising cost of living. A fifth of carers (22%) said they would like more help with reducing spending and saving money on groceries and energy bills. This is particularly important given Carers UK's report about the cost of caring found that the vast majority of carers (84%) said their energy bills have increased over the past year.⁴⁹

The third most common area carers needed support with was in relation to power of attorney – 20% said they needed more help with this. This reflects recent research commissioned by Phoenix Group which found that most people know nothing or very little about power of attorney, and less than 1 in 10 have an up-to-date power of attorney in place.⁵⁰ For carers, arranging power of attorney for the person they care for is important in enabling them to manage their affairs in the future, but many do not have time to look into this when they are so busy caring.

26% 

of carers said they needed help working out what benefits they might be able to access from the social security system



22% 

of carers said they would like more help with reducing spending and saving money on groceries and energy bills

⁴⁶ Independent Age (2025) *Jumping through hoops: reducing the complexity of the social security system for older people*

⁴⁷ Carers UK (2025) *Pension Credit and Carer's Allowance Smoothing the journey, combatting pensioner poverty and recognising unpaid care*

⁴⁸ Carers UK (2024) *Carer's Allowance Overpayments*

⁴⁹ Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring 2025. The cost of caring - the impact of caring across carers' lives*

⁵⁰ Phoenix Insights (now Standard Life Centre) (2025) *Power of attorney: why public engagement is so low and why that matters*

Other areas where carers need more support include planning for retirement, such as paying into a pension or saving for the future (17%), dealing with mental health issues caused or worsened by their financial situation (16%) and managing financially after a major life event such as a bereavement or divorce (11%).

17%

of carers said they would like more help planning for retirement such as paying into a pension or saving for the future



Table 3: Areas where carers need more support (source: State of Caring 2025)

Type of support	% of carers who said more help is needed
<i>None of the above</i>	33%
<i>Working out what benefits I might be able to access from the social security system</i>	26%
<i>Coping with the rising cost of living (eg how to reduce spending and save money on groceries and energy bills)</i>	22%
<i>Arranging power of attorney</i>	20%
<i>Planning for my retirement (eg paying into a pension or saving for the future)</i>	17%
<i>Dealing with mental health issues which have been caused or worsened by my financial situation</i>	16%
<i>Managing financially after a major life event, such as a bereavement or divorce</i>	11%
<i>Protecting myself from fraud or financial abuse</i>	9%
<i>Budgeting and managing everyday spending better</i>	8%
<i>Managing a large sum of money such as an inheritance</i>	7%
<i>Managing debt (eg borrowing money or getting out of debt)</i>	6%
<i>Taking out life insurance</i>	5%
<i>Taking out a mortgage or managing mortgage payments</i>	3%

Carers also suggested other areas where more financial guidance would be helpful, not mentioned in the list above. Several carers said they would like more help with creating a will or setting up a trust fund, so that the person they care for would be supported in the future. This reflects findings from previous Carers UK research where carers – and particularly older carers caring for a disabled adult son or daughter – are often worried about the future, and what will happen to the person they care for when they die.⁵¹

Many carers also said they would like more help in managing housing costs and working out what support with housing they might be entitled to. Other areas carers said they need help with include:

- filling out income tax forms
- applying for social security benefits (eg help completing application forms)
- advising the person they care for about how to manage their finances
- managing financially in the future if the person they care for moves into a care home
- working out what financial support they might be entitled to in relation to caring costs (eg support with paid care workers)
- how to manage finances when you have a disability or neurodevelopmental condition
- covering the cost of home adaptations
- accessing financial assistance.



Situational differences amongst carers

Hours of care

Carers caring for more hours were more likely to need more support. For example, over a fifth (23%) of those caring for 50 or more hours per week said they needed more help with coping with the rising cost of living, compared with 16% of those caring for 19 hours or less.

Length of time caring

Carers who have been caring for more years were more likely to need more support in most areas. However, carers caring for fewer years were more likely to say they needed more help with working out what social security benefits they are entitled to: 31% of those caring for two years or less said they needed more help with working out what social security benefits they are entitled to compared to 24% of those caring for 10 years or more.

Financial circumstances

Carers who are struggling to make ends meet were more likely to say they needed more support. 42% of carers struggling to make ends meet said they needed help with coping with the cost of living. This was the most common area where carers struggling to make ends meet needed more support.

Carers struggling to make ends meet were much more likely to say they needed help with dealing with the impact of financial challenges on their mental health, and this was the third most commonly selected area where more support was needed.

37% of carers struggling to make ends meet said they needed help dealing with mental health issues which have been caused or worsened by their financial situation.



⁵¹ Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring: the impact of caring on carers' mental health and the need for breaks*

Table 4: Top five areas where carers who are struggling to make ends meet need more support
(source: State of Caring 2025)

Area where more help is needed	% of carers struggling to make ends meet who need more help
<i>Coping with the rising cost of living (eg how to reduce spending and save money on groceries and energy bills)</i>	42%
<i>Working out what benefits I might be able to access from the social security system</i>	38%
<i>Dealing with mental health issues which have been caused or worsened by my financial situation</i>	37%
<i>Planning for my retirement (eg paying into a pension or saving for the future)</i>	23%
<i>Arranging power of attorney</i>	21%

Where carers access support now, and where they might access support in the future



Awareness of available support

Just under half (47%) of carers said they know where to go if they needed financial advice or guidance. However, those struggling financially were less likely to know where to go for help: 35% of carers struggling to make ends meet said they knew where to go. Over a third (34%) of carers struggling to make ends meet said they didn't know where to go if they needed financial advice or guidance.

34% 
of carers struggling to make ends meet said they didn't know where to go for financial advice or guidance

Table 5: Carers' knowledge of where to go for help (source: State of Caring 2025)

Statement	All carers		Carers struggling to make ends meet	
	% of carers who agree	% who disagreed	% of carers who agree	% who disagreed
<i>I know where to go to get financial advice or guidance if I need it</i>	47%	23%	35%	34%

More generally, it is clear from Carers UK research that many carers are unsure where they can access guidance about a range of topics – not just managing finances, but coping with caring responsibilities, knowing what support might be available from their local authority, and understanding what support is available in the workplace. This year, Carers UK's State of Caring survey found that 55% of carers said they needed to know what support might be available and how to access it – carers' third biggest overall need.

Carers have continually highlighted how difficult it can be to work out what support might be available to them when they are so busy caring. Carrying out administrative duties, such as researching what financial support is available, is often stressful for carers. When information is not readily available, carers have to spend unmanageable amounts of time trying to find what they need, and this reduces opportunities to take a break from caring. Previous Carers UK research found that dealing with admin was one of the main reasons why carers felt overwhelmed.⁵²

Support carers are already accessing

The majority of carers (73%) have not accessed any financial guidance or resources in the last 12 months. It is important to bear in mind that not all carers are struggling financially, so will not need any financial support. However, concerningly, 63% of carers who are struggling to make ends meet said they had not accessed any financial guidance or resources.

73%  of carers have not accessed any financial guidance or resources in the last 12 months



For carers who had sought guidance and resources, the most common source of information and support was from an advice charity (eg Citizens Advice, StepChange, National Energy Advice, National Debtline). 10% of carers had accessed financial guidance or resources from an advice charity. Just 7% of carers had accessed support from a bank or building society.

Carers struggling to make ends meet were more likely to access financial guidance or resources than those not struggling financially – including from an advice charity (20%), a local carers group or carers centre (10%), and from a national charity (10%). Only 8% of carers struggling to make ends meet had accessed support from a bank or building society.



Table 6: Where carers have accessed financial guidance or resources (source: State of Caring 2025)

Where carers have accessed financial guidance	% of all carers who accessed financial advice and guidance	% of carers struggling to make ends meet who accessed financial advice and guidance
None of the above	73%	63%
An advice charity (eg Citizens Advice, StepChange, National Energy Advice, National Debtline)	10%	20%
A local carers group or carers centre	7%	10%
A bank or building society	7%	8%
A national charity like Carers UK	6%	10%
A charity related to the condition of the person I care for (eg Age UK, MS Society, Parkinsons)	6%	6%
Other	5%	6%



10%
of carers had accessed financial guidance or resources from an advice charity

Carers also highlighted other organisations where they had accessed financial guidance and resources from, not mentioned in the above list. Some carers had found information on websites including MoneySavingExpert, MoneyHelper, or Turn2us, through social media, or by speaking to other carers, friends and family. Some carers had also sought help from an independent financial adviser, a pensions adviser or a solicitor.

Where carers would start looking for guidance and resources if they needed it

Managing finances now

Carers were asked where they would start looking for guidance and resources if they needed help with managing their finances at the moment. This might include, for example, help with budgeting, managing debt, coping with the cost of living, or working out what social security benefits they might be entitled to.

The most common way carers said they would find information was using an internet search engine (42%), followed by contacting an advice charity (26%) and contacting a national carers charity (19%).



Table 7: Where carers would start looking for guidance and resources if they needed help with managing their finances at the moment (source: State of Caring 2025)

Where carers would start looking	% of carers who responded
I'd use an internet search engine to find the information I need	42%
I'd contact an advice charity (eg Citizens Advice, StepChange, National Energy Advice, National Debtline) or visit their website	26%
I don't think I would need any guidance or resources	21%
I'd contact a national carers charity or visit their website	19%
I'd contact a local carers group or visit their website	17%
I'd ask friends or family for advice on where to get help	17%
I'd ask other unpaid carers for advice on where to get help	13%
I wouldn't know where to go to find financial guidance or resources	12%
I'd contact my bank/building society or visit their website	8%

45% 

of carers struggling to make ends meet would use an internet search engine to find information

Carers struggling to make ends meet also said they would be most likely to use an internet search engine to find information (45%), followed by an advice charity (33%). However, they were more likely to say they didn't know where to go for help: 20% of carers struggling to make ends meet said they wouldn't know where to go to find financial guidance or resources if they needed help with finances now.

Carers also suggested other ways in which they would seek guidance and resources on managing their finances now, including using social media channels or websites like MoneySavingExpert or Which?, downloading a budgeting app, using generative AI like ChatGPT, contacting an independent financial adviser, speaking to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about what support carers are entitled to, using resources in a public library, or contacting an Employee Assistance programme.

Some carers were worried about asking for help, due to feelings of embarrassment or concerns over privacy and confidentiality.

“Personally, I don’t trust people with this sort of thing I worry about confidentiality and people poking around in my business.”

“I would be ashamed to let others know I am struggling financially.”

“I’m very nervous about who to trust.”

Several carers also said that they needed more financial support, rather than more advice and guidance. Carers UK’s report about the cost of caring found that over half of carers (54%) need more financial support, rising to 84% of carers in receipt of Carer’s Allowance, 85% of carers in receipt of Universal Credit, and 83% of carers struggling to make ends meet.⁵³ Carers UK has continually called for a comprehensive review of social security support for carers, as well as an increase in the value of Carer’s Allowance and associated benefits, and a review of the eligibility criteria for Carer’s Allowance.

“No point as none of those can increase my income. I know how to budget but if you don’t have any money, how can you budget.”

“I don’t need advice on how to cope without money, that’s easily available. I just need more money.”

“I wouldn’t want to ask as I feel patronised. The end conclusion is always the same. Not enough comes in to cover three people. I used to be a teacher and have now used all my savings and previous pension payments. I’m sick of signposting and being offered resources and leaflets. It doesn’t feel like real help.”

Some carers also said they didn’t have time to seek advice as they were too busy caring.

“I don’t have the time and energy for this currently, I need to focus on future support for my adult child.”

“I know I need to contact Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) etc but time wise and my physical and mental health wise – is always back of the queue. Everyone’s else’s constant crisis take over my life.”

“My time is so limited, every time I start looking into something I am forced to drop it.”



54%



of carers need more financial support, rising to 84% of carers in receipt of Carer’s Allowance

⁵³ Carers UK (2025) *State of Caring 2025. The cost of caring - the impact of caring across carers’ lives*

Financial planning for the future

Carers were also asked where they would start looking for guidance and resources if they needed help with financial planning for the future. This might include, for example, help with planning for retirement, pensions, managing financially after a major life event, taking out life insurance, and getting power of attorney.

The most common way carers said they would find information was using an internet search engine (41%), followed by contacting an advice charity (25%) and contacting a national carers charity (15%).



Table 8: Where carers would start looking for guidance and resources if they needed help with financial planning for the future (source: State of Caring 2025)

Where carers would start looking	% of carers who responded
I'd use an internet search engine to find the information I need	40%
I'd contact an advice charity (eg Citizens Advice, StepChange, National Energy Advice, National Debtline) or visit their website	21%
I don't think I would need any financial guidance or resources	20%
I'd ask friends or family for advice on where to get help	16%
I'd contact a national carers charity or visit their website	15%
I wouldn't know where to go to find financial guidance or resources	14%
I'd contact a local carers group or visit their website	12%
I'd ask other unpaid carers for advice on where to get help	10%
I'd contact my bank/building society or visit their website	10%



Carers struggling to make ends meet also said they would be most likely to use an internet search engine to find information (41%), followed by an advice charity (25%). However, they were more likely to say they didn't know where to go for help with financial planning for the future. A quarter (24%) of carers struggling to make ends meet said they wouldn't know where to go to find financial guidance or resources if they needed help with financial planning in the future.

Carers also suggested other ways in which they would seek guidance and resources on managing their finances in the future, including contacting an Employee Assistance Programme, speaking to a financial adviser or solicitor, contacting their pension provider, and asking a trade union.

Again, some carers also said they didn't have time to seek advice as they were too busy caring.

“I can't face thinking about future finances I have too much to do day by day to even think about future planning!”

“I feel too overwhelmed by this to take action or ask for advice.”

“Given Carers like me have ZERO time and few resources we really don't have time to spend hunting about for NEW things and industries that we do not understand.”

Support from a bank

Carers were asked what, if any, type of support they would find helpful from a bank. The most common type of support carers would like to receive from a bank is 1:1 support from an adviser (37%).

“Seek initial information online but always prefer face to face advice and help.”

“If I was to seek advice it would be face to face not clicking a dubious link – I don't trust links they can be scams.”

“Anything that is person to person. I am fed up of AI / phone tree style advice apps/ bots/ etc. I don't have the time and their options are never relevant so it's endless circles of hell.”

A quarter of carers (25%) said they would find it helpful to access online resources from a bank offering tips and general advice on managing finances better, and a fifth (21%) said online tools to help manage money, such as a budget planner, or a calculator would be helpful.

Table 9: Support carers would find helpful from a bank (source: State of Caring 2025)

Support	% of carers who said this would be helpful
1:1 advice and support from an adviser	37%
None of the above	33%
Online resources offering tips and general advice on managing finances better	25%
Online tools to help manage money, such as a budget planner, or a calculator that allows me to see what social security benefits I'm entitled to	21%
Detailed step-by-step guides on specific topics, such as how to budget, how to manage debt, and how to plan for the future	18%
A mobile phone app that helps me manage my finances by allowing me to set goals, use tools such as budget trackers, and access articles and resources	13%
Free support webinars offering advice on topics such as budgeting, planning for retirement, or managing the cost of living	12%
Videos offering advice and guidance on different topics such as budgeting, managing debt and planning for retirement	8%
Other	3%

Balancing Work, Caring, and Navigating the System — Matthew's Story

Matthew Young has worked at HSBC for several years, specialising in supporting vulnerable customers, carers, and individuals living with dementia. His experience as a carer has enhanced his ability to empathise with customers in similar circumstances and helps him provide effective signposting to appropriate support and services.



Matthew is the father of Cameron, a 17-year-old with severe learning difficulties and autism. Cameron is non-verbal and requires a high level of daily care. He currently attends college, but Matthew and his wife are anxious about what will happen once he's finished, as they would like him to continue developing his independence within a college environment. Cameron will continue to need a high level of care, and this uncertainty about the future adds emotional and financial pressure on the family.

Matthew's wife is Cameron's primary carer. Due to her caring responsibilities and the conditions attached to the Carer's Allowance, there are limitations on the amount of paid work she can take on. This has a significant impact on the household's financial stability, as her earning potential is capped to remain eligible for support.

Employment and financial impact

Flexible working policies within the bank have enabled Matthew to work from home, which has helped him balance his career and caring duties. This arrangement was particularly important during Cameron's transition from primary to secondary education, a period that required more intensive parental support and presence at home.

Despite this, Matthew continues to face the challenge of balancing full-time employment with the unpredictable and demanding nature of caring. The family's financial situation is further complicated by the complex benefits system. When Cameron turns 18 and transitions to adult services, Matthew and his wife will need to navigate the transition from

Direct Payments to Universal Credit, which brings uncertainty about entitlement levels, and continuity of support.

Insights and implications for financial inclusion

Matthew's experience highlights several key issues relevant to financial inclusion for carers:

- **Income constraints and benefit limitations:** The structure of Carer's Allowance can unintentionally discourage carers from seeking additional work or career development, reducing household income and long-term financial resilience.
- **Complex benefit transitions:** The move between support systems (eg Direct Payments to Universal Credit) can be confusing and stressful, particularly when care needs remain constant.
- **Need for flexibility:** Flexible working arrangements and empathetic employers can make a significant difference in enabling carers to maintain employment and manage financial commitments.
- **Role of financial institutions:** Staff like Matthew, who have personal insight into caring, can play a vital role in recognising carers' needs and connecting customers with relevant financial support and resources.

Carers struggling to make ends meet were more likely to say they would find support from a bank helpful, including 1:1 advice and support from an adviser (41%), online tools to help manage money, such as a budget planner, or a calculator (28%) and online resources offering tips and general advice on managing finances better (26%). This suggests that although only 8% of carers struggling to make ends meet have accessed financial guidance and resources from a bank, carers would find support from a bank helpful.

Some carers also suggested other forms of support from a bank that would be helpful such as accessible information they could receive in the post (eg resources in large print) or face to face support that was specifically targeted to people with disabilities or neurodiversities.

“ Easy read written information by post.”

“ Support that is accessible to me as an autistic person.”

Some carers had some reservations about asking for help from a bank.

“ I would never seek financial advice from a bank – they are biased and only interested in selling products.”

“ My local branch is closing so no access in person to advisors.”

Other carers said they needed more financial support, rather than help with budgeting.

“ My current income is less than what I need to live on and I need support to increase my income opposed to budgeting.”

“ I manage very carefully. I just don't have enough money coming in.”

“ The problem isn't managing finances. It's not having enough money to pay for everything.”



Decisions carers would have made differently if they had received more financial guidance and resources



We asked carers if there were any decisions they would have made differently if they had more time to access financial guidance and resources. This was a qualitative open question where carers could input their own responses.

Decisions relating to employment

Some carers said they would have stayed in paid employment for longer, rather than giving up work to care or taking early retirement. Many carers give up paid employment when their caring responsibilities increase, and they are not receiving sufficient support from social care services or from their employer.

“Would not have given up paid employment! Financial future would have been more secure.”

“I would have continued to work longer, instead of retiring at 61 and getting a reduced pension.”

“I would not have given up my full time job. Potentially I will be mid 60s with no income if my husband dies.”

“Would have stayed in work part time rather than retire.”

“I would have tried to stay in my career for longer by reducing my hours – rather than resigning.”

Other carers said they would have managed their employment situation differently, such as paying for legal advice on discrimination, or choosing a different career path rather than spending time and money training for something they weren't able to pursue.

“I would have made a legal claim against the employer who terminated my employment when I asked to reduce my hours to cope with caring responsibilities. At the time we were raising funds for private education for my son (cared-for) who was being off-rolled by his school and I did not think we could afford the money or time for a claim, even though I definitely had grounds for it.”

“I wouldn't have wasted time and money training in a career that I'd end up having to give up anyway due to my caring responsibilities.”

Decisions about pensions and savings

Some carers said they would have done more research into the pension options available to them, paid more into their pension, or taken their pension later. Many carers are under-pensioned when they have had to reduce their working hours or give up work completely.

- “If I’d known what was coming I’d have paid more into my private pension.”
- “I would have tried to put anything I could into a pension; the future worries me so much.”
- “Accessed one of my pensions too early. I didn’t fully understand it. Took lump sum hit hammered for tax.”
- “I would have considered deferring state pension so as to have continued receiving Carer’s Allowance or at least to have had it made clear that Carer’s Allowance stops on receipt of state pension.”
- “If I had the time and respite, I would have had advice about my private pension, as I made the wrong decision on claiming it early at 55, as my Universal Credit has decreased my money because of this, therefore I have lost out and am not better off as a result.”

Others said they would have tried to save for the future at an earlier stage or done more research into savings accounts.

- “I would have saved more to have something to fall back on.”
- “I would have investigated better savings accounts.”
- “I would manage my savings better to get higher interest/income. I leave money in low interest accounts because I don’t have time/energy to rearrange or open new accounts.”
- “Put money in to an Individual Savings Account (ISA), on a monthly basis or just saved some money to help me now, but I couldn’t of foreseen the future.”
- “I would have taken time to plan for retirement if I had not been caring for my son 24 hours a day. My husband and I saved what we could but had no time to search for good interest rates and were too exhausted to seek financial advice.”
- “I was gifted a sum of money which was invested but the financial adviser did not give me sensible advice on how to make it last. Instead the money has been spent on my husband and son’s needs and daily living costs.”



Decisions about planning for the future

Several carers said they would have spent more time planning for the future by arranging support for the person they care for, such as writing a will sooner or differently, or setting up a trust fund. Others said they would have arranged power of attorney more quickly to help them manage the finances of the person they care for.

- “Making a Will differently after listening to advice at the Hospice.”
- “I might have set up a trust fund earlier.”
- “I would have arranged power of attorney (POA) earlier to allow myself and my sister to access Mum’s bank account. That would have made things easier for me to begin with.”
- “I would have strongly encouraged my mum to give me lasting power of attorney as trying to deal with her financial issues is difficult without this.”

Decisions about seeking financial support

Some carers said they would have applied for social security benefits sooner, if they had more knowledge of what was available.

- “ I didn’t know about PIP [Personal Independence Payment] and by the time I found out my husband was too old to claim.”
- “ My mother has only been receiving Attendance Allowance for two months although we have been caring for her for almost two years. I was unaware of the benefit.”
- “ I would have claimed Disability Living Allowance (DLA) earlier as I did not know I was eligible. I would have looked into what support for me was available to help me care for my daughter and still work.”
- “ I would apply for Universal Credit sooner.”
- “ If I had known I was eligible for Carer’s Allowance, I would have applied for it earlier. As it was I applied six months before I started receiving my state pension, so had it for those few months, but then it stopped when I got my state pension-but the caring didn’t.”

Decisions about budgeting and managing finances

Some carers said they would have budgeted more or managed their finances better. Previous Carers UK research has shown that many carers end up in debt, often due to using credit cards or taking out loans. This year’s State of Caring survey (2025) found that a third (32%) of carers have taken out a loan from the bank, used credit cards, or used a bank account overdraft.

- “ I panic spend and overspend when my mental health is poor. If I could have managed my money better with the caring role not causing so much stress and depression I think I could have managed by Dad’s inheritance better. Whilst we used it for some significant things, we have nothing left, and now under even more financial pressure than we were. I hate it.”
- “ I would have saved my money and not spent it on holidays in the past and general unnecessary stuff. I had no idea caring for someone would take up so much time and money.”

- “ I would like to have actually made financial decisions instead of leaking money and doing everything in a chaotic and haphazard way. It really doesn’t help that I have ADHD and money management is my greatest weakness, and yet I am the one who foots the bill for most things.”

- “ I would have set up a joint account with all household expenditure going through it. When my husband was acutely ill recently he was forgetting passwords, I couldn’t access some finances and it was very stressful.”

Decisions relating to housing

Some carers also said they would have made decisions differently in relation to their housing situation, such as arranging joint ownership of their home, not selling their home, not paying for adaptations which had been costly but ineffective, or buying a smaller property.

- “ If more time, we would have arranged joint accounts/ ownership of house with my Mum – she wants us to do this but it is too late in the day to be effective.”
- “ My big bad decision which I regret almost every day = I would NOT have sold my family home to pay for my husband’s care but would have remortgaged etc. But I did not have the time to find and take the right advice.”
- “ I spent over £2,000 on new beds, hoping this would help to mitigate my wife’s problems. This may have been a mistake.”
- “ I feel we would have bought a smaller house/new build to help with heating costs”
- “ I spent my savings to pay for a bathroom refurbishment so it would be safer and easier for my parents when my mother was alive she has passed over a year ago now to then be told that I could of got help financial help to support that refurbishment.”

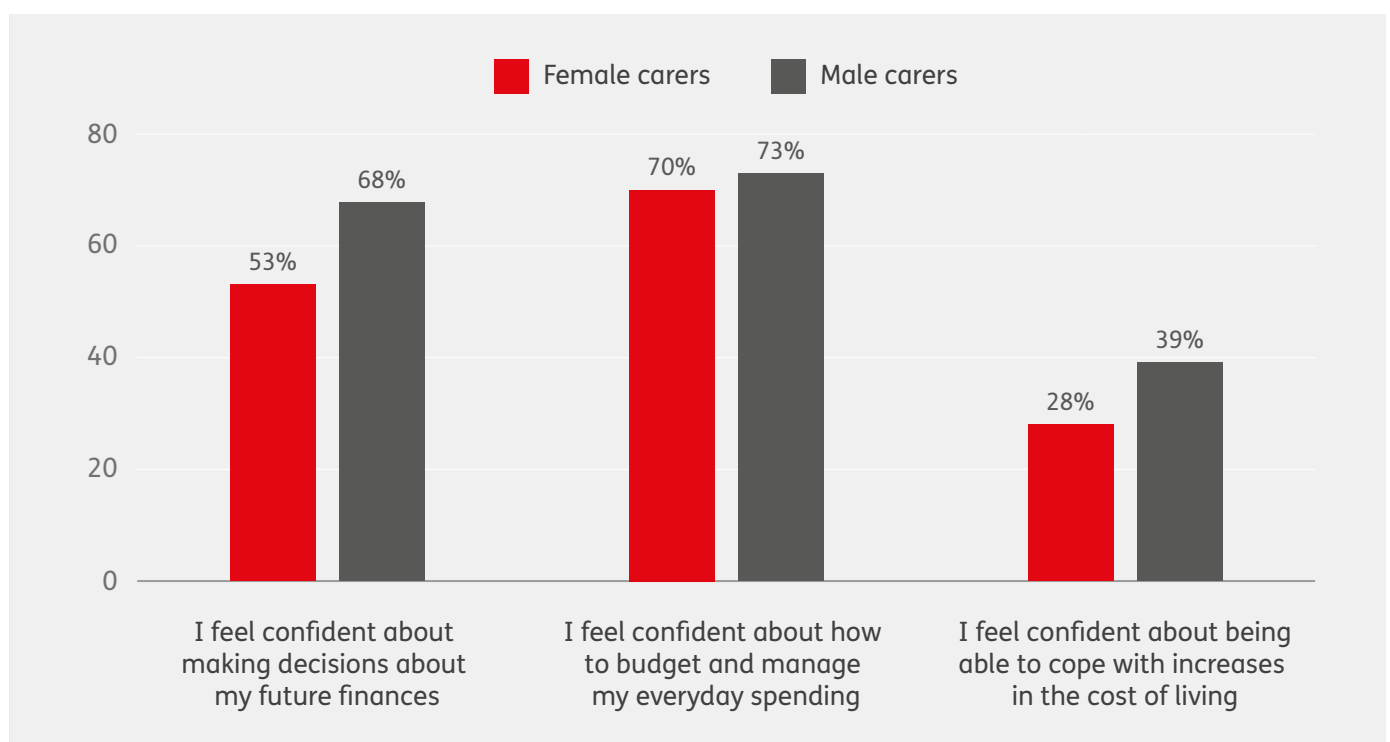
Differences by demographic factors



Gender

Female carers are less likely to feel confident about making decisions about their future finances, how to budget and manage everyday spending, and how to cope with increases in the cost of living, compared with male carers.

Figure 1: Carers' confidence in managing finances by gender (source: State of Caring 2025)

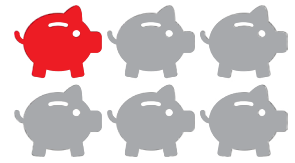


When carers were asked what support would be helpful, female carers were more likely than male carers to need support with planning for retirement (18% compared with 13%). This is an area where guidance and information are particularly important, given that women are more likely to start caring at an earlier age,⁵⁴ and are more likely to reduce their working hours to provide care.⁵⁵

Female carers were more likely to say that support from a bank would be helpful, including 1:1 support from an adviser (38% compared with 33%).

There were no differences by gender in whether carers said they knew where to go to access help. However, when carers were asked where they would start looking for financial guidance and advice, male carers were more likely than female carers to say they didn't think they would need any financial guidance, either in relation to managing finances now (26% compared with 20%) or financial planning for the future (27% compared with 18%).

18%



of female carers would find support with planning for retirement helpful, compared to 13% of male carers

38%



of female carers said support from a bank would be helpful compared with 33% of male carers



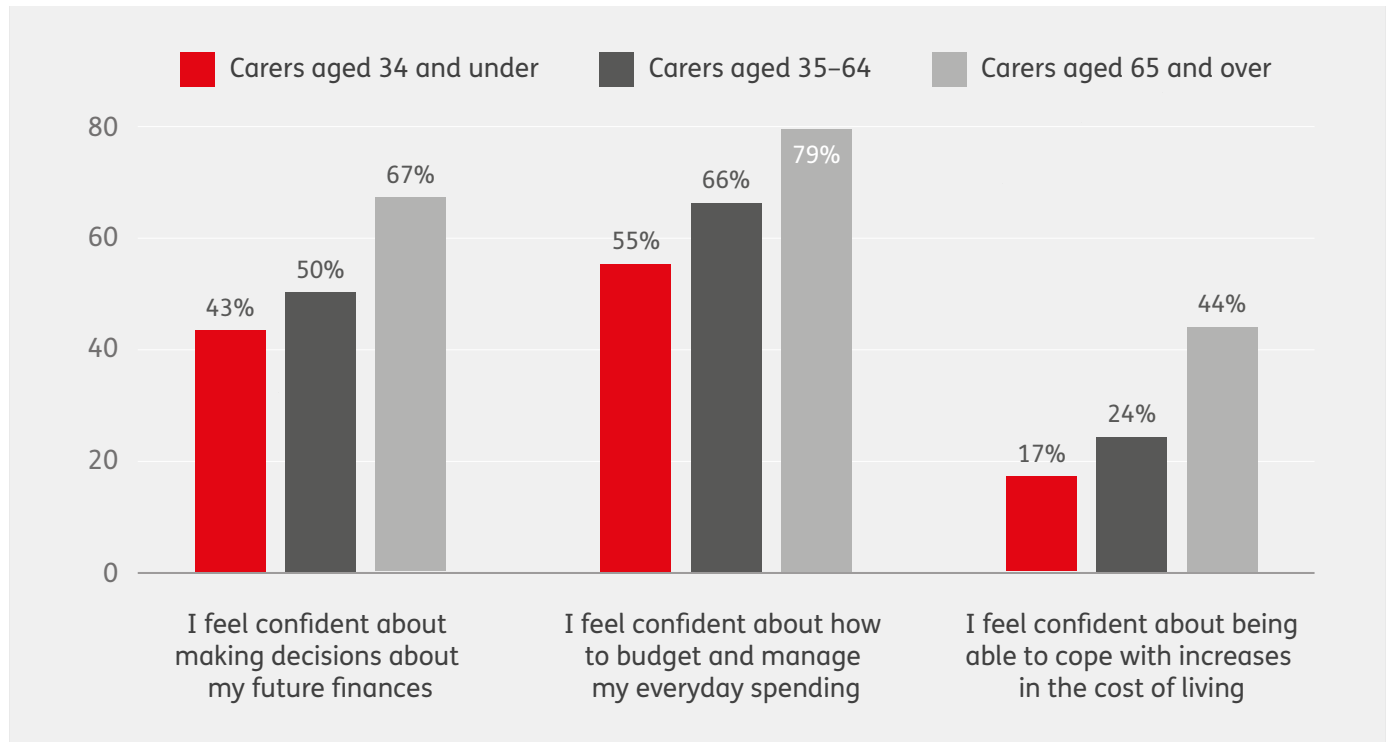
⁵⁴ Zhang, Y. and Bennett, M. (2019) *Will I care*

⁵⁵ Carers UK (2024) *State of Caring 2024: the impact of caring on employment*

Age

Younger carers were less likely to say they feel confident about financial decision-making, how to budget and how to cope with increases in the cost of living.

Figure 2: Carers' confidence in managing finances by age (source: State of Caring 2025)



Younger carers were more likely to access financial guidance or resources than older carers – for example over a fifth of carers (22%) aged 34 and under had accessed financial guidance or resources from an advice charity compared to 11% of those aged 35-64, and 6% of those aged 65 and over. However, younger carers were less likely to know where to go to access help: 42% of carers aged 34 and under said they knew where to go to get financial advice or guidance, compared with 53% of carers aged 65 and over.

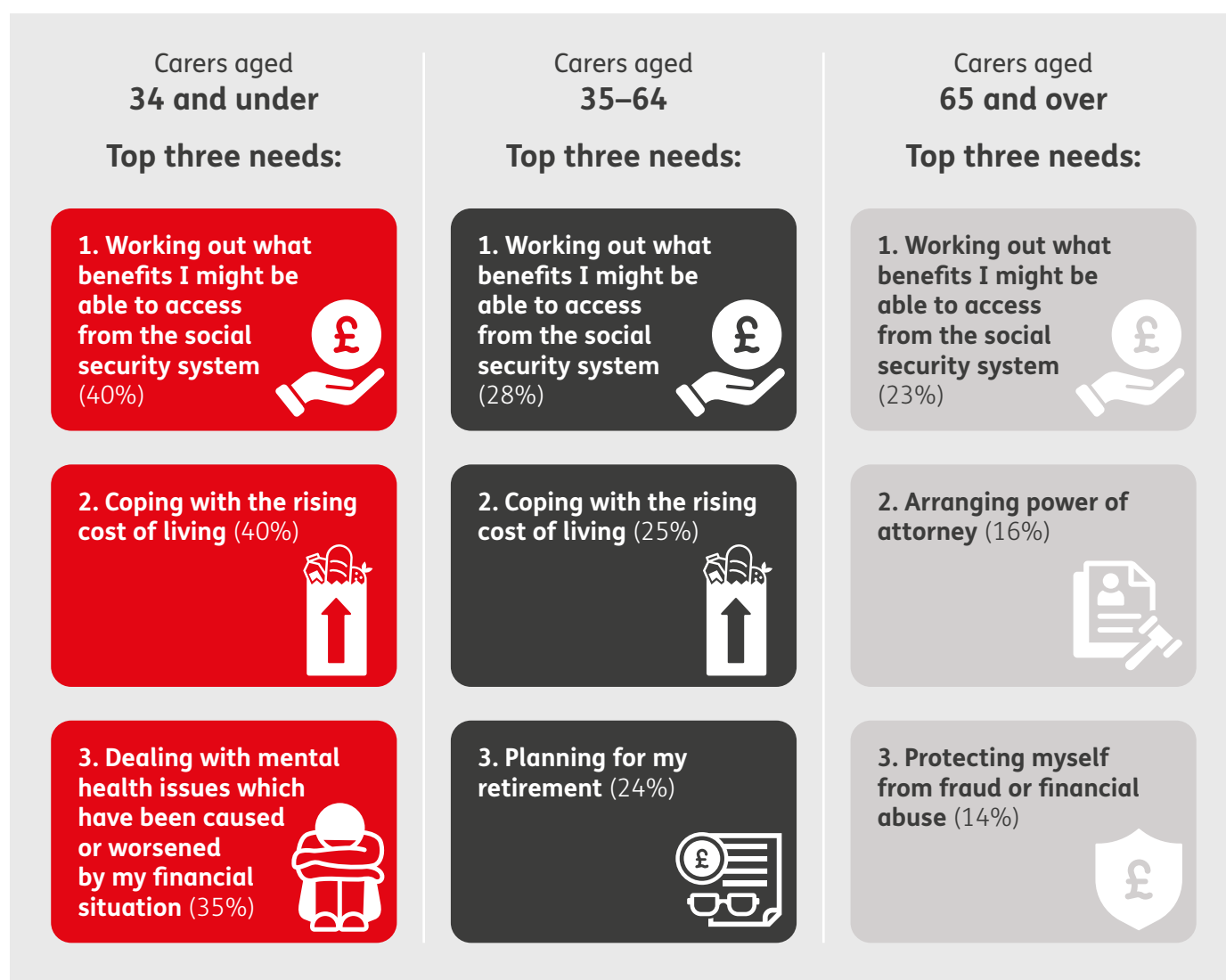
42% 

of carers aged 34 and under said they knew where to go to get financial advice or guidance, compared with 53% of carers aged 65 and over

When carers were asked what support would be helpful, these priorities varied by age. Younger carers aged 34 and under were more likely to say they needed help with dealing with mental health issues which have been caused or worsened by their financial situation. Middle-aged carers aged 35-64 were more likely to say they needed help planning for retirement, while older carers aged 65 and over were more likely to say they needed support with arranging power of attorney and protecting themselves from fraud or financial abuse. This demonstrates the need for support to be tailored to carers' individual circumstances.



Figure 3: Carers' top three areas where more support would be helpful, by age (source: State of Caring 2025)



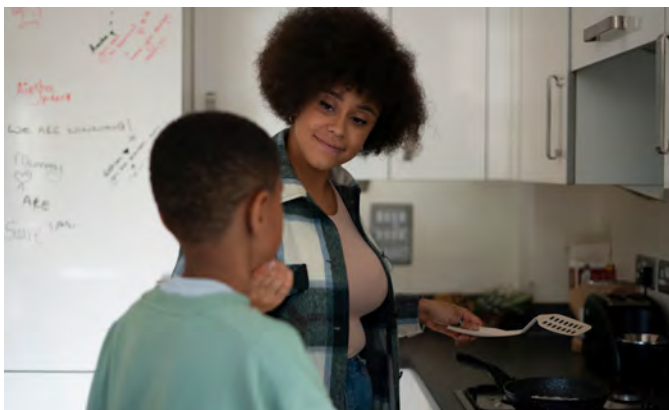
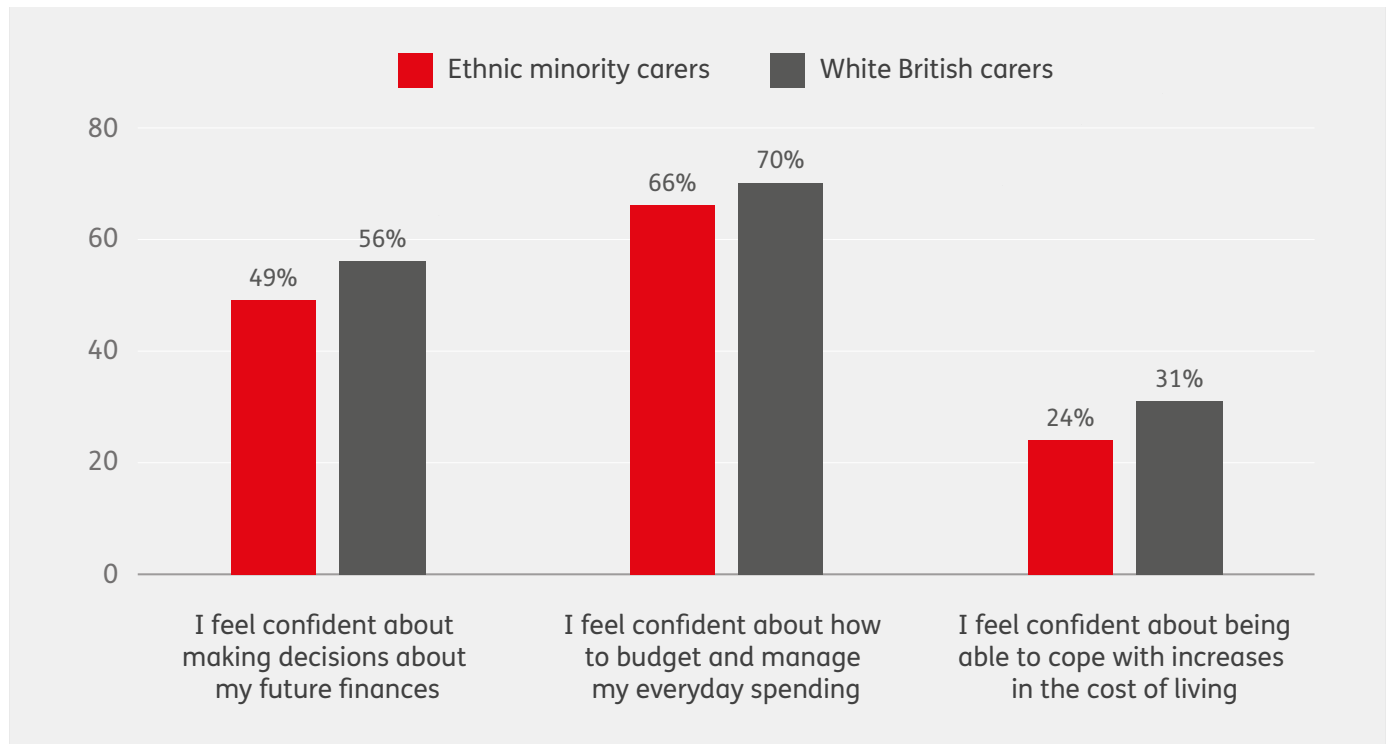
When carers were asked where they would go to seek help, older carers aged 65 and over were more likely than carers aged 35 and under to say they didn't think they would need any financial guidance,

either in relation to managing finances now (28% compared with 13%) or financial planning for the future (29% compared with 6%).

Ethnicity

Ethnic minority carers were less likely to feel confident about making decisions about their future finances, budgeting and managing everyday spending, and feeling confident about coping with increases in the cost of living.

Figure 4: Carers' confidence in managing finances by ethnicity (source: State of Caring 2025)



Ethnic minority carers were more likely than White British carers to say that more support would be helpful, including in relation to working out what benefits they might be able to access (32% compared with 26%) and planning for retirement (28% compared with 16%, and this was also a higher ranked priority than amongst White British carers). Ethnic minority carers were also more likely to say they need more support with coping with the rising cost of living through reducing spending or saving money on groceries (27% compared with 21%), and obtaining power of attorney (23% compared with 19%), though this ranked lower on their list of priorities than White British carers.

42%  

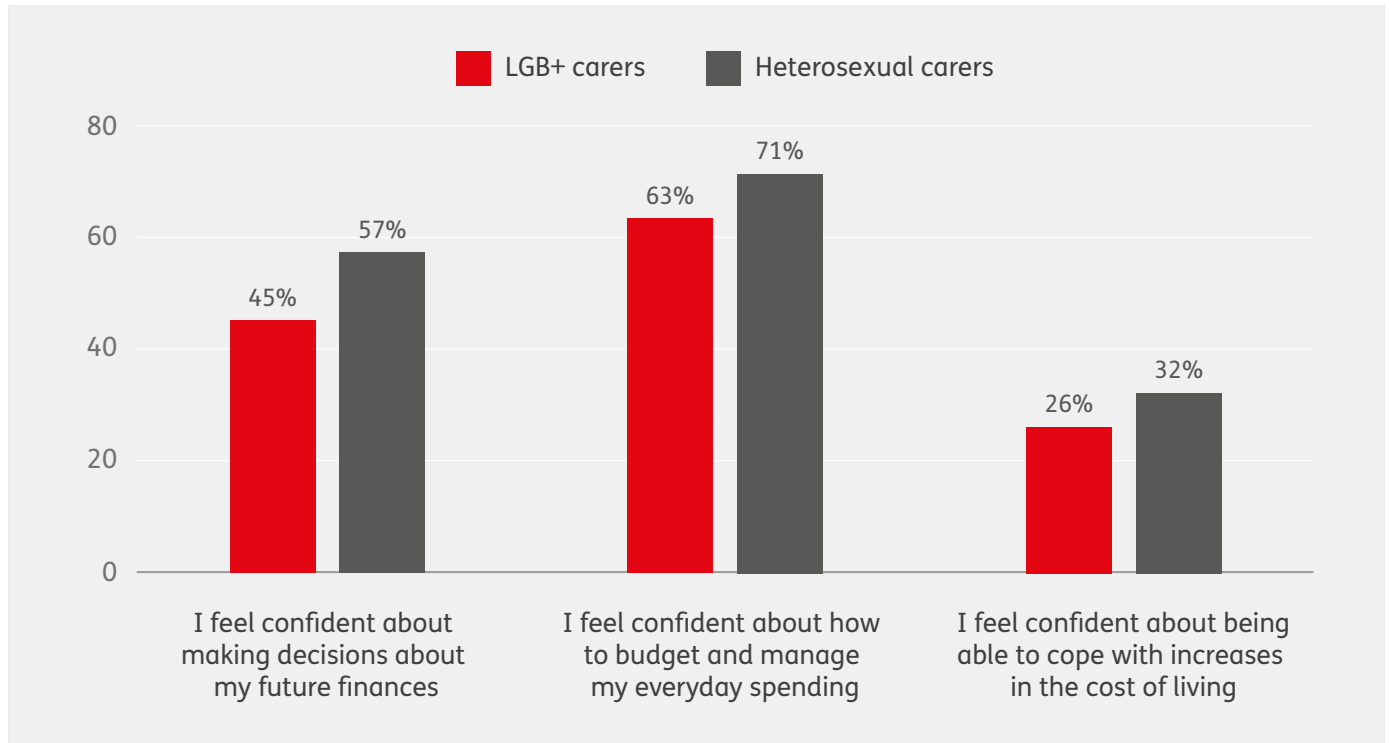
of ethnic minority carers knew where to go to find help, compared to 48% of White British carers

Although ethnic minority carers were more likely to say that financial guidance and resources would be helpful, they were less confident about knowing where to go to access help. 42% of ethnic minority carers said they knew where to go to find help, compared with 48% of White British carers.

Sexual orientation

LGB+ carers were less likely to feel confident about making decisions about their future finances, how to budget and manage everyday spending, and how to cope with increases in the cost of living.*

Figure 5: Carers' confidence in managing finances by sexual orientation (source: State of Caring 2025)



LGB+ carers were more likely than heterosexual carers to say that more support would be helpful, including in relation to working out what benefits they might be able to access (34% compared with 27%), coping with the rising cost of living through reducing spending or saving money on groceries (30% compared with 22%), and coping with the impact of finances on their mental health (29% compared with 15%).

34% 
of LGB+ carers said support to work out what benefits they might be able to access would be helpful

* The survey included separate questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. We are unable to compare responses by gender identity as the sample size for carers whose gender is not the same as the one assigned at birth is too small. Carers UK previously published research about the challenges faced by trans carers. In this report, we have used the term LGB+ to refer to carers who have a minority sexual orientation.

Conclusion

It is clear from this research that carers need more information and guidance in relation to managing their finances now and planning for the future. When carers are unable to access this guidance and support, it can be more difficult to make the right financial decisions.

Many carers shared details of things they would have done differently if they had been able to access advice and guidance in the past, from staying in paid employment for longer, to putting more money aside for the future. Carers are also often involved in managing the finances of the people they care for, so it's essential that they feel confident in making financial decisions, not just for themselves but the people they support.

Carers are often so busy caring that they do not have the time to explore what help they might be entitled to, including financial support from the social security system. As a result, many are missing out on vital support. It is crucial that information and advice is made quicker and easier to access, as seeking help can often feel like a battle for carers, increasing their levels of stress and anxiety.

Carers UK's research report "I want to see a future for carers where..." asked carers what support they would like to see, and the need for information and advice was one of the key areas that carers highlighted.⁵⁶

"I want to see a future for carers where they are automatically made aware of where they can apply for support and advice, services are made simpler to access and also financial benefits are made clearer and easier to apply for."

"I want to see a future for carers where there is clear information available, support for those who find accessing information difficult, help with filling in forms, financial advice..."

"I want to see a future for carers where they are given help and advice a lot more easily."

"I want to see a future for carers where they don't have to struggle to find support."

"I want to see a future for carers the system is much easier to navigate, its so disjointed and you don't get all the info in one place – it's exhausting looking for it."

"I want to see a future for carers where they are able to access help easily without jumping through hoops."

"I want to see a future for carers everything is not a battle and information is widely available and not "hidden.""

"I want to see a future for carers where we are not left alone to try to find out what support is available and who can help us."

"I want to see a future for carers where help and support is readily accessible and not something I have to fight for."

Financial education is not a solution on its own. Carers need more tangible financial support, and more opportunities to increase their income and earnings potential and to be able to save for their retirement. Carers UK research has found that many carers struggle to cope with the extra costs of care and need more support with this, particularly if they have had to reduce their working hours or give up paid employment to provide care.

"I want to see a future for carers where they don't have to worry if they can afford to pay bills and buy essentials."

"I want to see a future for carers where we are not financially penalised for providing essential care and support for our loved ones."

"I want to see a future for carers where they are financially much more comfortable than at present."

"I want to see a future for carers where they have a lot more financial support to be comfortable financially when taking on a caring role."

⁵⁶ Carers UK (2025) *I want to see a future for carers where...*

Carers UK recommendations



UK Government

Carers UK welcomes the fact that the UK Government has raised the earnings limit for Carer's Allowance to align it with 16 times the national living wage; the largest rise in this limit since the benefit was first introduced. Government has also said that it would consider introducing a taper on the earnings limit for Carer's Allowance, which we hope will enhance carers' ability to stay in work. However, more needs to be done to ensure that carers receive sufficient support.

Carers UK recommends that the UK Government should:

Policy and strategy

- Develop a new National Carers Strategy which clearly sets out the Government's future commitments to supporting carers. A key focus of this should be identifying specific actions that support carers to maximise their financial wellbeing and security throughout their lives, without significant financial penalty. It should focus on ensuring that carers:
 - » receive sufficient information and advice to be able to plan well in advance of caring and all the way along the caring journey, including planning for pensions.
 - » receive the support they need at work so they can juggle work and care for as long as possible.
 - » receive good quality and affordable social care so they are able to take breaks, focus on their own health and wellbeing, and remain in paid employment if they wish to do so.
 - » receive sufficient support from the social security system to prevent poverty.
 - » address other factors which affect carers' health and wellbeing, such as housing.

Providing more support to carers

Finances

- Begin a review of the current support provided to unpaid carers through the social security system, including setting objectives for carers' social security benefits as well as timescales and options for change. The review should particularly investigate interactions between different benefits in the current system to understand how they affect individual entitlements.
- Consider an increase to the level of Carer's Allowance and the value of Carer Element, Carer Premium and Carer Addition to lift carers out of poverty.
- Improve the process for claiming Carer's Allowance to make it less complicated for claimants by modernising delivery, increasing staffing and improving staff training, and improving information sharing between Department for Work and Pension (DWP) departments.
- Ensure that unpaid carers are fully consulted as part of the Timms Review into Personal Independence Payment (PIP) as it is a key gateway benefit to claiming Carer's Allowance, the main benefit for unpaid carers.

Pensions

- Take steps to improve carers' financial resilience in retirement by carrying out a review of pension rules for carers, implementing a set of initiatives to allow carers to achieve similar pension levels as non-carers, and considering additional financial support to carers of State Pension age.
- Ensure that the Government's ongoing Pensions Commission and State Pension age reviews both have clear lines of inquiry into the experiences of unpaid carers, so that carers receive the support they need in planning for their future.

Supporting carers to stay in paid employment

- Introduce a new statutory right to five days of paid Carer's Leave per year, to support more people to balance employment and unpaid care and remain in work.
- Develop the plan for the National Care Service and deliver much-needed funding to help stabilise social care, to better support unpaid carers' wellbeing and enable carers who wish to continue with or return to paid work to do so.

Financial guidance and resources

- Ensure that the advice sector for statutory benefits and entitlements is sufficiently funded so that advisers can provide tailored and personalised advice to people including carers.
- Improve carers' understanding of which social security benefits they are entitled to by providing clear guidance on eligibility rules to make the system less complex to navigate.

Housing

- Ensure that housing policies fully recognise and consider the specific challenges faced by unpaid carers and the people they care for.

Identification of carers

- Use relevant awareness campaigns to help unpaid carers understand their rights and entitlements, and know what support is available.

Other sources of support

Carers UK recommends that:

UK Finance

- Support its members through raising awareness of the need for more financial guidance and support for carers and facilitate the sharing of existing practices and ideas across the industry.
- Consider an industry-wide campaign focused on financial guidance for carers, raising awareness of support that is available and encouraging those in need of support to reach out early.

Local authorities and the NHS

- Ensure that carers are systematically identified and signposted to further information, support and advice, including in relation to their own health and wellbeing.

Banks and financial institutions

- Ensure that financial guidance considers the needs of unpaid carers, including those from under-represented groups.
- Develop public awareness programmes to raise awareness of the financial guidance and support available, and reduce the stigma of asking for help.

Local carers organisations

- Continue to promote information, advice and guidance to unpaid carers, including in relation to managing finances.
- Continue to help people recognise they are caring, so that carers understand their rights and entitlements and know what support is available.

General public

All of us can play a part in supporting carers.

- Help raise awareness of caring by helping family, friends and colleague identify as carers, and signpost them to advice, guidance and support if they need it.
- Listen to carers' experiences, recognise the challenges that carers can face, and support people to realise they are caring.

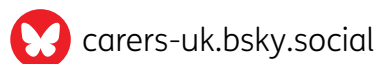


Across the UK today, 5.8 million people are carers – supporting a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill. Carers UK is here to listen, to give carers expert information and tailored advice. We champion the rights of carers and support them in finding new ways to manage at home, at work, or in their community.

We're here to make life better for carers.

Carers UK 20 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4LX

T 020 7378 4999 | **E** info@carersuk.org



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