

Scotland's Carers – Update Release

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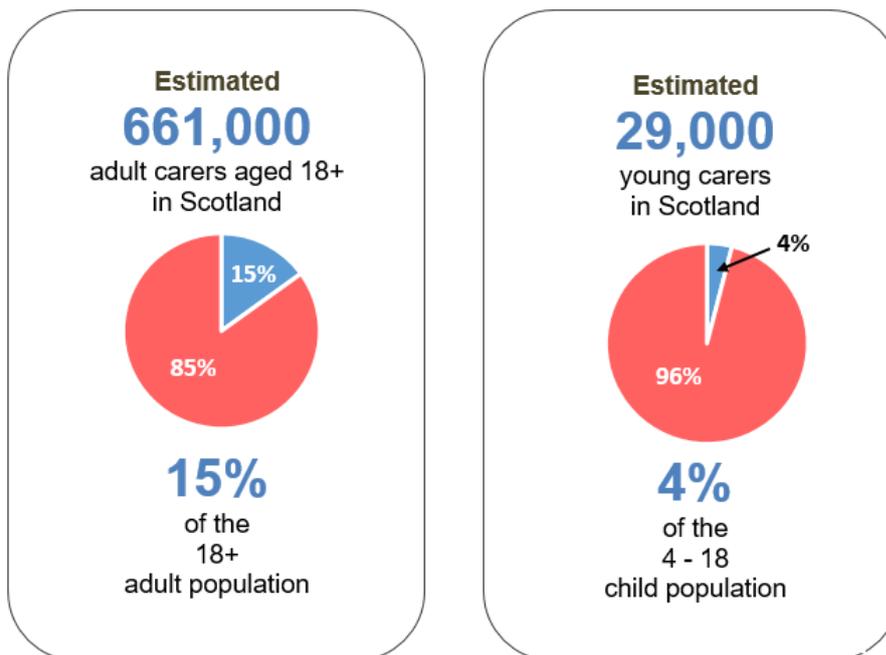
This release is an update to the headline figure of the [Scotland's Carers](#) publication, which was published in early 2015.

There are different ways to estimate the number of carers living in Scotland. Looking at the different sources of carer information (see Appendix for more information), the number of carers living in Scotland is estimated to fluctuate around 700,000 and 800,000 each year. This latest update uses the same methodology as used in previous estimates of Scotland's Carers, to maintain consistency and to take account of young carers.

The latest figures show an estimated total of around 690,000 carers living in Scotland, including 29,000 young carers.

More information on how this estimate was reached can be found in the Appendix.

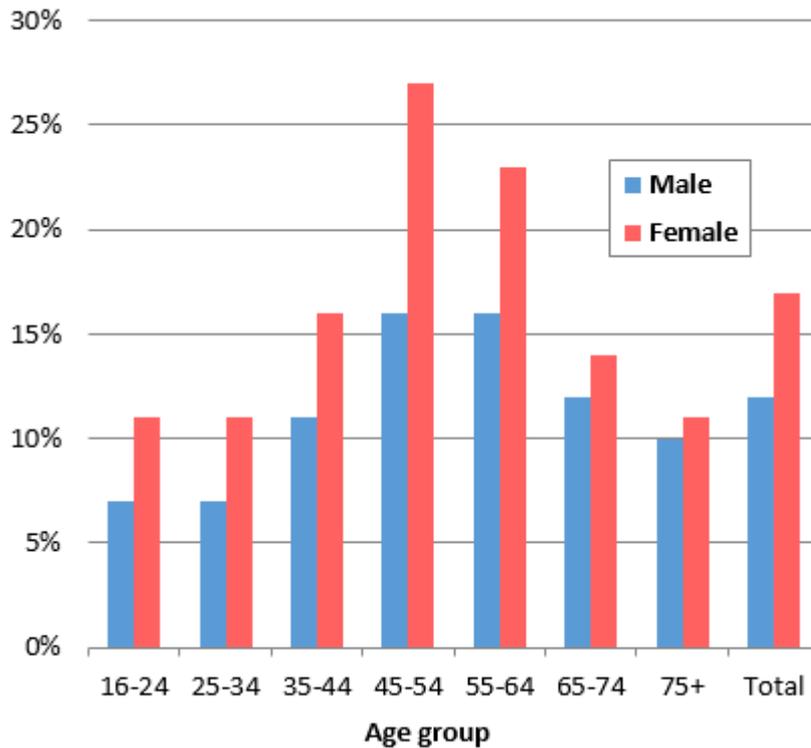
Figure 1: Estimated number of adult and young carers in Scotland, 2015-18



Sources: Scottish Health Survey 2015-18 (Scottish Government), Mid-year population estimates 2018 (National Records of Scotland)

The latest figures from the Scottish Health Survey 2015-18 also show that overall, 17% of women and 12% of men are carers (for people aged 16+). However, people are more likely to be providing unpaid care in their later working years – especially women (see Figure 2). Just over a quarter (27%) of women aged 45-54 and nearly a quarter of women aged 55-64 (23%) provide unpaid care.

Figure 2: Age and Gender of carers, 2015-18



This short update to the headline figures of Scotland's Carers is to give users the latest up to date estimates on the number of carers living in Scotland. For more detailed analysis on carers living in Scotland, including information on health and wellbeing and support received, please refer to [Scotland's Carers](#).

Contact us

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Appendix

The estimates in this update were produced using the Scottish Government's [Scottish Health Survey](#) and the [mid-year population estimates](#) published by National Records of Scotland.

Methodology

The number of carers living in Scotland was estimated by applying the percentage of the population who were estimated to be carers in the Scottish Health Survey (figures combined for 2015-2018 to give a large enough sample) to the 2018 mid-year population estimates, which produced the figures below:

Total estimated number of carers: **690,000**
Estimated number of adult carers (aged 18+): **661,000**
Estimated number of young carers (aged 4-18): **29,000**

This was how the previous estimate of the number of carers living in Scotland was calculated for the Scotland's Carers publication, using the 2013 mid-year population estimates and the 2012 and 2013 Scottish Health Survey results.

The latest estimates are significantly lower than the previous estimate of 790,000 carers living in Scotland. However, other than a slight change to the Scottish Health Survey question in 2014 which made the exclusion of paid work more explicit, there were no changes to survey methodology or sampling technique between 2014 and 2015 which is when the biggest drop was seen. The figures have since remained consistent.

It is important to note that the percentage decrease between 2012-13 and 2015-18 was under 3% for adults aged 18+, but when this is applied to the Scottish population estimates it can lead to sizeable changes in the estimated number of carers.

Other sources

The [Scottish Survey Core Questions \(SSCQ\)](#), which pool the samples from the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS), Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) and the Scottish Household Survey (SHS), give slightly higher figures for the percentage of the population estimated to be carers. **However, these figures relate to people aged 16+ only.**

During 2014-2017, an estimated 17.6% of people provided unpaid care according to the SSCQ. This would be equivalent to around 790,000 people aged 16+ providing unpaid care.

The higher figures in the SSCQ are driven by the higher percentage of carers being reported in the Scottish Household Survey. An extract from the SSCQ 2017 report explains this further:



Table A.5 Provides unpaid care by 2017 source survey (row % and margin of error)

	<i>Provides Care</i>	<i>No Care</i>
SSCQ	17.4 +- 0.7	82.5 +- 0.7
SCJS	15.9 +- 1.1	84.0 +- 1.1
SHeS	14.7 +- 1.6	85.2 +- 1.6
SHS	19.2 +- 1.0	80.8 +- 1.0

The three surveys produce somewhat different estimates of the rate of the provision of unpaid care. SHS reports the highest level, followed by SCJS and SHeS. The confidence intervals on estimates from SCJS and SHeS overlap and do not represent a significant difference. It is thought that the SHS estimate is higher due to this being asked in the context of other questions around volunteering and time spent providing care.

Source: SSCQ 2017

The Scottish Health Survey is the only national source which includes information on people under the age of 16 providing unpaid care apart from Scotland's Census. However, people providing low levels of care each week are less likely to be identified in the Census and it may be the case that one person will answer the Census questionnaire for the whole household. This person may not be aware of caring activity going on elsewhere in the household or may feel uncomfortable explaining that someone else in the household provides care for them. As such, the Scottish Health Survey still provides the best estimate of the number carers for all ages (including children) in Scotland.