

People who Access Social Care and Unpaid Carers in Scotland

This paper provides an overview of key sources of evidence about people who access social care and unpaid carers in Scotland. It is part of an initial collection of contextual evidence papers, setting out key sources of information about social care and related areas in Scotland, linking to the National Care Service Consultation proposals published in August 2021.

Key findings

- An estimated 1 in 25 people of all ages in Scotland (231,925 people) were reported as receiving social care support and services at some point during 2020/21.
- It is estimated that around three-quarters (77%) of people receiving social care support in 2020/21 were aged 65 and over, and around three-fifths (61%) were female.
- An estimated 93,280 people received home care at some point during 2020/21. There were also an estimated 130,130 people with an active community alarm and/or telecare service.
- There were an estimated 33,353 residents in care homes as at 31st March 2021, which is 11% lower than in 2011. Over 90% of residents in 2021 were in older people care homes.
- The number of carers living in Scotland was estimated to be around 700,000 to 800,000 before the pandemic. In 2020, it was estimated that there were around 839,000 adult carers living in Scotland.
- Older, working age females are more likely to provide unpaid care than other groups. People in the most deprived areas are more likely to provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week compared to people living in the least deprived areas
- The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the social care sector. For care at home services, some people had their care packages reduced or stopped as partnerships focused on providing support to those with critical needs. Many people who receive care and their families also chose to reduce the support they received. More than a quarter of deaths where Covid-19 was mentioned on the certificate between the start of the pandemic and February 2022 were in care homes.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Profile of people who access social care.....	3
3. Profile of unpaid carers.....	8
4. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic	12
4.1 People who access social care.....	12
4.2 Unpaid carers	13
5. Potential future demand for social care	14
6. Conclusion	15
Glossary.....	16

1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the key sources of evidence about people who access social care and unpaid carers in Scotland. It does not provide exhaustive or fully comprehensive coverage of all social care services but provides an insight into recent trends in social care use. The focus is on adult social care but data that covers all age groups is indicated throughout.

Social care support can be provided to people of all ages and encompasses a range of services. These can be provided in the home or wider community or in residential settings such as care homes. Unpaid carers also provide vital support to family, friends and neighbours. A person can become a carer at any time in their life and can care for more than one person. Unpaid carers may also be in paid employment.

This paper forms one of an initial collection of contextual evidence papers, setting out key sources of information about social care and related areas in Scotland, linking to the National Care Service Consultation proposals published in August 2021.

The collection consists of the following 6 papers on social care:

1. [Scotland's Health and Demographic Profile](#)
2. [People who Access Social Care and Unpaid Carers in Scotland](#)
3. [Social Care Support and Service Provision in Scotland](#)
4. [Experiences of Social Care and Caring in Scotland](#)
5. [The Adult Social Care Workforce in Scotland](#)
6. [Adult Social Care in Scotland - Equality Evidence Overview](#)

And papers on:

7. [Children's Social Services](#)
8. [Justice Social Work in Scotland](#)
9. [Learning and evidence from national social care systems in Nordic and Scandinavian countries](#)
10. [Integrated Care Studies: The SCFNuka \(Alaska\) and Canterbury \(New Zealand\) Models](#)

While the focus of this set of evidence papers is social care, there is an intrinsic link between social care and social work. Social work is a statutory role which involves assessing need, managing risk, and promoting and protecting the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Social care support is an umbrella term for adult, children's and justice services which directly support people to meet their personal outcomes. A social work evidence paper is being prepared for publication in summer 2022.

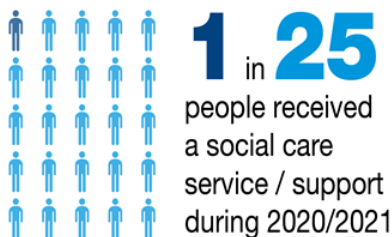
2. Profile of people who access social care

The main source of information on people being supported by social care services is Public Health Scotland's [Insights in Social Care publication](#)¹. Social care services are defined as support or services which are provided or funded by the local authority to people who have had an assessment or review of their needs. These services can include

¹ [Insights In Social Care: Statistics for Scotland 2019/20 – 2020/21](#), Public Health Scotland

community alarms, telecare, home care, day care and support to stay in a care home (see [Glossary](#) for further information).

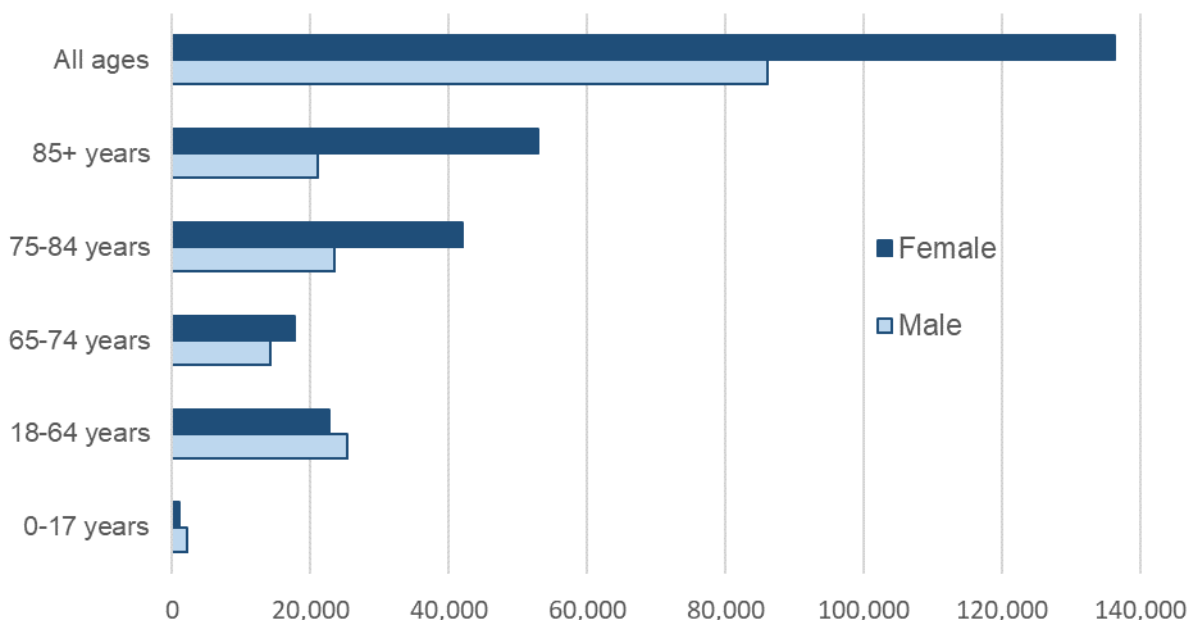
The latest publication showed that an estimated 1 in 25 people of all ages in Scotland (231,925 people) were reported as receiving social care support and services at some point during 2020/21. This is a 2.5% decrease from 2019/20 but is still 0.8% higher than in 2017/18.



Source: Public Health Scotland (2022) [Insights In Social Care: Statistics for Scotland 2019/20 – 2020/21](#)

Information on age and gender was returned for 98% of records. Based on these records, over three-quarters (77%) of people being supported by social care services in 2020/21 were aged 65 and over and around three-fifths (61%) were female. This is consistent with previous years. There were more females than males in the older age groups (aged 65 and over) but for people aged 18 – 64 the gender split was more even, with slightly more males than females (Figure 1). Overall, 99% of people being supported by social care services in 2020/21 were adults (i.e. aged 18 or over).

Figure 1: More females than males in Scotland received social care support in 2020/21



Source: Public Health Scotland (2022) [People supported - Insights in social care: statistics for Scotland - Support provided or funded by health and social care partnerships in Scotland 2019/20 - 2020/21](#)

A [previous data linkage study using the Social Care Survey²](#) (which preceded the Public Health Scotland data collection), suggested that females may be more likely to receive social care from local authorities than males because they are more likely to survive their partners and so live alone. The latest [publication from National Records of Scotland on Life Expectancy³](#) also showed that in 2018-20 females had a life expectancy of 81.0 years, compared to 76.8 years for males. Since females have a higher life expectancy, this may explain why more females than males receive social care support in the older age groups.

The majority of people receiving social care support in 2020/21 (72%) were white, a similar proportion to previous years. Ethnicity was recorded as not known or not provided for around a quarter (26%) of people who access social care.

The Insights in Social Care publication also includes information by client group. This is determined by a Social Worker or Social Care Professional and is used as a means of grouping individuals with similar care needs. A person can be assigned to more than one client group. In 2020/21, the most common client group was “Elderly / Frail” (99,015 people) followed by “Physical and Sensory Disability” (76,605).

Table 1: People receiving social care support in Scotland by client group, 2020/21

Client Group	Number of people
Elderly / Frail	99,015
Physical and Sensory Disability	76,605
Other ⁴	42,085
Learning Disability	20,590
Dementia	15,275
Mental Health	14,445
Not Recorded	23,325

Source: Public Health Scotland (2022) [People supported - Insights in social care: statistics for Scotland - Support provided or funded by health and social care partnerships in Scotland 2019/20 - 2020/21](#)

People can receive multiple social care services as part of their care package. Based on data from the local authorities that submitted this information, it is estimated that 93,280 people received home care at some point in 2020/21. There were also an estimated 130,130 people with an active community alarm and/or telecare service and 127,500 people with a social worker.

² Henderson DAG, Atherton I, McCowan C, Mercer SW, Bailey N. (2021) [Linkage of national health and social care data: a cross-sectional study of multimorbidity and social care use in people aged over 65 years in Scotland](#). Age and Ageing 50. 176-182.

³ National Records of Scotland (2022) [Life Expectancy in Scotland, 2018-2020](#)

⁴ The “Other” Client Group includes Drugs, Alcohol, Palliative Care, Carer, Neurological condition (excluding Dementia), Autism and Other Vulnerable Groups.

Table 2: People supported in Scotland by social care service, 2020/21

Type of service / support	Number of people
Community Alarms / Telecare	130,130
Social Worker	127,500
Home Care	93,280
Care Home	48,160
Day Care	6,240
Meals	5,695

Source: Public Health Scotland (2022) [People supported - Insights in social care: statistics for Scotland - Support provided or funded by health and social care partnerships in Scotland 2019/20 - 2020/21](#)

According to the latest [Free Personal and Nursing Care and Extension of Free Personal Care publications](#)⁵ produced by Scottish Government, 46,820 people aged 65 and over, and 12,110 people aged 18-64 received personal care at home in the last financial quarter of 2020/21 as part of their care package. This includes people assessed as having personal care needs who choose a direct payment or used Self-Directed Support (SDS) option 2 (see [Glossary](#) for further information) to purchase services in their own home, where information is available.

These publications also indicated that there were 10,420 self-funding care home residents aged 65 and over, and 120 self-funding care home residents aged 18-64 who received Free Personal Care payments. Local authority funded care home residents also receive personal care, but this will be included in the wider costs covered by the local authority.

Figures reported in the latest [Care Home Census publication](#)⁶ showed that there were an estimated 33,353 residents in adult care homes as at 31st March 2021 (Table 3). This is around 11% lower than the number of residents reported in 2011. Over 90% (30,502) of residents in 2021 were in Older People care homes (this definition is based on the majority of residents in the care home). Around 96% (31,882) of residents were long-stay residents, around a third of whom were either mainly or fully self-funded.

⁵ Scottish Government (2022) [Free Personal and Nursing Care and Extension of Free Personal Care publications](#)

⁶ Public Health Scotland (2021) [Care home census for adults in Scotland, Statistics for 2011 to 2021](#)

Table 3: Number of residents in adult care homes in Scotland, 2011 – 2021 ^{7,8,9,10}

Total number of residents and client group split	Year at 31 March											% change 2011 to 2021	% change 2019 to 2021
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 ¹	2021		
Total Number of Residents (Long Stay + Short Stay + Respite Residents)	37,511	37,335	36,578	36,751	36,193	36,621	35,989	35,202	35,630	n/a	33,353	-11.1%	-6.4%
Older People	33,645	33,636	32,888	33,187	32,771	33,301	32,691	32,008	32,445	n/a	30,502	-9.3%	-6.0%
Physical and Sensory Impairment	555	528	554	537	531	525	568	621	611	n/a	511	-7.9%	-16.4%
Mental Health Problems	978	960	1,032	944	971	939	949	847	901	n/a	821	-16.1%	-8.9%
Learning Disabilities	2,102	1,962	1,859	1,821	1,659	1,603	1,542	1,469	1,413	n/a	1,291	-38.6%	-8.6%
Other Groups	231	249	245	262	261	253	239	257	260	n/a	228	-1.3%	-12.3%
Total Number of Long Stay Residents	36,002	35,775	34,933	35,012	34,482	34,738	34,101	33,223	33,637	n/a	31,882	-11.4%	-5.2%
Older People	32,545	32,555	31,752	31,943	31,547	31,872	31,223	30,487	30,914	n/a	29,317	-9.9%	-5.2%
Physical and Sensory Impairment	493	455	459	464	448	460	490	515	510	n/a	469	-4.9%	-8.0%
Mental Health Problems	916	883	947	893	909	904	924	814	865	n/a	798	-12.9%	-7.7%
Learning Disabilities	1,849	1,699	1,588	1,539	1,407	1,343	1,292	1,237	1,178	n/a	1,142	-38.2%	-3.1%
Other Groups	199	183	187	173	171	159	172	169	171	n/a	156	-21.6%	-8.8%
Total Number of Short Stay and Respite Residents	1,509	1,560	1,645	1,739	1,711	1,883	1,888	1,979	1,993	n/a	1,470	-2.6%	-26.2%
Older People	1,100	1,081	1,136	1,244	1,224	1,429	1,468	1,521	1,531	n/a	1,184	7.6%	-22.7%
Physical and Sensory Impairment	62	73	95	73	83	65	78	106	101	n/a	42	-32.3%	-58.4%
Mental Health Problems	62	77	85	51	62	35	25	33	36	n/a	23	-62.9%	-36.1%
Learning Disabilities	253	263	271	282	252	260	250	232	235	n/a	149	-41.1%	-36.6%
Other Groups	32	66	58	89	90	94	67	88	89	n/a	72	125.0%	-19.1%

⁷ Public Health Scotland (2021) [Care home census for adults in Scotland, Statistics for 2011 to 2021](#)

⁸ The 2020 Care Home Census for Adults in Scotland was cancelled to avoid placing additional burden on care homes at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

⁹ Data was submitted by two-thirds of care homes. Numbers have been estimated for those homes which did not submit data.

¹⁰ The Main Client Group refers to the majority of residents in the care home. 'Other Groups' includes alcohol and drug misuse, blood borne virus (HIV/AIDS), and acquired brain injury.

The [Insights in Social Care](#) publication reported that a higher number of people (nearly 44,000) received funding towards a long stay care home place in Scotland during 2020/21 compared to the Care Home Census. It also showed that 6,300 people were supported during a short stay in a care home, such as for respite or for reablement in 2020/21. For people supported during a stay in a care home, 65% were female and nearly half were aged 85 and over. The data also indicated that 63% of people supported during a stay in a care home required nursing care.

It is important to note that the Insights in Social Care publication and the Care Home Census each cover different cohorts. The Insights in Social Care publication is based on returns from local authorities' administrative data and so only includes people who were at least partly funded by the local authority throughout the year. The Care Home Census is based on returns from adult care homes as at the designated census date and so will include self-funders.

3. Profile of unpaid carers

As there is currently no central mechanism for identifying unpaid carers, the numbers presented here are estimates. There are a number of ways to do this, as detailed in the latest [Scotland's Carers – Update Release](#)¹¹, but the preferred source for estimating the total number of carers in Scotland is the [Scottish Health Survey](#)¹² as it samples both children and adults and can provide additional information on carers' health and support.

As detailed in the latest [Scotland's Carers – Update Release](#), the number of carers living in Scotland is estimated to be around 700,000 to 800,000. Data from the latest full Scottish Health Survey suggested that there were an estimated 685,000 unpaid carers in Scotland in 2016-19. This includes an estimated 30,000 young carers (aged under 18) and is more than the total paid health workforce (140,000 staff¹³) and social care workforce (210,000 staff¹⁴) combined.

Data from the [2020 Scottish Health Survey](#)¹⁵ suggests that there were 839,000 unpaid carers in 2020. However, this figure is not comparable to previous years as it is based on a telephone survey that ran between August and September 2020 rather than the usual face to face interviews over a longer period of time.

The latest estimate from the full Scottish Health Survey for 2016-19 is significantly lower than the previous estimate of 790,000 carers included in the [Scotland's Carers publication](#)¹⁶ for 2012/13. 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

¹¹ Scottish Government (2022) [Scotland's Carers – Update Release](#)

¹² Scottish Government (2021) [Scottish Health Survey](#)

¹³ NHS Scotland [About NHS Scotland](#), accessed 5th May 2022

¹⁴ Scottish Social Services Council (2021) [SSSC – Visualisations](#), accessed 5th May 2022

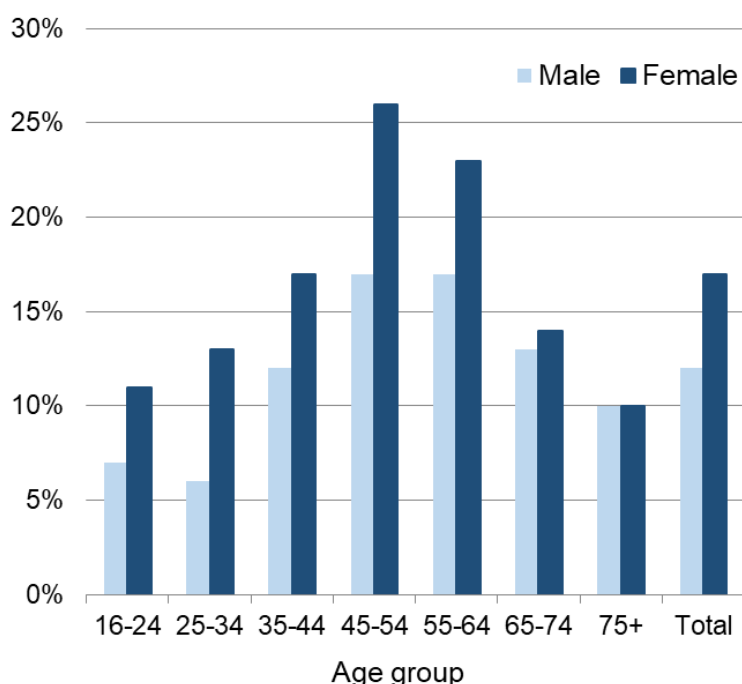
¹⁵ Scottish Government (2021) [Scottish Health Survey – telephone survey – August/September 2020: main report](#)

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2015) [Scotland's Carers](#)

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.

The latest estimates¹⁷ suggest that older working age females are more likely to provide unpaid care than other age and gender groups. Over a quarter (26%) of females aged 45-54 and 23% of females aged 55-64 reported providing unpaid care.

Figure 2: Older working age females were more likely to be providing unpaid care than other age groups



Source: Scottish Government (2020) [Scottish Health Survey 2019: supplementary tables](#)

[Data from the Scottish Health Survey, 2016-19¹⁸](#) shows that around a third (33%) of unpaid carers over the age of 16 provide up to 4 hours of unpaid care per week, while 15% provide 50 or more hours per week. This varies by level of deprivation, as people in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week compared to people living in the least deprived areas (21% in the most deprived areas compared to 8% in the least deprived areas). People in the most deprived areas are also more likely to be unable to take up work as a result of providing unpaid care compared to those in the least deprived areas (11% in the most deprived areas compared to 1% in the least deprived).

In the [2021-22 Scottish Health and Care Experience Survey¹⁹](#), which looks at people’s experiences of services and caring, 18% of respondents indicated that they provided someone with unpaid care. This is slightly higher than in previous years and higher than

¹⁷ Scottish Government (2022) [Scotland’s Carers – Update Release](#)

¹⁸ Scottish Government (2020) [Scottish Health Survey 2019: supplementary tables](#)

¹⁹ Scottish Government (2022) [Scottish Health and Care Experience Survey 2021/22: National Results](#)

the results of the Scottish Health Survey. Of these people, 48% reported caring for a parent and 24% reported caring for a partner or spouse.

For carers who are actively supported in their caring role, [the Carers Census²⁰](#) collects a variety of information from local authorities and third sector carer centres on unpaid carers who receive formal support or have a support plan in place. This is a relatively new collection and results should be treated with caution as it is taking time for providers to implement systems to accurately collect and record the requested information for the Carers Census following a significant change in practice.

In 2020/21, there were 31,760 carers receiving some kind of formal support. This is similar to the 32,690 carers reported as receiving some kind of formal support in 2019/20. However, this does not include all carers who are in contact with carer centres, as informal contact with carers would likely not be recorded in their systems. As noted above, these figures should be treated with caution as it is a relatively new and developing data collection.

The data suggests that people with more intense caring roles are more likely to be supported. In 2020/21, over half of carers (54%) being supported were providing 50 or more hours per week. This is more than triple the proportion reported in the latest Scottish Health Survey. The data also suggests that females may be more likely to seek out support with their caring role, as the data showed that 71% of carers being supported in 2020/21 were female. This is higher than in [Scotland's Carers²¹](#), which covered the total caring population, and showed that closer to 60% of unpaid carers are female.

Around 3 in 5 carers (62%) being supported in 2020/21 were working age adults (18-64 years old), while 14% were young carers (aged under 18 years). This is higher than [estimates concerning the total carer population²²](#), where less than 5% of carers are young carers. This may indicate that carer support services are reaching a greater proportion of young carers than adult carers.

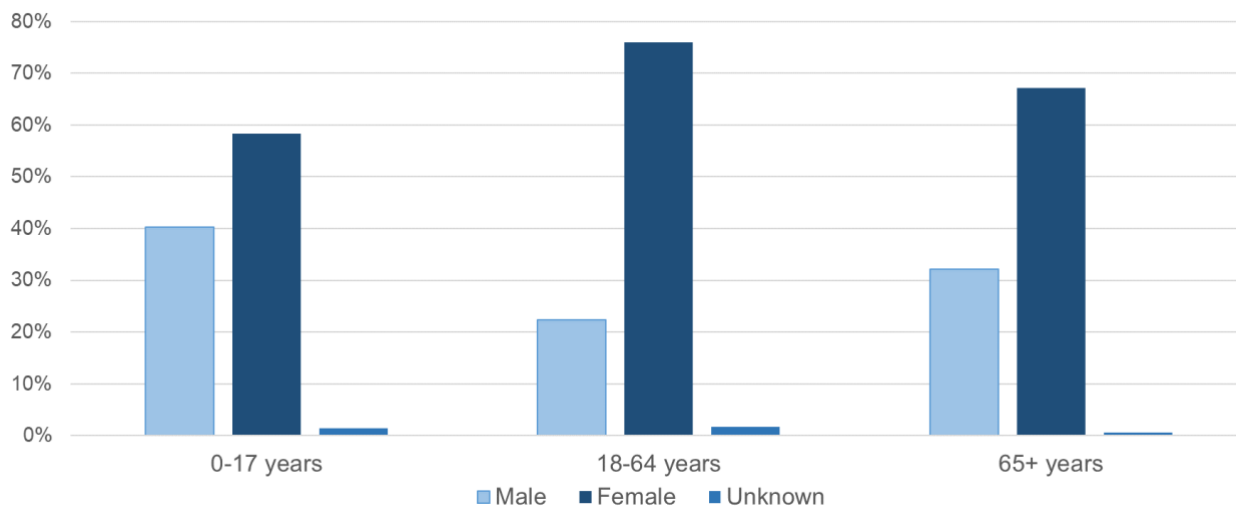
There were more female carers than male in each age group but the difference was most pronounced in working age carers, where around three-quarters (76%) were female. This is consistent with estimates for the total caring population as shown in Figure 2, where older working age females were more likely to provide unpaid care than other age groups.

²⁰ Scottish Government (2021) [Carers Census, Scotland, 2019-20 and 2020-21](#)

²¹ Scottish Government (2015) [Scotland's Carers](#)

²² Scottish Government (2022) [Scotland's Carers – Update Release](#)

Figure 3: Females accounted for around three-quarters of working age carers receiving formal support in Scotland in 2020/21



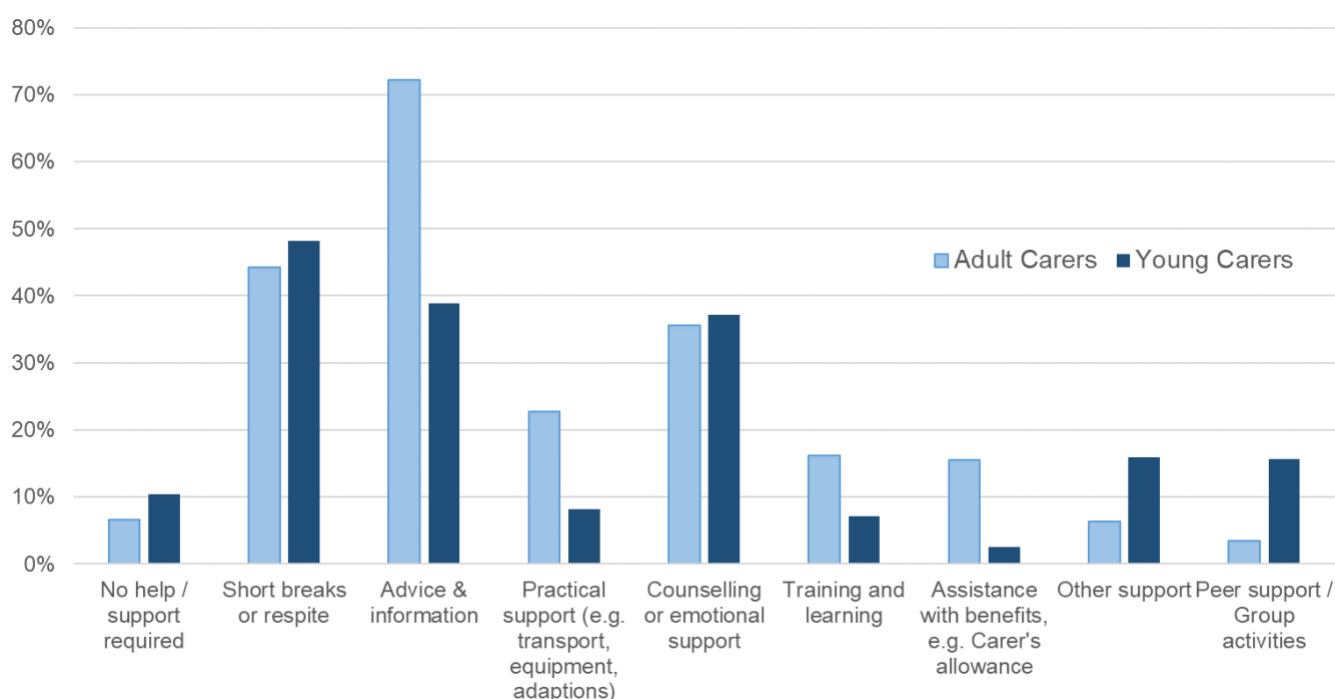
Source: Scottish Government (2021) [Carers Census, Scotland, 2019-20 and 2020-21](#)

The Carers Census also showed that young carers receiving formal support were more likely to live in the most deprived areas in 2020/21; 14% of young carers lived in the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland while 5% lived in the 10% least deprived areas. However, there did not appear to be much difference by level of deprivation in the number of adult carers receiving formal support.

The Carers Census data from 2020/21 indicated that, overall, 66% of carers were recorded as needing advice and information. 45% were recorded as needing short breaks or respite and 36% were recorded as needing counselling or emotional support.

The data suggested that adult and young carers had different support needs. Adult carers were almost twice as likely as young carers to be recorded as needing advice and information in 2020/21 (72% compared to 39% of young carers) and were also more likely to need practical support, such as equipment and adaptations (23% compared to 8% of young carers). Young carers were more likely to be recorded as needing peer or group support (16% compared to 3% of adult carers) in 2020/21.

Figure 4: Adult carers were more likely than young carers to need information and advice and practical support in Scotland in 2020/21



Source: Scottish Government (2021) [Carers Census, Scotland, 2019-20 and 2020-21](#)

4. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 to be a pandemic on 11 March 2020, ten days after the first positive Covid-19 case was confirmed in Scotland²³. Clinical guidance for people accessing care at home and housing support and updated guidance for residential care residents was issued on 26 March 2020. Advice for unpaid carers was issued the following day.

4.1 People who access social care

The Covid-19 pandemic led to widespread changes within the social care sector and the implementation of urgent guidance to curb the spread of the virus in care homes and within care at home and housing support services. This meant that social distancing was required as much as possible and visits to care home residents were limited. For care at home services, some people had their packages of care reduced or stopped as partnerships focussed on providing support to those with critical needs. Many people who receive care and their families also chose to reduce the support they received.

According to the Care Inspectorate's Report [Delivering Care at Home and Housing Support Services during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)²⁴, 19 out of the 23 Health and Social Care Partnerships that provided information reported that they had made changes to people's care packages that involved a reduction in support provided during the first phase of the

²³ The Scottish Parliament (2022) [SPICe Spotlight – timeline of Covid-19 in Scotland](#), accessed 5th May 2022

²⁴ Care Inspectorate (2020) [Delivering care at home and housing support services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

pandemic. However, it was noted that the proportion of people receiving support that were impacted by these changes varied greatly across the country. Some areas also reported increasing the support provided through a small number of packages and service providers looked for alternative ways to meet lower-level needs, including relying on more support from families, making fewer visits, and introducing new services to provide meals and shopping, in conjunction with third sector organisations²⁵.

The report also highlighted that people receiving social care support at home during the pandemic experienced increased social isolation as well as limitations to their physical activity and daily activities. People also experienced greater impacts if they were not able to understand the reasons for measures such as social distancing and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

However, it is important to note that not all of the reported impacts of the pandemic were negative. The report suggested that the reduction in activity helped some achieve a better life balance and others benefitted from technology enabled care to allow them to see family and access support. In the Arc Scotland report [We're all in this together: The impact of Covid-19 on the future of social care](#)²⁶, social care workers said that many people receiving social care support had coped better than might have been expected and that their relationships with the people they were supporting had slightly improved.

For care homes, the first clinical guidance was issued on 13 March 2020. This recommended limiting visits to essential visits only and social isolation in residents' rooms in order to limit the risk of infection. Between 1 March and 31 May 2020, almost a third of care homes (348) experienced a Covid-19 outbreak while 3,278 residents had at least one positive Covid-19 test²⁷.

Between the start of the pandemic and February 2022, over a quarter of deaths where Covid-19 was mentioned on the death certificate occurred among care home residents²⁸.

4.2 Unpaid carers

The 'Delivering Care at Home and Housing Support Services during the Covid-19 pandemic' report highlighted that the reduction of social care support meant that, in some cases, families and neighbours had to step in to provide support instead. In almost all areas that responded, some people who access social care and their families also declined their usual support in order to reduce the number of people in the home and thereby reduce the risk of infection.

²⁵ Additional information about social care during covid is available from the [Scottish Human Rights Commission Impact Monitoring Report](#)

²⁶ Arc Scotland (2020) ["We're all in this together" The impact of Covid-19 on the future of social care in Scotland: a view from the workforce](#)

²⁷ Public Health Scotland (2021) [Discharges from NHSScotland hospitals to care homes between 1 March and 31 May 2020](#)

²⁸ Scottish Government (2022) [Covid-19 dashboard data](#), accessed 23rd March 2020

A [YouGov poll commissioned for Carers Week 2020](#)²⁹ suggested that the number of people providing unpaid care in Scotland could have risen to over 1 million at that stage of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it should be noted that this is based on a small Scottish sample.

Data from the [2020 Scottish Health Survey](#)³⁰ suggests that there were 839,000 unpaid carers in 2020. However, this figure is not comparable to previous years as it is based on a telephone survey that ran between August and September 2020 rather than the usual face to face interviews over a longer period of time.

The closure of many day centres and respite services during the pandemic meant that there was greater pressure on unpaid carers, who were not always able to sustain the level of additional support they were providing³¹. These pressures were reported to have led to greater anxiety and mental exhaustion among carers during lockdown³².

While the number of carers is thought to have increased during the pandemic and carers were facing greater pressures, there was no increase in the number of carers receiving formal support as recorded through the [Carers Census](#)³³. This may be because local authorities prioritised support during the pandemic to those with the most critical needs and services were unable to provide many of their usual forms of face to face support due to restrictions. However, it should also be noted that the Carers Census is a relatively new collection and many areas are still implementing systems to accurately collect and record the requested information. Therefore, figures should be treated with caution.

5. Potential future demand for social care

While predicting future demand for social care is extremely challenging, National Records for Scotland forecast that Scotland's population is expected to age across the coming decades, with a substantial increase in the proportion of the population over the age of 65 years (projected to grow by almost 30% by mid-2045)³⁴. Since currently around three-quarters of people receiving social care support are aged 65+, this means that there will potentially be a substantial rise in the number of people requiring social care support.

National Records of Scotland's [most recent Healthy Life Expectancy publication](#)³⁵ indicates that the estimated healthy life expectancy of a child born in 2018-20 was 60.9 years for males and 61.8 years for females. While socioeconomic inequalities in life expectancy are stark, socioeconomic inequalities in healthy life expectancy are even

²⁹ Carers Week (2020) [The rise in the number of unpaid carers during the coronavirus \(Covid-19\) outbreak](#)

³⁰ Scottish Government (2021) [Scottish Health Survey – telephone survey – August/September 2020: main report](#)

³¹ Care Inspectorate (2020) [Delivering care at home and housing support services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

³² The Scottish Parliament (2020) [How has Covid-19 impacted on care and support in Scotland?](#)

³³ Scottish Government (2021) [Carers Census, Scotland, 2019-20 and 2020-21](#)

³⁴ National Records of Scotland (2022) [Projected Population of Scotland \(2020 based\)](#),

³⁵ National Records of Scotland (2022) [Healthy Life Expectancy in Scotland, 2018-2020](#),

wider. The estimated gap in healthy life expectancy between males and females across the most and least deprived deciles in 2018-20 was 24.4 and 24.2 years, respectively.

[Previous data linkage work³⁶](#) found that 93% of people aged 65 and over who received social care had multiple long-term health conditions (known as 'multimorbidity'). This means that lower healthy life expectancy for people living in the most deprived areas could potentially result in greater demand for social care support in these areas.

This was also highlighted in [Audit Scotland's 'Changing Models of Care' report³⁷](#), which suggested that the ageing population, deprivation, health inequalities and changes to healthy life expectancy will all contribute to increasing pressures on health and social care services.

These factors are discussed further in the ['Scotland's Health and Demographic Profile'](#) evidence paper.

6. Conclusion

In 2020/21, 1 in 25 people in Scotland (231,925 people) received social care support, a 2.5% decrease from 2019/20 but 0.8% higher than in 2017/18. The majority of people receiving social care support in 2020/21 were aged 65 and over (77%). As the population of people aged 65 and over is projected to grow by almost 30% by mid-2045, this could lead to a large increase in the number of people seeking support through a National Care Service.

Females currently make up the majority of people who access social care, although this may partly be because females have a longer life expectancy than males and most people who access social care are older. People living in deprived areas tend to spend more of their lives in poor health which may lead to more people in these areas requiring social care.

The number of unpaid carers in Scotland outnumbered the number of paid health and social care workers before the Covid-19 pandemic. It is thought that since the start of the pandemic the number of people providing unpaid care has increased.

When planning for the National Care Service, it will be important to take into account the age profile and level of deprivation in different areas, including needs of unpaid carers.

³⁶ Henderson DAG, Atherton I, McCowan C, Mercer SW, Bailey N. (2021) [Linkage of national health and social care data: a cross-sectional study of multimorbidity and social care use in people aged over 65 years in Scotland](#). Age and Ageing 2021; 50. 176-182.

³⁷ Audit Scotland (2016) [Changing models of health and social care, 2016](#)

Glossary

Community alarm: type of equipment for communication, especially useful as an alert should the user have an incident where they need to call for help quickly.

Day Care: involves attendance at a location other than the client/service users own home for personal, social, therapeutic, training or leisure purposes. Day care services can be registered or unregistered services.

Home Care: practical services which assist a person to function as independently as possible and/or continue to live in their own home. This can include personal care, reablement, respite and household tasks such as housework, shopping, laundry and/or paying bills.

Personal Care: includes assistance with activities such as eating or bathing, as well as other care of a personal nature. A fuller list of the types of care counted as personal care can be found on the [Care Information Scotland website](#)³⁸.

Self Directed Support (SDS): Self-Directed Support legislation means that everyone who accesses social care support should be given a choice as to how they wish to receive their support. There are four different ways of accessing social care support through SDS:

- Option 1: Taken as a Direct Payment.
- Option 2: Allocated to an organisation that the person chooses and the person is in charge of how it is spent.
- Option 3: The person chooses to allow the council to arrange and determine their services.
- Option 4: The person can choose a mix of these options for different types of support.

Telecare: remote or enhanced delivery of care services to people in their own home by means of telecommunications and computerised services.

³⁸ Source: [Care Information Scotland website](#). Accessed May 2022.

How to access background or source data

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact SWstat@gov.scot for further information.



© Crown copyright 2022

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.

This report is available on the Scottish Government Publications Website (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/Recent>)

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-494-0

Published by the Scottish Government, June 2022