

# Briefing Sheet

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**Scotland's Carers: An overview by  
disability and long-term condition**



# Scotland's Carers: An overview by disability and long-term condition

## Introduction

**Little Scottish based research exists about the nature and extent of informal caring amongst carers who themselves have a disability or long-term condition.**

It is widely recognised that caring for another person can have a detrimental and lasting effect on both mental and physical health. Data taken from Carers Scotland 'State of Caring in Scotland 2018' report<sup>1</sup> notes that 75% of respondents had suffered mental ill-health as a result of caring and 63% had experienced poorer physical health due to their caring responsibilities. Individuals may also have a pre-existing disability or long-term condition prior to taking on a caring role. Data taken from the same source notes that 25% of the 645 respondents consider themselves as having a disability although it is unclear as to whether this pre-dates the onset of caring or was caused to a greater or lesser degree by the caring role itself. Research undertaken by the Social Market Foundation<sup>2</sup> noted that amongst those under 55 years of age, carers were more likely than non-carers to have a disability or long-term condition.

Findings from the 2014 Carers UK enquiry into 'Caring and Family Finances'<sup>3</sup> highlight that carers with a disability were more likely to give up work to care and much less likely to be in paid work alongside caring than non-disabled carers. The report also notes that carers with a disability or long-term illness were significantly more likely not only to be in debt but to have considerably higher levels of debt than other carers, most notably due to their own disability related expenditure and reduced earnings.

One area that has attracted attention is the growing number of people with learning disabilities who are in or approaching co-caring or mutual caring relationships for elderly family members. Advances in medicine have significantly increased the life expectancy of many people with learning disabilities. However, increased life expectancy can also mean that care and support needs will grow exponentially: studies suggest that people with learning disabilities are more prone to heart conditions, stroke, osteoporosis and dementia. Many of these care and support needs will be met and continue to be met by families<sup>4</sup>. But as people with learning disabilities age, so too will their carers'. The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities<sup>5</sup> highlight that a growing number of adults with learning disabilities are now caring for ageing parents in return for the support they continue to receive themselves.

Scottish data for 2018<sup>6</sup> records 23,466 adults with a learning disability **known** to local authorities in Scotland. This equates to 5.2 people with a learning disability per 1,000 people in the general population. Of these, 7,109 or 30.3% of adults with a learning disability lived with a family carer. Of those adults who lived with a

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/policy/policy-library?task=download&file=policy\\_file&id=6617](https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/policy/policy-library?task=download&file=policy_file&id=6617)

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, K & Kirkup, J, 'Caring for Carers: The lives of family carers in the UK' Social Market Foundation 2018

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library?task=download&file=policy\\_file&id=219](https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library?task=download&file=policy_file&id=219)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2010/jun/30/learning-disabled-adults-elderly-carers>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/joint-position-statement-carers-learning-disabilities>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=2ahUKEwj1q863sP\\_gAhW5QRUIHf51B4IQFjADegQICBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.scl.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2018%2F12%2FLearning-Disability-Statistics-Scotland-2018\\_1.pdf&usq=AOvVaw2V78E8eGA5dB3oFX9WQR17](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=2ahUKEwj1q863sP_gAhW5QRUIHf51B4IQFjADegQICBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.scl.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2018%2F12%2FLearning-Disability-Statistics-Scotland-2018_1.pdf&usq=AOvVaw2V78E8eGA5dB3oFX9WQR17)

family carer, 5,168 or 72.2% lived with a parent carer. 875 adults with a learning disability aged 45 plus lived with a parent carer. This represents 52.2% of all adults aged 45+ who live with a family carer and 8.6% of all adults with a learning disability in that age group known to local authorities.

This indicates that a significant number of adults aged 45+ are being cared for by an elderly parent or parents and who may be in or approaching a co-caring situation in the future.

Table 1<sup>7</sup> provides information on adults with a learning disability known to local authorities who live with a parent carer by age.

**Table 1:**

16-17	18-20	21-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Not recorded	Total
105	655	2,690	843	574	259	42	1	5,168

It should also be noted that certain population groups, who also have caring responsibilities, are more likely to be in poorer health themselves due to age and the onset of age related illnesses, disability or conditions. Similarly, ethnicity may also be a factor whether this is due to a genetic predisposition to certain long-term conditions, lifestyle factors or wider socio-economic considerations.

The following table provides a breakdown by local authority area on the provision of unpaid care by longterm health problem or disability for all people aged 16+. The information was commissioned by MECOPP from the National Records of Scotland and subsequently published as Table CT\_0221\_2011 on the Scotland's Census website under the 'health' topic.

It is important to note that the situation across local authorities may have changed in the years subsequent to the 2011 Census from which these figures are drawn.

<sup>7</sup> ibid

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	Provides unpaid care: total			Provides 1 – 19 hours of care per week			Provides 20 – 34 hours of care per week			Provides 35 – 49 hours of care per week			Provides 50+ hours of care per week		
	Day to day activities limited a little	Day to day activities limited a lot	Total	Day to day activities limited a little	Day to day activities limited a lot	Total	Day to day activities limited a little	Day to day activities limited a lot	Total	Day to day activities limited a little	Day to day activities limited a lot	Total	Day to day activities limited a little	Day to day activities limited a lot	Total
Scotland	79,468	53,893	<b>133,361</b>	37,843	16,075	<b>53,918</b>	7,998	5,230	<b>13,228</b>	6,268	4,918	<b>11,186</b>	27,359	27,670	<b>55,029</b>
Aberdeen City	2,503	1,414	<b>3,917</b>	1,299	469	<b>1,768</b>	249	155	<b>404</b>	152	110	<b>262</b>	803	680	<b>1,483</b>
Aberdeenshire	2,902	1,511	<b>4,413</b>	1,568	541	<b>2,109</b>	276	170	<b>446</b>	195	139	<b>334</b>	863	661	<b>1,524</b>
Angus	1,716	1,065	<b>2,781</b>	854	341	<b>1,195</b>	160	105	<b>265</b>	121	96	<b>217</b>	581	523	<b>1,104</b>
Argyll & Bute	1,558	846	<b>2,404</b>	853	315	<b>1,168</b>	122	93	<b>215</b>	117	61	<b>178</b>	466	377	<b>843</b>
Clackmannanshire	736	543	<b>1,279</b>	318	146	<b>464</b>	75	54	<b>129</b>	62	49	<b>111</b>	281	294	<b>575</b>
Dumfries & Galloway	2,679	1,806	<b>4,485</b>	1,267	496	<b>1,763</b>	259	180	<b>439</b>	228	174	<b>402</b>	925	956	<b>1,881</b>
Dundee City	2,165	1,628	<b>3,793</b>	961	440	<b>1,401</b>	242	148	<b>390</b>	180	125	<b>305</b>	782	915	<b>1,697</b>
East Ayrshire	2,147	1,538	<b>3,685</b>	924	383	<b>1,307</b>	228	150	<b>378</b>	187	161	<b>348</b>	808	844	<b>1,652</b>
East Dunbartonshire	1,655	1,032	<b>2,687</b>	872	341	<b>1,213</b>	166	106	<b>272</b>	103	71	<b>174</b>	514	514	<b>1,028</b>
East Lothian	1,494	854	<b>2,348</b>	793	288	<b>1,081</b>	131	64	<b>195</b>	90	63	<b>153</b>	480	439	<b>919</b>
East Renfrewshire	1,301	696	<b>1,997</b>	708	257	<b>965</b>	121	62	<b>183</b>	81	63	<b>144</b>	391	314	<b>705</b>
Edinburgh City of	5,836	3,235	<b>9,071</b>	3,200	1,269	<b>4,469</b>	534	282	<b>816</b>	420	278	<b>698</b>	1,682	1,406	<b>3,088</b>
Eilean Siar	381	225	<b>606</b>	188	82	<b>270</b>	43	16	<b>59</b>	30	10	<b>40</b>	120	117	<b>237</b>
Falkirk	2,496	1,676	<b>4,172</b>	1,134	476	<b>1,610</b>	294	153	<b>447</b>	198	156	<b>354</b>	870	891	<b>1,761</b>
Fife	6,101	3,690	<b>9,791</b>	3,042	1,183	<b>4,225</b>	609	385	<b>994</b>	490	339	<b>829</b>	1,960	1,783	<b>3,743</b>
Glasgow City	8,675	7,625	<b>16,300</b>	3,490	1,876	<b>5,366</b>	954	701	<b>1,655</b>	790	753	<b>1,543</b>	3,441	4,295	<b>7,736</b>
Highland	3,401	1,936	<b>5,337</b>	1,765	706	<b>2,471</b>	321	204	<b>525</b>	242	150	<b>392</b>	1,073	876	<b>1,949</b>
Inverclyde	1,358	1,049	<b>2,407</b>	555	276	<b>831</b>	155	89	<b>244</b>	120	123	<b>243</b>	528	561	<b>1,089</b>
Midlothian	1,326	883	<b>2,209</b>	679	280	<b>959</b>	117	76	<b>193</b>	85	82	<b>167</b>	445	445	<b>890</b>
Moray	1,266	733	<b>1,999</b>	633	266	<b>899</b>	128	73	<b>201</b>	87	74	<b>161</b>	418	320	<b>738</b>
North Ayrshire	2,427	1,680	<b>4,107</b>	1,066	428	<b>1,494</b>	241	171	<b>412</b>	206	149	<b>355</b>	914	932	<b>1,846</b>
North Lanarkshire	5,398	4,551	<b>9,949</b>	2,127	1,099	<b>3,226</b>	596	468	<b>1,064</b>	496	465	<b>961</b>	2,179	2,519	<b>4,698</b>
Orkney Islands	297	157	<b>454</b>	159	56	<b>215</b>	30	13	<b>43</b>	21	9	<b>30</b>	87	79	<b>166</b>
Perth & Kinross	2,126	1,212	<b>3,338</b>	1,167	414	<b>1,581</b>	180	133	<b>313</b>	138	95	<b>233</b>	641	570	<b>1,211</b>
Renfrewshire	2,809	2,003	<b>4,812</b>	1,312	619	<b>1,931</b>	303	168	<b>471</b>	237	195	<b>432</b>	957	1,021	<b>1,978</b>
Scottish Borders	1,715	992	<b>2,707</b>	899	346	<b>1,245</b>	162	110	<b>272</b>	129	79	<b>208</b>	525	457	<b>982</b>
Shetland Islands	353	160	<b>513</b>	219	72	<b>291</b>	26	15	<b>41</b>	15	6	<b>21</b>	93	67	<b>160</b>
South Ayrshire	2,026	1,298	<b>3,324</b>	918	366	<b>1,284</b>	208	111	<b>319</b>	171	132	<b>303</b>	729	689	<b>1,418</b>
South Lanarkshire	5,092	3,879	<b>8,971</b>	2,276	1,119	<b>3,395</b>	520	393	<b>913</b>	459	322	<b>781</b>	1,837	2,045	<b>3,882</b>
Stirling	1,296	797	<b>2,093</b>	697	259	<b>956</b>	124	83	<b>207</b>	78	70	<b>148</b>	397	385	<b>782</b>
West Dunbartonshire	1,569	1,273	<b>2,842</b>	667	323	<b>990</b>	147	119	<b>266</b>	134	121	<b>255</b>	621	710	<b>1,331</b>
West Lothian	2,664	1,906	<b>4,570</b>	1,233	543	<b>1,776</b>	277	180	<b>457</b>	206	198	<b>404</b>	948	985	<b>1,933</b>