

Christchurch Carers Questionnaire

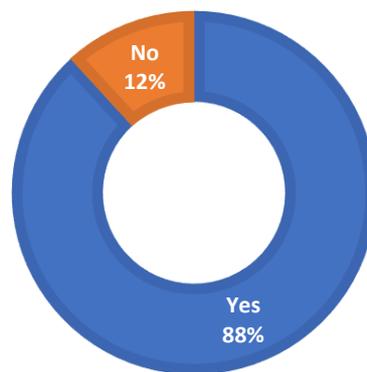
In May 2021, a questionnaire link was sent via text message to all patients within Highcliffe Medical Centre. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather feedback relating to support for carers in the Christchurch area to help inform organisations working together to improve support about the types of support needed locally.

28 replies were received online. A further 6 were returned after being handed out at events organised for Dementia Action Week. The responses were as follows:

Identifying as a carer

Do you feel the term 'carer' is one you readily identify with?

Of the 28 responses, 24 felt that this was as term they would identify with. 4 carers said they did not.



Carers were asked, **if not, what do you feel would be a better term to use?** The following suggestions were made:

Parent	Parent supporting complex needs	Husband / Husband who cares
Family member carer (to differentiate from paid carers)	Personal support	Advocate / Appointee

Finding information:

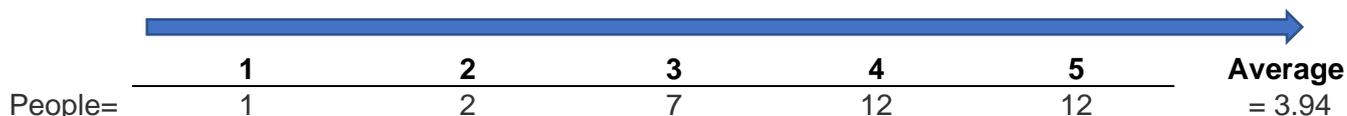
If you are seeking information and advice about matters related to caring for someone, what are the three sources that you are most likely to try?



Some of the responses were repeated. Other carers said that they did not know where to look and had found finding information / support difficult.

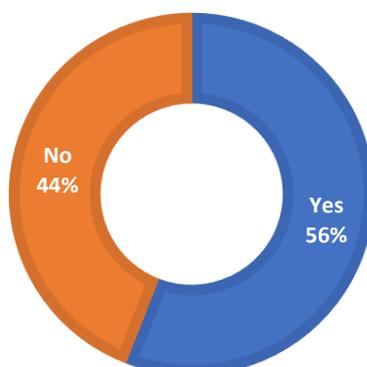
Two carers suggested that they had tried to seek support but had been unable to find it or had little success.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not confident and 5 is very confident, how do you feel about using technology such as the internet, email, social media etc to access information and support?



The higher number of carers who indicated that they were very confident with using technology may be representative of the fact that this questionnaire was sent to carers using text message, with a link to complete the form online.

Following on from this, carers were asked **If training or support was available to you to help you use technology, would you be interested?**



More than half of carers said that they would make use of this if it was available. All of the carers who completed a paper copy of the form said yes.

The challenges of caring

What are the three things that you find most challenging to deal with as a carer?

Some of the responses were repeated, with a high proportion of carers telling us that the emotional, social and time constraints were most challenging.

Respite	Emotional drain / stress	Knowing things wont improve	Public perception	Finding activities that are safe
Exhaustion	Lack of knowledge	Money worries	Finding help	Confusion of the person I care for
Navigating services	Juggling demands and conflicting priorities	Change of role (spouse to carer)	Loneliness	Proving personal care
Lack of time with other family members	Lack of support, guidance and structure	Dealing with medical episodes	Restriction on own freedown	No access to training
No escape	Social constraints	Not knowing what comes next]	Taking on the running of the home	

Carers were than asked **What are the three things that you feel would best support you to deal with those challenges?**

Respite •Additional sitting •Day Centre	Grants	Someone to talk to / who will listen regularly	Better public awareness	Patience
Empathy	Services which are adequately funded and able to provide support	Better communication from services	Access to leisure facilities	A named person to seek help from
A treatment plan	A guide	Support with personal care	Support networks	Ablity to access support at short notice
To be able to sleep	How to communicate with someone with Dementia	Less judgement from others	Hospital transport	Family / Friends
		Information from GP surgery		

Accessing Services

What services have you accessed in the past?

Adult Social Care	CRISP (carer support)	CHAD team	None	GP	Private healthcare
Care Direct	Charity	Education specialists	BCP Council	Sitting service	Internet
Relatives	Day Centre	Care at home	Telecare	School pastoral support	CMHT
	Hospital transport	Steps2Wellbeing	Carers groups		

Carers were then asked **How would you rate those services?**

Helpful, but under resourced	Red tape	Felt had to go privately because of waiting times	Reasonable
Excellent	Poor	Good source of information	Day Centre = Good
Adult social care - Ineffective	Priceless	Supportive of the person I care for which helps me	Not able to find public services

Carers told us that whilst some of the services were good, and had been very supportive, they often struggled to find support which was effective or able to help. Or, that they were able to access support initially, but this was only provided to them in the short term and not on an ongoing basis. There was also a key theme surrounding waiting times for support and that they were too long.

What are the barriers you find that stop you accessing services when you need them?

Lack of resources / funding	The support being online	Red tape	Time	Services not being applicable
Waiting times	Knowing what is available	Knowing which department does what	Forms / Applications	Money
COVID	Difficulty reading and writing	Lack of trust in others	Not being able to speak to someone on the phone quickly	Reluctance from the person I care for
	Not knowing if I am entitled		Location of services	

Lots of the above responses were repeated. A key theme was apparent in carers knowledge of what was available and who they could contact for support, highlighting a need to improve access to information and guidance for carers in the key areas that they would expect to find it.

Carers own health and wellbeing

Thinking about your role as a carer, how would you describe your own physical and /or mental health currently?

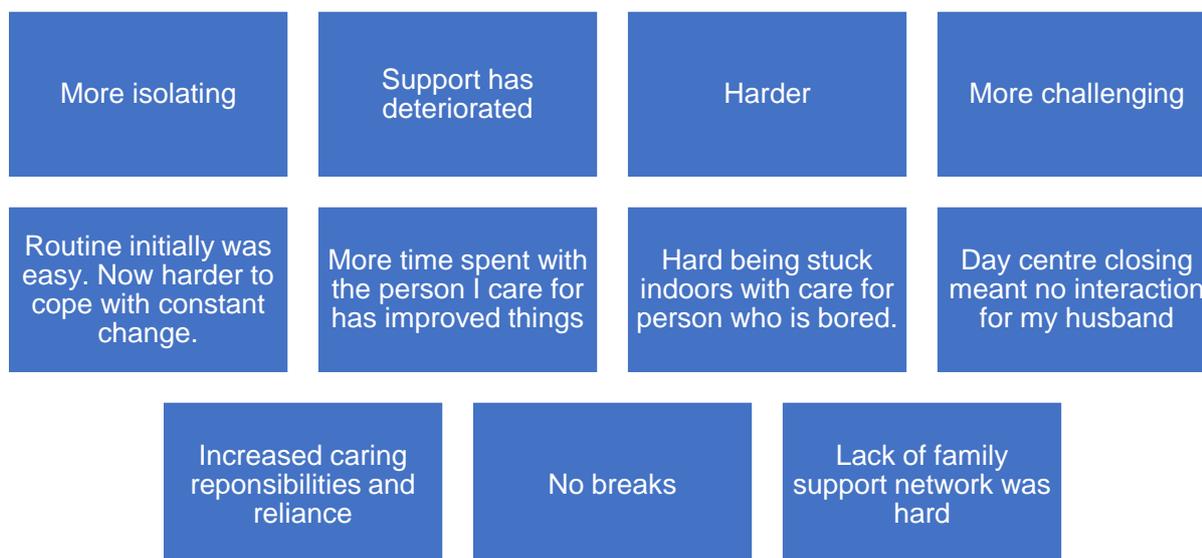
Affecting relationship with partner	Good	Bad (long COVID)	Worn out	Okay
Hard to find time for self	Better now because I sought help	Tired	Poor mental health	Not good physically - Awaiting overdue surgery
Knife edge	Stressed	Chronic illness	Run down	Sad
	Anxious			

Like previous questions, many of the responses were repeated. Carers highlighted that their caring roles had affected their mental health. There were also several carers who were providing care despite being in poor physical health themselves.

Caring during the pandemic

The following questions were asked to get an idea of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected carers. The responses below came from those who completed the form online, as this page was missed from the printed copy.

How do you feel the COVID-10 pandemic has affected your caring role?



Carers highlighted that with the lack of their usual support networks, all the caring responsibilities fell to them. Some carers found this increased level of responsibility and reliance, combined with a lack of being able to 'get away' difficult.

Do you feel that you have had sufficient support during this time?

No	Yes	Some
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•But day centre did try•But it felt 'business as usual'•Food support was lacking (waiting for deliveries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•GP surgery have phoned•District nurse support continued•School support•But mentally, no	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Fragmented

What support would have made a difference to you during this time?



Once again, carers identified similar things with regards to the support they would have benefitted from. Many felt that they struggled to access health care support, and that doing this over the phone or online was difficult. Others felt that they would have benefitted from being able to talk to someone regularly, on the phone or online.