

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY MONDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2013**

**Question**

Can the Minister advise members what information and data, if any, is available regarding the number of non-professional carers in the Island (including children looking after their parents, spouses looking after spouses, siblings looking after siblings) and what assistance, if any, is provided by States Departments to these carers?

**Answer**

A carer can be defined as someone who provides unpaid help and support to a family member, friend, partner, or neighbour who has a physical or learning disability (e.g. autism), a physical illness or mental health difficulties, is frail, or who has alcohol or drug related problems. When given this definition in the Jersey Annual Social Survey (JASS) 2013, around one in ten adults (10%) reported being a carer (a percentage unchanged from the JASS 2009 when the question was last asked), with similar proportions of men and women and across different age groups which represents a change from the 2009 figures.

This equates to around 10,000 unpaid carers in Jersey.

The outcomes from the Jersey “*Caring for life, a life for Carers*” Carers Strategy in 2009 included:

- The Statistics Unit undertaking two surveys of carers and as a regular measure, carers’ questions will be included in the annual Social Survey
- A training programme for young and adult carers is being run by St John Ambulance
- There has been an exploration of whether there would be any benefit in introducing carers’ legislation in Jersey which is now a recommendation in the new strategy
- A Carers’ Partnership Group has been established which is coordinated and supported by Jersey Association of Carers Incorporated (JACI) to advise on carer’s issues
- There has been the development of new flexible respite services for carers

The 2009 JASS indicated that the age composition of carers in Jersey ranged from one in twenty (5%) 16-34 year olds reporting that they were carers, to one in eight (13%) of those aged 55 years and above and it found that two-thirds (65%) of carers were women. When asked what impact being a carer had on their life nearly half (46%) said that being a carer led to “Less personal time”, whilst two-fifths (38%) indicated that they had “Increased stress” as a result of being a carer. A quarter (24%) reported “Loss of social life / increased isolation” as an impact of their caring role.

The results of the 2013 JASS indicate that carers felt that the most important support service was for information and advice, respite and practical support.

In addition there are young carers who would not be picked up in the JASS surveys. Work with Le Rocquier School since the development of Jersey’s first Carers’ Strategy in 2009 indicates that there may be up to 10 – 15 young carers in each secondary school.

In recognising the growing significance of these trends and the degree to which they resonated with themes emerging from the Green and White Paper consultation process, the Health and Social Services Minister requested that a renewed Carers' Strategy, which would seek to address these issues, should be produced as an important component within the overall redesign of Health and Social Services.

The new 2013 - 2016 Carers' Strategy, which builds on the original Carers Strategy, involved extensive consultation with local groups and charities that support carers. It sets out the framework for improving support for carers, and acknowledges the great contribution they make to local life. The vision of the Strategy is: **“To comprehensively recognise value and support carers in Jersey.”**

The current range of services for carers provided by the Health and Social Services Department include bed based, flexible community and day respite for the following groups:

- Carers of people with Dementia
- Carers of adults with physical and learning disability
- Carers of children with special needs
- The Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) in Schools offer support to young carers.
- Carers of children can access a range of short break services which include residential and community support.
- Carers of people with special needs can access daytime respite

In addition with dedicated funding from the medium term financial plan, new carers' services are being commissioned from the voluntary and independent sector to achieve improved outcomes for carers, which include:

- Developing a Carers' Support Service by 2014 which will offer practical assistance
- Improving access to information and the range of support options available to carers
- Developing the role of carers' support workers and Improving the support to young carers
- Improving support for carers of people with long-term medical conditions
- Improving support for carers and former carers to access volunteering, employment, training and leisure opportunities
- Improving access to independent advice and advocacy for carers and their families
- Advocating the introduction of Carers' Legislation in Jersey.

It may be that other States Departments are assisting carers, for example, the Social Security Department provides a Home Carer's Allowance for those of working age.

It may be that other States Departments are assisting carers, for example, the Social Security Department provides a Home Carer's Allowance for those of working age.

It is recognised that often carers are unable to access the kind of support which allows them to get the reprieve they need themselves to re-charge, and the developments funded through the medium term financial plan have included resources to assist us develop new and enhance existing services for carers.