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palliative,
neurological
and bereavement
support

On Tuesday 1 December Scottish Parliament Member's business will be Mark Griffin's motion [S5M-22523: Life After Death, Supporting Carers After Bereavement](#). This briefing for the debate has been put together by Marie Curie, Reform Scotland & Sue Ryder, authors of the Life After Death report. The full report can be read [here](#).

Life After Death

Every year it can be estimated that around 40,000-50,000 carers in Scotland are bereaved¹. In 2020 and 2021 we suspect that the number of bereaved carers will be over 10% higher as a result of the additional deaths because of the Covid-19 epidemic in Scotland. National Records of Scotland (NRS) has shown that around 90% of people who died with Covid-19 had an underlying health condition, such as dementia (over 30%) and the vast majority were over 75, suggesting that they are likely to have been supported by a family carer.

A recent report by Carers UK Scotland has found that nearly 400,000 additional people in Scotland are now caring for older, disabled or seriously ill relatives or friends since the Covid-19 pandemic.²

For many when their caring role ends so does the vital support they receive from benefits and tax credits, peer support, and even their identity as a carer, as well as their purpose. This can have a significant detrimental impact on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Although Carer's Allowance continues for eight weeks after death, this is not long enough for people to grieve, possibly find a job and adjust to their new circumstances.

While a carer's grief may be no greater than someone else suffering a loss, their practical ability to rebuild connections in their local community and/or the work place will be considerably more difficult.

According to Aviva, one in five employees aged over 45 expects to quit their job to care for an adult relative full time. Many ultimately find it difficult to return to the labour market following the end of their caring role. The longer someone has been caring, the longer they are likely to have been out of the labour market and potentially isolated from the networks they had before becoming a carer.

The more that can be done to help these individuals back into work if that's what they'd like to do, whether through support, counselling and retraining, the better it is for them and for our communities and wider society. Such policies would also represent a recognition of the sacrifices that carers made in their role, a role which in turn will have saved taxpayers money.

Our organisations believe that greater support is needed for people post-caring are therefore calling on the **Scottish Government to commit to the following key actions:**

- 1. A new Carers (Bereavement Support) (Scotland) Bill early in the next Parliament to provide information and a plan to support carers following the end of their caring role.**
- 2. A new fund to support training and education for carers returning to work/seeking employment.**
- 3. A new Post-Caring Support Payment, linked to the length of time caring, to help carers struggling financially following the end of their caring role.**
- 4. To extend eligibility for the Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement for up to 6 months after the person's caring role comes to an end (from the current 8 weeks).**

¹ Grande, G., Stajduhar, K., Aoun, S., Toye, C., Funk, L., Addington-Hall, J., . . . Todd, C. (2009). Supporting lay carers in end of life care: current gaps and future

² <https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/news/covid-19-pandemic-392-000-become-unpaid-carers-in-scotland-in-a-matter-of-weeks>

Background

Carers³:

- There were 76,597 carers in receipt Carer's Allowance in Feb 2019, 4% increase on the previous year
- 46,025 carers are entitled to the support but not claiming it (often due to being entitled to other benefits)
- 69% of carers are women
- 31% of claims last between 2-5 years while 38% last over 5 years
- 45% of claimants were aged over 50, whereas 12% were under 30.

Existing support:

- Carer's Allowance: Carers qualify for Carer's Allowance if they spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone, if they are 16 or over, if they not in full-time education or studying for 21 hours a week or more and do have an income of less than £128 a week. The person being cared for must already get one of a range of benefits for the carer to be eligible for the allowance. Although there is no upper age limit to receive Carer's Allowance, you will not receive it and the full state pension at the same time. As a result, the vast majority of recipients are of working age. Carer's Allowance payment continues for eight weeks after the death of the person being cared for.
- Carer's Allowance Supplement: Carer's Allowance Supplement is an extra payment for people in Scotland who get Carer's Allowance. It is paid twice a year and from April 2020 the rate will be £230.10 per payment.

Cost estimates of new measures

According to the Scottish Government, roughly 14,000 people each year stop receiving Carer's Allowance. While there will be many reasons why someone may stop claiming, for example their own death, or they start receiving the State Pension and become ineligible for Carer's Allowance, these are not currently published.

Extension of Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement from 8 weeks after death to 6 months:

Based on 14,000 people receiving an increasing from 8 weeks to 26 weeks will cost £1,188 more per person (£66 x 18 weeks), so £16.6m per year. Each individual would also be eligible for an additional Carers Allowance Supplement payment of £230.10, which would equate to £3.2 million. Resulting in an upper estimate of **£19.8 million**.

Post Carers Support Payment: Our intention is this new payment, taken together with the extension of Carer's Allowance, provide a package of support for carer's which takes account of the time they have spent caring and based on that time allows a longer period to return to work believe and adjust to their new circumstances.. We have suggested that the combination of the new payment along with the extension of Carer's Allowance should mean an individual be entitled to a month's worth of weekly payments for every six months they have been in receipt of Carers Allowance. We would view the new payment an 'earned payment', recognition of the "job" or "unpaid work" the individual has undertaken, a contribution to wider society that is not always recognised. Those eligible for this proposed new payment will be bereaved carers who have been in receipt of Carers Allowance for at least 12 months and it would begin after the individual's Carers Allowance entitlement ended (six months after the death of the cared for person). It would be a weekly benefit set at the same level as Job Seekers Allowance, currently £72.35. We have set the payment amount to the same as Job Seekers Allowance as that is the amount that CA and CAS combined is currently set at. Based on the available data on length of Carer's Allowance claims we have estimated this payment would be roughly **£49 million**. There is no publicly available data for how long people have cared for when they become bereaved. This makes it difficult to calculate how many extra payments they would be needed for all those that are eligible. Therefore, while we have used the best available figures to determine this estimated cost, but believe that the estimates will be at the higher end. It should also be noted that this estimate does not include any income clawed back through tax, which this income would be liable against if the person returned to work.

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³ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/CASApr2019>