

**Fife Health  
& Social Care  
Partnership**



## **Fife Unpaid Carers Experience Survey 2025**

### **Participation & Engagement Feedback Report**

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## **Table of Contents**

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2. Engagement Purpose</b>          | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>3. The Engagement Timeline</b>     | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>4. Designing the Consultation</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| 4.1 Engagement Methods                | 4         |
| 4.2 Engagement Reach                  | 5         |
| 4.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | 5         |
| <b>5. Themes from Feedback</b>        | <b>7</b>  |
| 5.1 Outcome 1: Information            | 7         |
| 5.2 Outcome 2: Co-ordinated Support   | 16        |
| 5.3 Outcome 3: Breaks From Caring     | 24        |
| 5.4 Additional Feedback               | 30        |
| <b>6. Conclusion</b>                  | <b>32</b> |
| 6.1 Next Steps                        | 34        |
| Appendices                            | 34        |
| Appendix 1                            | 34        |



## 1. Introduction

An unpaid carer is someone who, without payment, helps and supports a relative, friend or neighbour who cannot manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction, or disability ([www.mygov.scot/help-if-youre-a-carer/who-is-a-carer](http://www.mygov.scot/help-if-youre-a-carer/who-is-a-carer)).

Recent figures indicate that there are approximately 44,000 unpaid carers in Fife ([www.gov.scot/publications/carers-census-scotland-2022-23](http://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-census-scotland-2022-23)). Feedback from previous annual surveys highlights that it can help to get professional support and share experiences and ideas with other people in the same situation, as caring for another person can be a demanding role.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 requires Integration Authorities to recognise and support unpaid carers as partners in care. They must plan and deliver services that identify carers, assess and meet their needs and embed carer support within local strategies to sustain caring relationships and carers' wellbeing.

## 2. Engagement Purpose

The 2025 Fife Unpaid Carers Experience Survey was developed to capture feedback from Fife's unpaid carers on the first three outcomes of the 2023 to 2026 Carers Strategy for Fife. The purpose of engaging aimed to:

- Understand what is working well, what is not working well and what supports have made an impactful difference to Fife's unpaid carers.
- Increase awareness of services and supports available.
- To continue to grow the partnership's reach to as many unpaid carers within Fife as possible, including groups who are under-represented.
- For Fife HSCP to capture feedback that will influence any future improvement plans and decisions about what support can be offered to carers.

## 3. The Engagement Timeline





## 4. Designing the Consultation

A subgroup was formed to help design this year's survey questions and included colleagues at Fife HSCP, Third Sector partners, voluntary organisations and the Fife Integration Joint Board Carers Representative (see appendix 1).

The questions were designed to gather feedback from unpaid carers over three key outcomes, to help inform priorities within the 2023 – 2026 Carers Strategy.

- **Outcome 1: Information** – Providing unpaid carers with access to helpful information in different formats, whenever and wherever they need it.
- **Outcome 2: Coordinated Support** – Ensuring unpaid carers get help to manage their caring role and navigate health and social care systems from the start.
- **Outcome 3: Breaks from Caring** – Helping unpaid carers take breaks when and how they want, so they can rest and continue caring.

### 4.1 Engagement Methods

The consultation process focused on unpaid carers living across Fife's seven local areas, asking about their experiences over the past year.

- The survey ran from 9<sup>th</sup> June (Carers Week) to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025.
- Over the seven days of Carers Week, a daily survey question was posted through '**A question a day**' campaign across social media by Fife HSCP, in collaboration with its commissioned and voluntary partners, as part of an interactive initiative.
- Printed surveys with prepaid return envelopes were made available to community carers clubs and unpaid carers.
- Accessible versions of the survey were made available in both audio and large print. They were shared through organisations supporting unpaid carers who have visual and hearing impairments.
- The survey was translated into **Arabic, Dari, Hindi, Pashto, Polish, Romanian, Traditional Chinese, Ukrainian, and Urdu**, (based on advice from the Fife Centre for Equalities) and distributed via Fife Centre for Equalities and Fife Carers Centre.
- 10 in-person workshops were held with unpaid carers by the Participation and Engagement Team.

## 4.2 Engagement Reach

This survey received responses from **278 unpaid carers**.

- **272** responses were completed via the online link / QR code.
- **4 Paper copies** were returned complete.
- **2 copies** were completed with support from Deafblind Scotland.
- **0 copies** were complete from being translated into the 9 languages as detailed in section 4.1

A promotional flyer with a QR code and survey link was emailed to **415 organisations** who support unpaid carers, including Social Work Teams, Fife Carers Centre, Fife Voluntary Action, colleagues in housing and transportation services to distribute throughout their key stakeholder, including those within the nine protected characteristics categories.

Additionally, **197 unpaid carers** and **320 subscribers** via our Participation & Engagement networks, received the survey and flyer by email or post.

The promotional flyer was shared on social media by Fife HSCP, NHS, Fife Carers Centre, and Fife Voluntary Action.

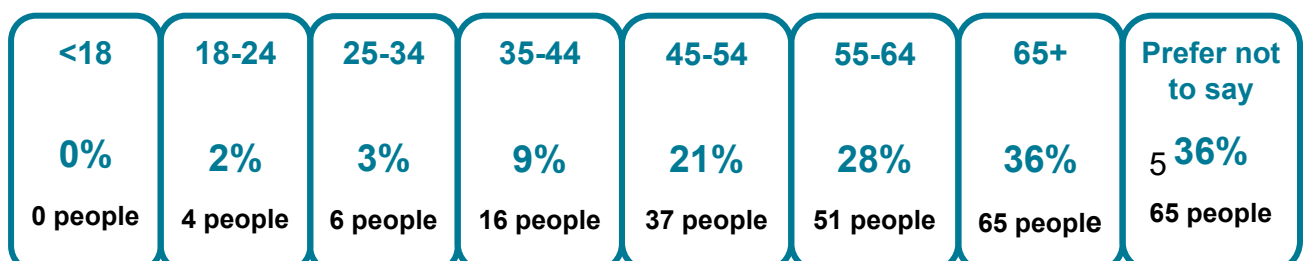
In addition, copies of the flyer were publicly displayed in various supermarkets, gyms and community notice boards.



## 4.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

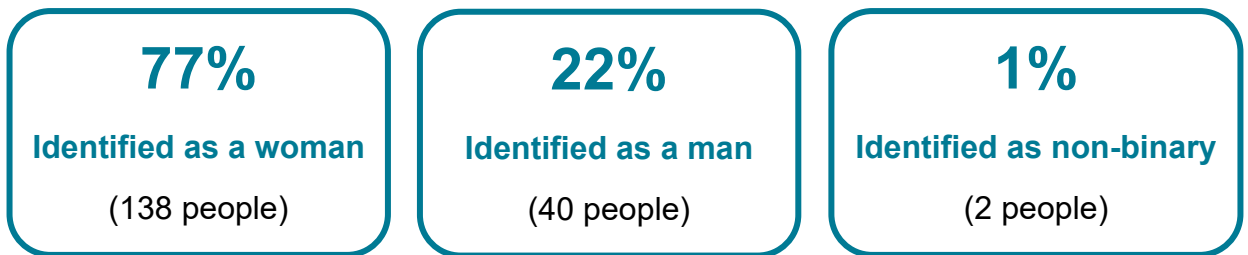
**65%** (180 people) completed the **Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion** question, which provided an understanding of respondents **age, gender, and ethnicity**, which is used for monitoring and statistical purposes in the planning and delivery of health and social care services in Fife.

**Age:** A detailed breakdown is shown below:





**Gender:** A detailed breakdown is shown below:



**Ethnicity:** A detailed breakdown is shown below:

**98%** (177 people) said they were **white** (Scottish, English or Welsh)

**1%** (2 people) said they were either **Mixed** or **Multiple Ethnic** (Latinx and English, Scottish, Irish)

**1%** (1 person) said they were from '**other ethnic group**' elaborating by saying '*They are English but have lived in Scotland for 40 years*'.

As previously highlighted, links were made with Fife's Centre for Equality to understand the most prominent languages within Fife for those who did not speak English, for the survey be made available to them. Although the survey was transcribed into **9 different** languages and shared through corresponding networks, no completed copies were received.

### **Localities:**

**237 respondents** responded to what part of Fife they reside in. The **3 highest** lived in localities were:

- 1. Glenrothes** (*includes Thorton, Kinglassie and Leslie*) with **18%** (48 people)
- 2. Dunfermline** with **16%** (45 people)
- 3. Kirkcaldy** (*includes Burntisland and Kinghorn*) with **16%** (44 people)



## 5. Themes from Feedback

Comparison data between the 2025 and 2024 surveys can be seen throughout the data analysis section, as well as reference to our '**A question a day**' results.

Some questions show a significant increase in the number of respondents to the 2025 survey, compared to the 2024 survey, as well as additional responses to specific questions through the 'A question a day' campaign. Because of this, data can have a misleading impact on the way performance is viewed. In many cases, the increase in the number of respondents who answered a question can be viewed positively (or negatively), whereas when viewed as a percentage of the total respondents the performance is less positive. This is the case with most questions where a comparison is available. For this reason, percentages have been used for comparison with real numbers expressed in brackets after each quoted percentage, where appropriate. The significant improvement in the overall number of respondents provides a greater sense of confidence of the views of unpaid carers as regard to each question – although further improvement is needed.

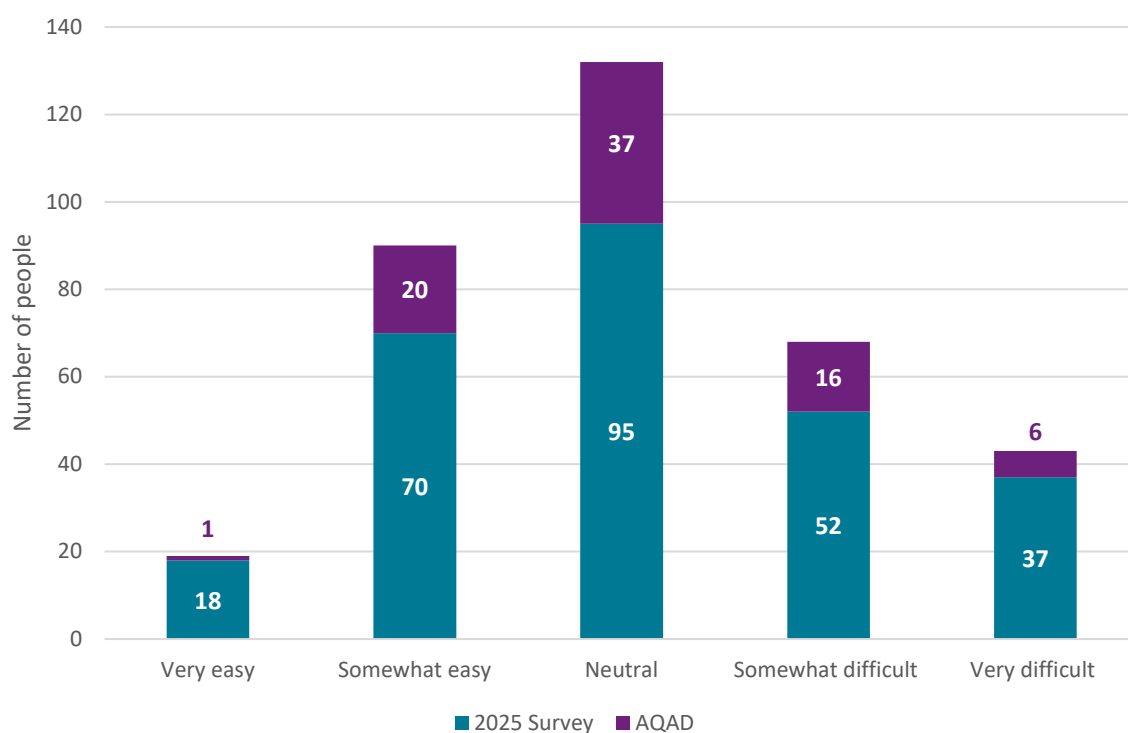
### 5.1 Outcome 1: Information

In this first section, unpaid carers were asked a range of questions linked to **Outcome 1** from the Carers Strategy on their experiences of **accessing information, being recognised and supported** by their **GP or Doctor** and how **communication with professionals** has been.

**Unpaid Carers were asked how they found accessing information to help them in their caring role.**

**272 responses** were received to this question within the survey.

Additionally, a further **80 responses** were received from those who answered via the '**A question a day**' (AQAD).



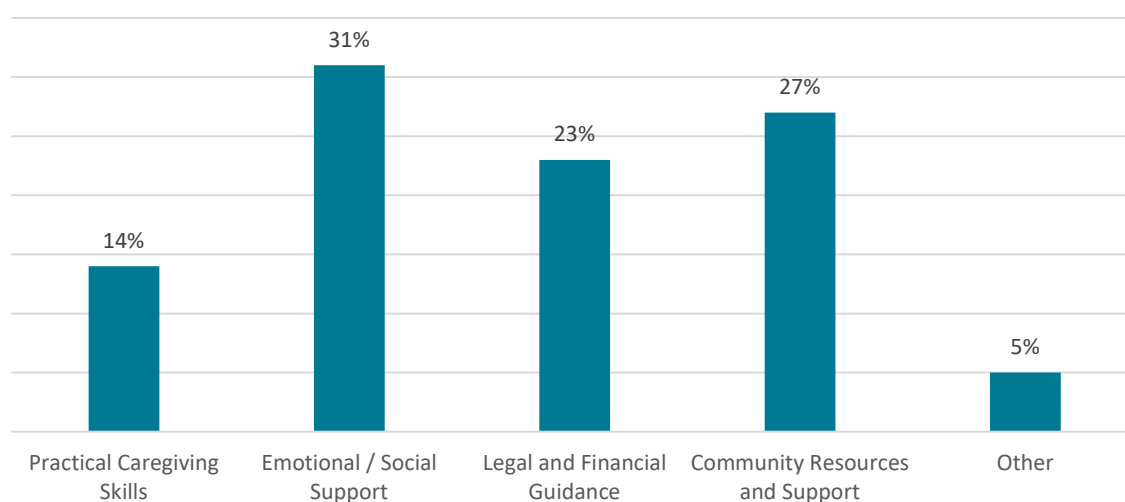
Feedback highlights that respondents from both the annual survey and the ‘**A question a day**’ suggest a **Neutral** response – **It depends on the type of information I am looking for**, when it comes to accessing information to support within their caring role.

The next highest response came from respondents who said access is **Somewhat easy – I usually find what I need, but it takes some time**, which indicates the opportunity for caring organisations to increase tailored information available to unpaid carers.

**Unpaid carers were asked what type of information would help improve their role as an unpaid carer.**

**278 responses** were received to this question.





Feedback highlights that improvements in access to information around **emotional** and **social support** materials would benefit unpaid carers within their role.

From the **5%** (27 people) who answered '**other**' further feedback highlighted what additional types of information would enhance support, with the most referred to being:

***“Mental Health Materials and support”***

***“Changes to SDS and Direct Payments and entitlements”***

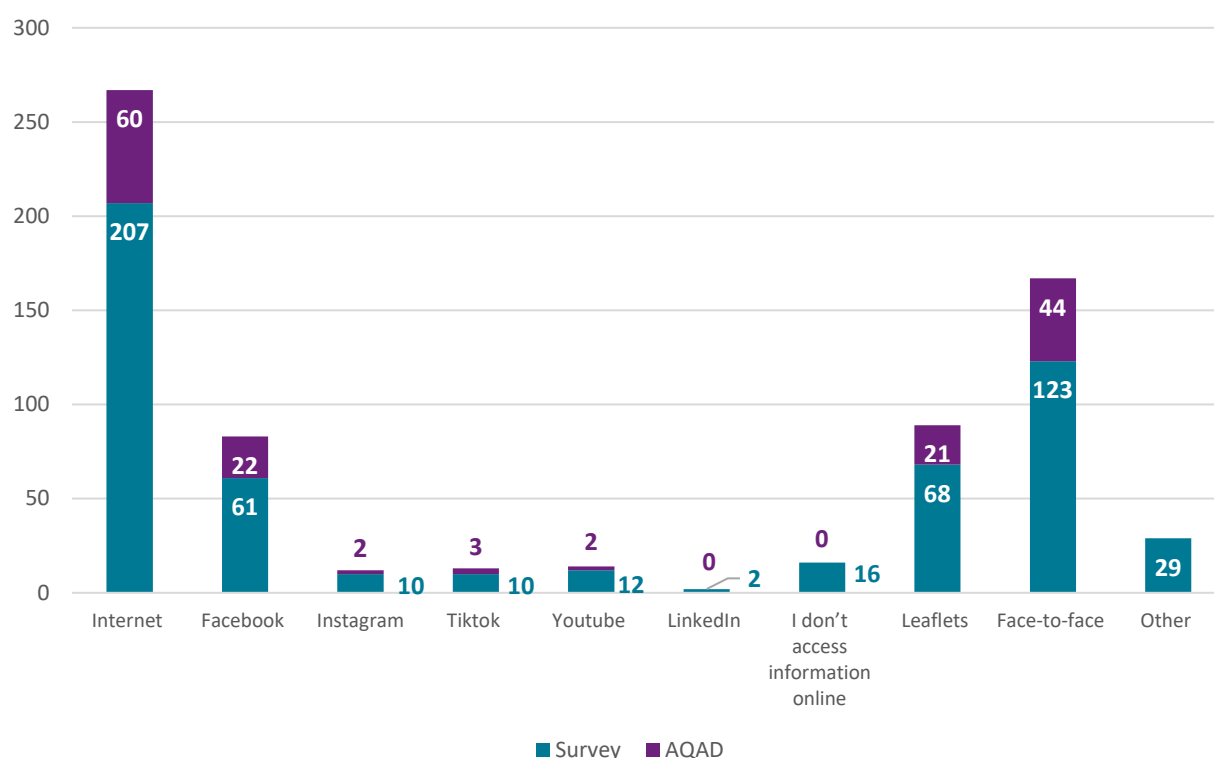
***“Information on short breaks or how to take a break”***

**Unpaid carers were asked what their preferred way of accessing information was.**

**278 responses** were received to this question.



Additionally, a further **77 responses** were received from those who answered via the ‘**A question a day**’.



Feedback from both the **annual survey** and ‘**A question a day**’ highlighted that **on-line access** is the **preferred** means to access information. Consideration should continue to be given to respondents that highlighted the desire of **face-to-face** interactions.

Feedback from respondents during in person engagements offered some insights around accessing information online saying it was ‘*quick, easy to use, get answers instantly*’. Those who prefer in-person said they valued ‘*the relationship*’ in person connections bring as well as ‘*trust*’.

From the **5%** (29 people) who answered ‘**other**’ from the **annual survey**, feedback highlighted additional ways unpaid carers would like to access information, with the most common themes being:

***“Through my community support group”***

***“A Phone call”***

***“Zoom Calls”***

***“Leaflets of services being emailed to me”***

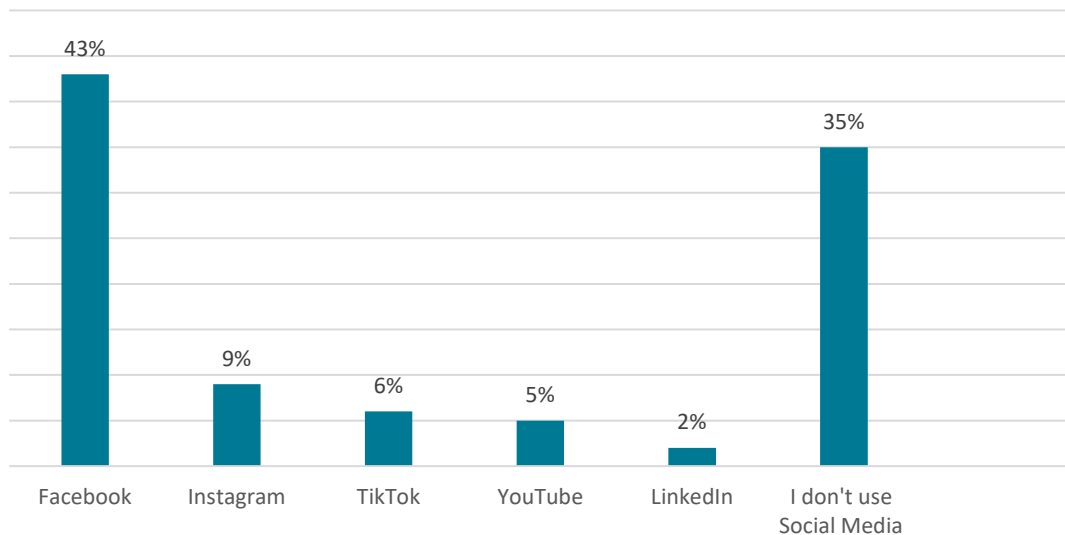
The ‘**A question a day**’ received **no results** to respondents telling us they accessed ‘**LinkedIn**’ and that they ‘**don’t access information online**’.



Additionally, the question a day session did not allow respondents to offer an explanation to their answer; therefore, they were not offered the choice of 'other'.

### Unpaid carers were asked if they used social media to access information about their caring role.

**257 responses** were received to this question.



Most of responses came from **43%** (139 people), who indicated **Facebook** was their preferred means of accessing information, with low numbers supporting other social media platforms. Data highlights a **growing reliance** for **digital platforms**, which can be echoed in the previous question.

The second highest response was from **35%** (112 people) who said they **don't use social media** and prefer **in person** interactions.

### Responses from unpaid carers who participated in our 'A question a day' shared views on where they go to access information and support about their caring role.

**53 people** responded to this question.

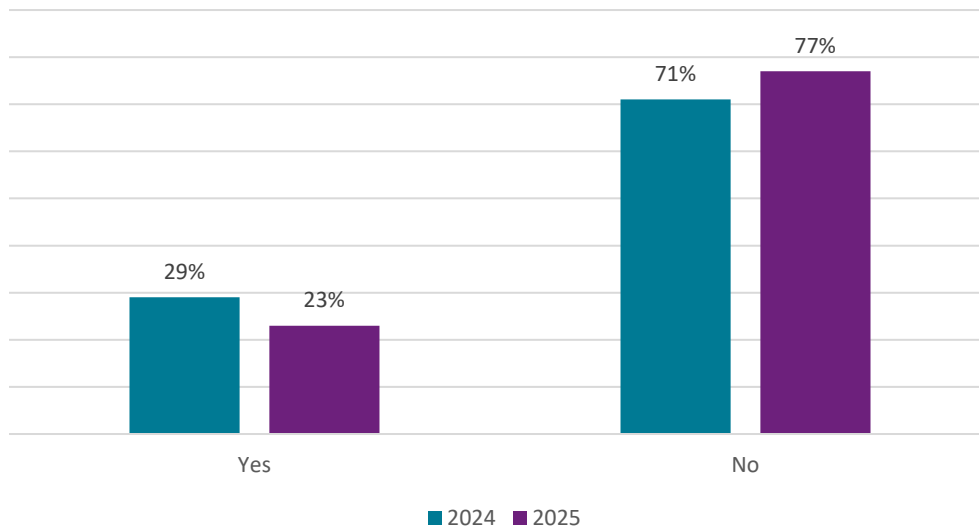
Feedback highlighted that the majority of respondents access information and support via **online** means, using platforms such as **social media** or an **internet search** function.

Established **providers** such as **Fife Carers Centre** and **Change Mental Health** were highlighted by a number of responses as their preferred means of access.

### Unpaid carers were asked if they were aware of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, and if they have a good understanding of the rights



**271 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 236 responses were received to this question from the 2024 survey.



Data from the **2025 survey** highlights that **77%** (208) people answered **no** and **23%** (63 people) answered **yes**.

**Comparison** feedback from the **2024** and **2025 survey** indicates that unpaid carers **do not feel** they have improved their understanding of **their rights** under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, since the previous year and **further work** requires to be undertaken, which may help empower unpaid carers to understand their entitlement within their role.

**Following up to the previous question, unpaid carers were asked if would like to know more about their rights and where to access them.**

**206 responses** were received to this question.

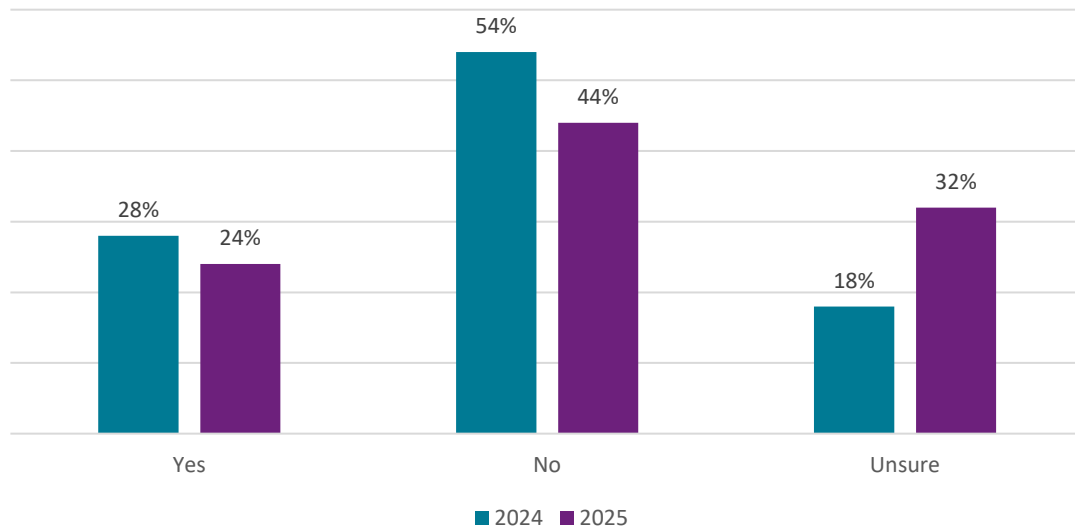
**97%** (199 people) answered **yes** with **3%** (7 people) answering **no**.

Feedback highlights a **willingness** and **want** from unpaid carers to **learn more** about **their rights**, with opportunities from providers and organisations to support this area of development.

**Unpaid carers were asked if they felt recognised and supported in their caring role by their GP or Doctor.**



**271 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 236 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Feedback indicates an **increase** in unpaid carers feeling **recognised** and **supported** within their role. Data highlights there is **still a requirement** for **GPs** to continue to make **improvements** within this area, as **44%** (120 people) said that they do not feel recognised.

Following on from the previous question, unpaid carers were asked why it was important to have a GP or Doctor recognise them as having a caring role.

**220 responses** were received to this question, with the most common feedback themes being:

*“So, I don’t have to repeat myself”*

*“Means I can speak to them in person, as opposed to a phone call”*

*“Allows me to discuss the cared for person and what support they need”*

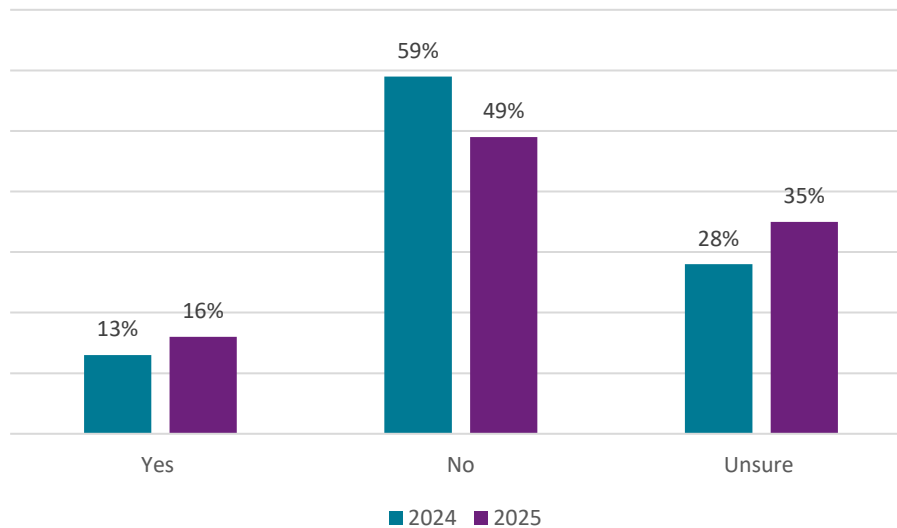
*“They know my family history which can help identify problems earlier”*

*“Easy to access Information about being a carer from one point of contact”*

Unpaid carers were asked if they felt communication with professionals about their caring role had improved over the last 12months.



**270 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 234 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Feedback highlights an **increase** in **confidence** among respondents who feel **communication** has **improved** since last year, which is echoed in the reduction in respondents who answered that it had not.

From the **16%** (43 people) of respondents feel that communication over the previous year has improved with professionals, respondents were asked what had made a difference.

**35 people** shared how they felt communication **had improved**:

***“Being referred to Fife Carers Centre – having all information in one place”***

***“I am now recognised as an Unpaid Carer which means I get told about support that’s right for me”***

***“Having information on financial support and advice”***

***“A dedicated nurse is now in our health centre after asking for this for some time”***

Respondents from the **2025 survey** were asked to share additional feedback on **what would help** shape **improvements** within this area.

**176 people** fed back on how they felt communication **could improve**:



*“A quicker response to situations”*

*“Systems need to speak to each other, so I don’t have to repeat myself when I go between services”*

*“More professionalism – increased social skills”*

*“Consistency of information and language”*

*“More face-to-face contact”*

*“More time for appointments”*

To better understand what it is like for unpaid carers in their daily caring role when speaking with professionals, unpaid carers asked to rate a series of statements on a 1 to 5 basis.

1 being **not confident** and 5 being **completely confident**. The average response is detailed below, along with how many respondents participated in each question:

My **needs** as an unpaid carer are considered by professionals

**261 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.57**

I am happy with the **support** I receive from professionals

**263 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.56**

I feel **acknowledged** as a carer and listened to by professionals

**263 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.56**

I feel **involved in decisions** that affect the person I care for, which affects my caring role

**262 responses** received, with an average rating of **3.03**

I feel I get the **help** and **information** I need

**261 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.54**



I have the **practical support** I need as an unpaid carer

**263 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.24**

I am satisfied with the **opportunities** as a carer, to **share my views** and **opinions**, to help shape the **policy** and **service development** in Fife

**264 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.64**

I am satisfied that my **views** and **opinions** as an unpaid carer **make a positive difference to policy** and **service development** in Fife

**261 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.45**

**Responses from unpaid carers who participated in the 'A question a day' shared views on if they felt their caring experience had improved because of the information and support they received. Respondents were asked to rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 basis.**

**1 star** being **not confident** and **5 stars** being **completely confident**.  
The average response is detailed below, along with how many respondents participated in each question:

I feel my caring experience has improved because of the information / support I received

**50 responses** received, with an average rating of **3.04**

## 5.2 Outcome 2: Co-ordinated Support

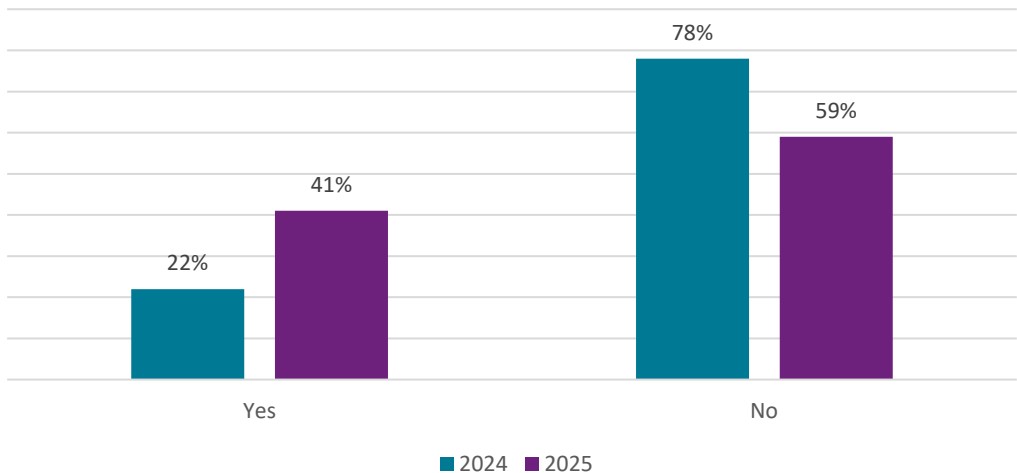
Unpaid carers were asked a range of questions linked to **Outcome 2** from the **Carers Strategy**, which focused on **support, involvement** with **social work** and **voluntary organisations, Adult Care Support Plans (ACSP)**, and general **quality of life**.





Unpaid carers were asked if they access support.

272 responses were received to this question from the 2025 survey and 237 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Data highlights an **increase** from unpaid carers who are **accessing support** from the previous year, which indicates a **positive improvement**. This suggests that organisations and providers have **improved** their **awareness raising** of increasing information and available support – some examples can be seen in the next question.

Unpaid carers who answered in the previous questions that they access support were asked to share with us what this was.

107 people responded to this question, with the most accessed services being:

|                       |                      |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Fife Carers Centre    | Fife Young Carers    | Change Mental Health |
| Mental Health Service | Alzheimer’s Scotland | Occupational Health  |
| Parkinsons Nurses     | Crossroads Fife      | Time to Live         |

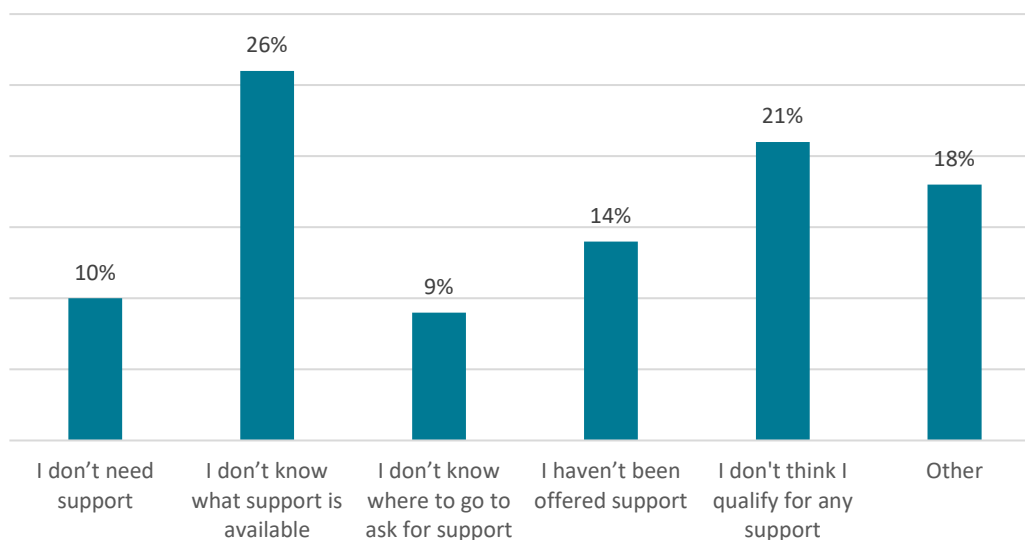
One respondent shared how much their community club had supported them:

*“I was at a loss without my support worker. I wouldn’t be here if it hadn’t been for her guidance”*

Unpaid carers who said they did not access support were asked to share why this was.



**159 responses** were received to this question.



**26%** (42 people) said they do not access support, as they **don't know what is available**.

For the **18%** (29 people) who responded **other**, some of the common themes are detailed below:

***"I don't need it right now – but know I will in the future"***

***"I am still waiting to hear back"***

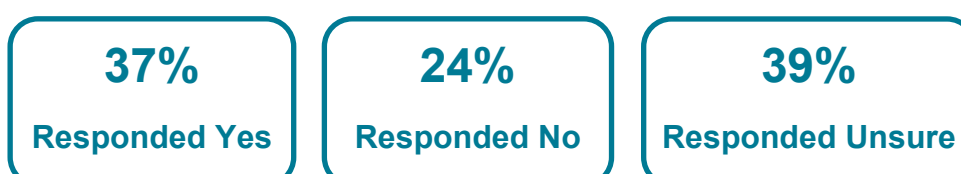
***"I don't know who the best person is to speak too"***

***"I don't need support at the moment, but I am looking to the future probabilities and would be happy if I was knowledgeable of what is available. A managed approach as opposed to a crisis approach"***

Feedback shows there are still **opportunities** for **organisations** to continue highlighting what support is available, across digital platforms and face-to-face (as in our previous survey questions). **Future planning** was highlighted as a key area, which could **strengthen** the **right supports** being in place at the **right time**.

**Unpaid carers were asked if they felt the information they have been offered was meaningful.**

**267 responses** were received to this question.





**63%** (168 people – those who answered no and unsure) to the current information offered being **meaningful**, could highlight a disconnect with the current materials being provided.

Feedback highlights a more tailored approach is needed, with the **opportunity** to **speak** with unpaid carers, to **understand** what **improvements** could be made to **improve** access to **meaningful information**.

**Responses from unpaid carers who participated in the ‘A question a day’ shared views on what support would make their life as an unpaid carer better.**

**55 people** responded to this question.

**More breaks from caring** were noted as a frequent request, to support with reducing social isolation and providing a chance to recharge.

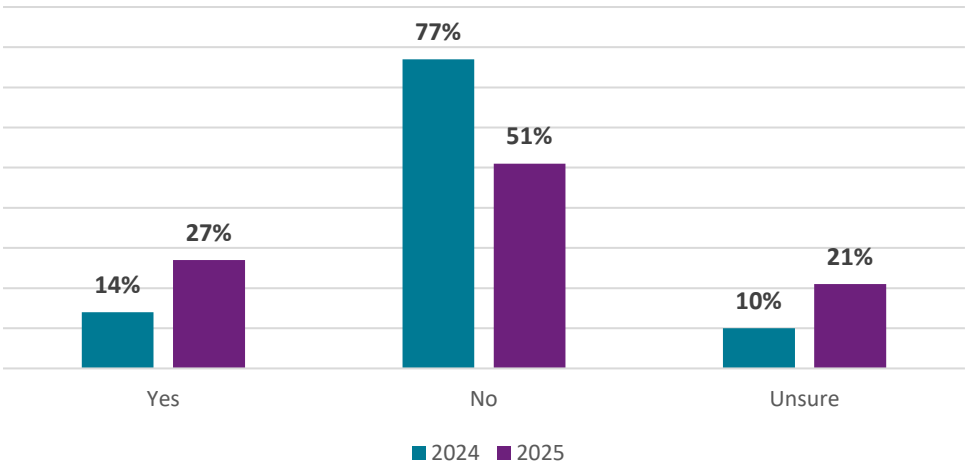
**Support with daily chores** was highlighted by a number of respondents, to help lighten the daily task for unpaid carers, allowing them to spend more time with their cared for person.

**Better access to GP's** was highlighted as important, as often the task of trying to source an appointment can be time-consuming and remove the carer from their role temporarily.

**A point of contact** to help support lead a person through their caring journey, including information and advice around what support is available, particularly around long-term conditions.

**Unpaid carers were asked if they had been offered an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP)**

**270 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 237 responses were received from the 2024 survey

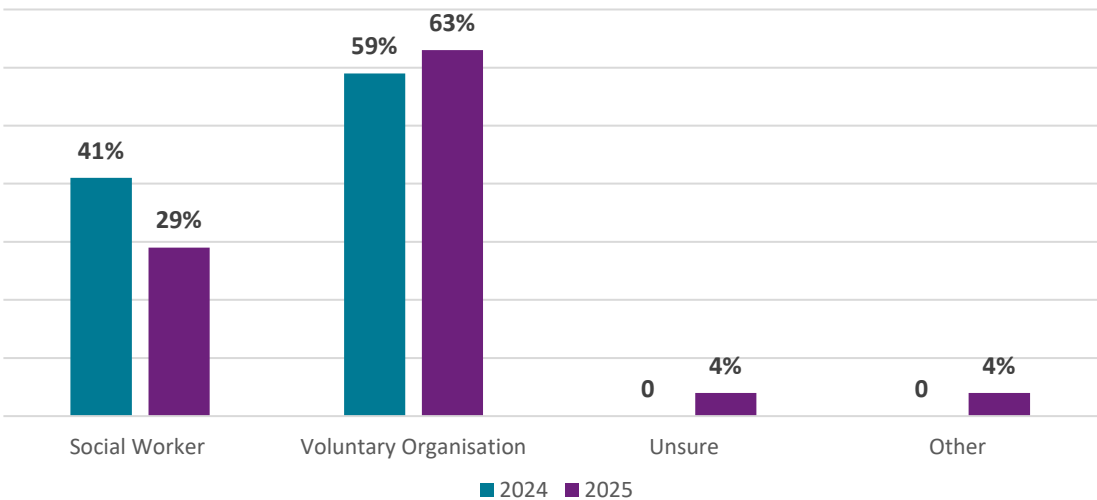


Data from the **2025 survey** highlights an **improvement** this year on unpaid carers who have been offered an ACSP.

Feedback highlights **opportunities** for **third** and **voluntary sector** colleagues, as well as the **Health and Social Care Partnership** to continue to offer ACSP across Fife, in order to see further increase in numbers of unpaid carers receiving a tailored support plan.

**For unpaid carers who were offered an ACSP, we wanted to understand which services offered this.**

**75 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 32 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



For the **4%** (3 people) who answered '**other**' feedback heard one ACSP was offered by Fife Carers Centre and one respondent feedback that not every aspect of their plan was discussed with them. One respondent said their plan was not kept up to date.

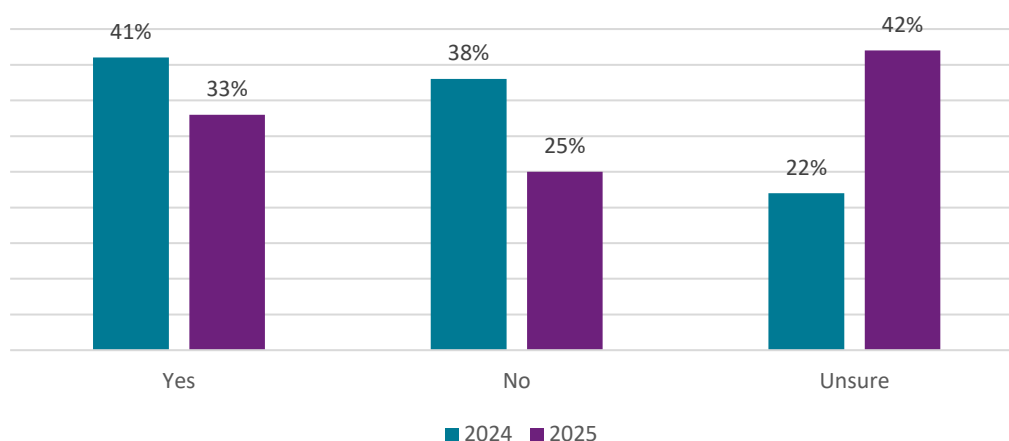


**Voluntary Organisations** offered **59%** (19 people) adult support plans to unpaid carers.

**Social Work** offered **41%** (13 people) adult support plans to unpaid carers.

**Unpaid carers were asked to tell us if they felt their ACSP's met their needs for support and personal outcomes.**

**73 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 32 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Feedback from the **2025 survey** highlights **33%** (24 people) said their ACSP **does** meet their needs **25%** (18 people) said it **does not** and **42%** (31 people) said they were **unsure**.

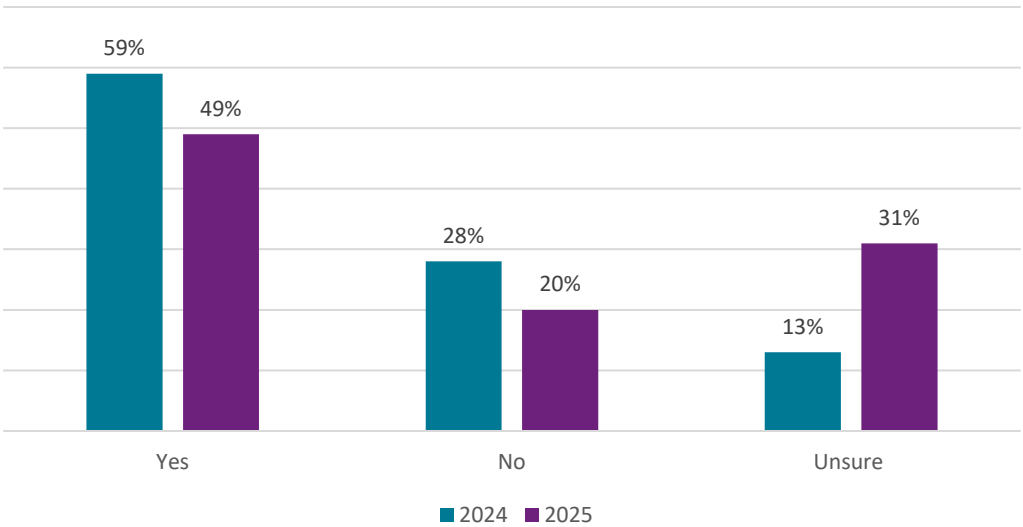
Unpaid carers could be encouraged to raise a request to review their personal ACSP if they feel that it does not continue to meet their personal needs for support. Additionally, the 2025 survey has offered respondents the opportunity to provide their contact details, to which a member of the adult social work team will make contact with them to discuss their ACSP.

**75 people** provided their contact details, which will be followed up by Fife HSCP Social work Customer Service Advisors Centre.

**18 people** responded to the 'A question a day' requesting contact on their Adult Care Support Plan.

**Unpaid carers were asked if conversations during the ACSP process were discussed and the need to develop an emergency plan.**

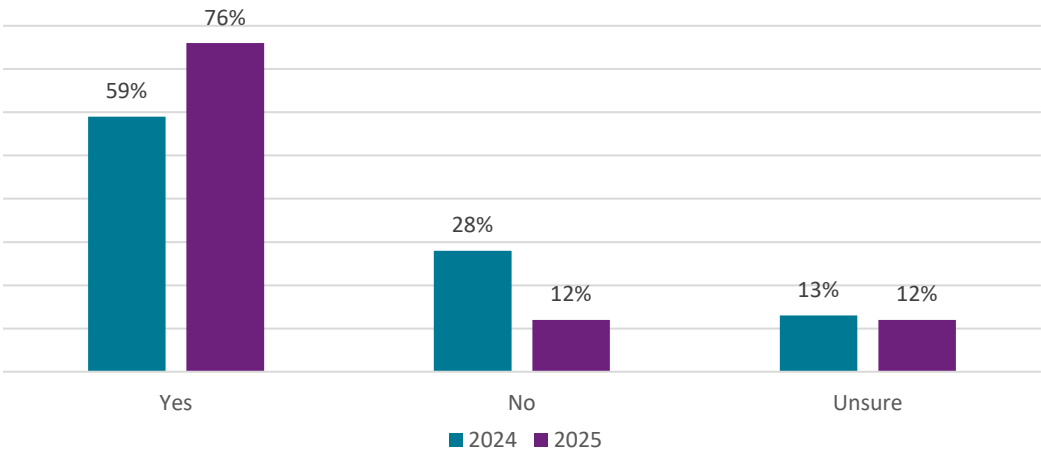
**74 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 32 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Feedback from the **2025 survey** indicates a need to improve conversations around emergency planning with unpaid carers as part of the ACSP process. Just over half **51%** (38 people) of respondents highlighted they **had not** or were **unsure** if these conversations have taken place. This gap in conversation or knowledge has increased from the 2024 survey.

Still looking at ACSP assessment process, respondents were asked if a conversation was had with them, to determine if a break from caring might benefit them.

**73 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 32 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Feedback highlights an **increase** in unpaid carers having **conversations** around what a break from caring might look like for them. **Continuing conversations** with unpaid carers **may** offer more **improvements** within this area.



**Unpaid carers were asked to share with us the confidence they have around the advice and support they receive from social workers and voluntary organisations. We asked respondents to rate the following statements on a 1 to 5 basis.**

**1** being **not confident** and **5** being **completely confident**.

The average response is detailed below, along with how many respondents participated in each question:

#### Social Work

From the **2025** survey, **253** respondents answered this question with the overall average score for **confidence among social work** being **2.7**.

From the 2024 survey, 13 respondents answered this question with the overall average score for **confidence among social work** being **2.7**.

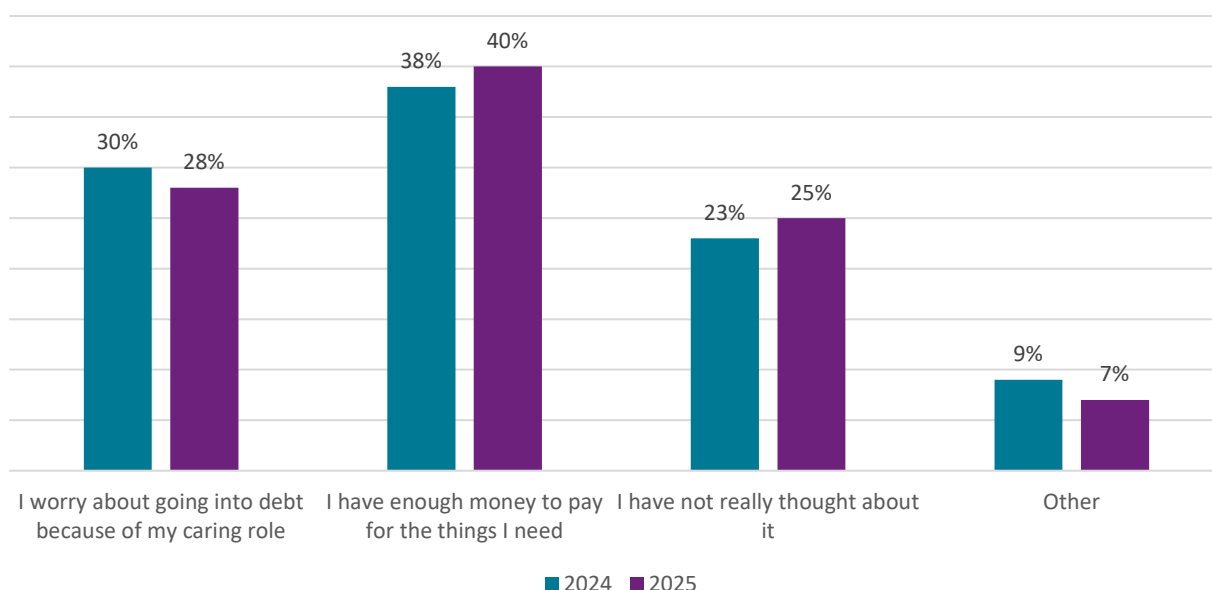
#### Voluntary Organisations

From the **2025** survey, **256** respondents answered this question with the overall average score for **confidence among Voluntary Organisations** being **3.35**

From the 2024 survey, 19 respondents answered this question relating to their **confidence among Voluntary Organisations**, with the overall average score being **4.5**.

**Unpaid carers were asked to continue to think about their finances and answer the current position of their financial situation.**

**269 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey**, and 237 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Feedback from the **2025 survey** highlights an increase in those who consider themselves to **have enough financial support** within their caring role, which is an **improvement** from the 2024 survey.

From the **7%** (20 people) who answered ‘**other**’ in the **2025 survey**, we asked them to tell us more:

*“I don’t meet the criteria”*

*“I can’t afford to retire due to my caring role”*

*“My caring role is a financial strain”*

*“I feel I need to do more as a carer, but cannot afford to give up work or reduce hours”*

Consideration should be given to the **28%** (74 people) who **worry about going into debt**, as while not all unpaid carers will be entitled to financial support and grants, the feedback highlights there would be benefit in making information about financial support services more accessible.

### 5.3 Outcome 3: Breaks from Caring

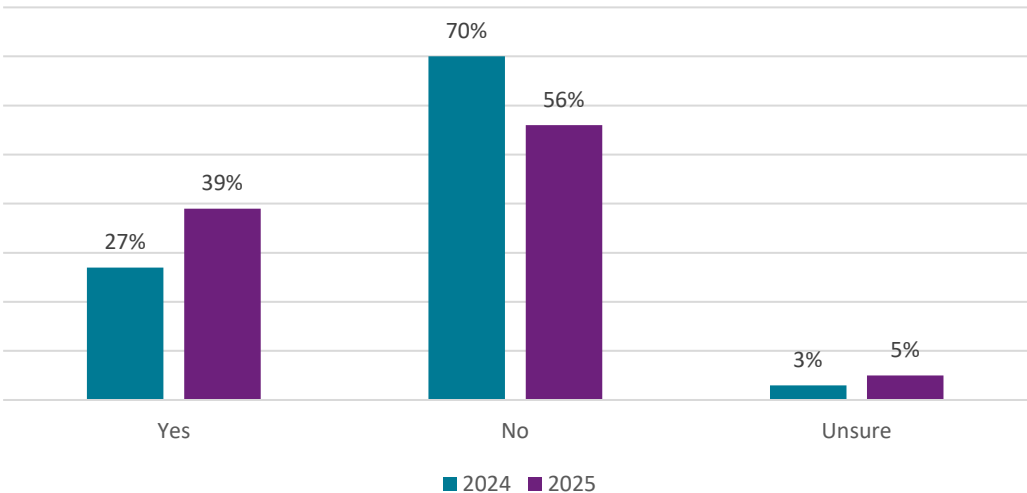
Questions were focused around **Outcome 3** from the **Carers Strategy** and we asked unpaid carers questions which focused on **breaks from caring**.





Unpaid carers were asked if they had been provided information about short breaks.

272 responses were received to this question from the 2025 survey and 237 responses were received from the 2024 survey.

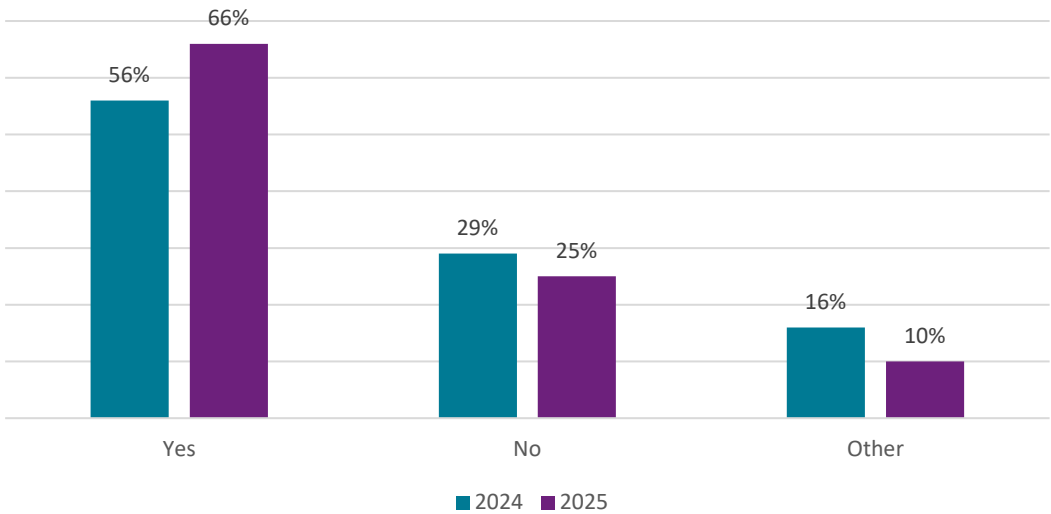


Data from the 2025 survey indicates an improvement on those being provided information around what a break from caring might look like, highlighting progress in this area.

It is a specific requirement within the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 to include as part of the Adult Carer Support Plan (and Young Carers Statement) conversation and discussion about a short break from caring.

Unpaid carers were asked if the information available about short breaks helped unpaid carers to plan a break from caring.

105 responses were received to this question from the 2025 survey and 70 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



Data from the **2025 survey** highlights **improvement** in **information** which has resulted in planning a short break.

From the **10%** (10 people) who answered ‘**other**’ some of the most common reasons people were unable to were shared:

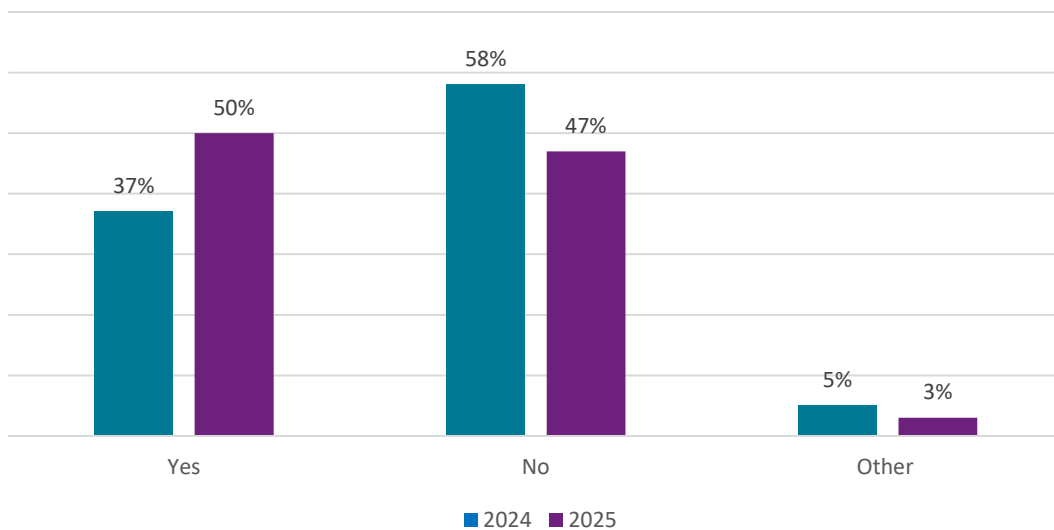
*“I have pets and struggle staying away”*

*“I have many tasks relating to my caring role to take care of, I never get a true break”*

*“I only found out this year I could access short breaks”*

**Unpaid carers were asked if they have taken a short break from their caring situation, either alone or with the person they care for.**

**272 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 235 responses were received from the 2024 survey.



From the **3%** (7 people) who answered ‘**other**’ in the **2025** survey, they were asked to share more:

*“It is very difficult to switch off”*

*“I can’t afford it”*

*“I was refused a break, I was so exhausted and suicidal”*

Data from the **2025 survey** highlights **improvements** in those having taken a short break from their caring role and a **reduction** in those who have not, which indicates **progress in this area**.

Increasing access to breaks could help unpaid carers continue their roles, **potentially lowering stress and depression**, which aligns with feedback about what unpaid carers feel their life is like, later in this survey.

**For those who took a break, unpaid carers were asked if it made a difference and left them feeling rested and able to continue in their caring role.**

**143 responses** were received to this question.

Unpaid carers were asked why a break from caring made a real difference to them. Here are some quotes on the impact it made:



*“I enjoyed time with my son, being able to do things we can’t usually do”*

*“2 nights away meant I got an unbroken sleep”*

*“It provided means of relaxation”*

*“Having some ‘me’ time away from responsibility helps prevent me being overwhelmed, especially as I suffer from a mental illness”*

Feedback highlighted that some respondents faced challenges when accessing short breaks:

*“I had to take my husband who I care for. He was unsettled in the new environment which caused us both stress”*

*“It made my cared for person worse being out of their own comforts”*

*“I still had to look after my husband”*

Responses from unpaid carers who participated in the ‘A question a day’ shared views on what sort of breaks from caring would make a difference to them.

53 people responded to this question.

Respondents shared that having **regular breaks** from caring that are **flexible** would better suit the needs of the family unit. Feedback highlighted that breaks need to be **accessible**, with a desire to have **strong transport links**.

Some suggestions for breaks included time away during the day, in the evening, full weekend breaks and the prospect of a week’s holiday. **Mixed responses** came from those looking to take the break **alone** or with **friends**, while others shared, they would prefer their **cared for person** to also **participate** in the **break**.

Feedback highlighted that there is not a one size fits all approach and that organisations providing breaks from caring require to use a person-centred approach for it to be most effective.

To better understand how unpaid carers feel their caring role impacts on their life, we asked them to share how this role has emotionally impacted their quality of life. Respondents to rate the following statements on a 1 to 5 basis

1 being **not confident** and 5 being **completely confident**.

The average response is detailed below, along with how many respondents participated in each question:



**My caring role stops me from living the life I want to**

**268 responses** received, with an average rating of **3.39**

**I have control over my own life**

**271 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.72**

**I feel depressed because of my caring role**

**270 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.69**

**I feel stressed because of my caring situation**

**270 responses** received, with an average rating of **3.22**

**I feel supported**

**270 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.40**

**I feel better informed**

**268 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.44**

**I feel involved in caring decisions**

**269 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.92**

**I feel my caring experience has improved because of the information / support I received**

**264 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.57**

**I feel valued as a carer**

**268 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.38**



**I feel confident in my carer role**

**270 responses** received, with an average rating of **3.20**

**I am satisfied with my life as a carer**

**269 responses** received, with an average rating of **2.47**

## **5.4 Additional Feedback**

In the final section of the survey, unpaid carers were asked to share their experiences around the amount of **hours** of unpaid care they carry out, the **health conditions** and if they would like information on **current opportunities** that can provide relevant, straightforward information, as well as practical help.

**Unpaid carers were asked how many hours of unpaid care they provide each week.**

**273 responses** were received to this question from the **2025 survey** and 237 responses were received from the 2024 survey.

Feedback from the **2025 survey** highlights that unpaid carers are continuing to carry out the large number of hours within their caring role:

1 to 19hours - **25%** (69 people)

20 to 34hours – **15%** (41 people)

35 to 49 hours – **60%** (163 people)

Feedback from the 2024 survey highlighted that **51%** (121 people) were carrying out **50+ hrs** of unpaid care **per week**.

**Unpaid carers were asked about the types of health conditions their cared for person has.**

**278 responses** were received to this question.

The **top 3** health conditions were identified as:

1. A physical disability - **21%** (122 people)
2. Dementia – **16%** (91 people)
3. A long-standing illness – **16%** (90 people)



From the **7%** (39 people) who answered '**other**' Some of the most common answers were known to be: **Parkinsons, Terminal cancer, brain injury and neurological conditions.**

**Unpaid carers were asked if they themselves had any health conditions.**

**90 responses** were received to this question.

The **top 3** health conditions among **unpaid carers** were identified as:

1. Disease or condition - **24%** (42 people)
2. Physical disability – **20%** (36 people)
3. Mental Health condition – **18%** (32 people)

**Unpaid carers were asked if they would like to be notified of when the next Carers Forum is.**

**104 people** responded **yes** to this question, which will allow Fife Carers Centre to reach out to these respondents and share with them details of the next Forum meeting.

**Unpaid carers were asked if they would like Fife HSCP to share their contact details with Fife Carers Centre, who support unpaid carers by providing relevant, straightforward information as well as practical help.**

**67 responded yes**, which will allow **Fife Carers Centre** to reach out to these respondents.

**47 respondents** said they were **already supported** by Fife Carers centre.



## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion the 2025 Fife Unpaid Carers Experience Survey heard the voices of **278 unpaid carers** and from this feedback identified several priorities areas for Fife HSCP to consider, that could improve their experience as an unpaid carer.

**Outcome 1: Information** - *Access to information, in a range of formats, that helps unpaid carers manage their caring role in the community, where and when they need it.*

Feedback highlighted a **growing reliance** for unpaid carers accessing information and support across a diverse range of **digital platforms**, due to the convenience, speed and accessibility. Large numbers said they value **face-to-face** interactions, based on **relationship, value** and **trust**.

These separate means of accessing information and support can help cater to the varied needs of different audiences and channels to increase awareness raising.

A significant number of unpaid carers do not know their **legal rights** under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2006, which creates an opportunity to **empower** unpaid carers within their role, by **clearer** and more **accessible information** from Fife HSCP, Third and voluntary organisations.

3 in 4 of respondents **did not** feel recognised by their GP as an unpaid carer, which lead to frustrations from unpaid carers in repeating their story when attending appointments.

This offers an opportunity to **enhance GP's understanding** around who is an unpaid carer and **strengthen communication** between **professionals**, within this outcome area of the delivery plan for the Fife Carers Strategy, which may lead to better outcomes for carers and those they care for.

**Outcome 2: Co-ordinated Support** – *To ensure unpaid carers have support to coordinate their caring role, including help to navigate the Health and Social Care systems as they start their caring role.*

While **59%** (161 people) said they **have not accessed support** over the past 12 months, feedback highlights that unpaid carers **have** overall **increased** their access over the last year to a wide range of **support**, and that many third sector and voluntary organisations play a role in this process

This highlights the importance of providers who support unpaid carers, to continue to promote their offer of support across digital platforms and face-to-face opportunities, which could result in more unpaid carers receiving support and understanding their entitlements.

Feedback highlights that just under half of respondents **feel confident** around having **enough money** to pay for the things they need, with a quarter of respondents





saying they **worry** about **falling into debt** because of their caring role. Low numbers offered feedback that there is **confusion around entitlement to carers allowance**. An opportunity from organisations to provide further information and education around financial support would benefit unpaid carers when navigating this complex topic.

Feedback from over half of the respondents around the **Adult Carer Support Plan** process highlighted that the plan **does not meet all individual needs** and that some crucial elements, including **emergency planning** and **breaks from caring** were not discussed.

This offers an opportunity for Fife HSCP Customer Service Advisor team to reach out to the **93 respondents** who requested a call around their plan, to **review the plan with unpaid carers who have been through the process**, to identify ways of improving their experience, within this outcome area of the delivery plan for the Fife Carers Strategy.

Feedback highlights that unpaid carers seek increased confidence in their interactions with Social Workers and Voluntary organisations. Building trust and ensuring that unpaid carers feel valued will strengthen relationships and develop support plans that will meet unpaid carers needs.

**Outcome 3: Breaks from Caring** – *To help unpaid carers take a break from caring when, where and how they want to, so that they are rested and able to continue in their caring role.*

Feedback highlights that just **over half** of respondents have **not been provided** information around **short breaks** and that just **under half** of respondents sharing they have not taken a short break.

Respondents to this survey expressed their own wellbeing has been affected because of their caring role, particularly their **mental health** with feelings of **stress** and **depression**, which can often lead to burnout. Increasing awareness of available resources – both online and in-person, may support an increase in unpaid carers accessing short breaks, particularly those who wish to take a break from their caring role and support unpaid carers to not compromise their own health and quality of life.

**Additional Feedback** – *Unpaid carers shared their experiences around the number of hours of unpaid care they carry out, their understanding of the Carers Scotland Act, and their health conditions*

Most respondents feedback they provide **35-49 hours of unpaid care per week** and that one third are within the **65+ age** category.

Additionally, unpaid carers report they have their own health conditions. This collective data highlights an opportunity to explore how Fife HSCP, Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations can best support unpaid carers to be most effective within



their caring role, to help enable them to continue to provide this crucial role to their loved ones.

## **6.1 Next Steps**

The findings from the engagement exercise offer the Carers Strategy Group an opportunity to identify key improvement areas to support the Priority Outcomes.

The development of the Fife Carers Providers Forum and Fife Carers Forum also offers an opportunity to support the development of the identified improvement areas.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

Fife HSCP Change and Improvement Manager

Fife HSCP Participation and Engagement Team

Fife Carers Centre

Fife Voluntary Action

Fife Carers Strategy Group

Fife Carers Integration Joint Board Representative