



**Carerpreneurs**

## **Carerpreneurs Insight Report 2026**

### **Caring & Opportunity**

# **Exploring the Potential of Carer-Led Enterprise**

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*Supporting carers exploring flexible enterprise opportunities.*

[www.carerpreneurs.co.uk](http://www.carerpreneurs.co.uk)

## **Executive Summary**

Across the UK, millions of people provide unpaid care for family members and loved ones. These carers support individuals with illness, disability, mental health conditions, and age-related needs, often for many hours each week.

While unpaid care plays a vital role in sustaining families and reducing pressure on public services, it often comes at a significant personal financial cost.

Many carers experience reduced employment opportunities, loss of income, and long-term financial vulnerability.

This report explores:

- The financial challenges faced by unpaid carers
- The employment barriers carers experience
- The untapped potential within the carer community
- How enterprise and self-employment may provide flexible economic opportunities

It also introduces Carerpreneurs, an initiative exploring how enterprise support tailored specifically for carers can help build financial resilience and confidence.

## **The Scale of Unpaid Caring**

Unpaid carers form a significant and essential part of the UK's social infrastructure.

Across the country, millions of people provide unpaid care for relatives or loved ones, often for many hours each week.

Without this support, many individuals would require additional public health and social care services.

Yet the economic contribution of unpaid carers is often overlooked when considering employment policy and economic participation.

## **The Financial Impact of Caring**

Becoming a carer frequently has a direct impact on employment and income.

Many carers begin by attempting to balance employment alongside caring responsibilities. However, as care needs increase, this balance can become difficult to sustain.

Common outcomes include:

- Reducing working hours

- Moving to lower-paid flexible roles
- Leaving employment altogether

Over time this can lead to:

- Reduced lifetime earnings
- Lower pension contributions
- Increased financial vulnerability

For carers who spend several years outside the workforce, re-entering traditional employment can be particularly challenging.

### **Employment Barriers for Carers**

Traditional employment structures often assume predictable availability and fixed working hours.

Caring responsibilities rarely follow such predictable patterns.

Carers frequently face:

- Sudden medical appointments
- Changing health conditions
- Unpredictable support needs
- Emotional and physical demands

As a result, many capable and skilled individuals find themselves excluded from employment opportunities that cannot accommodate flexibility.

### **The Untapped Potential of Carers**

While carers may experience employment barriers, they often develop a wide range of valuable skills through their responsibilities.

These include:

- Organisation and scheduling
- Financial management
- Problem-solving

- Emotional intelligence
- Negotiation with services
- Crisis management

These skills closely align with the qualities required for successful entrepreneurship.

However, because caring happens outside formal employment structures, these capabilities are rarely recognised in economic terms.

### **Enterprise as a Flexible Pathway**

Enterprise and self-employment offer a different model of economic participation.

For carers, entrepreneurship can provide:

- Flexible working hours
- Home-based opportunities
- Control over workload
- Gradual income growth

Carer-led businesses may be small in scale, but they can still provide meaningful financial resilience and independence.

Examples may include:

- Freelance services
- Digital products or online businesses
- Home-based enterprises
- Consultancy or support roles
- Creative or community-based ventures

Importantly, enterprise allows carers to adapt work around caring responsibilities rather than the reverse.

### **The Role of Carerpreneurs**

Carerpreneurs was created to explore how enterprise support can help carers rebuild confidence, develop skills, and create flexible income opportunities.

The initiative focuses on:

- Practical guidance for carers considering self-employment
- Confidence-building after time outside employment
- Flexible enterprise ideas that work alongside caring responsibilities
- Recognising the skills carers already possess

Carerpreneurs encourages sustainable and realistic enterprise pathways, rather than high-pressure business models.

## **Looking Forward**

Supporting carers to explore enterprise opportunities has the potential to:

- Improve financial resilience for carers and their households
- Unlock valuable skills within the carer community
- Encourage inclusive economic participation
- Strengthen local economies through small businesses

Carers already contribute enormously to society.

With the right support, they can also play a greater role in the entrepreneurial economy.

## **Supporting Carer-Led Enterprise**

Inclusive enterprise opportunities for carers contribute to both social wellbeing and economic participation.

We are seeking partnerships to:

- Support carer confidence through tailored enterprise guidance
- Develop flexible and accessible enterprise training for carers
- Raise awareness around the underutilised entrepreneurial potential of carers

Together, we can make enterprise a flexible path to economic resilience for carers.



## KEY STATISTICS ABOUT UNPAID CARERS IN THE UK

**5.7 million** people provide unpaid care for a relative or loved one in the UK.

**1.4 million** providing 50+ hours of care per week.



**£76 billion** a year estimated value of unpaid care to the UK economy.

**1 in 3** working-age carers forced to move out of paid employment.



Unpaid carers save the UK economy billions each year, but often at significant personal cost.

Source: Carers UK, 2024. Estimated data based on most recent available figures.