

SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS IN THE WORKPLACE

A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT
FOR EMPLOYEES



Seniorcare
by **lottie**

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KEY FINDINGS

Practical advice, useful tips and expert insight for employees balancing unpaid caregiving and paid work.

1 in 7 employees care for an elderly acquaintance¹

2.8 million employees have taken on carer responsibilities since the Covid-19 outbreak

33% of caregivers miss at least 6 working days per year³

1/3 of working carers don't receive sufficient support from their employers⁴

More employees will have an elderly person dependent on them than a child by 2025

In the UK, 1 in 4 female workers have eldercare responsibilities⁵

Caregiving goes beyond parenting: it can be extended to caring for relatives, friends, or elderly parents. Whilst caring for an elderly loved one can be extremely rewarding, it can also be isolating, costly and overwhelming.

An ageing population means more people are living longer, and many employees are finding themselves caring for older, disabled or seriously ill loved ones.

New research – from [Seniorcare by Lottie](#) – has found more employees than ever before are caring for an elderly loved one whilst juggling full-time jobs; leading to burnout, increased anxiety, and financial stress.

Now more than ever, employer support and workplace benefits that address your needs as a carer are vital. Organisations can best support you by establishing policies and providing practical employee benefits to ease your caregiving workload.

Here, we've shared the crisis caregivers in the workplace are currently facing while providing insights as to how Seniorcare by Lottie can help.

THE CAREGIVING CRISIS IN THE WORKPLACE: WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

What is Caregiving?

Firstly, caregiving involves providing support for those that are unable to care for themselves on a day-to-day basis. Caregiving can vary from supporting an elderly loved one with picking up shopping, to administering medication and helping with mobility.

As a working carer, you'll typically have caring responsibilities that may affect your working life. For instance, you may need regular time off to care. You may find your productivity has decreased and you're at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems, including anxiety, stress and depression.

Our Research Shows an Ongoing Workplace Crisis for Employees

As the UK population gets older, research from the ONS has found that one in four older female workers, and one in eight older male workers, have caring responsibilities for an elderly relative.

There's an increasing need for informal elderly care in society, and this can have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing. Juggling the additional demands of caregiving while still working full-time will leave you more likely to experience stress, absences from work and health problems.

New research from Seniorcare by Lottie has found a surge of employees recently giving up work to care for an elderly loved one. Over the last year, more workers turned to Google to find support for giving up employment to care for someone:

300% increase in online searches on Google for 'giving up work to be a carer'

200% increase in online searches on Google for 'giving up work to care for someone'

25% increase in online searches on Google for 'carers in the workplace' and 'working carers'

More working carers are turning to Google, as opposed to discussing their struggles with their employer. It's important that your workplace is carer-friendly and offers practical support where possible to ease your workload.

COVID-19: THE IMPACT ON ELDERCARE THROUGH DATA

How has the Pandemic impacted the eldercare landscape?

Since the Pandemic first began in January 2020, it has accelerated the pressure on informal carers in the workplace and emphasised the urgent need for employers to support you and your elderly loved ones when it comes to later living.

Although it must be acknowledged that there has been some evidence of positive by-products from the pandemic - such as increased flexibility through hybrid working enabling you to have more control over your schedule - it isn't clear if this is a long-term solution. Yourself and your employer will need to assess how financially and logistically viable it is to solely rely on hybrid working to enable sufficient care for your elderly loved one.

2.8 employees have taken on eldercare responsibilities since the Pandemic began in the UK.

It remains clear that even with the additional time created through increased flexibility at work, employees still have insufficient support and a lack of information when it comes to assessing their loved ones' care needs and agreeing on the best care plan.

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Covid-19 and Eldercare in Numbers



81% of carers providing more care since the Covid-19 Pandemic



74% of carers are feeling exhausted and worn out from caring during the pandemic



78% of carers state the needs of the person they care for have increased since Covid-19



36% of carers want someone to speak to about eldercare as a priority.



64% of carers say that their mental health has worsened as a result of the pandemic.



64% of carers haven't been able to take any breaks from their caring role since the pandemic.

CHALLENGES FACING CAREGIVERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Providing care is physically and emotionally draining and can take its toll on you. An ageing population – and the coronavirus pandemic – has caused many caregiving workers to reduce their hours or quit their jobs.

1. Increased Absence

More employees are resorting to using annual and sick leave – and sometimes unpaid leave – to look after their elderly relatives. Staff who have elder care responsibilities face several challenges and these may result in unexpected absences in the workplace. Caring responsibilities can occur at short notice, for instance following a stroke or heart attack. Absence from work costs the UK economy £13.2bn a year⁷, so it's important to offer a solution that protects employees such as yourself.

2. Higher Levels of Stress

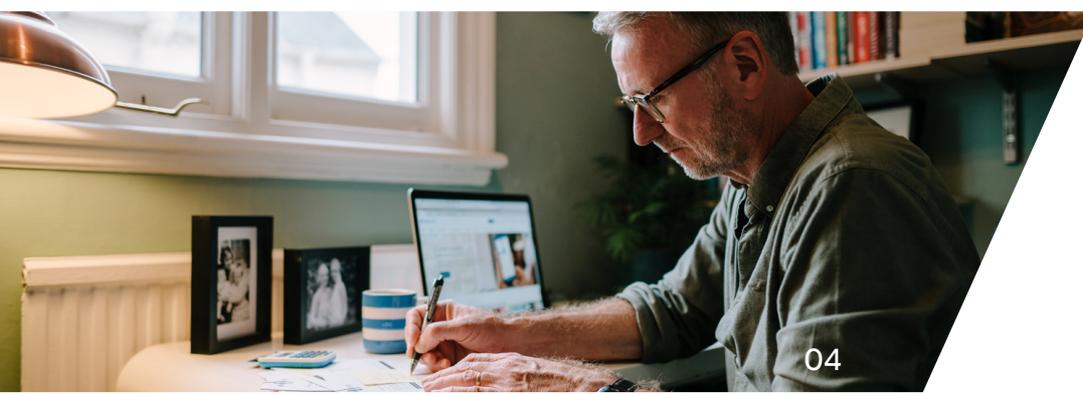
As a working carer, it's understandable to be focused on your elderly loved one. However, employees may not realise that your own wellbeing is suffering. Too much stress – over a long period of time – can negatively affect your health and wellbeing. Watch out for signs of feeling overwhelmed, constantly worried and becoming easily irritated.

According to research from⁸ Carers UK, 84% of unpaid carers feel more stressed because of their care responsibilities. 50% of unpaid carers have said they have felt depressed due to their elderly care responsibilities, leaving them at risk of mental health issues at work.

3. Increased Risk of Burnout

Taking care of your own wellbeing isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. Too much stress over time can build up and lead to burnout – a mental health condition that causes exhaustion – along with feeling helpless, disengaged unproductive. To better protect your mental health and that of your colleagues, look out for these tell-tale signs of caregiver burnout.

One of the key signs of burnout is the inability to concentrate. If you're experience these symptoms then your workplace should take a sympathetic approach, as you're likely under a lot of pressure.



CHALLENGES FACING CAREGIVERS IN THE WORKPLACE

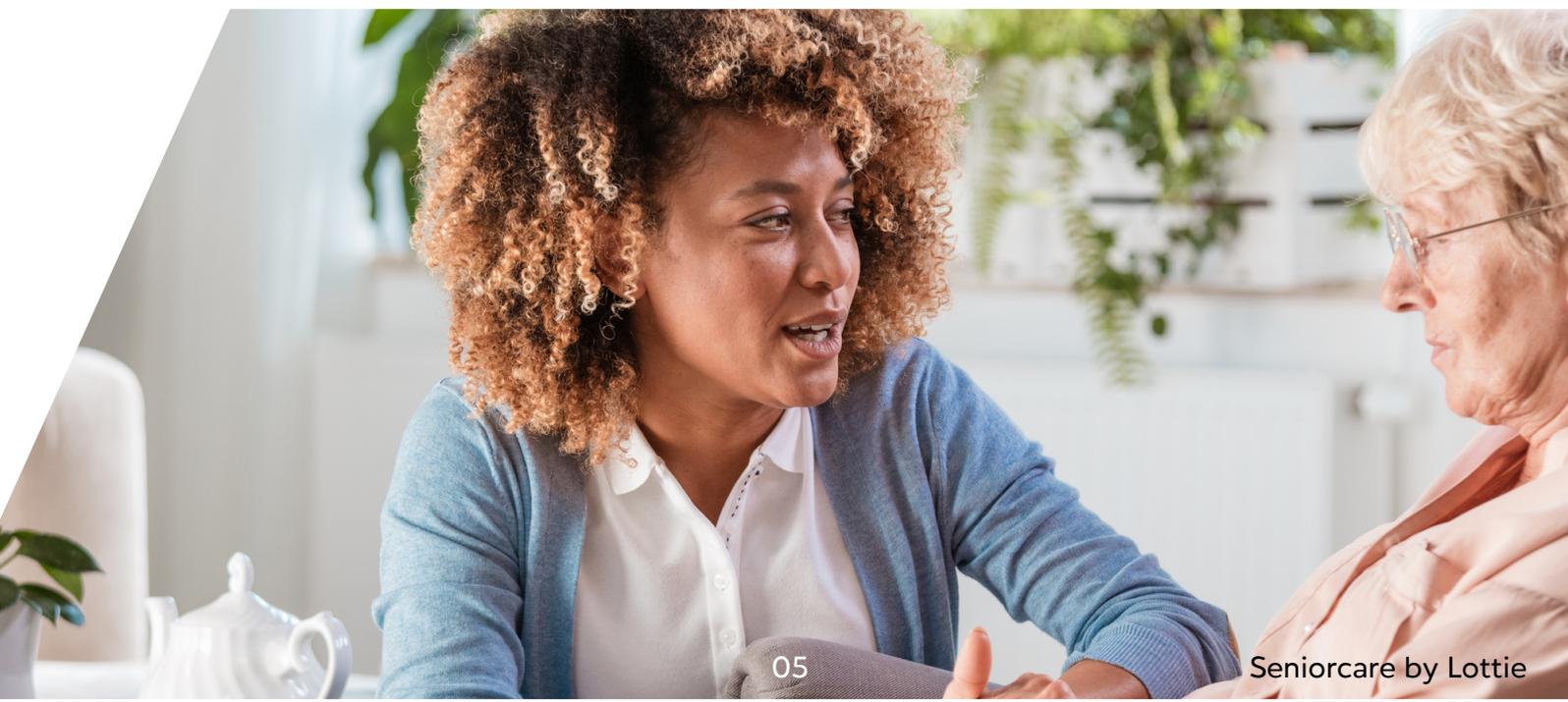
4. Financial Worry

Since late 2021, the UK has experienced several changes, leading to rising costs for individuals and businesses. Consumer price inflation has continued to rise to its highest level in almost 30 years, and this has had a huge impact on caregivers in the workplace. Family caregiving can have a big impact on your finances. You may have to financially support an elderly loved one or take unpaid leave to accommodate any elderly care needs.

Many caregivers may also neglect planning for their own retirement as they care for an elderly relative, which can leave working carers feeling stressed, worried, and anxious about money.

5. Women are More Likely to be Affected

A huge portion of later life care is provided by unpaid family carers – mostly women. Caring for an elderly relative can become increasingly difficult to balance with work as we get older, and by the age of 65, less than a third of women are still in employment. Research from Carers UK has found that 60% of informal carers in the UK are women and they're four times more likely to be forced to give up work, due to caring responsibilities. Businesses urgently need a sustainable solution to ensure that everyone can get the care and support they need in later life – without relying on the unpaid work of women.



A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS: HOW YOU CAN BE SUPPORTED IN THE WORKPLACE

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to raising awareness and sharing support for caregivers in the workplace. However, your employer can commit to raising awareness for the help available to anyone caring for an elderly loved one, alongside their role.

Workplace caregiving issues have a knock-on impact for your colleagues. If any staff quit because of their elderly caregiving duties, this will likely increase the workload for yourself and other co-workers.

As an employee, working carers have the right to take unpaid time off work for dependants in an emergency. It's your employer's role to provide the best support to all employees, especially if your life outside of work is affecting your wellbeing in the workplace.

1. Raising Awareness of Caregivers in the Workplace

Caregivers are often deterred from disclosing their caregiving responsibilities, which places great strain on their wellbeing at work.

Knowing that your employer is aware of your situation as a caregiver will help bridge this gap. Your employer should build a culture of support, empathy, and awareness for employees with elderly care responsibilities. They should encourage you to be open and communicate about your struggles.

Your employer or manager should take the time to listen, understand and empathise with caregivers.

Open team meetings provide an excellent opportunity for your employer to ask how employees are feeling and what type of support they need.

Through an employee resource group for workers who are also caregivers, you, your employer and your colleagues can share useful resources with one another that are aimed at easing the workload.



Fact Focus:

The informal carer industry is worth £132 billion per year with organisations losing £20 billion due to lost productivity annually.

A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS: HOW YOU CAN BE SUPPORTED IN THE WORKPLACE

2. Recognising Signs of Caregiving Stress

Positive mental health and wellbeing will lead to feeling more engaged and productive while at work. Caregiving stress is at an all-time high, so it's perfectly natural to feel frustrated, anxious, or unproductive.

If your employer recognises these signs then they can help you with stress management while offering a practical solution to this stress. Your employer may encourage you to take regular breaks away from work and share various wellbeing resources with you.

3. Flexible Working Policies

In many ways, caregiving workers have two jobs, so it's important that your life is made as easy as possible.

Flexible working is the business benefit at the top of almost every employee's wish list, especially for those who are unpaid carers for elderly relatives. There are lots of advantages to flexible or remote working, including increased productivity and reduced stress levels.

Being offered flexibility at work can alleviate a lot of pressure for those who may need to help their elderly loved ones first thing in the morning or in the afternoon.

4. Policies to Protect Caregivers

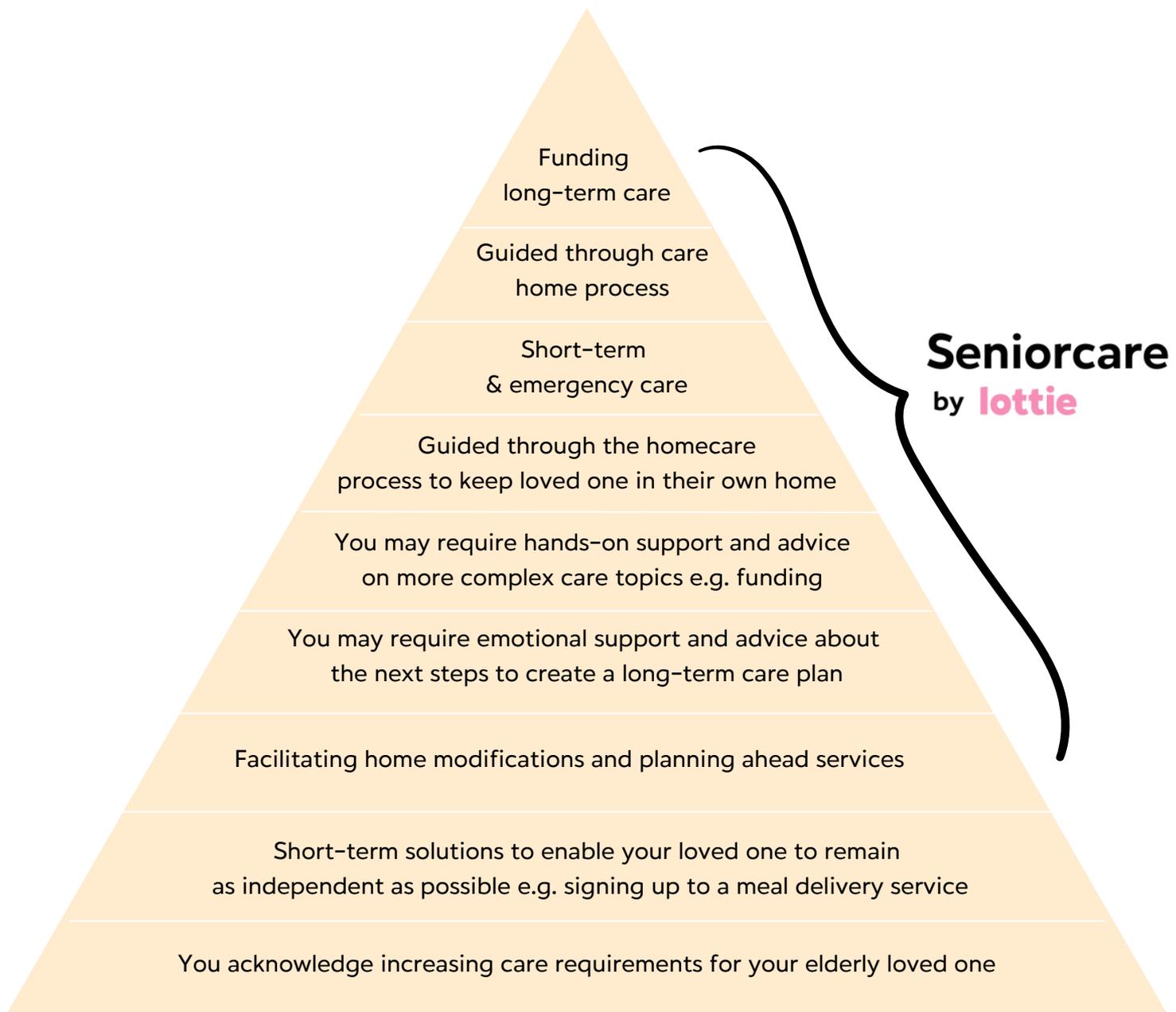
If you provide caregiving to loved ones then being offered workplace support can make a positive impact, helping you to be more effective in both your professional and personal roles.

One of the best ways you can be supported at work is through practical support. Seniorcare by Lottie takes the stress away from those juggling care responsibilities and looking after an elderly relative.

Providing access to resources can help you in their caregiving role and enable you to perform better at work.

THE STAGES OF ELDERCARE IN THE WORKPLACE

It's common to be unprepared when your elderly loved one's health suddenly starts to deteriorate. Seniorcare by Lottie supports you and your loved one through this eldercare journey, ensuring long-term plans are in place and leading advice is provided throughout.



Fact Focus:

The UK spends £23 billion on eldercare services every year, with the average annual care home fee amounting to £50,000.

SUPPORTING WORKING CARERS: USEFUL RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES

Knowledge is key, especially if you're navigating complex issues tied to caregiving.

Here we've shared a list of useful resources that you can use to find care for your loved one and maintain a more balanced lifestyle.

[MIND: Mental Health at Work](#)

[MIND: People's Managers Guide to Mental Health](#)

[NHS: Elderly Care Needs Assessment](#)

[GOV.UK: Apply for a Needs Assessment](#)

[Lottie: Find an Elderly Care Home Near You](#)

SOURCES

1)

https://www.carersuk.org/images/News_and_campaigns/Juggling_work_and_unpaid_care_report_final_0119_WEB.pdf

2)

https://www.carersuk.org/images/News_and_campaigns/Supporting_working_carers_in_COVID-19.pdf

3) <https://news.gallup.com/poll/148670/caregiving-costs-economy-billion-lost-productivity.aspx>

4) https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/carer-friendly-workplace-guidance_tcm18-80345.pdf

5)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/livinglongerhowourpopulationischangingandwhyitmatters/2019-03-15>

6)

https://www.carersuk.org/images/News_and_campaigns/Caring_Behind_Closed_Doors_Oct20.pdf

7) <https://www.makeuk.org/services/hr-and-legal/dealing-with-employee-absence>

8) <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/state-of-caring-2015>

HELPING THE UK'S LARGEST ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT THEIR EMPLOYEES WITH ELDERCARE

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