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for older people, their families and carers

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## **4 out of 5 carers fear consequences of cuts to care services**

More than 80% of unpaid carers are worried about cuts to services, according to new research for Carers Week 2011 (13-19 June). Almost half don't know how they will cope as the axe falls on some of the vital support they rely on.

The cuts to services compound the financial sacrifice people make when they start looking after someone who is ill, frail or disabled. Three quarters of those surveyed say they are worse off financially since taking on their caring responsibilities.

When people are forced onto benefits they find that Carer's Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind. The Carers Week research shows that two thirds of carers are surprised at how little help they get from the government.

Jules Wood cares for her disabled son. She says: *"I am now hugely in debt, my savings have gone, I cannot pay essential bills like gas and electric, I cannot meet my full mortgage payments. Today I would have walked off a bridge if it weren't for my children."*

A carer who wants to remain anonymous says: *"I cannot work and this means my home is at risk of repossession. The person I care for will also be made homeless. We live in poverty."*

These are the very people who save the UK economy **£119 billion** each year\* by relieving pressure on health and social services and serving their communities.

Hollywood actress **Dame Judi Dench** cared for her husband Michael who had lung cancer. He died in January 2001. She says: "As someone with experience of caring for a loved one, I am happy to offer my support to Carers Week. 3 in 5 people will be an unpaid carer at some point in their lives\*\* and many of them sacrifice everything to save our economy £119 billion every year. It's time to give them something back."

Carers Week Manager, Paul Matz, says: *"Many carers are already under a huge amount of financial and emotional pressure. Some carers are forced to give up work to provide 24 hour care. Some of them hold down demanding careers, working a double life as carer and employee. Some of them are children; those who should be the cared for, having to do the caring. Carers are extremely fearful about the impact of cuts on their lives."*

Adult social care services, which support families affected by illness and disability, are facing £1 billion worth of cuts in 2011-12 according to Social Services Directors. This is at the same time as £425 million worth of new services will be needed, due to the aging population.\*\*\*

The theme of this year's Carers Week is 'The True Face of Carers'. It calls for greater recognition and support for the diverse – and often unexpected – range of people who give up their money, time and health to look after somebody else.

Along with Dame Judi Dench, other celebrities supporting this campaign include: Sir David Jason OBE, Jack Charlton OBE, Martin Lewis and Angela Rippon. They all have experience of caring.

Carers Week 2011 has more than 8000 events and activities taking place across the country to ensure that all carers know they are not alone. [www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org)

**- ENDS -**

For more information, a full breakdown of survey results, or to obtain images or an interview with a case study, Carers Week spokesperson or celebrity supporter, please contact:

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

2012 carers took part in the survey, both online and by post, which was carried out by Carers Week from 1st February – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

#### **Results from the survey include:**

- 81% of carers are worried about the proposed cuts
- 44% of carers wonder how they will cope with the cuts – almost 1 in 2 carers
- 76% of carers are worse off financially since taking on their caring responsibilities
- 62% of carers have had to develop negotiating, mediating and persuading skills
- 59% of carers were surprised at how little help they get from the government
- 75% of carers have suffered with health issues as a result of caring
- 60% of carers have had to give up on their ambitions and aspirations since taking on their caring responsibilities
- 64% of carers were surprised at how hard it is to be a carer
- 49% of carers have a disability, condition or illness themselves
- 64% of carers provide more than 50 hours of care a week
- 48% have been a carer for more than 10 years
- 78% of respondents are female

#### **References:**

\**Valuing Carers 2011: Calculating the value of carers' support.* (2011) Carers UK and the University of Leeds.

\*\**It Could Be You - A report on the chances of becoming a carer.* (2001) Carers UK, London.

\*\*\**ADASS Budget Survey 2011* (2011) The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

Carers needing support and advice can find out about local organisations and learn what is happening in their area during Carers Week by visiting [www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org)

Carers Week takes place from 13-19 June and is a partnership of 9 national charities: Age UK, Carers UK, Counsel and Care, Crossroads Care, Dementia UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, MS Society, Parkinson's UK and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

We will be highlighting and celebrating the incredible contribution that carers make, sharing the challenges overcome as well as those still being faced. We will be campaigning for greater support and recognition for carers and informing those who are unaware of the services and benefits they are entitled to.