# WRITTEN STATEMENT

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# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Carers Rights Day** |
| **DATE**  | **25 November 2021**  |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services** |

Every year, Carers Rights Day is an opportunity to celebrate the role unpaid carers play in providing vital support to the people they care for and the health and social care system in Wales. It is also a chance to raise awareness of their rights and entitlements.

Becoming a carer for a friend or relative can happen gradually over time and carers can overlook their own needs out of concern for the person they are caring for. I want everyone in Wales who has caring responsibilities to recognise that identifying as a carer can be a first step towards accessing valuable help and support.

Our carers’ rights campaign encouraged people with caring responsibilities to get in touch with their local authority to see what support is available. We have worked with carers of all ages across Wales and our early feedback has told us more carers are taking steps to access the support they are entitled to.

The pandemic is continuing to place unpaid carers across Wales under pressure and many are in urgent need of support.

Alongside grants to organisations supporting unpaid carers, we are making £10m of extra funding available to support unpaid carers in 2021-22.

We are making £5.5m of the Winter Plan funding available to local authorities to support unpaid carers to manage their mental and physical health. Local authorities will use a range of methods to deliver support, including via direct payments.

We have also awarded £3m to local authorities to increase opportunities for unpaid carers to take a break. A range of new and innovative options are being developed, alongside more traditional residential and day centre respite services. For example:

* Gwynedd Council is setting up a ‘respitality’ scheme to offer cheaper holidays to unpaid carers and upgrading a respite cottage.
* In Torfaen, the funding is supporting an unpaid carers’ bowling club and day trips.
* A rapid response respite-at-home service in Swansea is allowing unpaid carers to attend health appointments or take a break. This service can also provide a taster session for carers considering accessing support from their local authority.
* A six-week programme of counselling is being offered to unpaid carers in Conwy who are experiencing stress and anxiety. The council is also purchasing items such as outdoor furniture, tablets, exercise equipment or gym membership for carers.
* 1,400 unpaid carers and young carers in Monmouthshire have applied for a £10 voucher to spend in garden centres, toy shops, pizza takeaways and for afternoon tea.
* In Anglesey, young carers can access a range of respite provision – many have experienced new activities.

We have also awarded £1.25m to Carers Trust Wales to extend the Carers Support Fund into this financial year – last year, it helped almost 6,500 unpaid carers to cope with the financial impact of the pandemic.

I greatly value the support of unpaid carers – and their representatives – in helping us to understand the challenges they are experiencing and working with us to take action to make a difference to their lives.

This partnership approach will continue, underpinned by the *Strategy for Unpaid Carers* and its delivery plan, which I am launching today.

I am confident that together we can raise awareness and improve the lives of unpaid carers across Wales.