# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **£500 Support Payment for Unpaid Carers** |
| **DATE** | **23 March 2022** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services** |

Unpaid carers provide invaluable care and support to people. This was particularly evident during the pandemic.

I know many unpaid carers struggled during the pandemic – both financially and emotionally. In recognition of their huge efforts and personal sacrifices and to help with some of the costs they have incurred, I am today announcing a one-off £500 payment will be made to more than 57,000 unpaid carers in Wales who are in receipt of Carers Allowance.

The payment is targeted towards those individuals who care for someone for at least 35 hours a week and have low incomes.

Providing care and support to someone can often lead to additional costs – from maintaining a warm home to purchasing specialist medical equipment. Alongside tough decisions to reduce working hours or leave employment to provide care, many unpaid carers can find themselves at risk of falling into financial hardship.

I have had the privilege of meeting and speaking to many unpaid carers over these difficult two years. I have valued their honesty when sharing the unique and often very difficult situations they have faced.

I am determined we will continue to do all we can to support and value all unpaid carers and recognise the vital role they play in reducing the pressures on our health and social care services.

I hope that this payment will go some way towards alleviating financial worries, particularly during these exceptionally challenging times of rising energy and food costs.

From the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, we have heard accounts about how pressure on personal finances has increased to unsustainable levels for many unpaid carers.

In October 2021, Carers UK reported that more than a quarter of Welsh carers were struggling to make ends meet. Sixteen per cent had reduced their hours at work to manage their caring responsibilities and 6% had given up work altogether to care.

A registration process will open later this year and anyone receiving Carers Allowance on 31 March 2022 will be able to register with their local authority to claim the payment. We will publish further details about when and how to register by the end of April.

We will work with our partners in the third sector and local authorities to publicise this payment to make sure all eligible carers are aware of their entitlement and are supported to make a claim.

I would welcome the support of Members in raising awareness of this payment and encouraging eligible constituents to come forward when registration opens.

416 words