# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Carers’ Rights Day** |
| **DATE**  | **21 November 2024** |
| **BY** | **Dawn Bowden MS, Minister for Children and Social Care** |

Today is Carers’ Rights Day. This is an important annual event to recognise the tremendous contribution that unpaid carers make to our society. This year’s theme is ‘Recognising Your Rights’. I am pleased to be meeting with unpaid carers at the new Swansea Carers Centre this week and attending events arranged by Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales at the Senedd to mark the occasion.

Our commitment to carers rights is outlined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Our [Charter for Unpaid Carers](https://gov.wales/charter-unpaid-carers-html) also highlights the rights of unpaid carers. Recent research has found one in six of the population in Wales could be an unpaid carer. The care they provide to family and friends is recognised by this Government and we want to do all we can to support them in their role. Since 2022, we have allocated £42 million to support unpaid carers and we will continue to target our support where it has the most impact.

An important first step is for people to recognise they are an unpaid carer so that they can access the information, advice and support they need. We know there are areas for improvement to ensure support outlined in the Act is consistent and easily accessible to carers across Wales. We are working closely with our health and social care colleagues and carer organisations to support best practice.

We know that achieving a balance of providing care and looking after their own health and wellbeing is key for unpaid carers. Our £9 million Short Breaks Scheme is a Programme for Government commitment and is on course to deliver 30,000 short break opportunities in the three years up to March 2025.

We want more carers to be able to maintain a balance between employment and their caring responsibilities. I welcome the introduction of the Carers Leave Act (2023). This legislation brought in new employment rights for carers to take unpaid leave and is an important first step in greater recognition of carers in the workplace.

I also welcome the UK Government’s recent announcement of the independent review of Carers Allowance overpayments and the increase in the maximum earnings limit for the payment from next April. These changes are crucial steps towards better supporting carers and ensuring they receive the benefits they deserve.

Unpaid carers are often under financial pressures, and we want them to claim their financial entitlements. Our latest national benefits take-up campaign helped almost 37,000 people claim over £10.4 million in additional income.

We have committed £4.5million to our Carers Support Fund. This fund helps carers on low incomes buy basic essential items and access information and advice. Almost half of those using this fund were previously unknown to services and were signposted to financial advice and local support services. I was pleased to attend an event organised by Carers Trust Wales this week and speak to unpaid carers about the benefits of this scheme.

It is vital that all unpaid carers feel increasingly empowered to claim their rights and entitlements and to be able to maintain a balanced life alongside their caring role.