

WHAT IS A CARER'S & YOUNG CARER'S RECOGNITION PAYMENT?

A **Carer's Recognition Payment** is a supplement to Carer's Allowance of £11.70 per week (2026/27). It is paid either weekly or every four weeks to unpaid carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance in recognition of the substantial care they provide. It does not count as income when calculating other means tested benefits or in other calculations of income.

A **Young Carer's Recognition Payment** is a financial payment of £405.10 (26/27) for carers aged 16–19 who are not in receipt of Carer's Allowance and who meet the eligibility criteria of providing at least 16 hours of care per week for at least 3 months. It is paid as a flat rate once a year to thank and support young people who provide unpaid care.

Both payments are currently paid in Scotland but **not** in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CARERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND?

According to the 2021 Census, there are **over 220,000 people providing unpaid care in Northern Ireland**. Of these approximately **17,500 are young carers or young adult carers** (aged 25 years or under).

Over **1 in 4 unpaid carers (28%) live in poverty** in Northern Ireland but this rises to nearly 1 in 2 carers who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance (46%).

Inadequate social security is one of the main drivers of carer poverty as well as the inescapable extra costs of caring. These include transport, electricity and heating, toiletries, clothing, special food and therapies plus the additional care paid for over and above that provided by social services and other support services. That coupled with the nature of the care being provided (more demanding care needs, caring for longer hours, caring for people with complex needs and sandwich caring) contribute to greater levels of poverty.

Additionally, the Carer Poverty Commission reports that **young carers and young adult carers do not receive any direct financial recognition for the care they provide**, and the households that they are part of are too often missing out on the support required to meet the extra costs of disability or ill health plunging them into poverty.

Carers save the Northern Ireland Executive an estimated £5.8 billion annually through the care they provide, yet many experience some of the highest poverty rates of any group in society.

HOW WILL A CARER'S RECOGNITION PAYMENT HELP?

A [Carer's Recognition Payment](#) would instantly lift over 3,400 carers out of poverty and send a powerful message that society values the enormous contribution carers make every day.

A Young Carer's Recognition Payment would give young carers extra financial resources for the social and leisure activities they often miss out on and a much-deserved recognition of the caring roles they perform.

WHAT IS THE COST OF THESE PAYMENTS?

The cost to deliver a Carer's Recognition payment in Northern Ireland would be approximately [£27.7 million annually](#).¹

The [Independent Review of Welfare Mitigations](#) looked at the cost to deliver a Young Carer's Recognition Payment in 2022 but were unable to provide a full cost estimate based upon available data.

WHAT WOULD CLIFF EDGE LIKE TO SEE?

The Cliff Edge Coalition are calling on the Minister for Communities and the Northern Ireland Executive to **introduce a Carer's and Young Carer's Recognition Payment similar to that in Scotland to recognise the significant contribution carers make to society and to help protect carers against poverty.**

Furthermore, we ask elected representatives to advocate for a Carer and Young Carer Recognition Payment in their daily work.

If you require any further information, please contact
The **Cliff Edge Coalition** via cliffedgeni@niapn.org

¹ Numbers receiving Carers Allowance in May 2026: 45,530 x £609 = £27,727,770