

# [News story: £5 million fund to develop support for unpaid carers](#)

The £5 million [Carers Innovation Fund](#) will invest in innovative ways of supporting unpaid carers, outside of mainstream health and care services.

This funding will be used to improve support across the country and help build more carer-friendly communities.

Examples of the kind of projects the fund would invest in include:

- technology platforms – for example, to help carers to take a break from their caring responsibilities
- support groups – like carers' cafes and Men's Sheds, which develop peer support groups and offer short courses to help reduce isolation

Projects will be expected to show a positive effect on:

- carers' health and wellbeing
- carers' ability to manage work alongside caring responsibilities
- carers' ability to take a break from their caring role
- reducing loneliness and social isolation

Applicants will need to demonstrate their idea is a fresh approach that is better than existing provision, will benefit the local community and can be expanded and replicated.

The voluntary sector, charities, SMEs and commercial organisations can all bid for funding to prove their concept, with the aim of securing longer term funding from other sources.

Carers and other experts will sit on the evaluation panel to make sure proposals are feasible.

The fund was first announced last year as part of the [Carers Action Plan](#), a cross-government programme of targeted work to support unpaid carers over the next 2 years. Initially the fund was worth half a million pounds. However, funding was later increased to £5 million.

The NHS is also working to better identify and support carers across England, as part of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

Minister for, Care Caroline Dinenage, said:

Informal care is a fundamental part of our health and care system, which would not be sustainable without the incredible contribution of carers across the country. But we cannot take them for granted and must do more to protect their wellbeing and ensure they can enjoy full lives.

This £5 million investment will help build our understanding of the kinds of support that work for carers, outside of traditional healthcare services. From cafes that bring carers together, to innovative forms of technology that help carers enjoy time off, I want to see a range of exciting projects boosted and their benefits unlocked.

Helen Walker, Chief Executive of Carers UK, said:

There's never been a more important time to develop and accelerate new ways to support unpaid carers.

Many more of us are taking on unpaid caring responsibilities for family and friends, often alongside paid work or raising children. We are also seeing the amount and complexity of care increasing.

As we live and work longer, with technology transforming so many aspects of our lives, it's time to innovate to support the way families are living today.