

THE IMPACT OF THE CARERS' MOVEMENT ON POLICY AND PRACTICE AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

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Outline

- **50 years of a carers' movement in the UK**
- **Bilateral and multinational connections**
 - ▣ **International carers' conferences**
 - ▣ **European campaigning and policymaking**
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- **Some international connections**
 - ▣ ***Australia***
 - ▣ ***Canada***
- **Reflections on policy and practice exchange**

50 years of a carers' movement in the UK

1965 – *The National Association for the Single Woman and her Dependants*

- 'From the beginning, **carers' sense of injustice** about their lack of financial recognition has been a **driving force** behind the carers' movement'. Carers who have given up their jobs, lost pension rights and become dependent on benefits, feel that they have been financially penalised for taking on the responsibilities of caring. Mary Webster saw clearly that **legislation would be needed alongside practical and emotional support if these women's lives were to be changed.**

(Nancy Kohner, 1993:7)

2015- *Carers UK - statement in the 50th anniversary year*

- We've been campaigning with carers for 50 years, transforming understanding and **winning critical developments in carers' rights**. In these challenging times, our work has never been more important as we seek to protect these rights, while pressing ahead to break new ground. **We are able to speak with authority in our policy and campaigning work because we are grounded in the reality of carers' experiences, backed up with vital evidence through our research.** We ensure carers' voices reach decision-makers at the highest level, **building on our research to influence and change policy.** We value working in partnership with others and we're tenacious in pursuing changes that look impossible.

<http://www.carersuk.org/about-us/what-we-do>

Key Achievements of the UK carers' movement

- ❑ **Invalid Care Allowance 1976 – later ‘Carers Allowance’**
 - ❑ Cost £1.8bn pa., c.600,000 carers, 35 hr for recipient of disability benefit
 - ❑ Married women entitled following ruling by European Court of Justice (J. Drake case)
 - ❑ 1986 – First legislative recognition of carers, in disability legislation
- ❑ **Three successful Private Members’ Bills placed duties on local authorities**
 - ❑ *The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995*
 - ❑ *The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000*
 - ❑ *The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004*
- ❑ **National Carers’ Strategies in 1999, 2008, 2010**
- ❑ **Coalitions, partnerships, research – Census question in 2001, 2011**
- ❑ **Carers, employment and flexible working arrangements**
- ❑ **Carers Week, Carers Rights Day, media campaigns**
- ❑ **All Party Parliamentary Group at Westminster**
- ❑ **International profile and activities**
- ❑ ***Care Act 2014*** – consolidates social care law in England / new rights for carers

International Carers Conferences

1st *'Caring for Carers'* - Church House, Westminster, UK, 1998

- Organised to mark the 10th anniversary of the Carers National Association: Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and USA representatives present - over 200 participants.

2nd *'Share the Care'* - Brisbane, Australia, 2000

- Hosted by Carers' Association of Australia at *'a critical time for decision makers around the globe'*.

3rd *'Family Care'* - Washington DC, USA, 2002

- Hosted by National Alliance for Caregiving: 700 participants, 22 nations. Seven countries - Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Sweden, UK, USA - *'dominated discussion'*.

4th *'Caregivers: essential partners in care'* - Toronto, Canada 2007

- Hosts Canadian Caregiver Alliance: announced international alliance: Australia, Canada, Finland, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, Taiwan, UK, USA.

5th *'New Frontiers in Caring: 2010 and beyond'* - Leeds, UK, 2010

- Carers UK with Uni. Leeds: Health, Social Care & Well-being Services; Caring & Employment; Technology, Design & the Built Environment; Financial & Legal Planning, Products & Services

6th *'Care & Caring: future-proofing the new demographics'* - Gothenberg, Sweden, 2015

- Forthcoming in September: Hosts - Carers Sweden, Swedish Family Care Competence Centre with Carers UK - 30+ countries

European campaigning and policymaking

Eurocarers

2003: EU research project

- set up pan-European research network on family care in 23 countries
- Carers UK provided initial secretariat

Eurocarers: 1st meeting Maastricht 2004; formally registered 2007; Paris meeting 2007

Mission: “Join Eurocarers and strengthen the voice of carers at home and in Brussels”

Members: initially Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, UK; now has members in all EU states

Focus on international policy change

- Eurocarers President role
- PROGRESS funding: Brussels office + CEO
- Promoting EU Carers Strategy
- Aim: carers central to EU social policy

□ **100 million carers in the EU**

The European Parliament Carers Interest Group

Established 2007 to raise awareness/ ensure carers are considered across EU policy fields

Key MEPs: Marian Harkin (Ireland); Heinz Becker (Germany); Jean Lambert (UK); Siirpa Pietikanen (Finland) – in all 30 MEPs belong

Policy change activities and ambitions

- Include recommendations on carer support in all key EC documents
- Open Method of Communication process
- Working towards **Directive on Carers’ Leave**

EC has policy remit which limits its direct influence to employment issues

Carers and Employment: case example

UK - EU: “Action for Carers and Employment” 2002-07

- **Employers for Carers Forum** – now employer funded, continues

Carers Australia: Work & Care: the necessary investment (2014)

- *‘Combining Work and Care The benefits to carers and the economy’*
- *‘Combining Work and Care The business case for carer-friendly workplaces’*

NSW Government - Carers Strategy 2014-19:

- Key aim: ensure *“carers have choices & opportunities to participate in paid work”*

Canadian Federal Government Employment & Social Development

- **Canadian Employers for Caregivers Plan 2014:**
- *Panel to consult with employers on workplace practices that support caregivers;*
- *Analysis of cost-benefit of workplace practices*
- *Mechanisms for sustained employer engagement in this area.*

Bilateral connections: Australia and the UK

- ❑ Early 1970s: *Council on the Ageing* awarded first grant to explore care given ‘by family and friends to the frail-aged and disabled’
- ❑ State organisations established: NSW 1980; Queensland 1989; Victoria 1993
- ❑ 1992 1st Carers’ Awareness week run in Australia
- ❑ 1992 Commonwealth Respite for Carers Program introduced /first federal budget allocation
- ❑ 1993 Carers Association of Australia launched – in 1997 Governor General becomes national patron
- ❑ 2007 Official launch of *Parliamentary Friends of Carers* at Parliament House
- ❑ 2010 Right to request flexible working for carers of disabled children – *Fair Work Act*

“Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia’s carers, advocating on behalf of Australia’s carers to influence policies and services at a national level. It works collaboratively with partners and its member organisations, the network of state and territory Carers Associations, to deliver a range of essential national carer services.”

Bilateral connections: Canada

- **Developments at Provincial and Federal levels**
 - 1984 First modest financial benefit to carers in Nova Scotia
- **Most progress occurred in 2000s**
 - 2000 - Federal Family Responsibility Leave – 3-12 days (unpaid)
 - Compassionate Care Benefit (within the Employment Insurance scheme)
 - Compassionate Care Leave – 8 weeks over 26 weeks - 2004-2014
 - Modest tax credits for carers of family members in specific circumstances
 - *Caregiver Recognition Act 2011* – Manitoba only
- **Employers for Caregivers Plan**
 - Federal Government initiative
 - Modelled on EfC in UK – explored in Ministerial visit to UK in 2013
 - Consulted with Carers UK in 2014

Towards convergence in policy choices on work and care?

□ **Common rationales:**

- *Demography*
- *Gender Equality*
- *Sustainability*
- *Employer interests*
- *Managing care costs*
- *21st century care:*
 - *Care outside hospital*
 - *Care outside institutions*
 - *Independent living*
 - *The 'bedrock' of carers' support*

□ **Policy options:**

- *Develop local services*
- *Fund carers to quit work*
- *Carers leave*
- *Flexible employment*
- *Support in the workplace*
- *Emergency support*
- *Discrimination law*
- *Human rights approach*

Reflections on policy and practice exchange

Issues and observations:

- *Importance of 'fit' with political systems*
- *Significant links with supranational charities*
- *Universality of issues*
- *Cultural context / difference*
- *Convergence*
- *Transfer of policy ideas*

Key informant data show:

- *'Common cause'*
- *Transnational learning*
- *International mentoring*
- *Empowerment*
- *Inspiration*
- *Sharing of ideas*
- *Raising the profile*

Contact details and sources

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- Keefe, J. (2004) *Policy Profile for Compensating Family Caregivers*
www.hecol.ualberta.ca/rapp/mcri.htm
- Kohner, N. (1993) *A Stronger Voice: the achievements of the carers' movement 1963-93* London: Carers National Assoc.

Links:

- <https://www.employersforcarers.org/>
- <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/media-centre/carers-national-news/article/?id=work-and-care-the-necessary-investment>
- <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/seniors/reports/cec.shtml>