

# FAMILY CARERS AND CARING

***Family Carers and Caring: What It's All About** makes a major contribution to the current debate about the future of social care in the UK and most importantly offers the basis for a new and evidenced narrative about how we identify, recognise and value the family carers who form the bedrock of our somewhat tired welfare state. Social care promised by Boris Johnson on the steps of 10 Downing Street was a historic moment to reconfigure our care system and thereby to formally recognise, support but not exploit the contributions of family carers. Delivery was delayed, but that delay creates opportunity and **Family Carers and Caring** offers the perfect brief for reforms to come, acknowledging and evidencing the critical role that family carers will play within a redesigned care system.*

*Family carers, unpaid, often over-burdened and poorly understood, underpin both the UK health and the social care systems. The value of their care is estimated at £193 billion a year, but there is growing evidence of multiple health and financial inequalities as carers care for longer and many struggle to balance complex care at home with employment and wider family responsibilities. Family care of necessity has become a 21st-century issue for local and national government. 1 in every 5 of NHS staff now have family caring responsibilities. The UK workforce needs to reverse the early retirement of so many workers in middle age, many of whom have acquired new caring responsibilities. We are seeing*

*the rise of young carers whose own education and career prospects are at risk because they are neither recognised nor supported sufficiently. Additionally, and importantly, the NHS is also reconfiguring the role of hospitals and transferring health care and recovery back into family homes.*

*The UK, of course, like its international counterparts, has seen multiple strategies and new legislation over the past two decades, intended to rebrand social care; to integrate health and care and to personalise support to meet individual needs. But family carers have not achieved the ‘parity of esteem’ envisaged by the Care Act and post-COVID financial challenges mean that fewer carers are now receiving support. An estimated 500,000 people await assessments or the delivery of agreed packages of support from their local authorities and families are still selling family homes to pay for care. But even allowing for the very real financial pressures on all public services, we can do better and **Family Carers and Caring** offers strategic analysis; creative forward thinking and a new understanding of what 21st-century care and support could look like.*

*As the authors note in the introduction to Chapter 2 of their book, the profile of the population of family carers in the UK is dynamic, diverse and constantly shifting. We are beginning to see the ‘big conversations’ which have already taken place in a number of our European neighbours around how we define and therefore how we deliver social care and support and the role of family carers in a changing society. The House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee recently entitled a report on the state of*

*UK social care as ‘A Gloriously Ordinary Life’ in recognition of powerful stories from family carers and those they support who wanted to reimagine care to actively support ‘ordinary lives’ and 21st-century preferences and ambitions. As a long-term personal carer myself, I can only hope that this book is read, discussed and shared across local and national government, the NHS and of course the UK’s rich constellation of community organisations as we work together to define an ‘ordinary life’ for the extraordinary people who are family carers and how we can progressively and strategically work together to achieve it.*

Dame Philippa Russell DBE, Vice-President,  
Carers UK

*This excellent book presents a wide-ranging, informative and accessible discussion of what family care and carers are ‘all about’, with conceptual and theoretical material illustrated by case studies. Drawing on their extensive knowledge of the subject, Milne and Larkin argue for change in the place of family care within social care systems. This book will be a valuable resource for a range of students and researchers in social work, social policy and related subjects.*

Professor Liz Lloyd, Senior Research Fellow,  
School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

# FAMILY CARERS AND CARING

What It's All About

BY

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And

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*Alisoun dedicates the book to her husband Simon,  
Mary dedicates the book to her eldest granddaughter Alice.  
We would also both like to dedicate the book to those who do  
caring now and will become carers in the future.*

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