



Care and support for caregivers

**WeDO Final Conference: The European
Quality Framework for long-term care**
European Parliament, 14 November 2012

Robert Anderson

Head of Living Conditions and Quality of Life Unit, EUROFOUND

President, EUROCARERS

Mainly unpaid care, often by workers

Dominance of family and informal care in most Member States e.g. EU – 20m carers provide 20+ hours per week. 80% of care hours are provided by informal care, predominantly women 45+.

- In nearly all countries more than half of carers under 65 combine care with employment
- 6% - 10% of employees are providing regular care, especially older (female) workers (13% - 16%)
- But among those with care responsibilities only half of women but 9 out of 10 men (are able to) work full-time
- Enabling access to employment of excluded carers

Concerns (e.g. in the 2009 Communication on Alzheimer's disease; 2012 Employment Package) about shortages of carers, lack of support for informal carers, and risk of social exclusion for carers. Concerns amplified by economic crisis and any reductions in services.

Caregivers in the EU policy debate

Role and contribution of informal carers begins to be visible, especially in long-term care.

- *Employment*: Recruiting and retaining an adequately qualified and skilled care workforce; training
- *Social protection*: For both formal and informal carers; pensions
- *Equal opportunities*: Measures to reconcile employment with informal care
- *Health*: Sustainability of care provision and quality of the care workforce; little attention to health of informal carers

Common needs of carers

- Security of income (and employment)
- Awareness, acknowledgement, advocacy
- Communication, counselling and building capacity/coping skills
- Prevention of common health impacts and health promotion
- Opportunities for social relationships and participation

Dignity and respect for caregivers and care recipients.

Support when and where it is needed.

Impacts on employment

- Financial disadvantage – nil/reduced hours
- Access to training and skills development
- Stress, sickness and absenteeism
- Career development and promotion
- Generally lack of action in the workplace to support working carers – benefits, information, services, flexible working times, work organisation and leave entitlements
- 2011 Eurofound study on ‘Company initiatives for workers with care responsibilities’: 11 Member States, 50 companies

What next?

Raising awareness and promoting good practice

- Amongst companies; among workers
- Also at policy and social dialogue levels

Increasing take-up of measures

- Support of line managers and colleagues
- Preferences of male and female workers; private matter

Ensuring wider and more consistent provision

- Labour legislation (EU and Member States)
- Formal provisions in social dialogue (EU, Member State, sectoral)

Joined-up approach

- Better integration of employment policy (and practice) and home/community care service policy (and practice)

Promote evaluation

Eurocarers agenda: Research and information for evidence-based practice

- Income security – reconciling employment with care, pensions
- Who cares? – The contribution of spouses and non-family carers
- Sustainability of family care – decisions to begin, maintain and end caring
- Burden of care – significance of incontinence, depression; joys of caring
- Communication – information needs over time and appropriate sources
- Capacity building – timeliness and effectiveness of support measures; prevention
- Diversity and developments in public policies and services: learning from experience; collecting and disseminating good practice

Strengthening support for carers: role for the EU

Promote awareness and debate on care and its importance in the European model of society – European Year Active Ageing 2012.

Use the OMC for Social Protection to share best practice on how to optimise support for informal carers.

Use Structural Funds (especially Social Fund) for training of both formal and informal carers.

Protect the rights of carers and provide support to organisations representing interest of carers

Promote development of complementary formal services – that explicitly address carers' needs