

## Carers

### Introduction

The FRS collects information on those giving and receiving help on an informal basis, that is, not as part of a paid job. What should be counted as care is not prescriptively defined. This information is collected when respondents, using a showcard displaying a list of types of help (given in Table 6.5), are asked, "Is there anyone in this household who receives any of these kinds of help or looking after? This could be help from outside or anyone who lives here." Respondents are also asked if anyone in the household provides care to anyone living outside the household. Questions then ask who is receiving the help or being looked after

and then there are follow-up questions for each person named, who provides the help, what type of help it is, and how frequently they receive the help. Note that the follow up questions are only asked for those receiving help at least once a week.

Information on carers and those receiving care is used within the DSS in the modelling of benefits, such as Invalid Care Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, as well as in analyses of work incentive issues.

### Contents and points to note when interpreting tables

Tables 6.1 to 6.4 look at those providing care. Carers are counted only once, even if they look after more than one individual. Carers outside the household are not included in these tables as they are not identified individually within the questionnaire, and they may also produce instances of double counting. Information is now collected for individual children who are carers in the same way that it is for adults. Therefore these tables, with the exception of Table 6.3, which looks at employment status, show statistics for *all* informal carers.

Table 6.2 gives the relationship between the carer and the person being cared for. Those giving care to more than one person have been combined into one group. For non-household members, more than one person receiving care means more than one entry in either the "relative", "friend or neighbour", "client of voluntary organisation" or "other non-household" group. However, if, for example, someone cared for more than one friend or neighbour, this would not be picked up by the questionnaire.

Table 6.3 shows the employment status of adult carers, using ILO definitions of employment in harmonisation with other government surveys. This table compares adult informal carers with all adults.

Tables 6.5 to 6.9 look at household members receiving care. An individual is recorded as receiving care if they receive care from another person in the household, and/or from someone outside the household. They are counted only once no matter how many people provide care to them. In the 1998-99 sample, the number receiving care was lower than the number providing care (2,687 and 4,689 respectively). This is because many recipients of care received help from more than one person within their household – each

of whom was recorded as a separate carer. Those being cared for can receive help with more than one task. The categories are chosen from the card shown to respondents at the start of the questions. These are as perceived by the respondent, who may or may not be the person receiving or giving that help.

Tables 6.4 and 6.9 show the main source of income received by the household in which the carer and the person being cared for live respectively. "Main source" is calculated as the category of income that gives the highest amount, and results should be interpreted with caution since some households may have more than one source that provides similar proportions.

Comparisons of earlier years, FRS data with the General Household Survey's (GHS) modules on informal care suggest that the FRS under reports both those receiving and those giving care. This is particularly where care is required less frequently and may be accounted for by the way the questions are asked. On the FRS, questions are asked as part of the household schedule, and, unlike the GHS, it is not always the case that the person providing or giving the care is addressed directly. GHS data therefore provide a more complete picture of all types of informal care. Uses of FRS data, such as in the modelling of benefits such as Invalid Care Allowance, are applicable to those requiring more frequent caring.

It should also be noted that the FRS does not record information on individuals in retirement or nursing homes. This means that figures relating to the most elderly individuals may not be representative of the Great Britain population, as many of those who require care at this age will have moved into homes where they can receive more frequent help.

**Key definitions used**  
**(for a full explanation of all definitions please refer to the Glossary)**

- Informal carers
- Employment status
- Gross weekly household income