

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland Carers Centres Funding Survey August 2023



Background

Following a discussion about inconsistencies in funding at the Managers Network Meeting in May 2023, it was agreed to develop a funding survey in order to gain an understanding of the current funding arrangements and any issues relating to capacity across the network.

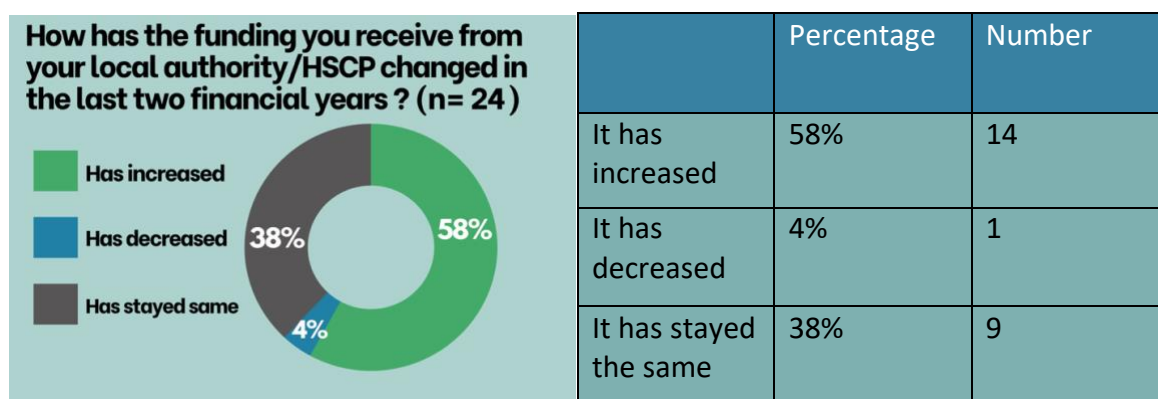
COCIS has undertaken funding surveys in the past, with the last survey taking place in January 2021. Findings from the previous survey have been included in this report, to allow for comparison and to identify emerging trends.

Methodology

The survey opened in May 2023 and consisted of 10 questions relating to the financial years 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023. It received 24 returns, representing 26 local authority areas. Three responses included information from two local authority areas (North and South Lanarkshire, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire and North and South Ayrshire). One local authority area received two responses (North Lanarkshire)

The 2021 survey received 29 responses and related to the financial years 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020. This was a much shorter survey with only 4 questions, all of which were repeated in the 2023 survey.

Q1 How has the funding you receive from your local authority/HSCP changed in the last two financial years. By what percentage has it increased or decreased?



We also asked respondents to indicate the percentage by which their funding had increased or decreased.

Increased funding

- The Increased funding range was from 2% to 100%
- The Mean or average was 21%

- The median, or middle point was 12%
- There was one significant outlier of 100%, with the next largest increase at 38.4%

Decreased funding

- Only one respondent reported a decrease in funding at 9%

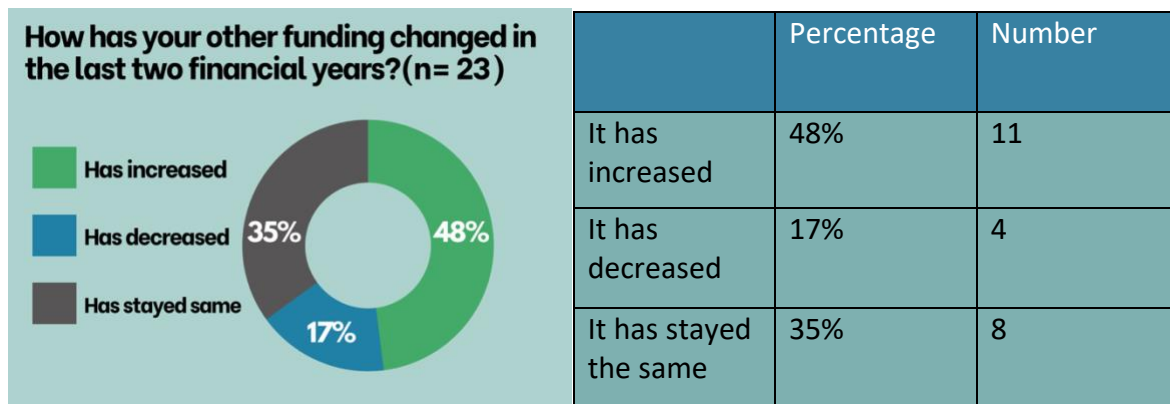
Comparison to 2021 survey

- In 2021, the majority of respondents (55%) said their core funding had remained the same compared to 38% in this funding period
- In two areas it had decreased, compared to one area in this period
- 38% had received an increase, compared to 58% in this period

A comparison with the 2021 survey would indicate that there has been some improvement overall in the level of funding, with some areas receiving significantly more funding and others a more modest uplift or remaining the same.

It should be noted that centres are starting from very different baselines and overall there continues to be great inconsistency in how local authorities / HCPSs are funding services.

2. How has your other funding changed in the last two financial years? (please include all except funding from your local authority / HSCP)



As before, we asked respondents to indicate the percentage by which their funding had increased or decreased.

Increased funding

- Eleven respondents said their funding had increased, with ten provided further details
- The Increased funding range was from 3% to 600%
- The Mean or average was 85%
- The median, or middle point was 18%
- There was a significant outlier of 600% and when this was removed the average reduced to 28%

'It has increased by over 7 x (percentage increase = over 600%!). This is predominantly due to significant increase in funding from Shared Care Scotland as well as some increase in unsolicited donations, accessing other grants, funding from small trusts etc.'

Decreased funding

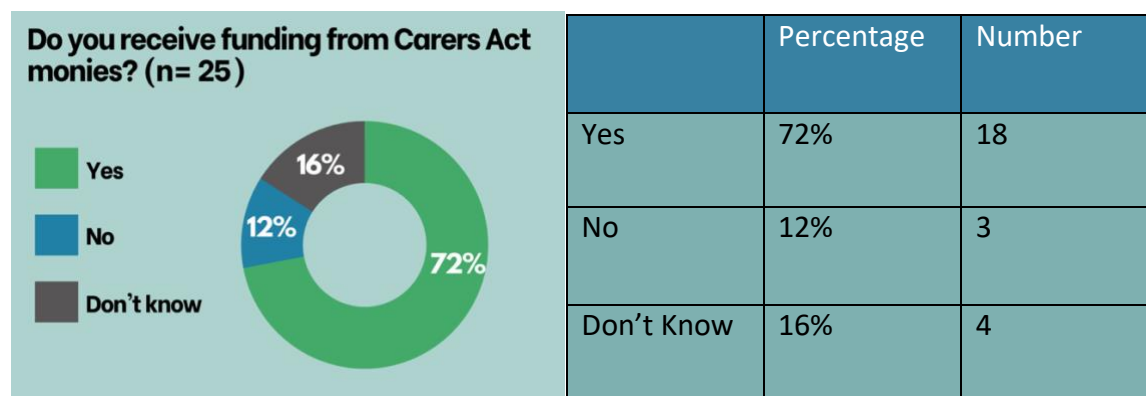
- Four areas reported that their funding had decreased. The decreased funding range was 3% to 54%
- The Mean or average was 26%

'In 2022 we received winter recovery funding, bank of Scotland and adapt & thrive money and while we got a substantial TTL increase over the 2 years will show as a decrease of nearly 54%'

Comparison to 2021 survey

- The percentage of centres who reported increased project funding was very similar to this period with a difference of less than 1%.
- In the previous survey 34% of centres saw a decrease in this funding stream, compared to 17% in this period

Q3 Do you receive funding from Carers Act monies?



The majority of centres (18 out of 25) receive funding from Carers Act implementation funding. Three areas responded that they received no funding and four areas said they 'don't know' if they receive Carers Act funding.

For those areas who did not know, this appears to be indicative of a lack of transparency in some areas about what Carers Act funding is spent on and what funding stream/s contract funding comes from.

'We receive around £850k from our HSCP for adult carers and Education & Children Services for young carers. I can never really find out where this funding comes from. We received similar amounts prior to the Carers Act being introduced but no one will tell me the breakdown of where the current funding comes from.'

We asked centres to specify what Carers Act funding was allocated for and we received responses from 16 areas. Exactly half mentioned specifically that the funding for their contract was met partially or fully through Carers Act funding

'All HSCP funding is Carers Act money'

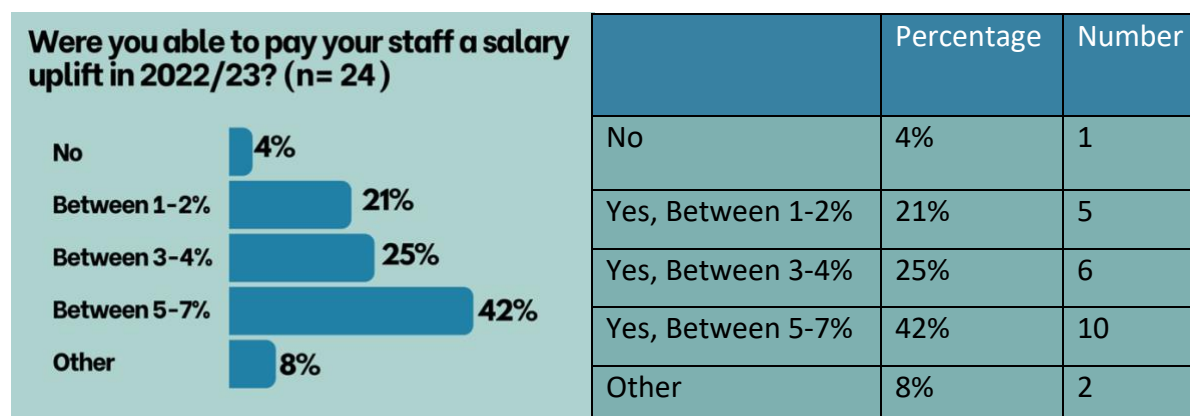
A variety of services were described as being funded through Carers Act funding. The table below sets out the range of services described

Type of Service / activity	Number of mentions
Short breaks funding / additional Time to Live funding	6
Conducting Adult Carer Support Plans	4
Building capacity / Employing staff members, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Discharge workers • Adult carer support workers • Young carer support workers and peer mentors 	4
Information and Advice	4
Carer Support / Group work	3
Counselling service	2
Financial Support / income maximisation	2
Emergency funds / recovery grants	2
Training programme	2
Young carer statements	1
Skill funds for carers	1
Health and Wellbeing programme	1
Grants for young carers	1

This list of services is unlikely to be comprehensive, particularly as some centres indicated that all of their contract funding is from Carers Act implementation monies, which would suggest that a significant number of their activities would need to be included.

It is interesting to note the recent development in some areas to use Carers Act funding to enable carers centres to facilitate grant funds for carers. These include topping up short breaks funding, providing emergency and recovery funding for carers and providing skills funding and grants for young carers.

Q4 Were you able to pay your staff a salary uplift in 2022/23?

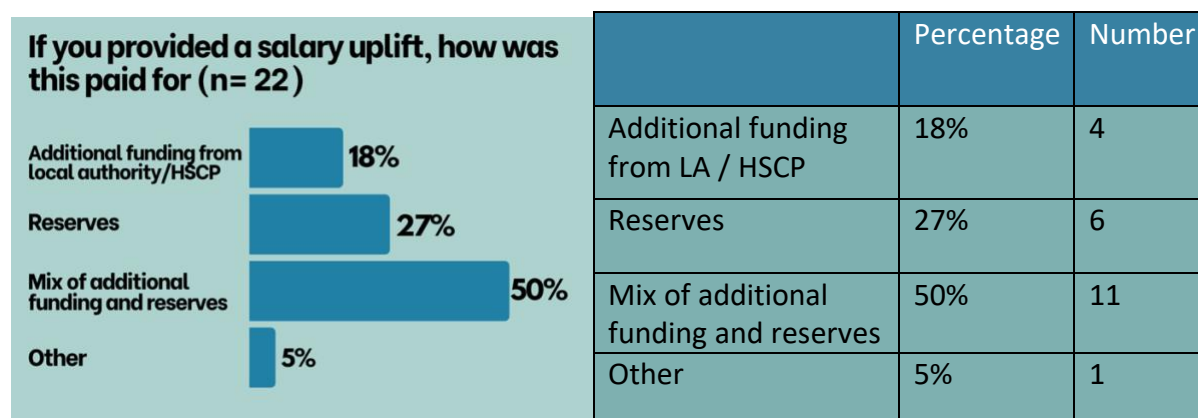


Of the two areas that reported 'Other' one provided their staff with a one off bonus, while the other area provided both a 4% uplift and a one off bonus. This means that the majority of centres paid their staff an uplift in the last financial year (92%)

There was a great deal of variation in the size of uplift centres were able to give their staff, ranging from 1% to 7%, with the majority falling within 5% to 7% band.

The pay settlement for local authority staff during this period was a minimum of 5%, meaning that at least 58% of staff within carers centres received a lower salary uplift during this period.

Q5 If you provided a salary uplift, how was this paid for



Only 18% of centres received the full cost of additional salary costs from their local authority as part of their contract. This means that 77% had to use reserves for some or all of the costs. Concerns have already been expressed that this situation is unsustainable, as centres will not be able to continue to fund annual uplifts through reserves.

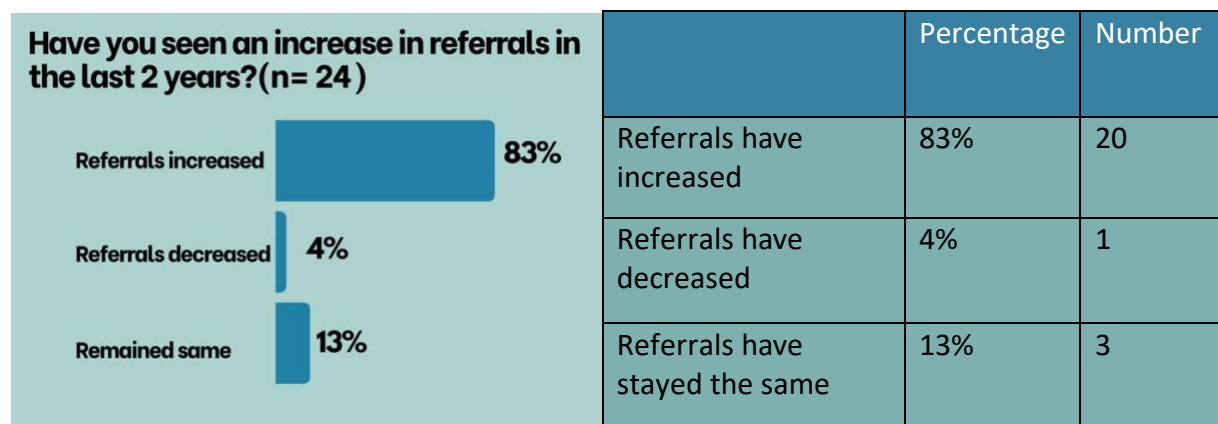
'It should be noted that voluntary organisations often do not receive inflationary funding increases that allow them to match salary inflation awards made in public sector which puts us at a disadvantage in the recruitment market'

If annual pay awards of a similar level continue, this will put third sector organisations at a further disadvantage to statutory services when it comes to recruitment. Salaries are

already lower in the third sector than the statutory sector and this is likely to lead to wider discrepancy. Only one centre reported that pay awards were part of their contract

'Yearly increases/additional funding built into both contracts'

Q6 Have you seen an increase in referrals in the last 2 years?



We also asked respondents to indicate the percentage by which their referrals had increased or decreased.

Increase in referrals

- Eighteen out of twenty respondents provided information on the percentage by which their referrals had increased. Of these one provided a narrative, rather than a figure saying that as well as a slight increase in the number of new carers, *'we are supporting more existing carers with demand above pre-COVID levels for all services'*
- The Increased range was from 1% to 172%
- The Mean or average was 41%
- The median, or middle point was 20%

Decrease in referrals or stayed the same

- Only one area reported a decrease in referrals of just less than 1%
- Three areas reported that referrals had stayed at the same level

Comparison to 2021 survey

- In the previous funding period 66% of carers centres reported an increase in referrals, compared with 83% in this funding period
- In 2021, 31% of centres reporting that referrals remained static, compared to 13% in this funding period.
- In our 2021 survey the increase range was 5% to 195%, with an average of 36% and a median of 21%

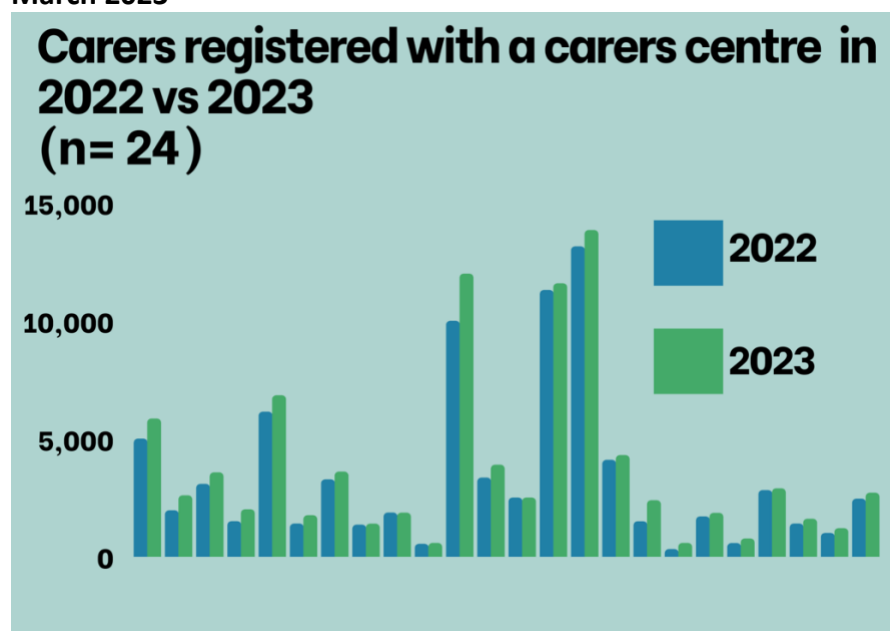
A comparison of our 2021 survey and our most recent survey shows that the majority of carers centres are still experiencing an increase in referrals and that the average is broadly similar. This appears to indicate a continuing upward trajectory for referrals.

It is important to note the cumulative effect of referrals continuing to rise, particularly as carers typically remain registered with the centre and may require ongoing support and review

In addition, several respondents noted that as well as supporting an additional number of carers, referrals are increasingly complex and time-consuming and this is also impacting on capacity

‘Whilst the number of new referrals has gone up, we are also still supporting carers registered in previous years. Around half of these registered will have direct personal contact during the year at some point. We are finding the complexity of cases having a huge impact on capacity as support takes longer’

Q7 Approximately how many carer were registered with your centre in March 2022 and March 2023



	Carers Registered March 2022	Carers Registered March 2023	Increase /Decrease Number	Increase /Decrease Percentage
	5000	5850	850	17%
	1961	2590	629	32%
	3080	3565	485	16%
	1500	2000	500	33%
	6144	6839	695	11%
	1,400	1750	350	25%
	3,273	3599	326	10%
	1349	1391	42	3%
	1862	1857	-5	0%
	537	571	34	6%
	10000	12000	2000	20%

	3346	3892	546	16%
	2500	2500	0	0%
	11308	11591	283	3%
	13159	13850	691	5%
	4100	4300	200	5%
	1497	2386	889	59%
	318	574	256	81%
	1700	1850	150	9%
	571	763	192	34%
	2815	2889	74	3%
	1400	1600	200	14%
	1000	1200	200	20%
	2450	2703	253	10%
TOTAL	82,270	92,110	9,840	18%

As well as referrals increasing, as expected the majority of centres have seen a corresponding increase in the number of carers registered with their service. Only two centres reported numbers remaining the same, or showing a very slight decrease of less than 1%

- The range of increase is between 3% and 81%
- Of the 22 centres that reported an increase in numbers, the average increase was 20%
- The total number of additional carers registered with carers centres over this period is 9,840. With one area alone recording an additional 2,000 carers

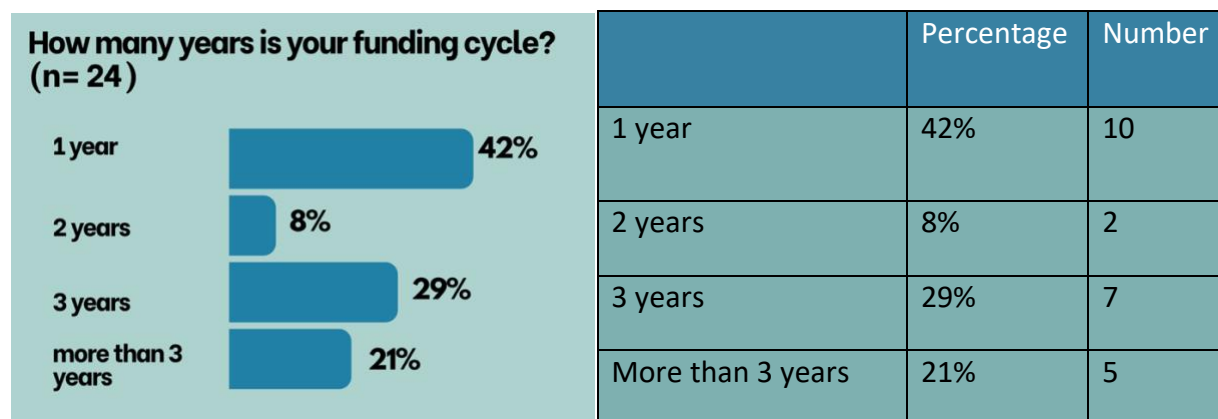
Q8 Over the last two years, have issues of capacity or demand had an impact on the services you are able to provide. For example- Has your staff team increased or decreased?- Have you reduced or increased the range of services you offer?- Do you now operate a waiting list?

This was an open ended question, which we received 17 responses to. The table below summarises the responses and the frequency with which points were raised

Point Raised	Number of mentions	Comments
Staff team has increased. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff are responsible for specific services, rather than increase in capacity • Demand still outstrips resourced 	12	<i>'Our staffing did increase in the 22/23 financial year but this was mainly in response to some new projects which were funded from Carers Act monies and consequently the range of services did increase'</i> <i>'Staff team has increased, however demand and new services are out-stripping that, and it is difficult to maintain demand'</i>

<p>Operating a waiting list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales for ACSPs extended from 4 to 6 weeks • Policy to respond to referrals in 28 days, unless an emergency • Waiting list for counselling • Waiting list for young carers 	10	<p><i>'We currently have a huge waiting list despite receiving additional funding from the HSCP to help with capacity issues.'</i></p> <p><i>'We have a waiting list for counselling'</i></p>
Increased range of services	5	<i>'We have increased the range of services that we offer, respite groups have increased, we have included the cared for to come along to some groups as unpaid carers are unable to get replacement care in to allow respite, this put additional pressure onto my staff.'</i>
<p>Doing things differently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triaging referrals • Using a sustainable leadership model • Reviewing processes • Extending digital capacity • Working with other local agencies 	4	<p><i>'We are working with other local agencies to provide support for carers including peer support, mental health support, and welfare benefits support to increase our capacity'</i></p> <p><i>'We have streamlined our processes and developed our digital capacity. Adopting a sustainable leadership model has also helped.'</i></p>
Recruitment issues, due to pay rates that are not competitive and short-term contracts	3	<i>'We have had recruitment issues partly caused by levels of pay and because negotiating new contract so time scales were unworkable to recruit'</i>
Increase in demand for support and complexity of carers' issues. Combination of new referrals and supporting carers already registered	3	<i>'The increase in demand for support and the complexity of carers' issues have impacted us. We have increased staffing to meet increasing carer numbers and complexity, but we know staff are still feeling the pressure'</i>
Staff team decreased due to loss of funding	2	<i>'We lost the funding for two members of staff who were providing valuable services to carers'</i>
Same amount of staff, same service, but increase in referrals	2	<i>'We operate with the same amount of staff and provide the same services.'</i>
Reduction in service	1	<i>'We have reduced our exit strategy for former carers from 6 months to 10 weeks.'</i>
Delays in some administrative functions	1	<i>'Payment of funds may take 2 weeks to process rather than 1 week.'</i>

Q9 How many years is your funding cycle?



The majority of carers centres are on a one year funding cycle, which was highlighted in the comments as being an issue of concern and insecurity. In some cases this has resulted in staff leaving posts due to uncertainty about continuation of funding and also requires centres to dedicate valuable resources to regular funding negotiations

‘We exist hand to mouth with a high degree of job insecurity. We have highly dedicated staff who are totally committed to the work they do and the people they support’

Comparison to 2021 survey

- There has been very little change from the previous funding period. The percentage of centres on a one year funding cycle was just one percent less at 41%
- In 2021 there were fewer centres on 3 year funding (24%) and on more than 3 year funding (17%), showing a modest rise of 5% and 4% respectively

Q10 is there anything you want us to raise with the Carers Policy Team about funding for carers centres

This was an open ended question, which we received 23 responses to. The table below summarises the responses and the frequency with which points were raised

Point Raised	Number of mentions	Comments
Carers Act funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not properly monitored • Should go to carers centres • Should be ringfenced 	11	<i>‘As local authority budgets continue to come under pressure, we have seen less transparency around Carers Act spend, and an increased tendency to internalise spend without evidencing the impact and outcomes for carers, and with far less</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs transparency and accountability • Is described as 'underspent' and used for other purposes • Carer organisations should be preferred bidders for Carers Act funding 		<p><i>scrutiny on where the money goes or what it is used for.'</i></p> <p><i>'Organisations should be preferred bidders across procurement processes for Carers Act funding.'</i></p> <p><i>'We were very disappointed when Carers Act money was not used to support carers or made available to our centre to support carers, but instead was described as an 'underspend' and used to balance the Local Authority budget'</i></p> <p><i>'If Carers Centres are carrying out the statutory duties placed on HSCP this should be recognised and adequately funded using the Carers Act funding provided by the SG'</i></p>
<p>Funding insecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of tender process • No contract only a 'letter of commitment' • Funding for staff posts is not secure 	9	<p><i>'After our current funding of 3 years +1, +1 we are facing the uncertainty of a new tender again this year.'</i></p> <p><i>'Can we have some acknowledgment of our specialism, input, service quality and delivery through clear guidance from Scot Gov on future procurement processes?'</i></p>
<p>Third sector pay and conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third sector pay rises need to match public sector pay deals • No funding uplift for several years • Recruitment issues due to not being able to provide competitive pay • One year funding cycle means it is impossible to recruit 	7	<p><i>'In addition to not receiving an uplift recently nor Carers Act monies, we have not received an uplift since financial year 2008-9. In real terms that is a drop of around £50,000 which we have to fundraise to cover'</i></p> <p><i>'When public sector get pay rises the voluntary sector should also get those rises'</i></p> <p><i>'We exist hand to mouth with a high degree of job insecurity. We have highly dedicated staff who are totally committed to the work they do and the people they support. They are understanding of the circumstances third sector organisations face, but as a manager I am acutely aware of the fact that we cannot pay them the wage they really deserve.'</i></p>

		<i>'Voluntary/third sector employees should have job security, decent/fair pay supported by good terms and conditions that reflects the work that they do and that this has changed significantly over recent years.'</i>
Funding Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One year cycle means you can't plan effectively • Should be 5 years • Managing several different funding cycles that vary in length 	6	<i>'5 year funding cycle to enable match funding and security'</i> <i>'As always, it would be preferable to have funding cycles for more than one year to allow for planning and staff stability.'</i>
Time spent applying for funding and providing monitoring reports	4	<i>'What is not taken into account is the time spent on funding reports and funding applications and tenders. As CEO, the vast amount of my time is spent on this - to the detriment of other aspects. A small funding application for a part time post can easily take 1-2 weeks'</i>
Funding should be tracked to referrals and the increase in the number of carers supported	3	<i>'When volume of carers increases so should the funding to meet capacity.'</i> <i>'Funding needs to reflect the demand as otherwise all we do is dilute what we can offer.'</i>
Short break funding needs to be increased – demand is outstripping resources	1	<i>'Short break funding needs to be increased further.....demand is outstripping the enhanced funding pot.'</i>

Conclusions

A combination of increased referrals, insufficient and insecure core funding and less favourable terms and conditions typical of the third sector, are all contributing to capacity issues within many carers centres

These factors are already having an impact on services, including the introduction of waiting lists and challenges with staff recruitment and retention

The upward trajectory of demand on services seems likely to continue, particularly given the ongoing issues with other parts of the social care system, such as workforce issues and the reduction of services.

If the intention is to scale up carers support in the future and to introduce Easy Access Breaks as part of the right to breaks from caring through the National Care Service, then increasing the capacity of carers centres must be an early priority.

The Scottish Government needs to consider how carers centres can be guaranteed more secure funding, linked to demand and provided more consistently across Scotland. Any new developments will need to be co-produced with staff and carers, fully costed and resourced.

Carers centres have proved themselves to be trusted partners, who are able to deliver best value, while also providing additionality. But if these funding issues are not addressed they are likely to compromise the support they currently provide to carers and may prove to be an impediment to future developments