

## **Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic two years on: Experiences of carers of people with dementia from the British IDEAL cohort**

### How have carers coped with impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic over time?

Early in the pandemic family carers of people with dementia struggled with loneliness and increased caring responsibilities. Some carers coped well and learned to adapt. Being able to return to normal activities seemed to help.

We wanted to find out how family carers were getting on later in the pandemic. We re-interviewed ten carers we had spoken to early in the pandemic. We asked about any changes in their lives and how they were coping.

The carers were five men and five women aged between 57 and 85 years old. Eight of the carers were married to the person with dementia. The people they cared for were aged between 57 and 94 years old.

The carers talked about trying to regain a normal routine, but it was not easy. New challenges made them feel more stressed. In several cases the person with dementia needed more help and the carers had less time to themselves. They continued to worry about people spreading the virus. They did not have advice or guidance about supporting the person with dementia and felt overlooked by the government.

There was not enough help. Friends and family were important for emotional and practical support, but after returning to the workplace they were sometimes less available to step in and assist. Some dementia support groups had moved online, which did not suit everyone, and others had closed. Some services carers had attended before the pandemic had reopened, but there were worries that these could close again. There were also difficulties getting healthcare appointments, and financial assistance was lacking.

At this later stage of the pandemic carers were still trying to adapt and were worried about their ability to cope. They needed advice and information, and reliable access to dementia support groups and services. Carers would have benefitted from regular assessment of their needs.



University  
of Exeter



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

**NIHR** | National Institute for  
Health and Care Research

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which was published in the **International Journal of Care and Caring** in August 2023.