**Vulnerability Registration Service launches new feature to help protect vulnerable unpaid carers in the UK**

* *‘Overwhelmed and at the bottom of the priority list’ - unpaid carers face significant mental and financial challenges making them among those most as risk of becoming vulnerable, according to the VRS.*
* *Organisations must take proactive steps to understand who among their customers are unpaid carers, so that they can be appropriately supported.*
* *New VRS flag will help ensure that the specific circumstances of unpaid carers are taken into account by the organisations that serve them.*

**UK, 22 May 2024 –** The [Vulnerability Registration Service](https://www.vulnerabilityregistrationservice.co.uk/) (VRS), a not-for-profit company providing the UK’s first central vulnerability database, has introduced a vital new feature to its service to help ensure support reaches the estimated 5.7 million unpaid carers in UK.

The VRS believes that unpaid carers are among those most at risk of being or becoming vulnerable, and it is vital that their circumstances are taken into account by the organisations that serve them - including banks, financial services, insurers, local government, utilities, mortgage and housing.

According to the charity [Carers UK](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/different-ways-of-managing-someones-affairs/), which has been flagging the VRS to carers that are dealing with particularly challenging circumstances, [unpaid carers save the UK £162bn a year](https://www.carersuk.org/policy-and-research/key-facts-and-figures/#:~:text=Unpaid%20carers%20in%20England%20and,Petrillo%20and%20Bennett%2C%202023). This figure, however, does not reflect the often severe economic and emotional challenges those individuals face. Previous VRS research has shown that two in five carers consider themselves vulnerable. Nearly one in four are struggling with their mental health, while more than one in five are in financial distress and finding it difficult to keep on top of their payments.

Thanks to VRS’ new flag, unpaid carers will be able to register with the VRS for free and highlight their specific circumstances to organisations. Organisations, meanwhile, can use the VRS to proactively identify who amongst their customers are unpaid carers, ensuring that they provide the most appropriate advice and support.

The service will also help connect carers to the specific support in terms of funding and low-cost services that are available to them – support that is not always easy to find, access and understand for stressed out and time poor unpaid carers.

**Helen Lord, CEO of the Vulnerability Registration Service,** said: “It’s not just the day-to-day care of another person’s health. Carers are also faced with trying to manage the financial affairs of the people they care for with providers that have data protection restraints in place, making it very difficult and time consuming for them to make any progress.

“Unpaid carers consistently find themselves at the bottom of the priority list and overwhelmed by the pressures they face. Many have had to give up jobs, impacting them financially. Those that manage to juggle a job with care commitments find themselves excluded from financial support, such as Carers Allowance.”

Working closely with other organisations to support unpaid carers, the VRS also hopes the new flag will enable them to easily connect unpaid carers to the financial support that is available to them.

Madeleine Starr MBE, Director of Carer Services at Carers UK, said: “Carers are making an enormous contribution to society, but many are at breaking point, facing challenges managing caring alongside their own health and wellbeing. They feel invisible and overlooked. It is crucial that they are seen and actively supported by their communities, by the government and by the organisations that service them. We welcome the VRS development and see it as a valuable step towards helping carers feel seen and more supported.”

Rachael Walker, Policy and Research Director at Policy in Practice, said: “Providing support to unpaid carers should be a national priority, and yet the system of financial support currently available is falling short. With more than £2.2 billion in unclaimed Carer's Allowance, unpaid carers shore up our national health and social care services, and are often living in poverty and debt as a result. We owe it to carers to provide support when we can, and flagging their status through the VRS is a great step towards this."

To introduce the new ‘unpaid carers’ flag and provide more details, the VRS is holding a webinar on June 7th - [Care For Those Who Care – VRS Virtual Event](https://www.vulnerabilityregistrationservice.co.uk/care-for-those-who-care-vrs-webinar-7th-june-2024/).

**ENDS**

**Note to editor:**

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**About The Vulnerability Registration Service:** [www.vulnerabilityregistrationservice.co.uk/](http://www.vulnerabilityregistrationservice.co.uk/)

We help financial services providers to identify and ensure the fair treatment of vulnerable customers – helping to reduce debt, financial problems and harm.

[The Vulnerability Registration Service](about:blank) is a not-for-profit company providing the UK’s first central vulnerability database. Registering with the VRS is completely free for vulnerable customers and their representatives to help inform service providers of their vulnerable circumstances such as financial abuse, risk of fraud, over-indebtedness, impact of Covid and power of attorney. The Vulnerability Registration Service is used by service providers and other organisations to help them ensure vulnerable customers are treated fairly and appropriately, and that their current financial circumstances are taken into account.