

# IT'S TIME TO PRIORITISE FAMILY CARERS

**THE CONTEXT:** Family Carers are people of any age who look after someone who has a long term illness or condition. They are unpaid and take on a caring role due to kinship or friendship bonds. In the UK, almost 6 million people are family carers, of whom around 65,000 live in Suffolk. Collectively family carers have been estimated to save the country £162bn<sup>1</sup>, the equivalent of another NHS.

**SUFFOLK FAMILY CARERS:** Since our establishment in 1988 Suffolk Family Carers Charity supports more than 6,000 family carers per year across the county. Our work is wide ranging and includes providing information, advice, emotional support, advocacy and peer support; our clients range from adults to young carers between the ages of 4 and 24 whose lives are affected by the caring needs of family members.

Family carers are adversely affected by rises in the cost of living and shortages in social care. They often face challenges juggling work and care and delays in identifying as a carer mean they do not get support at the right time. It is therefore essential that the new Government develops a strategy to support family carers which recognises their vital contribution.

**OUR 2024 GENERAL ELECTION ASK:** We appeal to all candidates standing for Suffolk constituencies in the 2024 general election to prioritise family carers and support our manifesto, which aligns with the manifestos of the national carers' charities – Carers Trust and Carers UK.

## WE CALL ON THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT TO:

### 1 PUT A HALT TO FAMILY CARERS BEING PUSHED TO THEIR LIMITS

- Through better identification and recognition
- With better support for family carers' health and wellbeing, including mental health
- By improving care and support locally
- By seeking equality for family carers

### 2 END FAMILY CARER POVERTY

- By preventing financial hardships (e.g. Carers Allowance improvements)
- By supporting family carers to juggle work and care
- By encouraging employers to support their employees who are family carers through carer-friendly legislation.

### 3 COMMIT TO FAIR FUTURES FOR YOUNG CARERS

- By encouraging schools, colleges and universities to support young carers to thrive
- By tackling the negative effects of caring through local care and support options

After the election, we are here to work with you to deliver a better future for family carers to ensure that family carers are visible, valued, supported and connected.

<sup>1</sup> Petrillo, M & Bennett, M.B (2021), *Carers UK: Valuing Carers 2021*, University of Sheffield.