

Positionspapier – Januar 2024

Häusliche Pflege endlich wirkungsvoll stärken. Von unnutzbaren Leistungsansprüchen zu neuer kommunaler Entlastung

English Translation of the Summary Version

Strengthening home care effectively – at long last. From un-useable service entitlements to new municipal support

Our demands

Abolishing care triage – Setting new priorities

Scarce resources lead to poor care for those in need of care. We now have a situation that is referred to as "care triage". Service providers (care services, care homes, day care facilities) decide who is cared for, when and how, with procedural organisational criteria and economic interests taking priority. As a result, those in need of intensive care who require a high level of basic care are often inadequately supported. In view of the fact that scarce resources can only be expanded to a limited extent in the short term, due to the shortage of skilled workers, care priorities must be set in such a way that the skills of skilled workers are deployed where they are most urgently needed. The person in need of care and their needs must once again take centre stage. This also applies to the capabilities of family carers.

Needs-based service structure for all municipalities and in rural areas

In order for existing services to be utilised, they must not only be available in terms of quantity, but must also meet the needs and requirements of those in need of care and their family carers in terms of quality. The services must be close to the neighbourhood, with sufficient opening hours for all age groups and specific illnesses in terms of infrastructure and staffing and allow flexible use of operating times and service complexes.

More flexible framework conditions for self-determination in home care

Good care can only succeed if relatives who take on this care and nursing work can continue to maintain their relationships and connections in their social environment. In particular, a lack of support infrastructure must not lead to family carers giving up their jobs. In order to ensure the compatibility of care and work, a sufficient range of needs-based support and relief services, care-sensitive and non-discriminatory working conditions as well as support under social law are required. A legal entitlement to day care is essential for reconciling care, life and work in order to make it possible to plan everyday life and, above all, work.

Flexibilisation of service entitlements to allow simplified and needs-based utilisation

To ensure that the care insurance entitlements of those in need of care can actually be used to meet their needs, it is essential to make the service criteria more flexible in order to enable simplified and needs-based utilisation. If needs-based services are not available, a financial benefit for organising care



independently must be guaranteed. The diversity of care situations requires individual options for organising the care setting. This requires all service entitlements to be combined across the boundaries of the service areas in an overall budget that can be used flexibly. Self-determined care must replace paternalistic care. Individuals and families must decide what is good for them. It must be possible to organise home care as individually as today's life models are.

Local development of support services with the involvement of civil society initiatives

The autonomous organisation of the care setting requires an appropriate care infrastructure that promotes cooperation between professional and informal care. To this end, politicians must create the framework conditions for the further development of support services with the involvement of civil society initiatives in neighbourhood-based care. This requires investment in a growing infrastructure of flexible support. The local authorities, which are responsible for providing care, need resources and rights to be able to manage and coordinate voluntary and competitive services.

Arguments, data and facts to back up our demands

50 billion euros service expenditure for home care from the social care insurance - but 74 billion euros remain unutilised

If you add up all the entitlements that people in need of care have to support funded by the social care insurance, it becomes clear that the sum of entitlements not utilised, at 74 billion euros, is greater than the sum of entitlements paid out. This is not because the people in need of care and their relatives do not want these supports, but because the entitlements can only be claimed as services, but there is a lack of corresponding services.

Day care services for less than 3 per cent of people in need of care

It is precisely those services that could provide real relief for carers that are rarely used. Day care would be the most important relief for family carers so that they can continue to work. However, such places are only available to less than 3 per cent of people in need of care. This means that 40 billion euros worth of benefits for day care alone cannot be realised. If family carers have to give up or reduce their gainful employment as a result, there is a risk of poverty. This also exacerbates the labour shortage and weakens society's economic power.

Dramatic decline in regular institutional support despite rapidly growing need for care: just 16 per cent live in care homes, only 21 per cent receive outpatient care

For years, the expansion of care homes and outpatient services has not kept pace with the increase in the number of people in need of care: the care rate for fully inpatient care has fallen from 28 per cent in 2013 to 16 per cent in 2021.

16 per cent in 2021, and that of outpatient services from 24 per cent in 2017 to 21 per cent in 2021. The shortage of skilled workers is currently exacerbating this process dramatically. In the meantime, people in need of the most severe care are often unable to find a place in a care home or receive inadequate or no care at all from outpatient services.



On average, services which are accessed by people in need of care have not increased – actual services used remain at the 1996 level

Since the introduction of social long-term care insurance, the increases in benefit expenditure have virtually never compensated for inflation. Over the entire period, real per capita benefit expenditure only reached the level of the initial phase in 2020 and 2021 and fell again in 2022. The political promise of a steady improvement in entitlements has effectively come to nothing.

Discrimination of home care - 30 per cent of expenditure for inpatient care for 16 per cent of inpatients

The proportion of people in need of care at home has been rising steadily for years, while the proportion of people receiving full inpatient care is falling accordingly. The support provided by long-term care insurance is significantly higher for people in need of full inpatient care. An ever-increasing burden of care lies solely with the caring relatives, resulting in an enormous overload that weakens their economic performance and also causes medical costs on a scale that has so far been almost impossible to estimate.

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Over 84 per cent of care for people in need of care in Germany is already provided by relatives. And the trend is rising.

Growing demand for care and an acute shortage of carers are increasingly leading to relatives being overwhelmed. The emergency is forcing more and more people, especially women, to reduce their working hours. With serious consequences for their own economic situation and that of the country.

Politicians and civil society have a responsibility to finally break new ground: to see the expansion of care support and relief as more of a responsibility for society as a whole. Involve family carers in the planning and organisation of care. Creating more flexible framework conditions and building new bridges for comprehensive, neighbourhood-based and needs-based care provision in our communities.

In this position paper, the Bundesverband *wir pflegen e.V.* presents new demands and solutions for discussion that arise from the care needs of many families.

Voice of unpaid carers

wir pflegen e.V. is a nationwide interest group and self-help organisation that provides a strong voice for family carers in Germany. 84 percent of all people in need of care are cared for by family members, with an average carer working 63 hours a week.

Engagement on many levels

We are committed to improvements in home care: in terms of care policy and through self-help support, at state and local authority level, nationwide and, with Eurocarers, also at European level. For many years, we have been bringing the voices of those affected via the press and the media to the public and politicians.

Get involved and help shape the future

Become a member of *wir pflegen*, because our movement thrives on the commitment and support of family carers, friends and stakeholders in the care sector. Together we are strong.

