# Ministers Informed of Unfair Carer’s Allowance Treatment in 2021, Report Uncovers



**Ministers Aware of Carer’s Allowance Issues Since 2021, Report Reveals**

Ministers were informed three years ago about the unfair treatment of unpaid carers, who were being forced to repay large sums due to minor breaches of carer’s allowance rules, according to a suppressed Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) report. The document, presented to politicians in 2021, highlighted financial hardships faced by carers, who often work 65 hours weekly while on low incomes.

Although the report was completed in 2021 following a parliamentary inquiry in 2019, it was released only recently due to lobbying efforts and several investigative reports. Stephen Timms, chair of the Commons Work and Pensions Committee, criticized the government for allowing unpaid carers to accumulate unmanageable debts, despite knowing about the system’s flaws.

The DWP report detailed that carers were frequently penalized for exceeding a £151 weekly earnings cap while receiving an £81.90 allowance. If carers breached the cap, they were required to repay the entire allowance amount for each week in violation, rather than just the overage. Approximately 156,000 carers are currently repaying overpayments, with some sums exceeding £20,000.

An investigation by the National Audit Office in 2019 found that most overpayment breaches were due to honest mistakes rather than fraud. The Work and Pensions Committee has urged the government to adopt a more graduated repayment approach.

Helen Walker of Carers UK welcomed the report's release, emphasizing the need for constructive discussions about the future of carer’s allowance. A DWP spokesperson highlighted measures to enhance communication with carers to prevent overpayments, noting an increase in the allowance value since 2010.