

Brief 4:

# Caring culture

**How might we improve the lives of older adults and their carers by encouraging and enabling cultures, and higher standards, of care?**

RSA

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The Rayne  
Foundation

# Brief 4: Caring culture

In partnership:



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Foundation

There is one award  
available for this brief:  
**Caring culture**  
award of £2,000

## How might we improve the lives of older adults and their carers by encouraging and enabling cultures, and higher standards, of care?

### Background

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, carers and the incredibly important work they do were brought into the spotlight. It is our collective responsibility to take action to improve the lives of carers and those they support (particularly older adults).
- According to mental health charity [Mind](#), care involves assisting with daily activities, maintaining independence, facilitating social interaction, protecting vulnerable individuals, managing complex relationships, and accessing additional support as needed.
- Unpaid care work (usually by family, friends and neighbours) is done for no monetary reward. Paid care work provides a living to thousands of people (including professional care workers and others such as nurses and teachers), many of whom are struggling with the cost of living.
- Care work, whether paid or unpaid, is becoming more necessary. [The global population of people aged 60+ years will be about 2 billion in 2050](#). The likelihood of experiencing a physical impairment or disability that makes day-to-day life more difficult increases as we age ([one in four adults over 65 years old in the UK require support with activities of daily living](#)).
- Diversity among older adults necessitates tailored care services. [For example](#), the UK has 1.2 million people aged 65+ who have no children to support them. This is particularly true for disabled people and those in the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Women, migrant workers, and ethnic minorities are over-represented in both the paid care workforce and among unpaid carers. Carers often suffer from poor mental and physical health, leading to high sickness rates. And [60 percent of unpaid carers report a long-term health condition or disability compared to 50 percent of non-carers](#).
- Changes in family structures, care needs, and an increase in women's employment have led to a greater demand for paid care. A well-functioning professional care sector is essential as it provides specialised knowledge and skills not always available to family caregivers or healthcare staff. It also offers choices for families, particularly women, [who often perform unpaid care](#).
- There are significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of the paid care workforce. The sector has high turnover rates and low rates of pay, as well as challenging working terms and conditions. It is crucial to showcase the value of the social care sector, and the variety of roles within it, to attract and retain talent.
- Even well-funded healthcare systems in many countries struggle to meet the population's care needs in terms of resources and quality. Payment for care work is often co-funded by individuals (through direct payment, insurance or taxation), leading to financial burdens for those in need of care and their families.
- [For unpaid carers in the UK](#) (an estimated 5-10 million people), on average 600 people a day leave work to care, 44 percent of working-age adults caring for 35 hours or more a week are in poverty, and Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers are more likely to be struggling financially.
- The unique skills of paid and unpaid carers are not well understood and are often unrecognised. Professional and personal support for carers is often lacking.
- Despite the challenges, there are inspiring examples of good cultures of care which are person-centred, prioritise choice, quality and fair access, and recognise the value of carers.

### How to approach the brief

- Consider the unique context, needs and desires of older adults in your community. This might include looking at 'age-friendly' design approaches and ideas that support them retaining independence.
- What are the beliefs that society holds about carers and older people? How could the narrative be shifted to stories of abundance, where carers and older adults are valued and celebrated? What cultures exist which respect the wisdom and contribution of elders and what might we learn from them?

- Think about how your proposed solution interacts with the many complex, interrelated aspects of the current care system – from women's rights and employment, to issues of class, disability, race and migration status, to local healthcare provision, and different cultural norms around caring for those in your community. As this is a big challenge, you may want to focus on one specific aspect.
- The nature of this problem is evolving, so your solution should also be able to last in the long run. We also encourage ideas that go beyond a stand-alone solution (such as a specific product) to end-to-end experiences. Your idea can include a range of things like the design of human interaction and personalised services, the physical environment, or use of technology and smart devices.
- Pay attention to inclusive access for underserved communities of carers and older adults. Examples of these could include people living in rural areas with few transport links, or in areas with little or no connectivity, people with mobility challenges, migrants that don't speak the official language nor have access to mainstream services, and/or people facing a specific health challenge.
- Focus on uncovering the everyday lived experience, needs and hopes of people in your chosen context and optimising what works well already. This can include social interactions and activities, personal hobbies, mealtimes, health activities and down-time. Map the users' journey and consider how they interact with your idea at different points.
- When coming up with your idea, it is important to include lots of different perspectives and skills. Could you work in a team, or at least talk with those studying psychology, biology, politics, media studies; older adults and carers; local community leaders and volunteer or faith organisations? Who else might be important for you to learn from?

For the purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

- **Innovative care models:** like [Buurtzorg](#) and Social Finance's [Enhanced Dementia Care Service](#).
- **Social enterprises:** [GoodLifeSorted](#), [Tresacare](#), the [Equal Care Co-op](#) and [Share my Home](#) all combine profit with purpose.
- **Micro accreditations:** a [digital badging system](#) that awards and recognises care workers for their unique skills.
- **Technology:** soft robotics, exoskeletons and smart walkers potentially allow those with mobility issues to remain in their own homes rather than requiring residential care. [Robots can offer companionship](#) and interaction with older people, which might slow the onset of dementia. [MiiCare](#) is an integrated technology system enabling older adults to live independently for longer. The [Carer's UK app](#) manages all aspects of caring. ...and many more are possible.

## Partner information:

### The Rayne Foundation

The Rayne Foundation is an independent funder which aims to harness the potential of organisations to work together to develop solutions and create a fairer society. We make grants, provide support, enable collaboration, and seek to influence and share learning. We look for good ideas from which other people can learn and which have lessons beyond the local. We seek to influence those able to secure long-term and widespread implementation of solutions.

## Judging criteria

**Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:**

### Social and environmental impact:

**Social:** How is your approach benefiting people and generations to come? How have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal? How have you brought in different voices and perspectives?

**Environmental:** How does your proposal make a positive difference for the natural world in your chosen context? How have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes that can do more good short and long term for people and planet?

### Rigorous research and compelling insights:

How have you combined your own first-hand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How are your insights and proposal grounded in people's needs and desires? How have you considered the potential of your chosen place and the global context? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

### Systems thinking:

What's the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you're exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

### Viability:

Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially with the resources and skills needed? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success? How could your proposal be adaptive to changes over time?

### Creativity and innovation:

How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal? How is it an imaginative and hopeful alternative for the future?

# Entry requirements (Briefs 1-5)

## Open briefs

The competition will open for entries via [sda.theresa.org](https://sda.theresa.org) on 31 January 2024, and the final deadline for entries is 16 March 2024 at 4.00pm GMT.

### Submission requirements

For all briefs EXCEPT the Centenary celebrations brief, the submission requirements are:

**1 x A3 PDF hero image with a one sentence description** – a single 'poster image' that conveys the essence of your project and includes your project title plus a one sentence description. For example: 'Bare technology: a product and service design proposal to convert old computers (e-waste) into simpler, more straightforward, accessible computers for older people'. Your hero image should aim to bring your concept to life – make sure it is vibrant and engaging. Your one sentence description is very important, make sure you take some time to craft an impactful message.

**1 x A3 written summary** – a single A3 PDF page that summarises your big idea using the following format:

- **Problem (50 words max).** What is the specific problem you identified within the brief topic? Who experiences this problem, and how does it impact them?
- **Process (75 words max).** How did you investigate this issue and what were your key insights? What journey did you go through to get to your final proposal?
- **Proposal (50 words max).** What is your proposed intervention? How will it address the problem?

### Online entry

If you are unable to submit online, please contact us by email at [sdaenquiries@rsa.org.uk](mailto:sdaenquiries@rsa.org.uk). As you prepare your submission, please ensure that:

- You do NOT include your name, university/college or other identifying marks anywhere on your submission.
- None of your PDF submission files exceed 10MB – this is the maximum size for each individual file/board when you submit online.

We are open to submissions in alternative formats - such as audio or video. Please contact us for more information if this would help you participate.

**4 x A3 PDF boards outlining your proposal** – 4 pages describing your proposal and responding to the 5 sections of the judging criteria. Number each board in the top right-hand corner in the order they should be viewed by the judges. You may include relevant hyperlinks in your boards, however we cannot guarantee this will be viewed by the panel.

For details on the submission requirements for the Centenary celebrations brief, please see the Centenary celebrations entry requirements and guidelines. Please note that late submissions will not be accepted, and all entrants are encouraged to submit their work in good time before the deadline.

# Competition timeline

**07/09/23**

## Briefs soft launch

The 2023–24 RSA Student Design Awards competition briefs go live on [sda.thersa.org](https://sda.thersa.org).

**Nov–Dec**

## Workshops and events

Free learning workshops and events based on all brief themes.

**14/02/24**

## Early bird deadline

Submit by 4.00pm GMT on 14 February 2024 for a reduced entry rate of £25.

**16/03/24**

## Final deadline

Submit by 4.00pm GMT on 16 March 2024.

**Early June**

## Winners announced

Stay tuned for the big announcement.

**Sept–Oct**

## Online launch events

Sign up to [our newsletter](#) to learn about our in-depth brief launch sessions held by our partners and the SDA Team.

**31/01/24**

## Submissions open

Go to [sda.thersa.org](https://sda.thersa.org) to submit your proposal.

**28/02/24**

## Needs-based bursary deadline

Submit your application for a needs-based bursary to cover the cost of your submission by 11.59pm GMT on 28 February 2024.

**March–May**

## Judging

Entries will be evaluated in a two-stage process: shortlisting and interviews.

**Late June**

## Awards ceremony

Join us to celebrate the 2023–24 RSA SDA Winners.