

FRENCH PROGRAMME IMPROVES QUALITY OF CARE AND LIFE FOR BOTH CAREGIVERS AND CARE RECIPIENTS

Introduction

France is facing a rapidly ageing population, with one in three residents of the Aquitaine region expected to be 60 years or older by 2030. To manage the care of these residents, home care has become the preferred option, but only approximately 6% of homes are adapted for the elderly and those with additional or special needs. This problem is already illustrated by the fact that 62% of falls by seniors occur at home. At the same time, home care workers in this region also suffer from high rates of occupational injury due to repetitive motions, heavy lifting, awkward postures and a high workload in solitary working conditions.¹

Workers in the home care sector often require more support than is offered, which can lead to a decline in the quality of care and life for both the care recipient and caregiver. The 'Carers, Cared, A Quality of Life to Preserve' programme has been supporting home care organisations by providing guidance and practical resources, as well as financial assistance, since 2013. It began as a pilot project in the Dordogne and Landes regions of France. This proved fruitful and was then extended to the entire Aquitaine region in 2015.²

The main challenges addressed through this programme include reducing physical strain on carers, preserving clients' autonomy, and enhancing the safety and adaptability of the home environment for people in care. These developments encourage an improved 'quality of life' at home for people in care, and an improved 'quality of life' at work for carers.³

This case study is based on desk research and one qualitative interview with a key representative (and co-creator of the programme) from Carsat Aquitaine. It is part of a research project⁴ carried out with the aim of providing an overview of research on the occupational safety and health (OSH) of home care workers.

Description of the Carers, Cared programme

Background



The 'Carers, Cared, A Quality of Life to Preserve' programme (later referred to as *Carers, Cared programme* or *the programme*), or in French *Aidants, aidés, une qualité de vie à préserver*, is a French

¹ Contoz, J. M. M. (2022). Aide aux aidants, le rôle que s'est fixée la CARSAT Aquitaine. *Handinova*.

<https://handinova.fr/aidants-et-maintient-a-domicile-le-soutien-de-la-carsat-aquitaine/#:~:text=En%20effet%2C%20l'E2%80%99Aquitaine%20n%E2%80%99C3%A9chappe%20pas,3e%20rang%20des%20d%C3%A9partements%20fran%C3%A7ais>

² Carsat Aquitaine. *Les partenaires du programme*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/entreprise/risques-professionnels/demarche-de-prevention/aidants-aides/les-partenaires-du-programme.html>

³ Carsat Aquitaine. *Aidants/aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/entreprise/risques-professionnels/demarche-de-prevention/aidants-aides.html>

⁴ The full report is available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/home-care-workers-comprehensive-overview-occupational-safety-and-health-risks>

initiative for the home care sector designed by *Carsat Aquitaine*. Carsat Aquitaine is a social security organisation that provides support to employees, retirees and businesses regarding retirement, social action and occupational risk management. It collaborates with approved or contracted home care service providers to deliver assistance at home for retirees and individuals in need. People requiring care can choose the home care provider from the Carsat Aquitaine network, and the service will be partially paid by the social insurance fund based on the individual's income and other criteria.⁵

The organisation acts as a social insurance fund in charge of managing contributions and payment of pension funds, supporting policyholders (e.g. seniors and disabled people) whose vulnerability is caused by health problems or loss of autonomy, and preventing and managing OSH risks among caregivers.⁶

The target groups include home care professionals (management, supervisors, home aids, prevention representatives), people in home care (elderly and/or people with disabilities), and (informal) family carers. The programme's objectives for carers are to promote occupational risk prevention and raise awareness among home care professionals and organisations on occupational risk prevention, to provide carers with risk assessments in home care to increase safety for both carers and clients, and to combine the concepts of quality of care and the occupational health of carers. The programme's goals for the people in care include increasing awareness about fall risks and their consequences, as well as encouraging the adoption of preventive measures at home. This aims to help seniors and people with disabilities live safely, both for themselves and their carers at home.⁷

A worrying injury rate among home care professionals inspired the creation of the programme in 2013. The two main causes of work-related accidents in the sector are falls (44%) and moving or handling people (33%). Furthermore, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) can cause professionals to become unfit for work and even result in them leaving the profession. The programme decided to combine occupational injury prevention with the idea that seniors dependent on care should live well, not only age well, and have the support to prevent accidents from happening at an early stage of ageing.⁸

Unlike other initiatives where the organisation focuses only on the wellbeing of either the caregiver or the client, this organisation is involved in both groups. Carsat Aquitaine has multiple programmes to support retirees in terms of overall health and additional services like home care, as well as initiatives on preventing occupational risks and ensuring health and safety at work.⁹

An important goal of this programme is to reduce the risk of occupational illnesses, such as MSDs, and workplace accidents (including handling, falls, etc.) among caregivers. To improve the working environment of home caregivers, Carsat Aquitaine supports measures that improve the safety and adaptability of the home environment of the caregivers' clients. Caregivers are also offered information and training to prevent negative physical effects.¹⁰ Furthermore, the programme also aims to make home care a more attractive profession through a reduction in occupational physical strain and an improved caregiver–client relationship.¹¹

Project structure

The programme's structure depends on collaboration between individuals and organisations in order to make it possible to intervene in the residents' homes, within caregiving teams and at the organisational level of each service provider. By aligning the interests of professional caregivers, family caregivers and care recipients, the programme is able to create a sense of shared responsibility for health and safety at home and at work without creating extra workload solely for the home care sector.¹²

⁵ Carsat Aquitaine. *Bénéficiaire d'une aide au maintien à domicile*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/retraites/etre-aide-au-quotidien/aide-au-maintien-a-domicile.html>

⁶ Carsat Aquitaine. *Nos missions*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/nous-connaitre/nos-missions.html>

⁷ CARSAT Aquitaine. *Prévention des TMS et chutes – Secteur Service d'Aide et de Soins à Domicile: Programme « Aidant, aidés, une qualité de vie à préserver »* [Brochure]. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/files/live/sites/carsat-aquitaine/files/documents/entreprises/programme-aidants-aides/fiche-technique-du-programme.pdf>

⁸ Expert Interview (July 4, 2025)

⁹ Carsat Aquitaine. *Nos missions*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/nous-connaitre/nos-missions.html>

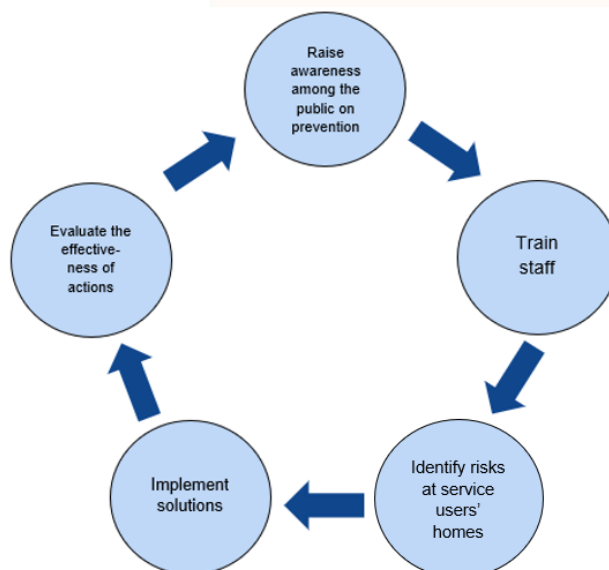
¹⁰ Carsat Aquitaine. *Les aidants professionnels*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/entreprise/risques-professionnels/demarche-de-prevention/aidants-aides/les-aidants-professionnels.html>

¹¹ Contoz, J. M. M. (2022). *Aide aux aidants, le rôle que s'est fixée la CARSAT Aquitaine*. Handinova.

¹² Carsat Aquitaine. *Aidants/aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*.

The Carers, Cared programme is a comprehensive preventive approach to preserving the quality of life at home for seniors and the quality of work for their caregivers. The approach relies on five steps:

1. Raise awareness among care workers, clients and their families about safe practices.
2. Train staff to identify risks and use appropriate technical aids.
3. Identify risks at service users' homes.
4. Implement solutions, including providing technical aids.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken.¹³



Source: Visionary Analytics based on Expert Interview (4 July 2025) and Carsat Aquitaine brochure¹⁴

The Carers, Cared programme has delivered tangible improvements in home care safety and prevention practices. It is structured around several interventions and support mechanisms that divide the responsibilities for safety at work and home among various individuals and organisations.

First of all, Carsat Aquitaine provides home care services with **methodological guidance** and **financial assistance** to implement risk prevention measures. This support enables home care service organisations to purchase essential safety equipment and provide specialised training for their staff. Furthermore, the programme also offers **training courses** on how to incorporate good prevention practices at work, how to identify risks at work, and how to use care aids and equipment safely and effectively. These training courses are supported by [welcome booklets](#) (*livret d'accueil*) for new hires that introduce safety practices, [technical fact sheets](#), a [guide to technical aids](#) for caregivers and the elderly, and a dedicated YouTube [video series](#) to effectively distribute good practices in manual tasks at work. Training is not only offered to new hires and home or family caregivers but also to those teaching in bachelor's degree programmes in personal assistance and care, thereby incorporating good prevention practices right from the start of caregivers' careers and raising awareness of occupational risk prevention among everyone in the care sector.^{15,16}

To create a safe working and home environment for senior clients, Carsat Aquitaine provides [risk assessment training courses](#) to care providers from their trusted network. These courses ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the high demand for **risk assessments at recipients' homes**. The programme also deploys external consultants, specialised in ergonomic safety and physical therapy, to conduct risk assessments in **complex living and working situations**. Both the regular and complex risk assessments in home care lead to **meaningful home adaptations** and **technical aid**

¹³ Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

¹⁴ CARSAT Aquitaine. *Agissons ensemble pour préserver notre vie au quotidien!* [Brochure]. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/files/live/sites/carsat-aquitaine/files/documents/entreprises/programme-aidants-aides/depliant-aidants-aides.pdf>

¹⁵ Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

¹⁶ Carsat Aquitaine. *Aidants/aidés une qualité de vie à préserver.*

installations, like installing grab bars, shower chairs, lifting aids or reorganising the home according to safety standards. The goals of these adaptations are to reduce strain on caregivers and increase home safety for seniors to make it possible for them to remain in their current living situation. At the start of this initiative, the courses for regular risk assessments in home care were mostly targeted at sector managers, but over time, it has become necessary to train as many care professionals as possible (the goal is now to train 50% of the workforce). Many of these modifications are co-financed through the programme to ease the financial burden on home care services and clients.^{17,18}

One of the most unique initiatives of the Carers, Cared programme is their Théâtre-Forum sessions with a theatre group that stages everyday caregiving scenarios and allows the audience to interact with the show. The forum theatre is a tool for raising awareness of risk prevention by enabling people to think, debate and then act on the situations they experience. The workshops are made to appeal to participants' emotional intelligence, which should encourage exchanges between people and has the potential to lead to action. The audience usually consists of caregivers, seniors and their family members who are invited to reflect on safe practices at work and at home. This theatre show has been active in the Nouvelle Aquitaine region since 2015 and is planned to be rolled out nationally among future care professionals in 2025 and 2026.^{19,20,21}

To ensure the engagement of the audience and the effectiveness of the performance, the workshops have a specific structure. **The play** is performed by three professional actors and highlights conflicts that have to be resolved between various characters in a client's home in three separate scenes. At the end of each scene, the mediator starts a discussion with the audience about their perception of the difficulties encountered by the characters in the sketch. When a solution to help one of the characters is suggested, the mediator invites the audience to try it out on stage, improvising with the actors. After all three sketches have been played out, the solutions by the audience are discussed once again and audience members are referred to local professionals who can help them in such challenging situations.²²

Results/success factors and challenges

It is only possible for the programme to run successfully through the partnerships between agencies and local partners in the care sector. Carsat Aquitaine encourages organisations and professionals to network with each other and create a supportive community that focuses on risk prevention. Lastly, the programme's impact is systematically **monitored and evaluated** through indicators such as injury rates, absenteeism and participant feedback. In 2022, an external evaluation by Kantar Public confirmed the programme's positive effects and helped shape its ongoing development.²³ Insights from this evaluation continue to inform refinements to the programme's tools and strategy to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.^{24,25}

The Carers, Cared programme has effectively bridged geriatric care and occupational safety, which has led to fewer accidents and enhanced quality of life for both caregivers and the people in care.

Success factors

In France, nearly 400,000 seniors experience an accidental fall per year and one in 12 of these falls results in a fracture. By directly involving seniors and their home environment in the programme, caregivers can prevent falls with the installation of technical aids and identifying risks at home. The organiser of this programme, Carsat Aquitaine, directly benefits from a reduction in occupational

¹⁷ Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

¹⁸ Les travaux collaboratifs d'autonom'lab. (2018). *Parcours des professionnels de l'aide à domicile en Nouvelle Aquitaine*. www.professionnelsdudomicile.fr and https://professionnelsdelaidelapersonne.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Parcours_LIVRET2018_download.pdf#:~:text=d%E2%80%99ateliers%20forum%20avec%20une%20troupe,adapt%C3%A9e%20et%20en%20s%C3%A9curit%C3%A9%20des

¹⁹ Professionnels de l'aide à la personne. (2022). *Programme Aidants-Aidés, une qualité de vie à préserver*. <https://www.professionnelsdelaidelapersonne.fr/projet/programme-aidants-aides-une-qualite-de-vie-a-preserver/>

²⁰ Le Petit Journal. (2025). *Le programme « Aidants, Aidés, une qualité de vie à préserver »*. <https://www.lepetitjournal.net/40-landes/2025/03/16/le-programme-aidants-aides-une-qualite-de-vie-a-preserver/>

²¹ Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

²² Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

²³ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.

²⁴ Les travaux collaboratifs d'autonom'lab. (2018). *Parcours des professionnels de l'aide à domicile en Nouvelle Aquitaine*.

²⁵ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.

illnesses and accidents among caregiver staff, as well as a reduction in falls and increased independence among seniors. **The special interest in the health and wellbeing of both caregivers and those receiving care services** is an important driver for Carsat Aquitaine and the success of their programme.²⁶

An important component of the initiative is the hands-on guidance by **external ergonomic consultants** and other experts offered to home care providers in the network, which is coordinated by Carsat Aquitaine. The ergonomics consultants are assigned to each participating care service provider and act as coaches by assessing situations, modelling safe techniques and advising caregivers on necessary improvements for occupational safety. Care providers indicate that they value the insights of an impartial 'pair of eyes' to identify problems and propose solutions. This external support also alleviates some of the burden on the organisations by assisting with complex tasks such as analysing injury data or designing home modifications.²⁷

Apart from providing support to formal caregivers and their clients, the programme also offers information and advice for family members who are involved in care tasks. With the involvement of (informal) **family caregivers**, seniors can live independently for longer and require fewer caregiving resources.²⁸ Dependent seniors and people with disabilities are able to remain at home safely for a long time, first with the help of family caregivers, then with the help of formal home care professionals. This preserves their autonomy and avoids them being placed in nursing homes.

The programme began as a regional pilot, but it has experienced a broad uptake, with approximately 180 participating home care organisations across the Aquitaine region in 2022.²⁹ This broad uptake and the positive reception of the programme reflect the value according to all people involved. According to the 2022 survey, 96% of participating home care managers were satisfied with how the programme met their organisation's needs, and 86% of participants would recommend it to peers. This widespread success is unique in the care sector.³⁰

Lastly, the feedback from home care professionals who work in clients' homes regularly has been consistently positive since the start of the programme. Seventy per cent of caregivers report that their working conditions have improved since taking part in the programme, and around 80% of caregivers now regularly and confidently use care aids and tools, as well as ergonomic techniques at the workplace.³¹

Challenges

During the **COVID-19 crisis**, home care workers were overlooked by the French political environment. In practice, this meant that home care workers were not given priority in the allocation of masks, gloves and gowns. In combination with other COVID-19 regulations, this caused a reduction in motivation and staff engagement with the programme. However, after a period of prioritisation of risk prevention under COVID-19, the activities under the programme were resumed. Additionally, the programme under Carsat Aquitaine developed tools to raise awareness about the risks of COVID-19 among care professionals after this short hiatus, such as training in chemical risk management and disinfecting technical aids, and leaflets and videos to raise awareness about COVID-19.³²

Risk assessments at clients' homes beforehand or on a regular basis are often not possible to do in real time. This challenge is regularly solved by prioritising homes that are expected to require the most

²⁶ Carsat Aquitaine. *Les aidés*. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/home/entreprise/risques-professionnels/demarche-de-prevention/aidants-aides/les-aides.html>

²⁷ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public. <https://www.carsat-aquitaine.fr/files/live/sites/carsat-aquitaine/files/documents/entreprises/programme-aidants-aides/70CG08-CARSATAquitaine-EvalPgme-AA-RapportFinalVF01.pdf#:~:text=Ses%20principaux%20leviers%20%3A%20E2%96%AA,financements%20qui%20a%20impact%20C3%A9%20les>

²⁸ Carsat Aquitaine. *Le programme et ses outils*. <https://carsat-sudest.fr/home/entreprise/risques-professionnels/demarche-de-prevention/aidants-aides/le-programme-et-ses-outils.html>

²⁹ Contoz, J. M. M. (2022). Aide aux aidants, le rôle que s'est fixée la CARSAT Aquitaine. *Handinova*.

³⁰ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.

³¹ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.

³² Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

intervention time or situations in which clients are highly dependent on the improvements to their homes to live in a safe home environment. Priority is given to situations in which caregivers need to assist individuals through transfers, particularly when mobility is limited and the risk of falling is significant.³³ However, **prioritisation** also leads to a backlog of homes that are not assessed in a timely manner, which can lead to further challenges.

The programme does not only demand resources such as time but also requires a significant amount of public and private **funding**. The relatively high costs and **resource-intensiveness** of the programme did lead to initial resistance among home care organisations. Implementing the Carers, Cared programme involves multiple contracts and funding streams (e.g. prevention grants, co-financing for equipment) each with their own paperwork and timelines. Many agencies found this 'very heavy and constraining' because it necessitated a lot of resources to deal with back-and-forth communication and paperwork to keep up with the complexity of the system. The administrative burdens and consequential financial burdens have already been improved since the initiative began, but they still pose a challenge that needs to be considered by parties interested in transferring the programme to their own regions or organisations.³⁴

Transferability

In 2022, the KANTAR Public firm carried out an evaluation of the Carers, Cared programme and concluded with an 86% programme recommendation rate. Managers and caregivers themselves are generally very satisfied and believe that the programme is effective in improving working conditions. Furthermore, KANTAR Public rated the programme highly because of its uniqueness in the sector.^{35,36}

Recently, the programme has been adopted at a national level. The national programme for the period 2024-2027 incorporates many of the aspects developed at the regional level. Instead of by one of the regional Carsat organisations, the programme on a national level is being managed by the CNAM-DRP, which is the National Health Insurance Fund for professionals at risk.³⁷ While adapting the programme for national adoption, certain factors were discussed, such as the different needs that different regions might have (urban vs rural home environments, different predominant risks, etc.) and existing services. The programme's content, like the training modules or theatre workshops, should be **adapted to the local context** and integrated with any existing initiatives. For example, in the Aquitaine region the focus was on MSDs and falls, but in other regions other issues might be more important to address.³⁸

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³³ Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

³⁴ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.

³⁵ Carsat Aquitaine. *Aidants/aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*.

³⁶ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.

³⁷ Expert Interview (4 July 2025).

³⁸ Carsat Aquitaine. (2023). *Évaluation du programme Aidants-aidés une qualité de vie à préserver*. Final report. Kantar Public.