

# Honorary doctor who wants to highlight the role of family carers

There are many people who care for relatives in the home, and they often bear a heavy load. Gun-Britt Lydén has personal experience – she cared for her parents for 20 years and is now the highly involved chair of the Carer Association in Halmstad. She is also a new honorary doctor in Health and Lifestyle at Halmstad University.

In her role as chair of the Carer Association, Gun-Britt Lydén has been involved in several research projects at the University, concerning subjects such as pharmaceutical management in the home and support for family carers in times of change. For many years she has also been a visiting lecturer for the University's nursing programmes regarding personal interactions within healthcare. For almost 20 years she worked full time while also caring for her sick parents 100 kilometres away.

“It was a fine experience and I would not have done things differently, but it was tough. As a relative you are often blinded by your situation and don't realise how tired you are.”

It was during this period that she got in contact with the Carer Association in Halmstad. She is now the chair of the association, and has been committed to speaking for carers for the past seven years.

## Family carers are a vulnerable group

Gun-Britt Lydén says that there are 1.3 million adult carers in Sweden today, who care for, or support, someone close to them. Of these family carers, 70 per cent have jobs. She wants to highlight this large group.

“Sometimes relatives are portrayed as angry, nagging and demanding. But, of course, the negative impression comes from being worried and feeling distressed and uncertain. These are situations when you feel at your most vulnerable. You need help, support and recognition for the job you are doing, and for the important knowledge you have about the person.”

After 44 years working in healthcare and after having cared for her own parents, she has seen time and time again the significance of cooperation. Gun-Britt Lydén has great hopes for the association's collaboration with the University and Halmstad Municipality, a collaboration which is the type of arena she has been looking for.

**“I am driven by a determination to change things. You must believe that it's possible, otherwise it's completely meaningless.**

**I have experienced how it is actually possible to change things for the better – sometimes it takes time, but it can be done!”**

