

## COVID-19 – One Year On

### The voices of young carers and young adult carers

For Young Carers Action Day, young carers and young adult carers have run a survey one year into the coronavirus pandemic.

This is to help us understand as much as possible about their current situations and needs, as well as understand what support they feel is needed in the next phase of the pandemic.

We will also advise partners and other organisations so they can be informed in their work and help young carers and young adult carers as effectively as possible.

This is a summary of the feedback:

### How they feel the COVID-19 pandemic has affected them and their families

What they said	Agree/Strongly agree
Their ability to cope with their caring role has deteriorated	74%
Their mental health has been negatively impacted	71%
They felt their education has been negatively impacted	60%
Their family has been negatively financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic	59%
They have not had any respite or break from their caring role	53%

### Recognition and support

What they said	Agree / strongly agree
The needs of young carers have had enough recognition throughout the pandemic	30%
The needs of young adult carers have had enough recognition	11%

Who have you had support from during the pandemic?	Percentage
Parent or guardian	72%
Young carers' worker or youth worker	48%
Other family member	30%
Friends	30%
Teacher or student support	28%
Other young carers support	15%
Counsellor	11%

Social worker	7%
Mental health worker	7%
GP or doctor	5%
I have received no support	5%
Online support (e.g. KOOTH)	3%
Text service (e.g. ChatHealth)	3%
Other (please specify)	2%

### **What young carers and young adult carers were saying**

- I just want to get out to have a break from watching my dad being ill. It's nice to be a kid!
- My mental health got really bad over the last lockdown, but I've now reached out for support.
- I live with my mum and my nan who have both been shielding. I've had to prioritise caring for my family over my studies over the last year.
- I had to go and pick up meds for mum, and people were saying I shouldn't be out and about, but I needed to be.

### **Education, career choices and aspirations**

- I can't focus – I've missed lessons due to caring.
- I struggled to understand online school work.
- I feel like my grades won't be as good as if I had been in school full-time and this will impact on my future career choices.
- I want to go into medicine, but this requires lots of work experience in a care environment, which has not been a possibility.
- I wanted to become an English teacher, but the pandemic has had a massive impact.
- I'm no longer certain on what career I want to do.
- Before the pandemic, I wanted to join the military and I thought I was going to be getting great grades. Now, my grades are slipping, and I've lost all motivation to join the army.
- I can't do dance at the moment so I am not taking exams so I fear I won't get a place at dance school at 16 as I need good results to get a scholarship - if not I won't be able to go as no-way will my parents be able to afford it.
- It would make a big difference if more employers understood the demands and importance of young people having a caring role
- It means that we miss out on social opportunities, on education opportunities and employment opportunities

### **Finances and employment**

- There has not been enough money to cover all our bills.

- Electricity and food bills have increased due to being at home more.
- We've needed to use food bank facilities.
- I'm on furlough money.
- I've lost my job – it's made my mental health lower.

### **What support is needed after the pandemic**

Young carers and young adult carers were asked what support they felt was needed after the pandemic to help support their futures. The support they asked for were:

- Respite/breaks from their caring role so they can be young people.
- Someone to talk to/mental health support.
- Young carer groups, trips and activities.
- Peer support.
- Help with career choices and skills/mentoring.
- Someone to check how they are doing (emotionally and academically).
- People listening and caring.

### **What Caring Together are doing in response to what young carers and young adult carers have said**

- Having given out over £20,000 in bursaries to young carers and young adult carers since the start of the pandemic, we will continue to seek funding to be able to provide even more financial support.
- Linking young carers and young adult carers in with mentoring/employability support – both individual and in groups.
- Offering individual carer breaks to sibling carers.
- Putting on additional Listening ear support (over the phone and in-person) for young adult carers aged 16-25 in Cambridgeshire.
- We are planning more activities/trips/workshops for young carers/young adult carers, including for siblings.
- We will continue to support organisations including schools, colleges, health organisations, employers and community groups to achieve the Carer Friendly Tick Award.

### **How you can help**

- Ensure that young carers, young adult carers and their families know about the support available from Caring Together and others.
- Ensure your organisation has signed up to the Carer Friendly Tick Award.
- Ask your local school/college/GP surgery if they have signed up to the Carer Friendly Tick yet.
- Offer to provide employability support to young carers

- Email your MP and ask them if they will sign the Early Day Motion (EDM) for Young Carers Action Day. [EDM 1629 Young Carers Action Day](#).
- Volunteer your time/expertise to provide employability support.

To find out more about the latest support available to young carers and young adult carers through Caring Together, visit <https://www.caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/young-carers>