



MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE.

**BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO
RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT
FOR YOUNG CARERS
IN THE COMMUNITY**



Report Audience: This report has been prepared for Youth and Community Programme Leaders, National Scouting and Girlguiding Associations, Duke of Edinburgh Award Leaders, Sports and Leisure Activities and Programme Leaders, Faith Groups and all those working with young people and their families in the community.

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LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR YOUNG CARERS



MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

WHO ARE YOUNG CARERS?

A young carer is legally defined in Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as 'a person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'. Therefore, young carers are children who provide care for someone or multiple people with unmet care needs, relating to ill health and/or disability. Young carers may be caring for one or multiple people in their family including those that may not live in the same household.



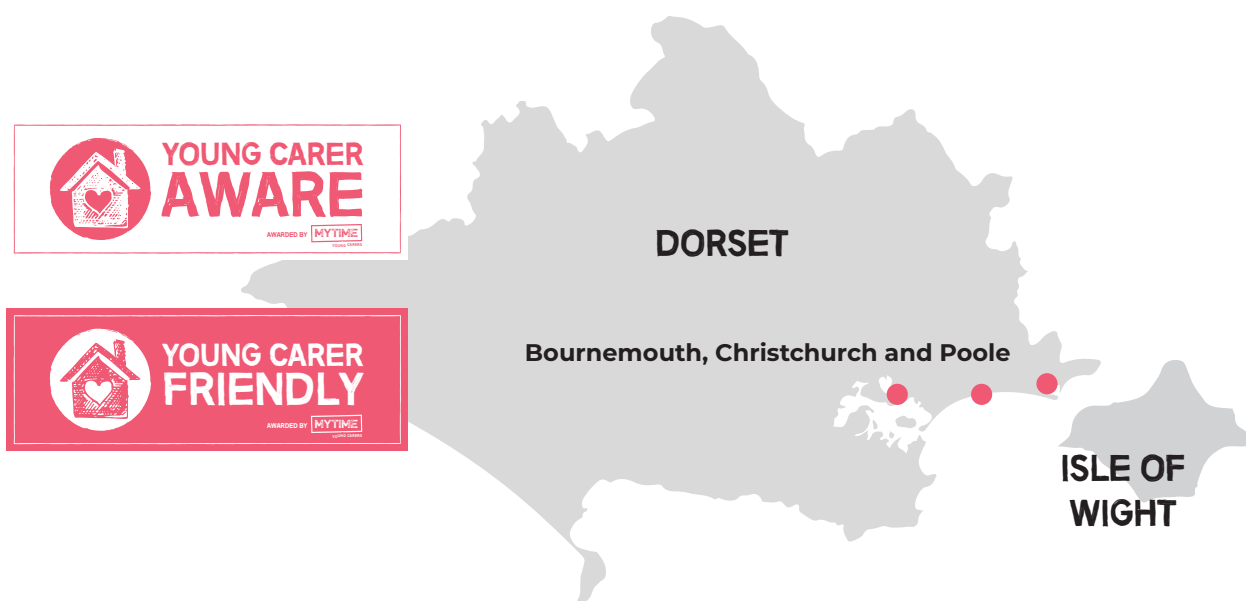
Young Carer Case Study: Daniel, aged 14

Daniel cares for his mum who has cancer. He brings her food, medication and provides emotional support when she is tired and unwell. He looks after his younger brother and manages the household, including washing their school uniforms and PE kits. Daniel finds it difficult to access any clubs or sports activities and feels completely isolated with no support networks. Daniel's mental health has rapidly deteriorated, and he lacks any sense of self-worth and belonging.

Many young carers like Daniel live in our communities and there is an urgent need to improve their childhood experiences. **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS COMMUNITY CHAMPION PROGRAMME** can break down the barriers young carers face when attempting to engage in a community, supporting them to build self-worth, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging.



MYTIME YOUNG CARERS is a national charity based in Dorset. Through our holistic programmes of support, **MYTIME** is dedicated to reducing the negative impacts of caring responsibilities and improving long-term outcomes for young carers. The **MYTIME Community Champion Programme** seeks to create 'Young Carer Friendly' communities. By equipping extra-curricular activity providers and group leaders with the training, tools, resources, and strategies necessary to create inclusive and compassionate environments, we will be enabling young carers to feel understood, respected, and experience a sense of belonging.



SCOPE OF THE REPORT

16 community group leaders and **34** young carers (aged 5–18 years) together with their parents and guardians participated in this study and it has highlighted an urgent need. The new Community Champion Programme will ensure extra-curricular youth and community leaders and activity providers become 'Young Carer Aware', thus reducing barriers for young carers to attend a club or activity of their preference and improving accessibility.

This report includes:

- ▷ Rates of young carers experiencing barriers to community provision and activities.
- ▷ Rates of young carers feeling isolated and 'missing out' on opportunities.
- ▷ Rates of young carers' parents facing logistical, financial and awareness challenges that impact them in supporting their children to engage in extra-curricular activities.
- ▷ Rates of understanding in community leaders regarding levels of participation and engagement amongst young carers.



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REPORT SUMMARY

Young carers face significant barriers to engaging in extra-curricular activities outside of school due to their caring roles and responsibilities. In this study, **91%** of young carers reported they were unable to consistently attend extra-curricular and youth provision services in the community due to their caring role. This results in them feeling deprived of vital social, emotional, and personal development opportunities, leading to feelings of isolation, stress, and exhaustion.

Additionally, their parents reported struggling to access the resources required for their children to attend extra-curricular activities, due to availability, cost of transport, uniforms/sports kit/equipment, and on-going cost or subsistence of attendance at the club or community group. Both the young carers and their parents reported feeling hesitant to disclose their health needs, caring roles, and their limited access to financial resources due to fear of service intervention, shame, embarrassment or simply feeling tired of repeatedly explaining their story.

We reached out to community leaders and activity providers to assess their ability to confidently identify and support young carers within their networks. **57%** of respondents acknowledged that they lacked the confidence to do so. This response sheds light on a critical issue: the hidden nature of many young carers and the challenges faced by those in positions to support them. It highlights the pressing need for greater awareness, education, and tools to empower community leaders and activity providers to recognise the signs of young caregiving and respond effectively. Without these measures, a significant number of young carers risk remaining unseen and unsupported, missing out on vital opportunities for help and understanding.

To counter these barriers, **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS** has developed the Community Champion Programme. Through this programme, MYTIME and its partners work to bring young carers out of isolation, connect them with their peers and provide the respite, resources, and recognition they deserve.

With the right support, young carers can reclaim their childhoods, safeguard their mental and physical health, and build promising futures. By elevating the visibility of young carers and fighting for their right to have support and opportunities, we can empower them to rise above the challenges they face. The time for action is now - these exceptional young people cannot wait any longer.



STAKEHOLDER'S RESPONSE



Stephen Peck

Deputy Secretary General of The Duke of Edinburgh International Award Foundation

As the Deputy Secretary General of The Duke of Edinburgh International Award Foundation, I wholeheartedly welcome the findings of the **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS: Making the Invisible, Visible** report and commend **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS** for their vital work in bringing attention to the unique challenges young carers face. This report powerfully illustrates the barriers that prevent young carers from fully engaging in extra-curricular activities, highlighting an urgent need for more inclusive and supportive opportunities within our communities.

At The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, we believe that every young person deserves the chance to develop their skills, build resilience, and experience the joy of personal achievement, regardless of their circumstances. However, as this report highlights, **91%** of young carers struggle to participate in extra-curricular activities, often due to their caregiving responsibilities, financial constraints, or a lack of understanding from activity providers. These young people possess incredible dedication, perseverance, and strength. Yet, without adequate support, they risk missing out on transformative experiences that could help shape their futures.

Through our partnerships and initiatives, we strive to create an environment where young carers feel seen, valued, and empowered to take on challenges outside of their caring roles. The resilience, leadership, and determination they demonstrate every day should be recognised and nurtured. The Community Champion Programme is an excellent step in breaking down barriers and ensuring that every young person, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

I am proud to stand alongside **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS** in working towards a more inclusive future. I encourage all community organisations to recognise and support young carers, ensuring they have equal access to the enrichment and growth that extra-curricular activities provide.



INVESTIGATING THE BARRIERS TO RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS IN THE COMMUNITY

What We Did

1 Recognised a Need

We highlighted a gap in support and visibility for young carers in extra-curricular activities outside of academic settings and a need to better identify and support young carers within the community environment.

2 Listened to Young Carers

Young carers directly informed us about their hobbies and interests and the barriers they face in accessing opportunities. Their insights were invaluable in shaping our approach to creating inclusive, supportive environments for them.

3 Consulted Young Carers' Parents and Guardians

Parents of young carers revealed the challenges faced by families in supporting their children to attend extra-curricular activities and community groups.

4 Consulted Community Leaders

By consulting local community leaders, we assessed their awareness of young carers and any existing support and adjustments in place to obtain a comprehensive view of the young carer experience across various settings.

5 Developed the MYTIME YOUNG CARERS Community Champion Programme

We developed a targeted training programme to raise awareness amongst community leaders and activity providers of the needs and challenges faced by young carers. This has allowed us to share knowledge and practical solutions that enable young carers to engage in extra-curricular activities whilst developing confidence and building a sense of achievement and belonging.



Why We Did It

1 Identifying Hidden Carers

Many young carers remain unregistered with local councils and thus miss out on essential support. By working with community organisations, we aim to break down the barriers to young carers being recognised, to bring hidden young carers to light, and ensure all young carers are recognised and receive the assistance they deserve.

2 Increasing Awareness and Understanding

Many adults and peers are unaware of the unique challenges young carers face, often failing to provide appropriate support. This initiative aims to build a more empathetic and informed community that understands and accommodates young carers' needs.

3 Aligning with National Recommendations

Following the 2023 APPG Inquiry, which advocated for “carer-aware” sports and leisure opportunities, we look to ensure that community organisations understand and address the needs of young carers¹.

4 Reducing Stress and Isolation

Our consultations highlighted that the substantial stress and isolation young carers experience is exacerbated by their limited involvement in social and recreational activities. We seek to create inclusive community spaces where young carers can participate without the weight of their responsibilities holding them back. By creating supportive environments, we hope young carers feel less isolated and have the chance to build relationships and positive aspirations.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The consultation activities for this study were informed by parents who recognise their child as a young carer. They are already engaged with **MYTIME** programmes and have engaged with extra-curricular activities in the past or are currently engaged, albeit sporadically. It therefore does not include the voices of young carers who are substantially isolated, not recognised as being a young carer, or accessing any form of support in the community.

¹ [appg-for-young-carers-and-young-adults-carers-reportlr.pdf](#)



KEY FINDINGS

Barriers to Regular Participation:

- ▶ **91%** of young carers struggle to participate in the community and face barriers to attending extra-curricular clubs and activities. Young carers find that their caregiving duties conflict with attending activities regularly and they report insufficient understanding by group leaders which can prevent them from engaging.

Barriers for Parents:

- ▶ **78%** of parents face challenges accessing clubs or activities for their children due to **logistical**, **financial**, and **awareness** issues, stating they need more support and understanding from community leaders and activity providers.

Inability to Identify and Support

- ▶ **57%** of community leaders and activity providers admitted that they could not confidently identify and support young carers. This statistic highlights a significant gap in awareness and understanding, underscoring the urgent need for targeted training, resources, and support systems.

Social and Developmental Opportunities:

- ▶ **78%** of the young carers reported that they miss out on important social and developmental experiences because of their caregiving role.

Reluctance to Share Young Carer Status

- ▶ Reasons for not sharing their status included **embarrassment**, **fear**, **shame**, **shyness**, **worry** that adults would dismiss their concerns and a general feeling of **exhaustion** from repeatedly explaining their situation to people who may not understand.

“ My daughter’s motivation to attend clubs and activities is lower due to poor self-esteem and shyness. This has been compounded by some degree because of the isolation she experiences by not being able to attend the groups regularly. ”

Young Carer Parent



“

Henry loves trying new activities, but has anxiety around meeting new people, especially if they do not understand his brother's medically complex needs. This can impact Henry and his ability to stay committed to clubs. As a family, we don't go to the away games and matches, as we can't get there because of Henry's brother's needs.

Young Carer Parent

”

This has highlighted an urgent need for community group and activity leaders to recognise and support young carers through more **flexible, understanding**, and **accessible** community programmes. Empowering young carers with the opportunity to engage with social and physical activities outside of their caregiving role is essential to developing their **confidence, wellbeing, future aspirations** and overall outlook.

“

There can be no doubt that caring significantly impacts many young people, so much so that they face disadvantages which not only affect their childhood and education in the here and now but also cast a shadow forward and affect their prospects in later life.

”

Professor Saul Becker²



² hidden_from_view_final.pdf (childrenssociety.org.uk)



THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG CARERS

A young carer is a child just like any other.

This opening line from **MYTIME**'s report, *'How Childhood Caring Responsibilities Impact Physical Health and Wellbeing'*, rings true in one respect - yet it understates a crucial difference. A young carer carries a unique weight: the pressure and responsibility of caring for a loved one with a disability, a chronic illness, or someone living with mental ill health or addiction. This role can fall upon any child or young person at any age, sometimes as early as primary school, and occasionally overnight due to a sudden illness or accident. Young carers may be caring for one or multiple people in their family including those that may not live in the same household. At **MYTIME**, we support young carers up to the day before their 26th birthday, recognising the profound effect this role has on their lives and futures.

Young carers shoulder duties far beyond their age including cooking, cleaning, managing the household, and administering medications, as well as providing personal, physical, and emotional care and looking after siblings. These daily responsibilities can be physically demanding and emotionally exhausting and the impacts of the ensuing isolation can be severe. Over **40%** of young carers say their caring role often prevents them from spending time with friends, and one in four feels excluded from activities that are simply part of everyday life for their peers³. Most report that their participation in leisure activities has suffered, often viewing rare opportunities to step away from their responsibilities as a "relief" and a chance to focus on themselves⁴.

The relentless strain young carers face can have a serious impact on their mental health, and they are reported to be more than twice as likely to **self-harm** or contemplate **taking their own life** (**17%** versus **7%**⁵).

It is thought that this hidden burden of care is felt by hundreds of thousands of young carers across the UK, though the true numbers remain uncertain. While the 2011 Census recorded around **195,000** young carers, Professor Becker estimates that the real figure may be closer to one million - a vast "hidden army" of young people whose contributions often go unseen. Startlingly, estimates suggest that over **80%** of these young carers operate without any formal recognition or support⁶ which often leads to reduced opportunities for engagement in physical, social, and leisure activities, thus enhancing feelings of isolation and loneliness and lowering self-esteem and confidence. Without urgent attention, we risk failing another generation of young carers, robbing them of a fair and fulfilling future.

³ [carers.org/downloads/being-a-young-carer-is-not-a-choice-its-just-what-we-do-final-uk-report-\(english\).pdf](https://carers.org/downloads/being-a-young-carer-is-not-a-choice-its-just-what-we-do-final-uk-report-(english).pdf)

⁴ mytimeyoungcarers.org/res/MYT_Impact_Report_2023.pdf

⁵ https://cosmostudy.uk/publication_pdfs/mental-health-and-wellbeing.pdf

⁶ mytimeyoungcarers.org/res/MYT_Impact_Report_2024.pdf



IMPACTS OF CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

78% of young carers have missed out on clubs and activities due to their responsibilities. This absence affects their social, emotional and personal development, as they lose out on formative experiences that peers without caring roles enjoy.

“ Jack’s swimming coach never followed up on his absences. Scouts were supportive - and we did have offers to help get Jack there, but it’s not just about getting him there as Jack worries if I’m not well and he’s not home. ”

Young Carer Parent

Young carers described feeling **sad, frustrated, stressed, annoyed, anxious, angry, left out** and **exhausted** when unable to attend or continue a hobby due to their caring role. These feelings are compounded by a sense of isolation, which highlights the need for targeted support and flexible, understanding community spaces.

“ I love drama, and I did an audition for a play at a youth club. I got the main part, but when my mum was ill, I had to miss two weeks of rehearsals. They told me they needed someone reliable and gave my part to someone else. I was disappointed about missing out on the play and I won’t go back to the club in the future. ”

Young Carer, aged 15

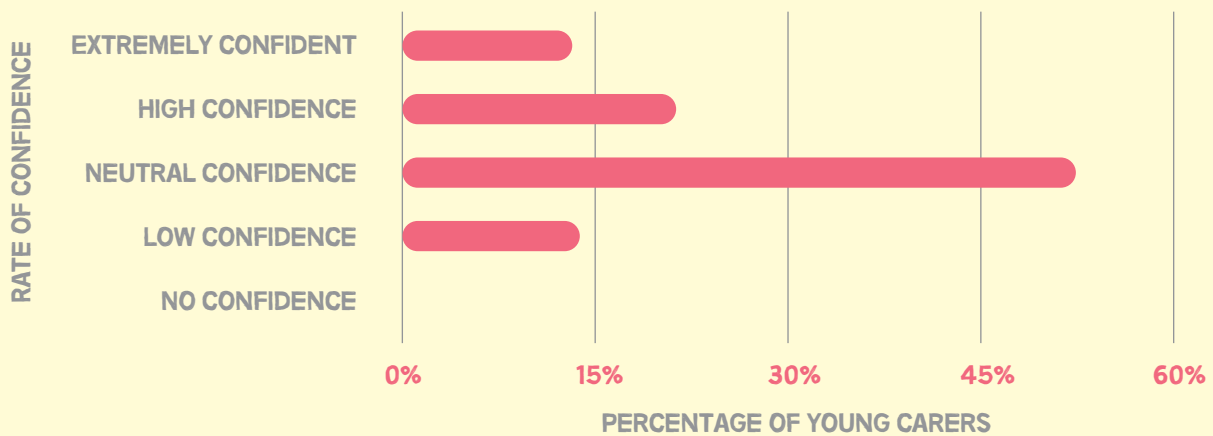
Our research also delved into the motivation, willingness, and confidence of young carers attending extra-curricular clubs and activities. **65%** rated their level of confidence attending extra-curricular clubs and activities as **low** or neutral, compared to **35%** of young carers who felt confident.

“ I have low self-esteem and feel isolated because I cannot attend clubs regularly. I feel like I’m falling behind in the training or activities, and it’s one more thing I’m not able to keep up with. This really affects my motivation to go. ”

Young Carer, aged 14

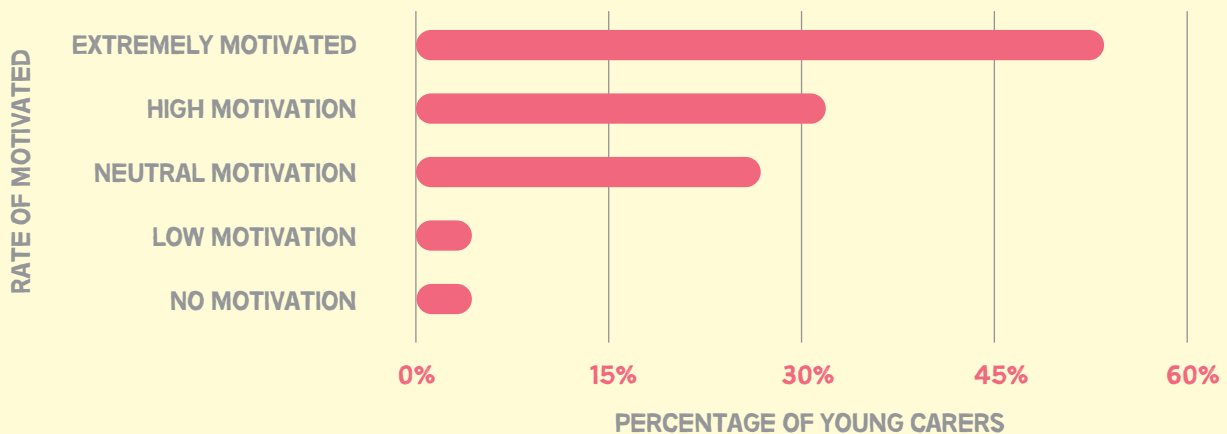


YOUNG CARERS' CONFIDENCE ATTENDING EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES



When asked about their willingness and motivation however, **70%** of young carers are **extremely or highly** motivated to join extra-curricular clubs and activities. This data shows that these young people are willing and eager to participate in their community outside of an academic setting but lack the confidence to do so.

YOUNG CARERS' MOTIVATION AND WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES



Our new Community Champion Programme aims to make communities across the nation 'Young Carer Friendly'. Through this programme, we equip communities with training, tools, resources and strategies to create inclusive and compassionate environments for young carers. This means fostering spaces where young carers feel understood, respected and empowered to be themselves, no matter the responsibilities they carry. By raising awareness and embedding supportive practices, **MYTIME** is addressing the urgent needs of young carers, allowing them to grow and succeed without sacrificing their well-being.

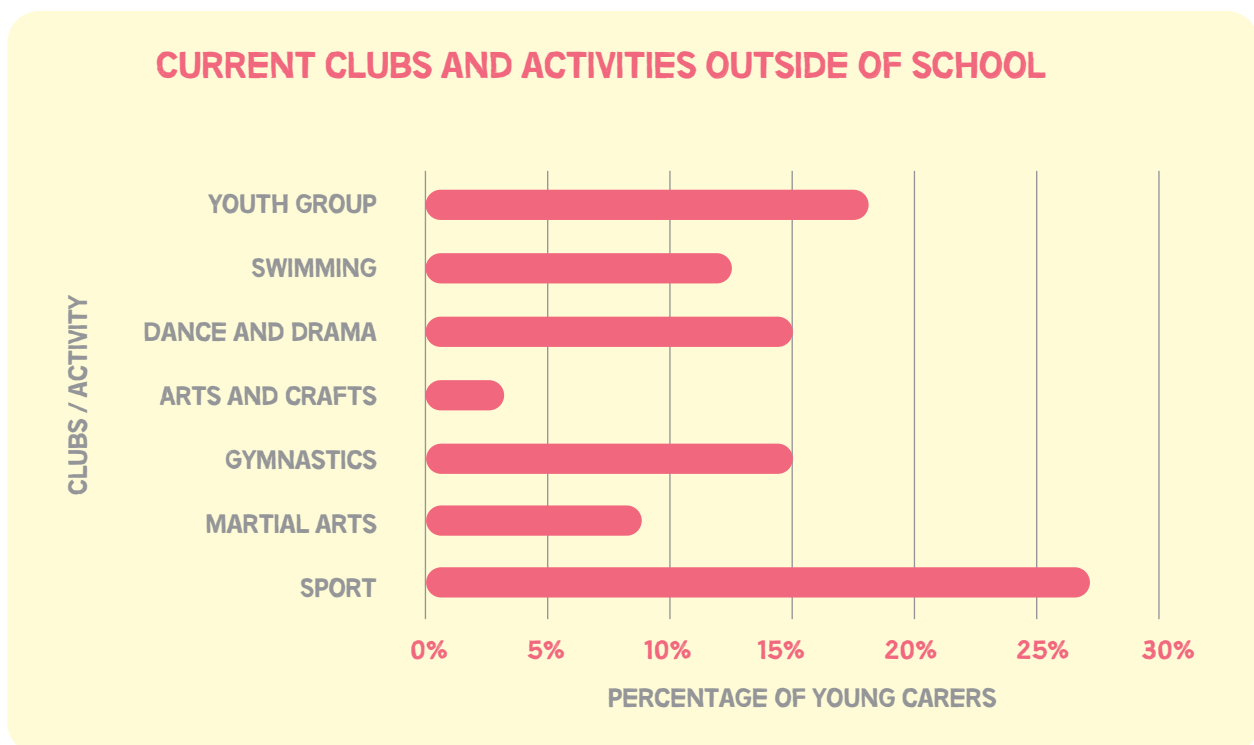


FURTHER ANALYSIS

Young Carers Participation in Clubs and Societies

Many young people recognise the importance of engaging in social action and extra-curricular activities with nearly **80%** reporting these activities are “important” or “very important” for their development⁷. However, young carers experience immense challenges in balancing school, personal development, and caring duties, making it difficult for them to take time for themselves or engage in activities outside their responsibilities.

Facing unique barriers that often prevent them from participating, young carers describe feeling **left behind**, **isolated**, and **unsupported** in communities that may not understand the pressures they face. **74%** of young carers in this study have participated in extra-curricular clubs and societies outside of school, but their attendance was often inconsistent due to their caring responsibilities, limiting their ability to build connections and fully engage in these activities. Consultation with the community group leaders and activity providers highlighted that **86%** of them were unaware if any of the children participating in their clubs were young carers. However, our findings show that young carers are already participating in extra-curricular activities such as youth groups, swimming, dance and drama, arts and crafts, gymnastics, martial arts, and sport.



⁷ youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-2023-report.pdf

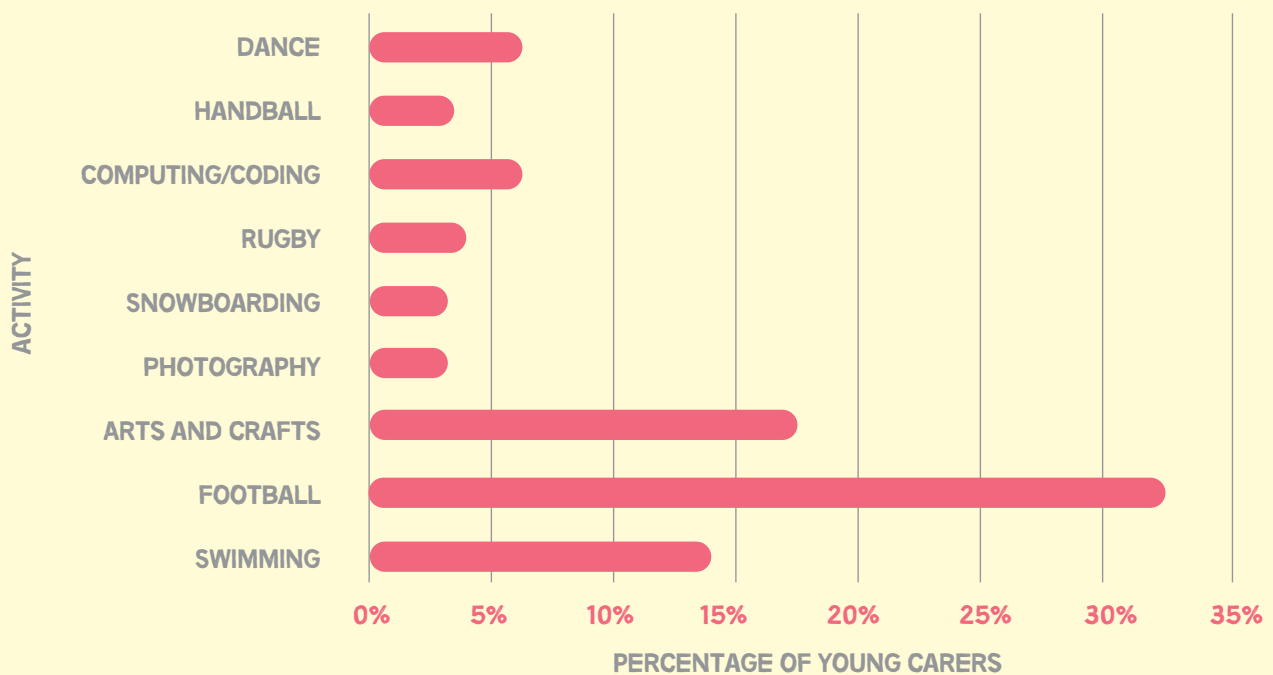


“ Due to my caring responsibilities, I had such limited experience around people, I couldn't really go out or talk to anyone outside a school setting. It made me really vulnerable, scared, and anxious. ”

Young Carer, aged 16

The consultation highlighted the types of activities and groups the young carers would like to participate in to feel part of their local community and relieve isolation and stress:

DESIRED OPPORTUNITIES



“ I explained to Harry's football manager about how he could not attend away games because of his brother's condition, but he would still not be understanding and used to drop Harry from the team the following week, leaving me having to explain repeatedly our situation. Eventually we gave up trying to explain and Harry left the club. ”

Young Carer Parent



SUPPORTIVE PROVISION FOR YOUNG CARERS IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Examples of supportive provision for young carers at extra-curricular activities include the activity and youth leaders recognising the child as a young carer, showing understanding of how that can impact them, being flexible if the young carer is late or cannot attend, supporting with transport, or 'checking in' with the family if attendance fluctuates.

“ When my daughter was having hospital admissions, surgery, and frequent appointments, the activity provider came to collect our other children, so they didn't miss out. ”

Young Carer Parent

For this study, **35%** of activity and group leaders of the clubs the young carers attended were reported as being 'supportive', **22%** were classed as 'somewhat supportive', and **13%** 'not very supportive'. **26%** were reported as being unaware of the child's status as a young carer. This highlights a gap in awareness and communication, with young carers and their parents/guardians sometimes reluctant to disclose their roles, and a lack of awareness amongst the community of who young carers are, and how their responsibilities can affect them.

“ They may know they are a young carer, but have never indicated that they do, and they make no effort to understand what impact it may have on our child's mood whilst attending, or any difficulties we may have to get them to the activity. ”

Young Carer Parent

By consulting local community leaders and activity providers, we assessed their awareness of young carers and the existing support and adjustments in place. **57%** said that they **did not feel confident** in identifying or supporting a young carer.

“ One of the Scouts kept regularly arriving late, or wearing the wrong shoes, or missing uniform. I didn't know they were a young carer, and I didn't even think of it until I was telling them off again for not being punctual. It turned out they were a carer for their brother with autism and ADHD. Their brother didn't want them leaving and would try and stop the Scout by hiding their shoes and delaying them. ”

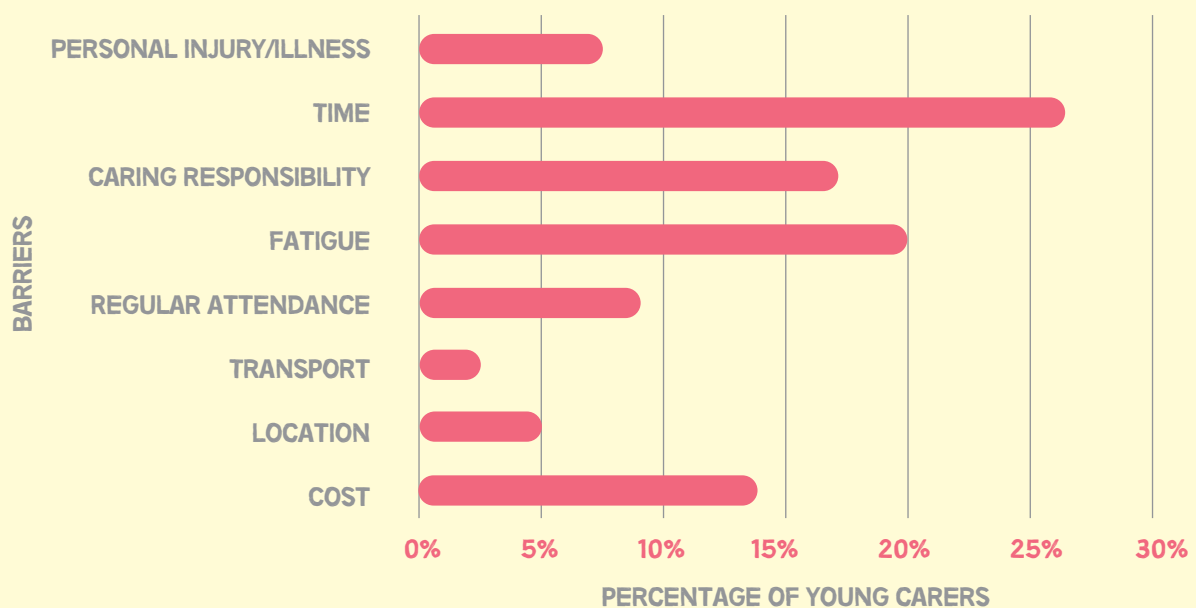
Scout Leader



CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG CARERS THAT PREVENT REGULAR PARTICIPATION

91% of young carers cited specific reasons why they couldn't join clubs regularly or pursue a passion. Their caring responsibilities often clash with scheduled activities, or something would happen at home that meant they couldn't attend. A lack of understanding or flexibility from the clubs meant that they were asked to leave or were excluded, and a lack of understanding from the group leaders prevented them from rejoining when possible.

BARRIERS FOR YOUNG CARERS



“ I used to go to Street Dance but my Mum has acute depression and fibromyalgia and sometimes can't get out of bed. So if she wasn't feeling well, she couldn't take me to class, or I didn't want to leave her because I was worried about her mood. I got behind in learning the dance routines and stopped going because I was embarrassed.

Young Carer, aged 16

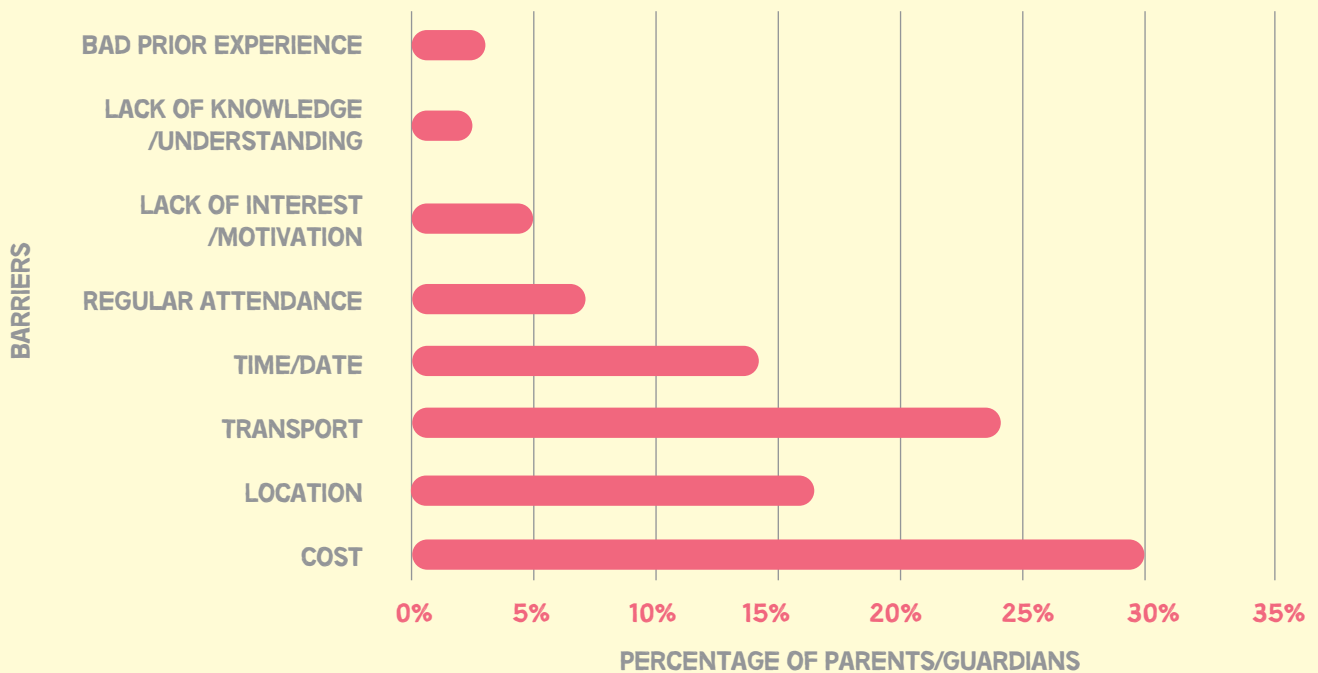




CHALLENGES FACED BY PARENTS AND GUARDIANS IN ENABLING YOUNG CARERS TO ATTEND EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

78% of parents we interviewed reported difficulties in accessing clubs and activities for their children. These challenges often stem from **logistical issues**, **financial constraints** and the need for **more understanding** from community leaders and activity providers regarding the unique situations of young carers and their families.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS



“ The Brownies’ leaders do all they can to help me get Lottie there, and I have support from another parent at the club, but if their child is ill or tired, I can’t get Lottie to the activity. ”

Young Carer Parent



The cost-of-living crisis has only increased the financial challenges faced by families, with more households having fallen into poverty, whilst the number of disabled people out of work has also increased⁸. Families where one or more people have a disability face higher household costs. This includes higher spending on essential goods and services, specialist equipment, insurance, energy, and therapies. On average, disabled households (with at least one disabled adult or child) will need an additional **£975** a month to have the same standard of living as a non-disabled household⁹. These financial challenges result in families having limited or no money to pay for resources or activities for their children; including days out, holidays and extra-curricular clubs and activities.



I couldn't get to class one week due to my caring role, so my Mum lost the money we had paid for the lesson. I couldn't go to class the following week because we couldn't afford it, even though I had the ability to go.



Young Carer, aged 14

Further research from **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS** has revealed that young carers are more likely to be eligible for free school meals, which is often associated with limited access to extra-curricular activities¹⁰. Findings from the 2023 Youth Voice Census indicate that children eligible for free school meals are less likely to participate in social action or extra-curricular activities, though they are slightly more likely to join a youth club compared to their peers with a non-caring role¹¹.



⁸ Disability Price Tag ²⁰²⁴ | Disability charity Scope UK

⁹ Extra Costs | Disability charity Scope UK

¹⁰ [mytimeyoungcarers.org/files/MYT Impact Report ²⁰²⁴.pdf](https://mytimeyoungcarers.org/files/MYT%20Impact%20Report%202024.pdf)

¹¹ youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-2023-report.pdf



HIGHLIGHTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Young Carer Case Study: Jayden, aged 15

Jayden joined Duke of Edinburgh and started working towards the Bronze Award. He was quite shy but started to grow in confidence from doing some volunteering activities in a charity shop. He suddenly dropped out just before going on expedition, and said he couldn't attend DofE anymore. The DofE leader was curious about what had gone wrong and spoke to Jayden and his mum about why he didn't want to carry on with the award. It turned out that Jayden was a young carer for his mum and his younger brother, and didn't want to leave his family overnight for the expedition in case they needed him. He also didn't want to ask his mum to buy the equipment he would need for it - such as walking boots, a sleeping bag, a water bottle, and a rucksack - because they didn't have much money. His mum was upset to hear that Jayden felt this way because she didn't know that was worrying him. The leader reassured Jayden that he could phone home at any time during the expedition if he was worried and arranged for the equipment he needed to be borrowed. Jayden was still nervous, but he went on the expedition, and he excelled. His confidence grew as he made some new friends, had fun at campfire, and laughed a lot. Jayden achieved the challenge set at expedition and got his Bronze Award. He was so pleased with himself, and his mum was delighted. Jayden is now planning on going for the Silver Award and has started to think about what he might want to do at College or Sixth Form, now he knows that he can achieve something if he tries. The thoughtfulness, flexibility and support of the expedition leader has had a hugely positive impact on Jayden, changing his mindset and as a result, unlocking future opportunities.





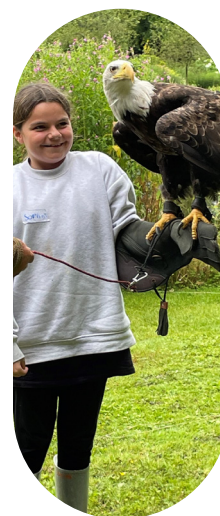
CONCLUSIONS

Identifying and supporting young carers must be a priority, embedded in all aspects of community life. When communities have the right tools to identify young people in caring roles, the pressure shifts away from young carers having to self-identify. Many young people are hesitant to identify themselves as carers out of concern for their family's privacy or fear of getting their parents into trouble. Parents of young carers often carry guilt, feeling that they rely too heavily on their children. They acknowledge that their children deserve better support and opportunities, despite the circumstances with one parent admitting, *"I can't give my child the time they need and deserve – but it's their life!"*

MYTIME's 'How Childhood Caring Responsibilities Impact Physical Health and Wellbeing' report emphasises how important extra-curricular activities are for young carers. Physical exercise, for example, serves as "a **release**, an **escape**, a way to **clear your mind**" - a simple but vital outlet often out of reach for many young carers due to their responsibilities.

Many young carers expressed that they would need **more support**, help with **funding**, more **flexible** timings and a greater **understanding** of their situation from adults in order to participate in activities. Providing these adjustments would open new opportunities for engagement and personal development.

Young carers will always exist, but with the right support and guidance, they shouldn't have to sacrifice their future to help those they love. Empowering young carers to access resources, support, and opportunities in their communities builds their confidence and develops life skills, all of which help them to realise their potential. Now, more than ever, we must take decisive action to support these young individuals who contribute so much to their families and communities.





RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for a cultural shift. The Community Champion Programme aims to create supportive, understanding communities that not only benefit young carers but also offer relief to families who rely on their children for care. One parent's comment captures this sentiment perfectly: *"the child should not be punished for circumstances which are out of their control."*

Our data suggests that young carers need dedicated opportunities to relax, rejuvenate and participate in leisure activities. Allowing them this time and support could alleviate some of the stress and emotional burden associated with their responsibilities.

These insights underscore the need for policies and community support systems that lower barriers to extra-curricular involvement for young carers, fostering their social and emotional development within an inclusive and empathetic environment.

- ▷ All community groups working with young people and their families should participate in the **MYTIME YOUNG CARERS** Community Champion Programme.
- ▷ Community groups need to make reasonable adjustments (such as offering support with transport or subsidised memberships) which enable young carers to take part.
- ▷ Community groups should create safe and trusted environments in which parents can confidently come forward and share that their child has a caring responsibility.

By encouraging community clubs and societies to become 'Young Carer Friendly,' we enable young carers to relieve stress and express complex emotions, helping them to cope healthily with their demanding roles instead of resorting to self-harm or other damaging coping mechanisms. When these communities and activity providers have had this training, they can proudly display the 'Young Carer Friendly' quality mark and certificate to encourage young carers to come forward and participate, knowing they will be welcomed in an inclusive and understanding environment.





MYTIME YOUNG CARERS COMMUNITY CHAMPION PROGRAMME

MYTIME'S COMMUNITY CHAMPION PROGRAMME exists to bring visibility and vital support to young carers, reducing the time it takes for them to receive help and ensuring no young carer goes unnoticed due to a lack of understanding. This programme aims to raise awareness across all areas of the community, enabling young carers to access the support they so urgently need. The programme seeks to break down barriers by upskilling those who work with young people and their families. Through targeted training and resources, we empower everyone - from sports coaches and scout leaders to dance teachers, youth groups, churches, and food banks - to better recognise young carers, understand their experiences and needs, confidently signpost them to support, and foster a meaningful, inclusive environment. Our mission is to equip communities with the tools to create welcoming spaces for young carers, free from stigma and misunderstanding, where they feel seen, respected, and safe to explore their interests.



Young carers themselves often express the need for communities that truly understand them, stating that they seek not only practical support but also empathetic spaces. Young carers want nothing more than to be understood and valued in places where they can enjoy fun and confidence-building experiences alongside friends, just like any other young person.

The need for the Community Champion Programme goes beyond support; it is about changing perceptions and challenging the invisible obstacles that young carers face daily. Our programme offers these young people access to clubs and societies that foster their growth and development, aiming to unlock social mobility and provide equal opportunities for all young carers.

For young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or living in low-income or marginalised communities, this access is a gamechanger, widening the playing field and breaking cycles of poverty and inequality.

By becoming a 'Young Carer Friendly' community through this programme, organisations are committing to fostering environments that enable young carers to feel confident in engaging with their communities. They are ensuring these young people are visible, valued and supported as they develop their dreams. This is about making the invisible, visible - about ensuring young carers feel the power of community behind them.

Young carers should not be disadvantaged by their circumstances. This programme seeks to secure a future in which no young carer feels unsupported or alone.



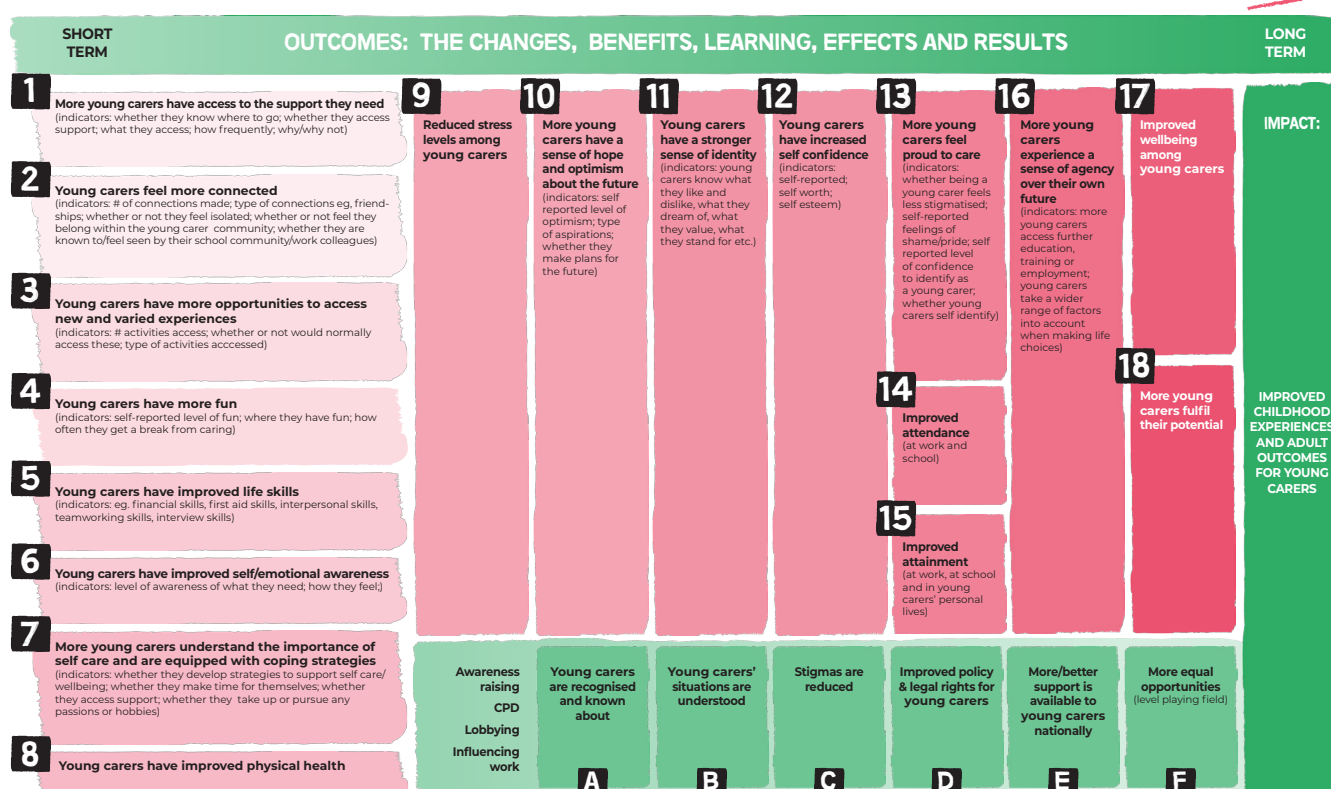
MEASURING THE IMPACT

The Community Champion Programme is designed to support communities in making meaningful adjustments that align with the outcomes specified in our **Theory of Change** model. To measure impact, we track partner community engagement, which indicates progress towards achieving our goals. Additionally, we conduct pre- and post-training evaluations to assess knowledge gains from the training sessions.



THEORY OF CHANGE

WE COMMIT TO COLLECTING AND ANALYSING DATA, TO UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES YOUNG CARERS FACE, AND THE MOST EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS THAT ENABLE YOUNG CARERS' TO THRIVE



Each 'Young Carer Friendly' community also maintains a young carer register and reports the number of young carers identified at regular intervals. By tracking this data, we can gauge the programme's reach and effectiveness, adjusting our approach as needed to better serve young carers.

Young carers represent both a social obligation and an opportunity. Targeted investment in research, policy, and support for young carers can yield high returns in terms of educational performance and overall societal and economic potential. Recognising and addressing the unique challenges faced by young carers benefits not only the individuals themselves but also the communities they are a part of.



PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

The Community Champion Programme is designed to partner closely with community leaders in roles that directly interact with young people and their families. By creating a more supportive and inclusive environment for young carers, we aim to foster a space where they feel welcome, understood and safe - an environment where they can thrive.

Programme Aims

Our main goals for the Community Champion Programme are to:

- ▷ Identify the many thousands of young carers who currently remain unknown and unregistered.
- ▷ Equip communities with the knowledge, tools, and strategies they need to effectively support young carers and their families.
- ▷ Empower young carers by providing them with the resources they need to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

To accomplish these aims, we offer the following:

- ▷ High-Quality Training: In-depth training that equips community members to identify and support young carers more effectively.
- ▷ Resource Provision: Both virtual and physical resources for display, enabling young carers to self-identify and reducing the stigma associated with caring.
- ▷ Individualised Policies: Customised young carer policies tailored to the specific needs and context of each community organisation.
- ▷ Parental Support: Resources specifically for the parents and guardians of newly identified young carers.
- ▷ **MYTIME** Branding and Materials: Branded promotional materials to increase awareness and visibility of support for young carers.
- ▷ Continuous Support for Alumni: Ongoing support provided by **MYTIME** staff for those who complete the Community Champion training.
- ▷ Access to **MYTIME** Programmes: Full access to all **MYTIME** support programmes for young carers.
- ▷ Networking Opportunities: Regular opportunities for 'Young Carer Friendly' communities to connect, share insights, and support one another.

A Community-Based Solution

In essence, we support communities so that they, in turn, can support their young carers. By equipping local leaders, activity providers, and those working with young people in the community with the skills and understanding to recognise and assist young carers, we can make a meaningful difference in their lives and help build a brighter future for all young carers.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Whether you're a community leader, youth worker, or someone simply passionate about supporting young carers and their families, you can make a difference:

▷ **Participate in the Community Champion Programme:** Through tailored training and ongoing support, this programme equips community members to identify and provide meaningful support to young carers.

▷ Email **YCFriends@mytimeyoungcarers.org** to get a list of available training and costings or scan this QR code to register your interest.



▷ **Raise Awareness in Your Community:** Help young carers feel visible, understood, and supported by sharing information and resources about the Community Champion Programme and **MYTIME** initiatives.

▷ For more information about our programmes, and to access the young carer referral form, scan this QR code or email **enquiries@mytimeyoungcarers.org**.



▷ **Support Extra-curricular Involvement:** Advocate for local clubs and societies to adopt carer-friendly policies, making it easier for young carers to participate and feel included.

▷ **Join the Young Carer 'Parents, Guardians and Friends' Newsletter:** Email your consent to **YCFriends@mytimeyoungcarers.org**, and follow and share our social media.



By joining us, you contribute to a crucial cultural shift - one that recognises, values, and actively supports young carers. Together, we can ensure they have the resources to thrive both now and in the future.

All enquiries please forward to YCFriends@mytimeyoungcarers.org



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to Stephen Peck for providing a brilliant stakeholder response which helps carry weight to the need for better understanding and recognition for young carers in the community.

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Lastly, thank you to the reader, I hope this inspires action for cultural change regarding young carers, and challenges your perception of the young people and families you support in the community.



THANKYOU

MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE.

**BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO
RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT
FOR YOUNG CARERS
IN THE COMMUNITY**



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LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR YOUNG CARERS