

# Time to be Heard Wales

A Call for Better Support  
for Carers in Wales



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# Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank all the young adult carers who contributed to this study by giving up their time to take part in this survey and to attend our consultation events across Wales.

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# Time to be Heard Wales

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“I feel if I had someone I trusted, I could talk to them and maybe I would be able to unload all this and get it off my shoulders. It’s really hard being a young adult carer. I feel isolated from everybody else and I’ve got nobody to go to.”

Young adult carer

## Introduction

A carer is anyone who cares, **unpaid**, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

There are over 370,000 carers in Wales, providing £7bn worth of **unpaid** care every year, an essential pillar of health and social care in Wales (Carers UK, 2012).

Of those carers, 22,655 are aged 14–25 – Wales has the highest proportion of carers aged under 18 in the UK (2.6%) (UK Census, 2011). Young adult carers are juggling the responsibilities of caring with the difficulties that come with that period of transition from school to college, college to university or education to employment.

Carers Trust commissioned the University of Nottingham to undertake research into the experiences and aspirations of young adult carers. The findings are clear – young adult carers are a group that are under-identified and under-supported, facing significant barriers that will have a long-lasting impact on their future.

Many young adult carers have been caring for most of their lives, often putting the needs of the person (or people) they care for above their own. Leaving school, going to college or university, entering employment – these are difficult transitions for all young adults. But for young adult carers, when there isn’t the support that they need, they can be insurmountable obstacles.

We recognise and welcome that the Welsh Government identified young and young adult carers as a key theme in the delivery plan for the Carers Strategy for Wales – committing to integrating young adult carers into all Welsh Government policies and strategies (Welsh Government, 2013). But the difficulty of bridging policy and practice remains, and more still needs to be done.

An opportunity exists with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which comes into force in April 2016. The Act will place carers on an equal legal footing as those they care for and places a statutory duty on local authorities to support all carers to meet wellbeing outcomes which include 'education, training and recreation'. For young adult carers, there are very real, specific barriers that they are and will be facing. Barriers that the Welsh Government, local authorities, local health boards, employers and education providers have the power to tackle.

The research by the University of Nottingham shows us that young adult carers are **four times** more likely to drop out of college or university than a student without caring responsibilities. Identification, understanding and support from education providers, coupled with strong local services for carers do make a difference, and they do not need to come with a high price tag. Many of the support mechanisms that are already in place in colleges and universities to support care leavers would be equally relevant to those with caring responsibilities. Support mechanisms such as flexible deadlines, admissions that take into account a young adult's caring responsibilities, and processes to identify young adult carers amongst a student cohort.

Carers Trust Wales has spent the past year talking to young adult carers in Wales – the aim of Time to be Heard Wales has been to not just listen to young adult carers, but to give them a platform to make their voices heard loud and clear. And their voices have been clear – young adult carers want recognition for the work they do; understanding from schools, colleges and universities; and the peace of mind that comes with knowing that public services, including the local authority, are there to support them.

Our campaign does not end with this report, it begins with this report. We will continue to work with and for young adult carers in Wales, providing them with what they need to make their voices heard. There are opportunities in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and in the increasing integration between health and social care, to create a Wales that doesn't just give young adult carers the recognition they deserve, but also they support they need.

### **About Carers Trust Wales**

Carers Trust Wales is part of Carers Trust, a major new charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with Network Partners in Wales – a unique network of 14 independent carers centres and Crossroads Care schemes and five young carers services. Together we are united by a shared vision for carers – to make sure that quality assured information, advice and practical support are available to all carers across Wales.

## Key findings across the UK

In 2013, Carers Trust commissioned a survey of young adult carers to inform the Time to be Heard campaign. The campaign, funded by The Co-operative Charity of the Year, aims to transform the lives of young adult carers aged 14–25 by addressing the barriers that prevent them from reaching their potential. The survey was carried out by a research team at the University of Nottingham reaching 362 young adult carers of whom 295 provided responses for analysis (Sempik, J and Becker, S, 2013, 2014 and 2014a).

Bringing these findings together, this report highlights the difficulties young adult carers experience in their education, employment, health and socialisation. They are not being identified and supported so they face multiple barriers that will have a significant and lasting impact on their future.

The research found that young adult carers:

- Miss or cut short an average of 48 school days a year because of their caring role.
- Over a third (35%) had not informed someone in school that they were a carer.
- Were four times more likely to drop out of college or university than students who were not young adult carers.
- Miss work on average 17 days per year, with a further 79 days affected because of their caring responsibilities.
- Have higher rates of poor mental and physical health than the average young person.
- Rarely receive the assessments they are entitled to, with only 22% of those surveyed receiving a formal assessment of their needs by the local authority.
- Experience high rates of bullying – one quarter reported bullying and abuse in school because they were a carer.

Carers Trust Wales is calling on the Welsh Government and public bodies to secure a positive future for Wales' young adult carers. It is young adult carers' Time to be Heard.



## Key findings in Wales

The research carried out by the University of Nottingham included young adult carers from Wales. Carers Trust Wales wanted to further explore the experiences of young adult carers in Wales and so held a series of consultation events across Wales, including:

- A consultation session at the Young Carers Festival at Goytre Village, Port Talbot in July 2014, attended by 30 young adult carers aged 14-17
- A residential in Llangrannog for young adult carers aged 16–25 in November 2014. This was attended by 39 young adult carers from across Wales.
- A consultation day for young adult carers aged 14–16 in St Asaph in April 2015. This was attended by 15 young adult carers.
- A consultation day for young adult carers in Bridgend in May 2015.

We used the opportunity presented by the residential to carry out a small quantitative survey of the young adult carers present (in total there were 31 valid responses). We found that the young adult carers we surveyed were in line with and echoed the findings of the University of Nottingham research – this includes over a quarter (30%) reporting having been bullied in school as a result of their caring role. We also found that the average time respondents had been caring for was five years. As well as the practical tasks around the house, the majority of young adult carers also described regularly providing emotional support to their family.

Carers Trust Wales also formed and facilitated the Young Adult Carer Advisory Group. The aim of the group is to provide a national voice for young adult carers in Wales and ensure that Carers Trust Wales' work reflects the real experiences and needs of young adult carers.



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# Recommendations

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The following recommendations in the areas of recognition and support, education and employment are in response to the findings of both the University of Nottingham research and Carers Trust Wales' own consultation work with young adult carers in Wales.

## Recognition and support

- There are 22,655 young adult carers in Wales, caring **unpaid** for a friend or family member who could not cope without their support. Young adult carers are a group that are under-identified and under-supported, facing significant barriers that will have a long-lasting impact on their future. Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, local authorities and local health boards will have a duty to plan how they will meet the needs of carers in their area.
  - Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government makes it clear in any guidance or regulations published under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act to local health boards and local authorities that these plans should include specific reference to young adult carers, including how local authorities and local health boards will support young adult carers during transition.
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 comes into force in April 2016.
  - Carers Trust Wales recommends that through the Codes of Practice, training and guidance under the Act, there is a clear emphasis on working with young adult carers, commissioning services for young adult carers and supporting young adult carers during transition.
  - Carers Trust Wales calls on local authorities and local health boards to ensure they meet their duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, ensuring that they assess young adult carers and, where eligible, put in place support plans and packages of support.
- Services can support young adult carers in a number of ways – from peer groups to short breaks.
  - Carers Trust Wales recommends that commissioners at local authorities and health boards fund and sustain young adult carer services for specialist support. We also recommend that the Welsh Government highlights examples of best practice in funding and sustaining young adult carer services locally.



- Identifying young adult carers is essential in ensuring that young adult carers receive the support that they need. Only 22% of respondents to the University of Nottingham research had received a formal assessment by the local authority. There is currently uncertainty over what emphasis will be placed on identifying carers in community-based health services after the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure comes to an end in April 2016.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government ensures primary care providers understand the role of young adult carers and are enabled to signpost young adult carers to appropriate services.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that there is increased, and specifically allocated, investment in services to support young adult carers including peer-support, information and advice, and short breaks.

“I care for my brother with autism and ADHD, I have to watch him when Mum’s having a break as he can’t be left alone.

“I’ve already got a place at Bangor University. I want to do teaching. I was offered a place with a scholarship in 2017.

“I’m looking forward to leaving home but I don’t want to leave the burden on my sister. It helps coming to the young carer group as it’s the only time we get away.”

Young adult carer

## Education

- There are no formal mechanisms to identify or count carers in school, or further or higher education. The University of Nottingham research found that 35% of young adult carers had not informed their school they were a carer. Unless school, colleges or universities have implemented their own measures, then institutions do not know how many carers are studying with them. Identifying carers is the first step to better knowing what these young and young adult carers need and how best to meet those needs.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government makes the identification of young adult carers a priority and works, where possible, with other organisations such as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to attempt to put in place formal ways to identify carers in the application process.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that schools adopt either an ID card system or a red card/time out system whereby young carers can excuse themselves from lessons without an explanation.

- Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government includes the identification and support of carers as a priority in the remit letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and as a priority in the priorities letter sent to further education institutions. This may include the requirement to produce a strategy to identify transition arrangements for young adult carers between schools and further/higher education.

- The message from young adult carers in school was clear – they feel that teachers do not understand their situation, that it is difficult having to disclose sensitive and personal information to multiple staff members, and that they do not believe anything will happen should they inform a member of staff they are a carer.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that PGCE courses at Initial Teacher Training Centres in Wales include information on the role of young and young adult carers to help improve awareness in schools.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that where possible, information on identifying and supporting young adult carers be included in continuing professional development courses offered to teachers.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that all schools, colleges and universities have a clearly identified member of staff to lead on working with and supporting young and young adult carers.

- A study of student carers carried out by the National Union of Students (NUS) revealed that only 36% of student carers felt able to balance their commitments (such as work, study and family/relationships), compared with 53% of students who did not have caring responsibilities (NUS, 2013).
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government review financial support arrangements for student carers, including the availability of maintenance support to further education students and part-time higher education students.

- All schools currently receive £1,050 for each pupil eligible for either free school meals and/or those who are Looked After as part of the Pupil Deprivation Grant.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government includes young and young adult carers in the Pupil Deprivation Grant – at a minimum by explicitly identifying young and young adult carers in the Pupil Deprivation Grant guidance.
- Many carer services play a vital role in supporting young adult carers and ensuring that they are given vital breaks from caring, support to build their confidence, and opportunities to connect and relate with other young adult carers.

- Carers Trust Wales recommends that schools, colleges and universities in Wales identify and make links with their local young adult carer services to better identify and support young adult carers in their institutions. Carers Trust Wales can help put schools, colleges and universities in contact with their local services.

## Employment

“If you have trouble in school you don’t think about what you want to do in the future. It’s hard enough now. I wish you had more support in careers advice. I haven’t had the time in my life to sit down to think about what I want to do.”

Young adult carer

- There are a number of training and employability programmes that have operated and are operating in Wales, including Jobs Growth Wales and Go Wales. Young adult carers on average miss work 17 days per year, with a further 79 days affected because of their caring responsibilities.
  - Training and employability programmes need to recognise the challenges faced by young adult carers in accessing them.
  - Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government ensures that all training and employability programmes commissioned or run by the Welsh Government recognise the needs of carers and ensure the programmes are accessible to carers.
  - Carers Trust Wales recommends that colleges and universities in Wales design or adapt their own training and employability programmes to be suitable for young adult carers – this includes long notice periods for placement timetables and the ability for young adult carers to take short notice leave if their caring responsibilities require it.
- Carers Trust Wales recommends that employers adopt the Carer Friendly Employer Recognition Award to better support carers in the workplace. Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Welsh Government actively promotes this award to employers.
- The Wales Employment and Skills Board provides the employer perspective to Welsh Government Ministers on employment and skills matters.
  - Carers Trust Wales recommends that the Board reflects on young adult carers, needs and on how policy could support young adult carers to enter and remain in employment.

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# The experiences of young adult carers

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The findings of the University of Nottingham survey have been broken down into the four broad categories below which cover the recognition and support young adult carers receive, young adult carers' experiences of school, their experiences of college and university and their experiences of employment.

## Recognition and support

The survey results show the impact on young adult carers' health and opportunities when health and social care services are unavailable or inadequate. For those young adult carers answering the survey:

- Only 46% say their family received good support and services.
- Only 22% have received a formal assessment of their needs by the local authority.
- 45% of those responding to the survey who had left school say that they would have got better grades if they were not a carer.
- There was a link between providing a greater amount of care and regularly missing college or university.<sup>1</sup>
- 65% of those responding to the survey said they had one or more disability or health difficulty.
- 45% of those responding to the survey reported having a mental health problem, including anxiety, depression and eating disorders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The data showed a weak to moderate but statistically significant correlation between level of care provision and attendance. Correlation coefficient of 0.29-0.41 depending on the measure of absence or lateness used.

<sup>2</sup> The number of responses analysed were from 295 young adult carers. This included 61 still at school, 101 in college or university and 77 who had left school and were either in work or NEET.

<sup>3</sup> Data for comparison includes the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2004 survey covering England, Scotland and Wales, which found that one in ten children and young people aged between five and 16 had a clinically-recognisable mental health disorder, with one in five of those having more than one of the main types of disorder (Green et al, 2005). Another survey conducted in 2006 found that 20% of students aged 16–19 in sixth form or further education colleges admitted experiencing emotional or psychological problems in that current term and 36% stated that they had done so in the past (Schools Health Education Unit, 2007).

Young adult carers are developing health problems, including high levels of mental ill health, at a much higher rate than other young people.<sup>3</sup> Of the survey respondents, 38% said that their health was just OK or poor and 45% reported having mental health problems. Their caring role has an evident impact on their attendance and grades at school, college and university.

"I constantly have these stresses. About the people I care for. About school. I took drama, music and performing arts but I have confidence issues and am constantly worrying about failing. I have anxiety. I overthink and worry about everything. I have trouble sleeping. I'm not getting sleep at night."

Young adult carer

The research findings support the case made by Carers Trust and young adult carers themselves that relying on young adults to provide high levels of care for a family member puts their health and their future at risk. This is echoed in the findings of the 2011 Census that found that carers under the age of 18 who provided **unpaid** care were more likely to say that their general health was not good. In Wales, young carers providing 50 or more hours of **unpaid** care were 4.4 times more likely than those providing no care to report their health as not good (ONS, 2013).

In the University of Nottingham survey sample, only 22% of young adult carers had received a formal assessment of their needs by the local authority. This means that the vast majority are missing out on the chance to have their needs considered and to hear about their right to be supported. New and stronger rights for carers in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 mean that more are entitled to a formal assessment and the duty is on the local authority to offer an assessment.

The research found that less than half of young adult carers felt their family received good support and services. An increase in the number of assessments and the subsequent provision of support by local authorities will be essential to address the poor health, disadvantage in education, and high unemployment rates seen in the survey results.

"I couldn't revise as I was looking after my sister. I only passed science GCSE. The school didn't care that I was a carer. They didn't help me. Counselling would have helped. I had a taxi to take me to school [from the LEA] but they wouldn't wait if I was busy, like if I was feeding my sister breakfast. My mum would have to pay for a normal taxi then to take me to school."

Young adult carer

In the research, we found evidence that specialist services can significantly improve young adult carers' wellbeing and educational attendance. Those surveyed said accessing specialist services had increased their confidence (72%), their feeling that they have friends (60%) and their grades and attendance (26%).

Services for young adult carers provide tailored support for young people with caring responsibilities to make decisions about education and employment. Carers Trust Wales' consultation work with young adult carers in Wales reaffirmed this, with young adult carers telling us that what they most valued from services was the opportunity to meet other young adult carers and to get a break for caring.

**“They only realised [I was a carer] when I was being bullied then they gave me counselling.”**

**Young adult carer**

These opportunities for peer support mean young adult carers can share their experiences with others who understand. The support services commissioned for young adult carers must recognise their unique needs and individual circumstances and be provided by a skilled workforce.

## **Young adult carers in school**

The research by the University of Nottingham found that over a third of young adult carers in school (35%) had not informed their school that they were a carer. Identifying young adult carers is an essential first step towards offering them the support they need to learn, study and progress onto further education, higher education or employment.

In the Carers Trust Wales' consultation that we held with young adult carers aged 14–16, a number of consistent reasons emerged for why those carers had not informed their school. This included:

- A strong belief that the school/teachers would not do anything.
- A lack of understanding about what being a carer means.
- Information not being communicated to all teachers. A number of young adult carers had been frustrated by the number of times they had to repeat the same information to individual teachers.
- Feelings of discomfort or embarrassment.

To be able to support young adult carers to achieve and succeed, schools need to be able to identify them and have in place the structures young adult carers need to feel that they are understood, recognised and supported. One key way that the Welsh Government could support the identification of young adult carers in school would be to include young and young adult carers in the criteria for the Pupil Deprivation Grant.

**“I'd started opening up to people at school but got bullied and people were taking the mick out of Mum. I've moved school now. I've only opened up to one friend who I think is also a young carer.”**

**Young adult carer**

The University of Nottingham survey also found that:

- On average, each year young adult carers miss ten days of school, start late 27 days a year and leave early 11 days a year.
- A quarter of young adult carers in school report being bullied or abused because they are a carer.
- The most common highest qualification for the young adult carers responding to the survey was a GCSE at grade D.

“One teacher said ‘I’m sorry I just don’t have the time’ and another said ‘We’ve got no one you can go to’.”

Young adult carer

Some schools are taking positive steps to support young adult carers, while others lack the awareness to identify and support them. Young adult carers face inconsistency, with many missing out on the support needed to prevent them being disadvantaged in their education.

## Young adult carers in college and university

Going to college and university can be particularly challenging for young adult carers – especially when it means significant time away from the person or people they care for. 25% of young adult carers in college or university had not informed staff that they are a carer, and almost half (45%) said they did not have a particular person at college or university who recognised they were a carer and helped them.

When Carers Trust Wales spoke to young adult carers in college about their experience of letting their college know, some of the most positive responses were from those where the school had informed the college. This meant young adult carers did not need to take the first step themselves. It is by creating these information sharing links – between services, schools, colleges, universities and local authorities – that the often difficult decision to disclose caring responsibilities can be made much easier.

The University of Nottingham research found that:

- 45% of respondents reported having mental health problems.
- Over half of respondents (56%) were experiencing difficulties in post-16 education because of their caring role.
- The majority of respondents (62%) had not had a formal assessment by a social worker or other health/social care professional.

“My mate got a B in Maths because he was good at arithmetic, now he’s got onto the college course I wanted to, he’s no interest in the subject he just did it because his mates were doing it. Now he can do the things I wanted to do. I spent my young life looking after someone else and who was looking after me?”

#### Young adult carer

Existing research shows that young adults with caring responsibilities are less likely to be in further or higher education and less likely to be in full or part-time work (Yeandle and Buckner, 2007). The University of Nottingham research also found that young adult carers, if they were in further or higher education, were *four times more likely to drop out*.

“Juggling university and caring responsibilities is not easy. I was lucky enough to have my family supporting me to go to university. In addition to having a brilliant support from a worker at college who gave me the encouragement I needed to go. I stayed on campus first year to experience uni life even though I travelled home every weekend. I was lucky enough that my university had a young carers bursary, which then helped with the travel costs. My lecturers understood and over time I have been able to get a worker in the university to support myself and other young adult carers. I feel that if you don't choose the right university then it can make your caring role that much harder.”

#### Young adult carer

Other research carried out in Wales demonstrates the importance of education to carers more generally, as well as the barriers faced by carers in accessing education including the need for financial support. The Open University in Wales’ evaluation of its Access to Education for Carers project found that of the carers who engaged with the project, 78% had no previous higher education experience and 62% had claimed a carer’s bursary towards the cost of their courses (The Open University in Wales, 2014). Further research carried out by NUS Wales and The Open University in Wales found that around 11% of part-time students in Wales had caring responsibilities and that carers were more likely to miss formal elements of their course and more likely to find their course too pressured (NUS Wales and The Open University in Wales, 2014)



Young adult carers in Wales need further and higher education providers to recognise them and their specific needs, as well as ensuring that structures and support services are in place to help them not only access post-16 education, but to complete their course. Once post-16 providers have identified young adult carers, institutions can put in place mechanisms such as peer support, flexible deadlines, financial support where necessary and other initiatives that recognise and tackle the barriers faced by young adult carers.



## Young adult carers in employment and training

The University of Nottingham research provides new evidence of the adverse impact of being a young adult carer on opportunities to train or work. Many young adult carers are feeling the pressure of balancing their caring role and training or employment. The data shows that their attendance and their choice of courses or jobs are negatively impacted. Young adult carers need more information about their options for the future so that they can make informed choices. However, local authorities and health services must make sure that the person being cared for has the necessary support so that young adult carers can reduce their caring roles and have genuine choices.



### Providing young adult carers with the information they need to plan for their future

Young adult carers need better advice about their options for the future. Many of those surveyed were uncertain about how they will be able to go to college or university while they continue as a carer. The low number who had received an assessment from the local authority means that many are missing out on support to answer these questions, including the chance to consider whether they want to reduce their caring role with the support of social care or health services.

Young adult carers did not feel they had the information and advice they needed to plan for the future:

- 87% felt they had not received good careers advice and many also reported that they did not get the advice they needed about how to look for a job while having a caring role.
- Almost half were uncertain about funding their further or higher education and a similar number felt that the careers advice they received had not helped them prepare for their future choices.
- 13% of those at college or university felt they may drop out because of financial difficulties.
- Few received state benefits (10% received Carer's Allowance and 28% received other benefits).

"Where will my sister live? I don't want to be a carer for my whole life. However, I want her to reach her potential."

Young adult carer

Taken together, young adult carers have insufficient information about the resources and guidance available to them.

Careers advice for young adult carers should help them understand their options in the context of their caring responsibilities. This advice needs to be tailored, targeted and effective. Young adult carers would benefit from being a priority group for Careers Wales. With new rights to assessment and support services from the local authority when the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is implemented, young adult carers in Wales should benefit from the support to consider reducing their caring role. It is essential that young adult carers are offered tailored careers advice, specialist support to consider and prepare for university and an ongoing offer of guidance as they balance caring responsibilities and employment.

## Enabling young adult carers to participate in employment

The University of Nottingham research showed that being a young adult carer had a significant negative impact on employment:

- On average, young adult carers missed 17 work days per year and had to start late or leave early on 79 days per year.
- 21% of the young adult carers who had left school were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The impact of caring on work attendance is likely to be holding young adult carers back in their working life. Many are risking their job security.

“My caring responsibilities feel like a barrier because I feel trapped and guilty for leaving my mum.”

Young adult carer

Across the University of Nottingham research sample, a significant number of young adult carers had felt it was necessary to prioritise their caring role over their work choices.

- 44% chose their job because it was close to home.
- 38% chose their job because it offered the flexibility to fit it around their caring responsibilities.

The restrictions that caring places on their employment opportunities can also be seen in the high number not in work at all.

It was positive to see that those young adult carers that had completed a university or college course were more likely to be in a job because it fitted with what they wanted to do. The research shows that college and university is an important route to employment for young adult carers. This underlines the importance of addressing young adult carers' disadvantage in education and the need for information for them to consider their options in young adulthood with recourse to good guidance.

Young adult carers are likely to be dealing with conflicting pressures from their employment and their caring. Health and social care services, in line with their new duties towards carers, can support young adults to review their situation and the potential for services to better meet the needs of the person they care for.

“[It would help me] If they discussed my changing needs regularly rather than just once.”

Young adult carer

At the same time, employers need to provide better support to young adult carers and to offer flexibility to their employees. Being able to balance the demands on their time will benefit the young adult carer and the organisation they work for. The University of Nottingham research found that employers are generally aware of the caring responsibilities of young adult carers. The majority of young adult carers in work had told their manager about their caring role but for 41% of them their manager was not supportive. Collaborative work between employers, government and young adult carers is needed to develop approaches for supporting young adult carers in work.



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# It is young adult carers' time to be heard

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Over the last decade, our groundbreaking work has brought young carers onto the policy agenda. There is more awareness of who young carers are and their support needs. The basic premise – understood and committed to by the Government – is that children and young people should not be relied upon to provide inappropriate care.

Those young people grow into adulthood generally with deep loyalties to their families. Yet at this time in their life, statutory protection and support rapidly falls away as they transition beyond the school environment. The impetus to prepare for the future shifts to the young person and their family at a time when these young adults are often relied on to provide more care.

Carers Trust Wales is calling for a commitment from the Welsh Government to listen to young adult carers and put in place the policies, support and services that will protect the wellbeing of young adult carers and enable young adult carers to succeed in education, employment and training.

Young adult carers are picking up the pieces of the health and social care system. Carers Trust Wales' consultation work revealed a diverse range of caring responsibilities from those caring for one family member for a few hours a day to some young people caring for three generations within the same family (grandparent, parent and sibling). Our work presents a picture of young adult carers in Wales where young adult carers are fearful of being misunderstood and judged. A picture where young adult carers do not feel there is support available for them in school, college or university. Where young adult carers worry about what will happen to the people they care for in the future.

Yet despite that, there is hope and optimism – young adult carers were ambitious, talking about their future in terms of achieving financial stability, working in a job they value, and building a life of their own.

Our recommendations set out a clear way forward for Government, educators and employers in Wales. A way forward that will help create a Wales that does not unfairly lean on and disadvantage young adult carers. Young adult carers in Wales are calling for:

- A social care and health system that does not rely on children and young people to provide inappropriate levels of care at the expense of their health and their future.
- An education system that identifies, recognises and supports young adult carers.
- An equal chance to train and work.

Young adult carers are calling for a better, fairer Wales. It is young adult carers' Time to be Heard.

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All library photos posed by models. Please note, identities of carers have been changed in the interests of privacy.