

Dear Carers, Friends and Colleagues,

## The day is almost here!

On **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March** it will be National **#YoungCarersActionDay**, a day in which we, as Sutton's Young Carers Service, and local partners, take the opportunity to once again highlight the contributions that Young Carers make to their families and communities.

It is estimated that Carers save the country at least £132 billion a year for the unpaid caring that they do and Young Carers contribute to this immense figure. We must value their lived experience and it is also crucial that we recognise the challenges that children & young people with caring roles face in their daily lives. Our goal is to amplify Young Carers' voices and to give them the platform to say what it is that they want local professionals and community leaders to understand.

The theme this **Young Carers Action Day 2022** is '**Taking Action on Isolation**'. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and already existing issues, such as feelings of isolation, only increased. Recent studies (Carers UK, Carers Trust, Children's Society) show:

- **89%** of Young Carers surveyed under 24 years old feel lonely or socially isolated as a result of their caring role.
- **11%** of Young Carers and almost **20%** of Young Adult Carers surveyed reported an increase of **30 hours** or more in the amount of time they spend caring per week during the pandemic.
- **64%** of Young Carers surveyed receive no support, whether formal or informal. Of those receiving help, the most common source was a Young Carers' project, followed by their school or college.

## Young Carers and Mental Health

Feelings of isolation impact wellbeing and mental health. We know that peer support, belonging and social connection are major indicators of health and these are areas that Young Carers feel are affected the most as a result of their caring role.

Additionally, some Young Carers are experiencing an increase in levels of anxiety and fear about their ability to cope with the pressures of juggling education, caring and ensuring they keep their families safe now that Covid-19 restrictions have ceased. Young Carers must be recognised as a vulnerable group when considering the mental health needs of children and young people.

## Our Actions

The **Ambassadors** are a group of Young Carers who campaign for change, often speaking to those in power, but also act to represent their peers within the Centre and ensure their voices are at the forefront of everything we do. This year, our Ambassadors have spoken to

community leaders, presented at school assemblies, created lots of content for our social media platforms and most importantly shared their experiences with us. Most recently, one of our Young Carer Ambassadors, Isla Eldridge, was also a judge at the Sutton Community Awards.

On Young Carers Action Day 2022, we will be launching our **#StoriesNotStatistics** campaign and sharing a poignant resource in which Sutton's Young Carers Ambassadors will share some of their stories around the impacts of caring. Our Young Carers Ambassadors decided that although statistics gave information on the impacts of caring, their lived experience is more than that and cannot be captured by just numbers.

This digital resource is an anthology of stories, poems, photography and artwork that all derive from the main 'isolation' narrative. The story-telling focuses on understanding the impact of isolation on Young Carers in their everyday lives. The Ambassadors also believed that it was important to include positive stories around finding solitude and taking time away from the noise of the world.

We want to continue to amplify Young Carers' voices, on a local and national level and will always ensure that their thoughts and ideas shape the Young Carers Service. Keep an eye on all our social media platforms and see how we mark Young Carers Action Day throughout the week.

During the week that Young Carers Action Day takes place, we will be running "Taking Action on Isolation" special sessions in all our groups: 'Chill & Learn', 'Passport' (emotional literacy) and Peer Support.

We are so proud that our **Young Carers Ambassadors** programme, which was relaunched exactly a year ago, has achieved so much in such a short time!

More information on Sutton's Community Awards can be found on the London Borough of Sutton website [here](#).

### **An update on Sutton Young Carers in Education (SYCiE project)**

In the past year, we have worked closely with 8 primary schools, 5 secondary schools and 2 colleges, who support their Young Carers by:

- Delivering Young Carer Awareness staff training.
- Delivering Young Carer Awareness assemblies.
- Running peer support and homework clubs.
- Completing and achieving 'The Young Carers in School' award.

We also want to take the opportunity to celebrate our 'Co-op Foundation 'iWill' project-funded schools work. Schools are increasingly coming forward, asking what they can do to support Young Carers. This year Muschamp Primary and Tweeddale Primary Schools have worked hard to identify and support Young Carers in transition stages. We have trained school staff as well as a cohort of Young Carers in years 4, 5 and 6 who are now accessing in-school peer support. We are proud that both schools have invested in creating systems changes and are ensuring that Young Carers are identified and supported.

### Young Carers tell us:

- *Having a named person in school that understands Young Carers needs has made a difference.*
- *I didn't know there were other Young Carers in my school, peer support has changed that.*
- *Having a space in school to complete work means I no-longer have detentions.*
- *I love school now, I can concentrate on my learning and leave the adults to do the adult things, which I didn't know were adult things!*

We are so pleased that the work our Service provides can continue, thanks to a further 3-years funding from BBC Children in Need, which ensures the continuation of the SYCiE (Sutton Young Carers in Education) Programme. The experience we've had over the past 4 years has taught us that offering resources directly to our education colleagues, whilst also helping to build that ongoing capacity, is key to creating systems-wide and community change. We look forward to our partnership work with more and more schools.

Lastly, we also are thrilled that we will soon have a commitment to another 5 - 7 years' funding from the London Borough of Sutton, unbroken support to Young Carers for around 3 decades.

### How can you get involved?

- Be a part of Young Carers Action Day - check out the resources available [here](#).
- View our Young Carers Ambassadors digital resource [here](#) and share it with friends, family and colleagues.
- Don't forget to send us your 'Solitude Tune' to be included within our Young Carers Ambassadors' Music Playlist. Submit your song [here](#).
- Continue to work with us to identify Young Carers. If you need refresher training for staff or for Young People, please contact us to discuss.
- Keep updated with Young Carers' issues, support services and events by following us on Instagram [@SuttonYoungCarers](#), Twitter [@SuttonCarers](#), Facebook [@SuttonCarersCentre](#), YouTube [@SuttonCarersCentre](#) or via our website [here](#) and our Carers Trust page [here](#).
- Stay connected nationally to Carers Trust by following them [@CarersTrust](#) or via their website [here](#), which has lots of information for professionals.
- Volunteer your time or your expertise - we have roles waiting to be filled.
- Fundraise for Young Carers and their families.
- Donate directly via our JustGiving page [here](#).
- Share your good work with us so it can be celebrated, we can learn from you, and we can build the local and national evidence-base of what works best for Young Carers and their families.
- Spread the word through social media by sharing Sutton Carers Centre and other local partner's posts by using the hashtags **#StoriesNotStatistics**, **#YoungCarersActionDay**, **#YCAD** and **#SuttonCarers**. Please tag [@CarersTrust](#) and not forgetting [@SuttonYoungCarers](#) on Instagram, [@SuttonCarers](#) on Twitter, or [@SuttonCarersCentre](#) on Facebook.

## Finally, a big thank you!

This is also a time for us to thank some of our partners, who have supported Young Carers over the last 12 months:

*We have been so generously supported, in money or in-kind, by London Borough Sutton for many years, and also BBC Children in Need, Co-op Foundation, The Jack Petchey Foundation, Carers Trust, Sutton CCG, SWLStG Mental Health NHS Trust, Epsom and St Helier Hospital NHS Trust, Cheam & Sutton Rotary Club, Sutton Freemasons, Surrey Freemasons, Nonsuch & Carshalton Rotary Club, Create Arts, Sutton Salvation Army, Sutton Asda, and many private donors, fundraisers and volunteers. Your generosity enables us to continue to provide support and time out for Young Carers, to reduce the impact of caring and give them space to realise their hopes and dreams.*

If you would like to find out further information or get more involved, please email the Young Carers Service at Sutton Carers Centre on [youngcarers@suttoncarerscentre.org](mailto:youngcarers@suttoncarerscentre.org)

Best wishes,

The Young Carers Team:

Shukri Mohamed - Sutton Young Carers Service Manager

Julia Kerr - Senior Support and Development Worker (Education) and SYCiE Lead

Anna Hetherton - Young Carers Activities, Engagement and Participation Worker

Esme Stock – Young Carers Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Worker (p/t until Oct '21)

Nazia Ayyaz – Young Carers Support Worker (p/t)