

**Sutton Young Carers lead the way for Young Carers Action Day**

**To mark *Young Carers Action Day* on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2021, two local Young Carers step up to make their voices heard, and ensure no Young Carer feels alone.**

*Over the past year, unpaid Carers across Sutton have been hugely impacted by the pandemic. The caring community has continued to step up to support family members and friends, whilst also adapting to updated Covid-19 guidance and restrictions. Despite these challenges, many Carers, including Young Carers, have spoken up to share their personal experiences to help others.*

*When Sutton Young Carer Finley Taheny was aged only 10 years old, he took action in his primary school by delivering an insightful and moving assembly alongside his Support Worker, Julia Kerr. Finley bravely spoke up in front of his peers to say: "I am a Young Carer and never want another child to go through the loneliness that I have".*

*Finley, now aged 11 at John Fisher School, was honoured as this year's recipient of the 'Outstanding Young Person' award at Sutton Community Awards 2020. He has continued his mission to highlight the issues faced by Young Carers, fighting for the platform for their voices to be heard. As the face of the newly relaunched Young Carers Ambassadors Programme at Sutton Carers Centre, he hopes that more Young Carers will come forward to speak to those in power, campaign for change and take action. He also hopes to help build a peer support group for those Young Carers feeling most alone, like he once was.*

*Another amazing Young Carer in Sutton, Lilly Smith, aged 15. Lilly was being supported by Sutton Carers Centre just before the pandemic hit. During lockdown, Lilly wrote a song, and then came forward to perform it live online to her peers. The powerful lyrics resonated heavily with the other Young Carers. Lilly decided that this Young Carers Action Day, Sutton Carers Centre could release 'Lilly's Song' more widely to support other Young Carers and to help them realise that they are not alone.*

**Shukri Mohamed, Young Carers Service Manager at Sutton Carers Centre, said:**

*This is a crucial time for Young Carers, young people who are proud, but may not be enjoying carefree childhoods because they are looking after a parent or sibling who is physically or mentally ill or disabled. COVID-19 has hit hard and some Young Carers may even spend more hours caring than studying. They may be worried, isolated, their mental health and wellbeing suffering. Finley and Lilly want this to change and for no Young Carer to be hidden away. Sutton's communities have come together during the pandemic, so please let's all pledge to take action for Young Carers now.*

**The London Borough of Sutton's Carers' Champions, Councillor Marlene Heron and Councillor Chris Williams, said:**

*"Collectively, we pledge to take action for Young Carers in Sutton. We value Young Carers' voices and will work to ensure that they are heard at the highest level in Sutton. We also pledge to recognise and respect Young Carers' experiences and will use this to inform the ambitious work of the Council. As a council, we need to do our best to support Young Carers' futures by promoting the opportunities that will help every Young Carer achieve their goals and aspirations."*

## Notes to Editors

Young Carers Action Day 2021 (previously known as Young Carers Awareness Day) takes place on Tuesday 16 March. The theme is: **Protect Young Carers' Futures**. It is a day to highlight the contributions that Young Carers make to their families and communities – as well as the challenges that Children & Young People with caring roles face in their daily lives. This day is an opportunity for Young Carers to say what it is that they want local professionals and colleagues to hear and understand, and to have a wider platform for sharing key messages that are important to them.

Young Carers Action Day also is a time to **recognise and highlight the incredible skills Young Carers have developed through being a Carer, such as resilience, time-management and empathy**. Additionally, it is a time to consider how we can support them, not only in their education, but also in their future aspirations. It is great news that YCAD now includes Young Adult Carers aged 18-25. This year in particular, Young Carers want to be at the heart of any change taking place locally or nationally.

**Sutton Carers Centre** is leading on Young Carers Action Day in Sutton, in partnership with the London Borough of Sutton and other charity partners and community members. Sutton Carers Centre is a local, independent charity offering information, advice, practical and emotional support to family and friend Carers of all ages; this includes 'Young Carers' who may be teenagers or potentially children as young as 8, as well as 'Adult Carers' who may be our elders or perhaps still juggling caring alongside paid employment. Sutton Carers Centre also provides tailored support to schools, help for Carers struggling with their mental health, and practical help - from access to food, to support with any financial difficulties, throughout the pandemic and beyond.

This year's YCAD 2021 is all about supporting Young Carers to make their voices heard - on a local and national level, but also at Sutton Carers Centre with their **#YourVoiceYourFuture** campaign. To mark the day, Sutton Carers Centre will be running special sessions in all their online groups, passing the 'mic' to Young Carers and inviting them to share their skills and aspirations, as well as offering support to help them achieve.

For more information on what **Sutton Carers Centre** is doing: Twitter @SuttonCarers, Facebook @SuttonCarersCentre, Web: [www.suttoncarerscentre.org](http://www.suttoncarerscentre.org)  
**#YourVoiceYourFuture**, **#YoungCarersActionDay** and **#SuttonCarers**

Nationally, further information on Young Carers Action Day can be found [here](#). Carers Trust resources can be found [here](#). Visit @CarersTrust on Twitter and Facebook, or via their website [here](#).

Finley Taheny's nomination speech and win at the Sutton Community Awards can be found [here](#). More information on Sutton's Community Awards can be found [here](#).

'Lilly's Song' will be launching at 1pm, 16 March on YouTube [here](#).

### **For more information, interviews, case studies, or pictures, please contact:**

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