



YOUNG CARERS: OUR VOICES, OUR LIVES

MARCH 2026

Introduction

In late 2025, Carers Northumberland invited young carers to complete our annual survey. A total of 73 young carers responded, providing detailed information about their caring responsibilities, wellbeing, and experiences in education. We would like to thank every young carer who took part and shared their views.

This year's survey focused on four key areas: caring responsibilities, emotional and practical support provided, financial pressures, and the impact of caring on school and daily life.

Recent national evidence highlights the increasing pressures faced by young carers. The Carers Trust report, "Caring and Classes: The Education Gap for Young Carers" (2024), found that young carers continue to experience significant barriers in education, including lower attendance, reduced attainment, and limited access to support. In addition, the 2024 school census recorded 53,976 pupils identified as young carers in England, representing 0.6% of the pupil population.

Our findings in Northumberland reflect several of these national trends, particularly around financial strain and educational support. However, there are also notable differences in the scale of caring responsibilities and the level of support young carers feel they receive in school. This report presents these findings in detail and highlights where local experiences align with, or diverge from, the national picture.

Young Carers Foreword



My name is Jess, I am 16, and I am a member of Carers Northumberland but most importantly, I am a young carer. I care for my mam, grandparents, and siblings, and have done so for some time. Being a young carer can be challenging, especially when it comes to keeping up with schoolwork and meeting deadlines. Despite this, I have become a young carer ambassador and represent Northumberland in the Young Carers National Voice.

This role has helped me grow in confidence and speak up, not only for myself but for other young carers who may struggle to express their needs or access support. I am very grateful for the young carers service, which has supported me through one-to-one help and opportunities like trips that give us a break from our responsibilities. These experiences have helped me meet others in similar situations and build my confidence, including speaking to Sir Martin Oliver, the Chief Inspector of Education.

Jess Turnbull

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YOUNG CARERS

Registered with Carers
Northumberland (March
2026)

Demographics

Who took part?

82%
were girls

Gender

Female: 60 (82.2%)

Male: 12 (16.4%)

Prefer not to say: 1 (1.4%)

Whats your
age ?

Age Range

7-9 years: 10 (13.7%)

10-12 years: 32 (43.8%)

13-15 years: 22 (30.1%)

16-17 years: 9 (12.3%)

The majority are primary and early secondary age (57.5%)

Northumberland data:

(Data from registered young carers from March 2026)

- 310 boys, 484 girls, 2 transgender young carers
- 136 young carers have a disability or additional need
- Where do you live? - 112(North), 457(South East) 110(West) 117(Central) Northumberland
- Most young carers registered with us are aged between 9-15 years old but we have young people as young as 5!



Caring Responsibilities

Who do you look after?

Many young carers support more than one person, most commonly siblings.



Who Young Carers Support

Brother/sister: 54 (74.0%)
Parent: 38 (52.1%)
Grandparent(s): 14 (19.2%)
Other: 5 (6.8%)

Hours of Care Per Week

0–10 hours: 27 (37.0%)
11–20 hours: 26 (35.6%)
21–30 hours: 14 (19.2%)
30+ hours: 6 (8.2%)

27.4%
provide 21+ hours weekly

Change in Caring (Past Year)

About the same: 39 (53.4%)
Doing more: 30 (41.1%)
Doing less: 4 (5.5%)

$\frac{1}{2}$
Nearly half of you said you are caring more this year!

78% of you help with cleaning



Types of Support Provided

Cleaning/tidying: 57 (78.1%)
Looking after siblings: 53 (72.6%)
Emotional support (siblings/adults): 47 (64.4%)
Cooking: 44 (60.3%)
Shopping: 36 (49.3%)
Medical/health support: 28 (38.4%)

Emotional support is a major but often hidden role (64.4%)



Financial Wellbeing

Do You Worry About Money?

Sometimes: 24 (32.9%)

Not really: 22 (30.1%)

Never: 15 (20.5%)

Yes, a lot: 12 (16.4%)

49.3% worry about money (sometimes or a lot)



A LOT OF YOU SAID YOU
WORRIED ABOUT MONEY

Does Caring Make Money Harder for Families?

Yes: 31 (42.5%)

Not sure: 24 (32.9%)

No: 18 (24.7%)

Impacts of Financial Pressure

Not having same things as friends: 29 (39.7%)

Worrying about bills/food: 25 (34.2%)

Missing school trips: 21 (28.8%)

Trying to help financially: 27 (37.0%)

Financial hardship impacts social
inclusion and wellbeing



Young Carers Support Fund Grants

Reported Benefits

Common themes (qualitative):

Time away from caring

Improved mental wellbeing

Social opportunities

Access to hobbies and activities

Over 80% of comments highlight respite and "time for me" as the main benefit



Education

50%

50% say caring makes school harder

Does Caring Make School Harder?
Sometimes harder: 26 (35.6%)
Yes, a lot harder: 11 (15.1%)
Not really: 21 (28.8%)
No: 10 (13.7%)
I'm not in school: 5 (6.8%)

Do You Miss School or Homework?
Sometimes/Often: 32 (43.8%)
Never: 41 (56.2%)

Do School Staff Know You Are a Young Carer?
Yes: 46 (63.0%)
No / Not sure: 27 (37.0%)

Do You Feel Supported in School?
Yes: 27 (37.0%)
No / Not sure: 46 (63.0%)
Majority feel schools could provide more support



DID YOU KNOW?
Carers Northumberland have delivered assemblies to over 13,000 pupils across Northumberland, this year!

Key School Challenges

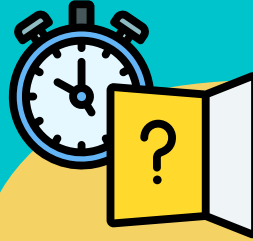
- Tiredness
- Worry about family
- Homework pressure
- Lack of teacher understanding
- Attendance issues

Wellbeing

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL HAPPY

How Often Do You Feel Happy?

Most days: 38 (52.1%)
Some days: 27 (37.0%)
Not often: 8 (11.0%)



1 in 5 of you have limited
time for fun

Time for Fun

(Friends, Hobbies)

Lots of time: 24 (32.9%)
Some time: 34 (46.6%)
Little time: 15 (20.5%)

What Would Help Most

Young carers consistently requested:

- More financial support / grants
- Help getting jobs (especially age 16+)
- Better school understanding and flexibility
- More activities and social opportunities
- Emotional support / someone to talk to
- Breaks from caring (respite)

What did you
ask for more of?

83% are
feeling tired!



How Often Do You Feel Tired?

Every day: 14 (19.2%)
A few times a week: 25 (34.2%)
Sometimes: 22 (30.1%)
Never: 12 (16.4%)

83.6% experience tiredness at least sometimes

YOUNG CARERS: OUR VOICE OUR LIVES (QUOTES)

"I worry about my mam when I'm at school"

"I wish I could help my mam with money"

"I feel different to other people."

"I worry about food, heating or bills."

"I sometimes have to do things adults usually do."

"A pass to leave class when I feel overwhelmed."

"Some teachers don't understand."

"I feel responsible for my family."

"It would be nice to do something just for me."

"I feel stressed and overwhelmed."

"I stay up till early hours doing homework."

"I get tired because my sibling doesn't sleep."

"I like helping but it can be tiring."

Over half of young carers report that caring negatively impacts their education, while nearly half experience financial stress and the vast majority struggle with tiredness.



Summary

Key Findings

- 41.1% of young carers are taking on more caring responsibilities
- 27.4% provide high levels of care (21+ hours per week)
- 49.3% worry about money
- 50.7% say caring makes school harder
- 63.0% feel schools do not fully support them
- 83.6% feel tired at least sometimes

Over half of young carers report that caring negatively impacts their education, while nearly half experience financial stress and the vast majority struggle with tiredness.

Recommendations

1. Financial Support - Increase access to grants and financial assistance. Provide targeted cost-of-living support for young carers and their families
2. Education - Improve awareness and understanding of young carers in schools Offer greater flexibility with homework, attendance, and deadlines
3. Wellbeing - Expand access to respite opportunities and activities and an expansion of 1-1 support to provide emotional wellbeing and mental health support
4. Future Opportunities - Develop job readiness programmes for young carers aged 16+. Offer education on money management and financial skills

Conclusion

This survey highlights that young carers are taking on significant and increasing responsibilities, often alongside financial pressures, tiredness, and challenges in education.

While many show resilience, there is a clear need for improved support across schools, financial provision, and wellbeing services. Providing targeted, accessible support will help ensure young carers can not only manage their responsibilities, but also enjoy their childhood, succeed in education, and achieve their future goals.



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What Young Carers Want More Of:

**More grants/financial help: ~60%
of comments**

Help getting a job: ~45%

Money management skills: ~35%

More activities: ~40%

Attached appendices show original survey questions sent to young carers and their individual responses to questions.

APPENDIX 1

Annual survey questions

Young Carers Survey 2025/26

We want to learn about what life is like for young carers like you. Your answers will help us understand how caring, school, money and wellbeing affect you, so we can think about how to make things better for young carers.

- There are **no right or wrong answers** — just be honest.
- The survey is **private and anonymous**. No one will know it was you who answered.
- If anything in the survey makes you feel worried or upset, please talk to a teacher, family member, or another adult you trust or you can contact a member of the young carers team for support!

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

All about you...

Tell us a little bit about yourself

1. How old are you? *

Enter your answer

2. Are you.. *

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

About Caring...

Tell us a little more about the care you provide

3. Who do you mostly care for? (Tick all that apply) *

- Parent
- Brother or sister
- Grandparent(s)
- Someone else

4. Thinking about the last year has the time you spend caring increased or decreased? (This means you are either helping more or less, or just the same) *

- I do more
- I do less
- About the same

5. **How many hours per week do you care? ***

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 30 plus

6. **What kind of things do you help with? (Tick all that apply) ***

- Cooking or making food
- Cleaning or tidying up
- Shopping
- Helping with money (bills, benefits, etc.)
- Giving medicine or other health support
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- Supporting a brother or sister with their emotions and/or mental health
- Supporting and adult with their emotions and/or mental health
- Other

Money and Caring

Tell us more about the impact of the cost of living on you and your family.

7. **Do you ever worry about money?**

- Yes, a lot;
- Sometimes
- Not really
- Never

8. **Do you feel that being a carer makes money harder for your family? ***

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

9. **Do you ever: (tick any that are true for you)**

*

- Miss out on school trips because of money
- Not have the things your friends have (like clothes, games, internet, etc.)
- Worry about food, heating, or bills
- Try to earn or save money to help your family
- None of these

10. **If you accessed the young carers support fund grant (to use either use towards a day out, activity or gym pass). We would like to know what were the benefits of being able to access the payment? ***

Enter your answer

11. **If you could change one thing about money or support for young carers, what would it be? (For example a grant for young carers or more help with money, learning about how to manage money or help to get a job) ***

Enter your answer

12. **Do teachers or staff at your school know that you are a young carer? ***

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- I don't go to school

13. **Does being a young carer make school harder for you?**

*

- Yes, a lot harder
- Sometimes harder
- Not really
- No
- I don't go to school

14. **Do you feel more supported in school? ***

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

- I don't go to school

15. If you find school difficult because of being a young carer, can you tell us why and what could help?

Enter your answer

16. Do you ever miss school or homework because of caring? *

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

17. Do you feel your school gives you enough support as a young carer? *

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No
- Not sure

Wellbeing...

Tell us how you are feeling.

18. How often do you feel happy? *

- Most days
- Some days
- Not often
- Hardly ever

19. How often do you feel tired because of caring? *

- Every day
- A few times a week
- Sometimes
- Never

20. Do you get time to do fun things (hobbies, sports, friends)? *

- Lots of time
- Some time
- A little time
- No time

21. **If you could have more help, what kind of help would make your life better? ***

Enter your answer

22. **If you would like to enter the competition for completing the survey, please leave your name and contact details below.**

Enter your answer

APPENDIX 2

Annual survey all quotes

Money and finances

(Question: "Do you ever worry about money?" / "Does caring make money harder for your family?")

- "I wish I could help my mam with money."
- "I hear my mam and dad say they can't afford things."
- "I try to save money to help my family."
- "I feel like my mam can't afford clothes so I want a job to help."
- "I would like more money to help my family."
- Support Fund (Grants) – Impact
- (Question: "What were the benefits of accessing the young carers support fund?")
- "It gave me time out to focus on myself."
- "It gave me a break from caring."
- "It helped me not worry about spending my mam's money."
- "It meant I could go swimming and do activities."
- "It gave me a different reality for a bit."
- "It helped me relax and take my mind off things."

What Young Carers Want More Of

(Question: "If you could change one thing about money or support for young carers, what would it be?")

- "More grants for young carers."
- "Help getting a job."
- "Learning how to manage money."
- "More activities for older young carers."
- "More time to myself."
- "Support groups to talk to others like me."

School Challenges

(Question: "Does being a young carer make school harder?" / "If yes, why?")

- "Some teachers don't understand."
- "I stay up till early hours doing homework."
- "I worry about my mam when I'm at school."
- "I don't have time for homework because I'm helping at home."
- "I get in trouble for not finishing homework."
- "I come into school tired."
- "School don't help me."
- "They don't listen when my mam tells them."

What Would Help in School

(Question: "What could help you in school?")

- "Teachers understanding more."
- "Less homework or more time to complete it."
- "Being allowed to be late sometimes."
- "A pass to leave class when I feel overwhelmed."
- "Someone to talk to in school."
- "A safe space in school."

Tiredness & Wellbeing

(Question: "How often do you feel tired because of caring?")

- "I feel tired every day."
- "I don't get enough sleep."
- "I get tired because my sibling doesn't sleep."
- "I feel tired and upset sometimes."
- "I feel stressed a lot."

Time for Fun & Social Life

(Question: "Do you get time to do fun things?")

- "I don't get time to do fun things."
- "I want more time with my friends."
- "It would be nice to do something just for me."
- "I like having time away from caring."

Emotional Impact of Caring

(Across multiple questions)

- "I worry about my mam all the time."
- "I feel different to other people."
- "It's hard not to worry in school."
- "I feel stressed and overwhelmed."
- "I don't always understand why I feel this way."

Responsibility & Role at Home

(Question: "What kind of things do you help with?" / general responses)

- "I like helping but it can be tiring."
- "I feel responsible for my family."
- "I help with cooking, cleaning and shopping."
- "I sometimes have to do things adults usually do."