



#WeCareToo

Young Adult Carer Event

Funded and supported by NHS England and Improvement North Region Quality and Safeguarding Team

Background to #WeCareToo

A group of young adult carers identified that their physical and emotional health had suffered because of their caring role. 29 young adult carers were involved in the #WeCareToo project, collectively they reported concerns about spinal problems, heart problems, depression and anxiety, self harm and suicidal tendencies. Young adult carers also said that their education, financial situation and future aspirations had been negatively impacted due to not having the support that they needed as a carer.

What could improve this situation?... Shared experiences highlighted that it had often taken years to access appropriate information and advice about caring, and the negative impacts young adult carers faced could have been largely avoided if they had been aware of the support available in a timely manner. Early identification could have prevented caring roles from escalating, resulting in significant safeguarding benefits.

Giving Young Adult Carers a Voice

Newcastle Carers worked in partnership with NHS England and Improvement North Region Quality and Safeguarding Team to put the young adult carers themselves at the heart of finding a solution to the problems they had identified. The goal that they set was to promote changes to the way organisations identify and support carers. Young adult carers gained empowerment and motivation, working together to build the skills and confidence that they needed to share their lived experience through a variety of media; they organised an event for professionals to raise awareness and promote good practice.

Young adult carers worked with a specialist Young Adult Carers Worker alongside a professional public speaking coach, in order to develop their ability to share the experiences that they had faced. Public speaking raises many challenges, especially when discussing negative and emotive experiences. A programme of engaging group work allowed young people to gain strength and peer support.

"I feel like everyone listened and took what we had to say seriously" Olivia, 17

"The day went really well for people to take info back and start recognising carers" Becca, 22

"I felt good knowing that I was a part of an event that was put together to make a difference." Katrin, 21

"All speeches were delivered with confidence and clearly and I'm certain tonight has made an impact. I was interested in everyone else's life and how they have coped with all that is happening around them, I have greater insight of everyone's position which helps me to feel closer to the group." Emily, 17

Young Adult Carers involved, reported a **52%** increase in confidence.

73% increase in referrals of young carers/young adult carers to Newcastle Carers in Nov, Dec, and Jan, based on the same three months in the previous year.

Professional Feedback:

"As a nurse this event has really opened my eyes...very thought provoking and inspiring [i will] share the learning with my organisation, make changes in practice to ensure if i identify a young carer i will do something about that information."

"I'm more open to the signs and hidden signs that identify young carers....I was really impressed with the confidence today and all the young people involved" NE1 Employment Advisor

"[I] need to ensure all employees ask a question which leads to a conversation about caring responsibilities." Newcastle City Council

91% attendees said their understanding of young carers had improved by **80-100%**.



#WeCareToo Animations

Young adult carers recognised from the offset that there were elements of the carer journey that they wanted to express through animation, giving them an anonymous tool to share their lived experience. Working with design agency Sail Creative, they developed four short animations describing situations that they had faced.

Benefits

These animations are a powerful and **impactful training tool**. They have provided a resource that can be shared widely ensuring **sustained learning** across the region. The films were launched at the November 2019 event and have so far been shared across staff teams in local colleges and universities, on GP waiting room screens, via email distribution and on social media.

The animations have reached over **10,000** people across Newcastle Carers social media platforms.

Safeguarding Benefits

Individual Benefits for the Young Adult Carers Involved

Young adult carers have reported feeling empowered, motivated and stronger through having the tools to be heard. The work will have a lasting and sustained impact, young adult carers involved have gained skills that will stay with them for life, boosting their goals and aspirations.

Lasting Impact

The impact of hearing directly from carers themselves ensured that professionals are motivated to continue to develop policies and procedures that identify young carers at the earliest available opportunity, changing current practice. Increased referrals allow more young carers/young adult carers to get the support that they need. Young adult carers are continuing to work with Newcastle Carers staff to follow up on the pledges that professionals made at the event. The training tools created will allow Newcastle Carers to continue promoting awareness of young adult carers in the region.