YCDT

Young Carers Development Trust

Impact Report

2026











Foreword

Standing Stone

When we're holidaying in Pembrokeshire, I like to go out for a run. One morning I ventured on a new route, having mentally plotted out the directions: down this long road, past a few fields, up a hill, then a straight line back home. All was going well, when I rounded a corner and came across a beautiful sight.



Tall and erect in the centre of a tiny hamlet, there was a standing stone. It had probably been placed there more than two thousand years ago. It would have marked the spot for communal gatherings, for celebrations, for listening to words of wisdom. While much has passed and changed in those two thousand years, still it stands—a place of calm and safety, of renewal and hope. That is when I thought of YCDT.

Young Carers benefit from finding a place of encouragement where there is no judgement but simply positive, kind attention: a place to meet, to be heard, to grow in wisdom. That place is YCDT.

The standing stone is not a signpost. It does not point the way, telling travellers where to go. Rather, the stone, by being upright, signals stillness, and provides a space for reflection and learning. Those on a journey continue on their way; the stone remains solid and true.

This is exactly the role YCDT takes. We support Young Carers through a transitional point in their life, giving them the resources and space to fulfil their potential and continue on their own journey.

Robert Cotton, Chair of Trustees

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Our Mission

We aim to inspire and nurture Young Carers to achieve their potential

Young Carers Development Trust was founded in 2012 in response to the harsh reality that many young carers were not reaching their educational potential and progressing onto higher education. Over time YCDT has evolved to provide individualised support to Young Carers from their GCSEs onwards, on whichever educational pathway they may choose. YCDT addresses the unfair gap in education that young carers face and supports them to fulfil their hopes and dreams.

Through our **Long-Term Programme**, each Young Carer gets tailored one-to-one support. Backed by a dedicated Development Mentor and financial support, each Young Carer is given the opportunity to work towards their goals.

Reaching a larger number of Young Carers, our **Group Mentoring Programme** delivers focused short-term support. It explores barriers to education while identifying each Young Carer's strengths, building a practical toolkit for their future.

Our **Aspirations Conference** gives Young Carers the opportunity to explore future possibilities, hear the powerful experiences of other Young Carers and learn about different pathways into education, training and employment.

Our mission, to inspire Young Carers to achieve their potential, is at the core of everything we do.

> ***"What makes YCDT different is that they don't just open doors for us Young Carers, they support our journey until we have the confidence to step into the future on our own."***
>
> ***Paul, YCDT Alumni and Ambassador, on behalf of YCDT Young Carers***

Our Values



We aim to support the futures of Young Carers. We make a commitment to **nurture** them through our dedication to their educational development and wellbeing.



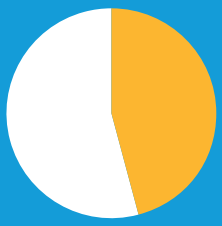
There is no doubt that Young Carers are **inspirational**. At YCDT we support them to recognise their talents and reach their full potential. We encourage them to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.



We provide practical support for Young Carers, in partnership with other organisations, allowing them to flourish and **achieve** whatever it is they aspire to do.

Why Young Carers need us

In 2025...



Fewer than half (46%) of Young Carers left school with five GCSE passes, including English and Maths...



Therefore, Young Carers were **25%** less likely than their peers, without caring responsibilities, to achieve this academic milestone.[1]

73%
feel like they are falling behind their peers.[1]

75%
said their caring role has made it difficult to take part in education or training opportunities, **almost half (49%)** said they missed out on opportunities because of their caring role.[1]

26%
believe they will have the same access to opportunities as others when they are adults.[1]

Young carers are over **2 times** more likely to be in the NEET category.[3]

40%
of Young Carers and young adult carers either 'never' or 'not often' get support when it comes to their education which would help balance caring with school, college or university work.[2]

28%
reported that they have either 'never' or 'not often' had someone in school, college or university who understood about them being an unpaid carer.[2]

When it comes to higher and further education...

Young Carers are **31% less likely** to attend higher education.[3]

Young adult carers are **38% less likely** to obtain a university degree than their non-caring counterparts. Those who care more than 35 hours a week are **86% less likely.**[2]

Young adult carers are **four times more likely** to drop out of university (29% compared to 6.5% of Higher education students nationally).[4]

[1] Andy McGowan, Charlotte O'Sullivan and Holly Cobb, Young Adult Carer Enquiry. *You may want us to focus on education and our future—but we have to put that second* Inquiry into removing the barriers to higher education, employment and training for young adult carers (London, Carers Trust, 2026), pp. 7-9.

[2] Carers Trust, *Young Carers in Education*. A briefing highlighting the need for greater recognition,identification and support for Young Carers within education in England (London, Carers Trust, 2023), pp. 1-2.

[3] Carers Trust. Young Carers twice as likely to be persistently out of work or education, new research shows (Carers Trust, 2026) <https://carers.org/news-and-media/news/post/622-young-carers-twice-as-likely-to-be-persistently-out-of-work-or-education-new-research-shows> [accessed 17 July 2026]

[4] UCAS, *HE provider good practice briefing for students with care responsibilities.* (UCAS, n.d) <https://www.ucas.com/providers/help-and-support/good-practice/good-practice-for-under-represented-groups/students-care-responsibilities> [accessed 17 July 2026]

OUR PROGRAMMES

Long-Term Programme

For education to truly come first, Young Carers need support that recognises their individual circumstances and their aspirations

Our **Long-Term Programme** provides up to five years of personalised mentoring and practical support, to help each young person build confidence, overcome barriers and take meaningful steps towards a brighter future.

Cory described his YCDT support as ***"monumental ... the impact is so great ... improving in education helps everywhere else in life".***

Every young person's YCDT journey is unique and led by them. Along the way they are supported by our dedicated team of volunteers, with each young carer being matched to their own Development Mentor. Mentors meet with their young carer regularly and provide personalised guidance and empowerment. Throughout a young person's journey with YCDT, they are given financial support to put towards their education. Those on our Long-Term Programme have used this towards tuition, laptops, textbooks and more.

Our Young Carers also get support through a network of educational providers, carers services, and other partners who work with us and each young person to help them reach each milestone. It is this sustained and collaborative approach that not only helps Young Carers to achieve their goals, but also to believe in what's possible for their future.

We are incredibly proud of all our young people, past and present, and will continue striving towards our vision for all Young Carers to flourish.

OUR IMPACT: LONG-TERM PROGRAMME



63% received tutoring



47% received laptops

100% of participants are in education, employment or training (EET)

2+ average increase on GCSE grades



OUR PROGRAMMES

Futures for Young Carers Group Mentoring Programme

Young Carers can face significant challenges at school, but many do not have access to support that recognises the impact of their caring responsibilities

The Futures for Young Carers Group Mentoring Programme was developed by YCDT to provide more Young Carers with access to high-quality mentoring and support. Working in partnership with schools, the programme helps Young Carers balance the demands of education alongside their caring responsibilities, while building confidence, resilience and aspirations for the future.

For many Young Carers, caring is simply part of their everyday life. However, caring responsibilities can create significant barriers to education, wellbeing and future opportunities. Our strengths-based programme provides bespoke information, advice and support, creating a safe space where Young Carers feel understood, valued and inspired to achieve.

The aim is simple, to empower Young Carers to fulfil their ambitions for the future by helping to reduce the unique and individualised barriers they face.

The programme combines small group mentoring (6–12 students), one-to-one support, peer connection and awareness-raising within schools. Delivered with the help of volunteers, each session is tailored to meet the needs of both Young Carers and partner schools. Through interactive activities, Young Carers explore the challenges they face, recognise and build on their strengths and skills, and develop a practical personal Futures Toolkit to support their education and future pathways.

By working closely with school Young Carers Leads and involving the Senior Leadership, the programme not only empowers Young Carers but also strengthens relationships with schools and can further develop the school's understanding of Young Carers' needs in the education environment.

At the end of the programme a Year 10 Young Carer said:

"I developed a better understanding of myself and who I want to be."

OUR IMPACT: GROUP MENTORING PROGRAMME



Overall Programme Enjoyment

4.5/5 average rating

96%

of participants would recommend the programme to other Young Carers (the remaining 4% saying "Maybe")

96%

of participants reported making new friends or support connections

100%

of participants felt the group helped them feel more confident and understood

OUR PROGRAMMES

Aspirations Conference

For many Young Carers, the opportunity to explore what is possible is rare

The demands of their caring responsibilities often leave little time to think beyond today, making university, apprenticeships and skilled careers feel out of reach. Our Aspirations Conference changes that, giving Young Carers the time and space to imagine what their future could look like.

Held most recently at the University of Bath, the conference brings together Young Carers from across the South West and beyond for a day dedicated entirely to their futures. Throughout the day they take part in practical workshops. They also have the opportunity to meet university staff, employers and apprentices, ask questions, hear first-hand experiences and discover opportunities they may never have considered.

Just as importantly, the conference helps Young Carers recognise the strengths they already possess. The resilience, responsibility and organisation they demonstrate every day are valuable skills. By reframing their caring experience as a strength rather than a barrier, young people leave with greater confidence in their own potential.

The conference also supports professionals through dedicated sessions, ensuring that the wider network around each young person is better equipped to help them navigate the transition into further education, training or employment.

Year after year, the conference inspires Young Carers to think bigger about their futures. One young person summed up the day simply:



> *"I didn't realise the opportunities and financial help I could get. It convinced me more that university could be for me."*
>
> ***Aspirations Conference Attendee***

OUR IMPACT: ASPIRATIONS CONFERENCE

75+ Young Carers attend

15+ universities, employers and partners represented

96% reported feeling better informed about further and higher education options

8/10 average rating for helping Young Carers build connections and feel supported

Our Impact

Each young person's journey looks different

Some come with a clear view of their future, some come with potential pathways and they change, some explore through their journey.

YCDT has a differing impact on every young carer we support. For some we provide the support they need to fulfil their own aspirations, for others we inspire them to realise their potential and raise their aspirations.

What graduates of our programmes say:

"I would jump at opportunities that I didn't think I could do – I would see other people do it – but now I believe I can."

"My mentor really is the reason I am where I am."

"The group programme made me feel very seen."

"I would've gone to Uni without YCDT but I would've really struggled in the support getting me there. Having a boost with someone in my corner was helpful."

"Academically, at first I was predicted to get two GCSE, and now I'm going to university."

"I've learned communication is key because people want to know how I feel."

Of the Young Carers supported by YCDT

100% confirmed that YCDT made a difference

6 have transitioned from Group to Long-Term Programme

100% reported raised self confidence

81% confirmed improved mental health

100% recorded improved academic outcomes

15 have spoken about their caring roles at events

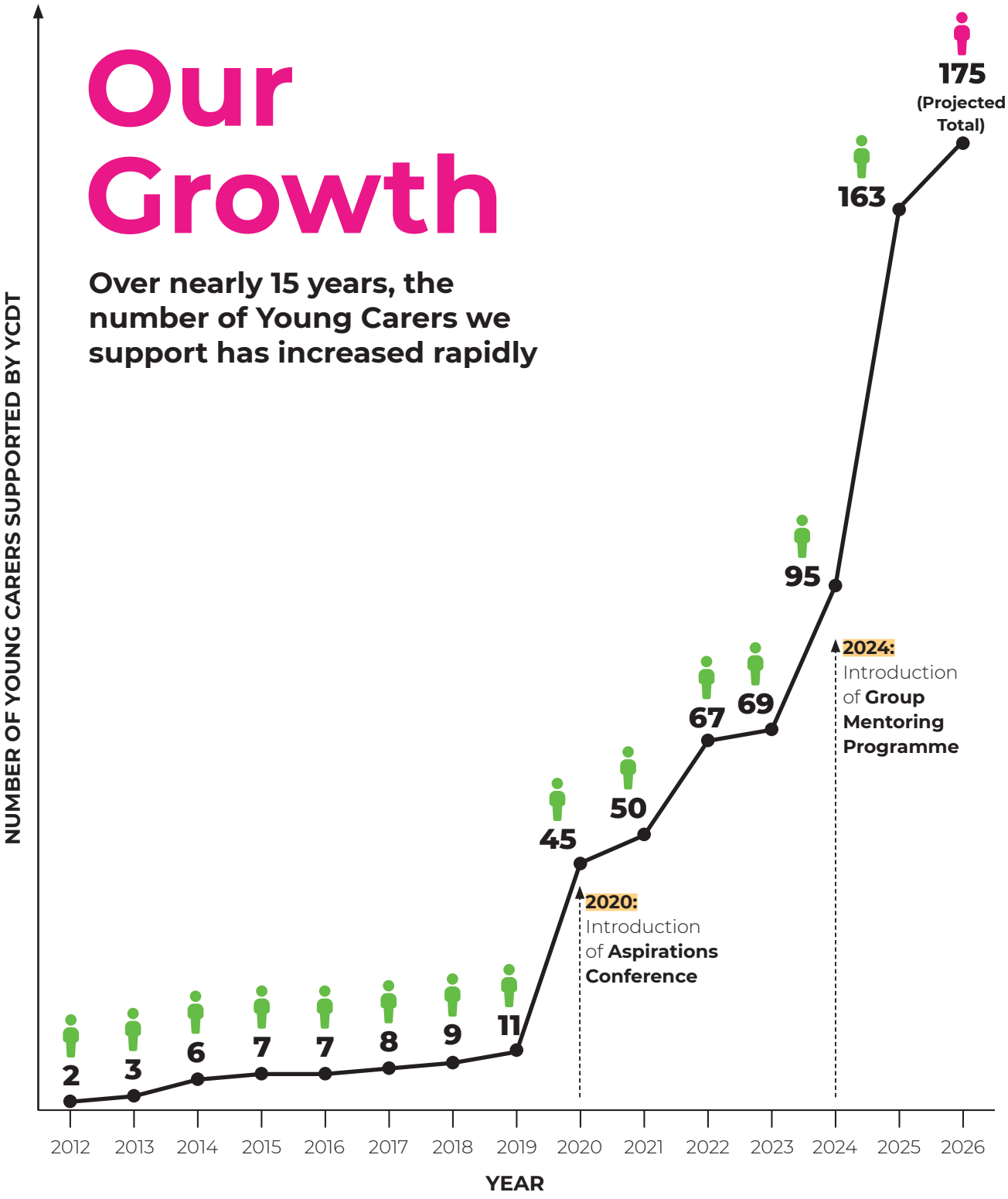
61% reported raised aspirations

with 100% reporting that YCDT supported them to achieve their aspirations



Our Growth

Over nearly 15 years, the number of Young Carers we support has increased rapidly



How Young Carers describe our programmes





Youth Voice

At YCDT, young people are at the heart of everything we do. We listen to what they have to say and act on it. Whether through our Youth Advisory Board or through the important role that our ambassadors and alumni play, young people keep our charity alive

The Youth Advisory Board

Our Youth Advisory Board meets regularly to provide feedback, share ideas and help shape the future of YCDT. This year, members of the Board played a key role in the development of our evolving Futures Group Mentoring Programme.

Their lived experience strengthens our services, ensuring they are designed *with* Young Carers, not just *for* them. By embedding youth voice into our decision making, we create programmes that better reflect the needs, aspirations and experiences of the young people we support.

What attendees say:

"I liked learning about YAB and YCDT and knowing that my opinion matters."

"I liked getting to know how much YCDT wants to have input from actual Young Carers. It's nice to know they truly care."

Alumni and Ambassadors

"At the end of the programme I was offered to become a YCDT ambassador. Excited, I said yes. Since being in this role I have been able to give back to a charity that had a monumental impact on my life. Not only this but I have continued to develop with the support of the staff and the opportunities I have been lucky enough to receive.

My skill set has continued to improve as an ambassador; speaking at Bowood House grew my confidence and improved my public speaking and a summer internship with the charity has given me opportunities to help me progress onto my career once I graduate. I admire how YCDT continues to put youth voice at the forefront of their work, even after leaving the programme I know that my voice still has an impact."

Ashleigh, YCDT Alumni and Ambassador, pictured above.

CASE STUDIES

Amy

YCDT Alumni and Ambassador | Development Mentor | Trustee



I became a young carer at an early age, supporting my mum, who had multiple physical disabilities and frequent hospital admissions. My role involved providing both emotional and practical support.

At 16, inspired by the care my mum received, I decided I wanted to become a doctor. I chose A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, Maths and Geography. However, balancing my studies with my caring responsibilities was challenging, and by the end of my first year I had not passed any of my subjects.

When I was offered support from YCDT, I was initially sceptical. My confidence was low and I had begun to believe that higher education was no longer an option for me. Through weekly tuition, textbooks and encouragement, YCDT helped me rebuild my confidence. They also encouraged me to explore different subjects, which is when I discovered my passion for psychology.

With YCDT's support, my grades improved and I began to look towards the future again. I not only gained a degree but also developed confidence in my own abilities. That confidence has carried me through university and into a career in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in the NHS.

I later became a YCDT mentor, supporting another young person through their academic journey. Taking my young carer to university open days to help inspire her future aspirations while also providing emotional support. **This was such an incredible experience for me**, seeing the resilience of my young person, and what she was able to achieve with the support of the YCDT.

After having my son, I stepped back from mentoring and was invited to become a trustee. This role has allowed me to continue supporting the charity alongside my career and family life. I have been able to contribute both my lived experience and professional knowledge to help the trust grow.

It is an honour to serve as a trustee for such an incredible charity that has transformed so many lives, including my own.

Without YCDT, I may never have believed higher education was possible for me. They provided me with resources and tools that would have otherwise been inaccessible.

YCDT has changed my life for the better.

William

Second Year



William is on the Long-Term programme, he has been receiving support from YCDT for several years now. He is currently studying for his A-levels, aspiring to become a barrister.

I care for my Mother who has life long and chronic physical disabilities, my brother who has learning disabilities as well as autism and ADHD and my Father who is recovering from a serious medical emergency and has heart issues.

My education is massively impacted as I am often heavily restricted in time, struggle with energy, anxiety and my attitude towards learning or productivity, all restricting my ability to produce the quality of course work I hope to and to engage in extra-curricular activities.

YCDT and my Mentor have helped by offering mentoring and guidance, navigating time management, coaching me through some difficult times and providing me with tailored support. I have received tuition during my GCSEs, access to technology through buying me a laptop and my mentor fundraising money towards learning to drive which is a practical and essential skill given my parents' medical needs prevent them from driving.

Having a mentor with a wealth of experience helped me to see beyond GCSEs and manage my stress. It also brought me confidence and support, making me believe in myself and my ability!

CASE STUDIES

Paul

YCDT Alumni and Ambassador



Paul has been a young carer for around ten years, supporting a family member who has complex health issues. From a young age, he helped with cooking, cleaning, shopping, medication, mobility support, and caring for his younger siblings. During his first year of secondary school, Paul became a full-time carer and missed around seven months of education.

"I felt like everything was moving forward for everyone else except me."

Paul was referred to YCDT in 2021 during his GCSE years, at a time when he was struggling with anxiety, low confidence, and the pressures of balancing education alongside caring responsibilities at home. Through YCDT's long-term mentoring programme, Paul received consistent one-to-one support tailored to his individual needs and future aspirations. Having a Development Mentor meant that Paul had someone who genuinely listened, understood the challenges he faced, and encouraged him to focus on his own future and ambitions.

"Having a development mentor was a turning point for me."

Mentoring helped Paul rebuild confidence, re-engage with education, and begin believing in a future beyond caring. YCDT also supported him to explore university opportunities and career pathways, helping him realise that his goals and dreams were achievable.

"YCDT helped me rebuild my confidence, set realistic goals, and stay focused."

Paul has now completed his second year studying Fashion Design at the University of South Wales, where he is currently top of his class. He has also been a Student Representative for his university for the past two years. Now in his fifth year with YCDT, Paul is proud to be an Ambassador for the charity, helping support and inspire other Young Carers.

"I'm excited for what comes next, and I know I'm stepping into it with confidence."

Paul's story shows the life-changing impact of long-term mentoring and personalised support. With the right encouragement and opportunities, Young Carers can rebuild their confidence, stay engaged in education, and pursue ambitious futures beyond caring.

Elizabeth

Third Year

▸ ***Image: Elizabeth at parliament***



Elizabeth is a young carer who provides regular support for her mother and her older sister, who experience poor mental health. Elizabeth often worries about her sister's wellbeing and takes on significant responsibilities at home. She prepares meals, helps with household chores, and accompanies her mum on food shopping trips, ensuring the family is supported day to day.

Alongside her caring role, Elizabeth has remained committed to her own ambitions. She is preparing to begin university, where she will study Drama. With her mentors' support she is pursuing her passion for acting and gaining independence.

Through her involvement with YCDT, Elizabeth has also developed her confidence to become an advocate for Young Carers. She travelled to London with YCDT to attend an All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting on Young Carers, where she met her local MP, Sir Ed Davey, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, and other MPs committed to improving support for Young Carers. By sharing her experiences, Elizabeth has helped raise awareness of the challenges faced by Young Carers and the importance of ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making.

Elizabeth's journey demonstrates how, with the right support and opportunities, Young Carers can balance their caring responsibilities while pursuing their aspirations and influencing positive change for others.

"I'm so grateful for YCDT, it's helped me in more ways than I could have asked, and my mentor, I can't thank them enough for everything they have done, I truly don't know where I would be without them."

Hear from our Volunteers

Our volunteers are a vital part of YCDT. Without them our programmes would not run smoothly. Whether they are Development Mentors, group mentoring volunteers or helping at our Aspirations Conference, we are tremendously grateful for the time they give to help support the futures of young carers

> One of my favourite things about being a Development Mentor is helping the Young Carers that I support to explore their aspirations and recognise their potential. I really enjoy chatting with them about the things that are important to them, exchanging ideas, learning about and identifying potential options and offering practical support. This has included exploring work experience opportunities, further education and university courses, pursuing interests and hobbies and even learning to drive. **It is such a joy to support them on their journey** and to see them **turn their dreams and aspirations into reality**.
>
> *Alison, YCDT Development Mentor.*

> Since joining YCDT as a Development Mentor, I have met some wonderful Young Carers whose potential is undeniable. The way they embrace life with its opportunities and challenges is inspiring. It's wonderful to be a part of their journey. **The YCDT team has built a beautiful community of support and possibilities**. Everyone involved truly cares about making a difference for the Young Carers.
>
> *Cindy, YCDT Development Mentor.*

> We were delighted to be involved with and volunteer at the Aspirations Conference this year. Such a wholesome and enjoyable day at Bath University for all involved.
>
> *BOM, YCDT Partnership, Volunteers at Aspirations Conference.*



> As an alumni I understand the struggles and difficulties that Young Carers face. Which is why I try to help other carers get a leg up and feel more prepared for the future.
>
> **A little help goes a long way.**
>
> *Louis, YCDT Alumni and Group Mentoring Volunteer.*



HEAR FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

I have had too many heartwarming moments to mention throughout the 12 years I have been a mentor with YCDT. Especially seeing someone grow into adulthood with a drive and confidence to thoroughly enjoy what they are doing and being proud of their achievements.

Mentoring is a two way conversation between the mentee and mentor. When it works well all things are possible.

Firstly, I am not a trained counsellor or teacher but I have seen my role as a mentor as someone who can help with the relationship with the school and arranging tutors, through YCDT in subjects that need a boost for GCSEs and A levels.

Secondly, I have been lucky enough to have developed a rapport with each YC. Consequently I think I have been able to encourage a self belief and confidence that ambitions are achievable.

We, the young carer and I, are on the same side and with the backing of the YCDT.

I sometimes see the role of a mentor as a sort of surrogate grandparent (I'm old enough and have 6 grandchildren) and a guide to life in general with of course all the uncertainties and problems of a teenager.

I'm immensely proud of them all.

David, YCDT's longest standing Development Mentor, mentored 4 Young Carers.



Can I fulfill my mentee's wish to be a world-class dancer? **Together we can work on her achieving her dreams.**

Peter, YCDT Development Mentor.



Join us

If you feel inspired to volunteer your time with YCDT and join our brilliant team then please reach out to

info@ycdt.org.uk

Partnerships

Strong partnerships help us create opportunities that would not be possible alone. By working alongside businesses that share our commitment to Young Carers, we can provide not only funding, but also expertise, experiences and opportunities that help young people realise their potential



BOM IT Solutions

Over the years, BOM has become a valued and trusted partner of YCDT, from sponsoring young carers and events to community fundraising and volunteering. Their long-term commitment has helped us provide practical support and opportunities that enable young carers to achieve their potential.

"We're delighted to have partnered with YCDT for seven years. The work YCDT does is extremely valuable and we're honoured to sponsor a young carer and support with technology, putting People First. It's been wonderful to see the charity's growth, from supporting a handful of young carers to over 150 a year. Thank you YCDT for all you do."



Seccl

We are delighted to have welcomed Seccl as a new corporate partner in 2026. Led by Charity Liaison Matthew, the partnership is already opening up exciting opportunities for young carers, through financial support, volunteering and sharing professional expertise, reflecting a shared commitment to helping young people fulfil their ambitions.

"I think it's been a great start to our partnership and I think we are really making waves. It has genuinely been such a pleasure to represent my company and help YCDT. Really looking forward to working directly with young carers through our online guidance and coaching sessions."

The University of Bath

The University of Bath helped us inspire the next generation of young carers by hosting our Aspirations Conference for the past two years. Their continued support has helped make the conference a truly transformative experience for the young people we work with, and we look forward to building on this partnership in the years ahead.

"We've been delighted to host the Aspirations Conference over the past couple of years. It's always great to see the impact these events have on the young people."

Finance

- **We fundraise for 100% of our income.**
- **We receive no statutory funding.**
- **All support is provided free of charge to Young Carers and their families.**
- **Every donation helps more Young Carers access mentoring, educational support and opportunities that will change the course of their future.**
- **Demand continues to grow. Every new donor makes a difference and enables us to reach more Young Carers who would otherwise go without support.**

Make a donation

www.justgiving.com/charity/ycdt
or scan the QR code

Thank you

Since July 2025 YCDT has received funding from many individuals, who we do not name but are incredibly thankful for. We have also received funding from the Companies, Trusts and Foundations listed below:

Alchemy Trust
Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust
Bath Boules Charitable Trust
Beatrice Laing Foundation
BOM IT Solutions
Bristol 500
Brownsword Charitable Foundation
Carers Trust
Chippenham Borough Lands Charity
Clark Foundation
Clothworkers Foundation
Dame Violet Wills Charitable Trust
David Medlock Trust
First Great Western
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John James Foundation
KFC Foundation
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The Robert McAlpine Foundation
The Sackler Trust
The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
The Steel Charitable Trust
The Wakefield Trust
Tula Trust
W O Street Foundation
Walter Guinness Charitable Trust
Wessex Water
Wiltshire & Swindon Community Foundation

Your funding doesn't just provide services. It changes lives. Thank you!















Young Carers Development Trust

Young Carers Development Trust
14 Queen Square, Bath, BA1 2HN
www.ycdt.org.uk email: **info@ycdt.org.uk** call: **+(44) 7368 366660**

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