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PRESS RELEASE

**World Mental Health Day 2018: Let's work together to promote good mental health for Young Carers!**

On this day, dedicated to mental health, Eurocarers would like to shed light on young carers, a group of young people that is particularly vulnerable to mental distress and illness and yet that largely remains **invisible**.

Young carers are people under the age of 18 who provide care to a family member or a friend, who has a chronic illness, disability, frailty or addiction. They assume a level of responsibility that is usually associated with an adult.

**Being a young carer is a risk factor for mental health.** Indeed, fulfilling caring responsibilities while navigating the challenges of growing up can be overwhelming. Compared with their peers, young carers tend to experience lower life satisfaction, greater level of stress and anxiety, more episodes of depression and other mental health problems.

**Young carers have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of mental health.** But to achieve this, **extra, tailored support** is essential. The importance of support programmes to better enhance and protect the mental health of young carers has explicitly been emphasized by the **European Network of Ombudspersons for Children** in their [statement on child mental health](#), adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

At international level, there is a **growing recognition of the importance of early intervention and prevention**. The [Me-We Project](#) – funded by the EU under the Horizon 2020 programme - aims to contribute to this by improving young carers' resilience and by enhancing their social support. The Me-We team will develop innovative psychosocial interventions, collaboratively designed by a group of stakeholders (from social, health and education sectors) and young carers themselves, cooperating as equal partners. This **co-design approach** is in line with the WHO recommendation to deliver comprehensive, **integrated support programmes for young people's mental health**, involving social, health and education sectors.

The WHO also stresses that **prevention of mental illness in young people begins with better understanding** and underlines the potential role of teachers in helping young people to develop the life skills required to better cope with everyday challenges. In the case of young carers, a supportive school environment is one of the proven positive factors for young carers' good mental health. The role of schools is therefore vital and is the backbone of the [Edy-Care Project](#), funded through the EU Erasmus+ programme. Edy-Care seeks to empower school professionals, so that they can identify and support young carers in their classes.



Eurocarers and its partners will use the **research findings** arising from these projects as a basis for the promotion of evidence-based **policies and practices that recognize and support young carers**.

On this special day, we call upon policymakers and relevant stakeholders (from educational, social and health sectors) to do what is in their power to **move young carers from a position of vulnerability to a situation of growth**, where they can flourish as human beings. Ensuring a good mental health for young carers will bring benefits not just to them, but also to our society and economies.

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For more information, please contact Francesca Centola (fc@eurocarers.org), Project Officer at [Eurocarers](#), Coordinator activities with and for young carers.

EUROCARERS is the European network representing informal carers and their organisations, irrespective of the particular age or health need of the person they are caring for.

More details on Eurocarers activities on young carers are available [here](#).

To access recommendations, broken down by category of stakeholders, read the [Eurocarers Policy Briefing on young carers](#).

More on the [Me-We Project](#).

More on the [Edy-Care project](#).