



EUROPEAN  
**CARERS**  
DAY - 06 OCT.

European Carers Day 2021  
**Young carers call to action**

# Let's open the doors for young carers

The upcoming European Care Strategy announced by EC President Ursula von der Leyen generates tremendous hope for millions of informal carers across Europe. But to be inclusive, it must also address the needs of young carers.

Childhood is usually seen as a protected stage of life where adults are “in charge” and provide care, while children and adolescents are primarily beneficiaries of care. But for a significant number of children and adolescents across Europe, this is far from true as they find themselves providing – sometimes very intensive levels of - long-term care to a family member with an illness or disability, a mental health condition or an addiction. As a result, these young carers may struggle in their education and access to employment, they may face discrimination, mental health issues, stigma and social exclusion. All of this also has long-lasting negative consequences for society as a whole.

Young carers should be considered as a group at risk in all EU initiatives directed at young people - e.g. the European Child Guarantee, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the announced ALMA programme.

The collection of comparable and comprehensive data on care and caring in Europe should also include Young Carers and not only people of working age. The EU should therefore ensure continuous funding for European research aimed at designing better support for young carers and at promoting their participation in the making of policies with a bearing on their daily life.

Finally, Member States, when designing comprehensive strategies to support carers, should pay particular attention to young carers and commit to ensure that they can access their Social Rights

## Young carers deserve to be considered

It is of the utmost importance for young carers to be taken into consideration. The education and youth sectors as well as health and social care professionals, employers and families all have a key role to play in that regard. Proper identification has a double positive effect: it helps to prevent stigma and opens the door for adequate support.

### Concrete actions:

- There should be clear ways of identifying young carers in the disease protocols
- Care and education professionals should be equipped to proactively identify young carers
- Young carers should be integrated in anti-bullying campaigns
- The positive aspects of caring should be promoted among the general public

**LET'S OPEN THE DOOR TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT OF YOUNG CARERS. IT'S NOT ONLY A MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS, IT IS A SOCIAL INVESTMENT.**

## Young carers demand to be heard

Even if it is difficult for young carers to speak out, they should be encouraged to do so at various levels.

### Concrete actions:

- The assessment of young carers' needs should be put in place as soon as they are identified as such
- It is difficult for a young carer to open up, so care and education professionals should always ask twice
- Discussions should be made easy, on various occasions

**NOTHING ABOUT YOUNG CARERS WITHOUT YOUNG CARERS. THEY SHOULD BE SEEN AS EXPERTS. LET'S OPEN THE DOOR TO DISCUSSION, AGAIN AND AGAIN.**

## Young carers demand adequate support

Young carers should not be left on their own to perform the tasks that are usually associated with an adult. Support measures should be put in place in order to avoid the negative impact of their caring.

### Concrete actions:

- Preventive actions should be taken as soon as the care recipient is in touch with care services so young relatives don't become vulnerable.
- A multi-disciplinary approach is needed, good cooperation between sectors is essential
- Governments should empower young carers using existing and adequate support mechanisms

**YOUNG CARERS ARE BEST PLACED TO KNOW WHAT SUPPORT THEY NEED, LET'S OPEN THE DOOR AND ASK THEM WHAT THEY NEED.**



For more info on necessary action and supportive measure, visit [www.carersday.eu](http://www.carersday.eu) and [www.eurocarers.org](http://www.eurocarers.org)

