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**March 12 2025**

**Three quarters of young carers in Wales accessing new breaks scheme in 2024 had no break at all in the previous year**

Ahead of Young Carers Action Day, young carers from across Wales call on Members of the Senedd to take action and give them regular breaks from caring.

Members of the Carers Trust Wales’ Youth Council who have accessed breaks through the [Short Breaks Scheme,](https://www.shortbreaksscheme.wales/) say that having access to breaks is essential so they can maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.

Interim findings from Bangor University’s independent evaluation of the scheme revealed three quarters (75%) of young carers accessing breaks through the initiative had not accessed a break from any other service during the previous 12 months.

Of the 24,000 unpaid carers who accessed a break through the Short Breaks Scheme in its first year, almost 4,000 were young carers, many of whom had never had a meaningful break from caring before.

The time young carers spend on their caring role means they often miss out on education, friendships, holidays and many other things their classmates take for granted.

Young Carers Action Day is an annual campaign organised by Carers Trust with its network of local carer organisations. It aims to highlight the challenges faced by young carers (under-18s) and young adult carers aged 18-25. There are more than 22,000 young and young adult carers in Wales, according to the latest census data.

This year the theme of Young Carers Action Day is “Give Me A Break”. It was chosen by young carers themselves to show their need for respite but also to be given a chance in life by schools, employers and politicians.

Carers Trust is highlighting the importance of properly funded and easily accessible breaks for young people from their caring role.

Kate Cubbage, Director of Carers Trust Wales, said:   
**“Young carers, like every other child and young person, should have time to play, to be with their friends and to do the things that mean the most to them.**

**“We’re proud of how the Short Breaks Scheme has supported local carer organisations and third sector partners, to provide thousands of precious moments and breaks away for young carers who wouldn’t otherwise get a break from their caring role.**

**“We owe it to our young carers to ensure that they can access a meaningful break to help sustain them in their caring role, support them to achieve their aspirations and look after their mental health and wellbeing. Despite the massive strides forward that have been taken through the Short Breaks Scheme we know that there is much more left to do to ensure that taking a break is the norm, not the exception for the lucky few, and that young carers across Wales can rely on getting a break when they need it.”**

Minister for Children and Social Care, Dawn Bowden said:

**“Young carers play a crucial role in providing care for family members, and we want to ensure this does not adversely affect their education, seeing friends or taking up hobbies.**

**“Our short breaks scheme is one way that young carers can take a break and enjoy time with their family or peers. I am also very happy to be supporting the annual Young Carers Festival in August for a further year.”**

A UK-wide Carers Trust survey, released for Young Carers Action Day on 12 March, found almost a quarter (23%) say there’s no one else to provide the care they do and two-fifths (40%) said they worried too much about the person they care for to take time out from looking after them.

One young carer said:

**“I feel bad for taking breaks and when I have time for myself I’m always thinking that I could be doing something else to help out. It’s isolating because I can’t meet up with friends. I can text but it’s just not the same. Everyone’s planning their holidays and trips but I know I can’t go on holiday.”**

Almost three-quarters of young carers (72%) said they miss out during school holidays because they provide care, the survey showed.

Many also felt they were shut out of a lot of the things most other children get to do. Nearly half (49%) miss out on time with friends, and 46% on hobbies. Almost two-thirds (65%) said they lacked time to themselves and nearly one in five (19%) felt they were missing their education.

Cefin Campbell, Plaid Cymru Member of the Senedd for Mid and West Wales, said:

**“The contributions we heard from young carers in the Senedd today were both revealing and shocking. They explained eloquently the challenges they face in taking care of the ones they love, specifically the lack of chances to take breaks from their care work.**

**“It is our responsibility now as politicians to give young carers the respite they deserve, to enable them to spend time with friends, to follow education and do fun things in life that everyone should have the right to do. We must work, through legislation, social services, and with local authorities to achieve this.”**

Kirsty McHugh, Carers Trust’s CEO, said:

**“Across the UK, children as young as five are spending huge amounts of their free time caring for others. We know this can have a devastating effect on their education, wellbeing and future prospects. It is simply wrong that, as a country, we are asking so many children to take on so much.**

**“Those in power need to give young carers a break. If we want young people to thrive, as well as those for which they care, we need to give these young people the chance to take time out from their caring duties.**

**“We’re proud to deliver the Short Breaks Scheme in Wales thanks to multi-year multi-million pound funding from Welsh Government. The evaluation of this scheme has shown it makes a huge difference to improving access to breaks for young carers. However, we know that demand still far outstrips supply and to meet that need we must have early commitment to continued funding beyond March 2026”**

ENDS

**Notes to Editors**

**About Carers Trust Wales**

Carers Trust Wales, part of Carers Trust, aims to shape a better future with and for carers in Wales by raising awareness, empowering carers and influencing change. It is committed to making sure that all carers receive the recognition and support they deserve. It works closely and collaboratively with Network Partners – local and regional independent charities which deliver information, advice and practical support for unpaid carers in Wales.

Carers Trust website: [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

**About the Short Breaks Scheme**

The Short Breaks Scheme was launched in 2022 to support 30,000 unpaid carers from across Wales to take a much-needed break from their caring responsibilities by 2025. Funded by Welsh Government, it now runs until March 2026. Carers Trust Wales is the National Coordinating body of the scheme, distributing grants to charities and Third Sector organisations across Wales.

Management of the scheme is shared between Carers Trust Wales and seven Regional Partnership Boards. Organisations apply for the funding to deliver the activities.

Short Breaks Scheme website: [www.shortbreaksscheme.wales](http://www.shortbreaksscheme.wales)

**About young carers in Wales**

* The 2021 Census figures indicated that there were 22,550 unpaid carers under the age of 25 in Wales. Of these it was noted that there were 8,230 young carers (under 18) and 14,320 young adult carers (18-25)
* Since the 2011 Census there has been a significant increase in the proportion of children and young adults who provide significant levels of care, namely 20 hours or more per week (increase from 15% to 27%) and also 50 hours or more per week (increase from 12% to 15%).
* The data highlighted how young carers and young adult carers in Wales were more likely to be living in areas of high deprivation, compared to their peers without caring responsibilities.

**Spokespeople available for interview**

* Kate Cubbage, Director of Carers Trust Wales

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