

Giving Young Carers a Voice

Quarterly Insight Report

What we're hearing

July - September 2025



Luminus
www.luminus-cic.uk

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About Luminus

Luminus is a Surrey based independent community interest company which exists to empower people to have their voices heard. We are an enterprise driven by social value, that invests in the local community. We help organisations provide equity of access, and the best services possible, through the inclusive involvement of local people. Our vision is to create a society where everyone's voice is heard so we all receive the support we need for our wellbeing.

Our CIC was originally established in 2013 to deliver the [Healthwatch Surrey](#) service and ensure the voices of all users of NHS and social care services are heard. We have since built on our expertise and experience and Luminus has grown to shine a light on the experiences of carers, young carers, those who are affected by substance use, and people most at risk of health and care inequalities. We achieve this through bespoke projects, co-design, contracts, mentoring, research, and training.

About Giving Carers a Voice

If people look after anyone who couldn't manage without their help, they are a carer.

Giving Carers a Voice listen to the experiences of carers (of all ages) to ensure their views are heard in the design and delivery of the services they use. These experiences form the basis of this report.

On engagement, our team always signpost to appropriate support and care services. Sometimes, people do not want information given to them. Support services are provided where relevant. We also support individuals who require assistance with other issues, such as locating a support group in their local area.

We check in with the group leader if someone has said something we are unsure of or concerned about to ensure that the person is being supported and not alone. We also ensure that support services are aware of appropriate treatment pathways and local support available. If we hear a case of concern regarding a person's safety, we immediately signpost the sharer to the appropriate body and escalate the case with the provider/commissioner.

We have signposted young carers to the following places:

- Surrey Young Carers
- College wellbeing leads
- Woking Young Carers
- Mindworks
- Eikon
- Catch 22.



Engagement July - September 2025

This quarter, we have visited the following places to speak to young carers and hidden carers to hear their experiences and to signpost to the relevant services where needed/appropriate:

- Additional needs showcase, Ewell
- Hermitage School, Woking
- Heathside School, Walton
- Phyllis Tuckwell Volunteering Day, Farnborough
- St. Peter's Hospital Community Open Day
- Woodfield School, Merstham
- Surrey Young Carers Family Day, Guildford Spectrum
- Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) Recovery Fest, Guildford
- St. Saviours Church Trekkers Festival, Guildford
- Surrey Young Carers event, Gatwick Aviation Museum
- Sheerwater Community Day, Woking
- Woking College, Woking
- Medwyn GP Practice carers event, Dorking
- Nurture Through Nature, Reigate
- East Surrey College, Redhill
- NESCOL College, Epsom
- Godalming College, Godalming
- Home-Start, Special Educational Needs parent carers group, Woking.

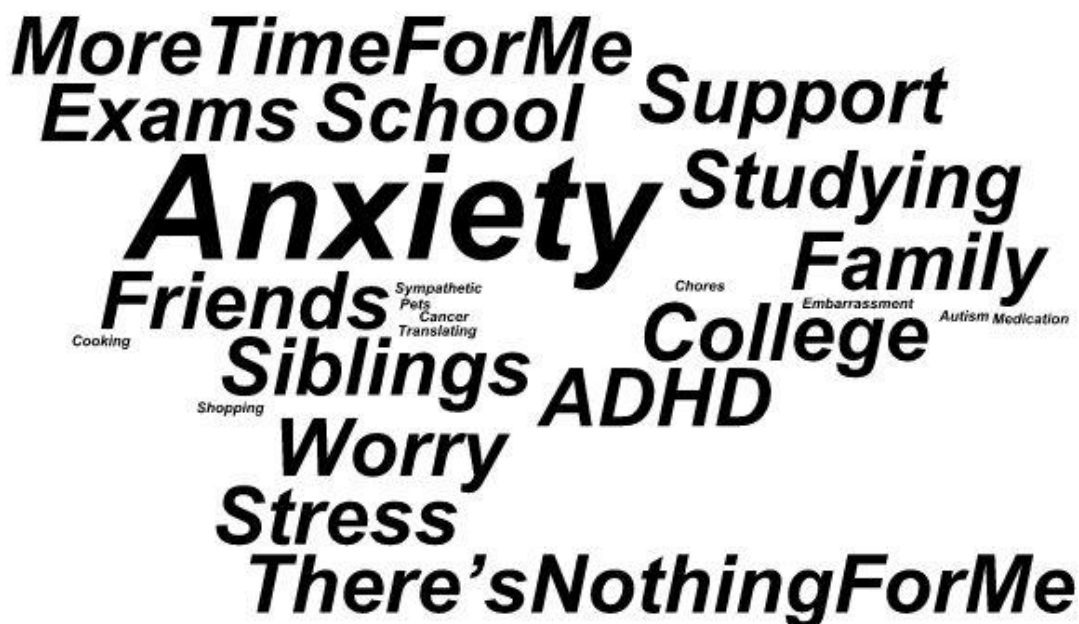
This quarter, we have attended the following meetings:

- Southwest carers practitioners meeting – July 2025
- Young Carers Alliance – July 2025
- Carers Trust webinar, exploring Neighbourhood Health Services in the 10 year plan and unpaid carers – September 2025
- Children and young people's insight and participation group – September 2025.



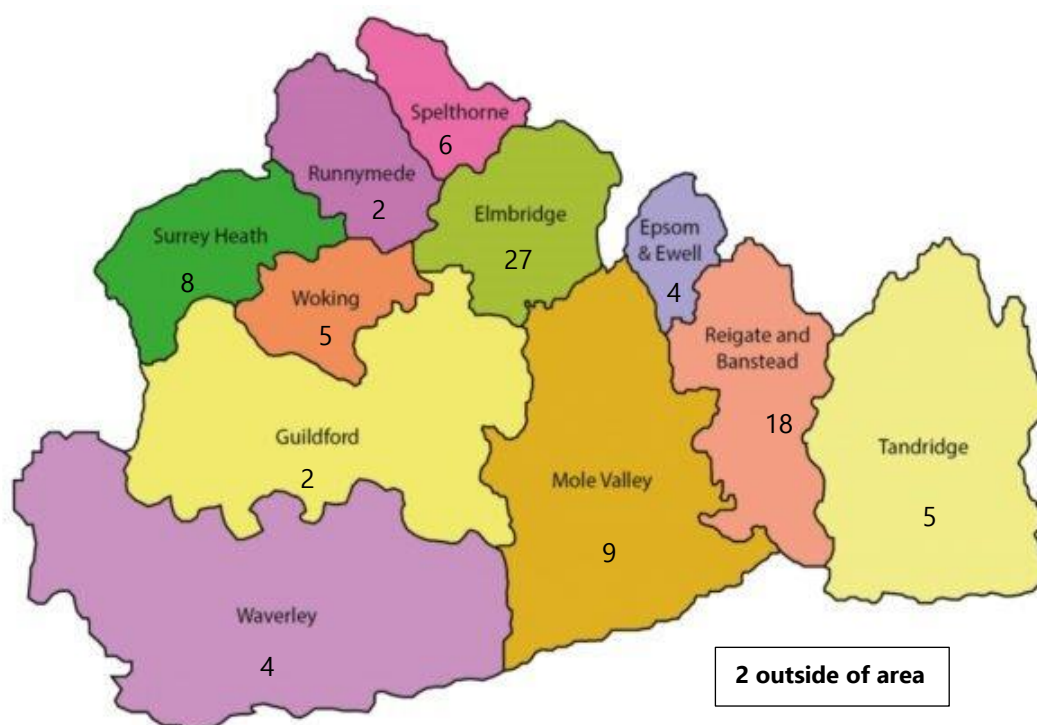
Main themes we have heard from July to September 2025

The word cloud below highlights the main themes we have been hearing about this quarter. The main themes are anxiety, more time for me, worry, stress and support.



Where we have heard from young carers

The map of Surrey below shows the number of carers we have heard from in each area of Surrey. This quarter, we have engaged with 92 young carers.



Key themes we have heard from young carers from July to September 2025

- Sibling young carers
- Importance of support groups
- Quiet strengths of young carers.

Sibling young carers

Young carers, particularly those supporting siblings, face unique challenges and responsibilities.

- They may not always understand their sibling's condition.
- They could miss out on friendships and opportunities.
- They may also get hurt if their sibling lashes out.
- They might also feel that they must look after their sibling.

"I've been a young carer for my brother since I was young. I help him with things around the house as well. My brother can be rude to me and unkind at times. I'm not sure how I feel about being a young carer and my brother. It's how it is."

[Spoke to the session leader, who will talk to the young carer about additional support.]

Carer, 13, July 2025

"If I'd been told about what autism was and what my brother was going to be like, I could have been more sympathetic to him. I get frustrated when he doesn't listen and just does what he wants to do. All I want is for my brother to be happy."

Carer, 12, July 2025

"I've always been a young carer, looking after my brother and sister. I make them breakfast and take them to school. They constantly need attention, which is hard for me. Not many people know I'm a young carer; obviously, school knows and others in this group."

Carer, 13, July 2025

"I help my parents with my brother; he needs constant supervision, and they need my help. It's very emotionally demanding, but I'm proud to help. I play online games with friends, but not all of them know I'm a young carer. It's hard to talk about your own emotions and what goes on at home."

Carer, 10, July 2025

"I've had to grow up fast, and being a young carer isn't the greatest. I'd like to go to young carer groups, and my parents are looking at them for me. I help out in lots of ways. We go to school together, and I always make sure he gets there



safely. After school, I wait for him so we can walk home together. When we go out shopping as a family, I help keep an eye on him and make sure he doesn't get overwhelmed or wander off. My brother has ADHD, and sometimes he gets overstimulated in busy places, so I try to help him stay calm and focused. My brother has a big personality - he can be really cheeky and noisy, and sometimes he gets frustrated or angry when things don't go his way. But I know that's part of how he experiences the world, and I try to be patient and understanding. Being a young carer isn't always easy, but it's also taught me a lot about responsibility, empathy, and how to support someone you love."

Carer, 12, July 2025

"My brother is autistic and has ADHD. He gets annoyed quickly and can lash out for no reason. He doesn't understand that what he does hurts people, and he doesn't really care either. He's mean to mum, and she cries a lot. I help her with chores when she can't cope with him and needs to have a break. Most of the time, I can calm him down; I don't shout like mum, and I will play games with him. She'll go to her bedroom to read for a little while. I have a break at school. The teachers understand what it's like for me and support me."

Carer, 10, July 2025

"Mum won't let me register as a young carer. She says she's my brother's carer, and I don't help him with anything. I do calm him down when he's having a meltdown, mum says all sisters do that for their brothers. My high school identified me as a young carer, and I attended the young carer group there. Listening to other young carers, I realised that I was doing a lot more than mum thought I was doing, just by calming him down and the fact that I was being affected by his behaviour."

Carer, 16, September 2025

"My brother is autistic; he becomes distracted easily and can get agitated. I help him with his homework and talk to him when he's feeling angry or upset about something he feels he cannot control. His school are very good with him. They also have a group that I saw you at last year, but I was having a bad day and didn't talk to you then. We were running late for school, and mum would be late for work, so she'd got angry with us. It's challenging in the mornings to get ready, and when we are out as a family, he becomes overwhelmed in certain environments or when people hurry him. That's when he needs my support the most. It's nice to be at college where I'll be able to concentrate and have time at break/lunch times without having to look out for him. I've heard there will be a young carer group here which I intend joining."

Carer, 16, September 2025

"My mum tells me that I'm a young carer, but I'm not sure if I am or not. My sister has a mental illness, and she is often suicidal. When mum and dad go out, I'm left



to look after my sister. I worry about what may happen, but I know they'll come back if I need them. Our neighbours are also very good. My gran is elderly and I also help her with shopping, tidying up and getting her drinks. My school had a young carer group, but I didn't go to it because I didn't understand what a young carer was. Sometimes I feel sad and don't know who to talk to about it. I'll attend the young carer group here when we're told of the date. I'll contact Surrey Young Carers too and register with my GP."

Carer, 16, September 2025

"I care for my sister who has ADHD. She gets annoyed quickly, and mum struggles with her. The school have told mum that I may have autism. All our family have either autism or ADHD. I go to [school name], and I don't think they have a young carers group.

Carer, 8, September 2025

"I care for my two brothers, who both have ASD, and my sister, although she doesn't have a diagnosis. I don't attend any sort of youth groups and I didn't know about any that were just for young carers like me. I'm not sure about how I would get to any groups as no one in my family can drive. If I need to talk to someone or if I'm worried about anything, then I talk to my mum. She's my best friend."

Carer, 17, September 2025

The importance of support groups

We continue to hear from young carers that support groups or clubs within schools, colleges, and local communities can provide young carers with a safe space to connect, share experiences, and build friendships with peers who understand their challenges. Young carers need an environment where they feel safe disclosing their caring responsibilities and seeking support from a trusted adult. Sometimes, all a young carer needs is someone to talk to, offering to listen without judgment and provide emotional support. With the proper support, they can flourish in school, college and the community, building friendships and enjoying their childhood.

"There are no support groups for older young carers, and I feel it's when we are in college that we need it the most. I've spoken to [wellbeing lead at college] and will join the young carers group here when it starts. I need emotional support, especially when things change as they are doing now. I get anxious and have panic attacks. At school, my teachers understood this. I also went to Surrey Young Carer events, which I enjoyed. There isn't anything for me now. My brother has ADHD. I feel I've missed out on so much being a young carer, especially meeting up with friends because of my brother."

Carer, 17, September 2025



"My dad has awful mood swings due to his drinking and taking drugs. He doesn't become violent as some would, he's argumentative, mainly aimed at my mum and older brother. It's not easy being around him, and I spend a lot of time at my friend's house. I don't like the atmosphere at home and have tried to talk to him on a reasonable day, but his addiction is far stronger. I'm not registered as a young carer. A teacher at my previous school spoke to my mum and highlighted that I was a young carer, and from then on, I got support at school. I've learned to manage my emotions and not let them control my life; instead, I now control them through doing yoga. It would be good if they had a group in college, as there would be others like me."

Carer, 16, September 2025

"Mum recently had a stroke. She has carers twice a day; other than that, dad, my sister, and I do everything. We had an assessment when she came out of the hospital, and that's when she started having carers. I don't know what help for me is available, but I know I must stay strong and focused."

Carer, 16, September 2025

"My dad had a stroke several years ago. All our family help him in different ways. I've suffered emotionally, especially with anxiety and depression. Having to cope with such a significant change in our family at a young age wasn't easy. I went to counselling, and my teachers, mum, and friends have been supporting me too. I've learned that I need to take time for myself to rest, and my feelings matter. I'm not registered as a young carer; it was just at school where we had a group which met every few weeks. I have reminders for myself to reflect and take time to relax." [

Carer, 16, September 2025

The quiet strengths of young carers

Young carers often take on adult-like responsibilities at a young age. They may have to manage household chores, handle finances, administer medications, and provide emotional support to other family members. This added responsibility can be overwhelming, leaving little time for personal pursuits or a normal childhood. This immense pressure can lead to feelings of stress, anxiety, and isolation, often with limited opportunities for respite or support. Young carers are just as capable as others of their own age; they face different challenges with grace, dignity and maturity beyond their years.

"I care for my mum; she's in a lot of pain and has to rest a lot. I have to be quiet so she can rest. The pain can make her irritable, and then she shouts at me. Caring for my mum makes me feel good. I'm doing things to help her and my family. I help with shopping, cooking, cleaning and anything my mum cannot do. My friends know I'm a young carer, and one is a young carer too. We talk through things and



help each other when things are hard at home. I get help at school and go to the young carer group."

Carer, 12, July 2025

"I help my dad and sister with everyday life. I can't go to clubs or groups. It can be stressful being a carer. It's fine and I'm ok with it. I'd like more time to spend with other people for more personal interaction." [School are aware of the family situation.]

Carer, 12, July 2025

"I care for my mum, she has cancer. It would have helped me if I'd known earlier about her condition. I could have helped her more and tried harder to understand. My friends help me, and I can talk to my family when I need to. I look after our dog, which I enjoy doing, and he's happy when we play together. I talk to mum about her illness, and we now feel comfortable talking about it which we didn't before. If my mum is not able to cook, clean or do washing, I'll step in and take over all the chores."

Carer, 12, July 2025

"I'm autistic and care for mum, who struggles to walk. She fell down the stairs recently, and I had to help get her up. I enjoy cooking and will use the air fryer to cook meals. My brothers and sister are out a lot, so it's left to me to help mum. School holidays are difficult because I don't have anywhere to go, and my brothers are out of the house. I often feel lonely and spend my time reading and writing stories." [Details of summer holiday clubs given.]

Carer, 11, July 2025

"I care for my mum, who's in a wheelchair. I usually do most things for her. I help her with cooking and cleaning. I get her breakfast every morning before I leave for school, put the washing on and get her medication. When I get home, I get dinner ready and help her cook. I wash up because she can't stand for too long. I've hurt my wrist and can't do as much as I usually do, and she's angry with me. It's not been too bad because it's the school holidays and I can take my time doing things. I'm worried that when I go back to school, it'll all get too much for me. The teachers know I'm a young carer and I'll speak to them. Mum doesn't want to get any outside help; she says we can manage on our own, we don't need anyone else." [Session leader is aware of the family circumstances and help is available.]

Carer, 10, August 2025

"I am an only child and at home with mum and dad. My parents are older. I have to help them out so that things can run smoothly at home. I sort of manage everything to make sure things happen. I am not coping well. Mum is more unwell now too, and now that means I'm going to have to take on more medical stuff as she will need help every day. I am struggling. I feel alone and overwhelmed. I'm



very stressed.” [Carer directed her to the college wellbeing lead, who spoke to her that day.]

Carer, 16, September 2025

“My dad has cancer and is in Sam Beare Hospice for end of life care. There's nothing anyone can do, and we have to accept what is about to happen. I'm registered with Surrey Young Carers and have been told that when my dad dies, I'll no longer be a young carer, but that's when I'll need the support the most. We have family and friends supporting us, but sometimes you need a stranger who isn't involved with all the emotional stuff. I'll ask my mum to contact Surrey Young Carers to ask if there is some support available and for how long.”

Carer, 17, September 2025

Thank you

A big thank you to everyone we have met and who has taken the time to share their experiences of being a carer with us. If you have a group you would like us to come along to and visit then please email us at info@luminus-cic.uk. We are very keen to hear from as many carers as possible from all over Surrey so we'd love to hear from you!

Our Giving Carers a Voice report is for carers over 18 and can be found on our website page [Giving Carers a Voice: Reports - LUMINUS](#).



Contact us

Contact us through any of the channels below.

We'd love to hear from you:

-  Web: luminus-cic.uk
-  Telephone: 01483 301448
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