

## Open letter from the heart

### Ailie speaks out for Young Carers Awareness Day

The work young carers like myself do on a day-to-day basis is overwhelming, and difficult for others to comprehend. We are different, and sometimes that's scary because as teenagers all we want to do is fit in.

February this year will mark six years since my father suffered a major stroke. However, this is not the start. A year prior, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, in which he was forced to go into retirement as he was not well enough to continue with work.

The man I copied, looked up to, asked for advice when I could, and a man who would sit me down regularly of an evening and make me go through my times tables, and simply be a role model and father figure to me changed in the click of a finger due to his stroke. It's certainly left its mark.

My mother is the heart of our family, she makes sure every single one of us keeps going, selflessly. She adamantly makes sure that my sister and I can live as normal a life as we can, and are taking as many opportunities that we can that will be beneficial for our futures. My sister has been living away from home at university for three years now, which means more responsibility for me, especially when mum falls ill herself.

It's the simple things that many teenagers my age do not do at home because their mums do it all. Things like doing the weekly food shop, cooking, cleaning, doing the washing, collecting mum's medication if needed, make sure dad has taken his medication, walking and feeding the dog... All in between doing all my extracurricular activities during the week, and attending my part-time job, and keeping up with my school work to make sure I get the A Levels I need to be able to get to go to university myself next year.

Being a young carer can take a toll on a person, but sometimes you feel as though you have to just bury the load on your shoulders and carry on.

Young carers are some of the strongest and weakest members of our community, and sometimes we need care ourselves. It's nice to have a break, time outside of the household, and just being well... "kids". I'm sure I am not the only young carer who is so incredibly proud to call themselves a young carer, although that doesn't take away the fact that it is so nice to not be a carer for an hour and enjoy the freedom we don't get on a day-to-day basis.

Credu Young Carers Service change so many lives for the better and are completely underappreciated. I am so proud to be part of a community that cares so deeply about others and strives to help them in every possible way. They truly are a phenomenon.

Ailie-Kenna Hughes, Young Carer

### Where I put down this weight

A pass around poem by  
North Powys Young Adult Carers Service

So you're there to look at all the different dangers  
The emancipation of my responsibilities  
I live to care, but it tires me out  
Being dragged along  
Tied by lies  
A rope that never ends  
Trying to get the chains off me for another few hours  
My role decided by arbitrary rules  
I'm not your slave, I want to choose.

My time  
My rules  
My role  
My decision  
Finally finding me  
Where I put down this weight.

For a moment I feel calm  
Find a piece of quiet  
So I can just breathe and clear my mind  
Close my eyes and be still  
Dream a little...live a little  
A positive moment

I take a deep breath before I go back in  
I don't want to leave but I have to.

Catryn Blunden, Chantelle Colohan, Nina Duckers,  
Ezra Jordan, Paddy Noakes, Kloe Hopwood,  
Megan Thomas & Dave Lloyd-Morgan



## Over 17,000 children, young people and adults in Powys are looking after someone close to them. That's 1 person in every 8. Illness and disability can affect anyone and any family

### Once upon a time...

Once upon a time I met a lad  
he had a Mum – but he didn't have a Dad  
the Dad had walked off when the waters broke  
so he never was around when the baby awoke  
when the baby awoke he was twelve years of age  
and he felt like his head was a barbed wire cage  
spent most of his life in a silent rage  
at home was a Mum on a single wage...

He did go to school but he got into bother  
cos he didn't fit in and he didn't have the clobber  
he knew "how you are" is not "what you wear"  
but you know "how it is" and it just ain't fair  
he turned the other cheek and he walked away  
and he told himself it was all ok  
but deep down deep in a hidden place  
was an itchy scar and an angry space

He loved his Mum but it caused him stress  
cos she cried quite a lot and the house was a mess  
there was sometimes days when she couldn't get dressed  
the doctor said she was "clinically depressed..."  
so he stayed at home when he should have been at school  
and you know how it is, well "rules are rules"  
and "stats are stats" just look at the paper  
he got further behind  
and the hill got steeper...

He's not quite a teen but he feels a lot older  
carrying a load on his too young shoulders  
with private stuff that he doesn't want to share  
and blind to the world is the fact that he cares

Dux

### I knew a lad called him and a girl called her...

I knew a lad called him and a girl called her  
And they lived in a land called overthere  
And each in their own way offered care  
And this care felt unfair at times

Each had a brother on the spectrum scale  
And each of these brothers have a tale to tell  
Each of these families lived in Wales  
And we start our tale with a well well well...

Or well....maybe....a not very well

Autistic behaviour and adhd  
Confusing at times for all  
A different sense leads to different rules  
And sometimes families struggle and fight

Loud shouting and quiet sobbing  
Long pauses and slammed doors  
A welling anger, a flushed temper  
A rushed insult and what's more  
In an ongoing every minute of every day kinda way  
There is a too tired focus on someone else  
And our him and our her kinda feel a bit ignored  
As they mostly only get to choose second time round  
Cos the brother is the brother and that's how it is  
And he's likely to hubble and bubble and fizz  
If he don't get his way every time  
There'll be a devastated moment and  
Possibly a crime...

Sometimes it's funny and they laugh all together as a family  
Sometimes it's not funny and they might cry  
Often it's high pressure as maybe her and mum or him and them  
Get cranky....  
Like most tales this one goes up and down  
Like most families these ones go round and round.

Dux



## I knew a girl...

Once upon a time I knew a girl  
 She was fourteen  
 And her head was in a whirl  
 Since the age of eight she had cared for her mum  
 Whose bi-polar extremes, as a rule of thumb  
 Went from higher than a kite  
 To lower than a drain  
 She'd been sectioned twice  
 Neighbours thought she was insane  
 She was up, or down, she was hot or cold  
 She laughed or she wept, she was timid she was bold  
 She was hardly ever even except under sedation  
 Her daughter was adept at assessing situations

The girl when I met her, her name was Kate  
 Was out on an edge and in need of a mate  
 She'd held it together and coped pretty well  
 In the face every day of inconstant hell  
 She coped, because she had to ...

She knew what to do when her mum was blue  
 She'd cook for herself and her sister too  
 She'd care for her mum, made sure that she slept  
 She'd hide all the knives,  
 Whilst in her room  
 She wept

She didn't complain and she didn't tell school  
 And she didn't tell her mates (thought it looked uncool)  
 So she kept it close to her chest and thus  
 She was never gonna reach the grade A+  
 She missed quite a lot of school as it goes  
 Headaches, sore throat, runny nose  
 Tiredness, mood swings, period pains  
 Tension-based sickness again and again

When she did go to school she was way behind  
 She avoided the glare, and the school were blind  
 She was streamed in the lower ability class  
 And yet knew more things than any teacher could ask

Like how to counsel a dangerous mum  
 And how to bandage a sliced up thumb  
 And who to call when the mania grew  
 And how to cook porridge or a basic stew  
 And how to avoid an argument  
 And how to make sure that a letter got sent  
 And how to make sure that her sister washed  
 And how to store chemicals (under COSHH)

Dux

## My Young Carers Story

In two thousand and thirteen my mum had bad news,  
 I knew that she had nothing to lose,  
 Because she got told that she had developed cancer,  
 I had so many questions that I just wanted someone to answer.

I then went to school, and I started to struggle  
 And I was just getting myself in a bit of a muddle  
 My teacher then came and we sat and had a chat  
 And talked about this great service, now I remember that

And that great service was the Powys Carers  
 Who would always be there and show they're supporting us  
 A few days later Sally from Powys Carers came to our door  
 Then I didn't feel upset no more

She explained who they were and what they did  
 And for me as she started talking it kind of opened my lid  
 To know there's someone out there who can offer support  
 It is just there, it didn't have to be bought

So I continue on my journey as they bring me out of my dark shell  
 Knowing that in the future I'll have loads more stories to tell  
 They make me laugh and they make me smile  
 And as long as I live I will do it all the while

Written with thought  
 Powys Young Carer

## Living life as a young carer

Living life as a young carer, is no easy task,  
 I may be smiling, but I'm crying behind this mask,  
 Getting up daily, to help my mum,  
 Then not going to bed until my chores has been done.

Scared to leave the house for my bus,  
 Knowing that my mum doesn't want me to make a big fuss,  
 Scared just in case I lose her one day,  
 Finding no time to have free time or play.

I love my mum, I don't want her to die,  
 If she does, I will just cry,  
 Feeling lost or just feeling upset,  
 This isn't just how I feel, it's only the beginning yet.

Feeling like giving up, most of the time,  
 Or feeling like I want to commit a crime,  
 But deep down inside, I know she's a fighter,  
 Ooh now I have done that my chest feels lighter.

Catryn Blunden  
 Welshpool Young Carer



## Reflections from a Young Carer

Before I started coming to clubs I was hanging around with the wrong people who broke the law. We were often involved with criminal damage, trespassing and stealing. Life at home was stressful and it was my way of getting away from it all.

Then one day someone visited my house and told me about Young Carers support. They told me about the clubs and I thought I'd like to meet some new people similar to me.

Coming to the clubs has changed my attitude to a lot of things. Like now when my mum or dad asks me to do something I'll do it. I'm also becoming more sociable each day and I've got more confidence in myself. I've been introduced to new things like writing rap songs. My goals in life have changed and now as I realise there's all sorts of paths I could take, for example mechanics, music, or even wrestling.

I'm looking forward to my future.

Family life has improved a lot too. I used to fight with my brother every day but now we get along much better because I understand him more and what he's going through with his autism.

At Young Carers I've got friends I can trust and I'm starting to let people in a bit more.

Jordan Rutherford, Mid Powys Young Carer

**My life now**

## Cân Serch i Dementia

Mam annwyl,  
 Peth rhyfedd yw sgwennu atat rivan, rhyw bum mlynedd ar ôl iti farw, ond roeddwn am adael iti wybod fod y dementia wedi arwain ni'n dwy i fydd hollol ddiarth inni, ond byd oedd yn llawn harddwch, trugaredd, ac yn anad dim, cariad a chwerthin.

Roedd y teimlad o fyw trwy ryw fath o brofedigaeth yn aml yn cuddio'r eiliadau o agosatrwydd a hwyl mewn sefyllfaoedd hollol amhriodol, felly doedd hi ddim yn dywyll ac yn ddiwedd y byd trwy'r amser.

Dangosodd ffrind imi sut i gadw ar gof pob atgof gwerthfawr ohonot - fel gem ar gadwynn bwaswn yn ei wisgo o hyd. Dros y blynyddoedd, wrth i'r dementia afael a mynd â thi oddi wrthym - y teulu a'r cartref i gartref nyrsio, mae'r 'gemau' wedi parhau i ddisgleirio, a'r holl fyseddu'n eu cadw'n loyw, ac yn cadw'r cyswilt rhyngom er gwaetha'r anawsterau cyfathrebu, adnabod a deall. Gallaf dy weld ar garreg y drws yn ffarfelio â mi, ti yn dy hen slipars, a'th wallt heb ei olchi mewn rholeri, dy fest thermal ar ben dy hen siwmpwr ac yn wen o glust i glust o fwynhau bynyd ar y prydd. Roedd f'ymdrech i geisio dy helpu i gael canod wedi'i hen anghofio, a'm teimladau o rwystredigaeth wedi imi roi'r bagiau sbwriel allan ar y diwrnod casglu, a darganfod dy fod ti wedi dod â nhw nôl mewn ac wrth dy fodd yn mynd trwy'r cynnwys afiach!

