

# Young Carers Festival 2026

## Fun, Friendship and Freedom

For more than 1,000 young carers from across England and Wales, Young Carers Festival 2026 offered something simple but deeply important: time to be children.

Across three days at YMCA Fairthorne, young people aged 11 to 17 took part in outdoor adventures, creative workshops, live music, fairground rides, team challenges and opportunities to have their voices heard. More than 250 volunteers helped make the weekend possible, giving more than 1,500 hours across the event week.

### Festival at a glance

**1000+**

Young carers in attendance

**11 - 17**

Ages of attendees

**1000+**

Days of activities

**250+**

Supporting Volunteers

**1500**

Hours Volunteered



### What young carers and groups shared

**“ I feel surprisingly calm.**

- Young Carer, YCF

**“ We all had a fantastic time & the young carers absolutely loved it.**

- Young Carer Group Leader, YCF

**“ It's the only place I feel I don't have to explain my life.**

- Young Carer, YCF

**“ The festival is a great experience for our young people. Our group love coming and your team really work hard.**

- Young Carer Group Leader, YCF



## The moments that stay with us

The Young Carers Festival is built around creating opportunities that many young people simply don't get elsewhere. While the activities bring excitement, it is often the quieter moments that leave the greatest impression.

Over the course of three days, young carers discovered new experiences, formed lasting friendships and found a community of people who understood their journey without explanation.

### A First Trip Away

For one young carers service in Slough, this year's festival marked a significant milestone. Through dedicated funding, the group was able to attend their first residential trip together.

For many of the young people, it was their first opportunity to spend several days away from home with others who shared similar experiences. The weekend gave them the confidence to try new activities, build friendships and enjoy time focused simply on being young.

By the time they boarded the coach home, there was already one question being asked: **"Can we come back next year?"**

For their group leader, the answer was simple. The experience had exceeded every expectation.

### Small Moments, Lasting Impact

Not every memorable moment happened on the climbing tower or around the stage. Sometimes it was sitting around a campfire talking to someone who understood. Moments where opportunities were taken to try an activity that had always felt out of reach, or laughing without worrying about what was waiting at home.

Throughout the weekend, young carers were given the opportunity to step outside the responsibilities they carry every day and experience something many children take for granted - the freedom to simply enjoy being themselves.

Those moments may seem small, but they help build confidence, reduce feelings of isolation and remind young people that they are not alone.

Events of this scale are only possible because organisations, volunteers and supporters come together with a shared commitment to improving the lives of young carers.

Every activity delivered, every meal served, every conversation shared and every smile created was the result of people giving their time, expertise and support to create something truly special.

Together, they helped create more than just a memorable weekend. They created an environment where more than 1,000 young carers could feel welcomed, valued and celebrated for who they are.

