

26th Festival Young Carers Festival 2026 - Information

26th - 28th June 2026



ycf@ymca-fg.org and www.ymca-fg.org/ycf

YOUNG CARERS FESTIVAL 2026

Thank you for booking your group to attend this year's event - we can't wait for you to join us again this summer to celebrate the Young Carers Festival! Once again, we are proud to host a fantastic weekend away for Young Carers from around the country, where this special group of young people enjoy a fun filled break away from home and responsibilities in a safe environment. Your booked places include accommodation, food, activities, entertainment and a festival t-shirt for young people.

WHO IS THE FESTIVAL FOR?

The Young Carers Festival is aimed at Young Carers aged from 11 – 17 years attending as part of an organised group. Please note that Young Carers aged 18 and above can only attend as leaders.

DEADLINES

To help us make the necessary arrangements, we require forms to be completed and returned to us by the deadlines listed on each form. We understand the difficulties in gathering these types of data so have split the information into what is needed for us to prepare the festival for you and the information that can be provided on arrival.

START & FINISH TIMES

The Festival site opens from 4.00pm on Friday 26th June, with registration and tent allocation from 4.30pm. Please do not arrive earlier as the site will not be ready for you. On arrival, you will be met by our festival team, given your arrival pack and taken to your camping area. The Festival finishes on Sunday 28th June, with all groups to have vacated the site by 12pm.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Groups must make their own travel arrangements to the festival site, located midway between Portsmouth and Southampton. Our address is YMCA Fairthorne Manor, Curdridge, Southampton SO30 2GH.

By train

If you are travelling by train, a luggage-only shuttle service is available upon request to collect and drop off luggage to Botley train station, a short 10-minute walk. This luggage service must be booked when sending your final completed information, including your train arrival and departure times. If you intend to arrive/depart from other train stations, you will need to make your own travel arrangements to get to Fairthorne Manor.

By road

If you are driving your own group, cars and minibuses may remain on site throughout the weekend. Once you have completed drop off, you will be directed to park in the allocated parking area only. Please inform us of all vehicles remaining on site when returning your final information prior to arrival, including registration details.

If you are arriving by hired coach please note that after drop off, coaches and coach drivers are not permitted to remain on site and must make alternative accommodation and parking arrangements if staying local.

ACCOMMODATION

Tents

If you have booked YMCA supplied tents, these will be 2 person pop-up tents or 6-8 person canvas tents. All tents will be erected prior to your arrival and sufficient toilets and showers are located nearby.

If you are using your own tents we will allocate space for you to pitch them in. We require the number of all tents/gazebos you are bringing, so please complete and return the tent plan. Please note we are unable to guarantee placement with other project groups but will always do our best to accommodate all requests.

Indoor Accommodation

A limited number of indoor dormitory style rooms are available for attendees with a medical condition or disability. Please advise us of any requirements on the tent form and ensure that tent groups retain a suitable male/female adult ratio to young people. Rooms will be allocated at our discretion and do not lock, so valuables should not be left unattended. You may be required to share rooms with other group leaders of the same sex.

GROUP LEADERS

Group leaders are responsible for the safe supervision of their group members at all times and each group requires a minimum of two leaders at all times. Leaders are provided with a leader's pass to be worn at all times.

- **Ratio's** - Please ensure you have enough staff and volunteers to support your group including overnight. A minimum 1:12 minimum ratio is required.
- **Drivers** - Consider the sleeping arrangements for your staff who are driving your group to and from the Festival. We have limited indoor accommodation for drivers, which must be requested on your returned tent information sheet.
- **Leader briefings** - projects must ensure that a staff member attends these briefings over the weekend which cover important information regarding the smooth running of the festival including health and safety updates.

Leadership

The festival depends on the hard work of committed, competent and experienced group leaders – visit <https://oeapng.info> for advice. For Young Carers attending for the first time please explain the festival aims, expectations in terms of accommodation and facilities and agree your own internal ground rules. We advise dealing with any issues with a clear, calm and consistent approach. If you wish to visit the site prior to the event to help with your

planning, please contact us; you may find the videos of previous festivals found at www.ymca-fg.org/yfc useful.

Behaviour

Please agree behaviour boundaries prior to arrival; as leaders, you are responsible for the safe supervision and behaviour of your group at all times. YMCA staff will step in should the behaviour of a young person be deemed dangerous to themselves or others. We will work closely with group leaders if it becomes necessary to exclude a young person due to unsafe or other inappropriate behaviour. Refunds are not offered in these instances.

Expectations

Leaders should be aware that other projects may have a different approach to the way they lead their groups. The diversity of leadership reflects the wide variety of projects represented and their understanding and trust of their young people. Leaders are asked to demonstrate tolerance of others and to engage in dialogue to resolve minor disputes between groups. Leaders are encouraged to report to festival organisers any incidents where safety is being compromised, or where disputes remain unresolved.

Alcohol, Substance Use and Smoking

The festival is an alcohol and substance-free site, including adults. Smoking and vaping are only permitted in designated smoking areas.

Media Consent and Photography

YCF attracts media interest and it is the responsibility of group leaders to gain media consent from parents/guardians. Leaders are responsible for preventing access to, and filming of, young people without media consent. A Group Media Consent Form is attached to the email accompanying this pack to complete and return together with other relevant paperwork.

Curfew

In order to respect other groups, please set a curfew for your group to return to their tents and discuss this prior to arrival. The first night is the most difficult and remember you need your sleep too! All groups should respect others camping nearby and keep noise and movement levels to a minimum until 8.00am.

Mobile Phones

As a leader, ensure your phone is always fully charged and switched on during the festival. There are a limited number of charger points available at reception for leaders and at other locations for young people. YMCA accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage of mobile phones or chargers left for charging.

Health Needs & Medical Consent

Leaders should consider the full range of health needs of their group, ensuring any young person who requires prescribed medication has brought this medication with them. Leaders should also consider the sexual health needs of their group. Leaders will need to make their own arrangements for ensuring they hold the necessary medical information and consents.

Meals

All meals are included in the price of the festival ticket from Friday dinner to Sunday breakfast, breakfast is from our dining hall. On arrival, attendees will be given a coloured wristband which determines your breakfast meal times over the weekend. Saturday lunch and dinner will be provided by a range of food trucks, that will be based around the sports hall. You will need to get your lanyard stamped for each meal you get from the food trucks.

- Friday: evening meal served until 8pm. Late arrivals will need to eat enroute; alternatively inform reception and some food will be saved for your group.
- Saturday: breakfast, lunch, evening meal
- Sunday: breakfast

Additional food and drinks can be purchased at the onsite café which is open until late each evening and operated by our local Rotary Club. Our tuck shop is available all weekend offering ice creams, sweets, cold drinks and souvenirs.

To ensure we meet the specific dietary requirements of your group, complete the Dietary Requirement form attached to the email for this pack. We cannot guarantee that dietary requirements received after the deadline can be catered for.

KIT LIST

Please label all items with full name, group and contact telephone number - please share this page with your group to aid their packing.

Kit list item	Tick when packed
Sleeping bag and pillow	
Sleeping mat	
Toiletries – deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, shower gel, soap	
Towel	
At least 2 complete changes of clothes (don't forget to include underwear and trainers. Although the sun may be hot during the day it may be cold at night)	
Waterproofs – jacket / trousers (activities run in all weather, so be prepared with wet weather gear, including wellies / boots)	
Sun hat	
Sunblock/ cream	
Disco outfit	
Torch	
Medication	
Water bottle (can be refilled)	
Purse or wallet (please label with name)	

YMCA Fairthorne Manor accepts no liability for any items of personal belongings, including mobile phones, lost during the festival. Items clearly labelled with a name and group are more likely to be reunited with their owner at lost property in reception. Items of lost property not claimed during YCF will be held for two weeks before being sent to charity. YMCA Fairthorne Manor is not responsible in returning lost property items to groups or individuals. Whilst we are happy to assist with arrangements you make to receive your items, we are not liable for the charges to return items.

FIRST AID

Please take time to read this information, drawn from our experience of previous festivals. Prior to arrival, please ensure you complete the Medical Conditions Form and return to us by the deadline.

First Aid Provision

A dedicated first aid team who regularly cover events provide emergency cover for the duration of the festival. In addition, YMCA delivery staff are first aid trained and have first-aid kits with them at all activity sites. YMCA staff will be patrolling the site and providing safety cover at the main gatherings during the festival.

Those with minor injuries can report to First Aid, with young people accompanied by a group leader. If a young person arrives unaccompanied, Festival Reception will contact the group leader by mobile phone, so it is important that leaders always have their mobile switched on and charged.

In the event of a serious injury where a casualty cannot be moved, send a person to Festival Reception with a description of the injury and an accurate location. The first-aid team will then dispatch the appropriate response. A senior staff member at the site will take charge of an incident until the appropriate help arrives.

What the first aid team can do

- Treat minor injuries
- Refer to A&E / local walk in clinics
- Give general advice on people presenting symptoms of illness
- Document treatment given

What the first aid team cannot do

- Prescribe medication
- Replace medication which has been left at home (e.g. inhalers)
- Provide counselling
- Diagnose illness

Transfer to accident & emergency

Emergency transfer to hospital will be by 999 and the Ambulance Service. Non-emergency transfer is by your own transport or taxi (approximately £45 each way). YMCA does not provide transportation to and from A&E, doctor's surgeries or chemists. Unless an ambulance is deemed necessary, please be prepared to pay for a taxi. A group leader must accompany Young Carers to hospital.

For your own risk assessments, the closest A&E department can be found at:

Southampton General Hospital

Tremona Road

Southampton

SO16 6YD

OUR EXPERIENCE OF PREVIOUS EVENTS

Accidents are **least likely** to occur on YMCA led activities

Accidents are **most likely** to occur in and around tent villages, during informal or spontaneous play activities.

Sickness

The most common symptoms of illness presented by festival attendees are headache, stomach ache and nausea. This is most likely due to one or a combination of the following:

- **Dehydration** – even on cold, overcast days, ensure everyone drinks plenty of water.
- **Tiredness** – lack of sleep will make people feel tired, irritable and even nauseous.
- **Not eating** – encourage everyone to eat the meals provided; eating just sweets and chocolate can lead to sickness.
- **Fresh air** – the combination of being out in the fresh air and expending lots of energy may lead to a sudden feeling of sickness or lack of energy.
- **Travel** – be prepared for travel sickness to and from the event.
- **Sunstroke** – even on overcast days, the combination of moderate sun and dehydration can cause sunstroke. Hats, t-shirts, sunscreen and water are absolutely essential. Encourage everyone to sit in the shade. Leaders must set an example.

TLC – over the course of past festivals, we have experienced many young people who have used the event for some much-needed TLC. Leaders should be aware of the need to target the first aid resources at those who are genuinely unwell or who have had an accident. We therefore ask you to provide initial pastoral care to your group.

HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICE

To guarantee the success of the festival, it is necessary to ensure the safety of all taking part. This is a matter that we take very seriously, and it is important that everyone understands their role. The following procedures are in place:

YMCA Fairthorne Manor has its own "Health and Safety Policy Statement" and £10 million public liability insurance cover. For information regarding Health & Safety on our activities, please see [our current policy and procedures](#) on our website.

All YMCA Fairthorne Manor activity staff are first aid trained, and first-aid kits are available at each activity. Throughout the festival, a first-aid area will provide round-the-clock cover. Leaders are responsible for the health needs of the young people within their groups.

The centre has a comprehensive child protection and safeguarding policy, and as part of this, all staff are DBS checked. A Child Protection Officer or Designated Safeguarding Lead is available throughout the weekend.

In some cases, activities and workshops offered during the festival are being provided by outside contractors. These contractors have all been asked for an assurance that they fulfil the following criteria:

- That the activities being provided have been risk assessed
- That all their staff have been adequately trained and are qualified to run these.
- That none of their staff attending the festival have any criminal convictions relating to children or young people, and all are sympathetic to their needs.
- That all equipment being used has been properly maintained, and is operated in compliance with the appropriate legislation or "industry standards"
- That their organisation(s) are covered by 3rd party liability insurance.

Whilst YMCA Fairthorne Manor accepts full responsibility for the safety of the young people whilst they are taking part in the organised activities, it is important for group leaders to understand that they are responsible for their group at all times. Leaders are therefore advised that it is essential to produce risk assessments for any group specific hazards due to medical or behavioural needs and for those periods when they are not taking part in organised activities. Effective group supervision and suitable and sufficient staff ratios will be the most important control measures for group specific hazards.

To assist you with your own risk assessments, we draw your attention to the following notable hazards within the Fairthorne Manor site: tidal river; freshwater lake and stream; areas of woodland; estate machinery and equipment; activity equipment not in use; a public campsite. Please find a map noting these areas enclosed with this document.

Your participation in helping us to make this event a success is very much appreciated, and we hope that you, as group leaders, also find the weekend both enjoyable and worthwhile.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – YOUNG CARERS FESTIVAL

YMCA Fairthorne Manor will take the lead in relation to implementation of a child protection policy for the event. YMCA has adopted the guidelines laid down by YMCA England policy and guidelines document "Safeguarding Children and Young People".

Safeguarding Children and Young People

- As one of its major activities, YMCA seeks to serve the needs of young people promoting holistic development. In doing so, YMCA takes seriously the welfare of all young people and children who come onto its premises, or who are involved in YMCA activities.
- YMCA aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe and caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.
- YMCA aims to ensure that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff and volunteers, to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of young people and children, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- YMCA recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures which are designed to prevent, and be alert to such abuse.
- YMCA is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people and children, and to providing supervision.
- YMCA is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities.

Equal Opportunity Statement for Young Carers Festival

All young people and staff attending the festival are expected to commit themselves to provide an atmosphere free from discrimination (on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical ability, educational attainment or wealth) and harassment (whether physical or verbal).

This festival is a drug, alcohol and substance-free event.

Anyone behaving in a way that breaks this agreement will be challenged appropriately, and the organisers reserve the right to exclude them from the remainder of the festival.

FAIRTHORNE MANOR HIGH RISK AREA OVERVIEW

Supervision of your group whilst at Fairthorne Manor is your responsibility. Please take extra care around high risk areas such as the boathouse, lake, river and stream areas, as well as all high risk activities which require Fairthorne staff instruction

