

This project worked with 4 Carers Trust Network Partners across England to empower young adult carers with the skills and confidence to approach their colleges and universities to ask for recognition and support. The learning from this project bridges the gap and helps young adult carers overcome barriers in order to stay in education.

Top tips when training young adult carer ambassadors and engaging with education providers

- It can be helpful to offer a range of involvement opportunities to young adult carers for them to engage education providers. While some young people may prefer, for example, to talk to tutors, pastoral leads or headteachers, others may prefer to send emails and write briefings, or to arrange teacher training sessions.
- Mix-up the support offered to young adult carers. Group sessions can be beneficial, but so can 1-to-1. Additionally, holding digital sessions with young adult carers can make input more accessible. But be aware that the home may not always be the best place for young adult carers to speak openly, and may see involvement as a form of respite away from the home.
- Be creative and offer a range of training sessions. This can be presentation skills training, public speaking confidence training, or specific training from external agencies e.g. with design companies to explore effective ways to generate social change through design.
- Offer a 'safe space' for young adult carers involved, both physical and digital, in order to gain respite from their caring role. And deliver other activities to keep engagement and excitement high e.g. quiz nights, Bake Off's.
- To keep enthusiasm, it can also be helpful to emphasize the transferrable skills gained from participation, and that they are helping future young adult carers.
- Do celebrate achievements, no matter how small, and thank the young people for their hard contributions.
- It is often more effective when young people engage with education staff as it leads to a greater understanding of the challenges of balancing a caring role with studying. Young people's voices can be influential, so do spend time supporting and training ambassadors - accompanying them to initial meetings can be really helpful.
- It is effective to deliver a 'multi-pronged' approach. Buy in from senior leadership on the one hand, whilst working closely day-to-day with staff that spend most of the time with students. Additionally, in larger institutions it can be effective to arrange monthly meetings with lead staff members, whilst with smaller institutions a more tailored approach with regular email check ins was proven to be effective.
- Flexible training materials that can be amended for in-person but also digital training sessions is beneficial.
- Overall, a flexible approach is helpful, tailoring the support to suit both the young people and the education providers - there is no 'one size fits all' policy.