Statement on Coronavirus by the prospective Officers of the APPG for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers

As prospective Officers of the APPG for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, we are particularly concerned by the impact that the coronavirus pandemic will have on young carers and young adult carers.

We are calling on government, local authorities and professionals to not lose sight of the needs of young carers and young adult carers, and the people they care for, during this emergency.

Across the UK, as many as one in five children and young people are young carers. The impact of caring can be significant on their health, emotional wellbeing, socialisation and life opportunities. Young people with caring responsibilities already support the person they care for without enough support. Any cuts to the support they receive, and the person they care for receives, will have an extra impact at this time of emergency.

Supporting young carers and young adult carers must be a priority

Now, more than ever it is vital that local authorities continue, and in some cases increase support for young carers and young adult carers. Young people with caring responsibilities will be under particular strain during this crisis. They are worried about what will happen if they exhibit symptoms and have to self-isolate. They may also have to pick up even more caring responsibilities if the person they care for contracts coronavirus which in turn puts them at risk of getting the virus themselves.

The support of local carers services can be crucial in helping many young people with caring responsibilities to balance their needs with those of the person needing care and support. During the coronavirus outbreak, local carers services will be switching many of their services online to support social distancing. In the event of support being withdrawn or if the person they care for becomes ill with coronavirus, young carers’ needs may need to be swiftly re-assessed, and more support put in place, so they are not providing inappropriate or excessive care.

Temporary closure of educational establishments

Whilst some young carers will continue to attend school during the emergency, many will not. The caring responsibilities of young carers should not increase as a result of school closures. Schools and local authorities must ensure that young carers are not doing more caring if they are at home and that support is provided, particularly as school may the only break or respite some young carers get.

For some young carers, a teacher is the only person who has identified them as a young carer or who they feel most comfortable speaking to about their caring role. This contact and support should be maintained so that young carers can continue to discuss their caring responsibilities and any concerns they may have. Many schools are staying in contact with vulnerable pupils and we ask all to include young carers within this group. Each school should also have a contact point for external
agencies, such as a Young Carers School Operational Lead, to support effective inter-agency working.

**The role of professionals**

Health professionals, such as GPs, are uniquely placed to identify and support young carers and young adult carers during the crisis. They are often the first point of contact for young people with caring responsibilities and one of the key groups who have regular contact with them. GPs have a key role in listening to how caring is impacting on a young person and subsequently signposting to appropriate support.

For young carers who have a social worker, they can be another point of contact to discuss the impact of their caring role and make referrals to other services. Social workers should be aware that during the outbreak young carers needs may change and more support put in place. They should also be aware of the impact that the temporary closure of schools might have on a young carer and that some family behaviour may present more of a concern.

**Our pledge as MPs**

✓ As MPs we will make supporting young carers and young adult carers a priority by helping to ensure that young carers are identified and supported during this emergency.

✓ In our local communities we will work together with local carers services and signpost constituents to support.

✓ We will ask our local authority about what they are doing to protect young carers from harm and to work with local schools on measures to support young carers.

✓ We will ask the Government to provide local authorities with the resources they need to provide the social care people need – including supporting young carers with their own support needs.

Paul Blomfield MP  
Martin Docherty-Hughes MP  
Gill Furniss MP  
Barabara Keeley MP  
Julian Knight MP  
Tim Loughton MP  
Julian Sturdy MP