

# WE STILL CARE

The role housing  
must play in offering  
young adult carers an  
independent life

Final report and recommendations  
from the Move on Up  
housing project

**Nicola Aylward**  
Head of Learning for Young People  
Learning and Work Institute

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Projects and services include support for those unable to afford funerals, courses to improve wellbeing and financial confidence, neighbourhood-based initiatives and a couple of homelessness projects including a community kitchen and a mobile library.

**[www.quakersocialaction.org.uk](http://www.quakersocialaction.org.uk)**

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## Foreword by Professor Saul Becker

Moving out of the family home, a blossoming independence and social life, further education, or starting out a career: these are all the traditional markings of the freedoms we begin to embark upon in our transition to adulthood. For young adult carers – who face a host of disadvantages and injustices – few, if any of these freedoms will feel tangible.

Caught between the mainstream policy lines that serve young carers and adult carers, young adult carers have slipped under the radar. In particular, housing support for young adult carers continues to be a stark absence from policy, practice and guidance. Too few understand their needs, and fewer still talk about it. It has, therefore, become a hidden hotspot for potential homelessness and other social injustices among these young people – and considering that young adult carers make up several percent of the population of their age group, it would be perilous to continue to trundle along without a major rethink in how we support these vulnerable young people.

At a time when there are crises in housing, social care and the wider economic climate, all of which are disproportionately impacting young people, it is clear to see where the gaps in policy can become pits in peoples' lives.

Move on Up – a pilot project between Quaker Social Action and Commonweal Housing that housed and supported young adult carers – serves as proof of the benefits that respite from care, the value of a home away from caring duties, and tailored support can bestow upon them. It is unique in its offer and commendable in its achievements, and local authorities, housing providers and the third sector should take learnings from this project on the value of embedding housing into support for young adult carers; but even more the crucial importance of asking about and understanding the housing needs of these young people. If you don't ask, you can't help.

Further still, stakeholders across the board should consider this report into the injustices young adult carers face and its very relevant recommendations. To solve these injustices, greater visibility will need to be a natural first step, and this report will hopefully aid in garnering policy-makers' and practitioners' attention.

But visibility alone will not put a roof over the heads of the hundreds of thousands of young adult carers in Britain, nor help carve independence and healthy relationships, it will not help in their studies or get them jobs, and that is what every young adult carer deserves. These should all be the standards which young people can expect, particularly for those who've had to make immense sacrifices in their caring roles. It is time we recognised young adult carers, but more importantly, it is time we helped them.

## 1

## Introduction and context

### Move on Up – why focus on young adult carers?

Running from 2017 to 2023, Move on Up was a housing project for young adult carers, aged 18-25, delivered by Quaker Social Action (QSA) in strategic partnership with Commonweal Housing. Based across four homes in London, it tested a shared housing pathway to independent living, alongside tailored support, in securing positive outcomes for young adult carers.

Move on Up's focus on young adult carers was unique and innovative. In developing the concept, and in their planning for the delivery of Move on Up, QSA and Commonweal consulted widely to understand young adult carers' housing needs, and how they were being addressed. It quickly became clear that young adult carers were a highly disadvantaged group of people, whose needs were often unseen, and that their housing needs, in particular, were entirely overlooked in policy and practice.

Move on Up was designed as a response to the challenges that young adult carers face. It took account of young adult carers' experiences, wider context and evidence, and the views of stakeholders. It was deliberately set up as a small-scale project, to enable deep relationships to grow between staff and participants. Not only did Move on Up provide the opportunity for shared housing, it enabled shared housing with other young people who had similar lived experience, in the hope that young adult carers would benefit from feeling seen, heard and understood.

Young adult carers are young people, aged 16-25, who provide unpaid care to someone, usually within their family, on a regular basis. Young adult carers often have different needs to younger carers (under 16) and older carers (over 25), which makes them a distinct group who require tailored support. Data from the 2021 Census shows that there are over 272,000 young people, aged 16-24, providing unpaid care across England and Wales. Census data also shows a marked increase in the numbers of young adults providing significant levels of care – at least 20 hours per week, and still tens of thousands who provide over 50 hours per week. Despite these figures, there's consensus among experts that this data is the tip of the iceberg. In reality there are likely to be significantly more young adults providing care, and in particular, higher levels of care, than the Census found. This is, in part, due to many young people not recognising themselves as carers and reluctance to disclose.

Arguably more important than the numbers of young people who provide unpaid care, is the impact that caring has. There is strong evidence that caring responsibilities have a negative impact upon young people – particularly their transitions in education and employment, alongside their mental health and wellbeing.

- On average, carers miss **5%** of school days because of caring, and caring interferes with a quarter of all school days.<sup>1</sup>
- Young adult carers have significantly **lower educational attainment** at GCSE, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers.
- **24%** of young adult carers in school say they cannot afford to go to college or university.<sup>2</sup>
- **57%** of young adult carers say that they 'usually' or 'always' worry about the cost of living crisis and things becoming more expensive.<sup>3</sup>
- Young adult carers are **three times** as likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) compared to other young people.<sup>4</sup>
- Young adult carers are **4 times** more likely to drop out of college and university than a student without caring responsibilities.<sup>5</sup>
- **44%** of young adult carers report that they 'usually' or 'always' feel stressed because of their caring role.<sup>6</sup>

It's this social injustice, and the inequalities that young adult carers experience, that Move on Up sought to challenge. Support for young adult carers to overcome disadvantage requires a co-ordinated and broad policy and practice response. While the response must be about more than just housing, housing is not simply a place where somebody sleeps. Timely and good quality housing can prevent a crisis, such as a young adult carer becoming homeless. It can also prevent a breakdown in family relationships due to the pressures and tensions of caring; provide space for a young person to carve out a life of their own – either alongside or outside of caring; opportunity to transition to independence; to go where their talents will take them in education and work; and to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

## 2023 – challenging context and disproportionate impact on young adult carers

As we recover from the pandemic, the UK is in the midst of an unprecedented set of crises. The rising cost of living, chronic shortage of affordable housing and the adult social care crisis are widely reported and are affecting most of us in some way. Whether that's rising food prices, low wage growth, lack of affordable and reasonable quality housing, or long waiting lists for social care. Individuals and families are under pressure, with many struggling to keep afloat.

While many groups of people need support to get through difficult times, young adult carers are uniquely and disproportionately affected by the current challenges that we face. Pre-existing inequalities, discussed above, have been compounded, and there is a social justice imperative in ensuring that young adult carers are no longer overlooked and undervalued. Children and young people do not choose to be carers, yet through no fault of their own it is a situation that too many find themselves in. Most young adult carers took on responsibilities as children and grew up with them, making a huge contribution to their families and society, and saving the state billions

1 Sempik and Becker, 2013, 2014.

2 Carers Trust, 2014.

3 Being a carer is not a choice; it's just what we do, Carers Trust, 2023.

4 Audit Commission, 2010.

5 Time to be Heard, Carers Trust Wales, 2015

6 Being a carer is not a choice; it's just what we do, Carers Trust, 2023.

in unpaid care every year. These young people deserve to receive good support, and to have opportunities to become independent, to develop goals and aspirations, and build good lives for themselves.

A key part of such support must be housing. Prior to the launch of Move on Up in 2017, 'young adult carers' and 'housing' were rarely, if ever, mentioned in the same sentence. Move on Up was a pioneering initiative. Six years on, this report explores the key lessons from the project, the implications for current policy and practice, and the role of different organisations in enabling young adult carers to achieve the outcomes they deserve. We believe that young adult carers get a raw deal. But this is not inevitable. Like all young people, we want young adult carers to have the opportunity to thrive, not simply survive. Access to housing and tailored support is one of the missing links. Our vision is for housing support to be embedded at the centre of a joined-up and comprehensive policy and support offer for young adult carers. Implementing the recommendations set out in this report, will, we believe, move one step closer to achieving this vision.

“Last year everything just reached breaking point. It was just too much. Mum’s MS and her mental health got worse and worse, she was unpredictable and constantly picky with me and my little brother. She stopped taking her medication. I know she can’t help it, but it made me feel angry and anxious. I was missing college, and Jayden was missing school. I had to get away, so I moved in with my cousin for a few weeks, and my nana stayed with mum and Jayden. I felt bad, but I had to get away.”

(Young adult carer, from a local carers service)

## 2

## Key learning from Move on Up

Since the launch of Move on Up in 2017, the project has received 141 referrals and has provided housing and support to a total of 32 young adult carers. Evaluation of the first three years delivery of Move on Up, published in 2020, highlighted a range of outcomes, challenges and lessons learned.

## Outcomes

Participants reported a range of positive experiences from Move on Up. In particular, young adult carers were happy with the quality of the properties and with the pragmatic and tailored support provided by project staff. They were also positive about their experiences of living independently. Alongside this, the evaluation showed a number of positive outcomes, many of which resulted from the respite from caring which living independently afforded participants. These outcomes included considerable improvements in their relationships with their families, accessing education, finding employment and refining their future plans. Other outcomes included a better understanding of their own needs and aspirations, improved independent living skills and increased social participation and friendships. Move on Up has been successful in terms of move-on destinations and outcomes, with around two thirds of participants reporting a more positive situation compared to when they initially engaged.

*“The support has made a massive difference. I struggle with my mental health, but they listen and help me. They have helped me move back with my family. They’ve even sorted out a bed and stuff, and a moving van. My room is really nice. I think it’s all going to be much better now.”*

*(Move on Up participant)*

The consistent stream of referrals – and in particular self-referrals – to Move on Up demonstrates significant need and demand for housing support by young adult carers. Over the lifetime of the project the delivery model has been adapted in response to feedback from participants and evidence from the evaluation around what works and improvements needed.

## Challenges and lessons learned

As with any pilot project, some delivery challenges are to be expected. The key challenges for Move on Up included high levels of rent arrears, often due to participants’ transition to Universal Credit, zero-hour contracts or irregular hours of work. For some participants, the experience of shared living was not positive, this was often due to disruptive or challenging relationships within a property; the cost of living independently prohibited some participants from achieving a successful transition into independent living; and some participants presented with higher mental health needs than identified in their initial assessment, which was challenging and time consuming for staff to support. Evidence from the evaluation highlights that the QSA project team were open and responsive, and were effective in learning from and overcoming some of the challenges encountered, for example, around rent arrears.

Overall, there are a number of key lessons that can be learned from Move on Up:

- **Accessible and affordable housing, away from the family home, is a crucial factor in enabling many young adult carers to achieve independence and carve out a life of their own.** Young adult carers often talk about feeling ‘trapped’ in a caring role. This can lead to a

deterioration in their own mental health, low confidence and self-esteem, and a breakdown in family relationships, which can sometimes result in a young person becoming homeless. Lack of suitable housing options removes opportunity and choice and can contribute to young adult carers feeling trapped. The opportunity to live independently provides respite from caring. For some Move on Up participants, this was partial or temporary, as the project gave them the space to live independently alongside maintaining a caring role. For others, it provided the opportunity to break from caring responsibilities altogether.

- **Tailored and personalised support is crucial in helping young adult carers to overcome barriers to independence, education and employment.** The young people referred to Move on Up presented with a complex range of needs. These needs often result from growing up with caring responsibilities, the practical and emotional pressure that this places them under, and complex family dynamics. Mental health problems were common, and many participants found it very difficult to reflect on their own needs and take up support. This is likely to be because of the psychological effect of suppressing their own needs from a young age. The complex needs that many young adult carers present with require tailored support, that is personalised to each individual. Employing staff with the skills and experience to identify mental health needs and provide high quality, tailored support was central to the success of the Move on Up delivery model. It reinforced that a 'one size fits all' approach does not work.
- **Combining the above – independent living, with tailored support which is personalised to the needs of individual young adult carers – is an effective approach.** Independent living can provide valuable respite from caring and the opportunity for young adult carers to define their own needs and aspirations, and make plans for the future. However, tailored support is crucial in enabling young adult carers to make a successful transition to independent living, to maintain living arrangements and overcome wider barriers to independence. A combination of both elements is important in achieving good outcomes for young adult carers.

Ciaran cared for his mother, who has mental health difficulties, from a young age, and also played a significant caring role for his sibling who has a disability. Life was difficult for Ciaran, and at times his mother was abusive towards him. Ciaran finally decided to leave home and was homeless for a while. He was then housed in a hostel and referred to Move on Up by a youth charity.

After receiving support from Move on Up for ten months, Ciaran is now studying at college and is aiming to go to university. He no longer cares for his mother but still visits his family regularly. Ciaran finds it quite difficult to build trusting relationships due to his childhood experiences and tends to be very cautious in what he shares about himself. However, he has gradually become more settled at Move on Up, has regular support meetings, and is getting on well with his house mates. He has found a part-time job that fits in with his studies that helps him to pay the rent. **(Move on Up participant)**

Ciaran's story demonstrates how young adult carers can suddenly find themselves in a housing crisis that places them in a dangerous situation, with no support, and at risk of long-term homelessness. While the Move on Up home was invaluable in providing an independent space, away from the intense day to day pressures of caring for his family, the one-to-one support that Ciaran received is equally important in enabling him to address personal and emotional difficulties, and practical barriers to progression and independence.

## 3

## Looking ahead – challenges and opportunities to improve housing support for young adult carers

Evidence from Move on Up has clearly demonstrated significant need and demand for housing support among young adult carers. The project delivery model works well, resulting in a range of positive outcomes, move on destinations and improved situations for participants. The combination of affordable, decent and accessible housing, alongside tailored support which is personalised to the needs of individual young adult carers, has been critical to the success of the project.

Move on Up is an innovative and unique project. When it was launched in 2017, it was the only project of its kind that provided housing and tailored support targeted at young adult carers. That remains the case today. Given the level of demand, and the success of Move on Up, there is a strong argument for replicating the approach and delivery model in other parts of London and the country. However, it should also be recognised that Move on Up tested **one** delivery model. Evidence from the project has provided invaluable insight into what works, and the challenges of providing housing support to young adult carers, but it should not be assumed that other approaches would not also achieve strong outcomes.

In the context of devolution, local policy makers (such as combined authority housing leads) and providers (such as local housing providers and carers services) should design and deliver housing support for young adult carers in response to local needs, priorities and existing provision. However, underpinning this must be a recognition from the Government and support services (carers services and wider services for young people) of the importance of housing as part of a wider and co-ordinated support offer for young adult carers and a commitment to improving transitions to independence and their right to a life of their own, outside of caring responsibilities. Discussions with a range of experts and stakeholders have identified a number of challenges, and changes that are needed, if this vision is to become reality.

**The distinct needs of young adult carers should be recognised and prioritised in policy and practice.** Between the ages of 16-25 most young people make key transitions to independence – moving out of the family home, establishing new relationships, becoming financially independent and moving from school to college, university or into the world of work. Despite providing vital care to their families, and making a crucial contribution to society, young adult carers' transitions are often restricted. Many talk about becoming 'trapped' in a caring role, with little opportunity for a 'life of their own'.

Lack of join-up across government departments results in young adult carers falling through gaps in policy. While the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is the lead department with overall responsibility for carers, the Department for Education (DfE) has some responsibilities for carers under the age of 18. Alongside this, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for Carers Allowance, which people over the age of 16 can claim if eligible, and other departments, such as the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities (DHLUC) have a key role to play in ensuring support is in place for young adult carers, in the context of their policy priorities.

"At national level policy is fragmented. Lack of join up across government departments often results in young adult carers not getting the support they need. There needs to be better leadership and join up across government departments." (Expert stakeholder)

At national and local level, policy and practice should be joined-up and coordinated, recognising that young adult carers' specific needs are different to those of younger carers, and older carers. Young adult carers require tailored support and should have the right to the opportunities and transitions that most young people take for granted.

"School was alright, they were pretty supportive, but that changed when I went to college. I was told to leave my baggage at the door and concentrate on my course. He [teacher] didn't get why I was distracted. Once I was late because I had to take Ryan to school. I got a detention. I told him I had to pick Ryan up because my dad's ill. He didn't believe me. I dropped out after a couple of months." (Young adult carer, from a local carers service)

**Awareness of the housing support needs of young adult carers is currently low.** The risk of homelessness among young adult carers is often high and hidden, and this is likely to become more severe as the ongoing impact of the cost of living, housing and social care crises intensifies.

"I don't think young adult carers' housing needs is on the policy radar at all." (Expert stakeholder)

At national and local policy level, and among carers services, young people's services, housing providers and homelessness organisations, awareness of young adult carers' housing needs is low. While the housing providers and homelessness organisations who contributed to this report are aware that some of their residents are young adult carers, there is a recognition that they are not systematically identified. One of the key reasons for this is low levels of awareness among staff of young adult carers and their needs, which is compounded by lack of disclosure by young people about caring responsibilities.

"We occasionally support young adult carers, mainly because they're unable to cope at home. I think we definitely need to get better at unpicking this [caring responsibilities], and staff need support to deal with this. A Housing First type model could work well for young adult carers, where different agencies work together to build support around the individual" (Housing provider)

Likewise, carers services and local authorities, who provide support for carers and undertake carers assessments, also report low awareness of young adult carers' housing needs. Carers assessments, and transition assessments for young people approaching the age of 18, do not follow a specific format or template, which means that housing often isn't systematically discussed at this key stage in a young adult carer's life. Where needs are identified, for example, if a young adult carer is sofa-surfing, carers support services report that they often don't feel equipped to address this, or where to go for advice and support. This results in housing needs being overlooked and unmet, which can contribute to a young person becoming homeless.

Almost a decade after legislation was introduced that provides a policy framework for carers assessments and transition assessments, it is deeply concerning that many young people continue to report that they do not get assessments. Where assessments are carried out, housing is not systematically discussed, which perpetuates these needs being overlooked.

“Before I came here [Move on Up] I was sleeping under the kitchen table. There wasn't room for all of us at home. I resented everyone – my family and other people. I kicked off at college and smashed a door. I don't know where I'd be if I wasn't here.” (Move on Up participant)

Alongside lack of recognition of young adult carers' specific needs, disjointed policy and low awareness of housing needs, a further challenge is **lack of affordable and accessible accommodation for young adult carers**. Long waiting lists, rising rental costs, poor quality housing and overcrowding are widely reported, particularly in London and other major cities. Local authorities and social housing providers often implement allocation policies, which prioritise people in specific circumstances. Young adult carers are not typically a priority group for housing, which means that, in some parts of the country, they could be waiting for over a decade. Raising awareness of young adult carers' housing needs is important in ensuring that they are prioritised for support, both by existing local authority and social housing providers, and new initiatives, such as Move on Up. The 'hidden' impact of caring upon young people – isolation, poor mental health, lack of independence, risk of homelessness, family breakdown – must be seen by housing providers if they are to prioritise young adult carers for housing support.

“In some parts of the country, especially London, waiting lists are many, many years, up to a decade. Without priority status it's unlikely that young adult carers would be housed, which really only leaves the private rental market, which obviously brings challenges of high rent costs, often poor quality, insecurity and lack of support.” (Housing provider)

Julia is a long-term carer for her father, who has severe and enduring mental health difficulties. Julia also cares for her sister and her aunt.

Julia recognised that she needed to leave the family home in order to improve her own mental health, which was deteriorating under the stress of the intensive caring she was doing. At this point she was referred to Move on Up by her local carers service.

Alongside working part-time, Julia continues to go to the family home regularly to look after her father, before returning to her Move on Up home. She says she finds it a huge help to have a place in a Move on Up flat, especially for respite during an intense period of caring for her father, who can become very distressed when he is unwell. She has been able to use her support sessions to reflect on her family relationships and to build her sense of herself as a separate person with her own plans for the future. (Move on Up participant)

## 4

## Conclusion and recommendations

Move on Up is a unique and innovative project. Over the last six years it has provided housing and tailored support to 32 young adult carers, many of whom were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. As the project progressed, participants presented increasingly complex needs, with mental health difficulties particularly prevalent. This was compounded by reluctance and difficulty in discussing their own needs and accepting support.

Despite the challenges encountered, participants describe a wide range of outcomes, with around two-thirds reporting a more positive situation compared to when they initially engaged. Some participants continued to care for their families, and moved back into the family home when they left Move on Up. These young people spoke about the value of the respite and support that Move on Up provided. Others chose to break from their caring role, or to significantly cut it back. Having cared for their families for many years, these were choices that participants had the right to make. For those who chose to step away from their caring role, there is inevitably an impact on the state, or other family members, in picking up the cost or responsibility for care. This is an unavoidable consequence of a young person choosing to end a caring role, and it highlights the critical importance of the state valuing the contribution that young adult carers make, and providing the support that they deserve to develop full and active lives outside of caring.

One of the key recommendations of the evaluation of Move on Up was that the project should be replicated in other parts of the country and that:

“Replications of Move on Up should be delivered as a partnership between housing and carer/youth organisations. Socially responsible private landlords, social housing providers and local authority housing providers with suitable properties should allocate housing stock specifically for young adult carers, whilst carers services or youth organisations should provide tailored support to meet young adult carers' individual needs. This approach would both build on providers' expertise in their respective areas and create economies of scale, whilst maintaining the independent living and specialist support elements of the project.” (L&W evaluation of Move on Up, 2020)

Evidence from this report suggests that this recommendation remains very relevant and should be taken forward as a partnership by organisations that support young people and housing providers.

Our vision is for housing support to be embedded at the centre of a joined-up and comprehensive policy and support offer for young adult carers. To make this vision a reality, and to achieve a step change, we urge government and other stakeholders to implement the following actions.

### Recommendations for national government:

- **The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) should update the Carers Strategy and Action Plan.** The last update was published in June 2018 and covered the period 2018-2020. A new cross-government strategy and plan is needed. This should include a specific section and actions to improve support for young adult carers, bringing together co-ordinated commitments from all government departments. Within the strategy, housing should be identified as a need,

and the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities (DHLUC) should commit to review vulnerability legislation in housing law to recognise the risk of homelessness and precarious housing that young adult carers face.

- **DHSC should issue guidance to local authorities setting out a requirement to assess young adult carers' housing needs when conducting transition assessments.** Legislation introduced in 2015 placed a duty on local authorities to conduct transition assessments with young adult carers as they approach age 18, to ensure that they have choices and the right to a 'life of their own' outside of caring. Evidence indicates that transition assessments are not routinely conducted in all local authorities, and that the quality and breadth of assessment varies. Housing is not currently systematically discussed as part of assessments, but must become a core part of the agenda. DHSC should require local authorities to report on assessments and outcomes, to ensure that all aspects of need are discussed and to monitor the implementation of follow-up support.

## Recommendations for local authorities:

- **Local authorities should ensure that transition assessments are routinely conducted and include an assessment of a young adult carer's housing needs.** Where a transition assessment results in housing needs being identified, this should initiate the local authority's prevention duties and right to refer, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, so that the young adult carer is prioritised for housing support.
- **Alongside other groups with distinct need for housing, local authorities should classify young adult carers as one of their priority groups.** Allocation policies are set by individual local authorities and are used to prioritise people in specific circumstances for housing support. The risk of homelessness among young adult carers is often high and hidden. Inclusion in allocation policies, alongside other groups, would help to raise awareness of the precarious housing that young adult carers are often in and ensure that they are a priority group for support.
- **Local authority carer leads and housing leads should work together to assess and monitor local need, and improve housing support for young adult carers.** This is particularly important across two-tier local authorities, where social services and housing responsibility sits with different levels of local government. This should include training for key staff; a regular forum to understand challenges and what works; data collection and reporting to lead councillors for young people, carers and housing.

## Recommendations for carers services:

- **Carers services should be proactive in discussing living arrangements and housing needs with young adult carers.** Carers services provide invaluable practical and emotional support to young adult carers, but living arrangements and housing needs aren't routinely discussed. As a result, services often only become aware of a housing need when a crisis occurs. Likewise, in areas where carers services are commissioned to undertake transition assessments, housing should be systematically discussed as part of the assessment.
- **Carers services should develop links with local authority housing leads and social housing providers.** Carers services staff often say they don't feel equipped to deal with housing needs. By developing links with local housing services, they will be well placed to seek support and information, when a need arises, and also to advocate for young adult carers' needs. Likewise, stronger links will enable housing providers to refer residents for support from carers services when a caring situation is identified. One of the key lessons from Move on Up is that the combination of housing and support is crucial in enabling young adult carers to achieve good outcomes.

## Recommendations for housing providers and homelessness organisations:

- **Housing providers should recognise that, alongside other groups, young adult carers have distinct needs and should be classified as a priority group for housing support.** As set out above, the risk of homelessness among young adult carers is often high and hidden. Increased visibility and awareness, and prioritisation of young adult carers for housing, alongside other groups with specific needs, would create pathways to support and help to ensure that their needs are met. As part of this, different models of support should be tested (such as Housing First) to understand if and how these can benefit young adult carers.
- **Housing providers should systematically seek to identify caring responsibilities when assessing housing applications, and through the ongoing support they provide to residents.** Overall, identification of caring responsibilities is currently incidental and inconsistent. Housing providers should routinely ask applicants and residents about caring responsibilities, through application and support processes, to fully understand their circumstances and the impact of caring.
- **Housing providers should develop links with local carers services.** Overall, low levels of awareness of young adult carers and their needs, prevent housing provider staff from identifying residents with caring responsibilities. Developing links with local authority or voluntary sector carers services will enable housing providers to improve staff awareness and identification. It will also create referral pathways for support.

## Recommendations for further research:

- **Researchers and funders should prioritise research into the distinct needs of young adult carers and the challenges they face.** Alongside cuts to dedicated services for young adult carers, research focussed on this group of young people has stalled in the last five years. Most commentators agree that 2021 Census data significantly understates the numbers of young adults who provide unpaid care. In-depth understanding of the impact of caring on a young person is crucial in raising awareness and developing an evidence base to inform policy and practice.