

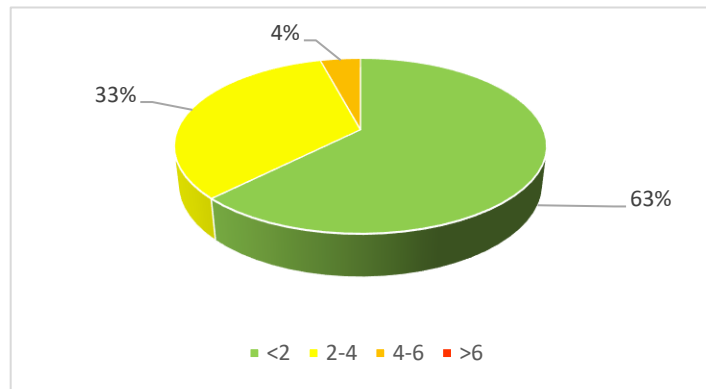
Young Carers Summer Break Survey Report 2024

In much the same way we have asked our Young Carers in previous years to tell us how the Christmas period affects their caring responsibilities, this year we have asked them to tell us how the summer break from school impacts their lives.

The Numbers

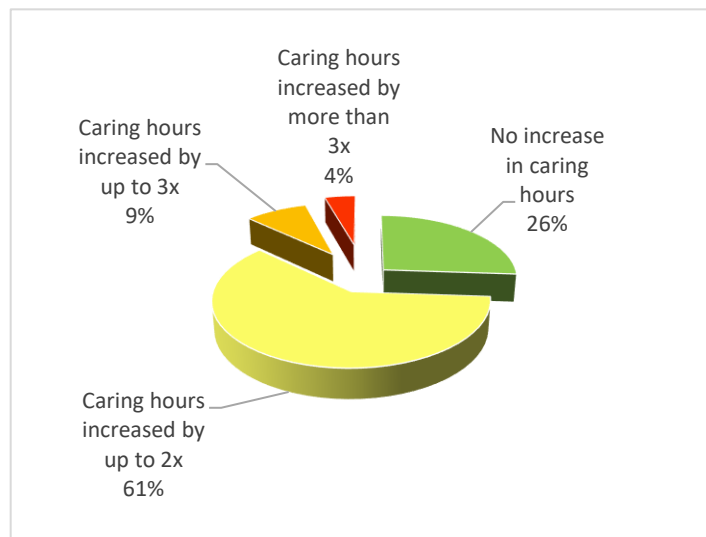
To set a baseline we first asked how much time they spent undertaking their caring role during a normal term-time day.

- 63% said that it was less than 2 hours
- 33% said it was between 2 & 4 hours
- 4% said it was between 4 & 6 Hours
- No-one said they spent more than 6 hours a day



We then asked how that changed during the summer break period.

- 26% said that they did not expect the amount of time they spent caring to change
- 61% said they expected their caring hours to double
- 9% said they expected their caring hours to treble
- 4% said they expected their caring hours to MORE than treble
- 8% said that these increases would take their length of time caring each day to more than 6 hours



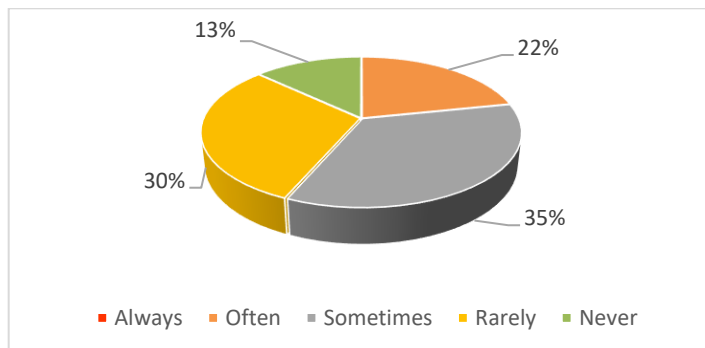
Given that many young carers experience social isolation as a result of their caring responsibilities as a matter of course, we asked them how the summer break affected this.

- 4% said they always missed out on opportunities to socialise with friends
- 8% said they often did
- 50% said they sometimes did
- 17% said they rarely missed out
- 21% said they never missed out on social opportunities

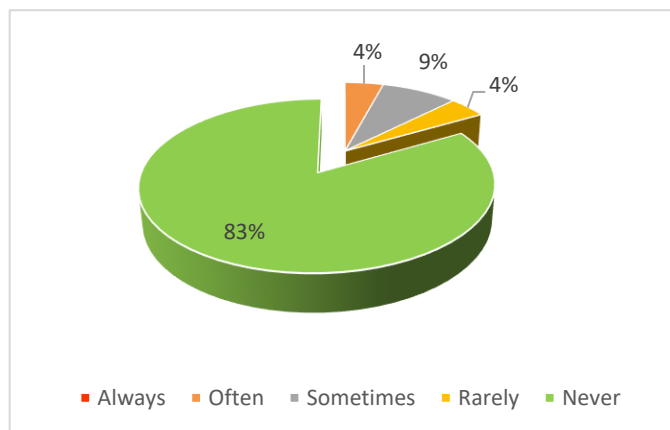
We also asked whether they expected to miss out on other opportunities that might be available to them during the summer, such as sports, arts/crafts, fun and activity days, due to their caring responsibilities

50% of our young carers thought that they would miss out on some of these types of activities over the summer, with 4% believing it would be a frequent occurrence

Following on from these missed social opportunities we asked how lonely young carers felt over the summer break



With the much-highlighted plight of some families struggling to feed their children during school holidays, due to not being able to access breakfast clubs and free school meals, we asked young carers whether they felt the summer break would put additional pressure on their family in relation to food.

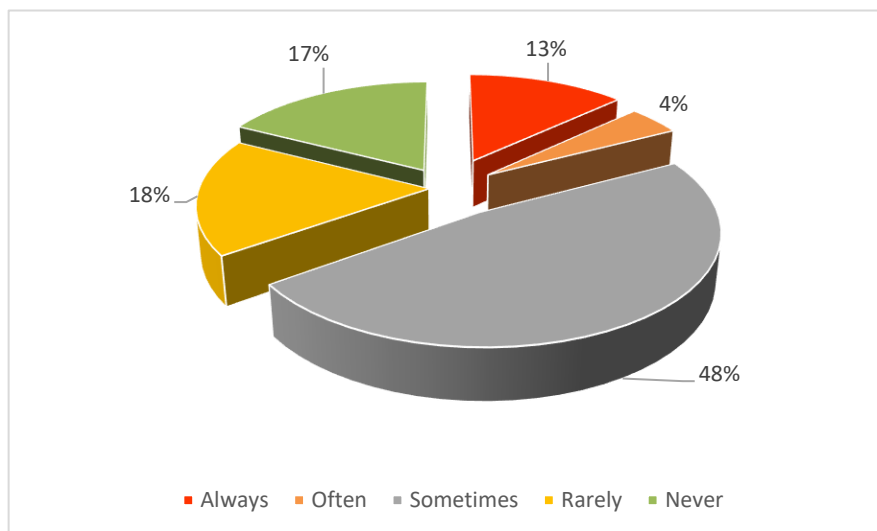


We went on to ask if any of them had missed meals as a result of this, maybe to ensure someone else in the family had enough food

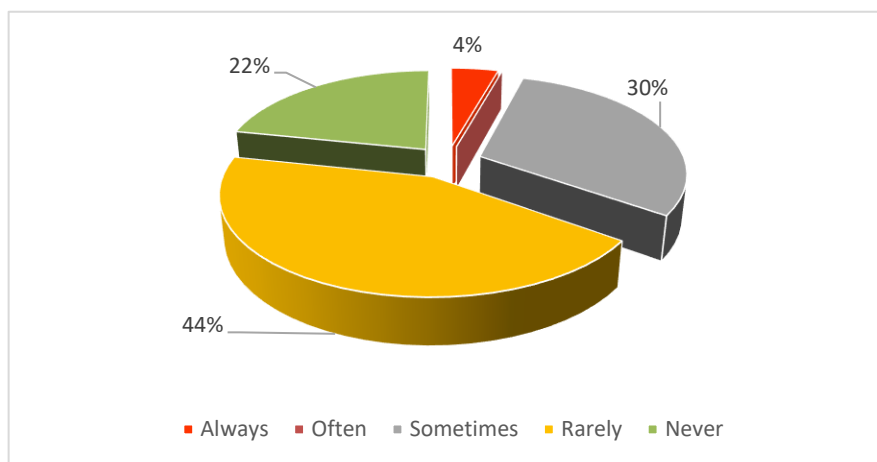
Whilst 76% said they had not missed meals, 24% said they had missed a meal at least occasionally, with 25% of those saying it happened often

In a series of related questions we asked...

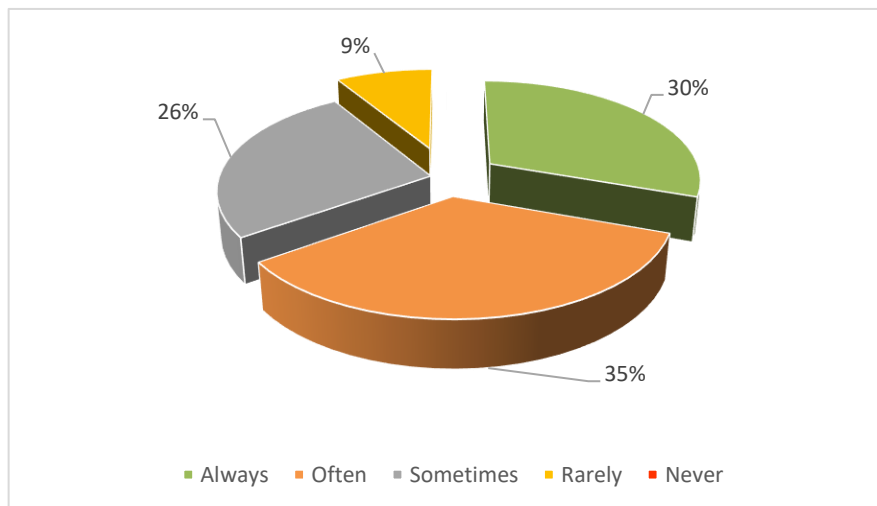
If the increased caring load made our young carers more tired during the summer break?



If the increased caring load made our young carers feel more stressed or under pressure?

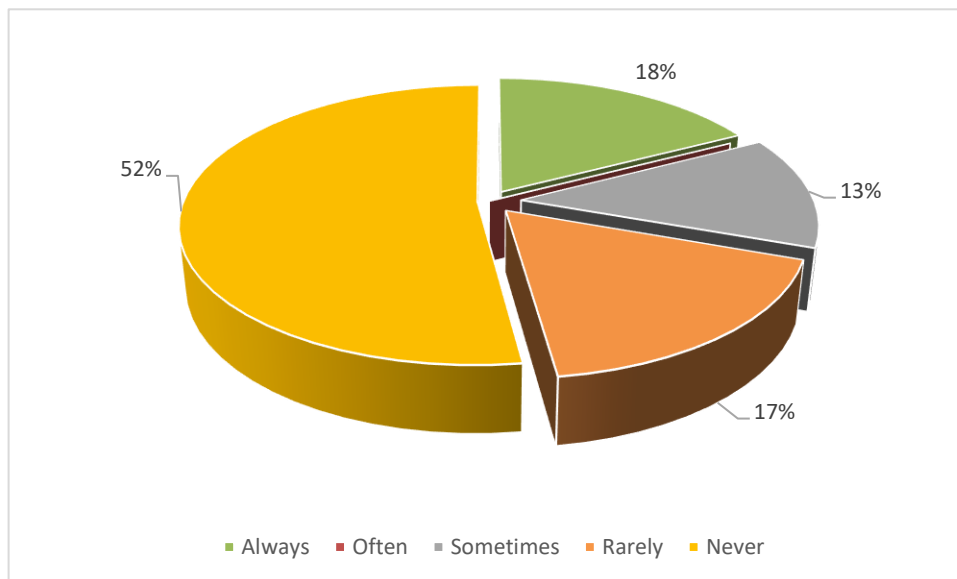


Do you get an opportunity to take a break from your caring during the holiday?

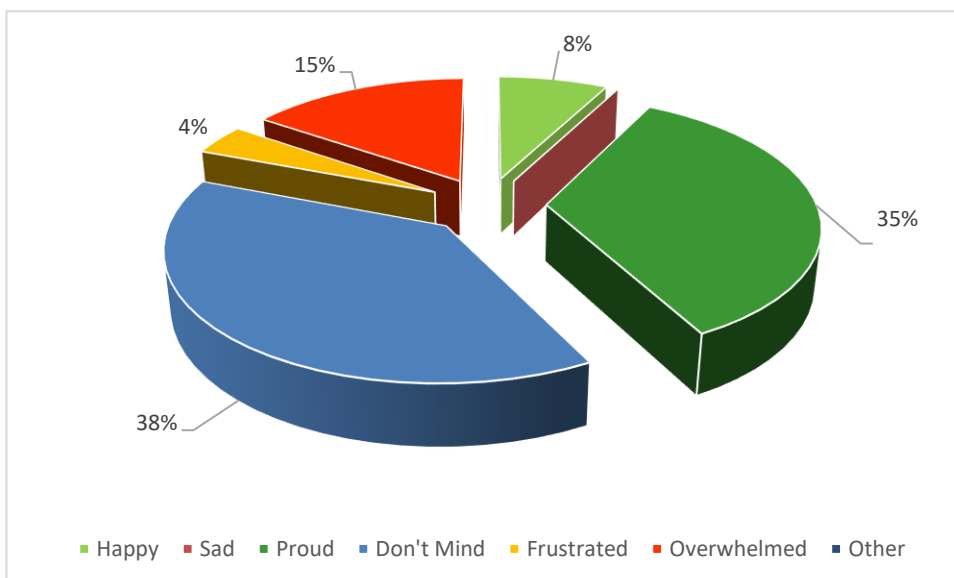


Finally, we asked....

Did they look forward to returning to school after the summer break?



And how they felt overall about being a young carer



Analysis

It should be borne in mind that these results are quite specific to the responses given by the young carers of Rochford District, they may correlate to national statistics in some respects but deviate in others, reflecting local conditions and support frameworks. Where comparable figures are available each point has a traffic-light indicator against it, as to whether it is better or worse than the national figure, or whether it is of concern.

- When looking at the numbers presented for the level of time spent caring, it is worth comparing against national figures, a 2020 study by Action for Children arrived at an average figure of 3.77 hours per day (term time), whilst a 2023 Carers Trust study found steep increases in time spent caring and that 51% of young carers reported caring for between 20 and 49 hours more per week, than they were a few years ago. Our term time results in this survey equate to an average of 2.64 hours per day. None of these studies take into account time also taken up by concerns and anxiety, only active caring.

- With respect to holiday caring levels Action for Children data suggests that a doubling of caring time per day is the norm, whilst even higher levels of caring are not unusual. This would loosely tie in with our findings with 74% saying they expected their caring to at least double, with 13% saying it could be 3 or 4 times higher than term time.
- Carers Trust reported that around 40% of young carers nationally expected to have reduced social opportunities as a result of their caring role, but didn't specify whether this changed during holiday periods. Our young carers reported that 62% experienced reduced social opportunities during the holiday period, whilst 17% said it rarely happened and 21% said they never missed such opportunities. In the absence of national figures relating to whether young carers experience reduced opportunities to attend summer activities it is probably reasonable to assume that those who miss out on social opportunities also miss these other activities, with 50% of our young carers reporting this to be the case, and 4% saying this would often happen. 1 in 5 young carers reported never having had a holiday away with their family.
- Action for Children found that nationally 82% young carers felt lonely during the school summer break, with just 13% of our young carers reporting never feeling lonely over the same period, this leaves 87% feeling lonely at least some of the time during the holidays. This slightly higher figure may reflect the more rural nature of parts of the district and therefore reduced mobility and opportunity for social interaction.
- The Health Foundation reported in 2023 that more than 1 in 6 families (16%) experienced food poverty, particularly in relation to school holiday periods when there was no access to breakfast clubs and free school meals. The governments HAF program is intended to help support these vulnerable families during these periods. 17% of our young carers reported difficulties with obtaining enough food during holidays, whilst 18% said they had at least occasionally missed meals as a result of food shortages and 6% said it happened often.
- A study of young carers in Scotland found 61% were more tired, while 83% of our young carers reported feeling more tired, with 17% saying this was often or always.
- A Carers Trust study found 86% of young carers were more stressed during school holidays than during term time, whilst our young carers reported that 78% felt more stressed or under more pressure.
- Although many organisations exist to offer respite breaks to carers, these rarely cover young carers, but many families still manage to give their caring children a break from their responsibilities. We were unable to find any comparable national figures but none of our young carers reported never being able to have a break, with 9% said they rarely got a break and the remainder saying they at least sometimes got a break, 61% of those saying they often or always got a break.
- In terms of how they feel overall about their caring role 38% gave a non-committal "I don't mind" response, which may reflect feelings of family loyalty rather than a truly representative feeling, 35% felt proud of their contribution, 8% were happy, 4% expressed frustration at times and 15% admitted to being overwhelmed.