YOUNGCARE

RELIEF FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE IN NEED OF CARE AND THEIR INFORMAL CARERS



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS

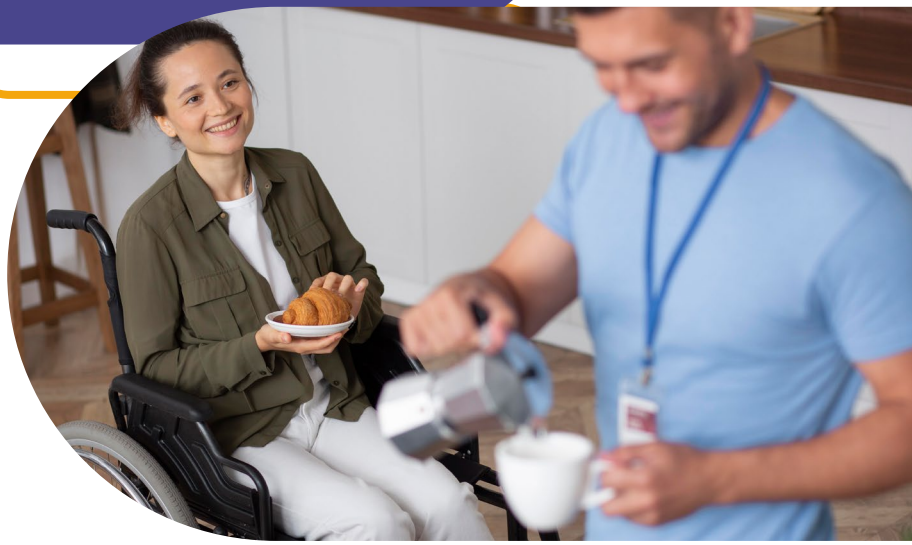
SHORT VERSION

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Introduction

Informal caregivers provide most of the care for those in need of care. Numbers speak volumes: for example, about 80% of care recipients in Germany are being cared for at home. Up to 15% of the whole population of Italy are caregivers. Yet, informal caregivers often work without recognition or financial compensation. Although there are social support systems in place for both caregivers and care recipients, caregiving is still largely viewed as a personal responsibility. Above all, it is the individual who has to take care of the care.

> "I can tell you exactly when I got married, when I dated, when I had children. I can give all those dates. Now, when I became an informal caregiver, I don't know. It was a role I took on without knowing that this had a name."
>
> *(Portuguese caregiver for his wife)*



About YoungCare

Young adults – individuals aged 18-64 – face significant challenges when they need care or become carers themselves. Caregivers may have to manage work, family responsibilities and caregiving at the same time. Moreover, young people in need of care often miss adequate age-appropriate support.

The YoungCare project aims to develop and promote strategies to support both informal caregivers and young adults with care needs and disabilities. Through targeted strategies and support mechanisms, like an online learning platform, YoungCare aims to alleviate the burdens faced by them and improve the quality of care given to young adults.

The project runs from December 2022 to July 2025, involving six organisations across five European countries.

ISIS Institut für Soziale Infrastruktur gemeinnützige GmbH
PARITÄTISCHE Projekte gemeinnützige GmbH

SHINE 2Europe

AFEdemy, Academy on Age-Friendly Environments in Europe BV

CADIAI Cooperativa Sociale

Vytauto Didziojo Universitetas (VDU)

Tools and materials of YoungCare

The following learning tools and materials have been developed within the project:

- five national reports, offering an overview of the situation of informal caregivers, based on local interviews and desk research;
- a compendium, giving guidance to young adults in need of care and their informal carers;
- a low-threshold learning platform, providing practical and nationally-oriented tips on housing and living, leisure and mobility, participation and employment as well as care and support;
- recommendations for policy-makers and professional carers to raise awareness of the issues faced by young adults in need of care and their informal caregivers.

All educational materials and news about the project can be found on: www.youngcare.eu



Be informed and take action!

Based on the findings of the national reports and the European roundtables with experts discussing these results and giving further insights into informal caregiving across Europe, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Practice active listening!

Professional caregivers should engage in active listening to fully understand the needs of people with disabilities and their families, particularly informal caregivers. This approach fosters trust and ensures that care is aligned with each individual's specific requirements.

2. Develop a person-centred life project to promote independent living!

Collaborate with people with disabilities and their informal caregivers to formulate a "life plan" aimed at maintaining and enhancing individual autonomy. The goal is to promote independent living by tailoring support to their personal aspirations and capabilities.

3. Foster interdisciplinary collaboration to improve service coordination!

Encourage coordinated teamwork among various services involved in the care of persons with disabilities (e.g., healthcare services, mental health centres, employment support agencies, and local associations). A networked approach ensures the effective implementation of the life plan and optimises available resources.



4. Identify and provide support for informal caregivers to reduce their burden!

Professional caregivers can play a crucial role in easing the burden on informal caregivers by offering guidance, emotional support, and practical strategies. They should be attentive to signs of overload, such as exhaustion, stress, or withdrawal, and proactively provide information on available resources, respite care options, and coping mechanisms. Encouraging open communication and collaboration ensures that informal caregivers feel supported and are better equipped to manage their responsibilities.



5. Ensure accessible and clear information about care services and rights!

People with care needs and their families should receive easily understandable information on available services, benefits, and rights to navigate the care system without unnecessary barriers. Caregivers can provide guidance on bureaucratic processes or, at the very least, direct individuals to the appropriate sources where they can access the information they need. This includes financial aid, healthcare, and social services. To ensure accessibility for all, information should be available in multiple formats (easy-to-read guides, digital platforms, and multilingual resources). For comprehensive support, individuals can refer to YoungCare, where they can find resources on navigating the care system, accessing financial and social support, and managing caregiver responsibilities.



