YOUNGCARE

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



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS

SHORT VERSION

Co-funded by the European Union

Introduction

Informal caregivers provide most of the care for those in need of care. Numbers speak volumes: about 80% of care recipients in Germany are being cared for at home. Up to 15% of the entire 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."
>
> *(A 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 received by young adults.

The project runs from December 2022 to July 2025 and involves 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 young care, based on local interviews and desk research;
- A compendium, giving guidance for 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. Provide affordable, accessible and available care

Informal carers must juggle work, family and care simultaneously. They need time to fulfil all their obligations. Respite care services such as care assistance at home or short-term care, during the day and overnight as well as on weekends, must be affordable, accessible and available. Informal caregivers need professional ambulatory and inpatient care services to supplement and guarantee home care. Local low-threshold offers such as neighbourhood help and/or voluntary support should supplement professional care. Establishing a dialogue with informal caregivers is essential to better meet their needs.

2. Guarantee reliable and sufficient financial support

Caring often leads to a loss of income, while care and medical costs are high. Reliable and sufficient financial support for caregivers and people in need of care is essential. Income support is necessary to compensate income shortfall due to being in need of care and having to care for someone. Options range from full income compensation, to the formalisation of informal care by employing the carer ensuring a proper work-care balance with paid care leave as well as customised and flexible working hours that would lessen the need for income support.

3. Simplify the care system by providing clear information and digital solutions

The care system is often complicated and difficult to understand. It is important to reduce or prevent the fragmentation of support systems and minimise administrative burdens. Clear information is needed! This also includes the use of easy language as well as using the languages spoken by migrants. Digitalisation is helpful to facilitate access to social care systems. Improving carers' digital literary is therefore necessary.



4. Provide prevention and assistance for mental overload

Informal caring is stressful. Caregivers need available and affordable access to psychological support. Offering professional advice to caregivers as well as enabling self-help groups should be considered to prevent psychological burden. Yet, informal carers often do not perceive themselves as carers. Existing offers must be 'advertised' to them. The balance between capacity and burden needs to be determined at an early stage. Therefore, greater recognition is needed for the difficult position of informal caregivers through awareness campaigns and educational programmes. Informal caregivers need to be and feel heard.

5. Remove gender inequalities in care

Care is predominantly provided by women, both informal and professional care. Men need to be more involved to solve gender inequality. Equality can be promoted by upgrading care professions and reducing opportunity costs for informal care. Potential informal caregivers must be able to retain their standard of living and their social security benefits if they reduce or quit their employment for caring. Besides, awareness campaigns can foster destigmatisation of care performed by men.

6. Appreciation of informal care by the political world and society

Informal care is often socially and politically overlooked. However, care is also a public obligation. With every person cared for at home, public spending is reduced. Informal care has to become visible within families, society and the political world. Caregivers must be paid attention to and be appreciated.







ISIS
AFEdemy age-friendly environments academy
SHINE 2Europe
VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETAS M C M X X I I
CADIAI COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
DER PARITÄTISCHE PARITÄTISCHE PROJEKTE Selbsthilfe