

Carers and Learning

*"To have a life
of your own."*

Kayleigh Smith



This is one of a series of small portraits of carers talking about the impact learning has on their lives. The carers featured face particular barriers to accessing learning; carers from minority ethnic groups; carers who are disabled; young adult carers (16–25) and carers who live in rural areas. Their stories highlight the importance of access to education for all. Under the Carers Equal Opportunities Act (2004) carers have a right to have their learning and work needs assessed as part of the carers' assessment procedure.

Kayleigh is 20 and she has been caring for her dad since she was eight. She shares the caring responsibilities with her mum.

Kayleigh dropped out of high school and after being out of education for 18 months, she started a BTEC National Diploma in Applied Science course. She wants to become a forensic scientist. Being on the course is important to her:

You are gaining qualifications and learning to socialise with others. When you're a carer you don't see many other people.

Kayleigh relies on staff being sensitive to her situation and giving her time off when she needs it. Her mum gets a break once a week when her dad attends a club for disabled people. Kayleigh normally takes her mum out during this time.

Kayleigh is very clear that her dad wants her to:

Get on with her life and do things. The person you care for wouldn't want you to lose out on your life because of them.

For further information about access to learning and training for carers, visit www.niace.org.uk

ESF is an EU initiative that helps people to improve their job prospects and skills. For more information go to www.esf.gov.uk.

