**Katie-Ann Smith: Students with Caring Responsibilities Officer [Manifesto]**

My name is Katie! I am a first year Biomedical student (who studied first year Children's Nursing last year)!

A little bit of back story about me....

From the age of 12, I have been caring for my brothers and mum (now ages 8, 15 and 42 but were 0, 7 and 34 at the time of being officially labelled a "young carer"). I am now 19 (nearly 20 whoop whoop!!) but as you can imagine, for an 11 year old to take on such a big responsibility was tough. I still really don't feel as though there was enough to support me growing up, but as we all know, Higher education is an entirely whole different remit of education. I provide more emotional and remote support to my family at home since I reside at university, but I really did struggle moving away. To be honest, most days it feels like I have missed something really important. Home sickness for me has a whole different intensity.

Last year, to my knowledge, there was no support or officer for Students with Caring responsibilities and it was hard learning how to manage the guilt of prioritising my dreams over the care of my family.

Subsequently, one of my main action points will be to create a support network of students, as motivation and a reminder that we deserve to be "selfish" from time to time, especially if for such a long time, we prioritised other people.

This support network will hopefully be able to have socials in which those who are still caring for someone and those who have left it behind are able to connect and just have fun!

I also strive for there to be more understanding in terms of extensions etc for carers. This pressure can often impede on studies (at least it has mine) and being able to apply for an extra week can make the world of a difference.

It can be really difficult to provide evidence for something you do naturally every day.

These are just a few thinking points. I would like to say my manifesto will be complete with your input and support. After all, how can I provide any support without knowing YOUR needs!!