

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Children's author Onjali Q. Raúf launches campaign for Young Carers at Hay Festival ahead of National Carers Week

Saturday 31 May 2025 | 10am | Meadow Stage, Hay Festival

Award-winning children's author and humanitarian **Onjali Q. Raúf** is set to launch a powerful new campaign for **Young Carers** in partnership with Carers Trust and Suffolk Family Carers at this year's **Hay Festival**. Using the platform of her latest novel, *The Letter with the Golden Stamp*, she will highlight the unrecognised hardships of children and young people across the UK who care for family members suffering with long-term illnesses.

Timed to raise awareness in the lead-up to **Carers Week (9–15 June 2025)**, Raúf's event on **Saturday 31 May** will celebrate the resilience and sacrifice of young carers through the story of **Audrey**, a 12-year-old girl from Swansea, who is the sole carer for her seriously ill mother and two younger siblings—all whilst trying to stay in school and survive life lived below the UK's ever expanding poverty line. The story was inspired by Onjali's own experiences of becoming a young carer at age fifteen, following her father's paralysis.

Speaking to a live audience of young readers, families and educators, Raúf will explore the real-life experiences behind the fiction, highlighting the urgent need for better recognition and support for the UK's estimated **800,000 young carers**, many of whom begin their caring duties from the age of 4, and carry their responsibilities unseen and alone.

"It is infuriating that in 2025, young carers – especially girls or of ethnic minority backgrounds – are this ignored, this unseen to a government for whom they save millions of pounds," says Raúf. "It's high time they be legally acknowledged, and supported—not punished with missed school days, lost childhoods, and ruined future prospects."

Raúf will call on audiences—and the UK Government—to take action in three key areas:

1. **Early identification of young carers below the age of 16**, especially girls, in schools
2. **Increased funding** for respite care and support to stop young carers missing school
3. **Financial assistance** for young carers living in poverty

As part of the campaign, young audience members at Hay Festival will be invited to sign and send an open letter to the Prime Minister and join a growing call for the government to endorse the **Young Carers Covenant**, a national pledge to protect children in caring roles.

Visit: www.carers.org/campaigning-for-change/the-young-carers-covenant

The Letter with the Golden Stamp follows the story of a young carer who embarks upon an outrageous adventure to aid her terminally ill mother. With her trademark empathy and humour, Raúf once again gives voice to children who are too often left out of the national conversation.

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Notes to Editors:

- Onjali Q. Raúf is the bestselling author of *The Boy at the Back of the Class* and founder of the refugee aid NGO Making Herstory.
- Carers Week is an annual awareness campaign to recognise the vital contribution of unpaid carers across the UK.
- The Hay Festival is one of the world's leading literary festivals, held annually in Hay-on-Wye, Wales.