

Young Carers need caring for TOO!



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Children and Young People's Services promotes equality and celebrates diversity.

Children and Young People's Services

Are you a young carer?



You are a young carer if you are under 18 years old and you help to look after someone at home.

Being a young carer can be tough:

Perhaps you don't have as much free time as your friends because of the things you have to do at home.

Perhaps you are always worried about the person you look after.

Perhaps you feel a bit different from other kids of your age, and are worried about being picked on.

Perhaps you feel your schoolwork isn't as good as you'd like it to be because you're tired.



The person you help to look after may be your mum or dad, your brother or sister, a grandparent, or someone else. They may need help because they are ill, or have a disability, or are elderly and can't manage on their own any more.

Everyone's situation is different, but many young carers have similar feelings and experiences. It can be helpful to know that other people feel and think the same way you do.

We don't know how many young carers there are in the United Kingdom. There may be as many as 175,000 (2001 Census). It's difficult to know how many young carers there are because many young people don't call themselves young carers.

Don't feel ashamed of being a young carer. It's something to feel good about and something to feel proud of.



Who can you talk to?

Sharing problems

You may not want your friends and other people at school to know what goes on at home. Your family may not want other people to know because they are worried about people interfering.



If you don't talk about what's happening to you, your feelings get bottled up inside and can make you feel angry and miserable. This makes it even harder to talk about what is bothering you. Angry and sad feelings may make you do things you regret afterwards....which can make you feel even worse.

Adults

You may not want to talk to any adults about being a carer. You may think that you will get on better if you don't ask for help, but there are many people who can support you if they know you are a young carer. If they don't know, they may not notice that you are having problems.



Friends and family

If it's hard talking to your mum or dad, can you talk to another relative? For example, a grandparent, aunt or uncle. What about other adults - a family friend or your friend's mum or dad?

These people probably know your family well. They'll be on your side because they've seen what you do. They may be able to help in an emergency.

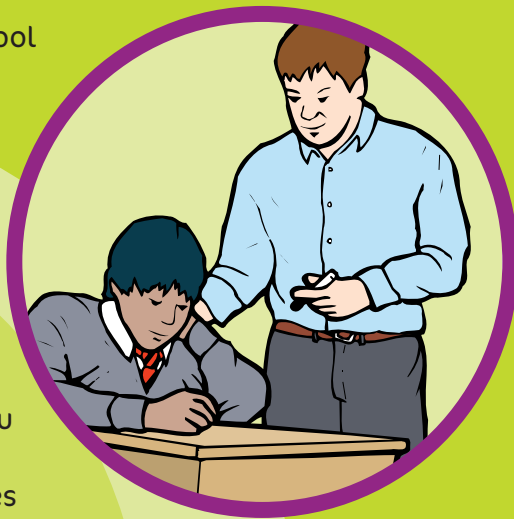
Teachers

If you have problems at school because you are a young carer, try to talk to one of the teachers. Can you talk to your form teacher? If you don't get on well with him or her, is there another teacher who you like and trust?

If the teachers know that you are a young carer, they will understand if you sometimes have problems at school. They may be able to suggest ways to help you.

School nurse

The school nurse is not based in school, but is always available. If you cannot contact the nurse when they are in school, they can be contacted at the local clinic. The school nurse may be able to help and advise you if they know you are a young carer.



Education welfare officer

He or she works with your school and is there to help you. If you are often absent or late for school, he or she may be asked to speak to you and your mum or dad about it. He or she will want to help sort things out, so that you don't miss school.

Doctor

Your family doctor is the person to talk to if you are worried about your health. It is very important that you look after yourself.

Caring can make people tired and stressed so that they get ill more easily. Your doctor may also be able to tell you about your relative's illness.



District nurse/health visitor

These are nurses who visit ill people at home. They help with medicines or injections, or other nursing.

They can sometimes lend you special equipment, to make caring easier. They can also show you ways to care for your relative, for example, how to help them wash, or move around safely.

Social worker

A social worker is the person who can organise extra help for your relative, for example a home care or meals on wheels. Social workers can also help your relative claim money.

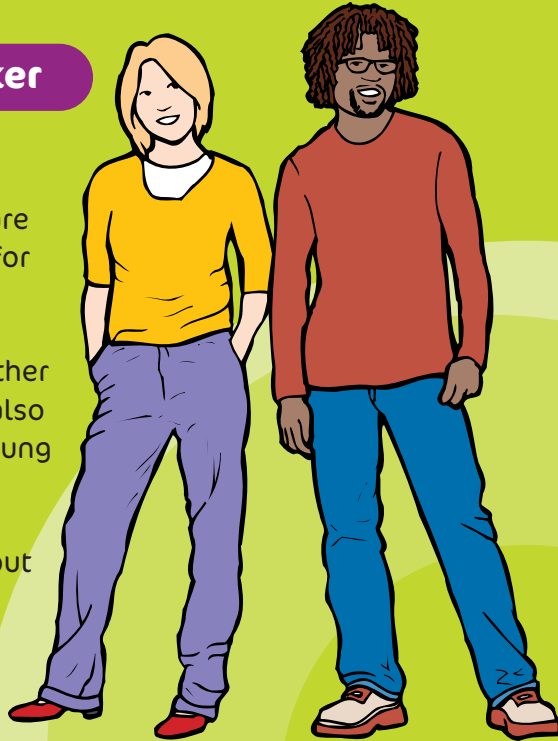
People are sometimes worried about telling the social worker that children are carers. They are afraid that the social worker will interfere or split the family up. In fact, social workers will work with your whole family to make sure that the caring arrangements work the way the family wants.

Young carers worker

They help to run young carers projects, which are youth clubs especially for young carers.

At a project you meet other young people who are also young carers. Lots of young carers like that because they don't have to explain, or pretend, about their family life. Most projects organise outings and fun activities.

A young carer's worker will know the kinds of problems you might have and can give you advice, or just listen to you.



What can we offer?

Support groups - where you can meet other carers and have fun in a friendly place, or visit other fun places, go bowling, outdoor activities, or just have a time to enjoy yourself with others who understand what a young carer has to do.

There will be times to chat about what problems young carers have and how they can be helped to deal with them.

Befriending scheme - to develop a relationship with someone who will understand your life as a carer, and who you can contact if you need someone to talk to or to meet with for a chat or go on an outing.

Support and advice - young carers do not always know where to go for help or to find someone who understands the problems that they are facing. We can provide support and advice, and someone to talk to.



REMEMBER:

This is a confidential service. Anything you choose to discuss will only be shared with someone else if that is what you want and you give your permission, or if you or someone else is at serious risk of being harmed.

Useful contacts



Young Carers Group Work Co-ordinator
tel. **01942-705963**

Young Carers Befriending Co-ordinator
tel. **01942-705962**

Or write to them at:

**Hyndelle Lodge
King Street
Hindley
Wigan
WN2 3AW.**

E-mail: young_carers@wigan.gov.uk

Friends of Young Carers website - www.friendsatwlyc.org

