

How can you help?

Many young carers do not consider themselves to be a carer – they are just looking after someone in their family who needs help and getting on with what needs to be done.

Please do not assume that only adults provide care. Simply asking 'how are you?' can be the most important action you can take for a young carer.

In order to care safely and stay in good health, young carers need information, support, respect and recognition. Acknowledgement of their role and a listening ear can be a lifeline to young carers along with information and advice about services that can support them and their families.

Many young carers continue to go unrecognised, and although they spend a lot of time looking after someone, they frequently say they feel invisible, and that some professionals do not acknowledge their responsibilities.

Carers Support Centre uses a family centred approach to provide information, advice and support to young carers, their families and professionals. We work in partnership with other agencies to provide activities for young carers and to increase wider community support networks.

www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/young-carers/

You might find this website a good starting point. It provides information and support to young carers and resources for professionals.



Carers Support Centre

We support children and young people under 18 in Bristol and South Glos who provide substantial care for a family member who is ill, disabled or misusing substances. We work with families and give one-to-one support to individual young carers, we provide social activities and outings, and we work with professionals and agencies.

If you care,
we care.

The Carers' Support Centre

To find out more or make a referral contact us.

Tel: 0117 939 2562

Email: youngc@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

Web: www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk

Carers Support Centre, Vassall Centre,
Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2QQ



Who's caring?

Maybe a child...

Information for professionals who work with children and families



Who is a young carer?

A young carer is someone under 18 who looks after someone in their family who:

- Is disabled
- Or is experiencing long-term physical or mental ill-health
- Or has a drug and/or alcohol misuse problem

Many young carers do a fantastic job at home, achieve well at school and have lots of friends. But others are under a lot of strain and need help. This checklist may help you identify a young carer.

Are they

- Repeatedly late or absent from school?
- Anxious, withdrawn or isolated?
- Unwilling to talk about home life and personal issues?

Do they

- Lack concentration in class?
- Have inappropriate peer relationships?
- Display emotional difficulties or challenging behaviour?
- Have limited or no aspirations for their future?

They may be a young carer.

How are young carers affected?

The average age of a young carer is just 12 years old. Young carers, and indeed their parents, often keep themselves 'beneath the radar' of support services, frightened that their families might be broken up.

It is no exaggeration to state that many of these young carers simply miss out on their childhood.

- 1 in 5 young carers miss some schooling
- 35% of young carers in secondary schools have some kind of educational difficulty
- Young carers' mental health can be affected by depression, lack of control and bereavement
- Young carers' physical health can be affected by lifting, heavy domestic tasks, lack of sleep, poor self care and nutrition
- Young carers miss out on time to play, sport and leisure activities
- Young carers are vulnerable to bullying and can be isolated and lonely

Would you have seen these children?

"My mum has depression, anxiety and suffers with self harm. On the bus I would be wondering how she would be during the day, if she was safe. At college I would text and ring my mum as much as I could to see what she is doing, to see if she is okay." Young carer, aged 17

"I care for my younger sister who can't do anything for herself. I help feed her, bath her, dress her and do every other thing for her." Young carer, aged 9

"My mum finds it hard to get out of bed as she has depression. I tell her that if she goes downstairs I'm proud of her, which I am. And she says that if she can she will change. But you can't change I say - she is who she is." Young carer, aged 14

"I hate when teachers ask why you are late and ask lots and lots of questions that never end. And the worst thing is I don't get enough time to finish my homework and get detentions for it." Young carer, aged 13

"I have been caring for my mum for around six years now... So when I should have been playing and at after-school clubs I was at home caring for my mum... My life is really stressful because my mum will constantly have a go at me if I don't do something as soon as she says it or if I do it wrong." Young carer, aged 16