



Young Carers



Young carers are children and young people under 18 who provide, or intend to provide care, assistance or support to another family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or who has a substance misuse problem. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks, taking on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age or development.

Young carers are often described as a hidden group; however it is the children's responsibilities

that are hidden, not the children themselves. All families are known to universal statutory services such as schools and primary care, but health and disability issues and caring responsibilities may not have been recognised.

Young people are often very happy to help their parents or relatives and it can be very positive for them. But children also have the right to be looked after, and to have their own time to play, develop and learn. Government policy is that children should not be expected to do as much caring as an adult, and adults should not rely on the caring abilities of a child.

Young carers might experience the following:

- Great feelings of responsibility
- Physical tiredness, due to lifting or helping their relative or doing lots of housework
- Needing to feed and care for siblings/other family members
- Worries about their parent's health and future wellbeing
- Having to give medication or helping with personal care
- Having to communicate with services or the authorities on behalf of their parent
- Coping with a parent's changes in mood, unpredictability or difficulties in parenting
- Not having time for schoolwork or relaxation
- Feelings of embarrassment or shame at having a relative with problems.

Most ill or disabled parents try very hard to minimise the effect of their difficulties on their children, and many young carers cope well with caring, especially with the support of other family members.

But some may find caring for a relative very stressful at times. They might develop depression, anxiety or low self-esteem. They may feel angry with their relative at times, but feel guilty about this.



Support for young carers

As a young adult carer you have the right to be supported and to get the help you need. You have this right whether you look after someone every day or from time to time, or if you do a lot of caring or only a little. You shouldn't be doing a caring role that:

- Makes you feel worried, sad or lonely.
- Makes your health worse.
- Means that you miss out on time with friends.
- Means you do worse at school, college or university.
- Stops you getting a job or keeping a job.
- Stops you wanting to achieve your goals for the future.

Your needs are important. That is why there are laws that tell your council that they have to find out what support you need by asking you some questions. This is called an assessment.

An assessment is a discussion to find out information about:

- You.
- The caring you do.

This is so that the person doing the assessment can make decisions, with you, about:

- Whether your situation is okay.
- If more support would help you and the person you care for.

An assessment isn't an exam, and it isn't about how good you are at supporting the person you care for. It is about finding out if the council is doing enough so that you have the same chances as other people your age.

South Gloucestershire Council commissions the Carers Support Centre to provide support for young carers and their families through the [Young Carers Project](#). Many schools in South Gloucestershire now have a Young Carers Policy, a staff member who champions young carers within the school and even have a peer support group for pupils who are young carers. If you have a child or a pupil who is a young carer or if you are a young carer yourself and want more support please contact First Point, the single point of access to children's preventative, social care and specialist services on 01454 866000.



[Matter](#) has been created by Carers Trust to provide an online space for young adult carers aged 16–25 to connect, share their experiences, and access trusted support.

The vision of the site is to bring together young adult carers from across the UK, as well as those who work with young adult carers, via an online space which is safe, fun, and most of all, inspiring. There is an online community team on hand to provide support as and when needed, by messaging or email.

If you're aged 16–25 and are caring for a family member or friend, Matter is a platform for you to share your story with others and to hear the stories of those with similar experiences to your own. Your thoughts, your world, matter.



Babble

— an online community for young carers

[Babble](#) has been created by Carers Trust as an online space where those aged under 18 who are caring for a family member or friend can chat, share their experiences and access information and advice.