

What it means to be a young carer, by young carers:

"A young carer is someone aged 18 or under that helps to look after a relative with either a disability, illness, mental health problems, or someone who struggles with addiction.

Being a young carer is isolating because you feel like you have to look after other people and you don't get the care you need. Having that type of responsibility can make a child grow up way too fast.

While being a young carer can give you some positive attributes such as being compassionate towards others,

being empathetic, and being understanding, it is important to remember the impact it can have on a child's mental wellbeing. One example of this would be the feelings of resentment for missing out on everything your friends are doing, or feeling guilty for leaving said relative when you did have plans.

Advice for young carers: it's okay to put yourself first and just be a kid/teenager sometimes. Make those plans, you deserve to live a normal life."

Useful Contacts:

Crossroads Together provides support for carers.
Call: 0333 323 1990

Carers Direct provides support and advice.
Call: 0300 123 1053

Sidekick by Action for Children is a text message and email support service for young carers.
Text: 07888 868 059 or
Email:
sidekick@actionforchildren.org.uk

Carer's Trust offers information and advice for young carers, and runs local support services.
Website: <https://carers.org/>

Citizens Advice has information on money, benefits and your rights.
Website:
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

ADVICE FOR YOUNG CARERS - FROM YOUNG CARERS

CREATED AND DESIGNED BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF CYGNET HOSPITAL SHEFFIELD



MY STORY - A REAL LIFE ACCOUNT FROM A YOUNG CARER:

My experience of being a young carer has been for a big part of my childhood, since I was 9. Firstly it was for my dad from the ages of 9-12, the second time being for my mum from the age of 13 up to my own hospital admissions.

My dad suffered from COPD for my whole life however when I was 9 this became worse, this impacted my mum quite a lot causing her to become quite absent, this meant a lot of the responsibilities were passed on to me. Some of these responsibilities were keeping a check on his physical observations, giving medications, cooking food and trying to maintain a tidy living space. From the age of 10 this began to impact my mental health but that felt really unimportant at the time due to the situation I was in. at 13 I then began caring for my mum and this took an even bigger toll on my mental health.

My advice for anyone in a similar situation would be to reach out for help and support and don't struggle in silence."

Facts and Figures:

Research shows that as many as one in five children and young people are young carers. There are around 800,000 young carers aged 11-16 in England alone.

There are an estimated 1 million young carers across the UK when accounting for the numbers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

What do young carers do?

The responsibility of a young carer is wide and varied. It can include:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, like helping someone out of bed.
- Emotional support, including talking to someone who is distressed.
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress.
- Managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions.
 - Helping to give medicine.
 - Helping someone communicate.
 - Looking after brothers and sisters.

One in three young carers said that their caring role makes them feel stressed. Research also shows that 23% of young carers in the UK said that their caring role had stopped them making friends.

Over a quarter of young carers aged 11-15 regularly miss school. This can have a lasting effect on their life chances.

new research by Action for Children and Carers Trust found that eight out of ten young carers feel lonely during summer holidays. The research also highlighted that over a third of young carers do not look forward to summer.

statistics courtesy of:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/young-carers-who-are-they-and-how-are-they-impacted/>

Carers Rights:

The Children and Families Act 2014, and the Care Act 2014, both significantly strengthened young carers' rights. Local authorities have a duty to offer all young carers an assessment of need — no matter how old they are, who they look after, how many hours they provide support for, and why they care. Young Adult Carers are also entitled to a transition assessment before they turn 18. This ensures that they have the support they need as they begin their adult life..

Find out more at:

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/supporting-young-carers/facts-about-young-carers>
or download this useful PDF:
<https://carers.org/downloads/help-and-advice-section/knowyourrights.pdf>

