

Who are Young Carers?

Young carers are young people and children under 18, who take on physical, practical or emotional responsibilities at home because someone in their family is disabled, has been ill for a long time, experiences mental ill health, has a learning disability or has a problem linked to alcohol or drugs.

Lots of children and young people want to help out and feel proud that they are lending a hand. At the same time the impact of these caring responsibilities may cause difficulties at home, in school/college or elsewhere.

Sometimes it can be difficult to recognise someone as a young carer – but does this sound like your family or a family you know?

Did you know there are thousands of young carers in West Sussex?

What can help Young Carers?

- Acknowledging that they are in a caring role.
- Supporting the person who is cared for so that children and young people do not have to do so much.
- Having regular breaks from caring and ensuring they have the same opportunities as other children and young people of their age.
- Meeting other young carers and knowing they are not alone.
- Having someone to speak to who understands.

How we work

We meet with young carers together with their family at home to discuss the needs of the young carer and to consider the needs of the whole family. We may call some families and this discussion will take place over the phone.

Once we have made an assessment we develop a plan of support to meet the needs of the individual and their family. Our priorities are to:

- Reduce the amount of caring a young person has to do if it is too much for them.
- Increase young carers awareness and confidence to manage their situation.
- Help the young carer to get more support at school or college.
- Make sure that the young carer gets a regular break and time for friends and fun.
- Improve the life opportunities of the young carer.
- Ensure that the young carer is supported by other adults and professionals in their lives.
- Make sure that the young carer has someone to talk to when things are difficult.
- Check that the family are receiving all the support or financial benefits available to them.
- Make sure young carers are supported at times of significant life changes and the transition to adulthood.

What we can offer

Our team offers direct support to families and works with other agencies to provide a range of services which can include:

- Specialist assessments, advice and information.
- Advocacy and co-ordinating support.
- Counselling/play therapy for young carer.
- 'Solutions' family work sessions for the whole family.
- Local young carers groups.
- Regular activity days and time out with groups of young carers.
- Help to access activities and clubs in local areas.
- Events and network for young carers who are 16+.
- Family Group Conferences.
- Support for Parents.
- Volunteer Mentors for Young Carers.

Raising awareness

We want to make sure that children and young people with caring responsibilities get support from all the different adults in their lives.

We therefore offer information sessions and training workshops to a wide range of other professionals so they can have a better understanding about what children and young people do to care and how it effects them.

Get in touch

Parents, young people and professionals are all welcome to contact us.

It will be helpful to have some information on the care being undertaken and the impact of this on the child/young person and family.

If you are a professional making a referral on behalf of a young carer and their family please ensure you have consent to do so and you have talked to them about how they hope to benefit from the involvement of the Young Carers Team.

Contact details

To access the Young Carers Service, please phone **01903 270300** and ask for the duty worker.

For more information:

email youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk

website www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers

WEST SUSSEX YOUNG CARERS

**Information for
families and
professionals**

"Before I went to Young Carers I thought I was the only one – now I know I am not!"

"He's been able to be a child again"

"I did not think that anyone would be able to help my situation but the young carers team have"

