



**WARWICKSHIRE YOUNG CARERS**

**PROFESSIONALS PACK**



The 'Warwickshire Young Carers Professionals Pack' has been developed by Warwickshire Young Carers

Copyright © 2018 by Warwickshire Young Carers

Ryton Gardens, Wolston Lane, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire, CV8 3ES

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Warwickshire Young Carers

Warwickshire Young Carers is a Charity registered in England No. 1098357 - A Company limited by guarantee No. 4610367

Please feel free to contact us by any of the following means:

Warwickshire Young Carers

Holly Grange

Balsall Common

CV7 7EB

[www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk](http://www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk)

[info@warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk](mailto:info@warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk)

## Contents

Who are Young Carers? .....	4
What Young Carers might do .....	4
The impact of caring.....	4-5
How to identify Young Carers.....	5
Key Current Legislation.....	6
Who Warwickshire Young Carers are.....	7
How to access the service.....	7
What Young Carers have said in Warwickshire.....	8
Resources for Professionals.....	9

## **Who are Young Carers?**

A Young Carer is a child or young person under 18 years of age whose life is affected by helping to care for someone with:

- A disability
- A long-term illness
- A mental illness
- A drug or alcohol issue

The person they care for may be:

- A parent
- A sibling
- Another family member

Warwickshire Young Carers works with children and young people between the ages of 6-25.

## **What Young Carers might do**

Some Young Carers will be providing high levels of care, and others will provide less, but this caring role can impact upon the child or young person greatly.

Young Carers may do things like:

- Household chores (e.g. cooking, cleaning, clothes washing and shopping)
- Supervision and management (e.g. watch over someone and deal with money issues)
- Communication support (e.g. interpreting, answering phone or door and making appointments)
- Personal care (e.g. helping with lifting, moving, washing, dressing, toileting, giving medicine and changing dressings)
- Emotional support (e.g. offering hugs, listening to problems and worries, giving reassurance)
- Look after siblings (e.g. making breakfast and school lunches, personal care, helping putting them to bed, playing with them and taking them to school)
- Looking after themselves and getting themselves ready for school

## **The impact of caring**

Caring for a family member can be very challenging. It can have a huge impact on a child or young person's life.

Some of the impacts could be:

- Missed childhood experiences (Trips, activities, holidays)
- Fewer chances to have fun or relax
- Additional stress and worry (about the cared for)
- Additional tiredness and lacking concentration
- Loneliness and isolation
- Being bullied and socially excluded
- Under achievement
- Feelings of resentment, guilt or anger

These impacts can present in the following ways;

Young Carers may turn up for school late or miss days as a result of their caring responsibilities, they may have transportation difficulties and some also miss out on school trips and clubs.

Some Young Carers will face stress, anxiety and fatigue, leading to a lack of concentration and attention, an inability to process information and with the increased possibility of leading to low attainment. They may also have limited time, a lack of appropriate space and less support to complete homework because of their caring responsibilities.

Some Young Carers have problems interacting with professionals and their peers making them isolated and in some cases a target for bullies. How they deal with stress varies widely – some may be withdrawn with low self-esteem and lacking confidence where as others may be disruptive and display some challenging behaviours. Some Young Carers challenge the authority of professionals because they may be struggling with the contrast between their adult role at home and being a within other environments again at school.

As a result of missing out on opportunities to socialise with peers in their own time and in the form of school trips and activities Young Carers can experience isolation and bullying, this can in turn lead to a reluctance to participate in activities with peers even when the opportunity is available to them.

Transitions are important but sometimes challenging for any child or young person but can be harder for Young Carers. They need to be managed well with the correct support in place to make the change less stressful. These transitions may be moving from primary to secondary school, preparing for college, jobs or university or leaving the family home. It is important at this time that professionals and the family work together to support the Young Carer with the transition to make it as easy as possible and for them to be aware of the key adults that can support them going forward.

### **How to Identify Young Carers**

Young Carers may:

- Often miss days or weeks off school
- Arrive at school consistently late
- Be secretive about their home life
- Have parents who are hard to engage
- Be tired, withdrawn or have poor concentration
- Have difficulty joining in extra-curricular activities
- Be a victim of bullying, isolated and lack social skills
- Be underachieving with school work
- Experience and display feelings of anxiety or concern
- Exhibit behavioural problems and have physical problems
- Have difficulty interacting with professionals

## **Key Current Legislation**

### **Children Act 2004**

Most Young Carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services. In the event of any Young Carers being considered to be at risk of significant harm the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

#### **As a child a Young Carer has the right to:**

- a childhood
- have an education
- be healthy
- be heard, listened to and believed
- be protected from physical and psychological harm
- be consulted and fully involved in discussions which affect their lives.
- have privacy and respect

### **Equality Act 2010**

Young Carers have protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act because they are associated with a family member who has a disability or illness and cannot be discriminated against because of this.

**The Children and Families Act and Care Act 2014**, which came into force in April 2015, significantly strengthen the rights of Young Carers and includes:

All Young Carers under the age of 18 have a right to an assessment regardless of whom they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it.

A Young Carer has the right to an assessment based on the appearance of need – which means that Young Carers will no longer have to request an assessment or be undertaking a 'regular and substantial' amount of care. An assessment also can be requested.

#### **A Young Carer has a particular right to:**

- Request an assessment to see what help and support they and their family need
  - Choose the amount of care they receive
  - Be protected from excessive or inappropriate caring that impacts on their health and wellbeing
- Information and advice.

#### **The changes in the Care Act reinforce these new rights by requiring that local authorities:**

- Must take a whole family approach to assessing and supporting adults so that Young Carer's needs are identified when undertaking an adult or adult carer's needs assessment.
- Should ensure that adult's and children's social services work together to ensure assessments are effective.

This means when a child is identified as a Young Carer, the needs of everyone in the family are to be considered. This should trigger action from both children's and adults' services – assessing why a child is caring, what needs to change and what would help the family to prevent children from taking on this responsibility in the first place.

## **Warwickshire Young Carers are;**

WYC is an independent charitable organisation who provide support solely to Young Carers, aged from 6 to 25 who live within Warwickshire. The organisation is funded by the local authority and various local and national funders to provide the support it offers. One of the core aims of the organisation is to enable Young Carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities through a varied programme of support.

We cover all five Districts of Warwickshire with each having a designated project worker and we offer:

- Regular groups
- Activities and workshops
- Residential trips
- One to one support
- Support at school
- Advocacy
- Signposting, information and referring to other services
- Regular contact through our website and Facebook
- Opportunities to meet with other Young Carers and make new friends
- Transitions support (aged 14-25)
- Family support (aged 6-8, Rugby, Bedworth and Nuneaton)

## **Access to the service**

- To access support a referral form can be completed via our website and sent in to us. We operate an open referral process meaning that young people can be referred by a professional or they can refer themselves.
- Once we have received a referral, the worker for the area in which they live will contact the family to arrange an assessment and discuss the support available. This is usually completed at the family home with the Young Carer and parent/guardian(s).

## What Young Carers have said in Warwickshire

Two consultations one in 2014 and one in 2017 have taken place within Warwickshire; the Education Development Worker, consulted 168 Young Carers aged 6-18, about being a Young Carer and the impact of this for them.

These are some comments from the consultation:

### Difficulties around being a Young Carer:

- **“It is hard being a Young Carer because sometimes you get upset about nothing because of stress at home”** Female aged 11 who helps care for her Mother.
- **“The hardest thing about being a Young Carer is worrying”** Female aged 10 who helps to look after her whole family.
- **“The hardest thing about being a Young Carer is not being like other children”** Female aged 10 who cares for her Mum with ME.
- **“It’s hard being a Young Carer as sometimes you can’t deal with things that are happening”** Female aged 11 who helps support her sister with autism.
- **“The hard things about being a Young Carer is involving everything around the person you care for”** Female aged 16 whose brother has autism and OCD.
- **“It’s hard being a Young Carer as people don’t understand. It is really hard watching a family member suffer. You have to grow up too fast and end up being less sociable.”** Female aged 16 who cares for her Mum with a neurological disorder.
- **“It is hard because you never get time off”** Male aged 13 with a disabled sister.
- **“It’s hard to concentrate in school and gets you bad marks in your books”** Female aged 10.
- **“Nobody really knows what it is like and what we have to do and why we can't do what they do”** Female aged 13
  
- **“Knowing everyone's family is fine and healthy and yours is not”** Female aged 14
  
- **“People think that we need something like we are desperate for help and I feel like they will make fun of me”** Female aged 12

### Positives about being a Young Carer:

- **“You get to help someone you love”** Female aged 10 whose Mum has arthritis and depression.
- **“It does not make me feel much different to anyone else”** Female aged 14.
- **“It is just the thing I do”** Male aged 8 who helps to care for his Mum and brother.
- **“being a Young Carer makes you feel different in a special way.”** Female aged 10 who helps care for her whole family said that.
- **“The good things about being a Young Carer are that you feel like you’re a good person and that you are helping”** Female aged 13 who cares for her Mum.
- **“Being a Young Carer makes you learn skills other young people don’t learn until later on”** Female aged 16 who cares for her younger brother.
- Female aged 13 who helps care for her Mum and sister said **“Nothing”** was good about it.
- **“I LOVE IT!!! There is so much to do and so much to see!! I really recommend coming to the Young Carers!!!”** Female aged 15



## **Key resources for professional's awareness;**

- **Warwickshire Young Carers**

<http://www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk/>

- **A Healthy Schools Young Carers e-learning module.**

The module for staff is to increase understanding of particular issues and challenges facing Young Carers and their families. The module is designed to help all school staff identify and support Young Carers throughout their education. It provides insight into Young Carers and practical ideas about how to support them. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and you can test your understanding at the end. <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/Young-Carers-Web-Pub-v13/player.html>)

- **On the Children's Society website you will find many resources for professionals and young people about Young Carers.**

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/youngcarer/resources-for-professionals>

- **A booklet about "Supporting Young Carers in School: An Introduction for Primary and Secondary School Staff"**

<http://static.carers.org/files/supporting-young-carers-in-schools-booklet-6860.pdf>