



Project Summary

A Bit About Us

Action for Young Carers was established in 1996, after the Carers Federation highlighted gaps in service provision for young carers. Since then they have grown from a small project intended to highlight and identify the needs of young carers, to a diverse service, which both lobbies for service improvements, and directly provides a range of provision to young carers themselves.

Action for Young Carers exists to:

- Identify, support, inform and empower children aged 5 - 18, who care for parents/carers, relatives, siblings, etc with a physical or sensory disability, mental health difficulty, substance misuse, learning disability, long term ill health including terminal conditions.
- Offer Young Carers a Local Authority Statutory assessment. This is to ensure Young Carers are receiving the support required to reduce/alleviate their caring role. The assessment will often be completed with the cared for involvement to ensure a whole family approach is provided.
- Offer specialist one to one and group support service both in and outside of school, AYC offer telephone support including a text service for young carers and their families. AYC will sign post young carers to other internal and external agencies for additional support where relevant and appropriate, this can be identified through the CAF process (common Assessment Framework)
- We provide activities for the young carers depending on additional funding, to relieve and prevent the stresses experienced by young carers, in order to protect health, relieve poverty, distress or sickness.
- Offer training aimed at helping young carers learn new skills, including; Personal Safety, First Aid, Bullying, Self-esteem and Assertiveness, Stress and Relaxation Techniques, Race and Culture, Healthy Eating, Drug and Alcohol Awareness.

- Offer young carer photo ID Cards, during initial assessments with young carer and cared for, this will only be given if signed consent from the cared for has been given. This is to support young carer in being recognised and listened to.
- Promoting the needs and issues that affect young carers to Education, Health and Social Service professionals, and encourage them to help young carers and improve their standard of living across the Nottingham City area.
- Provide awareness raising materials and direct work to schools. Support workers facilitate understanding of young carer needs and the instigation of in-house support systems, i.e. named teacher, young carer school group.
- Support workers are specialized in working with young carers and indentifying individual needs. Staff are trained in the most upto date safeguarding training and continue to attend any training relevant to their role.

So what is a Young Carer?

"A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 carrying out significant tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person which would normally be taken by an adult."

The Princes Royal Trust for Carers, 2005.

The person they care for may be a parent, sibling, grandparent or other relative and may be affected by:

- Mental health
- Drugs or alcohol
- A physical disability
- A learning disability
- Any other illness or condition including terminal, longterm illness

The intensity of a child's caring role may be determined by several factors. These include:

- Living in a single-parent family where the parent is the cared for
- The young carer is caring for a parent with a terminal condition
- The young carer is the oldest child and has responsibility for younger siblings
- The parent or cared for has a combination of medical conditions
- The young carer is caring for more than one family member
- Financial constraints
- Lack of support from extended family/professional agencies

What does a young carer do?

Young carers help family members in a variety of ways. These might include:

- Practical tasks - washing, cooking or ironing
- Personal care - bathing and dressing
- Emotional support - offering a 'listening ear'
- Physical lifting and carrying
- Assisting with medication
- Helping look after younger siblings
- Ensuring safety
- Managing the family budget or collecting prescriptions
- Interpreting

It is not uncommon for young carers to carry out a combination of these tasks and the above list is by no means exhaustive. In some cases, a child may not undertake many practical tasks around the home but may have a significant role in offering emotional support. The nature of a child's caring role will be determined by the nature of the illness or disability.

Issues Affecting Young Carers

Being a young carer can have a profound effect on a child or young person. Having the responsibility of a caring role means that it is not uncommon for young carers to miss out on opportunities that other children have.

"It can be very difficult to invite friends back to our homes. This can lead to us feeling isolated and it can be very depressing and lonely".

Taken from "Making It Work - Good Practice with Young Carers and their Families".

Young carers may face difficulties in the following areas:

- Problems at school with peers (isolation and bullying)
- Lack of time to complete homework
- Problems juggling school and home life
- Feeling scared alone and frightened especially when caring for parents with terminal cancer
- Tiredness/difficulty concentrating at school
- Lack of time for social activities
- Conflict between needs of cared for and their own needs
- Feeling no-one understands them
- Lack of recognition, praise or respect
- Feeling 'different' from other children
- Difficulty accessing services if aged under 16
- No knowing where to access support
- Frightened of being taken away if they say any thing
- Enhanced responsibility/expectation from others
- Problems moving into adulthood (finding work, their own home and establishing relationships)
- Missing out on childhood

Young carers can be a much 'hidden' group of young people and their needs and those of the person for whom they are caring are often only identified when there is a crisis. Young carers may choose to remain hidden, by not being open about their home situation, for a number of reasons:

- They may fear the repercussions of being identified or asking for help
- They may worry that they will not be believed
- They may not want to be singled out
- They may fear outside intervention such as being put into care
- They may be anxious that they will be teased or bullied by peers

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Quotes

All the work we have done has been welcomed and valued by professionals, families and the young carers themselves.

Quotes from Young Carers.

"Thank you for all your support; at least I can discuss how I feel without you judging me or my family."

"I get bullied at school and someone to help me is good."

"All I wanna say is 'Thanks' for all the support you've given to me and my family it means a lot to me."

Quotes from Parents.

"I feel the pressure's off me for the first time, about how my illness affects him."

"It helps for her to have someone from outside to talk to; it's made her more confident."

Quotes from Educational Staff.

"The awareness raising is so important, not just now, but for future pupils."

"Knowing that it happens in every school has made us start to look for cases here."

Quotes from Partner Agencies.

"We all said when we got back that it made such a difference having workers that were up for it - thank you loads for keeping moral up even though we were all being half drowned!"

- Wild Things, ecological education collective.

Useful Contacts

www.carersfederation.co.uk

Action for young carers' project and carers' federation information

www.youngcarers.net

Young carers' information and chat rooms (run by the Princess Royal Trust for carers)

www.carers.org

Website for carers, ran by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers

[www.childrensociety.org.uk/young carers](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/young_carers)

Provide information, advice and support to young carers, their families and professionals

Our Contact Details

For more information or an informal chat about the services offered by Action for Young Carers you can contact us at:

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