

YOUNG CARERS COVID-19 CRISIS

During the COVID-19 crisis, young carers' are at home with their 'cared for' family members all day, everyday in isolation.

They may be caring for relatives experiencing a range of conditions some of which will be exacerbated by the current situation. Whilst this crisis continues, it is likely that young carers' health and wellbeing will be increasingly impacted by their caring roles and lack of respite and support. Identifying young carers' is the first step towards ensuring they are supported.

If you're working with a child/young person you believe could be a young carer, consider the following:

WHAT DO YOUNG CARERS DO?



THE IMPACT OF CARING ON YOUNG CARERS:

- Physical health: often severely affected by caring through the night, repeatedly lifting a heavy adult, poor diet and lack of sleep leading to tiredness.
- Emotional health: stress and worry are common for young carers, they are less likely to have positive coping strategies for managing these feelings.
- Isolation: feeling different or isolated from their peers, limited opportunities for socialisation. Sibling carers may believe their needs are less important and feel overlooked within their family.
- Education: impacts on school attendance and educational achievement.
- On average young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year due to bullying and harassment
- More than two out of three young carers are bullied at school
- Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have a special educational need or a disability
- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to 9 grades lower overall than their peers

THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL PICTURE

The 2011 census identified 166,000 young carers in England and Wales between the ages of 5 - 18 years.

There are an estimated 7,000 young carers in North Tyneside. However new research by BBC News and the University of Nottingham in 2018 suggests the number could be much higher – possibly up to 800,000 children in England alone. This amounts to one in five children are undertaking caring responsibilities.

INDICATORS THAT A CHILD COULD BE A YOUNG CARER

The presence of an illness or disability in the family	Poor personal hygiene
Appears tired, stressed, anxious or depressed	Emotional issues
Lateness or absenteeism from school, underachieving or experiencing difficulties with homework	Behavioral problems
	Physical problems such as back pain
Unable to join in after school activities	False maturity (older than their years)
Socially isolated	Parent/s or guardians may not attend meetings/ parent evenings
Victim of bullying	

SUPPORT THAT PROFESSIONALS CAN PROVIDE DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Undertake a Young Carers' Needs Assessment. If you are completing this while the child is not in school, make sure that school know about this when they return.	Help the young carer to safely access virtual activities where they can mix with their peers and other young carers.
Provide a listening ear.	Include the young carer in decision making about them and their family.
Provide age appropriate information about their relative's illness/disability.	Support young carers to stay positive and continue to talk to them about further education, future employment or aspirations that they have.
Identify a trusted adult/professional in their life whom they can talk to.	Acknowledge the young person's caring responsibilities so they feel valued.
Identify opportunities for the young carer to access a break from their caring role, even if this is an activity in a different part of the house.	Contact North Tyneside Carers' Centre (643 2298/ www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk) for further advice or a referral for specialist support if you are unable to meet the young carers needs.
Consider how a young person's caring role could impact their ability to cope with work that is being sent home. It may be helpful to discuss this with parents.	

FURTHER SUPPORT:

If you have identified a young carer and need help completing a Young Carers' Needs Assessment, contact North Tyneside Young Carers' Link Worker.

Email: anne.longstaff@ntcarers.co.uk

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