

WHAT IS A YOUNG CARER?

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after a family member or friend who has a physical or mental health condition or misuses drugs or alcohol. They may also look after brothers, sisters or elderly relatives too'

(The Children's Society, 2021).

WHAT DO YOUNG CARERS DO?

Young carers might do some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks such as cleaning.
- Personal care, for example, helping their mum get dressed.
- Looking after brothers or sisters.
- Household management, for instance paying bills.
- Emotional support, for example, calming and listening.
- Physical care, for instance, lifting, helping someone up the stairs.
- Helping with medication.
- Being an interpreter, for example, if the person is not fluent in English.

THE IMPACT OF BEING A YOUNG CARER:

Being a young carer can be a very rewarding experience; however, it can also, be exhausting at times.

Young carers have a range of caring responsibilities which mean that there can be a big impact on their day-to-day lives.

For example, they might:

- Be tired.
- Be late to school because of caring responsibilities.
- Be unable to go to afterschool clubs and activities.
- Miss school.
- Not be able to complete their homework.
- Worry about the person that they care for.

WHAT IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

We define bullying behaviour as:

Repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable, or unsafe.

YOUNG CARERS AND BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Often when young people display bullying behaviour towards young carers, it is because they don't understand the responsibilities they have and the complexity of their caring role.

People who display bullying behaviour towards young carers may do so because:

- They do not understand the illness or disability their peer's loved one has and the impact this has. The illness or disability of their loved one might be seen to be 'scary' or 'embarrassing'.
- Young carers might be thought of as being different from their peers because of their caring responsibilities.
- Young carers might be thought to be more mature for their age than their peers
- Some young carers experience bullying behaviour for a number of other factors (race, faith, gender, appearance, socio-economic status).

It is important to know that many young people with caring responsibilities do not class themselves as young carers. They may see caring as 'just something that they have always done' for their loved one(s).

This means that it is often hard to tell whether a young person who you know is a young carer. **In fact, 39% of young carers told The Children's Society (2021) that nobody in their school was aware of their caring responsibilities.**



FACTS ABOUT YOUNG CARERS:

800,000 young people (aged 5-17) care for an adult or family member in the UK

(Children's Society, 2021).

The majority of young carers carried out between 1 and 19 hours of unpaid care per week (Census, 2011).

1 in 3 young carers have a mental health issue (The Children's Society, 2021).

IMPACT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR ON YOUNG CARERS

- Young carers can find it harder to join in and may get left out because they are seen as different. This might mean that they do not take part in activities anymore.
- Taking part in groups might be more challenging for young carers to organise and they can be even less likely to take part if they experience bullying behaviour and feel excluded.
- Young carers may feel isolated or lonely if they are excluded by their peers.

TOP TIPS FOR ANTI-BULLYING AMBASSADORS TO SUPPORT YOUNG CARERS:

You can be an Upstander and support a young person who you know is a young carer if they are experiencing bullying behaviour.

Here are our top tips:

- Thank the young carer who has trusted you to support them. It can be very difficult to reach out for support so thank them for coming to you.
- Actively listen to their concerns. This can help them feel supported and heard.
- For support to be put in place for them, you will need to support them to tell a trusted adult, for example, a teacher.
- Suggest that they keep evidence of any bullying behaviour. This might be saving screenshots from messages received online and/or writing down what has been said and by whom, plus dates and times.
- Let them know that it is not their fault that they are experiencing bullying behaviour. Remind them that they are an important member of the school community who deserves respect from everybody.
- Raise awareness about the experiences of young carers by running assemblies or creating a short pamphlet on who they are and how to support them.
- Share information on your online school platforms featuring local or national support services for Young Carers.
- Celebrate Young Carers Action Day and make sure that your whole school is involved by using the resources provided online!
- Run workshops that not only demonstrate how to support young carers but also other young people in school.
- Highlight and recommend the reading of publications that raise awareness to the rest of your student body what young carers are and how to help them.
- Run charity events, such as non-uniform days or cake bake sales, to raise awareness for young carers.

Activities that Anti-Bullying Ambassadors can run to prevent bullying behaviour targeted towards young carers and to promote empathy and kindness:

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUNG CARERS:

Action for Children can put young carers in touch with other young carers.

Carers Trust provides support and information for young carers.

KIDS is an organisation for carers under the age of 18. It runs regular clubs where young carers can meet other young carers as well as offering support, advice and information.

Local Councils provide information and support for young carers and can direct young carers to local young carer support services.

The Children's Society runs the **Young Carers Festival** and funds projects for young carers.

Young Minds provides information and support for young people including young carers.

The Diana Award Crisis Messenger provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are a young person in crisis, you can text **DA** to **85258**. Trained volunteers will listen to how you're feeling and help you think through the next step towards feeling better.

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Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

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