

Identifying and referring young carers *Information for adults*

www.hartlepool.gov.uk

June 2012

Child and Adult Services and our partner agencies want to help all children and young people achieve their full potential. There is a need for us to make sure that young carers have the same access to education and career choices as their non-caring peers.

Many children and young people are expected to help around the house. They may do housework, run errands, or help to look after younger siblings. **Young carers**, however, have responsibilities over and above these 'normal' expectations. It is thought that there may be around 700,000 young carers in the UK.

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who takes regular and substantial care of someone who cannot wholly look after themselves due to:

- a physical disability
- a long-term illness (including mental health issues)
- a learning disability
- drug or alcohol misuse
- frailty, or
- old age.

Caring can have a restrictive effect on the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people. Though many young carers say they do not want to stop caring altogether, most do want time of their own to study and see their friends. We and our partner agencies provide practical help and support for young carers so that they can take a break from their caring role without having to worry about the person they care for.

Identifying young carers

It can be difficult to identify children and young people who care for family members. Families may not consider a young person to be a carer, and may not realise that there are services available to them. Some children and young people hide their caring role from others for various reasons, such as fear of being bullied, a fear of being taken in to care or worry that the person they care for may be admitted to hospital. Some adults may instruct young people not to tell anyone about their caring role, especially if the person being cared for abuses drugs or alcohol.

Though it is often not obvious that a child or young person is a carer, there are signs that may combine to suggest that they are. For example, parents may repeatedly fail to communicate with a school or college, or a young carer may:

- be persistently tired and/or distracted and/or not achieve their full potential
- frequently be absent from school without adequate explanation
- have low self esteem or be excessively attention-seeking
- behave in a disruptive manner
- rush their homework or coursework, submit it late or not at all
- not join in with out-of-school activities
- wear inappropriate uniform or have poor personal hygiene.

Referring a young carer to Children's Social Care

Once we are made aware of a young carer, we are able to assess their situation and provide services to help. Support available to young carers in Hartlepool includes:

- one-to-one support (for carers and parents/guardians) and family support
- holiday and respite activities
- volunteer services
- counselling
- school liaison and one-to-one work
- transitions services for 16 to 19 year olds
- the chance to attend regional events and the national young carers' convention

To refer a young carer to Children's Social Care, contact our First Contact and Support Hub by:



Telephone: 01429 284284



Textphone: 01429 284130



Email: fcsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

About this factsheet

This factsheet tells you how to contact Children's Social Care. We issued this factsheet in August 2012 and updated it in November 2014. We will check the information is up to date in November 2016.