

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a young carer?**

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who care for a sick or disabled relative. This includes children caring for parents who have mental ill health and/or severe drug and alcohol issues.

A young carer may also care for siblings, where the parent(s) is absent or dead. The young carer may be acting as main carer even where an adult is living in the household.

Caring can have a considerable impact on the quality of the young carer's childhood and can also affect future opportunities.

### **What care do young carers provide?**

Young carers provide physical care, washing and other personal hygiene, giving medication, lifting, cooking, housework, shopping and budgeting. They may also provide emotional care through support for depression.

### **What problems do young carers face?**

Young carers can fail to achieve at school through missed time and may leave school with few or no qualifications. Many young carers experience emotional problems and can be bullied at school. Young carers can experience isolation and loneliness. They may be cautious about asking for help and too ashamed to talk to professionals about the family's situation. Some young carers experience health problems such as lifting-related injuries, tiredness and stress.

### **How many young carers are there in the UK?**

The 2001 census estimated that there are 175,000 young carers aged under 18 in the UK. Many professionals believe this there are actually many more young carers.

### **What is the average age of young carers?**

Research by Loughborough University found that the average age of young carers is 12. However, they can be as young as five.

