

How can we help young carers



Friends and relatives are often the first people we turn to for help with our problems. Talking things through with them can be really helpful.

People who find it hard to talk to others often write their thoughts in a diary, poem or letter first. This can help to make sense of their thoughts and how they feel, before getting help.

Help from teachers and other school staff

Teachers are there to help pupils get the most out of school. They can be a good person for you to speak to about any problems you have.

If you're missing lessons to help look after someone at home, or struggling to get your work in on time, talk to a teacher about what you do at home so that they can understand what is happening and give you more help.

As a young carer, you might find school a place where you can forget about your caring responsibilities and feel "normal" for a while. But it can also be a place where you're under extra pressure or where people don't understand what your life is like outside school. It can sometimes be hard to juggle all your responsibilities as a young carer with the demands of teachers, friends and homework.

Keeping up-to-date with school work

You might not want your school to know you're caring for someone. But if they don't know about your situation, it will be difficult for teachers to understand if you struggle to keep up in class or don't do your homework. It's a good idea to let at least one teacher you feel able to trust know you're a carer.

You might find it difficult to talk about your home life with a teacher, so you could ask someone in your family to write a letter to the school, perhaps to the head of year. Some young carers find it easier to talk about the situation if they keep a diary or a list of all the jobs and tasks they have to do.

If you're having trouble with school or homework, your teachers may offer:

- extra time for school work when you have to give more help to the the person you care for
- help for your parents to travel to parents' evenings if they have trouble leaving the house
- to talk to you privately about your home life

homework clubs

Support at school

There are lots of ways your school can help. You could be allowed to use a phone during breaks and lunchtime so you can check on the person you're looking after.

The school could also put you in touch with your local young carers service, or get a young carers worker to talk to you. Some schools run lunchtime groups or homework support groups for young carers. If your school doesn't do this, you could suggest it to your teachers.

Nobody wants to get into trouble at school. If teachers know you're a carer, they may be more sympathetic to your problems (such as lateness), but it won't necessarily stop you being disciplined if you break the rules. If you are given detention, you could ask to have it during lunchtime rather than after school because of your caring responsibilities.

Missing school

You may feel you have to miss school to care for someone. But missing school can affect your whole future. It's important you get help as quickly as possible so the situation doesn't go on for a long time.

The family doctor (GP), nurse, a social worker or other people whose job is to help the person you look after should be able to organise more support at home to help you concentrate on school or college.

Friends and your social life

As a young carer, you may miss out on opportunities to play and spend time with your friends and classmates. You may feel isolated from your friends because:

- you don't have as much free time as them because you have to spend more time at home
- you're often thinking about the person you look after

you may be worried they will bully you

Being a young carer can make you stand out from other people, or you may find that you don't get included in certain activities.

It's important to get the help you need so that you have time to do the things you want to do and be with your friends. If possible, put aside some time each day to do something you enjoy. Your local young carers project or carers centre may be able to help.

Are you being bullied?

Just because you're not being hit doesn't mean you're not being bullied. Bullying can include being deliberately left out of activities or groups, as well as being called names, hit, kicked, punched or threatened.

Some bullies spread rumours. Some make fun of you or your relatives. You might be bullied for having the 'wrong' clothes, blue eyes or red hair. Young carers are sometimes bullied because the person they care for is ill or disabled, or because they can't always do the things other young people can. Some people are bullied for no reason.

In fact, 44% of children and young people say they've been bullied at school. Even adults get bullied. It's natural to feel sad, angry or scared if you're being bullied. But remember: there are ways to deal with the problem. Find out more about [bullying](#) on NHS Choices or by visiting [Bullying UK](#).

Welwyn Hatfield Young Carers Project at Monk's Walk Youth Centre, Welwyn Garden City



- Ongoing
- FREE
- Welwyn Garden City

The Welwyn Hatfield Young Carers Project is a supportive project for young people with caring responsibilities. It's at the Monk's Walk Youth Centre every Thursday during term time.

A young carer is someone under the age of 19 who helps to care for a member of their family who may be ill, have a physical disability or mental ill-health, drug or alcohol problems. Activities at the project include sports, cooking, dance, drama, film making... and we are open to any ideas you might have. Free transport is provided for local young people. Monk's Walk Youth Centre is partially wheelchair accessible.

Details

Venue: Monk's Walk Youth Centre, Monk's Walk School, Knightsfield, Welwyn Garden City AL8 7NA

Age Range: 13-19, up to 25 for young people with learning disabilities

Cost: FREE

Timing and Repeats:

Every Thursday during term time, 7-9pm.

Booking Info: Drop-in / no booking needed

Useful Links:

<http://www.channelmogo.org/info-and-advice/young-carers.aspx>

Contact: Brian Kelly, tel: 07554 117205

Organisation: Youth Connexions Hertfordshire, tel: 07554 117205, email: youth.connexions@hertscc.gov.uk, website: [click here...](#)

Childline

Childline is a free and confidential telephone helpline for children on 0800 11 11. You can talk to someone on [Childline](#) who may be able to give you advice and get you help. They won't tell anyone that you have called.

Meet other young carers

Meeting up with other young carers is a great way to make new friends, have some fun and share some of your worries with people in similar situations to your own. The Children's Society runs [services for young carers](#) in many areas. These can help you have a break from home, and meeting other young carers can help you to relax. Young carers projects may offer evening clubs, weekends away, days out and even holidays as well as friendly advice and information for you and for your family.

Help from social workers

From April 2015 the law is being changed to make it easier for young carers to get help. A social worker from your local authority must visit and see if you need any help, if you or your parents request this.

Social workers may be asked to help a young carer's family if there are problems that the family members are finding hard to sort out on their own.

Help from doctors, nurses and other health workers

If you have concerns about your own health, or the health of the person you care for, you can speak to a doctor or GP safely and confidentially.

School nurses visit schools and are normally happy to speak with you about any of your health concerns or worries.

Counsellors work in a variety of places, including schools, hospitals and youth centres. Their job is to listen carefully and give advice - in a private setting.

Local mental health nurses work can offer emotional support and advice about mental health conditions. If your parent has a 'community psychiatric nurse', you can talk to the nurse about your parent's illness and how you can help your parent cope.

If you're worried about your own mental health, you can speak to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service. There are services all over the country, giving support to young people with mental health conditions.

Macmillan nurses from the national charity [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) can help people who are affected by cancer and young carers. They provide a range of medical and emotional support for people who have cancer, and their families.

Other organisations that can help young carers

You can also chat with one another on [YC Net](#) and get advice and support from other young people.

The [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) provides comprehensive information on money, benefits and your rights.

The [National Careers Service](#) has a helpline, webchat and email service about education and careers for 13- to 19-year-olds. Support is also available up to the age of 25 for those who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Getting in touch with Carers Direct

For advice and support with caring issues over the phone, you can call the Carers Direct helpline on 0300 123 1053. If you are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing or have impaired speech, you can contact the Carers Direct helpline using textphone or minicom number 0300 123 1004.

