

# Young Carers and School

The  
Children's  
Society

No child  
should feel  
alone

**During 20 years of consulting with young carers, we have consistently been told about the particular challenges and demands that impact on their capacity to enjoy and achieve at school. Research shows that:**

- As many as **1 in 12** secondary school-aged children could be young carers. That is two in every class (BBC 2010).
- **27%** of young carers (aged 11–15) miss school or experience educational difficulties. This figure is 40% where children care for a relative with drug or alcohol problems (Dearden & Becker 2004).
- Young carers have **significantly lower attainment** at GCSE level – the difference between nine B's and nine C's (The Children's Society, Hidden from View, 2013).
- Young carers are **more likely** than the national average not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19 (The Children's Society, Hidden from View, 2013).
- A **quarter** of young carers said they were bullied at school because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).

## Young carer's experiences:

'For me I had specific teachers in my school. If there was a time that I felt down or stressed I would go to them and speak to them about how I am feeling, which helped quite a lot.'

'Ensure teachers are offered training on young carers and disability issues both at university and on inset days.'

'Thank you for starting a young carers group in our school and setting an example to others on how to treat us.'

'You need to teach people [schools] more about young carers and what we go through. We get bullied for it and it's not right.'

'Please take into consideration that there are young carers at school you don't know about.'

'Understanding that schools are supportive can mean the difference between attending or not. They [school] care more about our uniform and homework than our education.'

A '**young carer**' is defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as: '...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person.'

This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances.

The **key principle** is that: 'Children should not undertake inappropriate or excessive caring roles that may have an impact on their development. A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical well-being and their prospects in education and life.'

The **Children and Families Act 2014** amended the Children Act to make it easier for young carers to get an assessment of their needs and to introduce 'whole family' approaches to assessment and support. Local authorities must offer an assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care.

**Children Act 1989: Section 17ZA 1(a)** [inserted by section 96 Children and Families Act 2014] If any child or young person is identified as carrying out a caring role, this should result in an offer of a needs assessment for the adult requiring care and support, and the local authority must consider whether to undertake a young carer's needs assessment under the Children Act 1989. Refer to our 'Supporting Young Carers and their families' introductory booklet for more information.

Although young carers need extra support they are no more likely to find it from statutory agencies than other children (The Children's Society Hidden from View, 2013).

Ofsted Common Inspection Framework 2015: 'In making judgements, inspectors will pay particular attention to the outcomes for young carers.'