

WHAT DO YOUNG CARERS DO?



EMOTIONAL CARE

82% of young carers provide emotional support and supervision (Dearden and Becker, 2004). Often mental health problems are not 'seen', so this caring role can often be forgotten. Children as young as 5 support an adult with their mental health by listening to them, providing a shoulder to cry on or supporting at times of a mental health crisis. They may also remind an adult to act in a certain way or to remind them of positive decisions.

PERSONAL CARE

Young carers support others with tasks such as bathing, accessing the toilet, getting up from bed and getting dressed. 10% of young carers care for more than one person, so they may be caring for another adult or sibling at the same time.



DOMESTIC CARE

During the first lockdown, 7% of young carers and 14% of young adult carers who responded to a survey from Carers Trust, said that they are now spending over 90 hours a week caring for a family member or friend. This could be maintaining the household, cooking, cleaning and other domestic jobs. (Carers Trust, July 2020)



PHYSICAL CARE

If the cared-for person has a physical health condition, the young carer can support by helping them move around their home, access services outside, or attend hospital and doctor appointments.



FINANCIAL CARE

Sometimes, a young carer will take control of the family finances and will take on part-time jobs to ensure the family can afford food and electricity. Young carers also pay bills, rent and ensure that the family can budget for emergencies.



HEALTHCARE SUPPORT

Young carers between the ages of 13-17 can be authorised to collect medication from pharmacies. Still, we also hear, anecdotally, that young carers are sometimes responsible for ensuring that the right amount of medication is taken, at the right times. Also, that young carers assist with other treatments such as helping with physiotherapy and changing dressings.

COMMUNICATIVE CARE

In households where English is not spoken as a first language, young carers often act as a translator during health appointments. They experience being asked to explain complicated healthcare conditions, how often to take medication or hospital discharge plans. They also support the cared-for person to understand situations, particularly for an individual with a learning difficulty or other difficulties with communication and/or understanding.

SIBLING CARE

Sometimes young carers take on a parental role for a younger sibling; ensuring they have food, are taken and collected from school, managing their behaviour or their medical conditions if the adult is unable to.

