

## Looking after someone?

### Young Carers

Some children and young people have additional responsibilities because a family member who is sick or disabled needs their help. When young people do this, they are known as young carers.

#### **The term young carer applies to;**

Anyone under 18 years of age who helps to look after someone with a disability or long term illness. This may be a physical disability, frailty due to old age, a learning disability like autism, mental health problem like depression or a drug or alcohol problem.

Young carers help in a lot of different ways, like doing housework or shopping, keeping an eye on someone, helping them to wash and dress and cheering them up. Young carers may look after a disabled brother or sister or a parent or other adult family member.

Helping out at home is a normal part of growing up but young carers often have to do far more than other young people. This can make doing homework more difficult and restrict time available to meet up with friends. Without some help or support there is a danger this can affect the young person's future education and ability to make friends.

#### **Help from Social Care**

Local Authorities are responsible for providing social care support for families so that children and young people do not have to undertake unreasonable levels of caring responsibilities.

To enquire about help that may be available phone our Contact Centre on 03456 009 009.

#### **At School**

Many young people who care find the school environment challenging at times. Teaching staff often have little extra time available to support young people who are struggling with pressures of school work, relationships with their peers, or concentrating at school when there are family concerns.

## **Local young carers Services**

Surrey young carers work in school helping young carers to come to terms with their situation and deal with their worries. They do this either through one to one support or group work, where young people learn to draw strength from each other. They also provide opportunities to talk and do activities outside of school. The service is run by an independent charity and is free.

### **Surrey young carers also offer:**

- someone to talk to
- information and advice
- a chance to get to know others with similar circumstances in a group setting
- the chance to have a break and have some fun at residential and activity days
- a newsletter and internet site
- and most of all, some time for young carers themselves.

### **What parents can do**

If you think some of this may apply to your son or daughter:

- let him or her know that you understand the pressures they are facing
- discuss with them getting some help, perhaps through Surrey Young Carers, or through the Connexions Service that provides advice to young people of 13 years and above.

### **Benefits for young carers**

16 is the earliest age at which you can claim benefit in your own right as a carer. These include Carers Allowance and Income Support. You will not normally be expected to be available for work if you have caring responsibilities. For more information about your full benefit entitlement see the benefit leaflet included in this pack.

### **Where to get help**

Surrey young carers can be contacted by phone on 01737 248111/ 01483 568269 or email [syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:syc@actionforcarers.org.uk) or at: