



## One Minute Guide: Coventry's support to **Young Carers**

### Who are young carers?

In UK the legislation defines a Young Carer as a person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person such as relative or family friend. This definition includes those who care for someone due to illness, disability, mental health issues, or substance misuse problems. Young Carers will take on caring roles in the home that are practical and/or emotional which would normally be carried out by an adult.

### What support are young carers entitled too?

The legislation in the UK outlines significant support and rights for young carers through two key acts: the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.

Under the **Children and Families Act 2014** Local Authorities have a duty to assess the needs of young carers through a needs assessment. The assessment must involve the young carer, their parents/carer and any person the young carer or their parent/carer requests to be included.

**The Care Act 2014** complements the Children and Families Act 2014, emphasising that Local Authorities must consider the needs of the whole family when assessing a young carer. The Care Act 2014 also focuses on the rights for young carers aged 16 to 18 who are transitioning to adulthood ensuring that they have their specific needs assessed and do not take on inappropriate levels of care.

### What support is available in Coventry and how to get this help?

Young Carers aged 5-18 years in Coventry can receive support from the Carers Trust Heart of England - Young Carers Project. Young Carers referred to the service receive an assessment of their needs, on behalf of the LA, and the appropriate support is offered for any needs identified in the assessment. This support could be 1:1 emotional wellbeing support, signposting to activities that the Young Carers Project Team are running in the local community or referring/speaking to other professionals who may be able to offer support. The team can also support young carers to raise any issues they may be having at school and seek to have these addressed. The Young Carers Project run regular monthly activities for young carers in venues across Coventry. These activities are a chance for Young Carers to have some respite and to make new friends and have fun, with peers who share similar experiences. These groups take place at the Family Hubs across Coventry, in local libraries and community parks.

Carers Trust Heart of England also provide support to young adult carers aged 16-25. Support is provided to those who are transiting into adulthood as young carers they may continue their caregiving roles, becoming adult carers. The support provided can be attending social events and trips, education and training advice, employment advice and access to someone to talk to about any worries or difficulties they may be experiencing.

## How can a Young Carer be identified?

Many children and young people with caring responsibilities are not visible to services, schools or family members as they do not see themselves as being a young carer because they see this as part of their everyday life and something they have always done. Often young carers do not know who to speak to about help or reluctant to tell anyone about their caring role. This can lead to young carers becoming isolated and not getting the right support. Early identification is vital to ensure that the right support can be put in place for the young carer to ensure they are safe and able to achieve the best in their caring role. Different partners across Coventry play crucial roles in helping identify young carers such as practitioners in schools, nurseries, GPs and allocated social workers and family support practitioners.

There are many signs that you can look out for when identifying if a child/young person is a young carer such as:

- Often late or absent for school.
- Falling behind in school with work or handing homework in late.
- Tiredness
- Low mood/anxiety
- Showing signs of poor hygiene or diet
- Talks about family health issues
- Change in behaviour such as being aggressive or withdrawn
- If the parent/carer has an illness, disability, mental health worry or a history of substance misuse.
- If the child/young person has a sibling with an SEN need or physical health need.

## What should a practitioner do if they are working with a child or young person who may have caring responsibilities?

If you believe a child/young person to be a young carer you can complete a referral to **Carers Trust Heart of England Young Carers Team** for the child/young person to receive support from the team, with their families' consent. Here is the link:

<https://www.carerstrusthofe.org.uk/young-carers/referrals/>

If you think a child or young person you are working with may be a young carer, you should consider whether they are being relied upon to provide excessive and inappropriate care that is putting them at risk of harm. If you feel this may be the case, then you will need to contact the Coventry MASH team to discuss your concerns.

If there are no identified safeguarding concerns but you feel the family would benefit from an Early Help offer of support there are universal, targeted and specialist services available to families that have different levels of needs. These include the Family hub offer, [www.coventryfamilies.co.uk](http://www.coventryfamilies.co.uk) and/or the Intensive Family Support Model provided by the Supporting Families Teams by completing a request for support form <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/earlyhelp>.

If they child/young person is open to Children Services you must also record on their file that they are a young carer. Guidance on how to trigger this in LCS is available **here**

