

YOUNG CARERS

Young Carers

Are you under 18? Do you look after or help to look after someone at home who is disabled, sick, elderly, experiencing mental health problems or unable to look after themselves for some other reason?

If so, you are probably a young carer.

Your family circumstances could require you to look after your parents, grandparents, brother, sister, or any other member of your family.

The caring you do may include one or more of the following:

- emotional support - sitting and listening to the person you care for;
- household jobs - extra domestic chores such as cleaning, cooking, washing up, shopping and ironing;
- medical care - helping with medicine and injections;
- personal care - helping with washing, dressing, feeding or taking them to the toilet;
- physical care - helping the person to move around the house or go out.

It is not easy being a young carer but it's **nothing** to be ashamed or embarrassed of either.

As a young carer you may find you:

- have less spare time than many of your friends;
- worry a lot about the person you are caring for;
- feel your school work is not as good because of the extra caring you do;
- are embarrassed about inviting friends back to your house because of the situation at home;
- feel a bit different to your friends and are worried about being picked on or bullied.

No two situations are the same, but many young carers have similar feelings, experiences and stories to tell. There are many young people who are carers but the exact number is not known because most young people do not like to call themselves a young carer.

Your Rights

All children under the age of 18 have rights which are protected by law.

One of the most important rights you have as a young carer is the right to an assessment.

What is an assessment and should I get one?

A social worker is the person who would make an assessment. These will either be from the Child Care Team or from the Carers Assessment Team. They will ask questions about yourself, your family, the things you do as a carer and how it may be affecting your life. The social worker needs to ask these questions to get a good picture of your lifestyle.

The social worker must listen to what you have to say when deciding what help to offer. They will then discuss with you the type of help they are thinking about to make your life easier.

It is important that you are as honest as possible in what you say and the help you would like. If you are unhappy with what is offered it is best to say so and give your reasons why, rather than agreeing if you are not happy.

You may be worried about asking for an assessment because you do not want to talk in front of the person you care for and feel embarrassed about asking for help. You can ask to see the social worker on your own and take along a friend or adult you feel will support you.

If you would like an assessment, please 'phone 01437 776096 and ask for the Carers Assessment Worker, or ask the worker who has assessed the person you care for, they will help you start the process.

Getting ready for the assessment

It is not expected that you will have prepared in advance for the social worker's visit, however, it may help you to think of all the extra things you do as a young carer and the amount of time you spend on each. If you fill in the form on the below, you can keep it to show the social worker when you meet for the assessment.

Section 11

Job	Tick	Time spent each week
Cooking		
Cleaning		
Ironing		
Shopping		
Looking after brother & sister		
Helping the person you care for		
Move around the house		
Move around outside the house		
Get dressed		
Wash and go to the toilet		
Giving medicines		
Manage their money		
Sorting out appointments with doctors/hospitals		
Keeping the person you care for company		
Lifting the person you care for		

Other questions to think about:

- Who else helps you with these jobs?
- What would you like to do but cannot because of the caring you do? (e.g. go out with friends, earn some money, stay for after school activities, do some homework etc.).
- What sort of help would you like, to give you the chance to do some of these things?

Money

When you meet the social worker you may want to talk about benefits (money) the family are receiving. Alternatively, you can contact a number of other places that can offer benefits advice, for example - Citizens Advice Bureau and Benefits Agency.

Sharing your Caring

You may not want your friends or anybody else to know what goes on at home. Your family may not want other people to know either. Both you and your family may be worried what might happen if you do tell anyone about the caring you are doing.

However, as was said earlier being a young carer can be hard. Talking to someone about it often helps. Here are some suggestions of who you could think about talking to:

Friends

Do you have a special friend you can trust? Do you already talk to them about other things? If people start asking awkward questions your friends can stand up for you.

Family

It may be hard to talk to your mum, dad, or brothers and sisters. Do you have an aunt, uncle or grandparent who you get on well with?

School

Is there a teacher you know well?

If you have begun to have difficulties with your school work because of the caring to do, teachers will understand and be sympathetic.

Do you know the pupil support officer or the school nurse at your school? Could you talk to them?

Most schools have school nurses and pupil support officers who would be happy to talk to you about your caring role. To find out more about School Nurses contact Pat Truss on 01437 773850 or to find out more about Pupil Support Officers contact Michelle Rees on 01437 775295.

Youth Workers

Do you know anyone who runs a youth club you have attended or someone in your local leisure centre?

District Nurse/Health Visitor

One of these workers may already be visiting your house. Could you talk to them?

Young Carers Project

Pembrokeshire has its own project for children and young people under 18 years of age, who are 'Primary Carers'. That means young people who regularly have to give a lot of their time helping a parent, brother, sister, or perhaps another relative who is very sick or disabled.

The Young Carers Worker helps by giving support to young carers in both their family and school settings. Opportunities to meet other young carers are available.

One-to-one and small group support meetings are held, as are monthly social trips, outings, and other events in schools holidays. Please contact the Young Carers Project on (01437) 779188 or e-mail them on pembsyoungcarers@yahoo.co.uk

Gennex 25-7

This organisation runs young peoples forums which includes one for young carers. They meet regularly to support one another and have their say about services and provisions for young carers in the county. They can be contacted on (01437) 769422 or E-mail gennex@pavs.org.uk

Pembrokeshire Sibling Group

This group provides activities and outings for young carers who are providing care for brothers and sisters who are disabled. They can be contacted via Elizabeth Edwards (01834) 891446 or e-mail elzbthAngha@aol.com

Carers Development Worker

This person helps young carers to say what they need so new services can be developed. They can be contacted at PAVS on (01437) 771196 or e-mail carers@pavs.org.uk

Confidentiality

All the people listed above will respect what you have told them and not tell other people unless you agree. However if something you have said makes them believe you are at risk they will have to pass the information on.

General Information on Young Carers

The following organisations can also be contacted for general information on young carers

- Young Carers Project (01437) 779188
- Carers Wales: (02920) 811370

Legislation that relates to Young Carers

Your rights are protected by the following laws.

There is no need to know about the law, which is there to help you as a young carer. However here is a list of the relevant laws:

- The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 Section 8
- The Children Act 1989 Section 17
- The NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- The Carers (equal opportunities) Act 2004

Section 11 - Contact Details

Carers Wales

This is the 'national voice' of carers in Wales.

River House

Ynysbridge Court

Gwaelod y Garth

Cardiff CF15 9SS

☎ (02920) 811370

E-mail: info@carerswales.org.uk

website: www.carerswales.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureaux

19 Cartlett

Haverfordwest

☎ 0845 1202939

10 Meyrick Street,

Pembroke Dock

☎ (01646) 683805

Pembrokeshire Carers Outreach

The Princess Royal Trust Pembrokeshire Carers Centre

Meyler House

St Thomas Green

Haverfordwest SA61 1QP

☎ (01437) 767762

E-mail: carers.pembs@virgin.net

website: www.pembs-carers.org.uk

Pembrokeshire County Council

County Hall

Haverfordwest SA61 1TP

☎ (01437) 764551

website: www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Carers Assessment Officer

Phill Vickery on (01437) 776096 or

E-mail: phil.vickery@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Pupil Support Officer

Michelle Rees on (01437) 775295 or

E-mail: michelle.rees@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

School Nurse

Pat Truss on (01437) 773850

Pembrokeshire Crossroads - Caring for Carers

Pembrokeshire Crossroads is part of a national organisation providing respite care for carers.

Co-ordinator

Room 50 & 51, Meyler House,

Haverfordwest, SA61 1QP

☎ (01437) 764639

Fax: (01437) 764541

e-mail: pembrokeshire@crossroads.org.uk

Sibling Group

☎ Elizabeth Edwards (01834) 891446

Young Carers Project

☎ (01437) 779188