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One Minute Guide

Young Carers

Who is a Young Carer?

A young carer is someone under 18 who provides regular or ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or is a substance misuser. A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and responsibility for the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, and could negatively impact on his or her emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement or life chances.

How many young people are carers?

Data from the 2011 Census shows that 166,363 children in England are caring for their parents, siblings or other family members, an increase of 20% on the number recorded in the 2001 Census. However there is recognition that many young carers remain hidden from health, social care and education services which emphasises the need to raise awareness and to increase identification of young carers.

How do we identify young carers?

Indigo Young Carers works with other agencies to support early identification of young carers in schools, health services, and social care. Many young carers do not recognise themselves as a carer and would not necessarily come forward for support.

Some possible indicators that a young person has a caring role are:

Engagement/attendance at school - warning signs may include regular or increased lateness or absence, concentration problems, late homework, under achievement or victims of bullying.

Social networks - warning signs could be few but could include no peer friendships or unable to attend extra-curricular activities and clubs.

Age appropriate achievements/behaviour - warning signs could include behaviour problems, anger or frustration about relatively minor issues or reduced independence skills due to less opportunity to travel, access community resources etc.

Parent/family engagement - difficulties in engaging with family, limited or no attendance of family members at parents evenings, concerts/shows etc.

General health - warning signs could be anxiety, tiredness, not attending GP appointments, poor diet, and obesity.

What support is available for young carers?

The Indigo Service (part of Barnardos) was established in 2000 to support young carers (aged 8-18 years) and their families in Redbridge where young people have a substantial caring role that is impacting on their development.

The aim is to reduce the negative impact of caring from young carers lives by working with them and their families using a 'whole family' approach to:

- Reduce their caring role;
- Enable them to access positive activities; and
- Ensure that families are supported.

The support Indigo provides includes:

- Assessment
- Advocacy
- School liaison
- Support to engage in community and universal services
- Individual mentoring
- Group work
- Peer group support
- Recreational activities
- Regular whole family meetings with a link worker
- Attendance at multi agency reviews/meetings

Legislation

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) has given additional rights to assessment and support. Previously, young carers have been slipping through the net between children's and adults' support services. The [National Young Carers Coalition](#) of leading charities including Barnardo's, The Children's Society and Carers Trust have campaigned for many years to improve young carers rights promoting a 'whole family' approach to assessment so when a child is identified as a young carer, the needs of everyone in the family will be considered. The Act provides a legislative framework which will trigger both children's and adults' support services to develop joint ways of working assessing why a child is caring, what needs to change and what would help the family to prevent children from taking on this responsibility in the first place. In Redbridge there is a strategic working group that is meeting to develop a pathway for young carers that identifies any current barriers to support.

How can I find out more?

By contacting Indigo Barnardos Young Carers Service via 020 8554 5401 or reading about the service on the [FIND](#) website.