



SOUTHAMPTON VOLUNTARY SERVICES YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

The Southampton Young Carers Project provides specialist support, respite and activities to children and young people who are caring for a family member in their home. Young Carers may support one or more family members with disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems; drug and alcohol problems. **They have no choice about their caring role**, unlike adult carers who can, and do, walk away..... Due to their caring role they may not be able to access the opportunities their peers can; they can suffer with issues around confidence and self esteem and their caring role may impact significantly on their school attendance and educational attainment and ability to sustain friendships.

CURRENT SITUATION

SYCP is currently supporting over 150** children and young people at any one time and supports over 200 young carers per year; of these:

- 68 young carers support someone with a mental health problem
- 43 young carers support someone with a Learning disability
- 92 young carers support someone with a Physical disability
- 4 young carers support someone with a drug/alcohol problem*

*Anecdotal evidence tells us that many more children are living in households where alcohol and drug use is a problem.

** Some of these young carers support someone with one or more of the stated issues.

- 59% are caring for a parent
- 29% are caring for a sibling
- 20% are caring for multiple family members

THE IMPACT

The impact on these children and young people's lives is profound. They become:

- Isolated
- Marginalised
- Lacking in confidence
- They have low self esteem
- They are unable to go out to play with their peers
- They are often in benefit dependent households with scarce resources
- They are often singled out by bullies as they don't 'fit in' at School – they are often regularly late for School or may appear tired, lack concentration, don't achieve in line with their peers.

THE YOUNG CARERS PROJECT PROVIDES:

- An opportunity to give back some of their childhood
- Support with discrimination and bullying due to their caring role within School – a high number of young carers identified that they are bullied for being 'different'.
- Regular in-school support to advocate for them and support their school attendance and attainment.
- Fortnightly evening group for all children aged 8 – 18 years to come and share their experiences, challenge themselves and achieve higher self esteem and confidence.
- Support to raise their aspirations in spite of their circumstances
- Activities are provided that they can enjoy together and reduce their isolation. Activities that they may not otherwise experience due to their caring role and lack of opportunity and financial resources.
- 1:1 support for children and young people who are finding their caring role particularly difficult – approximately 60 children and young people are being supported through 1:1 support, by a support worker, at any one time.
- Support from up to 20 volunteers and befrienders.

TO CONTACT THE YOUNG CARERS TEAM FOR REFERRAL /FURTHER INFORMATION:

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