

# A Picture of Health

## In focus this month: Young Carers

Picture of Health is produced by Tameside's Population Health Team. We're here to research and understand the big health matters that affect our borough. Our goal is to find ways to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the people living here, to give them happier, healthier and longer lives. But enough about us. You are the most important person in your health, so read on to see what you can do for yourself and your family to stay fit and well.

**1** January 31st marks **Young Carers Day**. A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 who looks after someone who is physically or mentally unwell, disabled, or has an addiction. It can be a parent, sibling or other family member. The extent of help they give as a young carer isn't set in stone, but would usually cover things like helping with housework, washing, dressing and helping the person they care for to go to the toilet. The responsibilities a young Carer has can take their toll on their physical and mental health, and can mean they miss out on many of the joys of childhood.



**2** **Young Carers have rights as defined under the Children's and Families Act 2014.** These cover things like the right to be able to do well in school, the right to be able to achieve goals for the future, and the right to have time with friends. Young Carers are entitled to an assessment of their needs to ensure their rights are being supported, and to put in place help where it's needed. Assessors take a whole family approach, meaning that the circumstances of relevant family members are all taken into consideration. If you know of someone who might be a young carer, or know someone who is sick or disabled with young children in the family, they may find the leaflet helpful.



**3** **There are 700,000 young people in the UK caring for a sick or disabled family member.** This includes infant carers as young as 5 years old, getting up in the night to tend to the needs of someone they love. Young Carers are little angels, carrying out essential duties to keep families afloat, and cheering up family members when they're sad. Caring comes at a cost though, with many young carers missing out on the usual things kids should get to enjoy. To catch a glimpse of life as a young carer watch this short video



**4** **Young Carers lead a life very different to their peers, and whilst it may come with some hardships and sacrifices, it can also be hugely rewarding.** Young Carers may have to grow up before their time, but there can be a special bond between a young person and the person they care for that stays with them for life. Click the link to hear Lottie's story.



**5** **There are around 500 Young Carers registered in Tameside who look after a parent, sibling or relative, but many more young people will be Carers without knowing it.** Until a young person is identified as a young Carer they may not realise that there is help out there for them. For those who continue to struggle by themselves, they may go on to develop health problems of their own. Indeed, a survey of 348 young Carers found 48% felt stressed and tired, and a further survey found that 38% had mental health problems. Young Minds have plenty of advice about looking after mental health for young Carers,



**6** **The strain of being a young carer can come in many forms from stress, anxiety and guilt, to embarrassment and struggling to stay awake in school.** Knowing where to turn to for help as a young carer can be difficult. Children naturally worry that telling someone about their home situation could lead to them being separated from their family, especially if the person they are caring for is a parent who struggles to look after them. Some professionals will be in a position to spot a young carer and reassure them that it's safe to ask for help, if you think you know a young carer the following link offers some good advice on who to ask.



**7** **Young carers miss an average of 48 days in school due to their caring responsibilities and 68% have been bullied because of having to care for someone.** For many, the extra worry of homework having to be done late at night is another stress to balance with the demands of family life. If you are a teacher, or a professional who works with children who might be Carers, you are one of the people who can help ensure they receive the support they need and deserve. Click here for advice for teachers

JANUARY 2019						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
01	1	2	3	4	5	6
02	7	8	9	10	11	12
03	14	15	X	X	X	19
04	21	22	23	24	25	26
05	28	29	30	X		

**8** **Tameside has a team of people whose role it is to support young Carers in the borough.** They are on hand to offer help and advice, carry out whole family assessments, and to offer practical support and a place for young Carers to come together. Click here to find out more.



**9** **Young Carers can miss out on the social side of childhood as their duties can mean less time to play and make friends.** The Young Carers Project meets at Hyde Youth and Community Centre, on Bennet Street in Hyde (SK14 4PP), and is a place young Carers can go to meet other children with similar responsibilities. Regular trips and activities are planned for children to be children, and get some respite from chores. It's also somewhere they can get help and advice, like what to do in an emergency, or how to get help with money.



**10** **You and Your Mind is a website designed by young people for young people, and has lots of links to useful places and services that a young person with caring responsibilities might find helpful with regards to their mental health and emotions.** It's not just about caring, it's about all the other things a young person might be struggling with too, like problems in school, identity and sexuality, and friends and relationships.



You and Your Mind

**11** **Getting active is one of the best ways to look after physical and mental health, yet for many young Carers having the regular time and opportunity to commit to sports or hobbies is difficult.** In partnership with Tameside Council, Active Tameside run weekly sessions for young carers to get moving more, and to spend time relaxing with other young people. For more information click the link to email [helen.wilson@activetameside.com](mailto:helen.wilson@activetameside.com).

