



# **BE FREE YOUNG CARERS**

# WHAT IS A YOUNG CARER?

## What is a young carer?

You're a young carer if you're under 18 and help to look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem.

## What they do

- Looking after a family member:  
*"My day starts at 5. I wash mum, make her comfortable and then get the breakfast ready for the rest of the family... sometimes when I get to school I'm knackered."*
- Washing, dressing, cooking, medicine, housework, shopping, money.



# IN OXFORDSHIRE

**There are, at least, 2 young carers in every classroom in Oxfordshire**

- 12,000 young carers in Oxfordshire care for an adult or sibling.
- 1 in 12 caring more than 15 hours a week;
- 68% bullied in school;
- Young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year, on average;
- Young carers 16 - 18 twice as likely to be NEET;
- 1 in 2 young carers report mental health problems.



# ABOUT BE FREE YOUNG CARERS

- Independent small charity
- 30 years supporting Young Carers;
- Operate currently in Vale, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City area;
- 650+ Young Carers
- On average 6 new referrals a week;
- Referrals becoming more complex;
- Support and liaise with schools;
- Only specialist charity in Oxfordshire supporting young carers;



# WHAT WE DO



- **Emotional support, Counselling and befriending** - meeting with young carers to talk through their concerns, working with schools and families to help to alleviate isolation, anxiety and stress that so many young carers experience;
- **Respite activities** - time for themselves away from their caring roles, to make friends, and have fun;
- **13+ Monthly Youth Clubs** in Oxford City, the Vale and South Ox
- **Training** - in key skills such as first aid, relaxation and cookery/nutrition to improve their self-confidence and ability to cope in their caring roles.
- **121 support from our qualified Youth Workers**
- **Mindfulness movement program in primary schools**
- **New for 2024 – Employability program**
- **Laptop campaigns**
- **Food, hygiene and period packs**

## Emotional support and Counselling

- 94% of our young carers struggle with their mental health.
- Emotional support and counselling is a 1-2-1 opportunity for young carers to discuss their struggles and learn about techniques to support their mental wellbeing.
- We have 95 young carers as Abingdon town residents and an additional 43 young carers who attend school in Abingdon.
- We are looking to provide our 1-2-1 emotional support to any young carers in this area that may require support.

*"I really appreciate everything you're doing with L. it's so nice to start seeing and him understanding things better to help cope with things, it's nice he's opening up"*



# SUPPORTING BE FREE YC

- Become a befriender
- Volunteer on our trips, Abingdon marathon aid station
- Become a mentor on our employability program
- Fundraise – run a marathon, cycle, swim, bake sales etc..



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI10UaCBVio>

