

Top Tips for Primary Care Practitioners



It is widely recognised that there are many Young Carers who do not receive the support they require, notably where their caring role relates to parental mental ill health or substance misuse (or dual diagnosis).

There are many reasons why Young Carers are hidden; they are not aware they are Young Carers, the family member does not talk openly about their condition, stigma, respect for their family, they don't wish to be perceived as needing help, etc.

What can Primary care do?

New patient checks and questionnaires – “Do you care for somebody who could not manage without your help?” or “Are you cared for by somebody?” or utilise existing forms and add a Carers / Young Carers Box. **Record on the patient's record.**

Opportunities for identification by all staff – Young Carers are everybody's business!

Listen for indicators when meeting with patients; consider if someone in the family is receiving treatment at the practice for substance misuse or mental health, and open up the conversation with adults known to have children within the family home.

Empower all professionals to feel that they can talk about Young Carers.

Develop a practice policy for carers.

Develop a carers register – code 'is a young carer'.

Use a **variety of different media to encourage self-identification** (posters, practice website).

Offer enhanced access – flexibility of appointments or back-to-back appointments for the carer and person they care for.

Signpost Young Carers to where they can get more information and support.

If the family is open to support and accepts that their child is a Young Carer, then please **signpost them to Imago Young Carers** and record on the system.

If the family is not willing to acknowledge that they need further support, but you believe the young person is a Young Carer then you can talk about the benefits of the support without labelling the young person a Young Carer. We appreciate it may be difficult for families to acknowledge the impact on their child but just planting the seed may make them more likely to discuss support further down the line.

Imago Young Carers offers Young Carers home visits, assessments and reviews of support. Also providing one-to-one and in-school support, workshops, respite activities such as workshops, outings and visits, workforce development, signposting, advocacy and awareness.

Referral Process – Complete a referral form at www.imago.community. Complete the form with family where possible (otherwise ensure verbal consent has been sought). Initial triage will take place and the referral will be allocated to the local support officer. Referrers will be informed of family's engagement. Contact the **Imago Hub** on **0300 111 1110** or email youngcarers@imago.community for further information.

Other signposting resources:

Refugee Toolkit: www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk – A Children's Society resource for professionals working with young carers in refugee and asylum-seeking families.

Rethink: www.rethink.org – Directly helping millions of people affected by mental illness by challenging attitudes and changing lives. The website contains information about support for Young Carers.

The Children's Society: www.childrensociety.org.uk – Toolkits providing information, resources and good practice guidance about supporting 'hidden' young carers.

Winston's Wish: www.winstonswish.org – Offering practical support and guidance to bereaved children, families and professionals.

SIBS: www.sibs.org.uk – Has information for children growing up with a sibling who has special needs, a disability or chronic illness.

Contact a Family: www.contact.org.uk – A charity which has local contacts, for families with disabled children.

Macmillan: www.macmillan.org.uk – Has a section for teens and young adults with information that is age appropriate.

Childline: www.childline.org.uk – Help and advice for a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online or call.

Kooth: www.kooth.com – Counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people where you can get advice or ask a question.

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk – Information for young people to help them understand how they are feeling and self-help information .

National Self Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk – Online support forum for everyone. Providing crisis support, information, resources, advice, discussions and distractions.