

# What is Carers Lewisham's Young Carers Support Service?

## What is Carers Lewisham?

Carers Lewisham is an **independent** local charity affiliated to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers network of Carers Centres nationally. We serve all carers and young carers aged from 8-18 years who live in the Borough of Lewisham.

The Carers Lewisham **Young Carers Service** has been running since 1995 and at time of writing we have over 400 children on our mailing list. We support both the Young Carer **and their family**.

Although we do get some funding from Lewisham Council we are not **part** of the council and therefore do not have to abide by all their rules and regulations and we have our own Confidentiality policy.

## What Confidentiality means at Carers Lewisham

When you contact Carers Lewisham, things you tell us will be **treated as confidential to Carers Lewisham** and we will not, except in exceptional circumstances, tell anyone else what you have said, without your permission.

All information you give us about yourself and the person you look after will be kept safely in the office and you have a right to look at any records we keep.

## When we might not be able to treat things as confidential

On rare occasions we may have to break our general rule of keeping things confidential. The usual reason for breaking confidentiality is because we have to **legally**. The circumstances where we may have to break confidentiality are:

- If we think a child may be at risk we have a duty under the Children Act to tell our concerns to appropriate agencies, such as Social Care and Health. **NB Children who are Young Carers are NOT automatically treated as children at 'risk'**.
- If we think there is an immediate risk to a person's physical safety, we may have to speak to someone.
- Where there may be a formal legal duty, such as under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- Confidentiality may not be breached unless there is permission from the Chief Executive or Chair of the Management Committee.

## How can you get our help?

Anyone can refer a young carer to our Service providing consent has been gained from the young carer and their parent/guardian. The young carer and their parent/guardian will then be visited at home to assess what level of care they are undertaking and what support services can be provided by Carers Lewisham.

Because we now have so many Young Carers to support we have had to divide the Young Carers we work with into three groups as follows:

### Tier 1. High level of care

These are young carers who are acting as the main carer for the person they look after and are experiencing difficulties. They may need or already have social service involvement or be on the Child Protection Register. Maybe isolated with no family network or outside agency support. Or could be where a family is facing bereavement. Young Carers with poor school attendance, truancy or at risk of becoming involved in crime due to caring.

**Support available from Carers Lewisham:** home visit, individual support from the Young Carers Officer, family support, weekend breaks, day trips and clubs, access to respite scheme and funds, access to external funds, advocacy, information, counselling depending on age and issue, newsletter, telephone support.

### Tier 2. Intermediate level of care

Young carers who are performing heavy domestic tasks as well as emotional caring and young carers that care episodically (e.g. when a parent has a mental or physical relapse as in MS, manic depression or an epileptic fit).

**Support available from Carers Lewisham:** home visit, individual support from the Young Carers Officer, mentoring, family support, clubs and day trips, access to external funds, advocacy, information, newsletter, telephone support.

### Tier 3. Low level of care

Young Carers that are not physically or practically caring but are affected emotionally, physically or practically by having someone with a disability in the family (e.g. some siblings, relative is in residential care or doesn't live with young carer).

**Support available from Carers Lewisham:** home visit, information, referral to other helpful agencies, newsletter, telephone support.

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