

## ▶ ASK ME

# Guide to support SHSC staff with identifying, recording and signposting young carers

This ASK ME guide has been coproduced by young carers from Sheffield Young Carers Action Group and SHSC staff.

Its aim is to support you to ask your patient/service user/client whether their child is a Young Carer or to ask a young person accessing your service if they are a Young Carer themselves.

It is understandable that these conversations can be anxiety provoking for everyone involved.

### **When having a conversation here are some factors to consider:**

Parents or guardians might feel blamed or worried about potential retributions or referral to social services. A worker needs to understand the sensitivity of this subject in order to offer help to the young carers via a parent or a relative who is being assessed.

*"kids and families don't understand about social services - they think it always means you're going into care"*

It is important to understand that children might have to help out at home and that it is acceptable and often expected. This is perfectly fine as long as it is age appropriate and not impacting on the child's own education or wellbeing. You might find that different cultures and backgrounds have different expectations of how much children help out at home.

*"people are terrified about being separated from their parents/children"*

Enquiring whether a child is a young carer should be done in a way that is supportive and compassionate and offers potential respite to both a person accessing the service and a young person/people. It is important to note that some adults in your service may also be young adult carers aged 18-25 themselves.

*"My mum's still worried about me coming to Sheffield Young Carers groups even after all this time. She still asks me 'what do you say there?'"*

**Here are some examples of sensitively framed questions you could ask a person accessing your service who has children:**

- How do you balance being a parent/guardian and looking after your own mental health?
- How are your children at home?
- Do they support you in any tasks around the house or help you manage your mood/mental health? This could include:
  - practical tasks like cooking, cleaning, shopping, looking after siblings or themselves, interpreting, managing appointments or finances, reminding you to do things, liaising with services, helping you manage medication.
  - emotional support like cheering you up, listening to you, helping calm you down, accompanying you if you feel worried about going places on your own.
  - personal support like help with dressing, bathing or using the toilet.
  - emergency support like dealing with crises, first aid, ringing ambulances.
- How are they doing at school?
- Do they get any time for themselves / breaks away from home? (for example: do they see friends outside school? Do they have any extracurricular activities or hobbies?)
- How is their mental health/wellbeing?
- Do the children get any support? (for example through school, MAST, Sheffield Young Carers, GP, CAMHS, Door 43, Kooth, IAPT?)
  - If yes: Find out what support exactly and If it does include support for SYC make sure you include it in the DRAM and notes.
  - If no: Would they like any support? Would a service user be okay with you passing on some information to a young carer ñ Sheffield Young Carers leaflet/number? Have they spoken to their GP?

**Here are the Sheffield Young Carers contact details if you feel a referral is appropriate.**

- Tel: 0114 258 4595
- Email: [information@sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk](mailto:information@sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk)