

Who is a young carer?

A 'young carer' is defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as:

"...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person."

This relates to care for any family member who has a long-term illness, disability, poor mental health, frailty, or addiction.

Slough Young Carers – *an award-winning, co-produced service*

Slough Young Carers was established in 2014 when a representative from SBC attended one of Aik Saath's regular volunteering sessions to deliver an awareness-raising presentation. The young people there that evening, many of them young carers themselves, were inspired to do more for Slough's young carers. A group of young people put forward a project plan that focused on delivering services for young carers and Slough Young Carers was born.

The project, co-ordinated by Slough charity 'Aik Saath,' delivers a weekly session for children, 5-10, and a weekly session for young people, 11-19. During the summer holidays, sessions tend to be face-to-face but in recognition of the difficulties many young carers have with travel, during term time, most sessions are online via zoom.

The sessions are co-produced with young people and the majority of our activities are focused on enhancing the young people's lives outside of caring. In the summer, this involves free trips to theme parks, barbecues and beach trips. During term time, it can involve baking and arts activities.

We are also committed to ensuring young carers reach their potential. It is widely recognised that young carers do not have access to the same educational opportunities as peers that do not have a caring role. Consequently, many of our activities involve providing young carers with additional learning opportunities and raising their aspirations.

Many young carers struggle with their own health and wellbeing. We try to help young carers in Slough stay healthy with sessions designed to help them look after their physical and mental health. This looks like physical activities with our partners Active Slough and practical mindfulness sessions.

We believe young carers should be recognised and celebrated. This looks like working with young carers to deliver awareness-raising activities, such as presentations in schools and more recently, to GPs and health professionals. Celebrating young carers involves participating in local and national events designed to recognise the incredible contribution young carers make both to their own families and our communities.

Earlier this month, Slough Young Carers won a prestigious award from Children and Young People Now. "The panel were really impressed with the way the voice of young people is driving this project," said judge Steve Reddy, Director of Children & Young People's Services, Liverpool City Council.

How to involve young carers in our service

Contact Abi Tagoe at Slough Children First on YoungCarers@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

Abi will provide you with a young carers' assessment. Once you have completed it, she will forward the assessment to Slough Young Carers and this will be used to inform their engagement.

Top tip: Slough Young Carers are active on a range of social media platforms and Instagram in particular. If you are looking to share examples with a young person of the types of activity we engage in, please show them the account! @sloughyoungcarers