

EMPOWER MAGAZINE



For young carers in Wiltshire and Dorset



Find out
about our
cover star,
Katie!

Winter 2023

Ages 10 – 18*

*FLIP OVER FOR 5-10

Carer Support Wiltshire
Young Carers

Carer Support Dorset
Young Carers



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Wiltshire and Dorset



WHO IS A YOUNG CARER?

A young carer is a child who helps to look after someone who has an illness, learning or physical disability, a mental health illness or uses drugs or alcohol too much.

WHAT DOES A YOUNG CARER DO?

As a young carer, you might do things like cooking, cleaning, shopping, giving medicine, or simply talking and helping when the person you care for feels sad.



WE CAN SUPPORT YOU!

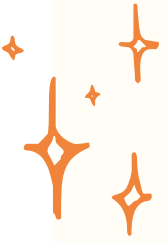


This is YOUR magazine full of fun things to do, colouring and news. You can also find out about our fun events and activities near you!

HAVE A LOOK AT OUR YOUNG CARER WEBSITES

**CARERSUPPORTWILTSHIRE.CO.UK/YOUNG-CARERS/
CARERSUPPORTDORSET.CO.UK/YOUNG-CARERS/**

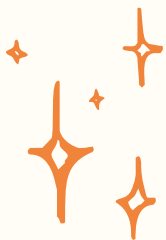
GET YOUR FUN ON WITH YOUNG CARER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES!



Fun with cooking!



How far would you climb?



We had a lovely time at our Weymouth picnic!

Brave young carers tackle the climbing wall!





YOUNG CARER EVENTS WILTSHIRE



Keep an eye out for our upcoming activities and on-going events you can get involved with! Check our What's On page in December for February half term events.

www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/young-carers/whats-on/



MENTAL
HEALTH
WORKSHOPS



LIFE
SKILLS



WELLBEING



CAFES



DAYS
OUT



YOUNG CARER EVENTS DORSET



Go to our What's On Page to stay tuned for what events and activities we have coming up.

www.carersupportdorset.co.uk/young-carers/whats-on

MYTIME also runs fun activities for young carers in Dorset – go to their website here: mytimeyoungcarers.org



FEELING LONELY AT CHRISTMAS

How should we feel at Christmas time? Happy? Full of joy? So unrelentingly merry and bright we might as well be lit up like a Christmas tree?

But what happens when we don't feel these things? What if we feel lonely, sad, or even angry? It's important to know that if you find yourself feeling these emotions during the festive season, it's completely normal, especially for young carers like you. You're not alone, and it's okay to not feel happy throughout the holiday season.

As a young carer, Christmas can be an overwhelming and stressful time. Juggling your caring responsibilities, the demands of the festive period, and trying to have a normal home life can feel like a huge balancing act.

It can be tough to see your friends enjoying the carefree holiday spirit while you're taking on the responsibility of caring for your family. Maybe you can't go to parties or meet up with your friends as much as you'd like to, maybe going Christmas shopping and baking a gingerbread house comes second to your caring responsibilities.

It's completely understandable to feel like you're missing out on the joy and excitement that others seem to be experiencing. But remember, it's important to acknowledge that your emotions are valid. It's okay to feel lonely during this time. The key is to find healthy ways to cope with these feelings and take care of yourself.



FEELING LONELY AT CHRISTMAS CONTINUED

Here are some tools that can help you deal with the loneliness and emotions you may experience during Christmas as a young carer:

- 1. Reach out to others: Don't hesitate to talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling. Sharing your emotions can help lighten the burden and provide support.**
- 2. Take breaks and practice self-care: Remember that it's essential to take care of yourself too. Carve out time for activities you enjoy, whether it's reading, listening to music, or taking a walk. Prioritising self-care will help recharge your energy, and give you a break from the stresses of caring.**
- 4. Create new traditions: Just because your circumstances might be different from your friends doesn't mean you can't create your own traditions. Find ways to make the holidays special for you and your family, and start a new holiday tradition that is meaningful to all of you.**
- 5. Seek professional help if needed: If you find that your feelings of loneliness or sadness persist and affect your everyday life, don't hesitate to reach out to a doctor.**

Remember, you are not alone, and your feelings are valid. It's essential to take care of yourself and find ways to cope with the emotions that may arise during Christmas as a young carer. By reaching out for support, practicing self-care, and creating new traditions that bring you joy, you can navigate this holiday season with a sense of hope and resilience.

SELF-CARE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE!



Set yourself a Christmas challenge and give yourself the gift of self-care this Christmas time. How many can you check off before January the 1st?

Write down 5 things you like about yourself

Go outside and count how many colours you can see

Dance to your favourite Christmas song

Watch the sunrise or the sunset

Take a relaxing shower or bath

Read your favourite book or watch your favourite film

Cuddle a pet, teddy bear, or someone you love

Try a new recipe

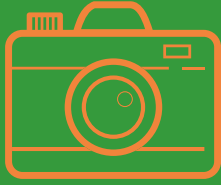
Take a few minutes to sit and breathe

Compliment yourself and others

Write 3 things you are looking forward to for the new year

What else can you do to look after yourself this Christmas?





GET CREATIVE!

Each issue we will have a different theme or activity for you to get involved with!

SUNSET SEEKERS!

Here are some pictures of young carers' and team members' beautiful sunsets!



NEXT ISSUE: SPRING BLOOMS!

Ask an adult to email your pictures of some beautiful spring flowers to communications@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk



MEET THE TEAM!

Meet the rest of our friendly young carer team in Wiltshire and Dorset...

JO



Jo has been supporting carers and parent carers for 4 years with Carer Support Wiltshire, and has now moved into the family and young carer team. She enjoys walking her dog, singing in her local choir, socialising, and reading a good book!

CLARE

Clare is the new Carer Friendly Schools Coordinator for Carer Support Wiltshire. Her role is to work in schools so that they can give the best support to young carers during their school day. In her spare time she likes to read, spend time with her family and go for walks with her dog.



LINDSEY



Lindsey has been working with young carers and their families for over 10 years in the south west and recently joined our young carer team in Wiltshire. She has two lovely dogs called Dobby and Bluebell and enjoy's getting out and about with the pups.

HELPLINES AND WEBSITES

If you are looking after someone, sometimes things might feel a bit too much. If you need someone to talk to about how you're feeling, talk to a trusted adult or teacher that can help. Here are some other places you can call or message that can help you:



CHILDLINE: CALL 0800 1111
WWW.CHILDLINE.ORG.UK

Childline has a free helpline and also a 1-1 chat where you can talk to counsellors about anything you're going through from 9am – 12am.

SHOUT: TEXT 85258
WWW.GIVEUSASHOUT.ORG



Shout is a free text line that you can text 24/7 about anything you're struggling with.



SIDEKICK: TEXT 07888 868059
SIDEKICK.ACTIONFORCHILDREN.ORG.UK

Sidekick is a confidential helpline for young carers aged 13 to 18 in the UK. Message them about anything that's bothering you.

GRIEF ENCOUNTER: CALL 0808 802 0111:
WWW.GRIEFENCOUNTER.ORG.UK



Grief Encounter supports young people who are dealing with grief or the loss of a loved one. You can call them or chat on their website.

Carer Support Wiltshire and Dorset will be closed on:
25 December (Christmas Day)
26 December (Boxing Day)
1 January (New Years Day)

REMEMBER TO ALWAYS CALL 999 IN AN EMERGENCY



YOUNG CARER STORY

MEET KATIE - OUR COVER STAR!

Meet Katie, a young carer who takes care of her Mum and siblings all while shining a light on the world of young carers. She's a girl on a mission, setting up a young carers group at her secondary school, attending educational summits, gracing radio interviews, and even sipping tea with the Prime Minister's wife at Downing Street!

WHAT WAS YOUR CARING ROLE LIKE GROWING UP?

My Mum's health started to get worse after she had my youngest sister. I started doing more around the house with things like if my Mum couldn't cook dinner one night, I'd cook dinner and then put my siblings in the bath then take them to bed. My Dad quit work to look after my Mum which meant my caring role was more based around my siblings, making sure they were up for school, brushing their teeth, finding the lost shoe or jumper. I really wanted them to have as much as a normal childhood as possible, so I'd often take them to the park after school, entertain and play with them on the weekend. That was really important to me.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE BEING A YOUNG CARER AT SCHOOL?

With school, I went to six different primary schools, and it was very different across them all. A lot of the time they didn't really understand what being a young carer was or what I was doing at home. They didn't understand why sometimes I couldn't do my homework, which meant I was always getting detention. My Mum explained the situation to them which helped, but sometimes I'd still get in trouble with other members of staff or teachers who didn't know my situation.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SETTING UP A YOUNG CARER GROUP IN YOUR SECONDARY SCHOOL?

During a young carer group we were asked about what support we received in school, and I realised we didn't really have anything set up in our school. I spoke to my tutor about it and set up a meeting with members of staff from my school and spoke about what I thought needed to be in place for young carers. They agreed and asked if I would be willing to run the young carer group, so I said yes. I then continued to run the group for two years, and I also did assemblies about young carers, and a staff survey to help teachers and staff understand what a young carer is, what they might struggle with, and how they can best support them.

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING AT MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE AND LIVING AWAY FROM HOME?

I'm currently doing 4 and a half A Levels! Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths, and a project. It's obviously quite a lot but it's really nice not to have to worry about homework or being busy with things at home because I'm living at the college. Although I do have a lot of studying, it's much less stressful because instead of like before I was trying to cram in revising and homework in-between looking after everyone at home, putting on the dishwasher, sorting out the laundry, now I just have the time to focus on studying.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

After college, I'd like to go to university to study medicine to be a doctor, possibly paediatrics but neurology and cardiology have always interested me as well.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE OTHER YOUNG CARERS WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT GOING TO COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?

I think the most important thing is to find something you like, something you can be passionate about, and stick with it. If you have a bit of an idea of what you want, you're more likely to push through things that maybe get in your way or make it harder for you. It's understandable if you're looking after someone to think, oh well I won't have time, or maybe to stop going to lessons at college, but if you find something you really want or enjoy, it gives you that motivation to keep going even when it's harder. It's important to just try and be proud of yourself no matter what happens.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SHARING YOUR INSPIRATIONAL STORY WITH US KATIE. GOT A STORY TO TELL? WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. EMAIL US AT COMMUNICATIONS@CARERSUPPORTWILTSHIRE.CO.UK

CREATE A CHRISTMAS POEM!

Have you ever tried your hand at black-out poetry? Use the story below, cross out the words and see if you can make a poem from the words left over! We've started it off for you...

~~Twelve~~ before Christmas, and all through the house,

Young carers were bustling, without even a grouse.

Their hearts full of kindness, their spirits so bright,

For through their selflessness, they spread pure delight.

In the midst of their duties, they still find a way,

To embrace the holiday spirit, so special this day.

With tinsel and baubles, they decorate with glee,

Creating a wonderland, shining bright for all to see.

Santa's been watching, with a twinkling eye,

For these young carers who never ask why,

He's got some treats, wrapped with care,

To thank them for the love they always share.

So, to every young carer on this special night,

May your Christmas be merry, filled with pure delight.

Know that you're cherished, and loved beyond measure,

For your hearts bring joy, and create memories to treasure.



**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

Whether you have ideas for the next issue of our young carer magazine or want to share a creative project you're working on, let us know!

Ask an adult to scan the QR code with their phone camera to go to a survey where you can send us all of your thoughts and ideas for our next issue.

