

Young Carers Summary



Who are young carers?

A "young carer" is a person aged 8-25 who helps support a member of their household who is experiencing a mental health challenge, disability, long term health condition (including a chronic condition or terminal illness), a substance dependency or who is frail aged.

This cohort are currently one of the most under represented and at-risk groups of young people in Australia.

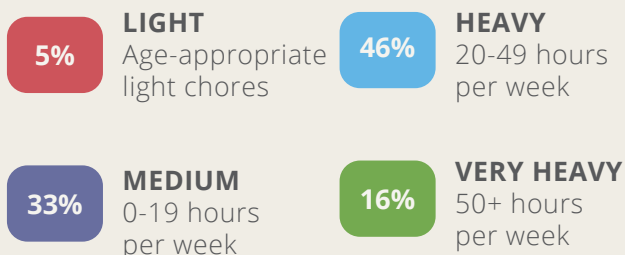
However, due to their caring responsibilities they are often mature, independent, compassionate, resilient, and empathetic¹ than their peers. This lived experience provides them with significant capability to contribute to the development of legislation, policy and services that impact them.

The diverse role of a young carer

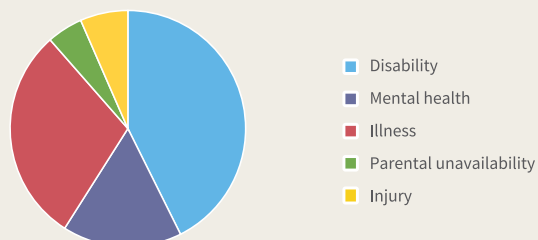
A young carer may provide care for a parent or guardian, a sibling, or friend. Their caring role may be ongoing or intermittent, and may be as a primary full time carer or as a secondary carer.

A young carer's caring role can vary widely from very light duties to very heavy duties.

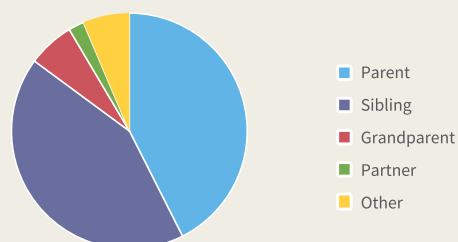
Care provided by young carers per week



Why young carers provide care



Who young carers care for



Did you know?

- Young carers are **one of four** most at-risk groups of young people in Australia.
- There is an estimated **2-3** young carers in every classroom.
- **1 in 10** children in Australia are providing care to a family member.
- **50%** of young carers live in households that are close to, or below the poverty line.

Identified Barriers for Young Carers



The impacts of caring

Young carers face many challenges including:

- The emotional impact of caring for someone.
- The social impact of not being able to mix with friends.
- The educational impact of not being able to do extracurricular activities, homework or attend school events.
- The financial impact of not having pocket money, or having the money they earn go towards household expenses instead.

This is exacerbated for young carers with additional layers of disadvantage or with other marginalised experiences.

Barrier	Impact
Limited definitions and understanding of the terms 'carer' and 'young carer'.	Many young carers, and the adults surrounding them, go un-identified as young carers, or, if they do identify as young carers and face misunderstanding when seeking support from people or services.
A lack of awareness about young carers and their experiences, both in educational facilities and from the adults around them.	This results in difficulty for young carers gaining support and understanding from the facilities around them. Young carers, despite being a particularly vulnerable group, are also not prominently featured on the political agenda.
Young carers having limited access to information and opportunities, particularly in regional and remote areas.	Learning about and accessing services and supports can be significantly time consuming. Young carers in regional and remote areas are also significantly impacted by economic barriers including transport costs and long or inconsistent work hours.
Young carers minimise their own experiences and think they are undeserving of assistance.	Young carers miss out on opportunities for support, which has immediate and future repercussions to their health, wellbeing, employment and education potential.
Young carers have busy and inconsistent lives	Many young carers, especially those that are primary carers, lack the time or capacity to engage in opportunities to have their voices heard. This means they are under represented or not represented as carers.
Lack of data	Many sources of research and data either do not include young carers, or they only include young carers from the age of 14+.

What is Carers WA doing for young carers?



Carers WA has a dedicated Young Carer Team which provides a range of services to support carers aged between 8-25 years, including:

- Career planning and support.
- Young carer and family counselling.
- Carer Gateway support planning.
- Peer support groups.

Carers WA also provides resources on young carers to educational facilities. This helps them to recognise and support young carers, as well as to be aware of challenges which young carers may be facing.

In the 2021-22 financial year, Carers WA's Young Carer team delivered:

Events and Expos Attendees 89

Youth and Family Related Stakeholder Meetings 127

Awareness Raising About Young Carers in the Education Sector
Educational Institutions (including Schools) 19
Workshops 58

1:1 Youth Needs Assessments 99

Young Carer Education & Career Assessments 266

Carers WA Youth Advisory Group

Carers WA is working to establish a Carers WA Youth Advisory Group. This group will be fully embedded within the organisation, including delivery of three key outcomes:

1. A framework for how the Youth Advisory Group will sit within Carers WA.
2. An end of project package for what the Youth Advisory Group will look like with fully developed policies and procedures.
3. Ensure Youth Advisory Group members are equipped with the skills, capacity and confidence to participate fully in the group.

What can be done to better support young carers?



Carers WA 2023-25 Policy Priority 14: Widespread recognition, inclusion and recognition of young carers in legislation, policy and services. This includes:

1. Inclusion of Carers WA and young carers in relevant program and policy consultations and key symposiums/events/initiatives where youth are involved.
2. Identifying and addressing systemic faults which negatively impact on young carers' wellbeing.
3. Inclusion of young carers in new and existing surveys, data and research projects.

