

Your friendship to a young carer can help them through the hardships

## Forming and Maintaining Friendships with Peers

Young carers may have difficulty forming and maintaining friendships with their peers for the following reasons.

- Lack of time to develop common interests with their peers;
- Awareness of the social stigma attached to the illness of their family member.
- Commitment to their caring responsibilities at home makes it difficult for young carers to engage with their peers and enjoy the same freedom to socialise. It is also difficult for them to share their view of life as their friends struggle to comprehend their existence or may even be thinking that they are lying.
- Conflicting feelings about bringing friends home, wondering what they will think of the ill family member and wanting to protect their family member from any distress.

## Social, Cultural and Leisure Activities

Many young carers go without the regular sporting and cultural activities their peers enjoy. This may be because of all or some of the following reasons:

- Financial constraints.
- The medical needs of the ill relative make it impossible to leave the home and/or attend activities regularly or consistently.
- Lack of transport is a common restriction in young carers' families. Regardless of whether they have a vehicle or not, the complexities of their family member's condition, may mean that they are unsure whether there will be anyone available to drive.
- Child-care responsibilities for younger siblings.

