

Appendix 1:

Guidance for supporting a young carer of a person with dementia

This information is taken from the Australian website www.dementiainmyfamily.org.au. It is aimed at supporting a young carer's parents to approach the subject and recognise the needs of the young carer, but is applicable for those offering support in different ways and who might not be family members.

- Be honest and keep them informed of what's happening, take time to answer their questions.
- Be willing to listen, even if you don't like what they have to say.
- Keep routines and activities going as much as possible.
- It can be helpful to share how you are feeling, particularly if you're feeling the same way.
- Allow them to be their age and not take on too much adult responsibility.
- Have open conversations with a trusted teacher at school about what is happening in the family.
- Encourage them to identify trusted people they can talk to.
- Provide ongoing reassurance and support. It's not uncommon for things to surface later on.
- Encourage them to think of things that make them feel OK – reading, singing, listening to music, exercising, talking with a friend.

In 2010 the Department of Health in England published the document: **'Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carer's Strategy'**.¹⁵ In recognition of the needs and experiences of young carers the document identifies that:

"Inappropriate caring roles or long hours of caring are likely to have a detrimental impact on young carers' lives, including their health and educational achievement. Young carers should be supported to achieve their potential and to have the same opportunities that other young people enjoy."

"Young carers are often strongly attached to their caring role and in some cases it is only with assertive support from teachers, personal tutors, young carers' services or family members that they can be encouraged to accept help to reduce the impact of their caring role."