

YC² Buckingham & Winslow Young Carers Youth Club meets on the 3rd Friday of each month at Buckingham Youth Centre.

There are currently 21 members aged between 8 and 18 years and the club offers social, leisure and learning opportunities for children and young people who have significant personal caring responsibilities for a family member or members. This includes helping with a sibling or parent who has physical or mental disabilities, or is learning disabled, or with terminal or chronic illness, or who misuses alcohol or drugs. The current membership covers all these circumstances.

Their official title is YC2 and they cover Buckingham and Winslow and all the villages surrounding them.

YC² are part of a registered charity-Community Care North Bucks which also covers the adults carers group-North Bucks Carers and the Hospital Car Service.

The people who run the club are all volunteers although Bucks Youth Services (Part of Bucks County Council) have assigned their trained youth worker Jim Whatmore to support the club sessions-which is immensely useful as he is a font of all knowledge on the huge amount of legislation required when providing a service for children and young people.

Most of their referrals are from CarersBucks, based in Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and High Wycombe, though they now are receiving referrals from schools, parents and other voluntary groups. CarersBucks do not provide any youth club resources in the North of the County which is why; although they do not provide financial support they do help in other ways e.g. they assign one of their paid staff to help with transport.

What YC² means to young carers:

"Taking some time out just for yourself is very important and there is help available for you and opportunities to meet others who have the same sort of life that you do. "

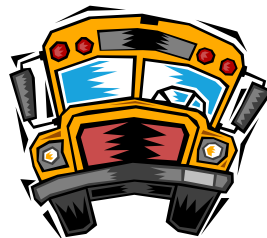
- *Do you look after someone in their family who has an illness, a disability, a mental health problem or some type of addiction problem?*
- *Maybe you take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult?*
- *If you take care of a parent then you may not want to worry them by talking about your feelings.*
- *This responsibility may sometimes make you feel worried, affect your schoolwork or even lead you to missing school.*

These are situations that young carers have to cope with on a daily basis. YC² offers the opportunity for the young people to be young people for a short time without having to worry about their family members for whom they care for.

YC² aims to provide a programme of events for young carers in the Buckingham and Winslow are aged between 8-18 years. They meet together to learn new skills, to share experiences, to build on their social skills, building of self esteem and encourage their confidence.

YC² have objectives which they aim to achieve. They do this through a structured activity programme including:

- ? *Arts and creativity*
- ? *Be healthy*
- ? *Enjoy and achieve*
- ? *Health awareness*
- ? *Positive contribution*
- ? *Recreation*
- ? *Stay safe*



Many of the young carers enjoy attending because the club provides a welcoming, warm and safe environment which they know they can have fun in and have a break from being the carer. It gives them a chance to receive something back for all the work that they have given and provided for the people they care for.

The young members are all 'normal' enthusiastic, cheeky, inquisitive young people who appreciate a small opportunity to have some time when they can just be themselves; make a noise, run around, have occasional treats like a trip to the panto, without having to look out for someone else, or be quiet so as not to disturb the person cared for. The club usually needs to arrange transport which is one of their major problems-if the young members are not there helping out at home then someone else has to take over and that often means no one is available from the family to take them to the club.