

Appendix 2

Who Am I? A poem written by young carers in SYC

May I have your attention? A few minutes of your time,
Take a break from your life, I'll tell you how I live mine.
See this face? See this smile? See these eyes open wide?
It's a mask to disguise how I'm feeling inside,
I'm one in twelve in my city, yet it's hard to describe,
But just give me a moment, I promise, I'll try.
I'm a cook; a cleaner; a doctor; a healer,
A helper; a sitter; a supporter; a leader,
By my demeanour, it may not always be clear that I'm needed,
When my mum takes a fall, has a fit or a seizure,
When my brother breaks his toys and I pick up the pieces,
When his autism means that even though I pleaded,
He kicks and he screams and every day this is repeated,
But before bed, I still hug him, because I know he doesn't mean it.
And some might say that this sounds strange,
Why I have all these skills and I don't even get paid,
When I get home from school and make sure the table is laid,
Because my dad is upstairs, still in bed, still afraid,
Oh, I'm sorry, did I not mention?
That his mind is affected by stress and by tension,
Depression that means he requires my attention,
So my homework goes unwritten with no chance of extension.
I shop; I feed; I help shower and bathe,
I wash; I make sure that the beds are all made,
I talk; I listen; I cuddle; I play,
I make sure that the medicine is stored safely away.
And even though I know that those who love me understand,
It's hard to keep up friendships when I have to cancel plans,
When phone calls go unanswered, when they say they'll lend a hand,
Sometimes it feels that it's only me who can.
So thank you for listening, To the words I have to say,
About how I live my life, About what I do each day,
I hope; I dream; I wonder; I pray,
Because I'm a young carer, And I wouldn't have it any other way.