

# Young Carers Practitioner Briefing

**Who are young carers?** Someone under the age of 18 who looks after a relative with an illness, disability, mental health condition, drug, or alcohol dependency. Young carers can often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. These responsibilities can vary according to the circumstances, the amount of care needed, and the family structure.

## Why it matters?

The impact of caring on children/young people is wide ranging and can include:

- Feeling lonely (missing out on friendships, feeling isolated and reluctant to tell anyone about their home circumstances).
- Feeling excluded (difficulty getting to school on time, experiencing bullying, struggling to get involved in activities).
- Feeling overwhelmed (tired, worried, high levels of responsibility with little support).
- Struggling with school/college work, difficult to concentrate to do homework, non-attendance, unable to think about future employment or education.
- Every family is different, but it is important that caring does not stop young people from getting on with their lives or affect their health.

**What can practitioners do if they identify a child/young person who lives with someone in their household with a caring need?** Practitioners should complete the 'Day in my life of a young carer' which has been developed to support practitioners to better understand the young carer and their family's situation. Completing this informs the needs of the child/young person and which service may be best placed to provide support. If it identifies a young carer then in conjunction with the relevant assessment tool a whole family holistic assessment would be undertaken to have a clear understanding of the needs of the whole family. Needs identified through these assessments can often be met by universal or targeted services. If the level of caring is age inappropriate and excessive and there are no safeguarding implications for the child/young person, then a referral should be made to the relevant Adult Social Care Team. If there are safeguarding implications, please discuss with your organisation's safeguarding lead to consider whether a referral to the relevant Children's Social Care.

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) and the [Care Act 2014](#) both address the needs and rights of carers. This includes duties for the identification, assessment, and implementation of a support plan for young carers and parent carers of children/young people under 18 years. Whole family assessment is a new approach to assessing and supporting young carers. It considers the following:

- The impact of the adult's care needs on the child/young person.
- The identification of any child/young person who undertakes a caring role.
- The parenting responsibilities of the adult/s.

Regarding young carers at transition, the following must be considered.

- How to support young carers to prepare for adulthood.
- A person-centred transition plan, including key milestones to achieve.
- The needs of the young carer and how they may change.

If practitioners are assessing a vulnerable adult, it is essential that they ask about potential young carers and ensure they can recognise and respond to any risks to their welfare. Identify how the adult's care needs will be met without relying on children/young people for their care.

Here are a range of resources when working with young carers and their families:

[Day in my Life - Young Carer](#)

[Young Carer Practitioner Briefing](#)

[Manual for Measures of Caring Activities and Outcomes for Children and Young People](#). – contains the Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities (MACA-YC18) a questionnaire that can be used to provide an index of the total amount of caring activity done by the young person, as well as six subscale scores for domestic tasks, household management, personal care, emotional care, sibling care, and financial/practical care. It can be used to obtain a detailed picture of the caring activities undertaken by an individual. The Positive and Negative Outcomes of Caring (PANOC-YC20) a questionnaire that can be used to provide an index of positive and negative outcomes of caring. These assessment tools provide practitioners with structured frameworks to evaluate the extent of caregiving responsibilities, the impact on the individual, and the positive and negative outcomes associated with the role of young carers. By utilising these tools effectively, practitioners can design more informed and targeted interventions to provide appropriate support, enhance well-being, and alleviate potential burdens faced by young carers.

[My Life Now: Individual Assessment and Planning Tool for Young Carers](#)

[Young Carer Mental Health Toolkit](#)

For more information and guidance please access the [Pan Bedfordshire Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures](#)



56%

OF YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG ADULT CARERS SAID THE TIME THEY SPEND CARING HAS INCREASED IN THE LAST YEAR

CARERS TRUST



56%

SAID THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS IS EITHER 'ALWAYS' OR 'USUALLY' AFFECTING THEM AND THEIR FAMILY



47%

NOW CARE FOR MORE PEOPLE THAN THEY USED TO



44%

'ALWAYS' OR 'USUALLY' FEEL STRESSED BECAUSE OF BEING A YOUNG CARER OR YOUNG ADULT CARER



45%

WHO WORK 'ALWAYS' OR 'USUALLY' STRUGGLE TO BALANCE CARING WITH PAID WORK



40%

OF YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG ADULT CARERS SAID CARING 'ALWAYS' OR 'USUALLY' AFFECTS HOW MUCH TIME THEY CAN SPEND WITH THEIR FRIENDS



40%

EITHER 'NEVER' OR 'NOT OFTEN' GET HELP IN EDUCATION TO HELP BALANCE CARING AND SCHOOL, COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY WORK

Questions practitioners need to ask themselves.

- Do you always ask an adult accessing Adult Social Care if they have dependents in the household?
- Do you always ask children and young people about their carer status?
- Are you clear about your legal responsibilities?
- Are you clear that this is a safeguarding issue?

**What support are young carers entitled to?**

Under the [Children and Families Act 2014 \(part 5 Section 96\)](#) and the [Young Carers \(Needs Assessments\) Regulations 2015](#), young carers are entitled to an assessment, whatever the level of care they provide. No child/young person should provide inappropriate or excessive care. Under the [Care Act 2014](#), local authorities also have a duty to consider the needs of children/young people living in households where there is an adult who has a disability or impairment that requires help or care as part of a 'whole family assessment'. Practitioners assessing an adult's needs must consider whether there are children/young people in the household and any care roles they may undertake in the home. The [Care Act 2014 \(section 63-65\)](#) also gives rights for young carers aged 16 to 18 who are moving towards adulthood to have their specific needs assessed as to how their role might change. This is called a Transition Assessment. In addition, the [Working Together statutory guidance](#) reinforces the need for agencies to work in partnership to support families with young carers, using a whole family approach. It is important to note, particularly when communicating with young carers and their families, that any assessment offered will be focused on the needs of the young person themselves and will not be an assessment of how well they are carrying out their caring responsibilities. Information on whether a child/young person has been identified as a young carer is collected annually through the school census. Schools do not need to obtain parental or pupil consent to provide this information for the purposes of the census but should respect the wishes and feelings of both children, young people, and their parents.

For further information locally and nationally on supporting young carers and their families:

[Childline](#) - a private, confidential service for children up to the age of 19, by calling 0800 1111 or via online chat or email.

[The Carers Trust](#) offer support and advice, including for young carers and young adult carers.

[Being a young carer: your rights](#) - Social care and support guide produced by the NHS.

[National SIBS website](#) a charity supporting people who grow up with a disabled brother or sister.

[Advice and support for young carers](#) from The Children's Society.

[Carers in Bedfordshire](#) – a registered local charity who help unpaid carers of all ages, across Bedfordshire, with info, support and advice. They offer a reduced service to young carers in Central Bedfordshire. They can register and apply for a grant also attend our family activities. Central Bedfordshire council have their own in-house young carers service.

[CHUMS](#) - The Young Carers Service supports children and young people aged 5-25 in Luton who have a practical caring role for a parent or sibling.