

**YOUNG
CARERS**

HELPING

Identifying and supporting young carers

**A toolkit for
professionals**



WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU



**Doncaster
Council**

www.doncaster.gov.uk/youngcarers

This booklet has been created to enable you to help young people who are providing care for a family member at home and suggests a range of ways that you can provide or access support for young carers.

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Introduction

Practitioners can make a huge difference to the experiences and outcomes of young carers through their positive relationships and the care and understanding they show.

The pack is designed to be used by any professional who works with children and/or young people as a guide to help identify, assess and support young carers. It includes information and tools to be able to do all of these things.

The young carers team can provide support both to professionals and young carers this includes, information, advice and signposting, an appropriate assessment (Outcome Star) to identify the caring needs and support required, 1:1 support for the young person, advocacy, group work, support with transitions, social groups and

activities during the school holidays.

Foreword

"We are determined to raise awareness of young carers by working with you to ensure young carers are identified and have the support they need.

The role of young carers often goes unnoticed and taking on a caring role may affect a young person's education and enjoyment of their childhood



Please don't underestimate the difference you as an individual can make to the life of young carer, or the impact of the partnership work you are involved in and let's all work together

to ensure young carers feel supported.

Councillor Nuala Fennelly
Children, young people and schools



“After school, I pick my cousin’s up from primary school, make tea and help with their homework as my Aunty is disabled. When I get home I help mum with my brother. Once I have made tea for us, I start to revise for my GCSEs but I am usually very tired by then.

Young carer, age 16.



Who is a young carer?

A young carer is a child or young person who provides regular and on-going care and emotional support to a family member with physical or mental health problems, has a disability, or misuses drugs or alcohol. This does not mean the everyday and occasional help around the home that many young people are often expected to give within families.

The key feature of being a 'young carer' is that the caring responsibilities continues over time and can make a young carer vulnerable, when the level of care and their responsibility to the person they look after, becomes excessive or inappropriate and risks impacting on emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and life chances.

Young carers often:

- Help family members to get up, get washed, get dressed or help them with toileting
- Do lots of household chores like shopping, cleaning, cooking
- Stay in the house a lot to provide emotional support.
- Look after brothers and sisters
- Sort household bills
- Support a family member who misuses drug or alcohol.

Did you know?

In Doncaster, there are at least

720
young
carers



1 in 20

young carers miss school because of their caring responsibilities



63%

of young carers in Doncaster care for their mother



21%

of young carers in Doncaster care for a sibling

The Children's Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014 give local councils and their partners the duty to 'take reasonable steps' to identify young carers, to assess their caring responsibilities.

"I wake up at 5:45 am every morning to get my brother and sister washed, dressed and get their breakfast before I get my mum up. I put the washing on and then I get myself ready for school."

Young carer, age 13.



Often young carers feel positive in relation to their caring role and proud to be a young carer, they can feel happy and proud of the support they provide within the family.

However, the things young carers experience have may have an effect on their education.

Young carers research tells us:

- 27% of young carers (aged 11-15) miss school or experience educational difficulties (40% where children care for a relative with drug or alcohol problems) (Dearden, C, Becker, S, 2004).
- They have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (Children's Society, 2013).
- A quarter of young carers said they were bullied at schools because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).

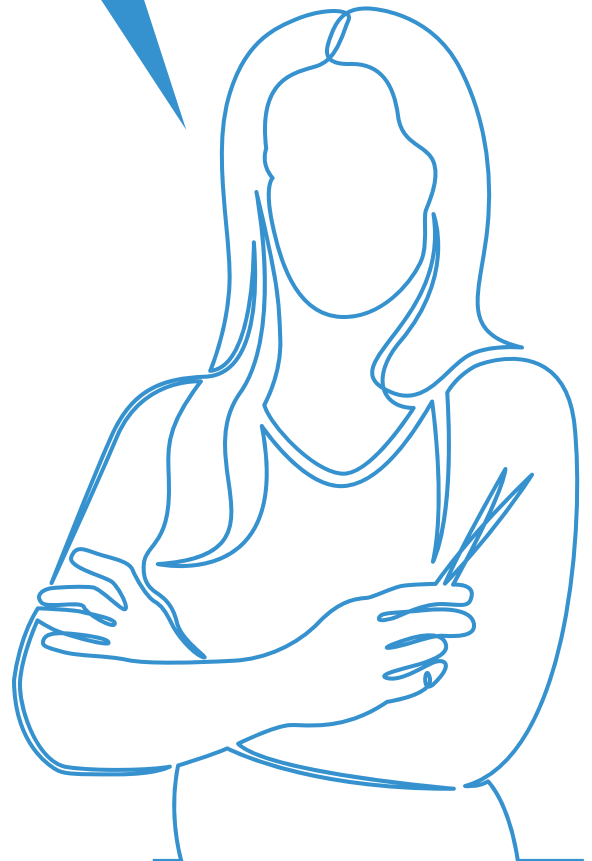
They may also feel socially isolated, stressed, anxious, have low self-esteem and confidence, may appear tired or withdrawn.

If you recognise these behaviours in a child or young person then consider if the young person may be a young carer.

“Mam has epileptic fits and my brother is in a wheelchair. I care for them, helping with hospital appointments and making sure they have their meals.

I'm happy caring. It's for my family and I'm the strongest one.”

Young carer, age 13.



How to identify a young carer

It may be difficult to identify a child or young person as a young carer because we know that many do not identify themselves as young carers.

This may be because the role they carry out is normal for them and they do not realise that they are doing above what others their age do or it may be because of concerns about being singled out as different and worry about bullying.

There are many reasons why children and young people do not want to identify as a young carer:

- They worry that the family will be split up and taken into care.
- They want to keep it a secret and/or are embarrassed about the person who is ill or has disabilities.
- They may not realise that they are carers or that life is different to that of their peers.
- They don't want to be any different from their peers.
- There has been no opportunity to share their story.
- They are worried about bullying.
- They see no reason or positive actions occurring as a result of telling their story. Young carers are not easy to identify and many will actively try to conceal their caring role.

There are some signs that a person in may be a young carer:

- Can have a poor attendance record at school
- Isolates themselves
- Behavioural problems

Or no signs at all.

Not all children/young people will show signs of being a young carer, this may be fear of being bullied, singled out or fear that if they admit they are providing a care role they may be taken out of the home.

"I'm sometimes tired in school and find it hard to concentrate because I have been up in the night helping my mum to look after my brother.

Young carer age 11

Training

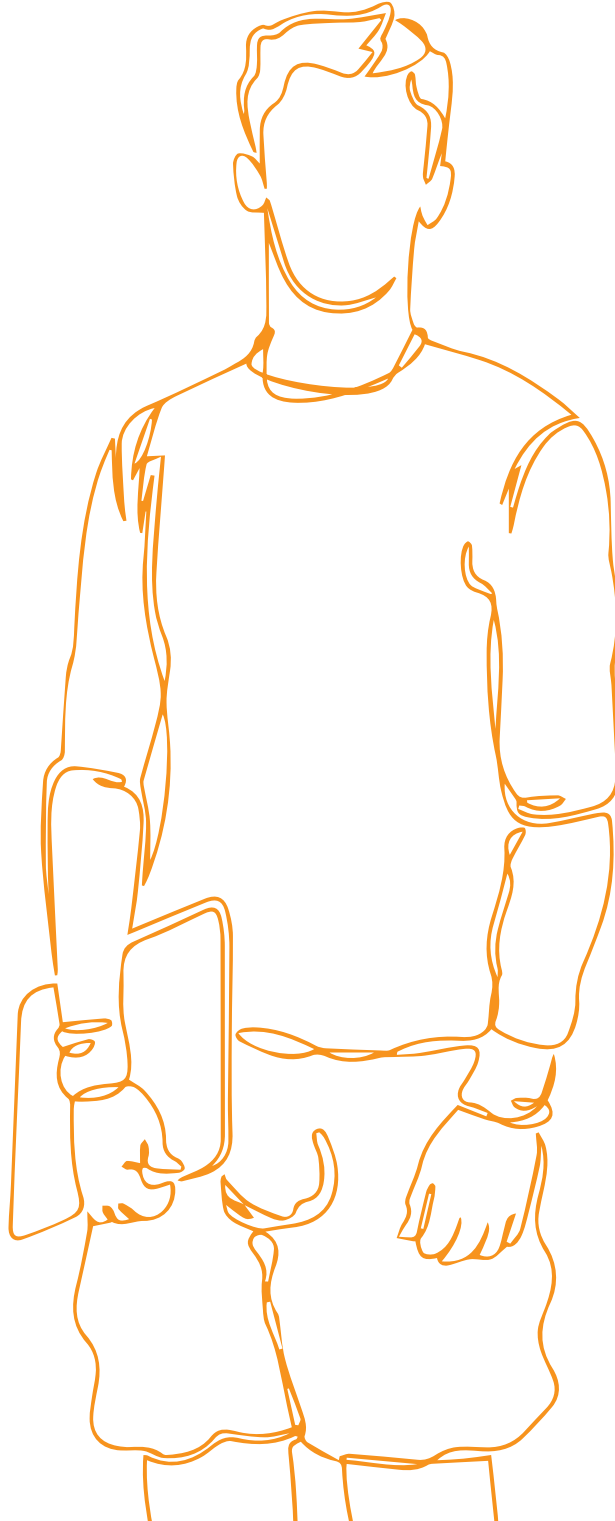
The young carers team run training sessions to provide you with the tools and knowledge to help to identify young carers, we provide a full day training session for individual staff or teams. The sessions are available to book online

buy.doncaster.gov.uk/training

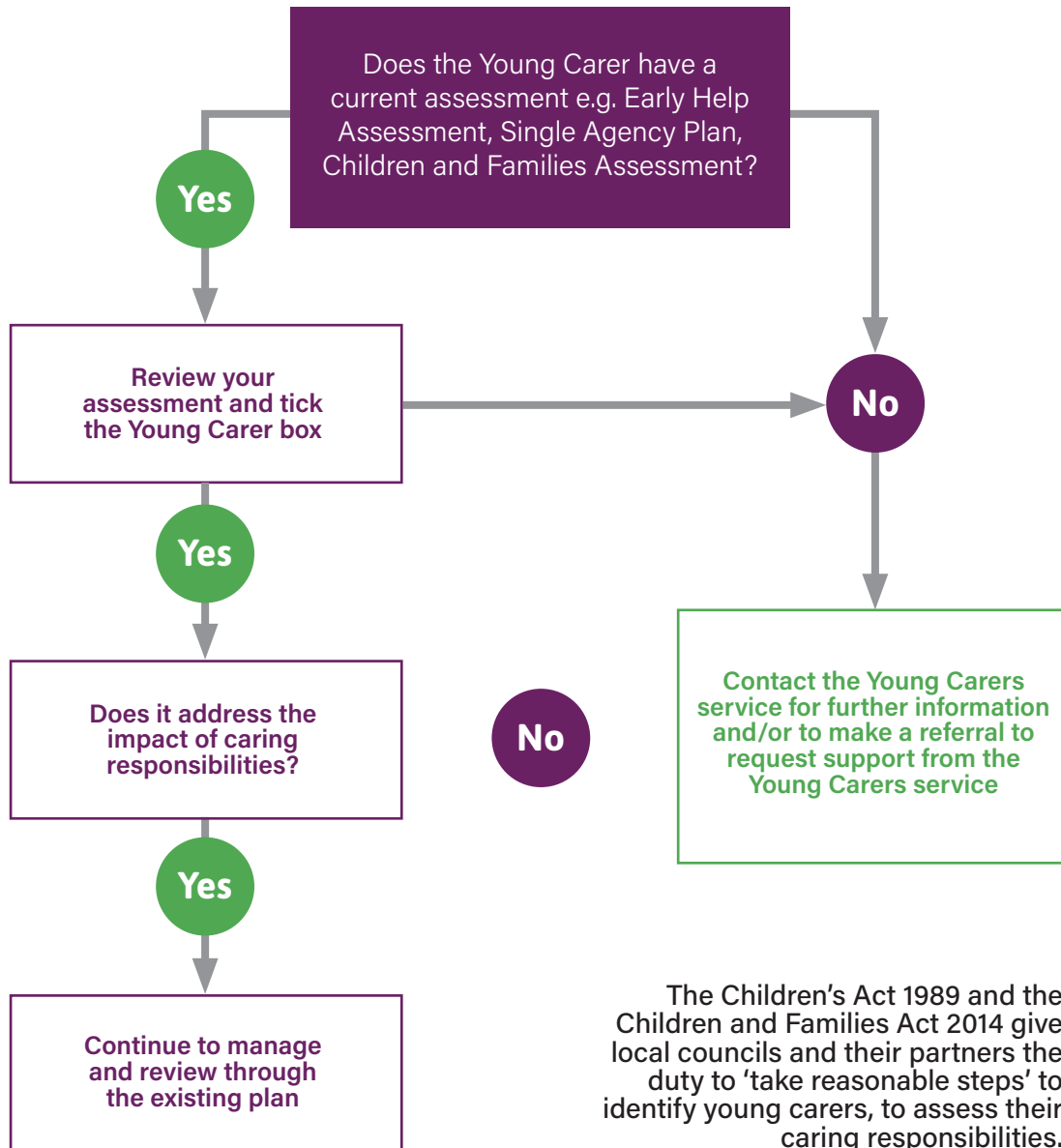
We also provide a presentation outlining the key points of identifying a young carer and the support available for both you and them which can be shared.

If you identify a young carer please follow the pathway on the next page.

If you have any questions or concerns then either ring the Young Carers team on [01302 736099](tel:01302736099) or email: young.carers@doncaster.gov.uk



Young Carers Pathway



If you need any help, support or information regarding Young Carers, please make contact directly to the Young Carers team on: 01320 736099 or email young.carers@doncaster.gov.uk

How can you help? Tips on how to start a conversation

- Are you someone the child trusts and knows well?
- Consider the setting the conversation is taking place in
- Avoid formal language
- Explain the term young carer without telling the child they are a young carer
- Ask them what a typical day is for them

The most important thing that young carers tell us they need from people in school is for them to listen. This is a direct quote from a young carer: **'Don't dismiss anything a child says, take it seriously and listen'**

Things you can do Next steps and referral to the service

Explain to the young person that there is help and support that they can access both from the school and from other services. If the young person would like to access this then it is important to talk to the parent/s about this.

Again consider the points above when talking to the parent. Many parents feel worried or feel guilty that their child has a caring role so it can be helpful to point out that consent for their child to be supported in the first instance is the action of a caring parent. Explain the benefits of gaining support such as the DNA card, social groups for the young person and activities during the school holidays.

Once the parent has given consent, email the completed referral form to:
young.carers@doncaster.gov.uk.

Or if you have any questions then ring us on: 01302 736099





YOUNG CARERS

YOUNG
OUTSTANDING
UNPAID
NEEDED
GENEROUS

CARING
AMAZING
RESILIENT
ESSENTIAL
RESPECTED
STRONG

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