



**North East Lincolnshire  
Safeguarding Children Partnership**

**Memorandum of Understanding:  
Working Together to Support  
Young Carers, Parent Carers  
and their Families**

**October 2024**

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## 1. Key Principles

As Children's and Adult's Social Services and the Integrated Care Board, we are committed to the principle that there should be "no wrong doors" for carers and their families; young and parent carers should be identified, assessed and their families supported.

We therefore commit through this memorandum of understanding to the below principles of adopting a whole system, whole family approach to ensure we are identifying and providing support for all young carers, young adult carers, parent carers and their families.

We will achieve this through working across our local health and care system, in partnership with our wider health partners, local carers' organisations and education providers, promoting a proactive approach, where support is offered at the earliest opportunity. We will work together to fulfil our legal duties to young carers, young adult carers, and parent carers and ensure that the following key principles underpin practice across our system:

- The primary responsibility for responding to the needs of young carers, young adult carers and parent carers, and ensuring an appropriate assessment is completed by the most appropriate agency, rests with the service responsible for assessing the person they support, rather than depending on the age of the carer.
- Practitioners across Adult Social Care, Children's Services and health settings working with individuals with care and support needs and their families have an equally important role in identifying potential young or parent carers at the earliest opportunity.
- The starting point should be to assess the needs of the adult or child who needs care and support and then see what remaining needs for support a young or parent carer in the family has.
- The presence of a carer in the family will always constitute an appearance of need and should trigger either an assessment, or the offer of an assessment, to the person needing care.
- A 'whole-family' approach is key when assessing an adult or child needing care. The cared for person's assessment and eligibility for support should take into account the impact of the care and support needs on the family. Where there are children in the family providing care to an adult or undertaking wider caring responsibilities, the adult's parenting responsibilities should be taken into account.
- Where young carers are identified, assessments should ascertain why a child is caring and what needs to change in order to prevent them from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities which could impact adversely on their welfare, education, or social development.
- Assessments of parent carers should consider how appropriate it is for the parent to provide, or continue to provide, care for a disabled child, and consider the parent's needs for support, wellbeing, and wishes. Assessments should take into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children and any other child for whom the parent carer has parental responsibility.
- The views of both adults and children within the family should be sought separately where appropriate, so as to ensure individual family members have the opportunity to speak openly about their situation and need for support.

- Consideration must be given to whether a young carer is a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989, and whether their welfare or development may suffer if support is not provided to them and/or their family.
- Consideration must be given to whether a parent carer under the Children & Families Act 2014, Care Act 2014, and associated regulations and guidance, has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are.
- Practitioners should have a professional level of understanding around safeguarding and the needs of young or parent carers, and partnership training around this be available to practitioners.

The commitments in this Memorandum apply equally to young carers up to the age of 18, and to young adult carers until the age of 25, as we recognise that young carers may require more focused support during the period they are making the transition to adulthood.

We will ensure that commitments in this Memorandum are reflected in all relevant local strategies, commissioning and operationally. We will put a clear plan in place to ensure that these commitments are reflected in practice. The Memorandum will be annually reviewed to ensure it reflects any changes in systems, legislation and policy, or needs of young and parent carers.

## 2. Our Local Context

The [2021 Census](#) suggests that 14,057 people are providing care to another person as informal carers in North East Lincolnshire, including 355 school aged children and 570 young adults. Over one third of adult carers are providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week. Nearly one third of young carers and half of young adult carers are providing more than 20 hours of unpaid care per week. The Young Carers Team are working with 252 young carers, the Carers' Support Service are working with 31 young adult carers.

However, we recognise that many carers go unidentified due to [family loyalty, stigma, bullying, and not knowing where to seek support](#). As many as 1 in 5 children could be young carers, according to [national research](#), an estimate of around 4,916 children in North East Lincolnshire. As many as 9,500 adults are [still to be identified](#) as carers in North East Lincolnshire.

We know that caring responsibilities have an impact on our young carers, young adult carers and parent carers. Both young and adult carers are more likely to report [a long-term mental health condition](#) or [poor mental health](#) in national research. On average, a young carer [misses 23 days of school](#) per year and has [significantly lower attainment](#) at GCSE level. 4 in 10 working age carers are [less likely to be working](#) as much as those without caring responsibilities. Our young carers have told us that they have experienced stress carrying extra responsibility and worry about the person they care for. Doing homework, focusing on school, and having time for friendships have all been described as more difficult by our young carers.

Young carers and parent carers are identified through self or family referral, children's services and partners including education settings, health settings, community and voluntary organisations.

Within Children's Services, young carers needs are assessed through multi-agency Early Help Assessments or a children's services assessment where open to a social worker. The Young Carers Team provides support through self-assessments, one-to-one drop-ins, group work, and seasonal activities. Parent carers needs are assessed through a Child and Family Assessments by the Children's Disability Service which considers the impact on the parent carer in meeting the needs of the child, the welfare of all children and parents, the ability of parent carers to work and have leisure activities, the network of support, and what further support is needed.

The Care Plus Group, Navigo and Carers' Support Service provide a range of support to young adult and parent carers. This includes emotional support, dedicated key workers, groups, befriending, training, advocacy, signposting and support when caring ends. Young adult and parent carers can access information and advice, benefits advice, emotional support, counselling, and holistic therapies via the Carers' Support Service.

The North East Lincolnshire Carers' Strategy 2023-26 outlines current strategic priorities around young carers, young adult carers and parent carers:

- Dedicated work to focus on identifying and recognising carers and providing information for all carers at any point within their caring journey.
- Strengthening the culture and practice of our workforce supporting carers.
- Ensuring access to assessments and provision of efficient and effective carer support.
- Supporting carers' education, training and employment.
- Tackling carer inequalities.
- Including and engaging carers in the design, delivery and monitoring of carer and non-carer support services and the work of the Carers' Partnership.

For more information, see the [North East Lincolnshire Carers' Strategy 2023-26](#).

### 3. Identifying Carers and Promoting Their Wellbeing

We will actively promote a whole-system approach for identifying young and parent carers across our population and promoting their wellbeing, including within education and the wider community.

We will ensure a regular programme of carer awareness-raising activity, with a particular focus on health, social care and education.

All professionals working with families are required to consider any children in the family or household and whether a child or parent is providing care to an adult or child and is in need of support.

We will ensure that practitioners working with both adults and children have access to training to help them identify young and parent carers and know what support is available locally.

## 4. Young Carers Assessment and Support

We commit to the principle that the aim of assessments and support for young carers is to ensure that no young carer is taking on inappropriate or excessive levels of caring responsibilities, and to ensure that their education/employment, health, wellbeing or wider life opportunities are not negatively impacted by caring.

Young Carers Needs Assessments will be available for any young carer who requests one or who appears to require one.

We will ensure that information, advice, support and services are available to all young carers and their families in our local area. This includes, where appropriate, support through local young carers' services, young adult carers projects, carers support services or universal services. Through a combination of commissioning and social work practice, we will ensure that support for young carers is not provided in isolation, but using a whole-family approach.

We will produce clear referral pathways so that young carers and their families and professionals know what support is available for them, and how to access information and advice, assessments and support. We will work with partners in the community, such as faith organisations and community groups to ensure that information for young carers is easily accessible.

Our transitions process will support any young carer approaching adulthood who appears that they may have need for support when they turn 18. We will ensure all system partners have a shared understanding about what constitutes 'inappropriate' or 'excessive' caring responsibilities and what the local response will be when this is identified. We will also ensure there is a shared understanding around the position regarding the need for parental consent in order for young carers to access support.

Where there are any concerns about a young carer's or other children's and/or vulnerable adults' safety, these will be addressed swiftly in line with our local safeguarding arrangements.

We will make clear the arrangements for reviews of assessments in case the circumstances of the young carer or the person they are caring for has changed (e.g. amount of care being provided has increased or decreased).

For further information on local support available to young carers, see [SaferNEL guidance on carers](#), the [SEND Local Offer](#), advice from the [Carers' Support Centre](#), or contact the Young Carers Team at [familyhelprequests@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:familyhelprequests@nelincs.gov.uk).

## 5. Parent Carers Assessment and Support

We commit to the principle that the aim of parent carers assessment and support is to ensure that it is appropriate for parents to provide, or continue to provide, care for their disabled child and safeguard all children for whom the parent carer has parental responsibility.

Parent Carers Needs Assessments will be available for any parent carer who requests one or who appears to require one. Parent Carers Needs Assessments may be completed as a holistic assessment of a child 'in need', including all disabled children, under the Children Act 1989 and take account the needs of other family members. Parent carers have the right to a standalone assessment under the Children & Families Act 2014.

We will ensure that information, advice, support and services, including short breaks, are available to all parent carers and their families in our local area. This includes, where appropriate, support through programmes by the Carers Support Centre, Care Plus Group and Navigo, the SEND Local Offer, or universal services.

Where there are any concerns about a child's and/or vulnerable adults' safety, these will be addressed swiftly in line with our local safeguarding arrangements.

We will make clear the arrangements for reviews of assessments in case the circumstances of the parent carer or the person they are caring for has changed (e.g. amount of care being provided has increased or decreased).

For further information on local support available to parent carers, see [SaferNEL guidance on carers](#), the [SEND Local Offer](#), the local [short breaks offer](#), advice from the [Parent Carer Forum](#), advice from the [Carers' Support Centre](#), or contact the Adult Social Care Single Point of Access on 01472 256 256.

## 6. Transition to Adulthood

For young carers transitioning to adulthood, we recognise that they may have different support needs as young adult carers.

We will ensure that local activity to increase identification of young carers also includes stakeholders relevant to young adult carers, such as further and higher education providers, and training providers/employers.

We will ensure that our transitions process supports young carers as they approach adulthood where it appears they may need support when they turn 18.

We will ensure that there is a range of support available which meets the specific needs of young adult carers. We will also ensure that any staff providing support to young adult carers have the knowledge and training to properly understand the needs of this group of carers.

For parent carers whose disabled children are transitioning to adulthood, we recognise that their needs as a carer may be impacted by the changing circumstances.

We will ensure that our transitions process includes an adult care transition assessment under the Care Act 2014 where there is significant benefit to a young person or their carer in doing so and they are likely to have needs for care or support after turning 18.

## 7. Information Sharing

We believe that effective and timely information sharing between local partners including health and education is critical to enable effective identification and support for young carers, parent carers and their families.

We will actively pursue opportunities to improve the recording of young carers, young adult carers and parent carers within systems across different settings (e.g. primary care, mental health trusts, education, social care and voluntary sector providers) and the information-sharing between system partners.

Children's and adult social care services will identify ways to improve data-sharing in relation to young adult carers or disabled children transitioning into adult services to reduce the need for young carers or parent carers to tell their stories multiple times.

## 8. Safeguarding and Partnership Working

We will ensure that all practitioners are aware of local safeguarding policy and practice and accept a joint responsibility to work in partnership to identify and respond to any children, including young carers, who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board will be made aware of issues surrounding young and parent carers and of this Memorandum of Understanding.

## 8. Actions and Accountability

The actions from this Memorandum will be fed into the Carers Action Plan and overseen by the Carers Partnership, with updates provided to the Integrated Care Board. These actions complement the actions from the Carers Strategy 2023-2026. Commitments and actions arising from this agreement will be highlighted in evidence for our Ofsted and CQC assurance processes.



## 9. Signatories

Signed  
**Director of Adult Social  
Care**

Signed  
**Director of Children's  
Services**

Signed  
**Chair of Integrated Care  
Board**

Commencement Date:

Review Date:

Publication: This document will be placed on the Council's and Integrated Care Board's websites as part of our commitment to work together on these issues.