



“No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” – Working together to support young carers and their families

Guidance to support the implementation
of the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers”
template Memorandum of Understanding

February 2024

Supported by

ADCS
Leading Children's Services

directors of
adass
adult social services

**CARERS
TRUST**



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Supported by



Department
for Education

CONTENTS

Introduction to the guidance.....	4
“No Wrong Doors” in practice – A case study	7
An overview of the legal and policy context	10
The elements of the MoU.....	12
1. Key principles	12
2. Local context.....	13
3. Identifying young carers and promoting well being.....	14
4. Assessment, information and support.....	19
5. Transition to adulthood.....	29
6. Information sharing	32
7. Safeguarding and partnership working	36
8. Putting these intentions into action and accountability.....	37
Appendix One – Legislation and policy	39

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This version of the template was produced by Carers Trust with the support of a working group comprising stakeholders with experience across social care, health and local carer services. The authors are particularly grateful to the members of this group for their insights and expertise. Any questions surrounding this MoU should be directed to Carers Trust via policy@carers.org. The development of this template was made possible through funding from Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) as Partners in Care and Health.

We are also grateful to invaluable contributions from the ADASS Carers Policy Network, members of the Young Carers Alliance and the support and advice of ADCS, the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England.

Authors

Andy McGowan, Policy and Practice Manager, Carers Trust

John Bangs OBE, Independent Young Carers Policy Consultant
(Appendix)

Professor Luke Clements, Cerebra Professor of Law and Social Justice
(Appendix).

Working group members

Charlie Burke - Be Free Young Carers

Diane White - Independent member

Emma Jones - Southampton City Council

Helen Yates - Derbyshire Carers Association

Janice Clark - Independent member

John Bangs OBE - Independent Young Carers Policy Consultant

Julie Griffiths - YMCA Cardiff

Kerry McKenna - Barnardo's

Laura Greene - Kingston Hospital

Liz Greer - Partners in Care and Health

Sabiene North - Be Free Young Carers

Sara Gowen - Sheffield Young Carers

Sophie Parker - Family Action Leeds Young Carers Support Service

INTRODUCTION

This guidance is designed to support the implementation of the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and help local authorities, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and other system partners ensure they are complying with their statutory duties relating to young carers and young adult carers. It will also help them prepare for Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted assurance processes.

Adopting the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU will also help local authorities to ensure they are complying with the requirements of the Department for Education’s ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023’ statutory guidance.

“Adult social care services should liaise with children’s social care services to ensure that there is a joined-up approach when both carrying out such assessments and in the provision of support to families where there are young carers or parent carers.”

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

This guidance provides further detail and context relating to the different elements of the MoU as well as practice examples and links to relevant legislation, policy and resources.

The “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU is designed to be a template which local systems should adapt to meet their local context.

It is permitted for the scope of the MoU to be broadened to include other groups of carers such as parent carers, particularly given the requirement in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 for a joined-up approach between adult social care services and children’s services in the provision of support when there are parent carers (Section 254).

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the template “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU.

The following colour-coding is used throughout this guidance:

Legislation, policy and guidance

Useful resources

Practice examples

Other useful documents

The following documents may also support local systems in the implementation of the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU:

- ▶ [“No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” - Suggested to-do list](#)
- ▶ **The Care Act and Whole-Family Approaches**
- ▶ **Young Carers’ Needs Assessments - Supporting information**
- ▶ [Young Carers Needs Assessments - Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Transitions Assessments - Checklist](#)

All of these resources can be found at www.carers.org/nowrongdoors

Why is “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” needed?

In addition to supporting local authorities and ICBs to ensure they are able to meet their legislative obligations and meet assurance expectations, implementation of the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU is also needed to ensure that young carers and young adult carers are identified and linked into available support at the earliest opportunity. There is an increasing evidence base which highlights why this is essential:

- The 2021 England and Wales Census found that **14,848 children were caring for more than 50 hours a week**. This figure includes **over 3000 children aged 5 to 9**.
- Young carers caring for over 35 hours a week are **86% less likely to obtain a university degree**, and significantly less likely to enter employment.
- Evidence suggests it takes on average **three years** for a young carer to be identified, with the main source of identification being schools and children’s social care.

- The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers 2023 inquiry highlighted a significant '**postcode lottery**' in relation to how well local authorities are complying with their legal duties in relation to young carers and young adult carers. The inquiry highlighted particular challenges faced by young adult carers and issues in relation to access to transitions assessments, and appropriate support for this group of carers.

What can local authorities and ICBs hope to achieve by implementing the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU

If local authorities and ICBs adopt the MoU and work with all relevant system partners (including education, health organisations and the voluntary sector) to ensure that it is implemented, then the system should expect to see:

- Young carers being identified at an earlier point, with more young carers being identified by health organisations and adult social care, as opposed to children’s social care.
- A reduction in the number of young carers taking on inappropriate or excessive levels of caring responsibilities.
- Improved educational experience (including attendance and attainment) for young carers and young adult carers.
- Fewer young carers and young adult carers experiencing poor physical and mental health.
- Young carers, young adult carers and their families reporting feeling better supported.

“NO WRONG DOORS” IN PRACTICE – A CASE STUDY – LEEDS

In December 2022, Leeds became the first area where all three of the recommended signatories (Adult Social Care, Children’s Social Care and ICB) signed up to the “No Wrong Doors” MoU. The MoU was signed by the Director of Children and Families, Director of Adults and Health and the Accountable Officer for the ICB. In addition, the Executive Member for Adult and Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships and Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board was an additional signatory.

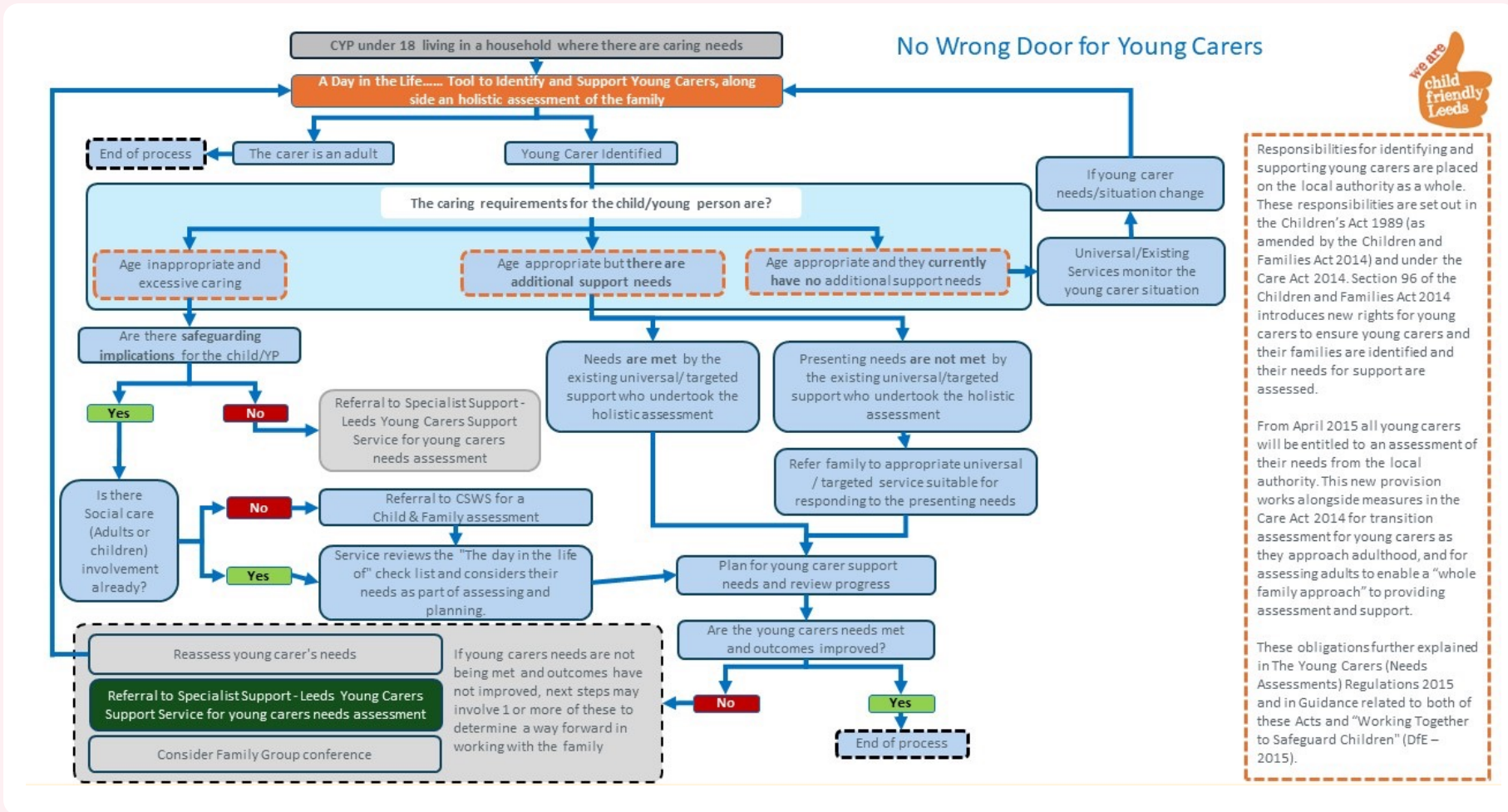
As part of the process, the multi-agency Young Carers Working Group produced a “No Wrong Doors” pathway and a new [“A Day in the Life of...”](#) tool to identify and support young carers and provide a holistic assessment of the family’s needs.

The “No Wrong Doors pathway” reflects that the first service to have contact with a family where there are caring needs and children under the age of 18 has the responsibility to assess and gain an understanding of the whole families support needs. The “Day in the Life of...” brief assessment tool was developed with the commissioned Family Action Leeds Young Carers Support Service to assist any practitioner across adults and children’s social care, and health services, to better understand what care is being provided, the impact and to inform next steps of provision and support at the earliest opportunity. Underpinning the pathway is a robust training package delivered across all sectors. This includes the We Are Young Carer Friendly Leeds programme which is a Young Carer Friendly Quality Mark that any setting can acquire and shows a commitment to adhering to a set of good practice principles as outlined in the MoU as how to identify and support young carers and their families.

Commissioning of the Young Carers Support Service was updated to reflect the “No Wrong Doors” approach and pathway. Support for young carers is now provided by a combination of universal/targeted/early help services and the specialist Leeds Young Carers Support Service run by Family Action. Family Group Conferencing was also incorporated within the “No Wrong Doors” pathway as a potential offer to young carers and their families. There is a Young Adult Carer project for 16-25 year olds across the city, provided by Carers Leeds.

Since the MoU has been signed off, the Young Carers Working Group continues to meet to progress actions which have arisen from the MoU. There is a big focus on increasing awareness and identification across health services, and there are a variety of health partners represented in the working group. There has also been a focus on practice development to ensure the principles are reflected.

No Wrong Door for Young Carers - Pathway



LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS YOUNG CARERS, YOUNG ADULT CARERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The need to identify, support and involve young carers and young adult carers is reflected in a range of legislation, guidance and policy. This need is also reflected in assurance frameworks for both the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted.

Adopting and implementing the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU will significantly help adult social care, children’s social care and ICBs to evidence how they are meeting legislative requirements.

Local authorities and ICBs are subject to specific legal duties, as are other settings such as hospitals.

Below is an overview of the legislation, policy and frameworks which contain provision relating to young carers and young adult carers. Further detail can be found in Appendix One. Local authorities and ICBs should ensure these requirements are being reflected in local strategies, commissioning and practice. All relevant system partners should have a good understanding of what their obligations towards young carers and young adult carers are.

Legislation, guidance and policy which contain provisions relating to young carers and young adult carers

Legislation	Guidance	Other policy documents/ frameworks
Care Act 2014	Care and Support statutory guidance (Department of Health and Social Care)	Adult Social Care Assurance framework (CQC)
Care and Support (Assessment) Regulations 2014	Hospital discharge and community support guidance (Department of Health and Social Care)	Core20PLUS5 - An approach to reducing health inequalities for children and young people (NHS England)
Children Act 2014 (as modified by Children and Families Act 2014)	Improving the mental health of babies, children and young people: a framework of modifiable factors (Department of Health and Social Care)	Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework (Ofsted)
Health and Care Act 2022	Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education)	NHS Long-term Plan (NHS England)
The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015	Working in partnership with people and communities (NHS England)	
	Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department for Education)	

THE “NO WRONG DOORS FOR YOUNG CARERS” MOU

1. Key principles

Who are young carers and young adult carers?

A young carer is “a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except generally where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work)”.

(section 17ZA Children Act 1989)

Young adult carers are aged 16 to 25 and may have different support needs as they transition to adulthood”

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

For the purposes of the MoU, this definition means caring for or supporting someone who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances. This memorandum also applies to young adult carers transitioning from children’s services to adult services.

Who should be signatories to the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU?

As a minimum, the template MoU sets out that the signatories should be:

1. Director of Adult Social Care Services

2. Director of Children’s Social Care Services

3. Chief Executive/Chair of the Integrated Care Board

Where one person is director for both children’s and adult social care services, the memorandum template will still be relevant for use by their operational leads for adults and children’s social care within the authority.

Local systems should also consider which other system partners should be signatories based on the local context, structures and priorities in relation to young carers and young adult carers. The following is a non-exhaustive list of system partners who local authorities and ICBs might consider including within their MoU.

Other potential signatories to the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU

- Drug and alcohol service(s)
- Early help/family support if separate to children’s social care
- Education
- Hospital trusts
- Local carer organisation(s) – This should include organisations who provide assessments and/or support to adult carers
- Mental health trust
- Primary care representative
- Public health representative

2. Local context

This section of the MoU is where systems should set out their local context relating to young carers and young adult carers.

In order to record the estimated number of young carers and young adult carers, systems may wish to refer to the following sources of data:

- England and Wales Census data
- School census figures
- Numbers of identified young carers within children’s social care
- Numbers of young carers and young adult carers known to local young carer services.

The Census and School Census are both widely believed to represent significant under-representations of the number of young carers and young adult carers. Carers Trust has analysed a variety of data sources, including those where young people were asked about caring responsibilities (including the UK Household Longitudinal Study and Sutton Trust’s Covid Social Mobility and Opportunities [COSMO] Study). These studies suggest that between 8% and 12% of young people may have caring responsibilities.

3. Identifying young carers and promoting well being

Local authorities have a legal duty to “take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are young carers within their area who have needs for support.” (section 17ZA[12] Children Act 1989). This duty is one which applies to the local authority as a whole, rather than solely children’s services, and regulations and statutory guidance both make clear the specific requirements for local authority services to adults:

“If it appears to a local authority carrying out an assessment that a child is involved in providing care to any individual, the local authority must—

(a) consider the impact of the needs of the individual concerned on the child’s well-being, welfare, education and development; and
(b) identify whether any of the tasks which the child is performing for the individual are inappropriate for the child to perform having regard to all the circumstances.

(Care and Support [Assessment] Regulations 2014, Regulation 4[3])

“In such cases, or when requested by a parent or the young carer, the authority is under a duty to conduct a young carers’ needs assessment under section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989”

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Paragraph 252)

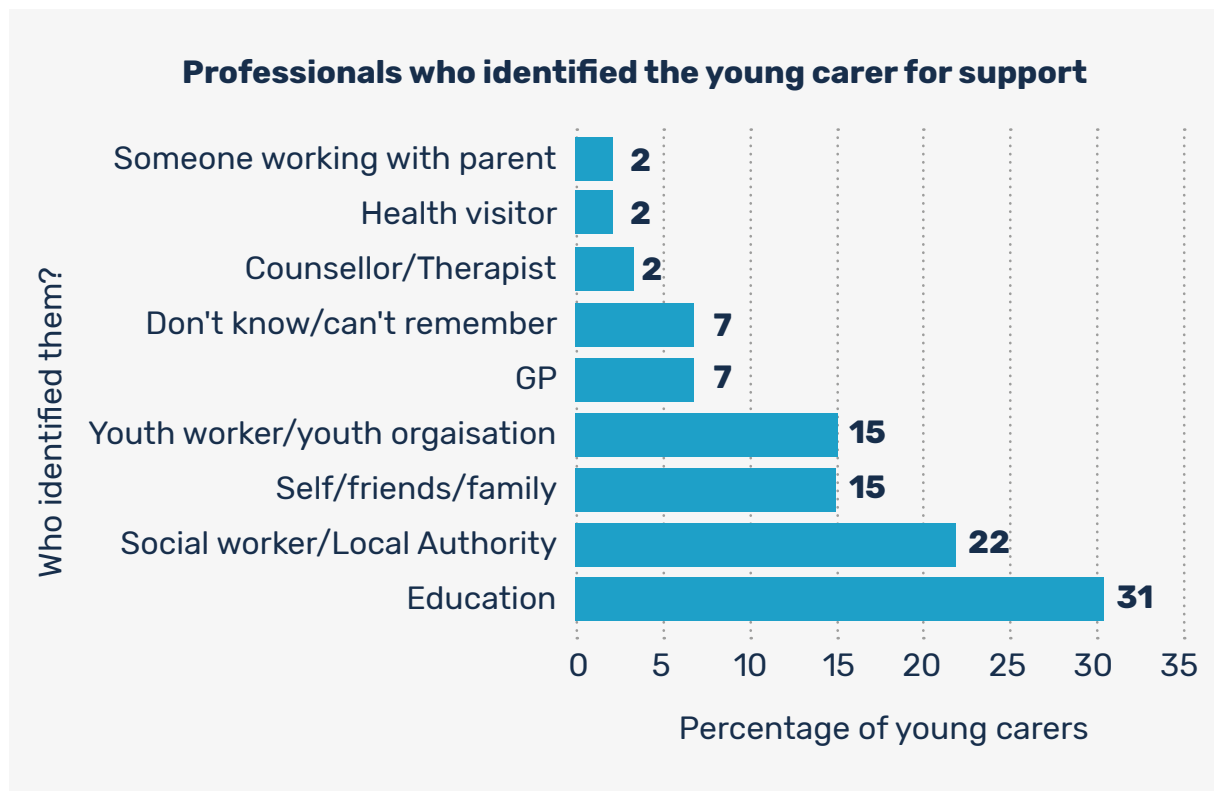
The [Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services \(ILACS\) framework](#) also emphasises the need for local authorities to be identifying young carers:

“A local authority is likely to be judged good if...Professionals identify children and young people in need of help and protection, including young carers.”

(Ofsted ILACS framework, paragraph 268)

A [snapshot survey by the Young Carers Alliance](#)¹ in 2022 found that on average young carers were caring for three years before being identified, with some young carers caring for over 10 years before being linked into support. The poll also highlighted how young carers were being identified.

1 The Young Carers Alliance is a network of over 200 organisations and 500 individuals, hosted by Carers Trust, which seeks to improve support for young carers and young adult carers
– www.youngcarersalliance.org.



Local authorities and ICBs should support a proactive awareness-raising programme to improve identification of young carers and young adult carers, particularly those under-represented within local carer services. Awareness-raising activity should also focus on settings with low referral rates.

Supporting young carers from hidden and seldom heard groups:

A literature review ([Download](#))

As part of the Carers Action Plan 2018-2020, the Department of Health and Social Care commissioned The Children's Society to evidence whether and how increased identification of young carers from disadvantaged and seldom heard groups can be achieved. The report contains a variety of recommendations from the literature review related to improving or enabling the identification and engagement of young carers.

All practitioners who work with children, as well as those working with adults with health and/or care and support needs, have a key role in identifying young carers.

Children's Services, Adult Social Care Services and ICBs should all ensure that any assessments of people with health, care or support needs ask whether there are children in the same household as the person being assessed and, if there are, to establish how much, if any care and support is undertaken by the children.

Practitioners responsible for assessing people with care needs should identify how it will be possible to support the person in need of care so that children and young people are not relied on to provide excessive or inappropriate care. Practitioners must know how to respond where they have concerns that children are, or may be, suffering significant harm.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

"When staff are providing services to adults, they should ask whether there are children in the family and take actions to respond if the children need help or protection from harm."

(Paragraph 251)

"Local authority services to adults must consider whether any children are providing care to the adult and whether the young carers are in need of support." **(Paragraph 252)**

The Local Authority and ICB should seek to ensure that commissioned services are:

- Alert to the need to identify potential young carers
- Providing any support to the families appropriate to the provider's own service, and
- Providing information about assessments/support available, and where appropriate, making referrals.

NHS staff in hospitals and community health providers should be appropriately trained/ briefed, so that they are aware of the needs of young carers and know how to refer for support. Young carers need to be consulted with (as is age appropriate) and their needs considered in health service assessments for ongoing or future support. This includes in relation to hospital discharge, continuing health care, community mental health and consideration of provision of personal health budgets.

System partners should also identify opportunities to raise awareness with other key local stakeholders, such as family hubs, the police and housing.

Local authorities should ensure that awareness-raising is an activity which is specifically included within young carer and adult carer services, whether they are in-house or commissioned services. Plans around how to raise awareness of young carers and young adult carers should be clearly included in local carers' strategies and Integrated Care Strategies. Commissioners of carer support services should be regularly reviewing information on sources of referrals so as to identify priority groups for awareness-raising activity.

Young adult carers and housing – Move on Up

The Care and Support statutory guidance highlights that young adult carers may require advice on housing options or support to help them live in their own home (Paragraph 16.60).

Research by Commonweal Housing, Quaker Social Action and the Learning and Work Institute found that the risk of homelessness amongst young adult carers is often high and hidden.

Examples included:

- Young adult carers in crises
- Tension or breakdowns in family relationships at home
- The person they are caring for passes away or is moved into supported accommodation or a hospice (particularly in cases where the person they care for is the lead tenant).

Move on Up was a housing project for young adult carers, aged 18-25, delivered by Quaker Social Action (QSA) in strategic partnership with Commonweal Housing. Based across four homes in London, it tested a shared housing pathway to independent living, alongside tailored support, in securing positive outcomes for young adult carers.

Their [evaluation of the Move on Up housing project](#) highlights the need for housing considerations in young carers assessments and transition assessments for young adult carers. The report contains recommendations for local authorities as well as local carer organisations and housing providers/homelessness organisations.

Caring Together

Caring Together run a programme of young carer awareness raising training across Norfolk, and Young Adult Carer Awareness-raising training in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. As part of this programme, they have reached a wide range of practitioners in a variety of settings including:

- Hospital discharge teams and outpatients departments
- Trainee social workers, teachers and occupational therapists
- Police
- Learning Disability services
- Mental health trusts
- GP surgeries
- School nurses
- Universities
- Employers
- Libraries
- Reablement teams
- Youth providers.

The first [All-Party Parliamentary Group \(APPG\) for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers inquiry](#) highlighted the need for improved awareness and identification of young carers and young adult carers within health settings and adult social care services.

Young Carers National Voice

Young carers from Young Carers National Voice have created [template wording](#) for mental health service referral forms. They have created wording for both young people's mental health services and adult mental health services.

Template wording for adult mental health services

Adult mental health services:

Our families often get very worried about being asked about their children and whether this will mean social services get involved. If you include these or similar questions on your forms, please make sure you include a clear statement about how this information will be used (and include links to your organisation's privacy or confidentiality policy where relevant).



On referral and/or initial assessment forms:

We're here to help you but also the people who support you when you're ill. If you have children at home:

- Does your illness affect them in any ways? (e.g. their education, wellbeing, friendships etc.)
- Do they get any support around this?
- If not, would this be helpful?
- *If yes, signpost to local young carers service or local council webpage about young carers.*



On referral forms:

Who helps to support you at home when you are ill (if anyone)? This could include your partner, your children, neighbours, friends etc.

4. Assessment, information and support

All young carers have the right to an assessment of their needs. Local authorities must offer a Young Carers Needs Assessment if the young carer or parent requests one, or if there is an appearance of need. This must be offered regardless of who the young carer cares for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it.

Young Carers Needs Assessment Checklist

Carers Trust have produced [a checklist](#) setting out the legal requirements for Young Carers Needs Assessments, as required by the Children Act 1989 and The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015.

The primary responsibility for responding to the needs of young carers and young adult carers, and ensuring an appropriate assessment is completed, rests with the service responsible for assessing the person they support, rather than depending on the age of the carer. This means that:

- Young carers of disabled children are the responsibility of children's services which will also need to undertake carers' assessments for any young adult carers and parent carers who look after disabled children.

- Adult services are required to identify children in the household/ family network and ensure that young carers are not left with inappropriate or excessive levels of caring responsibilities. They also need to undertake carers' assessments for young adult carers and transitions assessments. Adult services are required to refer to children's services where the child is thought to be a child in need or to young carers services or early help where other preventative services are needed.

No assessment should leave a child with inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities which may have a negative impact on their development. The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance sets out when a young carer may become vulnerable as a result of their caring role and tasks which may be deemed as inappropriate.

'Inappropriate' caring

"A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing or their prospects in education and life." This might include:

- preventing the young carer from accessing education, for example because the adult's needs for care and support result in the young carer's regular absence from school or impacts upon their learning
- preventing the young carer from building relationships and friendships
- impacting upon any other aspect of the young carer's wellbeing.

Inappropriate caring responsibilities should be considered as anything which is likely to have an impact on the child's health, wellbeing or education, or which can be considered unsuitable in light of the child's circumstances and may include:

- personal care such as bathing and toileting
- carrying out strenuous physical tasks such as lifting
- administering medication
- maintaining the family budget
- emotional support to the adult.

When a local authority is determining whether the tasks a child carries out are inappropriate, it should also take into account the child's own view wherever appropriate.

(Paragraphs 6.71 to 6.73 Care and Support statutory guidance)

Whole family approach to assessment

A whole family approach should be embedded into local assessments as required by law ². This means making sure any assessment evaluates how the needs of the person being cared for impacts on the needs of the child who is identified as a possible young carer, or on any other child, or on other members of the household. A thorough assessment centered on the family should result in appropriate support being provided for the person in need of care and support. This may result in the young carer being relieved of part or all of his or her caring role. Any remaining unmet support needs for the young carer should then be considered and responded to.

Whole-family approaches

Further information and good practice guidance in relation to whole-family approaches is available in "[The Care Act and Whole Family Approaches](#)".

Blackpool Carers Centre

As part of their Family Focus Project for young carers who care for a parent with mental ill health and/or a substance misuse issue, Blackpool Carers Centre have developed a Family Needs Assessment. This whole-family assessment includes a scaling tool to assess the needs of different areas around usual family dynamics. Some of these areas include finances, routine, coping mechanisms, physical/emotional health and outside support networks.

One of the most common needs identified in assessments is breakdown in communication between the young carer and the person they care for. This can be for a variety of reasons such as the young carer not wanting to worry the person they support or there being a lack of awareness of the caring role itself. Young carers sometimes also report not understanding the condition of the person they care for.

Attached to the assessment is a family action plan. This action plan can be used on its own or alongside a young carers assessment.

Using this whole-family approach to assessment and action-planning allows the service to personalise their support to individual family's needs to ensure that there are no inappropriate caring roles taking place.

² Care and Support Statutory Guidance relating to whole family approaches and young carers para. 6.65 to 6.73

Where a young carer is deemed to be a “child in need” needing protection and support or needs early help support, adult workers should discuss the case with their children’s services counterparts to decide if further action is needed. Further action might include:

- A referral to a specialist young carers service
- Accessing preventative support through ‘Early help’ or ‘Family support’
- A joint assessment where appropriate (there is provision in the Care Act Guidance and in Section 17 of the Children Act to combine a young carers assessment with that of the adult); or
- Further investigation by children’s services about safeguarding concerns if there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child.

Support

In addition to responding to identified needs through assessments, local authorities are also under a duty under both the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014 to arrange preventative services, and to ensure a diverse range of quality providers of care and support in their local area.

Care Act 2014 and unpaid carers: A handy summary

ADASS and Local Government Association as Partners in Care and Health have produced [Care Act 2014 and unpaid carers: A handy summary](#). This summary is designed to help councils understand their duties under the Care Act 2014 in relation to unpaid carers.

Commissioners of support for young carers and young adult carers should ensure that there is a range of support available. According to Professor Saul Becker³, when services are being designed for young carers or young adult carers, the support should be able to be classified in one of three ways:

³ Young Carers Alliance Conference 2023. Professor Saul Becker is Professor of Children and Families at Manchester Metropolitan University and is the world’s leading academic on young carers.

Purpose of support	Examples of activity
1. Preventing the young person from being a carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments of person(s) with care and support needs • Support for person(s) with care and support needs • Identifying and providing early support to adult carers
2. Reducing the amount of caring being provided by the young carer/young adult carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments for young carers and young adult carers • Whole-family support • Promoting use of technology • Adaptations to the home
3. An intervention to reduce/ mitigate the impact of caring, or to support the young person's health, wellbeing or life opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health support • Peer support • Breaks (including trips and activities) • Employability support • Support for young carers in education • Information about the condition

In a number of local authorities, the passing of the Children and Families Act and Care Act in 2014 have led to provision of support expanding to cover the three categories. In order to provide young carers with the same life opportunities as their peers and properly support their health and wellbeing, support for young carers and young adult carers which meets each of the above purposes should be made available.

Particular consideration should also be given to how to meet the needs of young carers who have their own health and support needs.

‘We all have a voice’: Disabled children’s vision for change

In October 2023, the Children’s Commissioner for England published [a report](#) into the experiences and needs of disabled children in England. The report’s Annex contains a whole section about the needs of young carers who also have a disability.

Local systems should consider how support available to other individuals or families might be able to benefit young carers and their families. Two examples of this are Emergency/Contingency Plans and Family Group Conferencing.

Family Group Conferences

Family Group Conferences (FGCs) are family-led meetings which bring together the network of family and friends around a child together to make a collective plan for that child. FGCs have been used for a variety of contexts including safeguarding, domestic abuse, court proceedings and youth justice. In 2010, 18 local authorities were funded to develop systems and support to address the needs of families with young carers, including through the use of Family Group Conferencing. A paper was released after the project showcasing some of the good practice developed in this area.

Contingency planning

Contingency/emergency plans are regularly used to support carers to think about what they would do in different emergency situations relevant to their caring role. Contingency plans can also help provide peace of mind to a young carer and ensure that an emergency does not turn into a crisis for the young carer or their family.

Norfolk County Council – Young Carers Emergency Plan

Norfolk County Council worked with young carers and young adult carers from the Norfolk Young Carers Forum to co-produce an emergency plan for young carers. The scenarios in the plan were based on the emergencies young carers were worried about or unsure about what they would do if they occurred. They included:

- What happens if the young carer/the person they are caring for needs to go to hospital or has a medical emergency?
- What happens if the young carer is unwell and unable to care?
- What happens if there is a fire, or the young carer gets locked out of the house?
- What happens if the young carer misses a bus home from school or college?
- What happens if the young carer/person they care for's phone is out of signal/credit?
- What happens if there is a power cut or fire?

All young carers and their families are encouraged to make an emergency plan. Young carers and their families can write their own emergency plan using a [Young Carer Emergency Planning template](#) or the commissioned young carers support service can help them to produce a plan.

Whole-family support

An increasing number of young carer services and local authorities are now offering 'whole-family' support as part of their offer to young carers and their families.

Whole-family support has particularly been used in order to provide support that meets the specific needs of young carers supporting a parent because of mental illness or drug or alcohol addiction.

Sheffield Young Carers Family Project

Through their [Family Project](#), Sheffield Young Carers provide intensive support to 40 families each year. One of the aims is to provide parents and families with the additional support required to make changes so that the direct support provided to young carers becomes more sustainable. Through this family intervention they look at the impact of the caring role on the young carer, and work with the whole family to reduce the care they are providing.

In addition to intensive 1:1 sessions with families over the course of a year, the service also offers:

- Co-produced Parent Networking events to bring parents of young carers together.
- A group programme designed around the needs and aspirations of the adult with care needs being supported
- Training programmes to support families into work or volunteering
- A moderated WhatsApp peer support chat group
- Whole-family activities and day trips
- Voice and influence opportunities so families have a say in the services and policies that affect their lives
- Bridging into local services to ensure families have support after the family project year finishes

In addition to the core family support offer, Sheffield Young Carers also now offers a specific programme of whole-family group support for children and young people impacted by parental addiction – [Moving Parents and Children Together \(M-PACT\)](#).

London Borough of Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest is committed to identifying and supporting as many young carers as possible across Waltham Forest. The council has devised a support pathway which will ensure every identified young carer benefits from whole family support, and the opportunity to access their dedicated Young Carers Programme.

The whole family support to young carers and families is delivered either by Early Help Delivery (multiple needs) or children's services (complex and acute needs). Every family will have a named family practitioner who will lead on the assessment, plan and review. The interventions and support to complement the plan, will include Young Carers Programmes, Family Hubs Activities Household Support Grants, tuition support, Duke of Edinburgh, and transitional support at the point of nearing adulthood with the view to receive continued support via a Carers Assessment, Parent Carers Assessment or Information, Advice and Guidance from Carers First.

Carers Trust Hillingdon

Since 2017, Carers Trust Hillingdon have run a Family Support Service providing short-term intensive support to families facing complex challenges. The focus on the project is families where there is parental mental ill-health and/or substance misuse.

The service has provided support to young carers and their families across a range of areas including:

- Training referrals (e.g. for parenting classes, first aid training)
- Debt management
- Support and advocacy at meetings
- Housing
- Family trips and activities.

One of the outcomes of the project was a reduction in the number of "Did not attend" appointments through primary care, including referral appointments.

Kids Time Workshops

Our Time's 'KidsTime Workshops' are designed to help children with a parent with a mental health problem using a 'whole-family' approach. The workshops use creative activities, drama and discussion to address children's lack of knowledge and confusion about mental health problems and to encourage communication between parents and children. The workshops also provide a space for parents to socialise with and support each other and improve communication with their children. A number of local authorities and mental health trusts have adopted the Kids Time Workshops model as part of their service offer.

Since attending the KidsTime Workshops...

- 86% of children said they were happy attending the workshops
- 61% said they felt happy to learn more about mental health and mental illness
- 72% of parents said their children seemed happier and more relaxed since joining the KidsTime workshops
- 71% felt as though they had a better relationship with their children.

“ KidsTime was the first place where my questions were actually answered. There was none of the awkwardness that the adults around me radiated when I brought up the topic of my mum at the KidsTime sessions. It was the first time where my mum's illness was finally given a name – bipolar disorder – and where my role was labelled as a young carer. Finally, the experiences that I had been struggling with internally, holding a confusing sense of shame that I didn't properly understand, were normalised and shared by the children and families around me. I wasn't the odd one out anymore. I fit in.”

Juliet

“ Being involved in the KidsTime Workshop has given us a great support system while meeting others in similar situations. While enjoying group activities with other families, we get to discuss things that affect our lives and share a safe space. We are reminded that we are not alone in our struggles. It has been a great way to connect with others”

Parent

5. Transition to adulthood

“ We feel there is a big issue when it comes to our young carers leaving our charity after turning 18 and a lack of appropriate transition methods in place to carry on support and access to help as a young adult carer, especially with mental health referrals.”

Young Carers Service

Young adult carers often find their education, training and employment prospects are challenged by their caring role. Research has also highlighted the negative impact that caring responsibilities can have on the mental health and wellbeing of young adult carers.

The Sutton Trust [COVID Social Mobility and Opportunities \(COSMO\) study](#) found that young carers aged 16+ were:

- Significantly more likely to report severe psychological distress
- Self-harm, and
- Make attempts on their own life.

Data from UCAS also shows that young adult carers are significantly more likely to share they have a mental health condition compared to other young applicants without caring responsibilities.

Local systems should therefore consider how to support young carers to prepare for adulthood, raise and fulfil their aspirations and have positive physical and mental health.

Guidance around transitions

Chapter 16 of the [Care and Support statutory guidance](#) provides detailed guidance relating to transitions for young carers.

Transitional safeguarding

The Chief Social Worker for Adults at the Department of Health and Social Care has published [guidance, including case studies](#), to put a spotlight on transitional safeguarding. Transitional safeguarding describes the need for ‘an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives’.

Transitions assessments

All local authorities have a legal duty to offer transitions assessments to young carers if they are likely to have needs for support after turning 18.

Transitions assessments – A few pointers

The Care Act 2014 states that young carers should be offered a Transitions Assessment if they are “likely to have needs for support after turning 18... if it is satisfied that it would be of significant benefit to the young carer to do so.” **(section 63(1) Care Act 2014).**

- The statutory guidance for the Act makes it clear that “significant benefit” only relates to the timing of the offer of the assessment, not whether the young carer is eligible for one.
(Care and Support Statutory Guidance, paragraph 16.6)
- Transitions assessment are available regardless of whether the young carer currently receives any services, and includes young carers whose parents are not eligible for support under the Care Act. or who self-fund their care.
- Carers Trust have produced a [Transitions Assessment Checklist](#) setting out all requirements of the transitions assessment

Transitions assessments checklist

Carers Trust have produced a transitions assessment checklist, which sets out the legal requirements for transitions assessments

Support for young adult carers

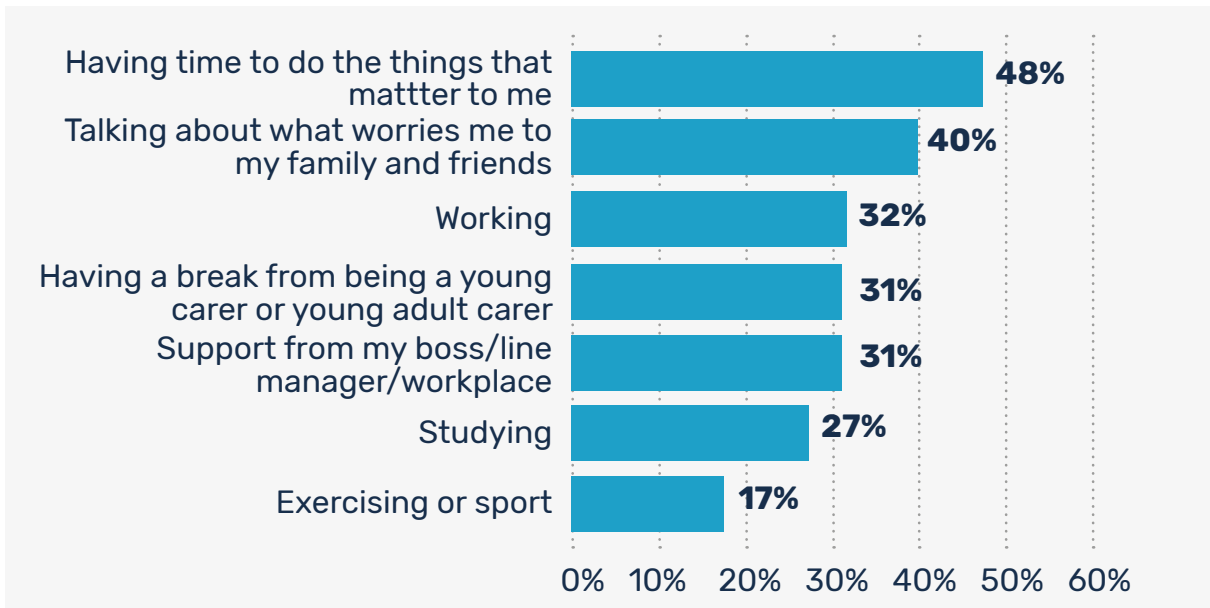
The APPG for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers inquiry highlighted a postcode lottery in relation to the provision of support for young adult carers.

Carers Trust’s report [‘Being a young carer is not a choice; it’s just what we do’](#) also highlighted that a significant number of young adult carers struggle to get the support they need:

- 57% ‘always’ or ‘usually’ get enough support from carer services
- 48% are ‘always’ or ‘usually’ able to get help as a young adult carer easily.

What helps with being a young adult carer?

As part of this survey, young adult carers set out what support would help them.



Examples of good transitions practice

The Children's Society conducted a review of how transitions assessments are working in practice. As part of [their report](#), they included examples of practice that young carers felt worked well for their needs in transitioning to adulthood.

My Future Programme – supporting transitions for Young Adult Carers in West Sussex

The My Future programme is run in partnership by West Sussex County Council's Young Carers Family Service and Carers Support West Sussex and aims to reach, enable and empower carers aged 16 to 21 to have a supported transition to adulthood and (where applicable) from involvement with the young carers service to an adult carers service.

The transition programme includes a combination of social and educational sessions. This work, particularly around aspirations, further/higher education and employment includes consideration of the needs of both the person being cared for and, where relevant, the potential impact on younger siblings.

This targeted project has helped to improve the transition from the Young Carers Family Service to Carers Support West Sussex with 92% of participants saying they feel better prepared for adulthood and 77% saying they know what they want to do in the future and how to achieve that aim.

Improving Lives Plymouth

The Improving Lives project provides support to 16 to 25 year old young adult carers across Plymouth. They provide a range of support to help with the transition into adult services, including:

- Free activities to provide respite and support productive interactions between young adult carers and professionals
- Drop-in sessions, 1-2-1 sessions and support in the community
- Statutory carers' assessments.

The service regularly links with education, training and employment services to increase the service offer which is available to young adult carers.

6. Information-sharing

In order to reduce the need for young carers and their families to repeat themselves and to ensure they can receive the best possible support, local authorities and ICBs should proactively seek to improve information-sharing with other system partners, including health, education and local young carer services.

Education

Schools have a key role to play in identifying and supporting young carers. Local authorities should ensure schools are recording which pupils are young carers on their pupil information systems. This will ensure the young carers are included in the school census return, but also make it easier to review attendance and attainment.

Young carers have been included on the school census return for state schools, alternative provision and special schools since January 2023. Schools should use one of the following three codes:

Code	Young carer indicator
N	Not declared
P	Identified as a young carer by parent or guardian
S	Identified as a young carer by school

As of January 2024, young carers have also been added to the school-level Annual School Census for independent schools.

Local authorities should ensure that they are supporting efforts to increase awareness and support for young carers in schools using a 'whole-school' approach.

Young Carers in Schools programme and the Young Carers Challenge

The Young Carers in Schools programme is a free initiative to help schools improve their ability to identify and support pupils who are young carers. There are a wide range of resources available and an award to recognise good practice.

The Young Carers Challenge consists of five practical measures schools can put in place to ensure their young carers are supported and able to thrive in education.

To find out more about the school census relating to young carers and the Young Carers in Schools programme/Young Carers Challenge, visit the [Young Carers in Schools website](#).

Health

There are a range of measures that could be implemented in order to improve the data-sharing in relation to young carers and their families.

- Mental health services could add questions to their referral/assessment forms about whether a person accessing services either is a young carer, or is being supported by a young carer and create a flag on their electronic record.
- Hospital records should also include whether a patient is a young carer, or if their carer is a young carer. Hospital trusts should also ensure that there is young carer awareness training for a wide range of hospital staff including hospital discharge teams to help ensure compliance with their legal duties to consult young carers.

Duty to consult young carers as part of hospital discharge

As a result of the Health and Care Act 2022, NHS hospital trusts are under a duty to ensure that unpaid carers of all ages are involved as soon as feasible when plans for the patient's discharge are being made. To support hospitals to meet this duty, the NHS England London team worked with a range of partners to create a [Hospital Discharge toolkit](#).

James' story – Young carers and hospital discharge

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust created an animation to highlight the negative experiences of a young adult carer in relation to hospital discharge and how they are using this to improve the experience of young carers. [James' story](#) highlights how he wasn't involved or communicated with and the impact this had on James and his mum. The animation is available to help raise awareness of young carers within other hospitals.

- Pharmacies should be seeking to identify young carers or young adult carers collecting medication and have in place a pathway for signposting or referring them through for support. Pharmacies should also ensure that they have a clear policy around young carers collecting medication for parents and that all pharmacy staff are aware of the policy.
- GP practices could improve the recording of young carers within primary care by routinely using relevant SNOMED codes for young carers. ⁴ There are two SNOMED codes which GP surgeries could use to record a young carer on their system:

SNOMED CT code	Term description	Definition
224484003	Patient themselves providing care	Person who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.
302767002	Cares for a relative	Person who looks after a family member who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

⁴ Systematised Nomenclature of Medicine Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT) is a structured clinical vocabulary for use in an electronic health record. It provides consistent codes which can be used across primary care and other settings.- [NHS England » Coding Unpaid Carers: SNOMED CT](#)

Improving data-sharing and support within primary care – Centre 33

As a result of young carer identification being very low within primary care across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, [Centre 33](#) ran a primary care project to improve awareness and identification within primary care and ensure consistent use of SNOMED codes.

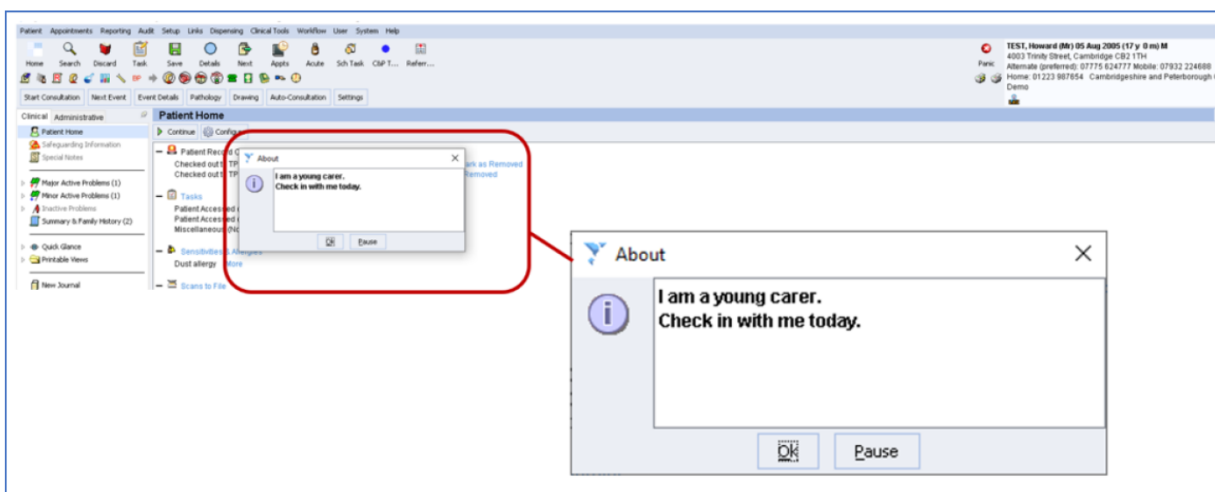
They created a health sub-group with key professionals across the NHS and spoke to young carers to find out what support they wanted from their GP.

Centre 33 changed their internal consent form to enable them to share information with GPs once a young carer is known to the young carers service and also created a bespoke referral pathway for GPs. They also created a 'Young Carers Support checklist' for primary care and provided 1:1 support for GP surgeries and key staff.

Through the project, they created a 'pop-up statement' for when someone who is coded as a young carer has their GP record opened, saying "I am a young carer. Check in with me today."

GP surgeries also sent mailouts to all young patients including information about Centre 33 for anyone who confirmed they are a young carer. Surgeries have also linked in with school nurses for schools in their area and have added a carer tickbox onto their patient questionnaire form.

In the initial six-month pilot of this project, identification of young carers within primary care increased by 23%.



7. Safeguarding

Practitioners conducting Children in Need or Child Protection assessments have an important role to play in identifying potential young carers. Children in Need assessment data from the Department for Education suggests a significant under-identification of young carers who have been assessed as children in need, particularly when compared with the number of cases where parental alcohol or drug misuse or parental mental illness had been identified as a factor. Over the past five years, there has been a 25% increase in the number of Children in Need assessments in England where parental mental illness was an identified factor.

Children in Need Assessment data – Factors identified at the end of assessment

Factor identified within assessment (assessments could record multiple factors)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Alcohol misuse: concerns about parent	64,380	67,250	72,620	73,690	70,310	71,580
Drug misuse: concerns about parent	62,260	64,620	70,870	72,080	67,010	67,000
Learning disability: concerns about parent	12,660	12,660	13,810	13,410	13,330	13,550
Mental health: concerns about parent	129,230	135,330	156,140	157,600	158,330	161,250
Physical disability or illness: concerns about other person	5,630	5,340	6,000	5,290	5,120	4,940
Physical disability or illness: concerns about parent	23,240	23,850	25,360	23,970	24,530	24,870
Young carer	16,100	16,520	18,670	17,520	18,110	18,040

The final [Department of Education analysis of serious case reviews](#) (now known as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) found that parental mental illness was reported in more than half of cases (55%) – the same prevalence as domestic violence. Parental alcohol or substance misuse were each noted in a third of reviews.

The [latest annual report from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel](#) highlighted both young carers and parental mental health as themes in local safeguarding children practice reviews, where children have died or experienced significant harm.

The report highlights how young carers are not routinely being identified by various agencies and that young carers need to be more recognised across safeguarding. The report also emphasises ‘the need for all services working with vulnerable children and adults to take a whole family approach’ to assessing need.

Arranging young carers awareness training for members of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards can help to ensure that they ensure young carers are a group whose needs they actively consider. This increased awareness will also help to ensure consistency with local multi-agency policies and procedures.

Safeguarding young carers in education

The ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ statutory guidance states that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies should undergo training so that they are alert to the needs of young carers. The guidance also states that all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for young carers.

Putting into action and accountability

Local systems should ensure they produce a plan for putting the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU into action and that there is a clear understanding of where accountability lies in relation to ensuring progress against the MoU commitments is reviewed.

“No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” **- Suggested to-do list**

The “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” working group have produced a list of suggested actions which local systems might consider including as part of their own action plans.

Adult social care, children’s social care and ICBs should also ensure that colleagues leading on preparation for CQC or Ofsted assurance processes have information about how the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” MoU is being implemented and progress against the commitments.

Any local audit/review arrangements should set out the outcomes the system is aiming to achieve for young carers and their families through the adoption of the “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers” Memorandum of Understanding.

Local authorities and the ICB should seek feedback from system partners on how this memorandum of understanding is being implemented and what difference it is having in practice. Feedback from young carers and their families will be an essential element of audits.

Programmes for learning and development to raise awareness and understanding of young carers and their families amongst a range of relevant practitioners should be implemented to ensure that a wide range of system partners understand the commitments within the MoU.

APPENDIX ONE – LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Young carers' rights explained

Prepared by John Bangs OBE, Independent Carers Policy Adviser and Professor Luke Clements, Cerebra Professor of Law and Social Justice.

The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 were the first pieces of legislation which addressed the needs of young carers clearly and directly.

The law concerning young carers was strengthened so that when a child is identified as a young carer, the needs of everyone in the family are to be considered. This can trigger action from both children's and adults' services – assessing why a child is caring, what needs to change and what would help the family to prevent children from taking on this responsibility in the first place.

There is now a comprehensive range of legislation in place requiring responses to young carers and their needs. This places obligations on both adult and children's social care; but also upon Integrated Care Boards and NHS Trusts. Effective implementation and delivery of these responsibilities requires both a 'whole-council' and a 'whole-system' approach. These notes about young carers' rights at law have been written to help support implementation of the "No Wrong Doors for Young Carers" MoU, updated to reflect legislative and policy changes, including those arising from the Health and Care Act 2022.

Amendments to Section 17 of the Children Act

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act 1989 by inserting new Sections 17ZA to 17ZC . This introduced new rights to improve how young carers and their families are identified and supported, and to extend the right to an assessment of their support needs to all young carers under the age of 18 regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it.

The duty on local authorities to undertake these assessments is triggered when they consider that a young carer may have needs - irrespective of whether there has been a request to assess - and this duty applies to both adults and children's services. These provisions work alongside measures in the Care Act 2014 to enable a "whole-family approach" to assessment and support, so that young carers and their families can access appropriate assistance.

The provisions include:

- Ensuring the right to an assessment of needs for support will be extended to all young carers under the age of 18 regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it;
- Placing a clearer duty on local authorities to undertake an assessment of a young carer's needs for support on request or on the appearance of need;
- Requiring councils to ensure that young carers are identified and that consideration is also given as to whether they are a 'child in need';
- Making links between children's and adults' legislation to enable local authorities to align the assessment of a young carer with an assessment of an adult they care for (preventing inappropriate or excessive levels of care);
- Requiring councils to be proactive about identifying young carers in their area and acting to help reduce their need for support through the provision of information and preventative measures (for example in schools, through Early Help or young carers support services).

Note: The definition of "Child in Need" in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 specifies that a child is "in need" in law if:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision of services from the Local Authority (LA);
- Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the LA;
- They have a disability.

(Development can mean physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Health can be physical or mental health.)

The **Young Carers Needs Assessments Regulations 2015** specify that where a local authority is carrying out a Young Carers Needs Assessment it must determine:

- the amount, nature and type of care which the young carer provides (or intends to provide);
- the extent to which this care is (or will be) relied upon to maintain the well-being of the person cared for;
- whether the care which the young carer provides (or intends to provide) impacts on the young carer's well-being, education and development;
- whether any of the tasks which the young carer is performing (or intends to perform) when providing care are excessive or inappropriate for the young carer to perform;
- whether any of the young carer's needs for support could be prevented by providing services to the person cared for, or another family member; and what the young carer's needs for support would be likely to be if relieved of part or all of the caring tasks;
- whether any other assessment of the needs for support of the young carer or the person cared for has been carried out;
- whether the young carer is a child in need;
- actions to be taken following the assessment and arrangements for a future review.

The regulations also state that the "local authority must consider the impact of the needs of the young carer's family on the well-being of the young carer and any child in that family and, in particular, on their education and personal and emotional development."

In the regulations, "well-being" has the same meaning as in Part 1 of the Care Act 2014).

The regulations also require councils to consider whether to combine a Young Carers Needs Assessment with the assessments of other family members (including of adults assessed under the Care Act).

The key Statutory Guidance for the Children Act 1989 "**Working Together to Safeguard Children**" was last amended on 15 December 2023, and this update has strengthened the section on support for young carers which essentially reinforces the requirements of the Young Carers Needs Assessments Regulations.

The mandatory statutory guidance also requires that **early help** systems must reflect the potential need for support for children who are young carers.

The Care Act and young carers

As described above, the amendments to Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 work together with provisions in the Care Act 2014, as well as for Children Act assessments. These therefore apply equally to both children's and adult services. The Care Act Regulations and Guidance reinforce this in a number of ways. For example, the Eligibility Regulations for the Care Act require councils to consider the support disabled parents and carers may need in carrying out their parenting responsibilities to care for a child (who may potentially be a young carer).

The care and support statutory guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 highlights the importance of whole-family approaches, including support for young carers (see Statutory Guidance 6.65 to 6.73).

The Guidance highlights that when carrying out an adult's or carer's assessment, if it appears that a child is involved in providing care the local authority must consider:

- the impact of the person's needs on the young carer's wellbeing, welfare, education and development;
- whether any of the caring responsibilities the young carer is undertaking are inappropriate.

The Guidance stresses that young carers should not be left with inappropriate levels of caring and describes this as "anything which is likely to have an impact on the child's health, wellbeing or education, or which can be considered unsuitable in light of the child's circumstances and may include:

- personal care such as bathing and toileting;
- carrying out strenuous physical tasks such as lifting;
- administering medication;
- maintaining the family budget;
- emotional support to the adult."

The Care Act regulations and guidance also specify that adult services must identify children in the household, consider whether they are young carers and, if so, whether they are children in need.

The Guidance says "a young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing or their prospects in education and life. This might include:

- preventing the young carer from accessing education, for example because the adult's needs for care and support result in the young carer's regular absence from school or impacts upon their learning;

- preventing the young carer from building relationships and friendships;
- impacting upon any other aspect of the young carer’s wellbeing.”

Councils should address the risks of such negative impacts either through support for the adult or through support for the young carer. There will be a need for young carers to either have a young carer’s assessment or for the care assessment of the adult they look after to identify support needed to prevent inappropriate care. These will be adult services responsibilities with referrals made to children’s services largely only where there are safeguarding issues.

The responsibilities created by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 are placed on a local authority as a whole (not just adult or children’s services). Together these pieces of legislation are intended to provide a legal framework that will support local authorities to consider the needs of the whole family, deliver coordinated packages of support and protect children and young people from excessive or inappropriate caring roles.

Guidance to the Care Act says councils should ensure that adults’ and children’s care and support services work together to ensure the assessment is effective – for example by sharing expertise and linking processes. This can be facilitated by joint protocols between adult and children’s services to support joint working; utilising the “No Wrong Doors” template.

Young carers in transition and young adult carers

The Care Act 2014 (sections 63 – 64) introduced important obligations to young carers ‘in transition’ to adulthood. The Act requires councils to undertake an assessment for a young carer if it considers that she/he is likely to have needs for support after becoming 18. The assessment must be offered at a time where there will be significant benefit for the young carer in having an assessment. If a local authority decides not to undertake such an assessment it must give reasons for its refusal.

This also provides opportunities to improve the identification of young adult carers (aged 18 to 24); a group whose needs have often been overlooked. There is a developing awareness across the country about the need to better address the needs of this group and these changes to the law should help this happen.

It is good practice for councils to ensure there is clarity locally about who has responsibility for supporting young adult carers aged 18 to 24. This may be the service responsible for the person they support but in some cases support might be via the early help system (if caring for a younger sibling) or other preventative services under the Care Act.

Young Carers, the NHS and Duties to Cooperate

Both the Care Act 2014 and Children Act 1989 include requirements for NHS bodies to cooperate with local authorities, including in relation to their responsibilities to carers and young carers. There are similar provisions in the **NHS Act 2006** where section 72 requires NHS bodies to co-operate with each other and section 82 requires that this also extend to working with local authorities 'in order to secure and advance the health and welfare of the people of England and Wales'. NHS bodies have a clear duty to cooperate in relation to carers of all ages.

The Health and Care Act 2022 strengthened the rights of young carers and enhanced these duties for the NHS to cooperate with local authorities in the identification, assessment and support carers of all ages. The provisions of the Act that relate to young carers are:

- A duty on ICBs to consult carers (including young carers); both around service planning and commissioning
- A duty on ICBs to consult carers (including young carers) about individual services relating to the patient for prevention, treatment and diagnosis
- A duty on NHS England to consult carers (including young carers)
- New powers for the Care Quality Commission to assess the performance of local authorities which includes for their duties to carers and ensuring a whole family approach is taken
- A duty on NHS hospital trusts to ensure that unpaid carers of all ages are involved as soon as feasible when plans for the patient's discharge are being made.
- Provision for statutory **Hospital Discharge and Community Support Guidance** which is mandatory and so is more directive than most other NHS guidance
- Clarity that the term carer applies to carers of all ages, including young carers

To comply with these legal obligations NHS organisations should :

- identify children in the household,
- determine whether they are young carers
- promote provision of information and make referrals for assessment and support

All of this is particularly relevant when undertaking assessments for ongoing support such as:

- health personal budgets
- NHS Continuing Care
- community mental health assessments
- wheelchair assessments
- hospital discharge situations
- Social prescribing services.

The statutory guidance for the Act **Working in Partnership with People and Communities** indicates that carers (including young carers) should be involved in planning, codesign, decision making, delivery and evaluation at all levels. There is also a duty of transparency.

The Community Mental Health Framework (formerly Care Programme Approach)

The NHS England position statement (1 March 2022) reaffirmed that the Care Programme Approach (CPA) has been replaced by the national Community Mental Health Framework. One of the 5 core principles for implementing new arrangements is “meaningful engagement with families and carers.” The document also confirms that the new arrangements must be “Care Act compliant”. This means that when introducing new systems to replace the Care Programme Approach, it must not be assumed that carers are willing or able to provide any part of the persons care plan. Carers must be engaged in the assessment process as required by the Care Act and have access carers assessments.

The requirement to be Care Act compliant also means that young carers must be identified and protected from having to undertake inappropriate caring tasks or excessive levels of caring. There is also an obligation to respond to the needs of young carers in transition to adulthood.

Where a young carer appears to need information or support they should be referred to a local young carers service for support or where appropriate referred to children’s services for a young carer needs assessment.

NHS Continuing Care

The 2022 “National framework for NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care” paras. 348 - 356 specifies that:

- NHS bodies have a responsibility to work in partnership with carers and young carers so that they can be better supported with their caring role. Healthcare professionals should be proactive in identifying carers and be sensitive to the level of support they need and desire.
- This approach should be reflected in any checklist and/or full assessment of eligibility for NHS Continuing Healthcare with carers and family members involved where appropriate.
- Carers and young carers must be told of their right to carers assessments and young carers needs assessments and referrals for these made as appropriate.
- The ICB may need to provide additional support to care for the individual whilst the carer(s) has a break from his or her caring responsibilities.

NHS Constitution

The NHS Constitution to which every NHS body in England must have regard - (National Health Services Act 2006 section 14P) commits the NHS to ‘work in partnership with patients and carers and to ensure that its services are ‘coordinated around and tailored to, the needs and preferences of patients, their families, and their carers’. The NHS is an all-age service and therefore the term carer applies to carers of all ages and so includes young carers.

The constitution lists seven key principles to ‘guide the NHS in all it does’, of which Principle Four recognises that: “Patients, with their families and carers, where appropriate, will be involved in and consulted on all decisions about their care and treatment”

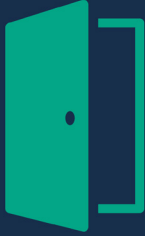
Carers and Employment

In 2024, two pieces of legislation will come into force. These will help young adult carers and should also help older young carers in transition to adulthood in thinking about the world of work. These are:

- the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and
- the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 which allows for flexible working to be requested from day one of employment.

Draft regulations for the Carer's Leave Act will cover employees in England, Wales and Scotland and confirm that Carer's Leave, is for employees providing unpaid long-term care. Unpaid carers will have the right to one week's unpaid Carer's Leave per year. Employees taking Carer's Leave will have the same employment protections as associated with other forms of family related leave. This includes protection from dismissal or detriment as a result of having taken the leave.(this must therefore also apply to carers requesting flexible working).

No Wrong
Doors for
Young
Carers








www.carers.org/nowrongdoors

Produced by

**CARERS
TRUST**

Carers Trust
10 Regent Place
Rugby
CV21 2PN

Email: info@carers.org
Tel: 0300 772 9600
Carers.org

-  www.facebook.com/CarersTrust
-  www.twitter.com/CarersTrust
-  www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust
-  www.linkedin.com/company/carers-trust
-  www.instagram.com/carers.trust

On behalf of

ADCS
Leading Children's Services

directors of
adass
adult social services

© Carers Trust 2024.

Carers Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1145181) and in Scotland (SC042870). Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 7697170. Registered office: Carers Trust, 10 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PN.