One Minute Guide

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Young Carers

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**What do we mean by a Young Carer?**

A Young Carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after a relative with an illness, disability, mental health condition or a drug or alcohol problem. Young Carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the circumstances, the level and frequency of need for care, and the structure of the family as a whole.

**What support are Young Carers entitled to?**

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 ([part 5 Section 96](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/5/crossheading/young-carers-and-parent-carers/enacted)) and in line with the [Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/527/pdfs/uksi_20150527_en.pdf) young carers are entitled to an assessment, whatever the level of care they provide.

Under the [Care Act 2014](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted) , local authorities also have a duty to consider the needs of children living in households where there is an adult who has a disability or impairment that requires help or care as part of a “whole family assessment”. If you are assessing an adult’s needs, you have to consider whether a child is in the household and consider whether any of the children may undertake any care roles in the home.

The Care Act 2014 ([section 63-65](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/63/enacted)) also gives new rights for young carers aged 16 to 18 who are transitioning to adulthood to have their specific needs assessed in light of how their role might change. This is called a Transition Assessment.

It is important to note, particularly when communicating with young carers and their families, that any assessment offered will be focused on the needs of the young person themselves, and will not be an assessment of how well they are carrying out their caring responsibilities.

**What should Children’s Service practitioners do if they are working with a child or young person who may have caring responsibilities?**

If you think a child or young person you are working with may be a young carer, you should first consider whether their caring responsibilities may be putting them at risk of harm as part of the care planning for the child.

For children and young people open to Children’s Social Care, the referral form, needs to be completed and sent back to youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk

**Support offered to Young Carers and Families**

When a Young Carer is referred to the Young Carers Team, they will contact the family and arrange to meet with them to discuss the needs of the Young Carer as part of a whole family assessment and support plan.

This meeting usually takes place at home with their family, or, as long as the child's parent or guardian agrees, they can meet at their school or another safe place. The team may also call some families to discuss their needs over the phone.

The Young Carer’s Team’s priorities are to:

* make sure the Young Carer is safe and being looked after
* reduce the amount of caring a young person has to do if it is too much for them, by thinking about the needs of the whole family
* help the Young Carer to get more support at school or college
* make sure that the Young Carer gets a regular break and time for friends and fun
* check that the Young Carer is supported by other adults and professionals in their lives
* make sure that the Young Carer has someone to talk to when things are difficult
* check that the family are receiving all the support or financial benefits available to them
* improve the life opportunities of the Young Carer.

**Further information:**

There are a range of resources both locally and nationally which offer advice and guidance on supporting young carers and their families:

Young Carers Team: youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk

 [Young Carers Website](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/young-carers/)

[The Carers Trust](https://carers.org/) offer support and advice to carers, including young carers and young adult carers;

[The Young Carers in Schools programme](https://professionals.carers.org/stepbystep) provides training and resources to help schools and teachers improve how they support pupils who have caring responsibilities;

[Young Minds](https://youngminds.org.uk/) offers support and advice on young people’s mental health and wellbeing;

[Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/) offers a private and confidential service for children up to the age of 19, to talk to a trained counsellor over the phone on tel: 0800 1111 or via online chat or email.

[NHS guide to Young Carers’ rights](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/being-a-young-carer-your-rights/)

[Briefing on carers’ rights (March 2015)](https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/new_rights_for_young_carers_young_adult_carers_and_their_families.pdf)

 