

# Young Carers' Transition to Adulthood

## A pathway for all practitioners

A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting on their emotional or physical well-being and their prospects later in life. Provision needs to be in place to ensure that support does not rapidly fall away when they become an adult.

Using this tool will help practitioners from all agencies to implement their responsibilities as outlined in The Care Act 2014 and the Children's and Families Act 2014.

The  
Children's  
Society

  
Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

**Include  
Service**



This tool is a 'map' for all agencies, including adults' and children's services, education, health services, housing providers and other statutory and voluntary sector agencies who have contact with young carers and their families. The Children's Society has developed this pathway to ensure that whoever is working with young carers and young adult carers is following and signposting to the relevant support, following lines of accountability and responding to the needs of the whole family. The pathway is a resource for all practitioners in every local authority across England and has been produced as part of The Government's Carers Action Plan, commissioned and funded by the Department of Health and Social Care.

## The Children's Society

The Children's Society is a national charity that runs local services to support children and young people who are at risk of exploitation or harm, living in care, or let down by the systems meant to protect them. They come to us when they are at their most vulnerable, when they're in desperate need of help, when they have nowhere left to turn. At their moment of crisis we are with them every step of the way, until they're ready to share their experiences, often for the first time. We get to the heart of their problems, start to repair the damage, and help them get the services they need. Across the country, particularly in the poorest areas, we're helping more than 18,000 children and young people through over 90 services run by over 700 staff and more than 9,000 volunteers. We work hand in hand with children to make sure their voices are heard, campaigning for changes to the law to stop the mistakes of the past being repeated in the future.

The Children's Society's Include Service is home to the national Young Carers Initiative, supporting children and young people who care for parents or siblings who suffer from chronic illness or disability. We work with voluntary and statutory services across the country to support young carers. We campaign for change and promote best practice with central and local government. We also help young carers by giving them a platform to share their experiences and raise awareness about the issues they face.

The  
Children's  
Society






# Welcome

This tool 'Young Carers' Transition to Adulthood' is an extension to the Whole Family Pathway. Using this tool will enable professionals to effectively respond to the needs of young carers as they transition to adulthood, and implement the responsibilities in the Care Act 2014 which places a duty on local authorities to provide a transition assessment before the young carer turns 18.



The Government's Carers Action Plan 2018–2020 highlights the need for improving support for young adult carers to enable them to make positive transitions between the ages of 16 and 24. This tool aims to enable professionals understand what their duties, roles and responsibilities are and provide good practice for transitional support.

The Whole Family Pathway is a tool for practitioners to implement the duties, outlined in legislation for young carers and their families, in the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014. It is important to ensure that, whoever or however the family (parent or child) in need of support first makes contact with an agency, the same processes or pathway is followed, and that at all times young people are protected from caring roles that negatively affect their life chances. The Whole Family Pathway was developed not as an assessment tool but as a 'map' for agencies to follow so they can see what choices, responsibilities and lines of accountability for services may be available. It was originally developed in 2004 in consultation with Carers Trust and the Disabled Parents Network.

## LINKS

-  [Whole Family Pathway](#)
-  [Care Act 2014](#)
-  [Carers Action Plan](#)

## KEY TO LINKS AND NAVIGATION FEATURES

-  Takes you to a related section in this tool
-  Takes you to an external website

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# How to use this tool

- This resource is not designed as a book to be read from cover to cover. Instead it is an electronic tool for ALL practitioners to use and access the information and 'sections' of the pathway most useful to you in your role.
- Whenever you are supporting a young carer or their family, remember to signpost this pathway to all other practitioners (including adults' and children's services, health, education, including schools, colleges, further and higher education establishments, housing and the voluntary sector) who may be able to provide support to the same family. They can then access the sections in the pathway relevant to the service they provide.
- Use the **links** on each page to navigate your way through the information in the pathway, or you can return to the contents page at any point to enter a new section.
- If you find a broken link within the pathway please let us know: [include@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:include@childrenssociety.org.uk)

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# Introduction: Why use this tool?

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 outline that a collaborative, whole-family, whole-council, whole-systems approach must be implemented for young carers and their families. All statutory and voluntary services – including adult services, children’s services, health, housing and education, the voluntary sector and others– must work together in a collaborative approach to identify, assess and support the needs of the whole family. This should happen early, to prevent children and young people taking on excessive and inappropriate caring responsibilities that affect their life chances. This requires coordinating services and support around the person with care needs, and considering the impacts of care needs upon the whole family, including children. Responsibilities for identifying and supporting young carers are placed on the local authority as a whole.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide a Young Carers Needs Assessment to young carers to take into account the impacts of caring responsibilities upon their well-being.

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide young carers with a ‘Transition Assessment’ **before they turn 18** to take into account their aspirations for the future, and how their caring role may impact upon their well-being and goals as they transition into adulthood. Both the Young Carers Needs Assessment and the Young Carers Transition Assessment should automatically trigger an assessment or re-assessment of the needs of the person(s) they care for, if it is highlighted that their care needs are impacting upon the well-being of the young carer.


Using this tool will support professionals from all agencies to respond to the needs of a young carer as they transition to adulthood. This tool will also enable local authorities to implement the duties in the Care Act regarding the Young Carers Transition Assessment.

# Who are young adult carers?





The census (2011) identified 293,000 young adult carers aged 16 to 25 years old in England.<sup>1</sup> This is likely to be the 'tip of the iceberg' with many more young people in this age group thought to be taking on caring responsibilities. Young adult carers are often referred to as being 'young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years old'<sup>2</sup> (some definitions from 14 to 25 years)<sup>3</sup> who provide, or intend to provide, care for another person who has a long-term illness, a disability related to a physical or mental health condition, or substance misuse including alcohol dependency.'

Young carers tell us that they often have to choose between their future aspirations or caring for their family. This impacts upon them as they transition into adulthood, and can result in them:

- Feeling anger, stress, guilt and resentment.
- Feeling lonely and isolated.
- Not pursuing their future goals.
- Not achieving or reaching their potential in education.
- Feeling guilty if they do leave home for university or employment.

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## LINKS

-  **There's nobody is there – no one who can actually help**
-  **Census tables M205 CTO415, Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2015**
-  ***About Young Adult Carers*. Carers Trust (2015)**
-  **Alexander C, *Time to be Heard, A Call for Recognition and Support for Young Adult Carers*, Carers Trust (2014)**

1 Census tables M205 CTO415, Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2015

2 *About Young Adult Carers*. Carers Trust (2015)

3 Alexander C, *Time to be Heard, A Call for Recognition and Support for Young Adult Carers*, Carers Trust (2014)

## Who are young adult carers? *continued*

- Struggling with higher education, as they may miss days at their place of study or experience disruption due to their caring role.
- Feeling pressure to remain in the family home or at least close by.
- Experiencing negative impacts on their well-being.
- Experiencing financial issues, living with low income or in poverty.
- Losing all support when they reach 18 years old.

It is important to recognise that all young people under 18 are still legally children and should have their needs met by services designed for children and young people and in line with relevant legislation. Additionally to this, provision needs to be in place to ensure that support does not rapidly fall away when they become an adult.

**‘My caring role stresses me out as it is, let alone trying to navigate jobs, uni, money and moving out... I want to be asked about me too.’**

Young adult carer

### LINKS

- ▶ **There’s nobody is there – no one who can actually help**
- ▶ **Census tables M205 CTO415, Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2015**
- ▶ ***About Young Adult Carers. Carers Trust (2015)***
- ▶ **Alexander C, *Time to be Heard, A Call for Recognition and Support for Young Adult Carers*, Carers Trust (2014)**



# Young Carers' Transition to Adulthood

## What is transition?

*'The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another.'*

In 2018, The Children's Society's 'Crumbling Futures' report highlighted the extent to which 16 and 17 year olds face multiple disadvantages across different areas of their lives. These multiple issues put their health, safety and long term outcomes at risk. The research highlighted that many vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds need more support

as they move into adulthood. Their age means that these young people often fall between the cracks of children's and adults' services and are left without support.

Approaching adulthood can be a challenging time with complex issues and key decisions to make for all young people. But for young carers it is particularly vital that during this process of change, they are not left alone to find a way forward for themselves, those they care for and their whole family.

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**3** Who are young adult carers?

**6** The young carers transition assessment

**11** Critical analysis in the transition assessment: Ensuring Quality Practice

**12** The Assessment Journey

**w** The Children's Society Crumbling Futures report

**w** Care and support statutory guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014

**w** The Care Act and whole-family approaches

**w** SCIE guidance on transition for young carers and adult carers


**w** SCIE – Transition from childhood to adulthood

# The young carers transition assessment













The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide young carers with a transition assessment before they turn 18 years old. Local authorities *must* assess the needs of young carers as they approach adulthood, regardless of whether they currently receive any services, when it appears that the young carer is likely to have needs for support after they turn 18, and when they think that there would be 'significant benefit' to that individual carer.

- There is currently no set age for when the transition assessment should happen, but it should be well before the young carer turns 18 years old.

- The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to conduct a transition assessment when it will be of 'significant benefit' to the person to do so. Significant benefit relates to the timing of when the young person is ready to have an assessment and will get the most out of the process.
- Working with a young carer to prepare them for their transition assessment is important, particularly when they are considering options at school/college or if there are particular pressures at home.

continued 

## LINKS

-  What is transition?  (Assessment) Regulations 2014
-  Who are young adult carers?  SCIE – Approaches to assessments
-  Critical analysis in the transition assessment: Ensuring Quality Practice  Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education
-  The assessment journey  Young Adult Carers and Employment
-  SCIE: Young carer transition under the Care Act 2014: Young Adult Carers and Employment  Young Adult Carers at College and University
-  Young carer transition in practice under the Care Act 2014  Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education. Carers Trust 2013

## The young carers transition assessment *continued*

*'The transition assessment should support the young person and their family to plan for the future, by providing them with information about what they can expect.'*

Social Care for Excellence, 2015

Young adult carers recommend that a transition assessment should be completed between the ages of 14 and 16 to ensure the assessment takes into account the choices related to a young person's life post-16 and beyond. This recommendation provides good practice, looking at transitional support as a process whereby young carers

receive an assessment followed by reviews and planning at regular intervals. This model ensures the support young adult carers receive is part of a process rather than stand-alone.

**'Transition assessments should be an ongoing process not a one-off assessment.'**

Young adult carer

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- 3 → Who are young adult carers?
- 11 → Critical analysis in the transition assessment: Ensuring Quality Practice
- 12 → The assessment journey
- w → SCIE: Young carer transition under the Care Act 2014: Young Adult Carers and Employment
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- w → Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education
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- w → Young Adult Carers at College and University
- w → Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education. Carers Trust 2013


# The young carers transition assessment: What should be included?

The assessment should include:









- A range of questions to explore the young person's current needs and how they impact upon their own well-being, what needs the young person may have post-18 – including their current and future aspirations regarding employment or further education.
- An indication of how any care and support needs for the person(s) they care for would change as a result of the young carer's change in circumstance. This includes an explicit requirement which states that children's and adults' services must cooperate for the purposes of transition to adult care and support.

Local authorities **should** consider formally designating a named person to coordinate transition assessment and planning across different agencies, as well fulfilling their duty to cooperate with relevant partners.

There is currently no national Transition Assessment template. However some local areas have designed their own transition assessment tools; including Liverpool, Wigan and Southampton.

continued 


## LINKS

-  What is transition?
-  The young carers transition assessment
-  Who are young adult carers?
-  Critical analysis in the transition assessment: Ensuring Quality Practice
-  The assessment journey
-  Assessment Tool Template Liverpool
-  Assessment Tool Template Wigan
-  Assessment Tool Template Southampton

## The young carers transition assessment: What should be included? *continued*

There is no specific Government-endorsed assessment template, as the assessment with individuals should focus on the unique circumstance of that individual, in context with the needs of their whole family, rather than a 'one size fits all' model. Young adult carers outlined that local authorities or commissioned services should include specific questions related to the current circumstance and future aspirations for individual young people. These questions can then be tailored for each individual. The young adult carers suggested that it would be important to include questions around the following:

- School – Questions should be tailored around the enjoyment of subjects, activities, a young person's selected subject options and any barriers to them not achieving. There should be a discussion around support needs regarding applications for college/sixth form or vocational training.
- College – If the young adult carer is at college then there should be questions asking what are they studying, what they hope to achieve at college and any barriers to this. There should also be a discussion around the support needs for applying for university or employment.
- Employment – Young adult carers can need support to find a suitable job, therefore exploring their support needs around searching for and applying for jobs, and help with CV writing, will enable them to feel equipped where needed.
- The future – Thinking about the future can mean different things to young people and can be daunting. However young adult carers highlighted that they feel it is important to be asked about their future plans no matter their age, so they can receive relevant support along the process. Young adult carers would like to be asked about their future aspirations and goals and supported to achieve these.
- Financial support – Young adult carers should be asked if they understand what financial help they are entitled to and what support they feel they need to understand and navigate benefits. Young adult carers also want to understand how they can budget and manage money, and therefore questions should be tailored around this.
- Mental health and well-being – Young adult carers should be asked how they are and how they feel. Questions regarding well-being should also take past feelings into consideration and cover isolation and loneliness.

continued 

## The young carers transition assessment: What should be included? *continued*

Local authorities should ensure that the assessment is part of wider transitional support for the young adult carers by:

- Setting short and long term goals with the young adult carer.
- Providing clear follow up action planning with support plans in place to enable the young adult carer to reach their goals.

**‘Help us consider timelines for short and long term goal planning.’**

Young adult carer

Local authorities should also ensure that following a transition assessment, a written report is provided for the young adult carer and parent/guardian that outlines the points covered in the assessments, the next steps, and the ongoing support in place. The report should also include details of any other services that may help to support the young adult carer, along with any referrals made. The assessment process should also include a review stage to ensure that actions are followed up, and ensure that any changes in circumstances for the young adult carer are taken into account. Reviews should be carried out at least every six months, but sooner if appropriate to the individual young person.

### LINKS

- 16** ▶ Key issues: Barriers to achieving in school
- 18** ▶ Key issue: Barriers to achieving in further and higher education
- 27** ▶ Key issue: Barriers to financial support
- 29** ▶ Key issue: Barriers to positive health and well-being of young adult carers
- 6** ▶ The young carers transition assessment
- 12** ▶ Good practice examples: Transition assessment templates
- W** ▶ L&W – Making the Transition to Adulthood
- W** ▶ Young Carers in Schools
- W** ▶ The Children’s Society advice hub – money pages
- W** ▶ Move on up
- W** ▶ Looking after myself: young people’s wellness plan
- W** ▶ Carers trust – Getting into work

## Critical analysis in the transition assessment: Ensuring quality practice

- Carry out the assessment **with** the young adult carer, rather than it being a process that's '**done to them**' or '**done for them**'.
- This is a discussion about a young adult carer's own future goals and aspirations, let them feel ownership in this process.
- Recognise, they may find it difficult to answer questions about their future goals.
- Provide a process of reflection, identifying needs, analysis, formulating plans, goal setting and reviewing success of plans set.
- Understand that sometimes young people's plans change, and this isn't a failure or an unachieved goal. Sometimes goals and aspirations change, or they may not know what they want to do for a career or their specific goals for the future.

- You may wish to set an initial meeting for the young person to reflect on their future aspirations and needs of their family, or set them a task that would elicit this information and ask them to bring it to the assessment meeting.
- Review the assessment over time and respond to positive changes and progress, or explore and understand the absence of any change and what influenced this.

Include and reflect upon themes and factors relevant for each young person, including:

- The vulnerabilities they face as they approach adulthood. Is there any risk to respond to?
- Their school, college, further education, vocational training and learning opportunities. Reflect upon any future aspirations, what they enjoy, are they engaging and attending education?

# The assessment journey

Each assessment should include:

**Aim:** Talk about why the assessment is being undertaken, outline the need to follow up on any risk that is identified, outline the process and what you intend to talk about.

**Context:** Explore family history and understand the needs of the whole family, refer to a young carer's assessment outcomes and planning if available.

**Approach:** Engage the young person in a conversation, don't use jargon, or explain what it means, let them identify priorities to talk about to inform an action plan.

**Plan:** Create an action plan relating back to the specific elements you have discussed. Outline what the actions are, who will lead on each action, include whether any referrals to other agencies will be included and include timelines for completion or review.

**Close:** Check that you have covered all the points that the young person wanted to discuss. Do they have anything to add? Confirm all is covered in the action plan and provide a copy of this to document what has been agreed, including timelines and review dates.

'Yes, I had an assessment, it was very helpful. It wasn't labelled as a transition assessment, but was all-encompassing. It looked at the negative impacts, but also what I wanted to change, emotional well-being (on a scale), future goals, access to financial help which helped me reduce the negative impact of caring. I got a free gym pass – this helped my emotional well-being.'

Young adult carer

## LINKS

Good practice examples:  
Transition assessment templates

- ▶ Assessment Tool Template Liverpool
- ▶ Assessment Tool Template Wigan
- ▶ Assessment Tool Template Southampton



# The role of support services

## Adults' and children's services

- Children's and adults' services should work together to ensure there is strategic leadership, whilst communicating to one another and young people. Young adult carers need to be informed about their next steps and who is responsible for the assessment and support following this from the local authority.
- Children's and adult services need to have a local young carers strategy and a memorandum of understanding which they jointly own which ensures the voices of young carers are heard. This should include joined up working between adult and children's services to carry out transition plans for young carers.
- Local authorities should allocate a staff member with responsibility for transitional support within both children's and adults' services to ensure the assessments are being carried out, and there is clear communication and transition happening between children's and adults' services.

### Good practice example

*Sheffield County Council have merged adult and children's services to become 'people's services' which ensures young people do not fall through that gaps when they turn 18. This has allowed for transitional support and assessments to be carried out within the council.*

## Good practice: Commissioning contracts

Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that transition assessments are implemented, whether that is in-house or commissioned to another service such as a young carer's project. Commissioning contracts should include clear expectations and roles for the commissioned service, as well as the council itself, to encompass assessments, including both the 'young carers' needs assessments' and the 'young carers' transition assessments', pathway planning and support recommendations following the assessment alongside monitoring and reviewing. Contracts should also take

into consideration the capacity of staff and ensure they are resourced appropriately.

In Liverpool, the commissioned contract from the local authority to the young carers service embeds what they refer to as a child, young adult and adult assessments – this model provides a seamless transition, with the service working with young people until they are 25. The service reviews the young people on a six monthly basis and monitoring continues up to the age of 25 with the local authority holding the data.

## Young carers service practitioners

- Practitioners who are responsible for carrying out transition assessments should ensure they are asking key questions to ensure the young adult carer is fully supported.
- Practitioners who are responsible for carrying out transition assessments on behalf of the local authority should provide reports and information to the local authority to ensure effective monitoring and reporting is being carried out.
- Where the local young carers service is not responsible for the delivery of assessments, practitioners should refer young carers/young adult carers to the local authority to carry out the transition assessment.
- Practitioners should provide young adult carers with appropriate and accessible information and guidance about their legal rights – especially the right to a transition assessment from the local authority.
- Young carers services can use the ‘Young adult carers – a guide to moving into adulthood’ resource to help shape transition assessments and support with the young people.

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- 8** ➤ The Young Carers Transition Assessment: What should be included? **w** ➤ Know your rights
- 16** ➤ Key Issues: Barriers to Achieving in School **w** ➤ Know your rights – Carers trust
- 27** ➤ Key Issues: Barriers to Financial Support **w** ➤ Young Carers in Schools
- 24** ➤ Key Issues: Barriers to Appropriate Housing **w** ➤ SCIE – Approaches to assessments
- w** ➤ Young adult carers – a guide to moving into adulthood

# Barriers and solutions

## Key issue: Barriers to achieving in school

Young carers face particular challenges that impact on their capacity to enjoy and achieve in education. Research shows that:

- As many as 1 in 5 secondary school aged children could be young carers. That is five in every class (BBC 2019).<sup>4</sup>
- Young carers have significantly lower attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine Bs and nine Cs (The Children’s Society, Hidden from View, 2013).<sup>5</sup>
- A quarter of young carers said they were bullied at school because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).<sup>6</sup>

School is a vital place for young carers to achieve and plan for their future. However without the appropriate support in place, young carers highlight that they have poor experiences of school.

**‘My school didn’t understand about the issues I face as a young carer, so when I was late or didn’t turn up I always got into trouble, but really it was because of my caring role, this affected how well I did and what I am doing now.’**

Young adult carer

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- 8** → The Young Carers Transition Assessment: What should be included?
- 17** → Good practice solutions: School staff
- W → Assessment Tool Template Liverpool
- W → Young Carers in Schools
- W → Assessment Tool Template Wigan
- W → Education and Employment
- W → Assessment Tool Template Southampton
- W → UCAS

4 BBC 2019




5 The Children’s Society, Hidden from View (2013)

6 Carers Trust, 2013

## Good practice solutions: School staff

- The senior leadership team have a responsibility to ensure there is a whole school approach and commitment to young carers. They should provide relevant training and information to all staff so they are better equipped to identify and support young carers.
- Schools should have a designated member of staff who holds pastoral responsibility for young carers within the school, and provides signposting information for identifying and supporting young carers.
- Staff have a responsibility to support young carers within their school and refer to the local authority, as well as with local young carer services to ensure they are supported.
- Staff have a responsibility to identify young people who may be young carers within their school. They should refer to a local young carer service and local authority to ensure that a young carer receives a young carer needs assessment, and that relevant support is put in place for that young person and their whole family.
- School staff play a vital role in identifying and supporting young carers and should be involved in ongoing support for young carers. Where appropriate school staff may need to attend meetings involving multi-agency staff for individual young carers.
- Schools should explore the ‘Young Carers in Schools’ programme<sup>7</sup> which includes a range of tools and resources to enable schools to identify and support pupils who are young carers.

### LINKS

-  16 Key issue: Barriers to achieving in school
-  W Young Carers in Schools
-  W Education and Employment

7 [www.youngcarersinschools.com](http://www.youngcarersinschools.com)

## Key issue: Barriers to achieving in further and higher education

- 56% of young adult carers in college or university struggle because of their caring role. 17% say they may have to drop out for reasons associated with their caring role, and 13% say they may have to drop out for financial reasons. Young adult carers are four times more likely to have to drop out of their college or university course than other students (Carers Trust).<sup>8</sup>
- Young carers are more likely than the national average not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19 (The Children's Society, Hidden from View, 2013).<sup>9</sup>
- Young adult carers often have limited options post-16 due to them weighing up what they personally would like to achieve and where they would like to work or study versus practical considerations such as location and how far this is from the family home.

### Case study

*David was the sole carer for his mum and was responsible for family finances. He dropped out of school at 15 years old to find a job to pay the bills, enabling him to manage the household budget. Aged 20, David still works in the same company now, with no career progression and no formal qualifications David feels stuck and this isn't the path he would have chosen.*

**'I feel too guilty to leave my caring role and go to university. There is no one to look after brother and my mum has mental health issues.'**

Young adult carer

### LINKS

- 19 ➔ Good practice solutions: College staff
- 20 ➔ Good practice solutions: University staff

## Good practice solutions: College staff

- Staff have a responsibility to identify young adult carers within the college and there should be a college-wide commitment to identification and support. Young adult carers who have been identified should be referred to the local authority for a needs assessment. Referrals can also be made to young carer services/young adult carer services where appropriate for relevant support.
- Staff have a responsibility to support young adult carers already identified within the college. Staff should refer young adult carers to the local authority for a transition assessment to be completed either by them or the local authority.

### Good practice example

*In Lincolnshire, the local college refers young adult carers to the local authority for a transition assessment. This will be carried out by the Early Help team, or in some cases the college will carry out the assessment. The young person is asked who they would feel most comfortable with to do the assessment – this can be someone from their college rather than someone they don't know. This can save them from having to tell their story several times too.*

## LINKS

- 18** ▶ Key issue: Barriers to achieving in further and higher education
- w** ▶ Education and Employment
- w** ▶ Carers Trust: Student Carers in Further Education

## Good practice solutions: University staff

- Universities should hold specific taster days for young adult carers to enable them to gain insight into higher education, and feel that university can be an option for them to pursue.
- As part of the recruitment process, university staff could provide transition events for young adult carers to alert them to what support is available, including internal faculties and support services – eg well-being, financial support, student union support.
- Designated widening participation teams within universities should coordinate support with local young carers projects and children's and adults' services to ensure referral processes are in place offering relevant assessments for the young adult carer to ensure they are fully supported.

## Good practice examples

- *The University of Sheffield has a designated form for young adult carers to complete to ensure they receive support once at university, and a bursary system which is open to young adult carers to receive financial support.*
- *Through their widening participation team, The University of Winchester provide outreach to young adult carers and work in partnership with the local young carer's service to provide support and activities.*

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**13** Key issue: Barriers to achieving in further and higher education

**15** The role of support services: Young carers services practitioners

**W** Education and Employment

**W** UCAS

**W** University of Winchester

**W** University of Sheffield

**W** Young carers in Higher Education



## Key issue: Barriers to achieving vocational training opportunities

Apprenticeships or other vocational training opportunities can be a suitable alternative to further education. They allow young adult carers to gain valuable experience and training alongside each other. However, with many apprenticeships requiring full time hours, young adult carers can feel this restricts them from choosing this route if they cannot commit the time to their course.

Apprenticeships also pay a lower minimum wage than the national minimum and living wage, yet they are classed as employment by benefit decision makers, which means choosing this route often wouldn't be financially viable for a young adult carer or their family.

### LINKS

- [w](#) Apprenticeships
- [w](#) Qualifications & apprenticeships – City & Guilds
- [w](#) T Levels

## Key issue: Barriers to employment

Young adult carers may experience many barriers to employment opportunities and struggle to find work which is close to home or that they can fit around their caring role. This issue is often linked to their access to education and they may not have gained the relevant qualifications or experience.

**'I need maths and science because nobody will recruit me without these, so I am stuck.'**

Young adult carer

Young adult carers highlighted they are unsure of the processes involved in finding suitable employment and are anxious about juggling their caring responsibilities with a job. They also emphasised a lack of understanding from employers being a cause for concern, and that it may hinder their future progression if they were to disclose their caring role.

### Good practice example

*Carers First in Lincolnshire have an Employers for Carers project which asks employers to sign up to a charter and become more 'carer aware'. The service then emphasises to employers the many attributes that carers have. The service has support workers in place who link with employers, and 'carer champions' in local businesses who can provide information to the carers.*

**'Employers don't understand – it does depend on the job I guess, but for example if I told them I am a young carer they would most likely sack me...'**

Young adult carer

### LINKS

- 6** → The young carers transition assessment
- 23** → Good practice solutions: Employers
- w** → Lincolnshire Employment for Carers project
- w** → Know your rights – The Children's Society
- w** → Know your rights – Carers trust
- w** → L&W – Barriers to employment for young adult carers
- w** → L&W – Barriers to employment for young adult carers (summary)
- w** → Getting into work booklet
- w** → Carers UK – Your Rights in Work

5 Aylwood, Klenk, Robey, Wolkind (2018) Barriers to employment for young adult carers

## Good practice solutions: Employers

Employers should adopt a carer friendly approach to their workplace by:

- Implementing a carers policy which seeks to support the young adult carers from the beginning of their employment.
- Considering setting up an employer's 'Carer's Passport' scheme to enable straightforward discussions to take place regarding flexibility and support.
- Encouraging a young adult carer to feel able to declare their caring responsibilities (this should take place during the young person's induction period).
- Putting in place a working plan in agreement with the young adult carers, in order to make suitable adjustments for them where needed. For example, this plan could include flexible working, use of mobile phone, and change of hours.
- Ensuring ongoing conversations assessing the young adult carers circumstances and needs are embedded into work plans and supervision meetings occur to ensure full support is in place.

### LINKS

- 18** ▶ Key issue: Barriers to achieving in further and higher education
- 8** ▶ The young carers transition assessment: What should be included?
- w** ▶ Lincolnshire Employment for Carers project
- w** ▶ Know your rights – The Children's Society
- w** ▶ Know your rights – Carers trust
- w** ▶ Carers UK – Your Rights in Work
- w** ▶ Carers passport

## Key issue: Barriers to appropriate housing

Moving out of home is an aspect of transitioning into adulthood that can be an exciting time for young people. Young adult carers have highlighted to us some of the key barriers they face about moving out:

- Worrying about the options available to them.
- The care needs of the family if they were to move out and who would provide this.
- Feelings of guilt as they think about their own future.
- Whether they could live independently from their family.
- Their financial situation creating a barrier to making this move.

Homelessness or unstable housing conditions can leave young adults particularly vulnerable. When young people aged 16 or 17 leave the family they may be offered housing accommodation by the local authority. The local authority

has a duty to ensure that all children under the age of 18 have accommodation. Young people need to be aware of their rights to ensure they are making informed decisions and that their living arrangements are safe.

A transition assessment needs to take housing into account and ensure young adult carers are being asked about their living arrangements and what support is needed around this.

**‘We need more information on the types of housing, what is appropriate for us, like social, assisted, warden controlled etc and how we can even move... a solution to help is that housing needs to be included in the transition assessments to help us.’**

Young adult carer

### LINKS


**25** ➔ Good practice solutions: Housing services

## Good practice solutions: Housing services

- Housing professionals should consider the whole family when meeting with adults who may have a disability or illness, and ask key questions about the family set up – including if there are children. They should ask questions about any role the children have within the family and assess if they might be a young carer.
- Housing professionals should refer families/young people who they identify as a young carer to the local authority for an assessment of need and continue to work with them regarding their housing needs, attending multi-agency meetings where appropriate.
- Professionals should be asking key questions to the young adult carer about their housing and accommodation needs following a transition assessment.

Questions may include:

- What is your current housing situation?
  - What support do you need to live independently?
  - What support does your family need, so you can live independently?
  - Who do you currently have supporting you?  
Eg other services
- Professionals need to be equipped to recognise when the family needs an assessment due to the young adult carer moving out of the family home.
  - Housing professionals should help to support the young adult carers to find out what financial support they are entitled to which could support them with their housing costs eg universal credit. Housing professionals should ensure young adult carers are given all the information they need to make informed decisions.

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## Good practice solutions: Housing services continued

### Good practice example

*'Move On Up' – run by the charity Quaker Social Action – provides four properties in East London for 12 young adult carers to use as their first base after leaving the family home. The young adult carers can live for up to two years as flatmates, learning key skills and independence, and building relationships with others in similar situations.*

*The project aims to give them a living space where they feel safe, supported and independent, and gives*

*them a chance to consider what they want to do in their future. The project supports young adult carers with the practicalities of maintaining tenancies alongside open communication and relationships. Young adult carers are provided with practical help and support regarding their own future goals and financial guidance and to ensure support is in place when they move on.*

### LINKS

- 24** ➔ Key issues: Barriers to Appropriate Housing
- 8** ➔ The young carers transition assessment: What should be included?
- w** ➔ Housing grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- w** ➔ Working together to support disabled parents
- w** ➔ Supportive shared housing for young adult carers – Move On Up

## Key issue: Barriers to financial support

Young carers are statistically more likely to be from low income families and backgrounds. The Children's Society's Hidden from View report found that the average annual income for families with a young carer is £5,000 less than families who do not have a young carer.

Although young adult carers have some benefits entitlements, such as carers allowance when they turn 16, they can only access this if they are in education or employment for less than 21 hours a week. This means young adult carers are wrestling with and weighing up if they should stay at home to get the carers allowance, or study or work and not be eligible for the benefit. This can be a huge burden on a young adult carer – especially if

they are from low income family and feel a responsibility to bring in money for the family. Young adult carers can also feel forgotten about when it comes to the 16 to 19 bursary fund for vulnerable students. If young adult carers were entitled to this bursary it would enable many of them to stay in education.

Young adult carers may also be entitled to universal credit if they are 16 or 17 and caring for a severely disabled parent who is in receipt of a disability-related benefit. This benefit is dictated by the number of hours they care for the parent and can have a knock-on effect on the choices a young adult carer makes about their future.

### LINKS

-  [28 Good practice solutions: Financial support and guidance](#)
-  [Financial support for young carers](#)
-  [Can I claim carers allowance?](#)
-  [Managing your money](#)
-  [Hidden from View](#)
-  [Financial support for young carers – Money Advice Service](#)
-  [16–19 Bursary](#)
-  [Carers allowance](#)

## Good practice solutions: Financial support and guidance

- Young carer's project staff could build links with local Job Centre Plus to enable young adult carers to access financial advice and support in finding employment.
- Job centre staff should include asking about caring roles in their assessments of young people. They should recognise young carers as a vulnerable group and give advice and guidance about their entitlements to benefits.
- Further education settings should provide financial support and advice through their support services. These services can also signpost young adult carers to where to go if they or their family reach crisis point.
- Where available, local authority local welfare assistance schemes offering crisis support should work with other services and agencies to make young adult carers and their families aware of the support they can offer.

### LINKS

- 27 ➤ Key issues: Barriers to financial support
- 8 ➤ The young carers transition assessment: What should be included?
- w ➤ Step Change
- w ➤ Citizens Advice
- w ➤ Job centre
- w ➤ Financial support for young carers
- w ➤ Can I claim young carers allowance?
- w ➤ Managing your money
- w ➤ Hidden from View
- w ➤ Financial support for young carers – Money Advice Service
- w ➤ 16–19 Bursary
- w ➤ Carers allowance



## Key issue: Barriers to positive health and well-being for young adult carers

Young adult carers can experience negative impacts upon their own health and wellbeing, including both their physical and mental health, due to inappropriate caring responsibilities throughout their childhood and into adulthood.

The Carers Trust and University of Nottingham found that almost a third of young adult carers felt 'just OK' about their physical health. Our current practice with young carers and young adult carers highlights the impact their caring role can have on accessing physical activities and sport, and how this can make them feel about both their physical and mental health.

**'I don't have time to go to sport or activities due to caring for my mum and sister, not to mention the costs too.'**

Young carer

**'I would feel uncomfortable going to a group because of how I feel about myself and my own health, people may judge me.'**

Young carer

In a Carers Trust survey, almost half (45%) of the young adult carers who responded reported having a mental health problem, including anxiety, depression and eating disorder.

Young adult carers have so many choices to make at this critical transition stage, and the weight of this can really affect their mental health and well-being. Young adult carers can often feel lonely and isolated, which can impact upon their well-being.

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### LINKS

- W** Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education
- W** Time to be heard – A call for recognition and support for young adult carers

## Key issue: Barriers to positive health and well-being for young adult carers *continued*

Transition assessments should capture how a young person is feeling and put support plans in place to ensure the young adult carer's well-being is being considered and supported.

Whilst local support networks will be important in supporting the young adult carer's mental health, there are also specialised online forums and services for young people which you can signpost young people to:

### ■ The Mix

The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people. They are there to help young people take on any

challenge they are facing – from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs. Young people can talk to support staff via online, social or their free, confidential helpline.

### ■ Kooth


Kooth provides free, safe, anonymous online support for young people.

## LINKS

- 8 → The young carers transition assessment: What should be included?
- 31 → Good practice solutions: Health services
- w → The Mix
- w → Kooth
- w → Looking after myself: Young people's wellness plan
- w → Young and caring: Assessing support
- w → Young People's Mental Health – The Children's Society
- w → Health and Mental Health for Young Carers

## Good practice solutions: Health services

- Mental health professionals should consider supporting the young adult carer up to 25 years old to ensure they are fully supported through the transitional period and don't fall through the gaps. Alternatively, they should help to support the young adult carer into adult mental health services who can fully support them with a clear handover period and action plans in place.
- Practitioners should be aware of identification factors of young carers when working with young people to ensure they are actively identifying hidden young carers.
- Practitioners who are working with adults with physical and/or mental health issues should ask questions around the whole family – especially if there are children in the household. If there are children within the family, practitioners should ask about what help they may provide to that adult to gain an insight into whether that child could be a young carer.
- Practitioners should seek to be flexible in their appointment scheduling for young carers/young adult carers to enable them to seek help and advice in a way that works around their education and caring role.
- Practitioners should provide age appropriate information regarding mental health conditions where a young carer/young adult carer is caring for a parent with mental health condition. This would enable a young carer/young adult carer to gain a greater understanding and thus alleviate some of the worry that they may have.
- Although mental health practitioners may carry out their own assessment, they should also refer identified young carers/young adult carers to their local authority for an assessment of need/transition assessment.

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## Good practice solutions: Health services *continued*

- Professionals should find out who else is supporting the young adult carer and attend relevant meetings, such as transitional support meetings, alongside other services to input into ongoing plans for support.
- There needs to be a greater understanding – from GPs, health and social care professionals – of the difficulties

related to health or disability faced by some young adult carers. GPs and health professionals need to be better equipped to identify young carers, and systems should be put in place that enable them to refer on to appropriate services or to provide support directly as appropriate.

### LINKS

- 8 → The young carers transition assessment: What should be included?
- 29 → Key issue: Barriers to positive health and well-being of young adult carers
- w → The Mix
- w → Kooth
- w → Looking after myself: Young people's wellness plan
- w → Young and caring: Assessing support
- w → Young People's Mental Health – The Children's Society
- w → Health and Mental Health for Young Carers

# Resources

Shaping our Future: Improving Assessment and Support for Young Carers Transition to Adulthood – Research report – [childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer/youngadultcarers](http://childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer/youngadultcarers)

Resources for Young Adult Carers – [childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer/youngadultcarers](http://childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer/youngadultcarers)

Include Service website – [supporting young carers and their families](#)

[Whole Family Pathway](#) – The importance of a whole family approach

[Supporting young carers and their families](#) – Supportive practice guidance for those who work directly with young carers and their families.

- [Involving young carers](#) – how to involve young carers in all that you do
- [Young Carers: information for healthcare professionals](#) – help to identify a situation where there might be young carers
- [Young Carers affected by HIV](#) – helping young carers who look after a relative with HIV
- [Young Carers and school](#) – the impact of caring and attending school and details of our Young Carers in Schools award
- [Young Carers in families affected by parental mental illness](#) – helping young carers who look after parents with a mental illness
- [Young Carers of black and minority ethnic families](#) – helping young carers from BAME families
- [Young Carers of parents who misuse substances](#) – helping young carers who look after a relative who misuses substances
- [Young Carers well-being](#) – looking after a young carers health and well-being