

A Young Carer's Practice Guidance

What is a Young Carer?

A young carer is a person under the age of 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell, or who misuses substances.

The **Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995** defined young carers as “children and young people (under 18) who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis”.

This definition excludes children who provide care as part of contractual or voluntary work, but the Local Authority can conduct an assessment if it is felt appropriate.

What are the obligations of the Local Authority towards a Young Carer?

Under the **Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004**, Local Authorities must have “*a protocol, shared between Adult and Children’s Services, for identifying and assessing young carers*”. The Local Authority must be proactive in identifying young carers in its area.

Section 17 Children Act 1989 places a duty on Local Authorities to assess whether a young carer in their area needs support and what those needs are if:

- it appears to the Local Authority that a young carer may have need for support;
- the Local Authority receive a request from a young carer or a parent of a young carer to assess the young carer’s need for support; or
- an assessment has been carried out, but the circumstances of the young person or person being cared for have changed.

A Local Authority can refuse to carry out an assessment if:

- the Young Carer does not appear to have support needs;
- an assessment has already been completed and the circumstances have not changed.

What does a Young Carer’s Assessment involve?

The assessment will look at whether it is appropriate for the young carer to provide, or continue to provide care for the person in question (**Section 96 (7) Children and Families Act 2014**).

Inappropriate or excessive care is defined in the **Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016** as anything which is likely to have an impact on the child’s health, wellbeing or education or which is unsuitable for a particular child.

Who is involved in the assessment?

When conducting a young carer’s needs assessment, the Local Authority must involve:

- *the Young Carer*
- *the Young Carer’s parents*
- *any person whom the Young Carer or their parents request be involved.*

A Young Carer Who Cares for an Adult

Adult has a Needs Assessment under the [Care Act 2014](#) using a [Whole Family Approach](#) by Adult Social Care. If during this process a Young Person is identified as being a carer (note: the child does not have to reside within the same household) the following should be considered within the Whole Family Approach:

The Adult Assessment must consider impact of caring duties to the child's:

- Physical and Emotional Wellbeing
- Social needs
- Any Excessive and or [Inappropriate caring responsibilities](#)

The Child Assessment must consider the following questions:

- Why is the young person completing caring duties?
- What needs to change to reduce the caring responsibilities?
- What would assist the family to prevent the need for the young person to take on this responsibility in the first place?

Note: All Young Carers will require an Advocate.

The Young Carer is deemed as a
[Child in Need of Protection](#)

Urgent Referral to be made to Dudley Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Adults and Children Services to jointly assess and complete a joint home visit and share information.

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Adults and Children Services to jointly assess and complete a joint home visit and share information.

The Young Carer is not deemed as a Child in Need, but still may require support

Referral to Dudley Early Help Services and /or Signpost to [Crossroads Dudley Young Carers Project](#) for a carer's assessment and support to be offered.

A Young Carer Who Cares for a Child

Young Carer requires a Needs Assessment under the [Children Act 1989](#) and the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) and using a [Whole Family Approach](#) (note: the child does not have to reside within the same household). The following guidance [The Young Carers \(Needs Assessments\) Regulations 2015](#) should be followed.

Note:

- Child being cared for may require a referral to Children Social Care for an assessment of need under Section 17 (Children Act 1989).

The Needs Assessment must, in particular, have regard to:

- The Young Carer's age, understanding and family circumstances
- The wishes, feelings and preferences of the Young Carer and the outcomes they want from the assessment
- Any differences in opinion between the Young Carer, parents and the person being cared for.
- Any Excessive and or [inappropriate care responsibilities](#)

Any Assessment must consider the following questions:

- Why is the young person completing caring duties?
- What needs to change to reduce the caring responsibilities?
- What would assist the family to prevent the need for the young person to take on this responsibility in the first place?

Note: All Young Carers will require an Advocate.

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A Young Carer Approaching Adulthood

Under the [Care Act 2014](#) councils are to undertake a [Transitions Assessment](#) for a young carer caring for an adult if it considers that she/ he is likely to have needs for support after becoming 18, and that the assessment would be of significant benefit to them.

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 (for support, and with added tools to assist in completing a [Transition Pathway](#) read *The Children's Society Young Carers Transition Pathway into Adulthood*).

The Transition Assessment should be carried out by the team responsible for assessing the person being cared for.

If the person being cared for is an Adult, then **before** the Young Carer becomes 18 years old (and by no later than 17.5 years old), a referral to Adult Social Care for a Transition Assessment should be undertaken.

If the person being cared for is a child, then **before** the Young Carer becomes 18 years old (and by no later than 17.5 years old), a referral to Children's Social Care for a Transition Assessment should be undertaken.

The Transition Assessment must include the following:

- Is the Young Carer able to care now and post 18 years old?
- Is the Young Carer willing to care now and will continue post 18 years old?
- Does the Young Carer work, participate in education, training or recreation and wish to do so post 18 years old?
- Current needs and the impact on wellbeing.
- Whether the young carer is likely to have care and support needs after they become 18, and if so, what those needs are likely to be, and which are eligible needs.
- The outcomes the young carer wishes to achieve in day-to-day life and how care and support (and other matters) can contribute to achieving them.

Further Information

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 defines a **Child in Need of Protection** as being:

- Where the local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- Significant Harm is defined as being the ill treatment or impairment of the health or development of the child compared to what might be reasonably expected of a similar child.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines a **Child in Need** as being:

- He or she is 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 LA;
- His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the LA;
- He or she has a disability.

Signpost to Crossroads Dudley Young Carers Project

- Fill in the [referral form](#) in full.
- If you are a health care professional you can also make a referral or gain advice by calling **0121 553 6483**.

The Care Act statutory guidance defines “**inappropriate caring roles**” 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.

The Children's Society –
[Young Carers Transition to Adulthood Pathway Tool.](#)

FURTHER READING AND SUPPORTS

- Dudley Carers Wellbeing Hub – Crossroad:
<https://www.sandwellcrossroads.org/dudley-carers-wellbeing-hub>

- Dudley Connexions Young Carers:
<https://connexionsdudley.org/specialist-support/young-carers>

- Sandwell Advocacy for Young Carers:
<https://sandwelladvocacy.org/advocacy-project-for-young-carers>

- NHS Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership:
<http://www.dwmh.nhs.uk/service-users-and-carers/dudley-young-carers>

- KIDS Dudley Young Carers:
<https://www.kids.org.uk/dudley-young-carers>

- Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families:
<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/youth-wellbeing/find-a-service-near->