

Supporting Young Carers

An online good practice guide for health professionals

A supplementary guide to Coventry's 'No Wrong Doors' Memorandum of Understanding



Carers Trust North of England
YOUNG CARERS PROJECT



Who are young carers and why are they important?

Young carers are children or young people who look after someone (normally in their family) who have an illness, a disability, mental ill-health or a problem with drugs or alcohol. They may take on practical or emotional caring tasks that an adult would normally do.

Around one in 20 young people miss school because of their caring responsibilities

One in 12 young people care for more than 15 hours per week

There are an estimated 5,000 children and young people under the age of 25 with caring responsibilities in Coventry. The caring role they undertake may not always be obvious particularly when it involves a lot of emotional support or supervision. The role might fluctuate, particularly if the person they care for is a relative experiencing mental ill-health or struggling with drug or alcohol addiction.

Health professionals play a vital role in helping to identify young carers and ensure they get the right support at the right time

Young carers don't always identify themselves as a carer because they see it as part of their everyday life and something they have always done. Often they are reluctant to tell anyone about their caring responsibilities. This can lead to young carers becoming isolated and not getting the right support and the impact on their life can be huge regardless of the type of care they provide or how often they provide it

A survey of 348 young carers found 48% said being a young carer made them feel stressed and 44% said it made them feel tired.

Being a young carer can often have a severe, significant and long-lasting impact on a young person's health and wellbeing. It is therefore essential that services consider how they will support young carers with regards to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The health of young carers may be affected for a variety of reasons for example stress and anxiety relating to financial or time pressures, exhaustion as a result of interrupted sleep, and physical injuries from repeatedly having to support or move someone with poor mobility. There is also a risk that these issues might not be addressed if health appointments are missed or not prioritised, or if there is a distrust of health services

The GP Patient Survey finds that a third more young adult carers report anxiety or depression than other young people

What do young carers do?

Some young carers have to:

- help someone to get around or help them wash, go to the toilet or get dressed or take medication
- look after a brother or sister and make sure they are safe and help them get to school
- provide emotional support and cheer someone up or support them when they are feeling down
- help care for someone by doing the cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping or other jobs in the home
- interpret for someone or help them communicate
- supervise the person with the illness or disability to make sure they are safe and monitor their condition
- manage aspects of their own care that other children of their age would not usually be expected to do (e.g. preparing meals)

Children and young people must not be relied upon to provide excessive or inappropriate care and all practitioners must be able to recognise and respond to risks to children's safety and welfare, especially where they have concerns that children are, or may be, suffering significant harm

What can you do?

Health professionals can use these resources to improve their knowledge and understanding about young carers and the support they require.

FREE E-Learning “[Young Carer Aware](#)” is available on the Council website to help raise awareness amongst health professionals



Carers Trust national website has a wide range of resources to explore on their [Professionals pages](#)

The Young Carers Project is a local service available to provide extra support to young carers and young adult carers



Carers Trust Heart of England

Phone - 024 7610 1040
Text - 074 2867 0040

The Young Carers Project is independent of statutory services, funded through Children in Need and Big Lottery

We work with young carers aged between 5 and 18 years old and run a range of supported activities, as well as providing one to one emotional support and working with families. We can also support young carers to raise any issues they might be having at school. Our workers have a presence in a number of schools across the city

We also have a support worker for young adult carers funded through the Carers Trust “Programme for Change” who provides support to 14-25 year old carers on issues around managing a caring role and education and/or employment.

Our service is open to all young carers and [more information can be found on our website.](#)

Professionals can make a direct referral to the project by completing the [online form](#) at the bottom of the ‘Contact Us’ page on our website

Assessing young carers

The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced new rights and assessments for young carers and their families which promote a whole family approach and aims to reduce children's caring roles and responsibilities.

Young carers are more than one-and-a-half times as likely to be from black, Asian or minority ethnic communities

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 has been amended and introduces new rights for young carers in the following ways:

- Local Authorities must identify young carers in their area
- Young carers have a right to a needs assessment and support
- The assessment should appraise whether it is appropriate for the child/young person to provide, or continue to provide care, their other needs and wishes and should also identify whether they are a child in need
- The assessment should include the views, wishes and needs of the young carer and the person who needs support, and any others identified by the young carer
- The young carer and the person who needs support should be given a written copy of the assessment
- Assessment and support should address the needs of families through the whole family approach

The 2011 Census showed that young carers providing 50+ hours of care a week were up to five times more likely to report their general health as 'Not good'.

The Care Act 2014 introduces new measures for assessing adult carers aged 18 and over and young carers in transition moving between children's and adult services. The Act introduces new measures that are intended to:

- Recognise the changing needs of young carers
- Give young carers in transition the right to a needs assessment in their own right
- Ensure assessments identify their support needs and assess whether they are able and/or willing to provide care after the age of 18

- Ensure any support provided helps young carers in their preparations for adulthood (e.g. education, training, employment, etc.)
- Address the needs of families through the whole family approach (including parenting needs)

Health professionals should start the process of considering the young carer's needs when carrying out a CAF assessment

The flow chart on the next page highlights the areas the assessment should consider and where other agencies should be involved.

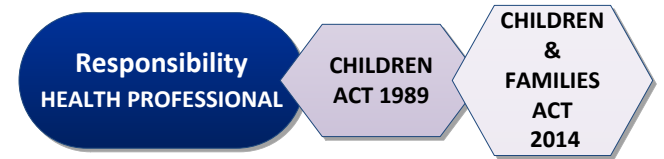
What to do when a young carer is identified by a health professional

Further guidance
Coventry Children's
Services Procedures
Manual

Further guidance
Young Carers
Needs Assessment



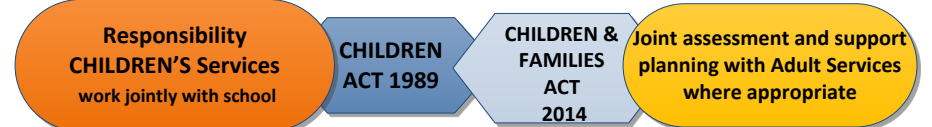
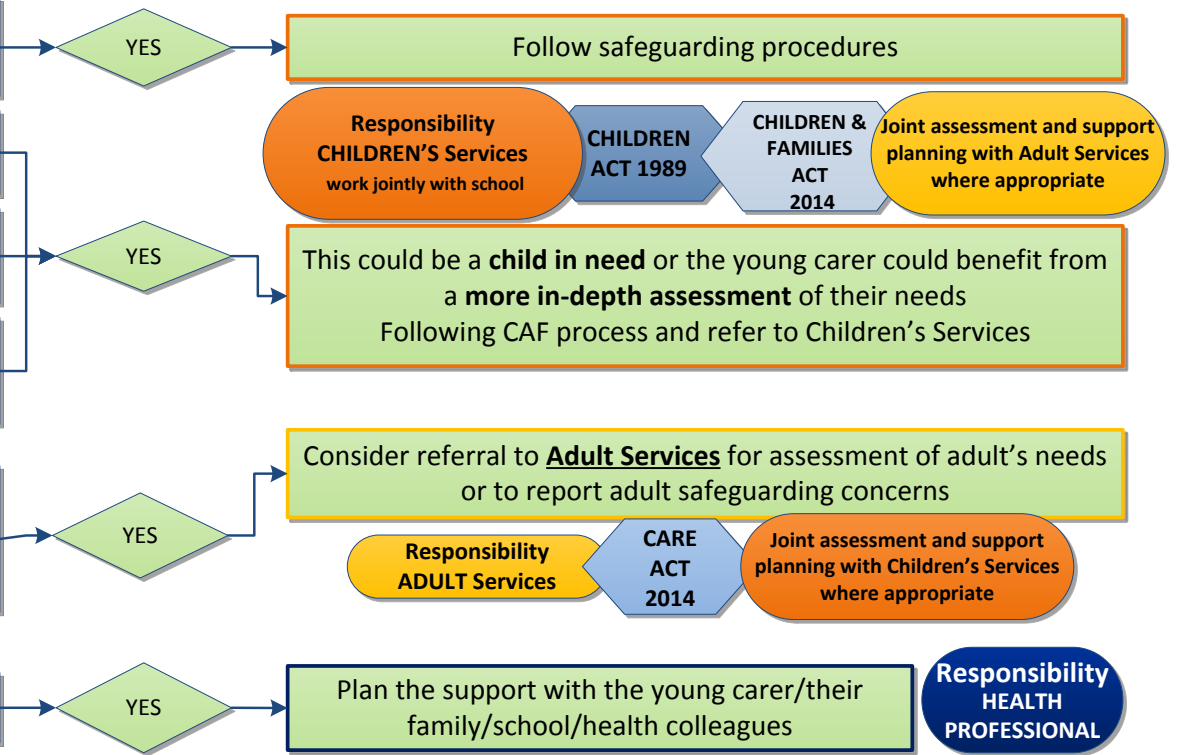
Carry out a CAF
Assessment



The CAF assessment must consider:

- Are there safeguarding concerns for the young carer or any other young people in the household?
- Does the caring role appear to be impacting on the young carer's wellbeing, welfare, education and/or development?
- Is the young carer taking on excessive or inappropriate caring roles? (including roles providing support to other children in the family)
- Do parents appear to have any needs for support in carrying out their parental role or to meet their needs as parent carers?
- Does any adult in the household have an appearance of need for care and support arising from a disability or illness that haven't been met by health intervention / are there safeguarding concerns for this adult?
- Does the young carer need support from health services or within school to meet their needs?

Actions to take



Other guides in this series:

Supporting Young Carers in Schools *an online good practice guide*

*A supplementary guide to Coventry's
'No Wrong Doors' Memorandum of Understanding*

Supporting Young Carers *An online good practice guide for social care*

*A supplementary guide to Coventry's
'No Wrong Doors' Memorandum of Understanding*

*All the guides and the
'No Wrong Doors' A Memorandum of Understanding for Young Carers
can be downloaded from*

www.coventry.gov.uk/youngcarers

Our local Carers' Strategy is also available on the Council website at
www.coventry.gov.uk/carersstrategy