

# YOUNG CARERS: IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL



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*For Practitioners in  
Harrow Council, but  
adaptable for other  
audiences.*

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# Who is a Young Carer?

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*Young Carers might be caring for a parent, sibling, grandparent, or someone else.*

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*Their caring role may extend to looking after siblings or other children because a parent in need of care, a parent carer, or an adult carer, is struggling to do this themselves.*

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*Children do not have to be the 'main' or 'sole' carer to be considered a Young Carer, they can also be a 'team' carer or 'secondary' carer.*

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*A child or young person aged under 18 who provide regular or on-going care and emotional support to a family members who is:*

- *physically ill*
- *mentally ill*
- *disabled*
- *misuses substances.*

## **A Young Carer becomes vulnerable when...**

...the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, with risk to his/her emotional or physical wellbeing, social networks, educational achievement, and/or life chances.





# What types of caring do Young Carers provide?

*This list is not exhaustive*



## **Domestic/ Household Activity**

- Washing dishes or clothes
- Cooking & Cleaning

## **Personal/ Intimate Care**

- Help to dress, wash, use bathroom
- Giving medication or applying dressings
- Assisting with Mobility

## **Household/ Financial Management**

- Shopping
- Repairs and/or heavy lifting
- Helping with bills, benefits, banking
- Employment to support household

## **Emotional Care**

- Providing company & emotional support
- Supervising/ keeping an eye out
- Taking someone out

## **Sibling Care**

- Responsibility for looking after other children – either alone or with a parent present.

## **Travel or Communication Support**

- Interpreting
- Attendance at appointments
- Support with travelling





# How to Identify Young Carers

*Young Carers might be caring for a parent or other family member, including siblings or grandparents or for someone outside of the family who has care and support needs.*

*Young Carers can appear to be coping or show few signs of having additional needs, then hit crisis point. Early identification and prevention is important.*

## How many young carers are there?

- There are about **700,000 young carers in the UK.** (BBC 2010)\*
- That's about **1 in 12 secondary aged pupils.**
- There are likely to be young carers in every school and college.

\*The Census identified over 200,000 young carers, but many remain hidden.



### Carers remain hidden for many reasons including:

- Do not realise that they are a carer or their life is different to peers
- Their parent's do not realise that their children are carers
- They worry that the family will be split up and taken into care
- They don't want to be any different from their peers
- Parent's condition is not obvious: people don't think they need help
- There has been no opportunity to share their story
- See no reason/ positive actions as a result of telling their story.
- May feel that no one else can understand.

### Signs that someone could be a Young Carer include:

- Not completing homework, absenteeism, lateness.
- Tired, distracted, withdrawn
- Lack of time for play, sports, leisure, after school activities.
- Social isolation.
- Victim of bullying
- Behavioural problems
- Anxiety, depression, self-harm.
- Low self-esteem or confidence
- Frequently contacting home
- Lack of aspiration for their future
- Higher maturity/ independence
- Confidence interacting with adults
- Knowledge of disability or illness
- Back pain or other physical injuries



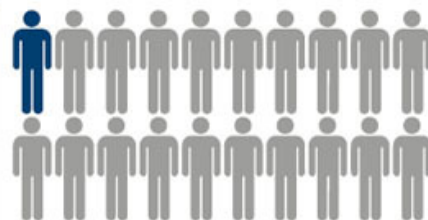


# Young Carer Needs

Being a young carer can have a big impact on the things that are important to growing up

- It can affect a young person's health, social life and self-confidence.
- Many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring which can cause pressure and stress.
- In a survey, 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.
- 26% have been bullied at school because of their caring role.
- 1 in 20 miss school because of their caring role.

But young people can learn lots of useful skills by being a young carer.



One in 20 miss school because of caring responsibilities.

*Harrow Specific: Just **37%** of Young Carers in Harrow Schools are meeting National Standards in both Maths and English.*



*Young Carers are less likely to be in Education, Employment or Training (post 16).*

*However, there is no strong evidence that young carers are more likely to come into contact with support agencies.*





# Council Support for Young Carers

## Making a Referral

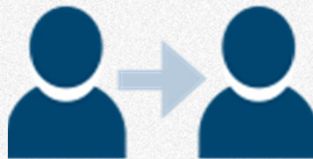


### *Early Support*

Early Support will undertake a 'Family Led Needs Analysis' for Young Carers who meet service need thresholds.

This will help young carers, and their families, to access support, based on their circumstances.

Harrow Council must assess whether a young carer has needs for support if requested to by a young carer or their parents.



### *Making a Referral*

You can refer a Young Carer by:

- Calling the Golden Number on 020 8901 2690
- Making a written CAF Referral (phone the above number to get a CAF Referral Form)

You should get the consent of the Young Carer or their parent/care before making a referral, unless you have safeguarding concerns.



### *Referring a Child in Need*

'Excessive or Inappropriate Caring Responsibilities' are those that mean a young carer is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development.

Consent to refer from young carer/ their family in these circumstances is not needed (but is preferable).

If you think a child or young person could be at risk of significant harm, you should call the Golden Number as soon as possible.





# Early Support

## Encouraging take-up

*All Young Carers with needs should get the support they deserve.*

When a Young Carer who has eligible needs for support is identified, practitioners should encourage a referral to Early Support. This will enable needs to be assessed and support put in place to meet them.

Unless there are safeguarding concerns, consent is needed to make a referral. Many families and/ or young carer will need encouragement or reassurance before giving consent.



### Language and Terminology

- **Avoid bureaucrat or interventionist terms** (Young Carer, Needs Assessment, Social Worker): 'a chat about how you feel about looking after mum and what we can do to support you'.



### Change the Power Relationship

- Emphasise **entitlement rather than imposition**: 'you have the right to an assessment and, depending on the outcome, the Council may be required to help you.' (without raising unreasonable expectations).



### Address fears directly

"it is clear that you are a good dad/ caring daughter who wants the best for his family, this assessment is to help you achieve this, not take away your control".



### Relationships

- **Build on existing relationships** of trust: "I can be there when they visit you if you'd like me to".



### Benefits & Outcomes

- Talk about the **possible services and support** that may be provided as a result (see later slides)