



One minute guide

Young Carers

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What do we mean by 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](#)) and in line with the [Young Carers \(Needs Assessments\) Regulations 2015](#) young carers are entitled to an assessment, whatever the level of care they provide.

Under the [Care Act 2014](#), 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](#)) 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 support is available in Leeds?

Young carers aged 5 - 18 years in Leeds can receive support from the [Barnardo's Willow Young Carers](#) service. Young carers referred to the service receive an assessment of their needs, and the appropriate support is offered for any needs identified through the assessment. Targeted and specialist support can vary from 1-1 sessions with Willow staff, or group work focused on specific issues where appropriate.

The Willow service takes a whole family approach, talking to parents and carers about the young person's caring responsibilities and, where appropriate, referring parents to adult support services if they need additional help; this approach recognises that the service cannot lift a child or young person out of their caring role without providing support to their parents or carers.

[Carers Leeds](#) also offer support to young adult carers aged 16 - 25 years.

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. If you suspect this is the case, contact the Duty and Advice team ([guide](#)) to discuss your concerns.

If there are no safeguarding concerns, you can speak to Barnardo's Willow Young Carers service on tel: 0113 2622851. They will be able to discuss the family's circumstances with you, and advise you whether a referral to their service is appropriate. They may also suggest that you carry out an Early Help assessment ([guide](#)) in order to identify the needs of the young person.

In all of your work with families, it is important to follow the principles of the [Think Family, Work Family protocol \(guide\)](#), and to recognise that if you are working with adults in the family who have difficulties which may limit their ability to carry out their caring responsibilities, some of these responsibilities may fall to their children.

How can practitioners working with adults recognise and support the needs of young carers?

If your role is predominantly to work with adults in a family, you will also need to follow the principles of the [Think Family, Work Family protocol \(guide\)](#).

This is particularly relevant if you work with adults who have an illness, disability, mental health condition and/ or drug or alcohol problem; it is important to consider whether the adult is a parent or carer, and whether their difficulties may be having an impact on their capacity to carry out their caring responsibilities. If this is the case, then there may be a child or young person in the family who is a young carer.

If you identify a child or young person with caring responsibilities, you can contact Willow Young Carers on tel: 0113 2622851 to discuss how to access appropriate support.

Further information:

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

[Barnardo's Willow Young Carers service \(Leeds\)](#) - tel: 0113 2622851;

[Carers Leeds](#) offer support to young adult carers aged 16 - 25 years;

[Mindmate](#) - support in Leeds for mental health and emotional wellbeing;

[The Carers Trust](#) offer support and advice to carers, including young carers and young adult carers;

[The Young Carers in Schools](#) programme provides training and resources to help schools and teachers improve how they support pupils who have caring responsibilities;

[NHS guide to young carers' rights](#).

[Briefing on carers' rights under recent legislation \(March 2015\)](#);

[Young Minds](#) offers support and advice on young people's mental health and wellbeing;

[Childline](#) 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.