

Centre
Supporting Young People

33

YOUNG ADULT CARERS

*Celebrating and Supporting
Young Adult Carers*



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Introduction to Centre 33

Centre 33 is a highly regarded local charity, with a proven track record of supporting vulnerable children and young people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Founded in 1981, our vision is that every young person is listened to, respected for who they are and receives support that enables them to be well and thrive.

We have delivered excellent local young carers services since 1999; continuing to develop our offer to young adult carers and their families through co-production, evidence-based practice and learning from evaluation. We are known for our expertise, innovation, accessibility and children and young people-focused services, which are embedded through active partnerships across family and community services.

We have designed this resource pack to reflect our values, ensuring the needs of young people remain at the heart of it. We ask all settings to do the same, and strive to create an environment that support and celebrate young adult carers.

Celebrating and supporting young adult carers

Hopes and expectations for your setting

What does being a young adult carers friendly setting mean?

Centre 33 Young Adult Carers Project works with further and higher education settings to create an environment for young adult carers that is inclusive, safe and where young adult carers can reach their potential.

To be recognised as a young adult carers friendly setting you are aiming to achieve the following:



Have a **named Young Adult Carers Champion**

Have an **agreement** with your Young Adult Carers

Deliver **whole staff training** each year

Encourage Young Adult Carers to meet and support each other -
Develop a Young Adult Carers Forum

Ensure you are thinking 'Young Adult Carers' ask them what they need/want!

Understanding more about young adult carers

What is a Young Adult Carer?

Young adult carers are young people aged 16–25 who care, unpaid, for a family member or partner with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction.

Ryan, 16, is a young adult carer. Ryan's definition of a young adult carer is someone with 'a unique resilience and versatility due to their experiences with life which sometimes are a bit unconventional...the empathy is a very very big part. Young adult carers have done things you wouldn't normally have to do until quite a bit later down the line.'

Young people have told us they want professionals to understand that they are a young person first and foremost. 'Acknowledge us for our skills and attributes, being a young adult carer isn't our only attribute, there are so many multi facets as a human...don't think of us as just young adult carers. We are a lot of other things.'

Ryan, 16.

What support might a young adult carer provide?

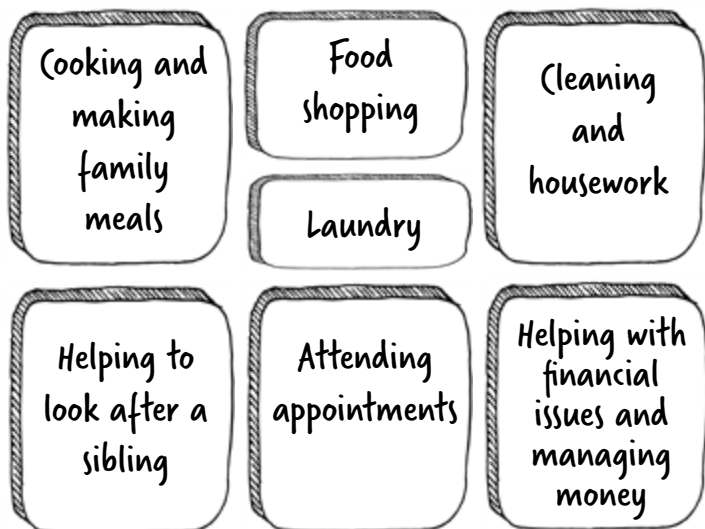
In general, support given by young adult carers can be divided into physical and practical support, and emotional support.

- Physical and practical support could range from 'reminding mum to take a tablet once a day' to 'helping mum get out of bed and get washed and dressed in the morning.'
- Emotional support could range from 'keeping my brother company and talking things through with him to make sure he is feeling OK' to 'preventing further suicide attempts from mum.'

Examples of support a young adult carer might provide

Here are some examples of different types of support a young adult carer may provide. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that it will be different for every young adult carer.

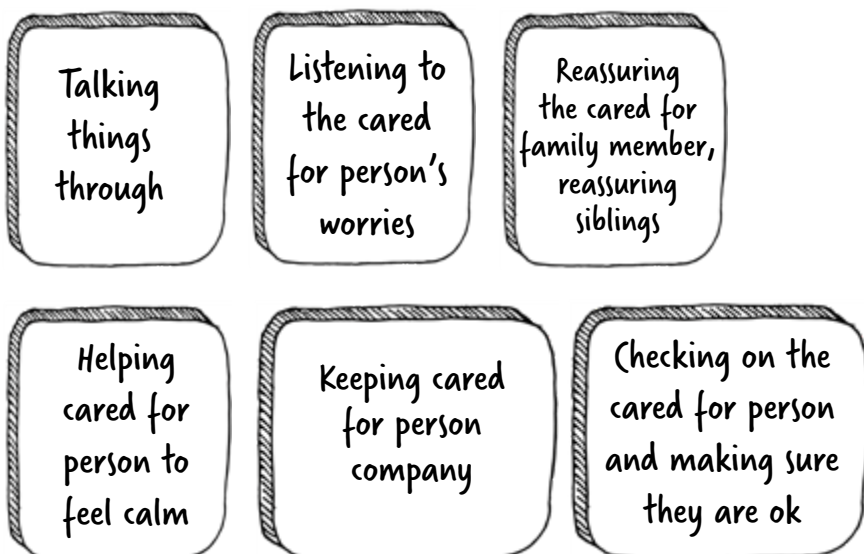
Practical support



Physical support

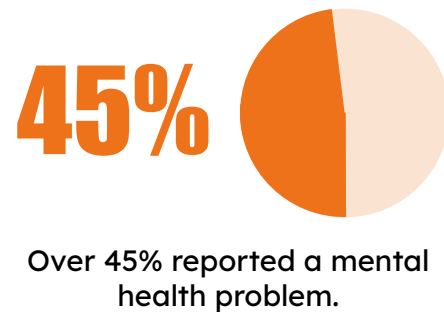


Emotional support



What we know about young adult carers

There are at least
376,000
young adult carers in the UK.

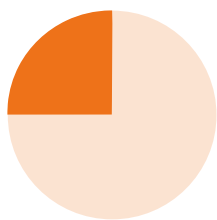


D-G
Recent research on young adult carers who were no longer in education showed their highest qualifications were GCSEs grade D-G.

29%
29% had dropped out of college/university because of their caring role. This is four times greater than the national average for degree courses.

Source: <https://carers.org/about-caring/about-young-adult-carers>

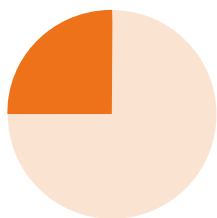
The Time to be Heard for Young Adult Carers Bridging the Gap: Young Adult Carers in Scotland (2015) report cited that:



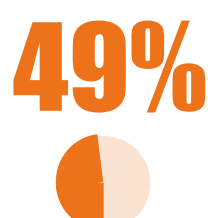
1/4 of the academic year (48 school days) for young adult carers had been affected because of caring, each year.



Young adult carers were four times more likely to drop out of college or university than students who were not young adult carers.



1/4 of young adult carers in school had experienced bullying because of their caring role.



49% of the young adult carers who had left education were not in education, employment or training (NEET). 49% reported a mental health problem.

Young adult carers in work missed 17 days per year and had a further 79 days affected because of their caring responsibilities.

22%
Only 22% of young adult carers had received a formal assessment of their needs by their local authority

The impact of being a young adult carer

We know that being a young adult carer can impact on a young person's life in different ways. These are some of the top reasons young people tell us they feel positive about being a young adult carer:



Diary management



Time keeping skills



Ability to communicate effectively with professionals



Specialist medical knowledge



Managing challenging behaviours



Resourceful and work well independently and as part of a team



Building resilience and the ability to overcome challenges



Empathy and kindness

The impact of being a young adult carer

We also know that being a young adult carer holds many challenges and in some circumstances can impact in the following ways:

Social

- Isolation
- Lack of contact with young people in the same age group
- Feeling 'different' to peers
- Limited time to themselves or for leisure activities
- Vulnerable to risky social relationships

Emotional

- Low self-esteem
- Feelings of guilt or shame:
e.g. "my brother's behaviour is so challenging and embarrassing but I feel guilty wishing he was more 'normal'" or "I want to move away to university but who will look after Mum", or "I feel guilty that I am healthy but my twin isn't"
- Feeling worried
- Experiencing mental illness, such as feeling stressed, anxiety or depression

Physical

- Physical health difficulties, such as joint pain
- Lack of self care
- Poor diet
- Tiredness/disturbed sleep

Educational

- Challenges with important transitions such as leaving college and starting uni
- Impact on educational attainment leading to fewer educational opportunities at secondary school, college, sixth form and further education
- Unable to make choices about future aspirations

Sources

¹ Carers Trust (2019), Young Carers: Who are they? What do they do? www.carers.org/sites/default/files/media/young_carers_who_are_they_what_do_they_do_0.pdf

² University of Nottingham and the BBC (2018), New Research Suggests More Than One in Five Children in England Carry Out Some Care For Sick and Disabled Family Members, www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/pressreleases/2018/september/childrenengland-care-sick-family.aspx

³ Carers Trust (2019), Key Facts about Carers and the People they Care for, www.carers.org/key-facts-about-carers-and-people-they-care

⁴ The Children's Society (2020), Carers week 2020: 7 facts you might not know about young carers, www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/facts-you-might-not-know-about-young-carers

⁵ Centre 33, 2019-2020, Young Carers Annual Report

How can your setting support young adult carers?


Identifying a young adult carer

It is not always easy to identify a young adult carer, especially as many young adult carers actively try to conceal their caring responsibilities and often others are not aware of the challenges they may face being a young adult carer.

Talking to a young person, being approachable and providing an inclusive environment are the best conditions for identifying a young adult carer.

What to look out for in your setting

There are signs and indicators that staff can look out for to help identify a young adult carer. These include:




regular or increased late attendance or absence

difficulty concentrating

requests to make contact with family members during the day

struggling to complete coursework/revision and meeting deadlines

displaying physical health symptoms such as back pain, wrist pain etc



stressed, anxious or tired

limited aspirations

Appearing much more grown up than their years

struggles or refuses to talk about the family situation

experiencing bullying, sometimes linked to their caring responsibility



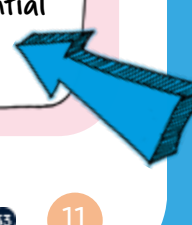
struggling to make friends in similar age range

parents absent at open days or celebratory events

unable to make use of college/sixth form or university social events

isolation, unable or embarrassed to take friends home

academic performance below potential



How can your setting support young adult carers?

We know that further and higher educational settings play a vital role in supporting young adult carers. Research shows that support within these environments can help to reduce the emotional and educational impact of caring. Young adult carers value support from their tutors with helping them achieve their potential and 'this is best achieved through tutors having a clear understanding of the nature of young people's caring responsibilities and providing stronger support around stressful periods...and transition points.'⁸

Awareness raising and identification

Raising the awareness of young adult carers with staff, students and parents in your setting can help to identify and support young adult carers and help young adult carers to feel seen and heard. There are many ways you can do this. Use opportunities such as the student union, emails, freshers week, identification at application stage. Centre 33 can help with this by giving you access to our online resources hub. Use opportunities, such as your website or newsletters, to communicate information about young adult carers. Make young adult carers visible – have information about young adult carers on your intranet.

Young Adult Carers Policy

Centre 33 can help you write a young adult carers policy for your setting.

Young Adult Carers Champion

Identify a named member of staff who will act as your young adult carers champion. This member of staff will be the key contact with young adult carers in your setting. Find out more about the role of the young adult carers champion on page 14

TALK! And listen...

Don't be afraid to talk about being a young adult carer with young people, including the positive and rewarding elements of their role, together with the challenges they may face. Openness to talk and willingness to listen are so important and will help staff to better understand each student's individual situation and caring role.

Transitions

We know transitions can be particularly challenging for young adult carers. Be aware of key transitions for young adult carers and what support they may need from you during this time, including starting college/sixth form and moving onto university or work.

Staff training

Centre 33 can work with you to deliver training to your staff to help them identify and support young adult carers in your setting. Any other training should be young adult career led if possible.

Revision/coursework support

Having extra support for young adult carers with revision and/or coursework is a great way for them to have an opportunity to revise with access to designated quiet/study areas that they may not have at home.

Young Adult Carers Forum

A Young Adult Carers Forum is a great opportunity to bring young adult carers together, hear their voices and share experience with others. They can help influence senior leadership teams policy making, rules and regulations and create a more young adult carer friendly environment within your setting.



The role of the young adult carers champion

Centre 33 asks further education and higher education settings to identify members of staff to become Young Adult Carers Champions. These named workers are the key link for young carers, their families and Centre 33.

Young adult carers tell us they don't want everyone to know about their caring role as this is something that is personal to them. Having members of staff in your setting who are aware of all the young adult carers ensures that young carers don't have to repeat their support needs to multiple professionals. Young Carers Champions are able to advocate on young carers behalf or share information with individual tutors if appropriate.

Having a named Young Adult Carers Champion allows young carers to know who to contact if they need extra support or if their caring role has changed. It is important for the champions to build relationships with the young carers in their setting so they notice any changes that may indicate the young carer needs further support. Centre 33 will ensure the champions are familiar with the pathways to refer young carers for further support if needed.

It is important that young adult carers are celebrated and that awareness of young adult carers is raised within your setting. The champions will be responsible for ensuring the wider staff team attend training delivered by Centre 33 and are confident to identify and support young adult carers. Champions play a key role in raising awareness of young adult carers with the whole setting, including young people, families, staff and senior leadership teams, through information on their website, notice boards, newsletters and celebration events such as young adult carers awareness day.

Setting up a young adult carers forum

What a young adult carers forum needs...

A space and time!

This is all young adult carers need... a space and time to meet each other. This could be a local coffee shop, union bar, or on site at your setting.

Think about a space you can commit to using regularly that is inviting, spacious, relaxed and offers some privacy.

How to host a Young Adult Carers Forum

Identify staff who can commit to giving their time regularly to attend and facilitate the forum.

Often forums are run by a young adult carer who is passionate about leading the forum. They may initially need staff support.

Having the same member of staff helps the young people to get to know them and build trust.

Developing close relationships with individual members of staff who can be approached when needed is something that young adult carers tell us is very important to them.

Who should be invited?

Young people who are identified as young adult carers – even if they haven't yet felt able to discuss their caring role!

When to run a Young Adult Carers Forum

Once you have at least 2 young adult carers identified.

Give space and time for the young adult carers to meet and facilitate a discussion around what they feel they would like and need.

Support them to create terms of reference for the forum.

Support them to identify any sub groups for targetting specific areas of need, such as: mental health of young adult carers, engaging with healthcare professionals, male young adult carers, financial support, reducing caring role etc.



Young adult carer support services available at Centre 33

Centre 33 is here to support young people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with a wide range of issues. We are proud to make listening to young people the foundation of what we do. We are non-judgemental and here to help in whatever way we can.

Practical Support

As well as young adult carers support, Centre 33 can offer support to young people on a range of issues including practical help.

We are experts in housing and homelessness, sexual health, employment support and more.

Emotional Support

We also provide emotional support. Centre 33 is strongly committed to supporting young people with their mental health. It is central to everything we do.

We offer one-to-one confidential counselling to young people aged 13-25.

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Young people can drop into a hub or contact us via:

Helpline: 0333 4141 809

Text: 07514 783745

Email: hello@centre33.org.uk

Website: www.centre33.org.uk

Drop Ins

We also host some drop ins in colleges around Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Please visit our website for further details or email us at: hello@centre33.org.uk

Young Adult Carers recommendations for sixth form/ colleges and universities

- Colleges and universities should develop policies and procedures that identify young adult carers who are having difficulties with their academic work and provide timely and appropriate support.
- Colleges and universities should develop awareness training for their staff so that they understand the difficulties faced by young adult carers and know how to identify and support them effectively
- Targeted career advice should be available to young adult carers which addresses their caring responsibilities, recognises any additional skills they have developed in their caring role and supports them to consider all available options.
- Schools and sixth form colleges should provide a balanced view of courses and subjects and encourage young adult carers to think broadly about their ambitions and aspirations.
- Guidance should be developed to help young adult carers who are going to college and university to apply for any bursaries, benefits or financial support for which they are eligible.
- Formal procedures should be available within colleges and universities so that young adult carers can inform staff of their caring roles. Support services should be clearly visible so that young people feel that there is a point in informing staff.
- In order for the young adult carer to participate fully in education, the care and support needs of the person being cared for should be adequately met.
- Colleges and universities, and their health and welfare services, including student unions, have a role to play in ensuring that young adult carers receive proper assessments and, subsequently, appropriate services.
- Young adult carers must receive an appropriate assessment which takes into account their wishes to participate in education and the impact of the caring role upon their desire and ability to do so.
- Colleges and universities should make close links with Centre 33 so that students with caring responsibilities are aware of the support they could receive. Local student unions have a role to play in disseminating information about the services and should consider starting and promoting college based support where appropriate.

