SHEFFIELD YOUNG CARERS

Information Pack for Young Carer Leads in education settings

Contents

Stage 1: Starting out - Understanding and identifying young carers

Who are young carers and the impacts of caring?

Young carers and education

What is a Young Carer Lead?

Young Carer Policy

Identifying young carers and awareness-raising

Signs that a pupil may be a young carer

Conversation guide

Stage 2: Formal identification

Identifying young carers

Sheffield Young Carers Identification Process

Next steps: Data monitoring and young carer assessment

Sheffield City Council's Young Carers Register

Breaking down barriers: Parental engagement

Stage 3: Supporting young carers

Supporting young carers...

- In school/ college - including setting up a young carer group, transitions and enrolments
- Support from Sheffield Young Carers
- Other local support services

Stage 4: Embedding a culture of awareness & understanding

Young Carers in Schools Award and Young Carers Covenant

Schools/college Checklist

This booklet has been produced by Sheffield Young Carers (SYC)

SYC offers flexible and responsive support for young carers and young people affected by familial substance misuse aged 18-25, as well as their families, across Sheffield. We also provide information, training and resources to support professionals across the city to identify and support young carers.

If you would like a hard copy of this booklet, please email shuna.beckett@sycp.org.uk

Stage 1: Starting out: Understanding and identifying young carers

If you are new to the role of Young Carer Lead...

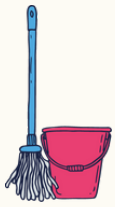
Thank you for choosing to support young carers in your setting.

"Being a young carer is not a choice. It's just what we do."

Who are young carers?

A young carer is a child or young person aged under 25 who provides substantial unpaid care for one or more relatives who have a physical or learning disability/SEND, long-term physical illness, mental health condition and/or substance misuse issues. This can be a parent, a grandparent, a sibling, or another family member. They may be taking on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that an adult would normally take on.

Young carers provide help by doing things like:



- Jobs around the house
- Shopping
- Helping with personal care (bathing, getting dressed, lifting)
- Giving medication, making medical appointments, accompanying them at hospital
- Providing emotional support, listening, helping calm them down
- Helping with finances, help paying bills, working to earn money

- Looking after themselves or their siblings because nobody else is able to

Anyone can become a young carer at any time. An inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for young carers and young adult carers suggested that **10% of all pupils will provide high or very high levels of care** – equating to at least two young carers in every class. This could mean well over 7,000 young carers in Sheffield alone. The number of carers and intensity of caring has increased as a result of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis.

The average age of a young carer is 12 but many are younger.

Impacts of caring

Young carers can often find life **tiring, stressful and lonely.** Being a carer can affect a young person in many ways – including **social isolation, bullying,** difficulties with **school/college attendance and achievement**, and **physical and mental ill health** themselves, sometimes leading to unhealthy **coping strategies.**

However, there are also many **positive impacts of caring,** such as feelings of self-worth, the development of practical and transferable skills, and other personal qualities like compassion. More information about young carers and the impacts of caring can be found here.

Young carers and education

Young carers face a number of barriers when it comes to education, and their caring role can impact heavily on their attendance and attainment:

- In a study of local schools by by **44% of young carers received Free School Meals and 53% are allocated Pupil Premium** (MyTime Young Carers 2024),
- Young carers are **one and half times more likely to have a special educational need** or a long-standing illness or disability themselves. In the MyTime report, **32% of young carers were on the SEND register.**
- Almost half (**46%,) of young carers at secondary school were persistently absent** in 2022/23 - twice as high as their non-caring peers (DfE, 2024), with young carers **missing 23 school days** on average, compared to 14 days for other pupils. Almost a **third of young carers (30%) are regularly late** for school because of the demands of their caring situation (Carers Trust 2024).
- **51%** of primary aged young carers reached aged related expectations in **reading, 39% in writing, and 49% in Maths** (MYTIME Young Carers 2024)
- **64%** of young carers in a recent study achieved a **4+ in English and Maths at GCSE**, compared to 71% of their peers without a caring responsibility (MYTIME 2024)
- Young adult carers are **37% less likely** than applicants without a caring role to achieve A*AA or above at **A Level** and **25% less likely** to achieve AAB or above.
- In 2022/23, young carers had almost **double the rate of permanent exclusions** as non-young carers. The rate of **suspensions is around 2.5 times higher** for young carers (DfE 2025).
- More than **two in five (44%)** young carers frequently **struggle to study for tests or exams** because of the demands of their caring situation.
- Almost half **(48%) of young carers reported being bullied** in the past year (Carers Trust 2024)
- Young adult carers appear to be **four times more likely to have to drop out** of their college or university course than other students (Children's Society, 2013).
- Young adult carers aged between 16 and 18 years are **twice as likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET)** (Children's Society, 2013).
- Almost one in four young carers **(23%) say there is 'no support at all'** for young carers and young adult carers in their school, college or university (Carers Trust 2024)

When young carers are identified early and supported well in their education setting, however, they can go on to achieve just as well as their peers.

Education staff play a key role in identifying and supporting young carers

It can be difficult to know who young carers are in your school or college, as they are often a hidden group. This could be due to fear, stigma or shame; embarrassment or worry about being bullied or getting their family into trouble; they might not realise they are a young carer; or they may not be aware of the support available to them.

This means that young carers are often only identified when there is a crisis.

The earlier young carers are identified, the more support that can be put in place to minimise the negative impacts of caring, improve their outcomes, achieve their potential, and keep them safe and well.

School census

In Spring 2023 a new young carer indicator was added to the school census return for all schools (not nurseries). This indicator records whether the pupil has been identified as a young carer and by whom (see here for more information and helpful resources). 2025's data showed that **69%** of schools in England reported that they had **no** young carers in their schools – we know this is simply not the case (Gov.uk June 2025)

Young carers and safeguarding

Being a young carer doesn't automatically constitute a safeguarding concern, but education settings should be aware of the needs of this particularly disadvantaged group. If you are worried about the wellbeing of a child, even if that's because of family illness or disability, it should still be treated as a safeguarding concern. Keeping Children Safe In Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges (2024):

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who [...]

- ***is a young carer***
- ***is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse (p.10).***

Collaboration between services is paramount to adequately support the family.

What is a Young Carer Lead?

A Young Carer Lead is a member of school staff who understands the issues surrounding being a young carer, leads on identifying and supporting young carers in school, and is an identified point of contact for pupils, families, staff and external agencies..

Who can do it?

- The role may sit within the Senior Leadership Team, or may be delegated to another member of staff, e.g. the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead, a Pastoral Lead, SENCO, or Learning Mentor.
- The responsibilities of the Young Carer Lead should be **written into a role job description** so that support doesn't fall away if a staff member leaves or changes role. A checklist of Young Carer Lead duties can be found here.

Whole setting commitment

- If the role is delegated, it's important that the Young Carer Lead is still supported by a member of the **Senior Leadership Team,** so there is a route to escalation, and so that knowledge and understanding doesn't only sit with one person.
- Effective identification and support of young carers in schools requires the development of a **whole school or college approach.** It is therefore vital that your senior leadership team (SLT) and governing body understand young carers' issues and are committed to meeting their needs (see next page).
- Resources to support the SLT and school governing body can be found here.

What are the first steps for a new Young Carer Lead?

- Make sure that you have a good understanding of who young carers are, the impacts of caring, and the barriers they face with regards to education. SYC strongly encourages you to complete our **free e-learning module**, and to embed this into staff inductions. SYC also delivers **multi-agency training** three times a year.
- Flag up that you are the contact for young carers, by adding this information to the school website, noticeboards in school, the staff intranet, prospectuses, or in a letter home to families. You could also have a dedicated webpage and young carer email address.
- Consider running training on young carers for the whole school staff team. SYC has a staff training template on the password-protected Young Carers Education Networks members area of the website (ask Shuna for login details).
- Check that identified young carers are flagged up on your data systems.

A whole- school/ college commitment to young carers

Young Carer Policy

All schools/ colleges should have a policy in place that recognises the needs of young carers and outlines how the setting will identify and address these needs.
Sheffield Young Carers has created a **template policy for schools and colleges** in Sheffield, endorsed by Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Team, with short guidance notes, for you to adapt in accordance with what works well for your environment. It should be signed off by a member of SLT and the governing body and be reviewed once a year. It could also be a MAT-wide policy.

Ideally this agreement would be produced together with any carers that have been identified. If you currently do not have any carers identified, start off with just a few ideas and then build on the agreement with them, once you do.

A regular commitment to seeking the views of young carers regarding your settin'gs young carer provision.

Flexibility around homework and lateness, mobile phones in break-times, time-out, lunch-passes - anything else identified by the young carers' support plans (see **Section 3: Supporting young carers)**

A regular commitment to staff training (including staff inductions).

Questions about family illness and disability, and the young person's caring role, to be included in enrolment and transition forms.

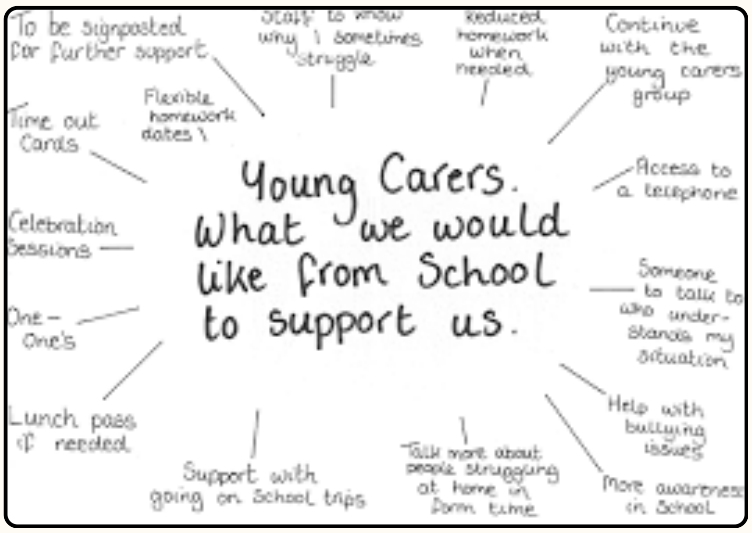
A regular commitment to pupil assemblies/ PSHE lessons.

Display boards signaling who the Young Carer Lead is, information about young carers, and internal and external support.

The inclusion of Young Carers as an agenda item in staff, management and governor's meetings.

A regular young carer group or drop-in.

Regularly review progress of young carers alongside other potentially vulnerable groups of pupils.



Other sample Young Carer policies can be found here. And a detailed checklist downloaded here

Identifying young carers

Young carers are often only **identified when there is a crisis.** The earlier young carers are identified, the more support that can be put in place to **minimise the negative impacts of caring, improve their outcomes**, **achieve their potential,** and **keep them safe and well.** Education staff have a key role in identifying and supporting young carers. However, it can be difficult to know who young carers are in your school, as they are often a hidden group.

Barriers to identification

- Stigma and shame - especially around issues surrounding mental health and substance misuse. This stigma can be be even more prevalent in certain cultures.
- The term 'young carer' - They might not see themselves as carers. It's their normal.
- A fear of being labelled or bullied.
- They may be embarrassed to ask for help.
- Anxiety about getting their family into trouble and involving authorities, e.g. social services, if they speak openly and honestly.
- A lack of awareness of the support available to them.
- Professionals lack the knowledge and awareness around young carers, and may fail to recognise or acknowledge their caring role.

Awareness-raising

Raising awareness among the **whole school/college community** (pupils, parents, staff and governing body) about young carers, disability, physical and mental illness and conditions, and alcohol and substance misuse, can help to **normalise caring, reduce stigma, and encourage young carers to speak out.** You could...

- Display accessible information - about who young carers are, as well as in-school/college and local support - on a school noticeboard, posters, on website, in newsletters, or student planners, electronic screens, staff-room, and toilets!
- Run assemblies and lessons about young carers and other related issues.
- Celebrate and raise awareness around key dates such as **Young Carers Action Day** (March), **Carers Week** (June), and **Carers Rights Day** (November).
- Add books about young carers to your school reading list.
- Hold fundraising events, stalls, or parent/carer coffee mornings.
- Hold regular staff training, talk about it in meetings.

For links to awareness-raising resources, lessons, films, books, famous young carers, and more ideas, see SYC's **awareness-raising resource packs for schools and post-16 settings** as well as **SYC's assembly templates** and a **resource for professionals working with younger young carers** all on the members' area of the website here (ask Shuna for login details).

Signs that a pupil may be a young carer

Knowing what to look out for...

- On **pupil premium/free school meals/SEND register.**
- Anxiety or concern over an ill or disabled relative.
- A need or desire to be in regular contact with home.
- Secretive about their home life.
- Often late or missing from school, not completing homework.
- Changes in pupil progress.
- Change in hygiene/appearance.
- Often tired, distracted, withdrawn, low attention span, or lacks motivation.
- Low self esteem and self confidence, low mood, anxious, mental ill-health.
- Isolated or victims of bullying, poor relationship with peers.
- Change in behaviour – becoming aggressive or angry, withdrawn or quieter.
- Outbursts or amplified response to events due to the emotional strain they may be under.
- Any behaviour that may be deemed as challenging in a school situation but is the opposite of behaviour demonstrated at home.
- May also be more mature and demonstrate confidence when interacting with adults.
- Back pain or other related pain.
- Might have frequent appointments.
- **Do they have a sibling with SEND in the school?**

Are their parents/another family member... Disabled (do they use the accessible parking space?) or do they have an illness or addiction problem? Not engaging in with school/college or attending parents' evenings or other schools events? On low incomes and unable to afford school-related expenses? This may be because of disability related unemployment.

Conversation guide

If you suspect a pupil might be a young carer, just asking a few simple questions can help identify these vulnerable young people in your setting and also help reduce the stigma of caring, making it feel OK and normal to talk about it at school or college.

With younger children you might ask them to describe their family, or their morning or evening routines. You could use props or ask them to draw pictures, or any other methods that have worked well in your setting that invite children to open up. Contact SYC for more ideas, or feel free to share your ideas with us!

Young carers from Young Carers National Voice have produced a tool for education providers to identify hidden and new young carers, which helps normalise talking to young people about caring. It lists some top tips, and some questions you might ask.

Some example questions...

I wanted to have a quick chat to ask how you are. I've noticed you've [see signs listed above etc]. I just wanted to check if you're OK or if there's anything we can do to help?

Sometimes when things are happening at home it can affect how we feel at school/college. So, I wondered if there's anyone in your family who needs extra support because of physical or mental illnesses, or any disabilities, or because of drugs or alcohol?

Do you do anything to help them or look after them? Or to help anyone else in your family because of their [illness/disability/drug or alcohol use]? [If yes] What kind of things do you do?

Take a look at the rest of the questions here:

Young Carer Identification Guide

Stage 2

Formal identification

Once you've got to grips with the basics...

“Caring isn't just the time I'm physically spending with the people I care for; it's also the free time I spend worrying.'”

Identifying young carers

SYC have developed a formal identification process for education settings which is outlined on the following page.

We advise you to run the process with a select number of year groups (e.g. Years 3-6, or Years 7 and 11) depending on capacity.

All the identification process documents, guidance and resources mentioned below can be found on the SYC website in the members area (ask Shuna for login details). Click on 'identifying young carers' on the right-hand-side.

Shuna, SYC's Education Development Worker can support you to run this process.

Once the identification process has been carried out, you will need to complete the registration and data monitoring process (outlined in **Next Steps**)

Sheffield Young Carers
Identifying Young Carers Process

1 Staff training

On the professionals area of SYC's website you can find details of training, including:

- A 60-90 min e-learning course about young carers and their context produced by SYC.
- Regular multi-agency training sessions on Understanding Young Carers and Adult Carers Needs in collaboration with Sheffield Carers Centre.
- Ad-hoc training sessions.

There is also a staff training template on the members' area of SYC's website (ask Shuna for login details) that you can adapt, and members of Sheffield Young Carers Education Networks also receive short training sessions at termly network meetings.

2 Letter home to parents

We recommend informing parents about the work you are doing, to raise awareness and give them the chance to tell you about any issues at home. You can use the template on our website, provide a link to your Young Carer Policy and a form they can fill in if they believe their child is a young carer.

3 Assembly

Introduce the topic to young people through an informational assembly, to reduce the stigma and increase understanding among pupils and staff. We have scripted assemblies you can use: one with cartoons and one with photo images

4 Follow-up lesson

We strongly recommend doing this work in advance in order to avoid misunderstanding (and more work) in the next stage. We have example lesson plans, films and other resources in the awareness-raising pack on our website.

5 Identification questionnaire with staff guidance

After the assembly, staff guide pupils through the identification questionnaire (individually, or using question-by-question slides in class).
This is then scored by staff.
NB there are two versions of the questionnaire available depending on age of children: Text and pictorial. Please refer to the Staff Guidance document.

6 Follow-up conversation

If they score over a certain number it suggests that they may have a caring role and this should be followed up with a conversation to assess the nature and extent of any caring responsibilities at home. Use the staff guidance document for ideas, or you can take questions from the identification guide above (Q2 onwards)

All the above resources, and more, are on the members area of our website.

Next Steps

Young carer assessment of needs

Any young people confirmed as young carers have a legal right to a young carers assessment. The young carers assessment is a Sheffield-wide multi-agency document that takes the form of a guided conversation with a young person. The assessment may highlight that you can provide all the support they need or it may highlight that referrals to specialist agencies are necessary. There is a written and a pictorial version, and can be found on the Sheffield City Council website here.

Contact parents or carers to explain that their child has been identified as a young carer, what your next steps will be, how you plan to support them in school, and ask what support the family might need (e.g. signposting to other services). This could be a phone call or a letter sent out with the Sheffield City Council Young Carers Register letter (see next page). You can use and adapt our template letter in the members area of our website. We are aware that there may be some barriers to engagement with parents/carers. so see **Breaking Down Barriers** for ideas and guidance.

Record your young carers

It is important that you record and track young carers in your school by **manually flagging them** as a named group on your data monitoring systems so that all staff are aware, this information doesn't get lost if a staff member leaves and support for that pupil can continue, school can track and monitor progress alongside other vulnerable groups, and it can be included in **transitions forms**. NB. If the young carer was recorded by a different service (e.g. LEA or GP), this will still need to be recorded on the school/college system.

*Recording young carers on the school census

Please note that not all data management systems automatically pull the information off for the census and have to be transferred manually.

We strongly encourage you to read MYTIME Young Carers' Management Information System Guidance for young carers for Arbor, SIMS and Bromcom and share this with the person/people who input your data. Please also ask your Head Teacher / Principal to check that the number recorded is accurate before signing off the return. NB this data is anonymous and '**you do not need to get parental or pupil consent** for the provision of information for the purposes of the census, but should respect the wishes and feelings of both young people and their parents' (DfE). This also applies to recording young carers (with names) on your school system generally.

Young Carers Register

Sheffield City Council also has a Young Carers Register for **schools.**

Please see next page for how to register the young carers you identify.

Regularly review the young person's and families' circumstances.

See Young Carers assessment review sheet here.

Sheffield's Young Carers Register: Process for schools

In July 2021, Sheffield City Council launched the city's Young Carers Register and a process for schools to inform the Local Authority whenever you identify that a pupil has caring responsibilities. The Council are fully committed to making sure that all the young carers in Sheffield are being identified across all services as effectively as possible, so they can make sure that they and their families get the help and support they need.

Please register all young carers identified in your school now and in the future using the process below:

1

Talk to young carers in your school and send the Sheffield City Council letter home to the young carer and their family, letting them know that their name will be added to the register unless they opt out.

If a young person does not want you to send the letter home, do not register them but talk with them about why they don't want their family to know, and follow your usual safeguarding procedures if you have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

2

Unless they opt out, submit the young person's details to the Young Carers Register by filling in the Young Carers Registration Form and sending it to Sheffield City Council via AnyComms.

Select Young Carers Referrals (file type) Young Carers (service/team).

If you do not have AnyComms access yourself, speak to your safeguarding lead about this.

3

Repeat this process whenever you identify a new young carer.

If someone stops being a carer, you can use the same form to let us know so they get taken off the register.

4

Provide support and flexibility in school based on their individual needs. Sheffield Young Carers can offer you free training and resources to help with this.

If they have additional needs, refer to the appropriate agencies (e.g. MAST, Sheffield Young Carers, etc.)

A young carer is a child or young person who provides substantial unpaid care for a loved one who has disabilities, long-term physical illnesses, mental health difficulties and/or drug or alcohol issues. 1 in 12 children and young people are young carers (BBC, 2010).

If you have any questions about the process then please email the Inclusion and Attendance team at:
sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk

Breaking Down Barriers

Between school/college and families of young carers

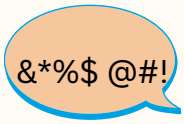
Both families and education settings have reported that communication, engagement and understanding about the support you are offering young carers can sometimes be a challenge.

It can be really difficult for families to accept help, or be seen to need or receive support. There may be shame involved, a fear of being labelled or involving authorities if they speak openly and honestly, or their illness or disability may cause additional barriers to school life. Their fears are often valid.

SYC has produced a resource, **Breaking Down Barriers,** in consultation with schools, colleges and families in order to help you break down those barriers. It can be found on the members area of our website.

The resource includes:

Ways of engaging parents in a positive and trauma-informed way.



Suggested wording.

Ideas for difficult conversations.

Suggested methods of communication and transparency

SHEFFIELD YOUNG CARERS

Other ways of supporting the family.

Stage 3

Supporting young carers

Identification is just the start.

Now that you've identified your young carers, what are you going to do to support them?

"I wouldn't say that my caring role impacts on my life; I'd say that it is my life."

Supporting Young Carers

Once the identification process is complete, appropriate support should be put in place for the young carers at school or college, with referrals to other services made if necessary.

The following pages outline this support:

1. Ways you can support young carers in school/college

2. If they need specialist support, make a referral to Sheffield Young Carers

3. Support from other services

1 Ways you can support young carers in school/college

What do young carers want?

What young carers want is very individual. What one young person wants won't be right for another. The best thing to do is to **ask and listen to them** and develop an individual plan, student profile or snapshot based on their Young Carer Assessment, then communicate what is necessary to staff (e.g. around reasonable adjustments in class). Below are some examples of support that young carers have said they find useful - most of it is very simple and costs nothing. The top three on the list are the things they said were most important to them (data from Still Hidden Still Ignored, Barnardos, 2017. Quotes from SYC and Young Carers National Voice).

Someone to talk to

Having a point of contact in school/college who understands what caring is and is around for a chat when things are hard can really help young people feel heard and valued.

"The homework for art GCSE is among the most extensive. Adding that to my caring role meant I fell behind. When my art teacher asked why I was falling behind, I told her I was a young carer, and she understood completely. Telling her made me feel much more able to approach her about problems I had with the coursework and definitely made me feel like my reasons for falling behind were genuine and not just laziness".

Emergency/crisis plan

Put together a simple document or card where young people can write down what actions they would take in an emergency, and who they would contact. You can find an example template in the members area of our website (ask Shuna for login details).

"When I was in secondary school I struggled with depression, partially due to my caring. Having a Young Carers Lead who actually listened made me feel seen, heard, and accepted."

Mental health support

More than one third of young carers have experienced problems with their mental wellbeing (Carers Trust, 2019). If you have dedicated mental health support in school/college, young carers can really benefit from accessing this, and you can also signpost them to relevant services and websites.

Information about the cared-for person's illness/health condition/disability

Lots of young carers have questions about the cared-for person's illness, health condition, disability or drug and alcohol use. Services that are involved don't always communicate with young carers or explain things that are happening, and they can feel anxious about asking their family questions in case they upset them. There are lots of resources on the SYC website about illnesses and conditions, and also a really helpful guide which suggests some things to take into consideration if you're preparing to have these chats. This is in the members area of our website.

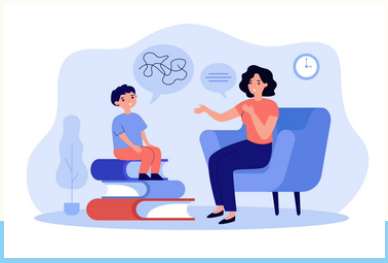
Practical help and training

Any help or training you can provide that might be useful for someone in a caring role can be really helpful (e.g. cooking, First Aid, budgeting). SYC sometimes provide First Aid or manual handling training for young people.

To know that their situation is not uncommon

Talking about caring in school/college really helps to challenge the stigma around the issue, and shows young people that they aren't alone. Lots of young carers find it helpful to know that 1 in 10 young people are taking on a caring role.

"Sometimes when I'm exhausted from caring, a quiet space or fun activity would be the perfect thing."

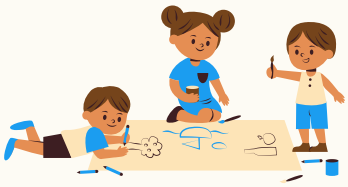


"A positive of having a Young Carers Lead is the wellbeing. Watching films, having a break; it really helps."

"When I was nine or ten, I was able to colour in and take time for me in school."

To have a break and the chance to be children / young people

It can be hard for young carers to attend after-school clubs or social events because of their caring responsibilities. If you're able to find opportunities for them to get a break, this can really help them get the chance to socialise and play. Consider starting up a **young carers group** or **drop-in**, or even just an open wellbeing group where young carers are invited, so they have a place to relax at lunch time. Consider using the schools' **PE and sports premium** or **pupil premium budget.** According to the government website, the PP can be used: *'to support other pupils with identified needs, such as those who have or have had a social worker, or **who act as a carer.'***



To know that their role is understood and valued

Young carers are often the experts in the cared-for person's situation, but aren't always consulted or included by services. Advocating for this for them can make a really positive change. Also, while it's good to acknowledge that they're doing a really important job, it's also important to ask what can be done to take things off their plate.

Visit the resources page on our website

We have a page on our website listing useful resources, services, and websites on a large range of topics that are relevant to young carers, including: ASD, BAMER young carers, disability and siblings, substance misuse, cancer, mental health, bereavement, suicide, confidence and self-esteem, stress and relaxation, funding and foodbanks, and much more!

These are searchable by the menu on the right-hand side. Find it here

Support and understanding in school and college

School/college can be a really difficult place for young carers. Making sure all staff in school understand who young carers are and the impacts they face means they are less likely to face difficult encounters with staff, and also means they are more likely to be identified and get the support they need. If you're reading this you're already making a difference for young carers – thank you!

Some practical steps you can take to support young carers include:

- Regular check-ins and one2ones
- Individual support plans with reasonable adjustments, including:
  - -Flexibility around homework and deadlines
  - -Understanding around lateness and attendance issues (e.g. time off for medical appointments) and support them to catch up from missed lessons
  - -Time outs to leave lessons, safe space to go, early passes
  - - Access to mobile phone to keep in contact with home
- Lessons and tutorials on development of personal wellbeing, supporting good mental health, and developing financial dependency
- Referrals or signposting to external support

"My tutor always checks if I'm OK first thing in the morning. This helped me attend because he made me look forward to going and feel safe before the rest of the day."

"If I have late homework or forgot my homework due to my caring role the teachers will let me off."

"My school gave me time out for lessons for one-to-ones and gave teachers the heads up about this."

"My school has chill out areas and I can go there to chill out and then a teacher will come and speak to me."

"My teacher says I can do homework at school when explained it was kinda stressful doing it at home."

Check out this education resource produced by Young Carers National Voice that lists some simple but great ways that schools/colleges have supported young carers.
You could put it up in your staff room for everyone to see!

Set up a young carer group or drop-in

Some key considerations, with input from SYC's young carers

Why?

•Gives a sense of belonging and pride, makes them feel special
•To make connections / friends and know they're not alone
•To feel supported
•To build confidence, self-esteem, to feel proud
•To learn new skills and understanding about their role and themselves
•To have a break, relax, be children, be silly, have fun! leading to increased wellbeing in school/college

However, some young carers said they wouldn't attend a group because of stigma, lack of confidentiality, or said that it was embarrassing. You could consider calling it by a different name, with a focus on arts or crafts, or set it up as a drop-in or wellbeing cafe.

Who?

•Just one or two young carers identified? Get them together
•Lots? Split them into Key Stages / lower and upper
•Who will help you to run the group?

When?

• Ask your young carers! Some young carers struggle meeting after school, and break times may be their only time to socialise.
•Form time? During assemblies? Lunch time?
•Primary: Could take out of class? E.g. Friday afternoon? But be careful about missing lessons.
•How often? Weekly, fortnightly, monthly?
•How long? Just 20 mins might be enough.
•It has to fit into your timetable and capacity BUT needs to be consistent and regular.

Where?

Offer a calm, comfortable, safe, confidential space, free of interruptions where possible

How (do you get it started)?

•Talk to them in one-2-ones
•Noticeboard
•Offer incentives – donuts, hot chocolate, carers card, young carer pass if they come to one session?

How much?

•What is your budget? It doesn't have to cost loads of money. But could consider using the PE and sports premium for activities or the pupil premium budget to put on an event or activity for young carers.

Young Carer Group

First meeting

- Ask them and listen to what THEY want from the group. Get young carers to agree what group is going to be - include these in YC policy? Review annually.
- Set ground rules/guidelines/group charter/agreement/boundaries, including confidentiality.
- Differentiate from a lesson, make them feel welcome, proud, special.
- Group name? Identity? ('Young carers?')
- Ice-breaker, getting to know each other

Ideas for future sessions

- Do regular check ins each session
- Keep it simple and fun!
- Do they want to talk about their caring roles or to forget about it and just chill and hang out? ASK!
- Watch films, do arts and crafts, group activities, play games. Popular games in SYC's groups are: Uno, Jenga, Wink Murder.
- Set themes? (ask them if they want them, and what they want). E.g. self-care and wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem, emergency plan, support networks, team-building. But others might come up, e.g. bullying. Give information where appropriate.
- Training (e.g. first aid, cooking, manual handling)
- Respite activities / trips
- Review or shape the Young Carer Policy
- Once established, can ask them ideas for awareness-raising ideas, e.g. create a poster, create assembly, plan fundraising activity

Online guides

- www.caringtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Quick-Guide-to-setting-up-a-young-carers-group.pdf
- youngcarersinschools.com/yc

Transitions and enrolments

Anxiety exists for many young people around transition time. But for young carers, coping with the multiple changes can be really difficult, due to increased educational demands and pressures like exams and homework, not knowing where to go for support, not being able to socialise or participate in extra-curricular activities, or a reluctance to disclose their caring role due to shame and stigma, fear of bullying, the need to fit in, and many more.

Information-sharing and communication between settings

Many young carers are already starting behind their peers in terms of attainment and attendance in primary school. Evidence shows that attendance drops significantly among young carers in Years 7-8. Therefore, sharing information about a young person‘s caring role is vital to ensuring that support is continued and they don‘t go under the radar until a crisis occurs.

This is the case with starting college too, where juggling the increased demands with their caring role can be extremely hard.

Secondary schools: Please support students to tick the young carer box on their Sheffield Progress applications.

Sheffield Children’s Safeguarding Partnership has produced a new **Transitions Toolkit** to improve the transfer of information and responsibility of safeguarding and related information between settings, from nurseries to colleges, at the point of transition. You are encouraged to use the Young Carer code (YC) under ‘other.’

It also includes guidance on GDPR between school and college.

More information, and suggested conversations between DSLs around the young person’s caring role, can be found on our website here.

Supporting young carers with transitions

Some useful resources for supporting and preparing Year 6/7 students (for both primary and secondary schools) can also be found on the members area, under Supporting Young Carers.

We encourage creating your own transition process, that could include a type of ‘pupil passport’ produced with the young carers that can be shared with the secondary school that explains the YC’s family life and the support that works for them, as well as any questions they may have.

Make sure to let them know who the new Young Carer Lead is.

Enrolment forms

Include questions about disability, or other long-term physical or mental health conditions, and the young person’s caring responsibilities in enrolment forms, and send information about young carers and the support you offer in letters home to new families. Consider running the formal identification process with new pupils.

2

Referring a young person to Sheffield Young Carers

Not every young person who is a young carer will need a referral to Sheffield Young Carers

For some young carers, if flexible support is put in place for them at school, this will make a huge difference and they may not need external support. SYC have a waiting list which varies in length, and you can check the website to see current waiting times. However, if a young person is caring for someone with a condition that is terminal, please make this clear in your referral and they will go to the top of the waiting list.

SYC offers one year of support to: children and young people aged 8-25 who are living in Sheffield and:
• Caring for someone at home, usually a family member, with physical or mental illness and/or a disability
• Are affected by drug and alcohol issues in their family (now or in the past).

We can only work with one sibling at a time (the one doing the most, or is most impacted by, caring)

We aim to:

- provide young people with a break from home
- build their resilience and confidence to help them manage in their caring or family life
- reduce the impacts that caring or family substance misuse is having on their life
- improve their health and wellbeing - both physical and emotional

We also offer families intensive one-to-one support, with the aim of reducing the caring that the young person is taking on and improving life for the whole family. Families can only be referred to our Family Project if they're already a member of SYC.

SHEFFIELD YOUNG CARERS

What we offer

- Four to six one-to-one sessions, for the young person to get to know a worker and receive individual support. These sessions are based on the needs and interests identified by the young person.
- A minimum of one term of our evening groupwork programme, where young people can have fun and get a break, learn information and skills, and get peer support from other young people in similar situations. Each term's programme is planned around the needs identified by the group members that term.
- Access to school holiday activities for one year, including trips, a summer residential and fun family events.
- Free access to **Free To Be You** counselling and psychotherapy service if the young person needs additional therapeutic support.
- Training and participation opportunities.
- Advocacy, case working, signposting and referrals.
- Opportunities to stay involved with the project after the core year of support has finished.
- See our website for information that you can share with the young person.

Referral process

If you think the young person will benefit from additional support:
1) Please tell them and their family about what SYC offers.
2) If they decide that they'd like support, please download the latest version of the referral form from our website and complete this with them. Then send it to SYC (details of how to do this are on the form).
3) SYC will email you to confirm we have received the form and let you know if they require any further information at this stage.
4) Once your referral reaches the top of the waiting list, an SYC worker will get in touch with you and then contact the young person and their parent or person they care for, to talk through the support they can offer them.
Please note: We can only support one sibling from a family at a time (the child most impacted). Our Family Project support workers also offer support to family members, if appropriate.

www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk

information@sycp.org.uk

@sheffyoungcarers

@SheffieldYoungCarers

@SheffieldYoungCarers

SHEFFIELD YOUNG CARERS

Other support from Sheffield Young Carers

Join our Young Carers Schools & Post-16 Networks

Over 145 schools, colleges, and services in Sheffield are currently members of SYC's Young Carers Schools or Post-16 Networks.
We meet once a term (online or in person) to share news, resources, practical tools and training around identifying and supporting young carers, and share good practice and challenges.
We also have a mailing list where we share resources and opportunities, together with a monthly briefing with local and national updates.
Members of the YCSN also get access to the members area on our website which contains dedicated resources for education professionals working with young carers.
Contact shuna.beckett@sycp.org.uk for more information.

Order a Carers card

Sheffield's Carers Card gives discounts and offers at a range of businesses to young carers and adult carers - from cafes to cinema tickets to yoga classes. There is also an emergency contact information section on the back. There is more information here.
Contact shuna.beckett@sycp.org.uk to order cards for your young carers

SHEFFIELD YOUNG CARERS

3 Other useful support available for young carers and their families

There are lots of links on our website, but here are just a few:

Local support for young carers

Cavendish Cancer Care: Local therapeutic support for young people affected by cancer/ bereavement.
St Luke's Patient and Family Support Service: Activities and advice &information sessions for anyone affected by incurable diseases and their families/friends
Cruse Bereavement Care: Provides support for people who know someone who has died. Young people's website and a section for education professionals.
Bluebell Wood Sibling Service: Support for siblings of children with life limiting conditions (121, groups, counselling): Tel: 01909 517360
ACCT (Asperger's Children and Carers Together): Parent-led support group for children & families affected by Autism in Sheffield. Group, outings, drop-ins & meetings.
Sibs: For brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults.
Roshni Ghar Carers Wellbeing Group for South Asian communities, Sheffield. Also offers mental health and wellbeing support and a young people's group.
Haven: For children and young people affected by domestic abuse in Sheffield.
SAYiT Sheffield (Sheena Amos Youth Trust): Support for young people affected by HIV/AIDS
Sheffield Carers Centre: For carers aged 18+

National support for young carers

Hope Again is the youth website for Cruse Bereavement Support. Also gives parental advice.
Grief Encounter: Supporting bereaved children & young people
Child Bereavement UK: The website has lots of resources, support and guidance, as well as a section for education professionals.
Alzheimer's Society: Information and support for carers of people affected by dementia.
Our Time: National charity for children who have a parent with a mental illness with information for young people, families and professionals
PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide
Suicide&Co: Support those bereaved by suicide
Over the Wall Camp: Provide free residentials for young people with complex health conditions, for their siblings, and their families (if they meet the criteria).

Local mental health support for young people

Sheffield Mental Health Guide: Searchable directory of services and support in Sheffield.
Door 43: Emotional, mental and sexual health support for 13 - 25 year olds.
Sheffield Futures: Offers a range of services for people aged 13-19.

Free, online mental health support for young people

Kooth
Epic Friends
Young Minds
Expert Self-Care Young Carers Support app
Sidekick: An anonymous and confidential text/email helpline for young people aged 13-18
Calm Harm app: helps you manage or resist the urge to self-harm
The Me We Booklet: A booklet made for young carers, by young carers to help you know how to take care of yourself, while caring for another person.
Know Your Rights guide for young carers

Help with money - funds and discounts

BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials: Supports children and young people who are facing exceptionally difficult circumstances by providing items that meet a child's most basic needs
Buttle UK provides grants to children up to £2400 for children and young people who have experienced a crisis that has had a significant impact on their wellbeing and educational engagement, including those with a parent, caregiver or sibling who is receiving end of life care, is terminally ill, or has recently died.
Everyone Active: Young Carers are eligible for a concession rate which they can access by providing a Young Carers Assessment or a letter from their school, GP, FIS/ social worker or from Sheffield Young Carers as evidence that they are a young carer. They will need to take this to their nearest leisure centre to sign up for the concessionary rate on the app.
Cinema Card: For people who care for someone who receives or carers for someone who receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
Sheffield Libraries offer a free home library service .They can deliver books for both young carers and cared for people who otherwise would struggle to access books. **Tel: 0114 273 4277**

For families

Sheffield Parent Carer Forum: Offers information and support for parents and carers of children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities.
Sheffield SENDIAS: Advice and support for children and young people who are under 18 with SEN/ a disability, as well as their parents/carers.
SNIPS – Special needs inclusion play care service - offers short breaks and family support.
Compassionate Sheffield: A community-led programme that helps improve people's experiences of death, dying, loss and grief through resources, workshops, Death Cafes, financial and other support.
Lenny's Legacy: Supporting parents after baby loss or child death in Sheffield and South Yorkshire
The Family Works: Offers relation-based wrap-around whole family support for families in South Yorkshire where there are children aged 0-18 years, from finances to relationships.
Turn 2 Us: Financial advice, support and a list of grants.
Family Fund: Grants for families of disabled or seriously ill children.

Learning through Caring: Children's University credits for learning through caring responsibilities:

In acknowledgment of the barriers that many young carers face to accessing Children's University (CU) activities, young carers can receive credits in recognition of learning and skills development that takes place through their caring responsibilities. Click here for full details.

Stage 4

Embedding a culture of awareness and understanding across the whole school community

Long-term, sustainable commitment to supporting young carers

"I've been a carer my whole life; it's just who I am."

You've come this far! Fantastic! Keep going!

Real, long-lasting impact on young carers' wellbeing, attainment, attendance, and improved chances in life, will only come if the whole school (or MAT) invests in young carers in the long-term, and truly embeds a culture of understanding and awareness amongst the whole school community.

- Create a permanent Young Carer Lead role within school, together with job description, as well as a Young Carer Lead role within the SLT.
- Regularly review the Young Carer Policy, together with your young carers.
- Regularly review progress and attendance of young carers alongside other potentially vulnerable groups of pupils such as PP, SEND and LAC pupils, in order to measure the impact of the interventions and make the case for further resources and support if they are falling behind.
- Commit to running regular assemblies, lessons and other awareness-raising activities.
- Regularly review ways in which young carers are formally identified in school (e.g. annual young carer questionnaires and SYC's formal identification process), including the Young Carer Assessment.
- Regularly review support in school, whether this is flexibility around homework and lateness, regular drop-ins, a young carer group, support for families, referrals, or annual applications to SYC's Activity Fund. Make sure that all staff are aware of each young person's individual support plan.
- Ensure young carers are supported during transitions.
- Keep up regular communication and maintain relationships with parents and carers. Provide frequent information in newsletters, letters home, on website, and social media etc, on who young carers are, what they do, how the school support them, and what other support is available.
- Commit to regular staff training, including adding the e-learning module to new staff inductions, attending SYC's tri-annual multi-agency training, or consider running your own in-house training.
- Keep young carer as an agenda item on staff, SLT and governor's meetings.
- Establish good links with SYC and regularly attend network meetings to keep informed of local and national developments, access helpful resources, and share good practice. Ask us for any support you need!

Young Carers in Schools

Run jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, the Young Carers in Schools (YCiS) programme works with schools across England to share good practice, provide relevant tools and training, and celebrate the great outcomes many schools achieve for young carers. It enables schools to:

- Gain national recognition for raising outcomes for young carers through the **Young Carers in Schools Award.**
- Identify manageable steps to improve educational outcomes for this vulnerable pupil group – the programme breaks down the actions schools can take so that your school can prioritise what to do next.
- Access additional support including tools, templates and good practice examples, webinars and professional development events.

You can access all these resources here.

Young Carers in Schools Award

The Young Carers in Schools Award has been developed in consultation with schools, young carer services and young carers.

The Award consists of two levels – an Award and, launching in 2024, an Award Plus. It is based on five standards which were developed following consultation with young carers. These five standards underpin the new Young Carers in Schools Award: **Understand, inform, identify, listen, support.**

If you have completed all the stages in this booklet, then you will qualify for the Award. You will just need to evidence it.

You can find an Award pack, list of criteria, examples on how to evidence your work, a wide range of resources, and other helpful guides here.

Please get in touch with Shuna if you need support with this.

Young Carers Challenge

If you're not ready to apply to the Award yet, you can sign up to the Young Carers Challenge here.
You will just have to pledge to carry out five challenges.

Our Challenge is that every school in England will ...

Have a **Young Carers Champion** in school so that every young carer has a trusted adult in school they can go to if things are difficult, or they need more support.

Raise awareness of young carers with staff and pupils to help ensure young carers are identified and they know what support is available.

Have a **young carers agreement / policy** (ideally designed with young carers) so that every young carer knows what support is available to them in their school.

Ensure **young carers are correctly identified** in their school pupil information system, monitor indicators such as attendance and attainment alongside other potentially vulnerable groups of pupils and include young carers within enrolment/transitions processes.

Have **linked in with their local young carer service** so they know what support is available for young carers outside of school.

Young Carers Covenant

The Young Carers Covenant is a UK-wide commitment to young carers and young adult carers, drawn up by Carers Trust and members of the Young Carers Alliance and launched on Young Carers Action Day 2024.

It sets out ten key outcomes that young carers from across the UK have said are key to improving their lives.

Any organisation, including schools, or individuals in a position to take action to help achieve these outcomes is urged to sign up to the Covenant. You are encouraged to sign up to as many of these pledges (that are relevant to you) as you can.

The Young Carers Covenant

We are committed to a fair future for all young carers and young adult carers

We agree that:

- Young carers and young adult carers are children and young people first; they should be recognised and listened to.
- No young carer or young adult carer should take on caring roles which are inappropriate, excessive, or which negatively impact their life opportunities, health or wellbeing.

We are committed to a future where all young carers and young adult carers:

- Are identified at the earliest opportunity ✓
- Are able to thrive in education ✓
- Can access and succeed in employment/training opportunities ✓
- Have time for themselves ✓
- Are safe and secure ✓
- Can access support for themselves and their family ✓
- Feel they have choices in their lives ✓
- Have good physical and mental health ✓
- Can access and benefit from the rights they have ✓
- Live free from poverty ✓

www.carers.org/youngcarerscovenant

Young Carers Alliance | CARERS TRUST & The Children's Society

Schools and colleges Checklist

Young Carer lead and whole scetting commitment

Appointed a Young Carer Lead - with Job Description ☐

Appointed an SLT Young Carer lead ☐

Become a member of Sheffield Young Carers Education Networks ☐

Created a Young Carer Policy ☐

Awareness-raising

Displayed clear information on school noticeboard, about who the Young Carer Lead is, as well as in-school/college and local support ☐

Displayed accessible information on school/college website, newsletter, staff intranet, prospectus, letter home? ☐

Run an assembly and/or lessons on young carers, disabilities, illness etc ☐

Training and resources

Provided staff training about young carers, either through SYC's e-learning module or multi-agency training, or other. ☐

Looked at the resources listed in this pack or on SYC's website ☐

Post-identification steps

Given those identified a young carers assessment to determine the level of support they need ☐

Flagged the young carers on your data monitoring system ☐

Sent a letter home to young carer's family and letting them know their name will be added to the young carers register unless they opt out ☐

Completed Sheffield City Council's online young carers registration form ☐

Formal identification

Run SYC’s formal identification process, including:
Letter home, assembly and optional follow-up lesson plan, identification questionnaire with staff guidance, follow-up conversation with children who scored highly, and the completion of the above identification steps ☐

Schools / college Checklist

What support do you offer in school/ college?

Externally...

Referred to Sheffield Young Carers if appropriate ☐

Referred or signposted to other agencies/ support services ☐

Embedding a culture of awareness and understanding

Regularly review progress of young carers alongside other potentially vulnerable groups of pupils ☐

Reviewed school / college enrolment process to identify parent(s), siblings or family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health conditions ☐

Transitions work when leaving primary or secondary school: Work with student / communicate with next education provider ☐

Keep young carer as an agenda item on staff, SLT and governor's meetings ☐

Thank you so much for supporting young carers in your school.

If there's anything at all that we can help with please get in touch

Tel: 0114 258 4595
Mob: 07923254043
shuna.beckett@sycp.org.uk
www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk

And let us know how you get on!

SHEFFIELD YOUNG CARERS

For all our latest updates and news, sign up to our **SYC News** or follow us on...

@SheffieldYoungCarers **@sheffyoungcarers**

@SheffieldYoungCarers

information@sycp.org.uk

www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk

Last updated: August 2025