Young carer transitions between education settings

Part 1: Information-sharing and communication between settings

Please share this information with your networks, MATs or cluster schools, and family of feeder schools.

Many young carers going into both secondary school and college/sixth form are already starting behind their peers in terms of attainment and attendance.

Fewer than half of young carers left primary school *with the expected standard of reading, writing and maths in summer 2025*

Only 46% of young carers left secondary school with 5 GCSE passes, *meaning they are 25% less likely than their peers to achieve this.* ***Just half gained GCSE passes in English and maths*** (DfE 2025)

In 2022-23, Young carers ***missed 27 school days per year on average*** *compared to 14 days for other pupils.* ***40.5%*** *had* ***persistent absence*** (DfE 2024)

We know that attendance levels drop significantly amongst young carers in Year 7 and 8, so transition time is crucial.

If their new school or college doesn't find this information out and put support in place for them, these could drop even more, and they could go under the radar until a crisis occurs (including behavioral or mental health-related).

The scale of under-identification is stark

- In 2025, 69% of schools in England said they had NO young carers.
- Nationally, only 0.8% of pupils are recorded as young carers.
- In Sheffield, just 0.6% of pupils are currently recorded.

Yet national evidence tells us something very different:

10% of all pupils will provide high or very high levels of care – equating to at least two young carers in every class (APPG Inquiry into Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, 2023)

That means there could be over 7,000 young carers in Sheffield alone.

This suggests that around 94% of young carers in Sheffield are not currently identified or recorded by schools.

Recording young carers

- It is important to record young carer data on your setting's information management system for the purposes of transition and ensuring continued support for young carers, and for the school census.

****Important****

- Schools do not need to ask for or obtain parental or pupil consent to record or provide this information but should respect the wishes and feelings of both children and their parents (guidance from DfE).
- The young carer does **not** have to have had a young carer's assessment, be known to the local authority, be registered with SYC or any other agency, or present any issues in school in order to be recorded.

Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership new transitions toolkit

Following consultation with DSL/Ds and Headteachers the Education sub-group of the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) has developed a toolkit for DSL/Ds to use to transfer information and responsibility for learners in Sheffield when they move between settings. This is based on and develops existing good practice from across the city and education phases.

It can be found here.

Aims:

- To improve the transfer of information and responsibility of safeguarding and related information between settings at the point of transition.
- To promote the use of shared systems, language & understanding around the identification and classification of safeguarding concerns and specific indicators of a child or young person's vulnerability.
- To bring together and share existing good practice from across the sector and city.
- SCSP recommends that you start by reading the Guidance document for the transition toolkit.

This guidance document will take you through the purpose and use of the rest of the toolkit documents.

- The rest of the transition toolkit is made up of:

  The transition toolkit - The spreadsheet
  The transition toolkit - DSL conversations template
  The transition toolkit - Information sharing template
  The transition toolkit - Early Years transition form and guidance
  The transition toolkit - Parent / Carer / family leaflet

- Once you have viewed the toolkit documents and considered how they might be used by your setting please complete this feedback form to let us know your thoughts and plans: Transition toolkit feedback form
- Once education settings across the city have signed up to use the transition toolkit a list will be published on the website of who is using it - so that all settings can easily know who is using it.

Post-16 Transitions

*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) *and **twice as likely to be NEET** (not in education, employment, or training)* (Carers Trust, 2024)

- All Sheffield colleges are committed to supporting young adult carers, but they have also all expressed how difficult it is to obtain information about a student's caring responsibilities at transition, and to go on and identify young adult carers in the short time they are there.
- As a result, support that that young person was getting at school disappears and juggling the demands of college with their caring role can be extremely hard.
- Information for post-16s is explained fully in the transitions toolkit guidance document. **Please read this.**
- The only difference when using this toolkit for post-16 transitions is that a conversation needs to take place with Y11 students to gain their consent (if they are judged to be Fraser/Gillick competent by the DSL) to share safeguarding information with their chosen post-16 provider(s).
- Young people are encouraged to be more involved in deciding what information they would like to share via conversations with the Secondary DSL. However, reassure them that this information is confidential and will not negatively impact their application and means the college will be able to connect them to the right support for their needs quickly and easily and ensure they have all the information they need.

Sheffield Progress

- Please support students with the applications via Sheffield Progress.

- When schools login to Sheffield Progress to provide the students' details, if consent is given, **please click on the 'young carer' tag.**
- All Sheffield Colleges have a question about caring responsibilities on their application forms and also ask an additional question at pre-enrolment. Please encourage students to tick these boxes.

GDPR – sharing of information between school and college: At the point of the conditional offer, the school should send an opt-out letter to parents/ carers informing them that the college will be contacting the school to obtain information about their child. See here for guidance on this.

If the applicant does not enroll, then the information will be securely destroyed in line with GDPR requirements.

The toolkit does not replace capturing the young person's voice.

Please make sure you talk to young carers about how much information they want to be shared.

Suggestions for conversations between safeguarding leads in schools / colleges around young carers

to be used in conjunction with SCSP's conversation template

Caring responsibilities

1. Who does the young person help to care for in the family? (this could also be an opportunity to identify hidden young carers. You could ask whether they have a sibling with SEND, for example)
2. Is this due to a long-term physical illness, physical or learning difficulty/neurodivergence, mental illness or alcohol/ substance misuse?
3. What type of care does the young person provide? Personal, practical, emergency, sibling care, self-care or emotional care (e.g. worrying about person, not wanting to leave them, calming them down etc).

Impact

4. How does the caring role impact the young person, with regards to:
    - Education
    - Mental health and wellbeing
    - Physical health
    - Social life and development
    - Other

5. What other challenges has the young person faced as a result of their caring role? / What have they found most difficult in school?
6. Have there been any other challenges (e.g. with the family?)
7. How do you think the transition may impact on the young person?

Support

8. What support has the young person received for their caring role:
   - **In school**?
   - **Outside of school** (e.g. referral to SYC, other referrals, e.g. FIS /signposting/support for family)

   Give approximate dates.

9. What further support would the young person benefit from?
10. What are the young carer's hopes and ambitions for the future? What support do you think they might need to achieve this at school/ college?

Feeder school: Communicate the young carer's answers and questions from their transition support documents **using their own words** (see Transitions Part 2: Supporting young carers).

NB. It is helpful to know who the Young Carer Lead is in the student's new school. You will find a list of Young Carer Leads under 'transitions' in the in the Network members area of our website. This is updated termly but we realise that some of our records are missing or out of date. **Please let SYC know if the details have changed and, better still, put this information on your website.**