



One minute guide

Young Carers

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Who are young carers?

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after a relative with an illness, disability, mental health condition, drug or alcohol difficulty.

Young carers can often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. These responsibilities can vary according to the circumstances, the amount of care needed, and the family structure.

What support are young carers entitled to?

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 ([part 5 Section 96](#)) and the [Young Carers \(Needs Assessments\) Regulations 2015](#), young carers are entitled to an assessment, whatever the level of care they provide. No child should provide inappropriate or excessive care.

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'. Practitioners assessing an adult's needs must consider whether there are children in the household and any care roles they may undertake in the home. The Care Act 2014 ([section 63-65](#)) also gives rights for young carers aged 16 to 18 who are moving towards adulthood to have their specific needs assessed as to how their role might change. This is called a Transition Assessment.

In addition, the [Working Together statutory guidance](#) reinforces the need for agencies to work in partnership to support families with young carers, using a whole family approach. 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.

Information on whether a child has been identified as a young carer is collected annually through the school census. Schools do not need to obtain parental or pupil consent to provide this information for the purposes of the census, but should respect the wishes and feelings of both children and their parents.

What is the approach in Leeds?

Leeds has adopted a version of the '[No Wrong Doors for Young Carers](#)' memorandum of understanding, developed by the [Carers Trust](#). This means that in Leeds, all agencies working with adults and children have a responsibility to identify any young person who lives with someone in their household with a caring need. When a young carer is identified there should then be a full family assessment, regardless of which service is contacted initially. Children & Families, Adults & Health directorates within the Council and NHS Leeds Integrated Care Board, commit through this memorandum to work together locally, adopting a whole system, council and family approach to providing support for young carers and their families in Leeds.

A brief assessment tool called '[A Day in the Life of...](#)' has been developed by Leeds Young Carers Support Service to support professionals to better understand the young carer and their family's situation. Completing this informs which service may be best placed to provide support in line with the No Wrong Door pathway. The pathway recognises that support can come from a variety of services, such as existing universal, targeted services or from our specialist young carers service – Leeds Young Carers Support Service - depending on need.

What does the Leeds Young Carers Support Service (LYCSS) offer?

The LYCSS offers the following:

- **Information and Advice** for practitioners, young carers, and their families, so that young carers can get the right level of support for their needs.
- **Awareness Raising:** To support the implementation of the No Wrong Door for Young Carers pathway, two opportunities are available to all children, family, and adult services in Leeds:
 - Practice Development sessions – an opportunity to develop knowledge, increase confidence and improve identification and support for young carers and their families.
 - We are Young Carers Friendly Leeds Programme – A bespoke package of support and training for schools and organisations to review their current young carer identification and support offer and establish a robust action plan to improve outcomes for young carers.
- **Specialist support:** For young carers whose needs cannot be met through universal support, targeted support, or Early Help services, LYCSS provides specialist family support, including an assessment of need, an outcome focused plan and possibly group work. The intended outcome of this work is to reduce the level of care a child or young person is providing, and to ensure the cared for person has the right support and care in place.

For young adult carers (aged 16–25 years), Carers Leeds can support young carers in transition to adulthood where a professional referral supports this, and if it is felt their support offer would best meet the needs of the young carer. Carers Leeds work in a person-centred way and offer information, advice, and emotional support on a one-to-one level. They also offer a range of other holistic support, as detailed on their [website](#).

What can practitioners do if they identify a young person who lives with someone in their household with a caring need?

Practitioners would complete the young carers brief assessment tool 'Day in the Life of...' If this identifies a young carer then - in conjunction with the assessment tool - a whole family holistic assessment would be undertaken to have a clear understanding of the needs of the whole family. Needs identified through these assessments can often be met by universal or targeted services.

If the level of caring is age inappropriate and excessive and there are no safeguarding implications for the child/young person, then a referral should be made to LYCSS. There are instructions on how to do this on their [website](#). If there are safeguarding implications, please discuss with your organisation's safeguarding lead to consider whether to discuss with the [Duty and Advice](#) team.

For further information

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

[Family Action Leeds Young Carers Support Service](#) - tel: 0113 7339126

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

Mindmate - support for mental health and emotional wellbeing: [Are you a young carer? webpage](#).

[Young Carers: West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership](#)

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

[Being a young carer: your rights](#) - Social care and support guide produced by the NHS.

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

[Childline](#) offers a private, confidential service for children up to the age of 19, to talk to a trained counsellor over the phone by calling 0800 1111 or via online chat or email.

[National SIBS website](#)—charity supporting people who grow up with a disabled brother or sister.

[Advice and support for young carers](#) from The Children's Society.