

**YOUNG
CARERS**

HELPING

Identifying and supporting young carers

**A toolkit for
schools and
educational
settings**



WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU



**Doncaster
Council**

www.doncaster.gov.uk/youngcarers

This booklet has been created to enable you to help pupils who are providing care for a family member at home and suggests a range of ways that you can provide or access support for young carers.

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Introduction

Practitioners can make a huge difference to the experiences and outcomes of young carers through their positive relationships and the care and understanding they show.

The pack is designed to be used by any member of staff in any school as a guide to help staff identify, assess and support young carers and includes information and tools to be able to do all of these things.

The young carers team can provide support both to professionals and young carers this includes, information, advice and signposting, an appropriate assessment (Outcome Star) to identify the caring needs and support required, 1:1 support for the young person, advocacy, group work, support with transitions, social groups and activities during the school holidays.

Foreword

"We are determined to raise awareness of young carers by working with schools to ensure young carers are identified and have the support they need.

The role of young carers often goes unnoticed and taking on a caring role may affect a young person's education and enjoyment of their childhood



Please don't underestimate the difference you as an individual can make to the life of young carer, or the impact of the partnership work you are involved in and let's all work together to ensure young carers feel supported throughout their time at school.

Councillor Nuala Fennelly
Children, young people and schools





"I wake up at 5:45 am every morning to get my brother and sister washed, dressed and get their breakfast before I get my mum up. I put the washing on and then I get myself ready for school."

Young carer, age 13.

"After school, I pick my cousin's up from primary school, make tea and help with their homework as my Aunty is disabled."

When I get home I help mum with my brother. Once I have made tea for us, I start to revise for my GCSEs but I am usually very tired by then."

Young carer, age 16.

Who is a young carer?

A young carer is a child or young person who provides regular and on-going care and emotional support to a family member with physical or mental health problems, has a disability, or misuses drugs or alcohol. This does not mean the everyday and occasional help around the home that many young people are often expected to give within families.

The key feature of being a 'young carer' is that the caring responsibilities continues over time and can make a young carer vulnerable, when the level of care and their responsibility to the person they look after, becomes excessive or inappropriate and risks impacting on emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement and life chances.

Young carers often:

- Help family members to get up, get washed, get dressed or help them with toileting
- Do lots of household chores like shopping, cleaning, cooking
- Stay in the house a lot to provide emotional support.
- Look after brothers and sisters
- Sort household bills
- Support a family member who misuses drug or alcohol.

Did you know?

In Doncaster,
there are at least

720
young
carers



1 in 20

young carers miss
school because of their
caring responsibilities



63%

of young carers in
Doncaster care for
their mother



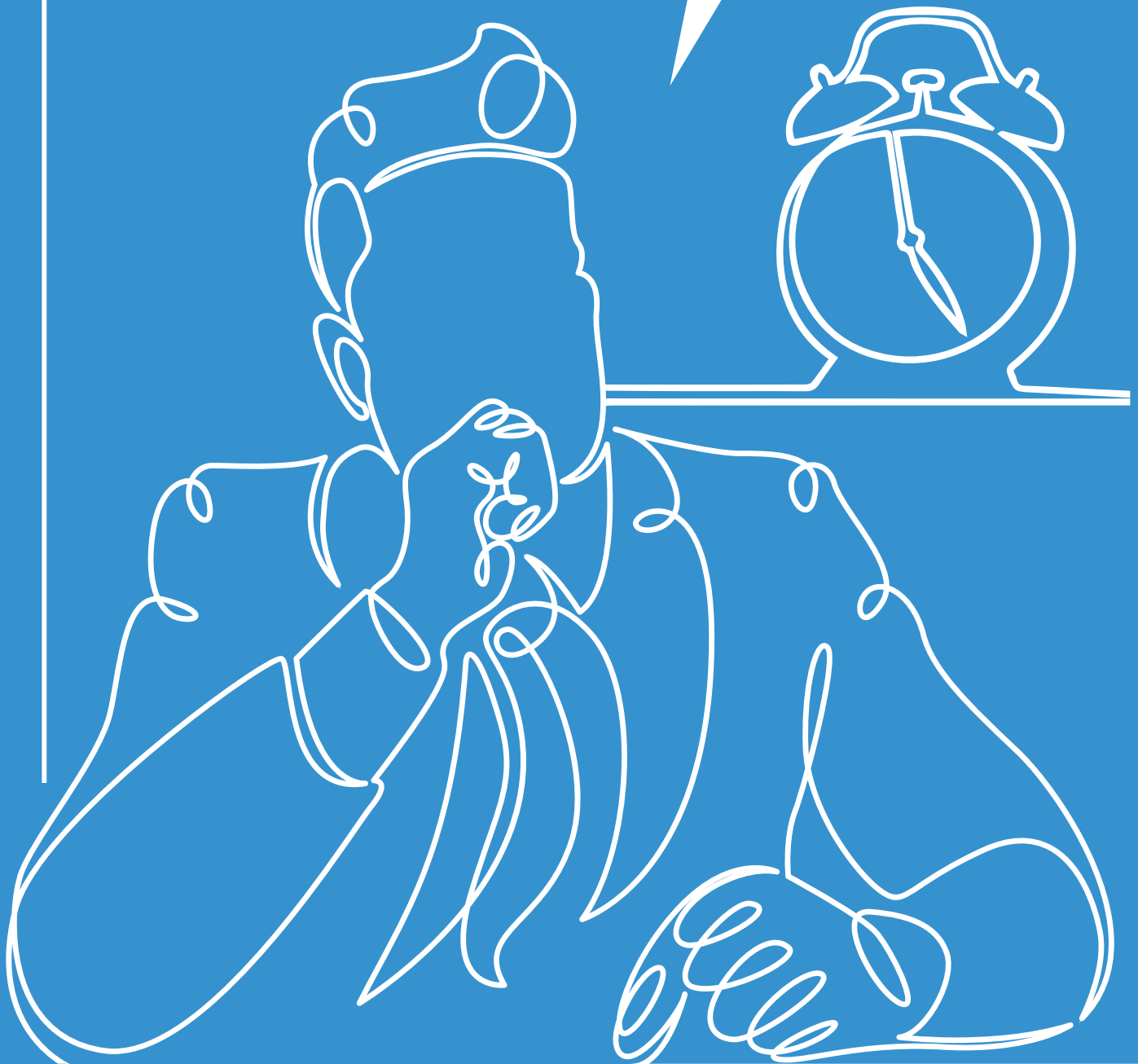
21%

of young carers
in Doncaster care
for a sibling

The Children's Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014 give local councils and their partners the duty to 'take reasonable steps' to identify young carers, to assess their caring responsibilities.

“Once I found out about her family situation, it made sense why she was often late and only sometimes completed her homework.

Form tutor, Year 7



Often young carers feel positive in relation to their caring role and proud to be a young carer, they can feel happy and proud of the support they provide within the family.

However, the things young carers experience have may have an effect on their education.

Young carers research tells us:

- 27% of young carers (aged 11-15) miss school or experience educational difficulties (40% where children care for a relative with drug or alcohol problems) (Dearden, C, Becker, S, 2004).
- They have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (Children's Society, 2013).
- A quarter of young carers said they were bullied at schools because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).

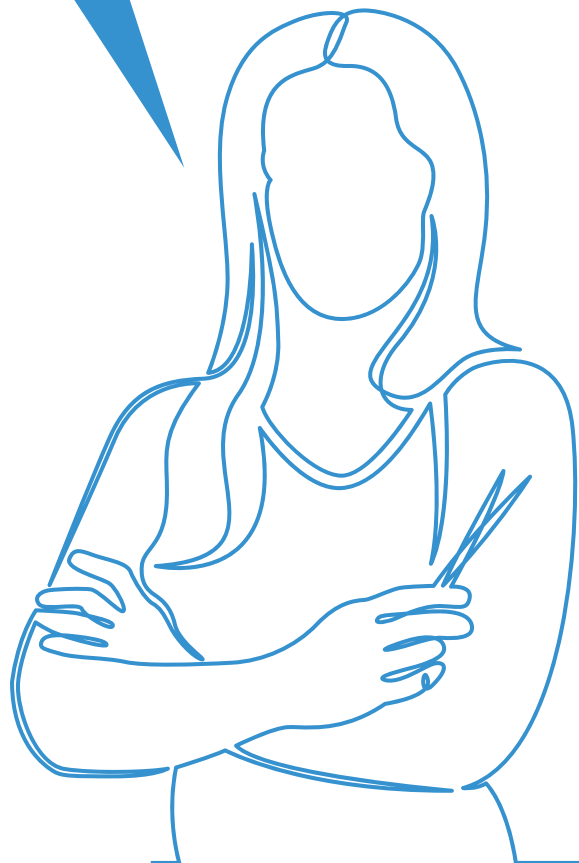
They may also feel socially isolated, stressed, anxious, have low self-esteem and confidence, may appear tired or withdrawn.

If you recognise these behaviours in a child or young person then consider if the young person may be a young carer.

"Mam has epileptic fits and my brother is in a wheelchair. I care for them, helping with hospital appointments and making sure they have their meals.

Sometimes it's a lot when I'm trying to revise for my exams but I feel happy caring. It's for my family and I'm the strongest one."

Young carer, age 13.



How to identify a young carer

Schools play a vital role in identifying young carers but it may be difficult to identify a child or young person as a young carer because we know that many do not identify themselves as young carers.

This maybe because the role they carry out is normal for them and they do not realise that they are doing above what others their age do or it may be because of concerns about being singled out as different and worry about bullying.

There are some signs that a person in your class may be a young carer:

- Often late or miss school regularly
- Isolated or a victim of bullying
- Homework either late or of poor quality
- Distracted in class
- Behavioural problems
- Difficulty joining in extracurricular activities

Or no signs at all.

Not all children/young people will show signs of being a young carer, this may be fear of being bullied, singled out or fear that if they admit they are providing a care role they may be taken out of the home.

"I'm sometimes tired in class and find it hard to concentrate because I have been up in the night helping my mum to look after my brother."

Young carer age 11

Training

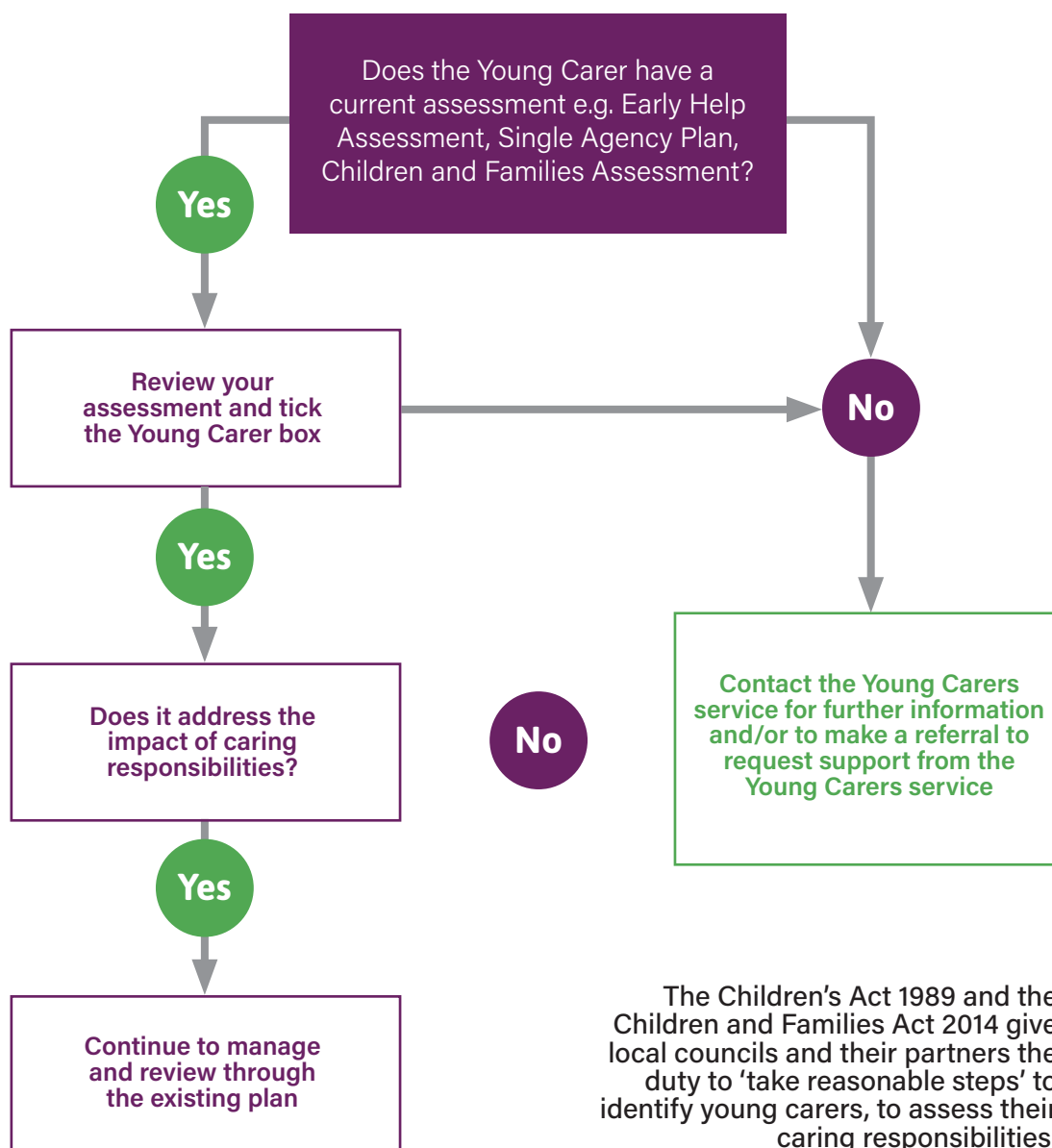
'Improving the identification and support of young carers training' is a full days training for individual staff and is available on the Buy Doncaster website.

A presentation outlining the key points is available for team meetings and the Young Carers team will attend school assemblies on request.

If you identify a young carer please follow the pathway on the next page.

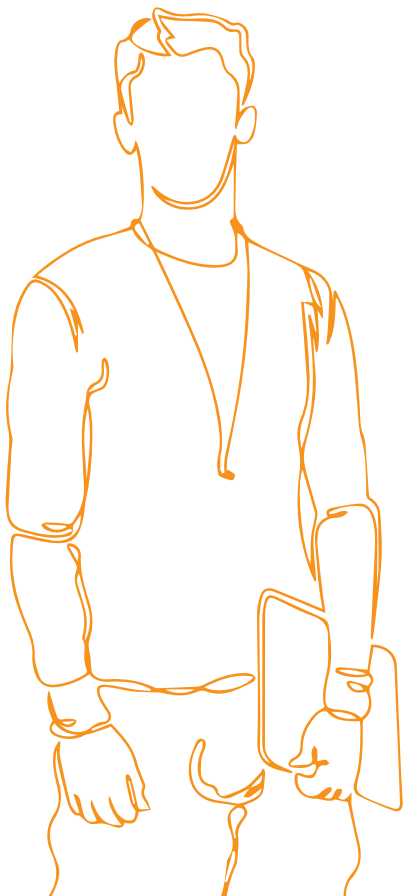
If you have any questions or concerns then either ring the Young Carers team on 01302 736099 or e mail: young.carers@doncaster.gov.uk

Young Carers Pathway



If you need any help, support or information regarding Young Carers, please make contact directly to the Young Carers team on: 01320 736099 or email young.carers@doncaster.gov.uk

Please don't underestimate the difference you as an individual can make to the life of a young carer.



Appointing a specific Young Carers Champion

By appointing a specific young carers champion is vital to support young carers during their time at school by providing a specific point of contact in school.

As part of their wider role within the school the Young Carers Champion will:

- Manage the school's provision for young carers and their families on a day-to-day basis.
- Act as the main contact for young carers and their families in the school.
- Advise and support school staff about how to identify and support young carers.
- Be the contact point for external agencies, such as the school nurse and local young carers' service, and feeder/linked schools.

The Carers Champion will be required to complete 'Improving the identification and support of young carers training' to support their role. They will have a named Young Carers practitioner who they can contact for advice and information in addition to being a part of a Young Carers Champion Network.

How can you help?

Tips on how to start a conversation

- Are you someone the child trusts and knows well?
- Consider the setting the conversation is taking place in
- Avoid formal language
- Explain the term young carer without telling the child they are a young carer
- Ask them what a typical day is for them

The most important thing that young carers tell us they need from people in school is for them to listen. This is a direct quote from a young carer: **'Don't dismiss anything a child says, take it seriously and listen'**



Things you can do

Next steps and referral to the service

Explain to the young person that there is help and support that they can access both from the school and from other services. If the young person would like to access this then it is important to talk to the parent/s about this.

Again consider the points above when talking to the parent. Many parents feel worried or feel guilty that their child has a caring role so it can be helpful to point out that consent for their child to be supported in the first instance is the action of a caring parent. Young carers are provided with various support mechanisms such as a young carers card, every family whose child is registered with us as a young carer will receive a FREE DNA card which will give them access to a vast range of discounts to help them to enjoy any free time they have and support their independence away from their life as a young carer.

As well as the family card each young carer will be given their own card, this card is to be used within the school setting or with any professional, on the reverse of the card will be an image of a traffic light. This allows that young person to tell someone how they are feeling without words, if they do not feel like talking at that time or are unable to explain what the problem is they can simply point at the red traffic light. This will then allow the young person to deal with their issue and you are able to let them know that they can discuss the issue when they are ready and that you will be there to provide support if required.

Once the parent has given consent, email the completed referral form to:
young.carers@doncaster.gov.uk.

Or if you have any questions then ring us on: 01302 736099



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YOUNG
OUTSTANDING
UNPAID
NEEDED
GENEROUS

CARING
AMAZING
RESILIENT
ESSENTIAL
RESPECTED
STRONG

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