

Multi-agency Young Carers Policy & Guidance

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Young Carers Policy

Context

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, a young carer is defined as: *'A person under 18 who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person. The concept of 'care' includes practical or emotional support, and 'another person' means anyone within the same family, be they adult or child'.*

This could include someone with physical or learning disability, mental health issues, substance misuse or a long-term condition.

The Children and Families Act 2014 definition excludes children providing care as part of contracted work or as voluntary work unless the local authority consider that the relationship between the person cared for and the young person under 18 is such that it would be appropriate for him/her to be regarded as a young carer.

Identifying Young Carers

Local authorities are expected to take 'reasonable steps' to identify children in their area who may be young carers. However, identifying young carers is not always easy with research showing that a significant proportion of young carers do not disclose their caring responsibilities, and that often young people (and their families) do not recognise themselves as 'young carers'. Parents and carers can be reluctant to disclose information about caring responsibilities for fear of repercussions, including children's social care involvement and potential family separations.¹

"Caring can be hard whether it is long term or short-term care that is being given"

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Adopting a whole family approach is recommended as the best way to identify young people who are caring for a family member. This means that whenever an adult is receiving social care or support, any assessment undertaken should always include discussions about children in the household to identify any caring responsibilities and whether support is needed for a young carer.

Early interventions are critical in ensuring that children do not take on inappropriate caring tasks; the need for children to provide care is increased when services to ill or disabled adults (or other family members) are inadequate, inappropriate, or missing and when family-based interventions are not provided.²

Young carers told us that they didn't know they were a 'young carer' until an adult told them they were. They often rely on someone else to interpret their experiences as being a carer.

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¹ [Enabling Young Carers to Pursue their Goals in Life and Reach their Full Potential: Converting Research Findings into Policy Actions \(Me-We Consortium, Carers Trust, 2019\)](#)

² [The Lives of Young Carers in England Research Brief \(DfE, 2016\)](#)

Young carers and their families are likely to access a range of services across school, healthcare, housing, and community groups. To ensure young carers are identified and supported, statutory and community agencies across Lambeth should work together and partners should commit to adopting a whole system, whole family approach to providing support for young carers and their families.

What responsibilities might a Young Carer have?

Young carers undertake a wide range of caring roles and responsibilities in the family home which could include:

- Practical tasks: such as cooking, housework, and shopping
- Physical care: such as lifting, supporting mobility and physiotherapy
- Personal care: such as helping with dressing, washing, and using the bathroom
- Emotional support: such as listening, calming someone and being present
- Household management: such as paying bills and managing finances or benefits
- Looking after siblings: such as walking them to school
- Interpreting: for hearing or speech impediments or English as an additional language
- Administering medication: such as insulin needles, inhalers, and tablets
- Medical appointments: accompanying parents or siblings to medical appointments on a bus, train or taxi

Activities might appear 'big' or 'small' or like something that you might just be expected to do in your family, but to be a young carer you don't need to be doing everything on the list

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Why might young carers need additional support?

As a result of their caring responsibilities many young carers experience issues with:

- Physical health: often affected by lack of sleep, night-time caring responsibilities, repeated lifting or carrying and poor diet
- Emotional wellbeing: stress, tiredness and mental ill-health are common for young carers alongside feeling different or isolated from their peers
- Environment: traumatic life changes such as bereavement, family break-up, income or housing worries and witnessing the effects of an illness on a loved one

The effect of caring responsibilities on young people can have a long-lasting impact on social activity and interaction, educational participation and attainment and employment opportunities. If caring is long term and unsupported it can have real consequences for a young person's transition to adulthood and long-term life chances.³

"You might need extra help because you might not have time for yourself, and your own wellbeing is important"

"Young carers need time off from caring to be able to socialise and have some enjoyment"

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What support may a young carer need?

Research has suggested that support for young carers can be grouped into 6 broad types⁴ consisting of:

³ [Who Cares About Me? The Mental Well-being of Young Carers in Manchester \(Manchester Carers Forum, 2010\)](#)

⁴ [The Lives of Young Carers in England Qualitative Report \(DfE, 2016\)](#)

- emotional and social support;
- practical support and information;
- educational support;
- financial management;
- support with life planning (such as planning for university or employment) and;
- respite care.

Additionally, young carers may need support to be able to

- Participate in fun activities and
- Have enjoyment and socialising

Young inspectors talked about the type of support they get and said that the list in the policy didn't cover fun activities, enjoyment or socialising and that this should be included in the type of support you can get.

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Young carers may have support needs that fall within multiple categories, and which may change as their caring responsibilities vary alongside developments in the needs of the person being cared for.

Young Carer's Statutory Duties:

The Children and Families Act 2014⁵ (s96) states that:

"A local authority in England must assess whether a young carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are, if:

- it appears to the authority that the young carer may have needs for support, or
- the authority receives a request from the young carer or a parent of the young carer to assess the young carer's needs for support."

This legislation is aligned with similar provision in the Care Act 2014⁶ (s61-62) noting local authorities should consider the needs of young carers if, during the assessment of an adult with care needs, or of an adult carer, it appears that a child is providing or intends to provide care.

Sections 63-65 of the Care Act 2014 does provide a duty for local authorities as part of transition planning to adulthood to assess a young carer's needs for support where it considers the child is likely to have needs for care and support after turning 18 and where there is significant benefit to the young carer in carrying out the assessment. There is no statutory requirement to provide support for a young carer within the Care Act 2014. Instead, a young carer's statutory needs may be met under section 17 of the Children Act 1989⁷.

This provision does not affect existing rights to assessment under section 1 of the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000. A young carer, or a person acting on their behalf, could request an assessment in advance of their 18th birthday, which could indicate to the local authority an appearance of need which would trigger the duty.

⁵ [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

⁶ [Care Act 2014](#)

⁷ [Children Act 1989](#)

The Children and Families Act amended the Children Act 1989 to make it easier for young carers to get an assessment of their needs by introducing 'whole family' approaches to assessment and support. Young carers have said that there should be “no wrong doors”⁸ for them and their families, meaning young carers should be identified and supported regardless of which service has initial contact.

Referring Young Carers for Assessment

Following the identification of a young carer who may need support, a Young Carer's Needs Assessment must be carried out. The [Pan London Thresholds Continuum of Need](#) document (p10) sets out the indicators of need for Young Carers.

To ensure robust, consistent, and appropriate Young Carer's Needs Assessments (YCNA), Carers' Hub Lambeth (CHL) will carry out all assessments where a child or young person is identified and referred.

Practitioners within Lambeth Adult Social Care (ASC), on identifying a young carer, will refer to CHL or Lambeth Children's Social Care (CSC) dependent on need. If they consider the case to be that of a 'child in need' or a child in need of protection the ASC practitioner will refer CSC, otherwise cases will be referred to CHL.

Where a young carer completes a self-referral to the CHL or where a family member does so for them, if the CHL considers they may be a 'child in need' or a child in need of protection under the Children Act 1989, they will seek consent to make a referral to CSC.

Professionals outside of CSC and ASC should work with the family to gain consent to make a referral to both:

- CSC Integrated Referral Hub via telephone and then submission of a Multi-Agency Referral Form
- Carers' Hub Lambeth via telephone and email

Throughout the referral and assessment process the local authority is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a referral to CHL is made when a young carer is identified
- Ensuring that a Young Carer's Needs Assessment is completed where appropriate
- Sharing information where permitted and appropriate
- Collaborating with CHL to ensure a joined-up approach based on best practice, where the needs of the young person come first and to create one coherent and connected service
- Implementing relevant actions from the support plan that is developed through the YCNA, to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of the young person and their family
- Working to ensure that young carers are not left with excessive and inappropriate caring responsibilities
- Involving CHL in meetings, plans and interventions where permitted and appropriate

⁸ [No Wrong Doors Working Together to Support Young Carers and their Families – Young Carers' Needs Assessment Supporting Information \(ADCS, 2015\)](#)

Contacts:

Lambeth Integrated Referral Hub

0207 926 3100 (referrals by professionals only)

helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk.

[Multi Agency Referral Form for Early Help or Child Protection](#) (referrals by professionals only)

Lambeth Adult Social Care

020 7926 5555

Carers' Hub Lambeth

020 7501 8970

connect@carershub.org.uk.

Young Carer's Guidance for Assessment

Key Principles in Assessment

1. Assessments must consider whether the care being provided by the child is excessive or inappropriate and how the child's caring responsibilities affect their wellbeing, education, and development. CHL will complete assessments with particular focus on the impact of the young person's caring responsibilities on their physical and emotional wellbeing.
2. Assessments must be carried out in collaboration with any relevant services that are working with the young person and their family where appropriate, including any persons with expertise and knowledge relevant to the young carer or any person the young carer or their parent wishes to involve.
3. Assessments should be carried out promptly following identification or disclosure of a young person's caring responsibilities. Clear communication between professionals and families at the start of the assessment process is important to allay concerns parents and young people may have about the assessment process and possible outcomes.
4. A whole family approach must be embedded into the assessment process. This means making sure any assessment considers and evaluates how the needs of the person being cared for impact the needs of the child who has been identified as a possible young carer. The needs of other children and adults within the household should also be considered.
 - 4.1. CSC when visiting or working with a family may come into contact with an adult who may have social care needs or identify an adult safeguarding concern. The CSC practitioner should make a referral for assessment to ASC.
 - 4.2. ASC will carry out any needs assessment and care and support planning for adults in need of care and support as set out in the Care Act 2014. This may result in the identified young carer being relieved of part or all of their caring role. Any remaining unmet support needs for the young carer should then be considered and responded to.
5. Assessments must be carried out in a manner which is appropriate and proportionate to the young carer's age and needs and considers their wishes and feelings. It is important to speak to the child alone, wherever possible, and to observe how they relate with their parents and siblings.
6. Practitioners should encourage and facilitate full and meaningful participation in the assessment process by providing age-appropriate information prior to the start of the

assessment. Information should be shared with the young carer and the person cared alongside the young carer's parents (or carers with parental responsibility) and any other person whom the young carer or a parent of the young carer requests to participate in the assessment.

7. Young carers, their parents, and any person at the request of the young carer or their parent should be provided with a copy of the assessment **and** a copy of the support plan. This should include information about actions to be taken, whether the young carer has been assessed as a “child in need” and confirm any arrangements for review.

What Should a Young Carers Assessment Consider?

Any YCNA assessment should take into account the strengths of the family unit and support network as well as identifying any challenges faced.

The assessment should take into consideration or encompass:

- The amount, nature, and type of care which the young carer provides (or intends to provide) as well as the extent to which this care is (or will be) relied upon by the family to maintain the well-being of the person cared for.
- Whether any of the tasks which the young carer is performing (or intends to perform) when providing care are excessive or inappropriate having regard to circumstances, and in particular, the carer's age, gender, wishes and feelings. Inappropriate tasks could include:
 - Personal care such as bathing and toileting
 - Strenuous physical tasks such as lifting
 - Administering medication
 - Maintaining the family budget
 - Offering emotional support to an adult beyond the capacity and maturity of the child or young person
- The impact of the needs of the young carer's family on the well-being of the young carer (and any child in that family). In particular, the impact on their educational and personal development. For example:
 - Whether the young person's caring role limits educational engagement and opportunities through increased absences from school
 - Whether caring prevents the child from building relationships and friendships
 - Whether caring responsibilities have an impact on the physical or emotional wellbeing of the child
 - Whether the young carer has someone to talk to or relate to
 - Whether the young carer believes that the person they are caring for requires any additional support such as from Adult Social Care
 - Whether the young carer is engaged in activities such as administering medication or taking someone to a hospital appointment
 - Whether the young carer is required to cook for themselves, the person they are caring for and/or siblings

- Whether the young carer is managing documents and emails and translating these for the person they are caring for
- Whether there are any technology devices that could be useful in their caring role
- The impact of parental health on their ability and capacity to meet the child's needs
- Whether any of the young carer's support needs could be reduced or mitigated by providing services to the person cared for, or another member of the young carer's family
- Whether the young carer's support needs could be reduced or mitigated if they were to be relieved of part/all of the tasks they perform (or intend to perform) when providing care
- Whether any other assessment of support needs for the young carer **or** the person cared for has been carried out previously (any previous assessment outcomes or recommendations should then be considered)
- Whether the young carer should be considered a Child in Need
- Any recommendations or actions to be taken as a result of the assessment
- Arrangements for a future review(s)
- The support plan must be shared with the young carer in addition to their parent or person they are caring for. This should be in a child-friendly format.

Reviewing a Support Plan

A carers support plan should be reviewed at regular intervals as set out in the young carers assessment. Young carers should be engaged in reviewing their plan.

Refusing an Assessment

An assessment can be refused if:

- The young carer does not appear to have needs for support; or
- The local authority has already carried out an assessment of the young carer's need for support connected with their care for a particular person and circumstances have not changed.

Additional Support Needs

Where there are any aspects of a situation that indicate concerns about children's and/or vulnerable adults' safety which would require protection from harm, these will be responded to swiftly. CSC will undertake the provision of services or support to children and ASC will provide services and support to the adult. These may be provided directly or commissioned through other providers.

Transitions

Where a young carer is making the transition to adulthood and approaching eighteen, practitioners should seek the agreement of the young carer to undertake an assessment under the Care Act 2014, if the young person is likely to have needs for care and support when they reach eighteen, and if the timing of the assessment offers 'significant benefit'.

The timing of any assessment should be discussed with the young carer and their family. Much of the information necessary to complete a transition assessment may have already been collected as part of the YCNA.

Transition assessments for young carers must also specifically consider whether the carer is able to care now and whether they are prepared and willing to continue to be a carer after they reach adulthood at eighteen. This must be handled sensitively and afford the young carer the opportunity to talk about it privately if they wish as they may be fearful of upsetting the person they are caring for.

Young adult carers often find their education, training and employment prospects are challenged by their caring role. As a partnership, we will therefore consider how to support young carers to prepare for adulthood and to raise and fulfil their aspirations.

Where young carers are not eligible for services, the transition assessment will be followed up with good information and advice about support in the community.

The power to join up assessments can be important at transition and, where appropriate consideration should be given to combining any existing Education Health and Care Plan with a transition plan and plans for the adult carer. When assessments are combined, it is essential to designate a named person to coordinate transition assessment and planning across agencies.

Training and Raising Awareness

Information and resources to support professionals from across the partnership to identify and support young carers will be made available through the LSCP website and through the LSCP Training Offer. This will be reviewed every six months.

[Young Carers - Lambeth Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Young carers felt that more should be done to share information with adults about what a young carer is and does so that they can be identified early and professionals should be told about what support the Carer's Hub offers. The young inspectors said that this is important so that adults can tell young carers that they are indeed a young carer and that they can get support and they might be able to access the Carer's Hub.

Information sharing can be done through lots of different means but might include:

- Articles in newsletters
- A short film by the Young Carers
- Tic Tok
- Publishing what the Carer's Hub does for young carers and sharing with communities and schools
- Reviewing the webpage and forms

Young inspectors August 2025