

“Opening Doors”



A guide to identifying, supporting and signposting Young Carers in your practice





THE IVY & JANE
CHARITABLE
TRUST FUND

National Context

Who are Young Carers?

How can you help to identify Young Carers in your practice?

How can you support Young Carers in your practice?

Where can you signpost Young Carers to get more information?

What can we learn? – Case Studies

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Imago Community is a Registered Charity supporting individuals and communities across the South East and the London Boroughs of Southwark, Havering and Bexley.

Visit www.imago.community for more information.

Imago has received funding from the Ivy and Jane Charitable Trust to increase participation by Health Practitioners in identifying and supporting Young Carers. This resource has been developed to enable practitioners to identify, support and signpost Young Carers to appropriate interventions, improving outcomes for Young Carers.

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National Context

Young Carers organisations, alongside the Children's Society and the Carers Trust, have long campaigned for changes in the law to benefit Young Carer welfare.

Recent years have seen success... twice!

The Children and Families Act 2014 gives Young Carers the right to have their support needs assessed; and to be assessed again if their support needs change.

The assessment looks at whether the Young Carer is participating in or wishes to participate in education, training or recreation; and whether the Young Carer works or wishes to work.

The Care Act 2014 gives provision for families to be assessed holistically. This means that the needs and caring responsibilities of children in the household will be looked at alongside adults. Guidance specifies that Adult Services must identify children in the household, consider whether they are Young Carers and if so whether they are a Child in Need.

The Care Act introduces a new right for Young Carers aged 16 to 18 to have their specific needs assessed, considering how their role might change as they transition to adulthood.

Together these pieces of legislation are intended to provide a legal framework that supports local authorities and support agencies to consider the needs of the whole family, deliver coordinated packages of support, and protect children and young people from excessive or inappropriate caring roles.

In 2019, Young Carers were removed from the vulnerable group's category in the Ofsted framework, removing the obligation for Schools to identify and support Young Carers. It is more important than ever for other professionals to identify Young Carers so they are not missed.

Who are Young Carers?

"A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work). This relates to care to any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail, elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances".

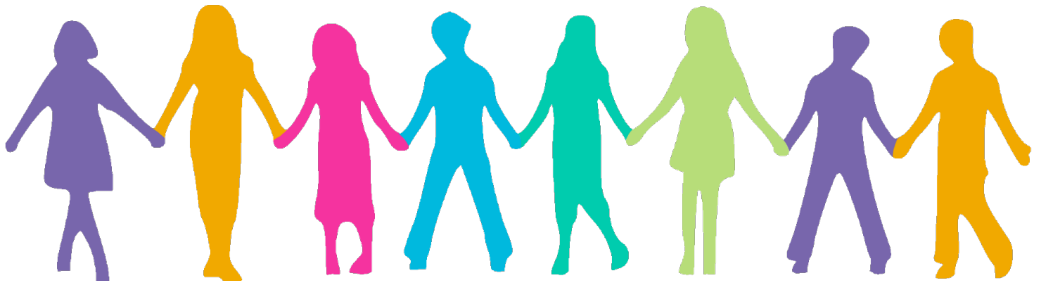
Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014

"Children should not undertake inappropriate or excessive caring roles that may have an impact on their development. A Young Carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing and their prospects in education and life".

Care and Support Statutory Guidance. Issued under the Care Act. DH 2014. Paragraph 2.49

Anyone can become a carer; from any background, within any culture and at any stage of life. Many feel they are doing what anyone else would in the same situation; looking after their mother, son or best friend and just getting on with it.

Young Carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care, and the structure of the family.



A Young Carer may do some or all the following:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping;
- Physical care, such as lifting and moving, or supporting with physiotherapy;
- Personal care, such as dressing, washing, support with toileting;
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and making payments;
- Administering medication, ordering prescriptions, sorting medication;
- Looking after or “parenting” siblings;
- Providing emotional support;
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impairment, learning disability or because English is not the family’s first language.

Hidden Young Carers

It is widely recognised that there are many Young Carers who do not receive the support they require, particularly where caring relates to parental mental ill health or substance misuse (or dual diagnosis).

Census results are widely believed not to reflect the true scale of young people who are carers. The census asked parents rather than children to complete the questionnaire and made no mention of the possible range of conditions where caring might be required, such as mental ill health, HIV and substance misuse.

Young Carers are often hidden because:

- They do not identify themselves as a Young Carer;
- Services are not identifying them as carers;
- Fear within the family of involving Children’s Services;
- Children are home schooled.

Or because their family is from a hard to reach group:

- Parents with HIV or Aids;
- Gypsy and Traveller Communities;
- Black and Asian minorities;
- East European communities;
- English as a second language;
- Substance misuse (parents, siblings);
- Mental health (parents, siblings).



Identification of Carers / Young Carers

New patient checks and questionnaires:

- "Do you care for somebody who could not manage without your help?";
- "Are you cared for by somebody?";
- Utilise existing forms and add a Carers / Young Carers Box;
- Record on the patient's record.

Opportunities for all staff – Young Carers are everybody's business:

- Does the receptionist regularly see a young person supporting a family member to attend appointments during school time?;
- Does the health professional notice that the young person is translating?;
- Has an interpreter been booked but a young person is attending the appointment with the person they care for?;
- Is there someone in the household (parent, grandparent, sibling) that has
 - > Long-term illness
 - > Terminal illness
 - > Substance misuse
 - > Disability
 - > Mental health issue;
- If there are any children in the house under the age of 18, then they may be Young Carers.

Listen for indicators:

- Is the young person reluctant to leave home because of a caring role?;
- Does the young person feel upset that they always miss out on opportunities?;
- Is the young person reluctant to talk about what they do to help at home?;
- Does the young person seem really mature for their age?;
- Does the young person ask lots of questions at a family members appointment?

Be aware of reoccurring health problems:

- Back problems from lifting and moving;
- Poor sleep due to waking up to look after somebody else;
- Mental health problems due to anxiety or worry;
- Poor emotional wellbeing due to seeing someone in pain or behaviour from a family member which may be irrational, unpredictable and/or harmful.

Other signs to look out for:

- Frequently late or missing from school;
- Parent or other family member has a disability;
- Tired or finding it difficult to concentrate;
- Signs of neglect, poor health/diet or physical problems;
- Family is difficult to engage with;
- Frequently missing appointments;
- Behavioural problems / bullying;
- Feelings of too much responsibility or resentment towards their family.

Support



Get carers involved:

- Many practices have Patient Participation Groups. Are carers involved?;
- Speak with carers in the practice, what would they like to see? Some practices have volunteers that run carers groups and activities such as coffee mornings;
- Involve carers in the development of your practice's carer strategy.

Get the message out there – speak about it:

- Encourage patients to self-identify by displaying information on a notice board;
- Use this space to inform carers what services may be available to them as registered carers;
- Utilise your website and apps for patients that can book appointments and request prescriptions online;
- Notices on social media and newsletters that go out to families.

Research suggests there are links between parental and child mental health; and there is a higher risk of children developing drug and alcohol problems when there is a parent who abuses substances.

When meeting with someone within the family who is receiving treatment at the practice for substance misuse or mental health, open the conversation if it is known that there are children within the family home

Empower all professionals to talk about Young Carers:

- Provide workforce development to upskill staff;
- Know what to look for when completing home visits.

Offer enhanced access:

- Flexibility of appointments;
- Back-to-back appointments for the carer and person they care for.

Addition things you can do

- Develop a practice policy for carers;
- Use a variety of methods to identify Young Carers;
- Develop a carers register;
- Use a variety of different media;
- Signpost Young Carers to where they can get more information and support.

Open the doors!



Signposting

Imago Community - www.imago.community

Information about Imago Young Carers projects and services

Refugee Toolkit - www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk

A Children's Society resource for professionals working with Young Carers in refugee and asylum-seeking families

Rethink - www.rethink.org

Directly helping millions of people affected by mental illness by challenging attitudes and changing lives. The website contains information about support for Young Carers

The Children's Society - www.childrensociety.org.uk

Toolkits providing information, resources and good practice guidance about supporting 'hidden' Young Carers

Winston's Wish - www.winstonswish.org

Offering practical support and guidance to bereaved children, their families and professionals

SIBS - www.sibs.org.uk

Has information for children growing up with a sibling who has special needs, a disability or chronic illness

Contact a Family - www.contact.org.uk

A charity which has local contacts, for families with disabled children

Macmillan - www.macmillan.org.uk

Have a section for Teens and young adults with information that is age appropriate

Childline - www.childline.org.uk

Help and advice for a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online or call

Kooth - www.kooth.com

An online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people where you can join a chat room, get advice or ask a question

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk

Information for young people to help them understand how they are feeling and get self-help information

National Self Harm Network - www.nshn.co.uk

Online support forum for everyone. Providing crisis support, information, resources, advice, discussions and distractions

Guidance for Professionals

The Imago hub is a resource for professionals, families and Young Carers to seek information, advice, support and signposting. We have a variety of resources we can share with families about this service and others.



youngcarers@imago.community

0300 111 111 0

www.imago.community

If you think there is a Young Carer in a patient's family, please act:

- If the family are open to support and accepting that their child is a Young Carer, signpost them to Imago Young Carers and record this on their records;
- If the family are not willing to acknowledge they need further support, but you believe the young person is a Young Carer, then you can talk about the benefits of the support without labelling the young person a Young Carer.

We appreciate that families may find it difficult to accept their child is Young Carer, or acknowledge the impact a family member's condition may have on their child. Just planting the seed may make them more likely to discuss support further down the line.

What does Imago Young Carers do?

All Young Carers receive:

- Home visit, assessments and reviews of support.

Depending on need, we provide:

- One-to-one support;
- In school support;
- Workshops;
- Respite activities;
- Workforce development;
- Signposting;
- Advocacy;
- Awareness raising.

Imago Young Carers outcomes are to:

- Improve educational attendance and attainment;
- Improve confidence and self esteem;
- Reduce isolation;
- Raise awareness of Young Carers and Young Carer issues.

How to refer to Imago Young Carers

- Contact hub or complete a referral form securely online at www.imago.community;
- Complete the form with family where possible (otherwise ensure verbal consent has been obtained);
- An initial triage will take place and the referral will be allocated to the local support coordinator;
- Referrers will be informed of family's engagement.

As a health professional your support is key to identifying Young Carers so they receive the support they need to improve their health and wellbeing

Resources

The **Whole Family Pathway** is a tool for all adults and children's services, education, health and other agencies who have contact with Young Carers and their families. This online resource will support you to implement changes in legislation for Young Carers and their families, including identifying them and providing effective responses and support. It is also a useful map for families to follow to inform their choices.

You can access it at www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/whole_family_pathway_2016_1st_1_.pdf

Royal College of General Practitioners have created a useful e-learning module. This module provides information and guidance for GPs and other community healthcare professionals to enable them to build carer involvement and support into everyday practice.

“Thousands of children and young people provide nothing less than life changing care for their family and deserve in return the best possible support from the NHS and other public services. No young carer should feel they are struggling to cope on their own.”

Dr Neil Churchill, director for experience, participation and equalities at NHS England.

“80–90% of carers have had contact with their GP in the previous 6 months, yet many remain anonymous”

British Journal of General Practice, November 2017

www.bjgp.org/content/bjgp/67/664/527.full.pdf

An Integrated Approach to Identifying and Assessing Carer Health and Well-Being Toolkit covers new duties on NHS organisations brought about by the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014. It includes numerous examples of positive practice that are already making a difference to carers, including Young Carers, and their families.

www.england.nhs.uk/commitment-to-carers/carers-toolkit

NHS England has outlined a series of practical plans and actions designed to help Young Carers who may be ‘hidden’, unpaid and under the age of sixteen. Family doctors across the country can offer a new package of services for children and young adults who perform an informal caring role for a family member.

www.england.nhs.uk/2019/06/nhs-sets-out-care-for-young-carers-offer-in-gp-surgeries



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