



Young carers and the schools census

Resource pack for schools

September 2022

Young carers and the schools census

Who are young carers?

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after someone who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. As well as those caring for parents, they may also look after brothers, sisters or elderly relatives too. Research suggests that 10% of all children are providing high or very high levels of care, and the last census found that over 1500 children aged 5-7 were providing over 50 hours a care every week.

Local figures suggest that you will have **at least 1 young carer in every class in every year group in your school**. Schools in Norfolk who have worked with Caring Together to achieve the Carer Friendly Tick Award - Education accreditation reported **on average 22 young carers per school, with some having more than 40**.

If young carers are not identified at an early stage then they often end up taking on inappropriate and excessive levels of caring responsibilities, to the detriment of their education, health and future opportunities. A recent survey by Caring Together found that on average young carers were caring for 3 years before receiving any support, and there were some caring for more than 10 years (from the start of primary through to the end of secondary).

- 27% of young carers aged 11-15 miss school or experience educational difficulties
- 1 in 4 young carers have reported being bullied because of their caring role
- There are over 1500 young carers aged 5-7 nationally providing more than 50 hours of care a week
- At least a third of young carers said their caring role resulted in them either 'always' or 'usually' feeling 'worried', 'lonely' or 'stressed'

We are asking you for your help to ensure that all young carers in the county are identified and supported.

Young carers and the school census

From spring 2023, young carers are for the first time going to be included on the school census return. This will provide a much better picture of the number of young carers in Norfolk schools, but also presents opportunities to use this data to monitor attendance and attainment of young carers.

Schools will be able to record the information using the following code set (CS118):

Code	Young carer indicator
N	Not declared
P	Identified as a young carer by parent or guardian
S	Identified as a young carer by school

What do schools need to do in order to prepare for this change?

In order for the school census return to provide an accurate representation of the number of young carers in Norfolk schools, schools will need to have systems and processes in place to:

1. Raise awareness of young carers with all staff and pupils.
2. Correctly identify young carers in their school pupil management systems, so they are picked up in the census return.
3. Ensure that young carers who are identified are linked into available support, both within school and externally.

Caring Together have produced a checklist which headteachers and senior leaders can use to ensure they are prepared for the addition of young carers to the census and that any young carers identified are linked into support.

The Young Carers Challenge for schools

To help ensure that every young carer in the county is identified at the earliest opportunity and linked into available support, Caring Together and other young carer organisations across Norfolk have set a challenge that:

By the end of the 2022-23 academic Year, we want every Norfolk school to:

1. Have a young carers champion so that every young carer has a trusted adult in school they can go to if things are difficult, or they need more support.
2. Have a young carers agreement/policy (designed with young carers) so that every young carer in Norfolk knows what support is available to them in their school and locally
3. Ensure young carers are correctly identified in their school pupil management systems, so they are picked up in the census return. Monitor indicators such as attendance and attainment using the young carer flag.

Young Carers Matter Norfolk

The Young Carers Matter Norfolk service is a partnership of local voluntary sector organisations and commissioned by Norfolk County Council to provide a range of support including:

- Information and advice
- 1:1 and group support
- Whole-family support
- The opportunity to meet other young carers.



Visit <https://www.youngcarersmatternorfolk.org/> to find out more.

Young Carers Needs Assessments

Young carers have legal rights to assessments and support.

A Young Carers Needs Assessment under s17ZA of the Children Act 1989 is designed to ensure that young carers are not taking on inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities. They are available to any young carer who requests one, no matter who they care for or how much care they provide.

Assessments can be requested via Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020

Young Adult Carer Transitions Assessments (The 'My TAP')

Young Adult Carers (young carers approaching adulthood) are also entitled to an assessment under s63 of the Care Act 2014 to help ensure that any barriers to them making successful transitions into adulthood are removed. Norfolk County Council and other partners are currently working on the pathway for these assessments (called 'My TAP' as chosen by young carers) so please contact the Young Carers Matter Norfolk Advice line for the latest information on info@youngcarersmatternorfolk.org or 0800 083 1148

Other young carers support

There are a variety of grant-funded organisations providing group and one-to-one support across the county. To see what is available, contact Young Carers Matter Norfolk or look at caringtogether.org/young-carers-support-norfolk

There is also support available for particular groups of young carers:

Children of Parents with mental illness – Our Time (<https://ourtime.org.uk/>)

Siblings of disabled children:

Sense - <https://www.sense.org.uk/our-services/support-for-children/support-for-young-carers-and-siblings/>

Sibs - <https://www.sibs.org.uk/>

Children where there has been sexual/violent crime:

Restitute - www.restitute.org

Young Carers Emergency Plan



Young Carer Emergency Plan

Being a young carer can be difficult at the best of times, but it can be extra stressful if something unexpected happens, either to yourself or the person you are caring for. Planning ahead can help you manage these changes by being prepared, knowing what to do and who to turn to for help and support.

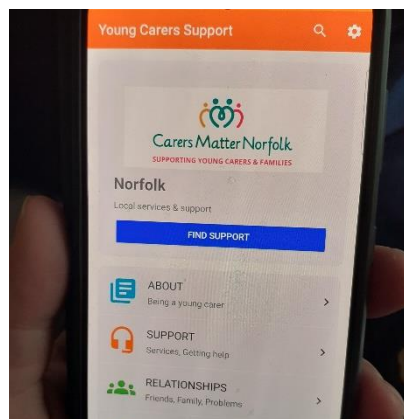
About me and my family:

My name is	
My age	
I live at	
I care for	
My caring role involves	
Other people who live with us are	

Being a young carer can be difficult at the best of times, but it can be extra stressful if something unexpected happens, either to the young carer or the person they are caring for. Norfolk County Council worked with young carers to produce an emergency plan tool to help them plan ahead so they can be prepared, know what to do and who to turn to for help and support.

Young Carers Support app


There is free [App](#) which contains useful local and national information for young carers. No registration is required so young carers, parents and professionals may find it equally of use. Search 'Young Carers Support App' on Apple or Android devices.



Support for professionals

There is free support available to schools to help you improve your ability to identify and support young carers within your school. Caring Together can also help link you in with other schools who have already implemented systems and processes to identify and track their young carers, as well as support across the school. Contact carerfriendlytick@caringtogether.org

Young Carers Toolkit



How to recognise a young carer

Over 1500 young carers are already known to, and being supported by Norfolk County Council and other young carer specialist support agencies. However there are many more young people—believed to be up to 5000 more - who have caring responsibilities for a family member and who are currently an 'invisible young carer'. It is essential all young carers are identified, so that they and their families get the full range of support that is available to them.

Potential indicators

Indicators that a child or young person may be a young carer include:

- Often late, or absent from school or college/further education with little explanation
- Falling behind on school/college work, handing in homework late or incomplete
- Stopping participating in youth groups, clubs or sporting activities without explanation
- Often tired, anxious, withdrawn or worried.
- Isolated from peers, struggles to attend extra-curricular activities and trips.

With key statistics, potential indicators that someone might be a young carer, the legal framework, useful resources and information on how to access support, [this toolkit](#) is essential reading for any professional working with children, young people and families. It has been created in partnership by Norfolk County Council, Voluntary Norfolk, Caring Together and Just One Norfolk.

Carer Friendly Tick Award

The Carer Friendly Tick Award - Education is an accreditation designed and assessed by young carers and run by Caring Together. It helps schools and other education settings to create a whole-school approach to identification and support for young carers, based on what young carers have said they need.



number

In a recent survey of schools recently awarded the Carer Friendly Tick Award - Education, schools reported that on average, they had seen a 250% increase in the number of young carers they had identified in school since undertaking the programme

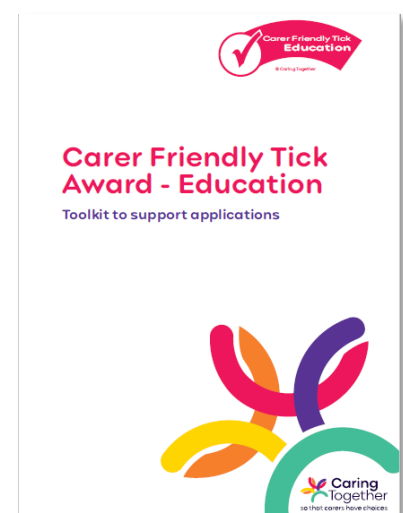
Caring Together are able to help schools work towards the accreditation by providing:

- Awareness-raising training for staff
- Awareness-raising training for pupils
- Guidance to help schools work through the process.

"Wonderful to be able to work with such a valuable resource and have expert guidance as we support our Young Carers."

"5 more young carers have come forward since the assemblies – you were so inclusive and positive and really engaged the children... The assembly was pitched perfectly for the age group."

There is also a Carer Friendly Tick Award toolkit to support schools with examples of young carer policies, noticeboards as well as ideas and resources for raising awareness of young carers.



Visit caringtogether.org/professionals/carer-friendly-tick-award or email carerfriendlytick@caringtogether.org for more information.

Young Carer School Support sessions

Caring Together have organised a series of support sessions for schools throughout the autumn term to help prepare for the addition of young carers to the census and improve the identification and support for young carers in your school.

To book spaces on any of the below sessions visit

www.caringtogether.org/youngcarerschallenge

These virtual sessions will provide an introduction to the Carer Friendly Tick Award – Education and are also an opportunity for schools to ask any questions about improving awareness, identification and support for young carers in your school.

Young Carer school support sessions (all on Zoom)

Thursday 17 November	3.30pm-4.30pm
Monday 12 December	3.30pm-4.30pm

Young Carer Awareness-raising sessions for education professionals

In addition to the dates below, Caring Together can arrange in-person or virtual awareness-raising sessions for entire schools and multi-academy trusts.

Young Carer awareness-raising sessions for school staff

EYFS/ Primary (all on Zoom)

Monday 14 November	3.30pm-4.30pm
Thursday 8 December	3.30pm-4.30pm

Secondary/Post-16 (all on Zoom)

Wednesday 16 November	3.30pm-4.30pm
Thursday 15 December	3.30pm-4.30pm

Bitesize training

Caring Together are also running two bite-size training sessions on specific topics to support schools. Visit

www.caringtogether.org/youngcarerschallenge or contact carerfriendlytick@caringtogether.org for the latest dates

- **The role of a young carers champion in schools**
- **Creating a young carers agreement**

Top tips for schools

Identification

- Using a tool such as the [Multi-dimensional Activity of Caring Activities \(MACA-18\) assessment](#), a short, standardised questionnaire, with all pupils can help to identify potential young carers. Repeating the exercise annually may help identify new young carers.
- There are some groups of young carers where the MACA-18 may not as easily identify them, and so there are particular questions in the MACA-18 which by paying particular attention to the scores may help you identify potential young carers:
Children of parents with mental illness – Questions 13, 14 and 15
Siblings – Questions 16,17 and 18.
- Increasing conversations around topics such as mental illness, addiction and disability, alongside visible support in school for young carers will increase the chances of young carers coming forward for support.
- Awareness-raising activities with pupils can also help increase self-identification and identification of young carers by their friends.
- Review any Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection cases you have open where parental mental illness or alcohol/drug addiction are relevant.

Tip: Consider adding a question to your school enrolment paperwork which asks if there is a parent(s), siblings or family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health conditions. Make clear **why** you're asking for the information.

Signs that a pupil may be a young carer

(Taken from 'Supporting Young Carers in Schools: A Toolkit for Initial Teacher Education Providers'; Carers Trust, The Children's Society)

The following checklist of signs that a child or young person may be a young carer may of course also be indicators of many other issues. However, knowing these signs can help all school staff to build up a picture of a pupil and ask the right questions to reveal that a pupil is a young carer.

Is the pupil...	Y/N
Often late or missing days or weeks off school for no reason?	
Often tired, anxious or withdrawn?	
Having problems socially or with making friends?	
Presenting as very mature for their age?	
A victim of bullying?	
Depressed?	
Finding it difficult to concentrate on their work?	
Having difficulty in joining in extracurricular activities or unable to attend school trips?	
Isolated?	
Not handing in their homework/coursework on time, or completing it late and to a low standard?	
Anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative?	
Displaying behavioural problems?	
Having physical problems such as back pain (perhaps from heavy lifting)?	
Secretive about home life?	
Showing signs of physical neglect or poor diet, for example hungry, thin or lacking clean uniform?	
Listed as a Child in Need, subject to a Child Protection plan, or Looked-after Child Plan where parental ill health or addiction issues are involved?	
A sibling of a pupil at your school who is registered with disabilities or ongoing health problems, including mental ill health?	
Are the parents/another family member	Y/N
Disabled or do they have an illness or addiction problem?	
Difficult to engage with?	
Not attending parent's evenings?	
Not communicating with school?	
On low incomes, and unable to afford school-related expenses? This may be because of disability related unemployment.	

Tip: Make sure staff are not just looking for young carers where there are visible, physical support needs. Otherwise you risk missing young carers of:

- **Parents who are struggling with mental illness**
- **Siblings with a learning disability**
- **Family members who have developed support needs because of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and other forms of abuse/violence.**

Identifying a young carers champion

- Your young carers champion doesn't have to be a teacher – the best champions are those who have a real desire to support young carers, are approachable and have the time to support
- Why not ask your young carers who they think might make a good champion?
- Some schools have more than one champion, just in case of absence and to help ensure support is available as number of young carers identified increases
- If your champion is not in a position to make school-wide decisions, then you need to have a way for them to escalate things to senior leaders.
- Some schools have an operational champion and a senior leadership team champion – one providing the main support to the young carers, and the other ensuring the school-wide systems and processes are in place, and that data is being reviewed at a senior level.
- Ensure young carers know how/when they can contact your champion.

Creating a young carers' policy with your young carers

If you don't have (m)any young carers identified, take a look at the Carer Friendly Tick Award - Education toolkit which contains some examples from local schools who developed them with their young carers.

If you also contact Caring Together then some of their Norfolk Young Carers Forum members might be willing to help you – the policy can then be reviewed once you identify more young carers.

Tip: Start by asking the young people what causes them the most difficulty at school as young carers, or what would make balancing schools and caring easier.

Young carers often raise issues such as:

- Not being able to contact home to check on the person they care for, or the person they care for not being able to get key information to them.
- Not having a quiet space at home to concentrate on homework/revision.
- Needing to be able to have a 'time-out' if things get too much.
- Getting homework in on time when things are really difficult at home
- Sibling carers often say how they find it difficult when they are relied upon during school hours to provide care to their brother or sister. This obviously impinges on their own learning and quality of education.

Creating and implementing your young carers' policy

Once you've identified the issues, you can then identify practical solutions/agree a level of flexibility which can tackle some of the issues.

Real-life example: Your school has a strict 'no-phones' policy due to issues with cyber-bullying. Megan's mum has been really unwell and is awaiting a call with important test results. Megan keeps going to the toilets to check her phone, text mum and once mum has her results, call her from the cubicle to discuss them.

Alternative solution: Your school retains its 'no-phones' policy but your young carers policy means that Megan is permitted to go to her Head of Year's Office at break and lunch to check if mum has texted her and give her mum a call in privacy. Mum is also given a contact number and email address for the young carers champion, so can get a message to Megan through the champion.

Some schools create a two-way agreement – what young carers can expect from the school and what the school can expect from their young carers.

The most important point is to make sure your policy works for your young carers and your school – young carers say there is nothing worse than having a policy which isn't adhered to.

In addition to support which is available for all young carers, the best young carers' policies enable a person-centred approach to support – acknowledging that what works for one young carer won't help another.

Ensure your policy is regularly reviewed like other school policies and that staff, pupils and families are aware of it.

Using your systems to support young carers

Having comprehensive systems and processes in place in relation to your young carers can help identify any early warning signs.

- Ensure you have a flag on your pupil management system for young carers and that staff routinely use it.
- Use this flag to review attendance and attainment for young carers alongside other vulnerable groups of pupils
- Review your arrangements for transitions support to ensure they meet the needs of young carers – have your young carers been able to visit schools/colleges? Do they know what support is available at their next setting? Does the new setting know what support you have provided?

Tip: Caring Together have produced a Year 6 Young Carers transitions booklet which is freely available for schools to use.

Any questions

You can find out more about the Young Carer Challenge and record who your young carer champion is at caringtogether.org/youngcarerchallenge

For Young Carers Action Day 2023 (Wednesday 15 March 2023), Caring Together will publish an updated list of the schools with young carer champions.

If you have any further questions about supporting young carers in your school, contact carefriendly@caringtogether.org

To find out about support available for young carers through the Young Carers Matter Norfolk partnership, visit <http://www.youngcarersmatternorfolk.org>