

The Right to Dream

Behind every young carer is a child
with dreams for their future.

SEEN, SUPPORTED, SUCCEED



#YoungCarersRightToDream

Supporting Young Carers in
Derbyshire Schools

A Guidance Toolkit for Education Settings

www.derbyshirecarers.co.uk

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YOUNG CARERS ARE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 5–17.5 YEARS WHO PROVIDE CARE, ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR ONE OR MORE FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE DISABILITIES, LONG-TERM ILLNESSES, MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES OR WHO MISUSE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.

YOUNG CARERS

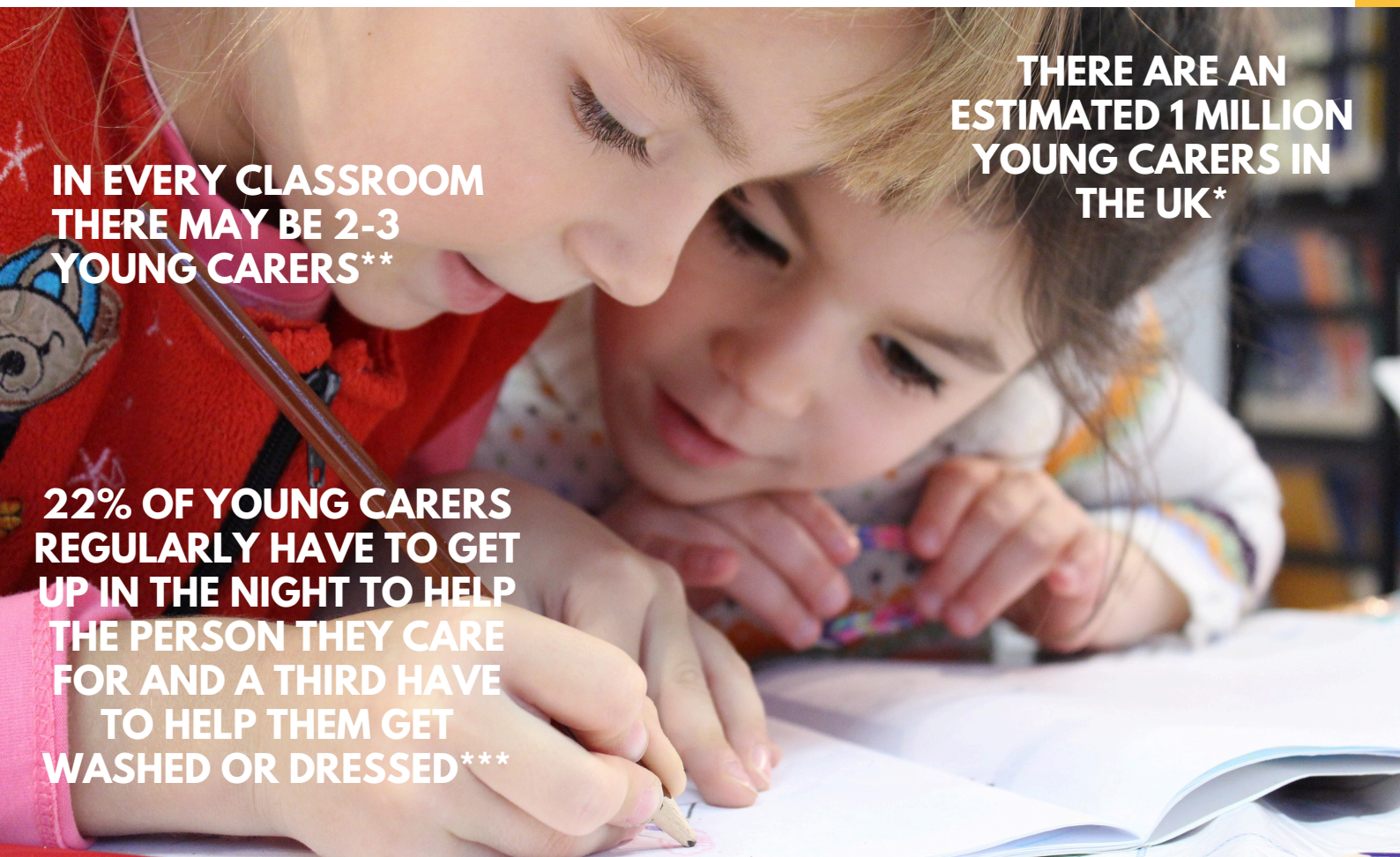
Every day in schools across the country there are children helping care for someone at home. They might help a parent who is unwell, support a sibling with additional needs, or take on responsibilities that many children their age do not have.

These children are **young carers**.

Being a young carer can be something to feel proud of. But sometimes it can also make school harder - worrying about home, feeling tired, or missing out on things other children can do.

School's play an important role in recognising young carers and making sure they receive the understanding and support they need to succeed.

Because every child has the right to dream about their future.



**IN EVERY CLASSROOM
THERE MAY BE 2-3
YOUNG CARERS****

**THERE ARE AN
ESTIMATED 1 MILLION
YOUNG CARERS IN
THE UK***

**22% OF YOUNG CARERS
REGULARLY HAVE TO GET
UP IN THE NIGHT TO HELP
THE PERSON THEY CARE
FOR AND A THIRD HAVE
TO HELP THEM GET
WASHED OR DRESSED*****

* Carers Trust (2025) Young carers and the school census / policy briefings on prevalence of young carers. London: Carers Trust.

** Barnardo's (2025) Young carers: who they are and how they are impacted. Barking: Barnardo's.

*** Carers Trust (2026) Young carers statistics reported in sector briefings highlighting caring responsibilities including night-time care and personal care support.

OUR VISION

Across our schools, there are children balancing learning with caring responsibilities at home. The **Right to Dream** campaign recognises that young carers deserve the same opportunities as every other child - the opportunity to learn, achieve, and imagine their future.

By recognising young carers early and removing barriers to learning, schools can play a vital role in ensuring no child's education is limited by their caring role.

This toolkit has been developed to support schools and education settings across Derbyshire in identifying, understanding, and effectively supporting young carers. It is intended for use by all school staff, including senior leaders, teaching staff, pastoral teams, safeguarding leads, SEND staff, governors and support staff.

This guidance focuses on support for young carers provided by Derbyshire Carers Association as part of the Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service. The guidance is practical, suitable, and can be adjusted to fit different education environments.

Our vision is that every young carer is seen, supported, and able to succeed. Across our communities, many children quietly balance school with caring responsibilities at home, often without recognition or support.

Through our Right to Dream campaign, we aim to shine a light on young carers, strengthen understanding within schools, and ensure that no child's future is limited by the responsibilities they carry.

When young carers are recognised and supported, barriers to learning can be reduced and every child can feel confident in their right to dream about their future.



INTRODUCTION

Schools are uniquely positioned to recognise and support children and young people with caring responsibilities at home. For many young carers, school is the one consistent space outside the family where they can feel safe, listened to and supported. However, caring responsibilities are often hidden, and without a clear, shared understanding across the school, young carers can struggle to have their needs recognised.

This toolkit aims to help schools create an environment where young carers are identified early, supported sensitively and enabled to achieve their full potential.

Why this matters

Many young carers do not recognise themselves as carers and may never actively ask for help. A clear, visible and supportive school approach helps young carers feel understood and reduces the risk that caring responsibilities negatively affect education, wellbeing and safeguarding.

Case Study

Alex is in Year 3 and enjoys school. At home, he helps his dad who has a long-term health condition - reminding him about medication, helping with small jobs around the house, and looking after his younger brother after school. Alex simply describes this as 'helping out at home' and has never thought of himself as a young carer, so he has never asked for help.

**1 IN 8 YOUNG
CARERS ARE
AGED UNDER 8***



When Alex's school introduced a young carers awareness assembly and a clear way for pupils to talk to staff, he quietly shared a little about home life. With understanding and small adjustments in place, Alex felt reassured that school knew about his situation.

His experience shows how many young carers may never actively seek help - but a clear, visible and supportive school approach can help them feel understood and reduce the risk that caring responsibilities begin to affect education, well-being or safeguarding.

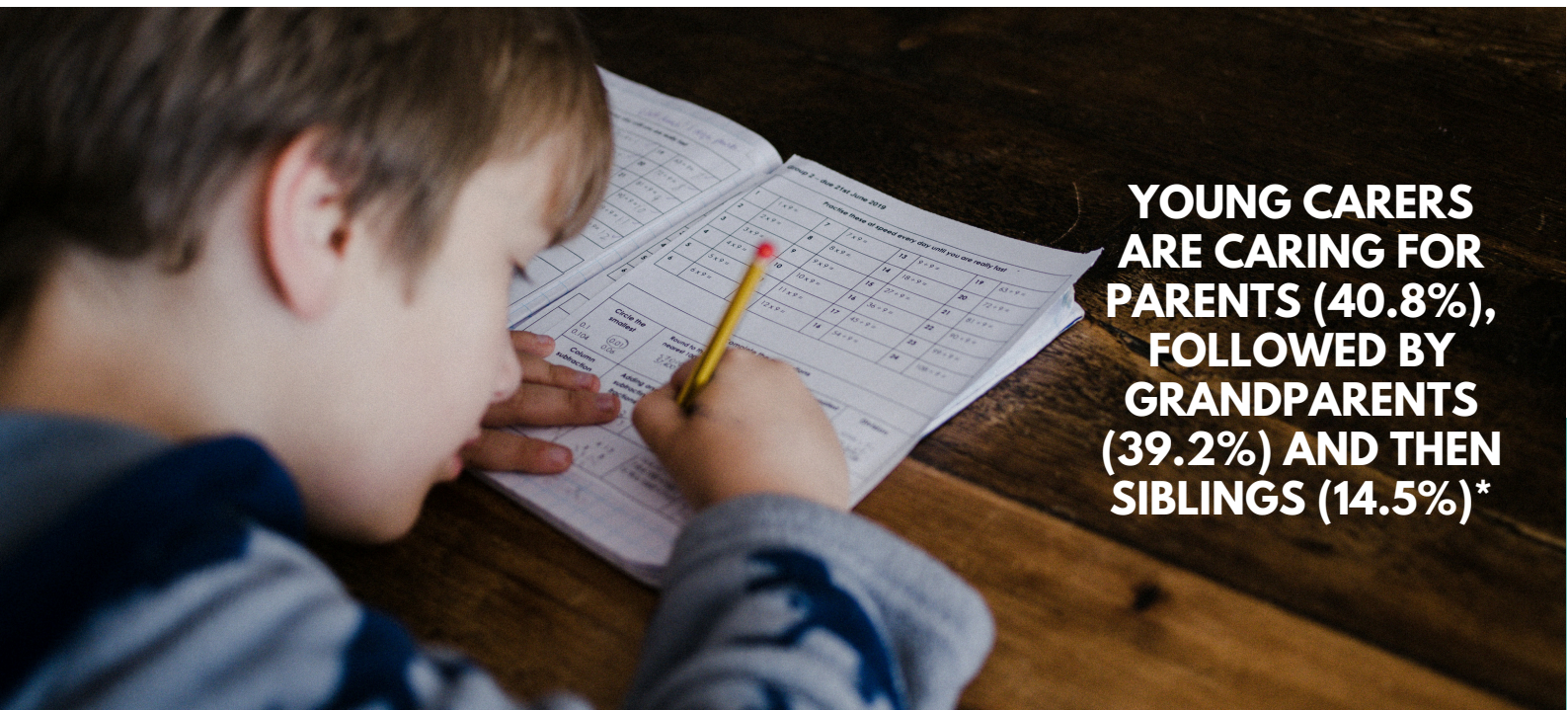
* Carers Trust (2017) Young Carers in Schools: Key findings from the national programme. London: Carers Trust.

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG CARERS

A young carer is a child or young person aged 5–17.5 years who helps to look after someone at home who has a disability, long-term illness, mental health condition, learning disability, or additional support needs. This is often a parent, sibling, or close family member.

Caring roles can vary widely. Some young carers help with everyday household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, or shopping. Others may support with personal care, medication, communication with professionals, emotional reassurance, or caring for younger siblings. For some children this support may be occasional, while for others it can be a significant and regular responsibility.

Many young carers do not recognise themselves as carers and may see their role simply as part of family life. “I just help” is one of the most common ways children describe what they do at home. Because of this, many young carers remain hidden and may not realise that the support they provide is different from the responsibilities of many other children their age.



**YOUNG CARERS
ARE CARING FOR
PARENTS (40.8%),
FOLLOWED BY
GRANDPARENTS
(39.2%) AND THEN
SIBLINGS (14.5%)***

Young carers are not all the same

Young carers come from all backgrounds, cultures and family structures. Some care for a short period of time; others care for many years. Some have very visible responsibilities, while others provide emotional support that may not be immediately apparent.

* Carers Trust (2024) Policy briefing: Young carers. London: Carers Trust.

THE IMPACT OF CARING ON EDUCATION

Caring responsibilities can affect many aspects of a young person's school life. Young carers may arrive late or miss school because of home responsibilities, feel tired due to disrupted sleep, or struggle to complete homework due to time constraints.

Emotionally, young carers may experience stress, anxiety or worry about the person they care for. They may appear withdrawn, distracted or more mature than their peers. However, caring responsibilities are not always visible, and many young carers may appear to be coping well, meaning their situation can easily go unrecognised.

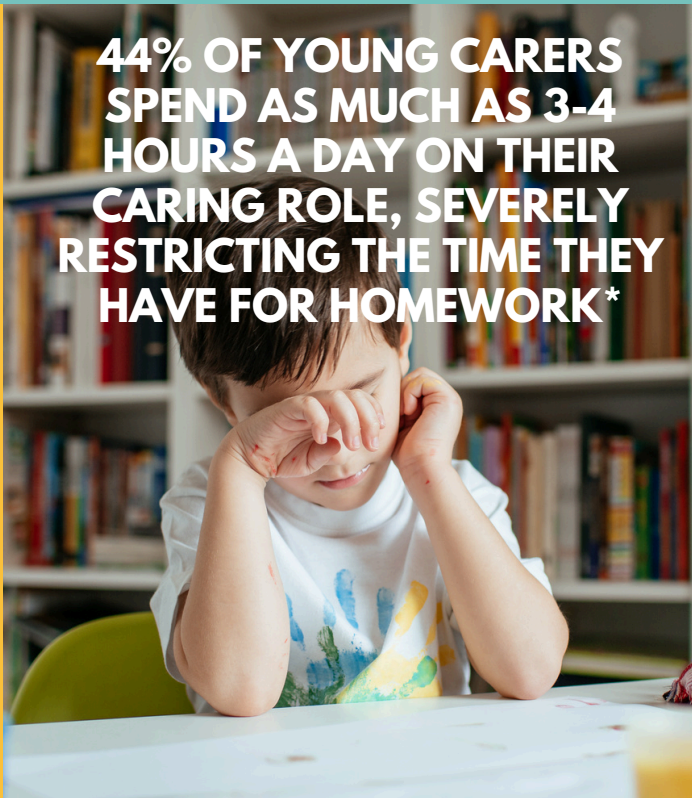
With understanding and appropriate support, young carers often demonstrate resilience, empathy and determination. Schools play a key role in removing barriers so these strengths can flourish.

49% of young carers achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of primary school (Key Stage 2), compared to 61% of students not identified as young carers

45% of young carers achieved 5 GCSEs including English and Maths, compared with 60% of non-young carers.

Young carers are 60% less likely to achieve three or more A-levels or equivalent.

Young adults who were young carers are around 38% less likely to obtain a university degree than those without caring responsibilities



44% OF YOUNG CARERS SPEND AS MUCH AS 3-4 HOURS A DAY ON THEIR CARING ROLE, SEVERELY RESTRICTING THE TIME THEY HAVE FOR HOMEWORK*

What schools may notice

Young carers may appear tired, anxious or distracted. They may struggle with homework, arrive late or miss school, or avoid trips and extracurricular activities. These behaviours are often responses to responsibility, not a lack of motivation.

* Carers Trust (2025) Many young carers may be missing out on schoolwork, friends and hobbies as they look after loved ones, Opinium study shows. London: Carers Trust, 2 October.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

Schools in Derbyshire have a clear responsibility to identify young carers and respond in ways that promote inclusion, wellbeing, and educational achievement. Through their safeguarding duties and under the Children and Families Act 2014, young carers have the right to be identified and to have their needs considered.

The Care Act 2014 also recognises the importance of identifying young carers where caring responsibilities may affect a child's wellbeing, development, or opportunities. Statutory safeguarding guidance such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) highlights the need for staff to recognise when children may require additional support, including early help, particularly where caring responsibilities begin to impact wellbeing, attendance, or engagement in learning.



36% OF YOUNG CARERS SAID CARING HAD LEFT THEM TIRED OR WORN OUT AT SCHOOL*

Ofsted expects schools to understand their vulnerable groups, recognise barriers to learning, and demonstrate how they support pupils' personal development and wellbeing, including those with caring responsibilities.

Considering the needs of young carers in practice means recognising how caring responsibilities may affect their school experience and putting supportive, proportionate measures in place to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. This might include access to a trusted member of staff, flexibility around homework or deadlines during periods of increased responsibility at home, access to a quiet or supportive space when needed, and effective communication with families and relevant services.

It also involves creating a school culture where young carers are understood, where staff recognise the possible signs, and where pupils feel safe to share their circumstances without stigma.

Supporting young carers does not mean lowering expectations. Instead, it means recognising the additional pressures they may face and making reasonable adjustments so they can fully engage with education and achieve their potential.

* The Children's Society (2013) Hidden from View: The experiences of young carers in England. London: The Children's Society.

IDENTIFYING YOUNG CARERS

Young carers are often hidden, and identification requires awareness and sensitivity. There is no single indicator that a pupil is a young carer. Still, signs may include persistent lateness or absence, tiredness, difficulties with homework, anxiety about home, or reluctance to attend trips and activities.

Staff should feel confident asking gentle, non-judgemental questions in private settings and know how to share concerns appropriately within the school. Identification should focus on understanding the pupil's experience rather than labelling them.

Young people and families do not always recognise or feel comfortable with the term 'young carer'. Many children simply see themselves as helping or supporting someone they love, and may not identify their role as caring. Families can also find the term unfamiliar or worry that the label may reflect negatively on them. For this reason, schools may find it more helpful to start conversations by talking about 'helping at home' or 'supporting someone in the family,' creating a safe and understanding environment where pupils and families feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

Gentle, open questions can help pupils share their experiences in a way that feels safe and natural. Many young carers do not recognise themselves as carers, so conversations should focus on everyday life rather than labels.

Sometimes young carers remain hidden simply because no one has asked them about life at home.

For example:

- *Who lives at home with you?*
- *Do you help anyone at home because they are unwell, disabled, or need extra support?*
- *What sorts of things do you help with at home?*
- *Do you ever worry about someone at home while you're at school?*

These conversations should take place sensitively and at appropriate times. Pupils should never feel pressured to share more than they are comfortable with. Often, simply asking and listening can be the first step in helping a young carer feel seen and supported.



IDENTIFYING YOUNG CARERS CASE STUDY

Billy is 12 years old, he is the oldest of 3 children and lives with Mum. Dad is alcohol dependent. Mum has Cervical cancer and is undergoing treatment. There is a history of Domestic Abuse.

At school, on the occasions he attends, Billy often is late to school after ensuring his siblings get to their school, he is tired in class and repeatedly disruptive in lessons too. He has received numerous suspensions and attendance is 18%.

Police have been involved due to relationship breakdowns within the extended family resulting in Dad being arrested with assault on Maternal Grandad. Following on from this, school became aware through the Public Protection Notification (PPN) and it was understood that Billy was disruptive in class so he could go home and spend time with his Mum as he was aware her cancer was life limiting.

Space4U supported Billy, Social Care became involved following the PPN and the children were worked under a Child In Need plan, as Mum was on end of life care. Dad was not charged due to Mum being on end of life. School had been contacting the family based on Billy's low attendance but hadn't been aware of the wider context of the family dynamics.



Dad had been fearful about sharing with school, as he was mistrustful that his alcohol dependency would come to light and the children would be removed.

Following on from this, Billy's attendance increased to 81%. He was allowed to come in after tutor time, so he could take siblings to school and go straight to lessons. Billy had a mentor in school whom he could talk to, he had a time out pass to go and phone home to see how Mum was. Billy was referred to Young Carers for his caring role for both parents and supported in school. Direct work was completed to gain his views, wishes and feelings to capture his voice to help direct his targeted and timely support.

Consider what the behaviour of pupils is telling you. Take time to understand their lived experience. Get the child's voice to help understand and drive the plan of support.

A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

A whole-school approach ensures that responsibility for supporting young carers does not rest with any single individual. Most schools benefit from appointing a **Young Carer Champion** to coordinate support, serve as a point of contact, and liaise with Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service. Clear procedures, staff awareness, and visible commitment help create a culture in which young carers feel safe seeking support. Including young carers within relevant school policies and the school website reinforces this message.

What a young carer-friendly school looks like

A young carer-friendly school is one where young carers are seen, supported and able to succeed. Schools actively work to identify pupils who may have caring responsibilities and ensure staff understand the signs that a child may be helping to care for someone at home. They provide a supportive environment where young carers have a trusted member of staff, opportunities to talk and reasonable flexibility around school expectations when needed. Schools also raise awareness across the whole community, work in partnership with families and local services, and make sure young carers remain included in learning, friendships and school life so that can achieve and thrive alongside their peers.



**42% OF YOUNG CARERS
REPORT FEELING
STRESSED, AND 33% FEEL
LONELY, WHICH HINDERS
ACADEMIC FOCUS***

* Carers Trust (2022) Caring without limits: The impact of caring on young people's mental health and wellbeing. London: Carers Trust.

SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS IN SCHOOL

Support should be flexible, proportionate and shaped by the young person's voice. Small, practical adjustments can have a significant impact, such as flexible deadlines, understanding around punctuality linked to caring responsibilities, access to a quiet space, or regular check-ins with a trusted adult.

Schools may also consider offering support that helps reduce pressure, maintain wellbeing and protect time for learning and friendships. This might include support with organisation and homework, opportunities to complete work during the school day, access to pastoral support, or flexibility around participation in clubs, trips or enrichment activities where caring responsibilities create barriers.

Some schools provide drop-in spaces, lunchtime support groups or peer connection opportunities so young carers do not feel alone. Simple adjustments to communication with families, or sensitive awareness among staff, can also help young carers feel understood without needing to repeatedly explain their circumstances.

Support should always aim to enable young carers to achieve, participate and look ahead to the future they want, ensuring caring responsibilities do not limit their opportunities.



Case study: Feeling listened to

Sophie, Year 5

Sophie was often quiet in class and appeared tired. After gentle conversations, the staff learned she was helping to care for an older sibling with additional needs. A simple support plan was implemented, including regular check-ins with a teaching assistant and flexibility on homework. Sophie said school felt like “a place where I don't have to worry so much”, and her confidence in class increased.


Support plans should be reviewed regularly, recognising that caring situations can change. Some young carers benefit from peer support or group activities, while others prefer low-key one-to-one support.

* Carers Trust (2025) Young carers and the school census. London: Carers Trust.

A NAMED LEAD FOR YOUNG CARERS

An important step in building a young carer-aware school is having a named member of staff who takes a lead for young carers. This role provides a clear point of contact for pupils, families and staff who may need advice or support. The Young Carer Lead helps ensure that young carers remain visible within the school community, encourages staff awareness, and helps coordinate support where it may be helpful. They may also link with local young carers services or other organisations so that families know what support is available beyond school.

Having a designated lead helps ensure that support for young carers is consistent and embedded within the school's wider wellbeing and safeguarding approach. In this way, schools can help ensure that young carers are seen, supported, and able to succeed in their education.



ALMOST HALF OF YOUNG CARERS SPEND LESS THAN AN HOUR EACH DAY TO DO HOMEWORK (57%), SEE FRIENDS (49%) OR TAKE PART IN HOBBIES (50%)*

What might a Young Carer Lead do in practice?

The Young Carer Lead helps coordinate a whole-school approach to recognising and supporting young carers. While responsibility for supporting pupils sits across the staff team, the lead helps ensure that young carers remain visible and that support is consistent. This may include:

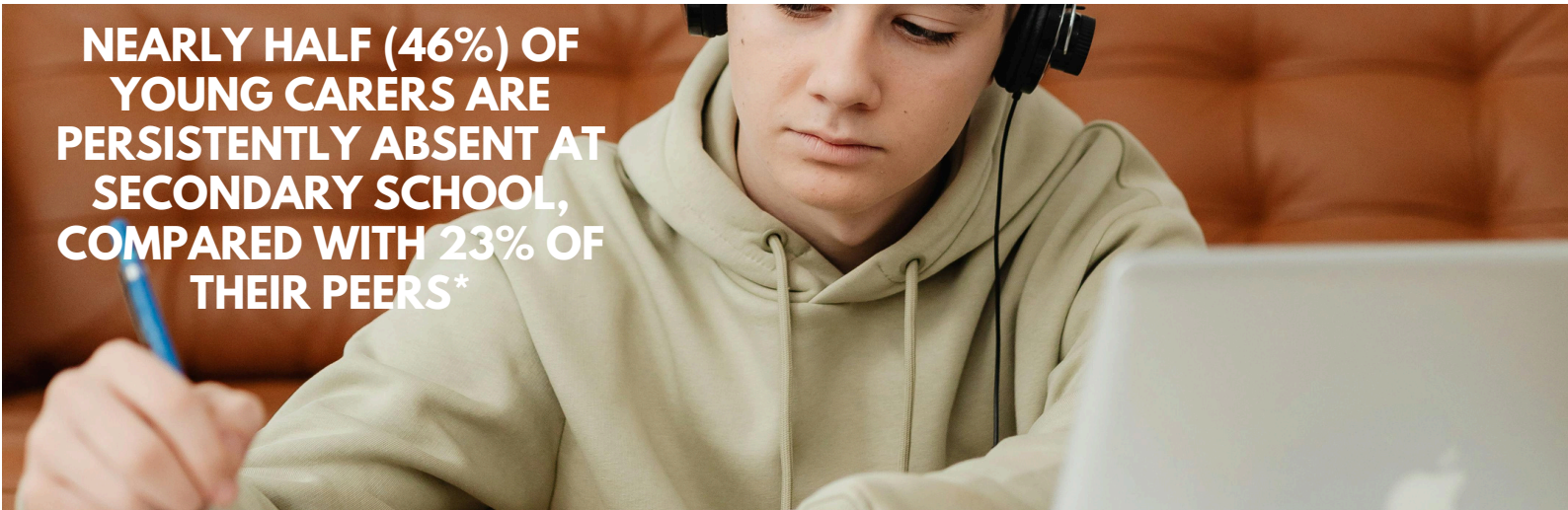
- Raising awareness so staff understand who young carers are and how caring responsibilities may affect pupils.
- Supporting identification, encouraging staff to recognise possible signs and record this appropriately.
- Coordinating support within existing pastoral, safeguarding and wellbeing systems.
- Providing a trusted contact for pupils who may wish to talk.
- Working with families and local services to ensure support is joined up.

The Young Carer Lead does not hold sole responsibility for supporting young carers, but helps ensure that awareness and support are embedded across the whole school community.

* Carers Trust (2025) Many young carers may be missing out on schoolwork, friends and hobbies as they look after loved ones, Opinium study shows. London: Carers Trust, 2 October.

ATTENDANCE, ATTAINMENT AND ENRICHMENT

Young carers often experience additional pressures that can affect attendance, attainment, and participation in school life. Caring responsibilities, disrupted routines, and concern for family members can lead to increased absence or lateness and difficulties concentrating in class. Over time, missed learning and reduced engagement can contribute to an attainment gap, with some young carers less likely to reach expected academic milestones compared with their peers. Caring roles can also limit opportunities to take part in clubs, school trips, and after-school activities, reducing access to the enrichment experiences that support confidence, friendships, and wider development. With early identification and supportive school approaches, many of these barriers can be reduced, helping young carers to fully participate and achieve in education.



NEARLY HALF (46%) OF YOUNG CARERS ARE PERSISTENTLY ABSENT AT SECONDARY SCHOOL, COMPARED WITH 23% OF THEIR PEERS*

Case study: Improving attendance through understanding

Amir, Year 8

Amir's attendance had dropped, and he was frequently late. Initially, this was viewed as disengagement. A conversation with a trusted member of staff revealed that Amir was helping his mother each morning due to her mobility difficulties and often stayed home when she was unwell. The school worked with Amir to agree flexible responses to lateness, provided access to the breakfast club, and referred the family (with consent) to the Derbyshire Young Carers Service. Amir's attendance improved, and he reported feeling less anxious about getting into trouble. Attendance and attainment should be monitored with an understanding of the context of caring. When caring affects attendance, schools should collaborate with families and other services to identify solutions rather than rely on sanctions.

* Carers Trust (2022) Caring without limits: The impact of caring on young people's education and wellbeing. London: Carers Trust.

DERBYSHIRE ALL AGE CARERS SUPPORT SERVICE

Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service delivers the Derbyshire Young Carers Service and provides specialist support to young carers and their families across the county. The service offers assessments of caring roles, one-to-one emotional and practical support, support within schools, social activities, groups and workshops, and guidance to help families access wider services.

Referrals can be made by schools, other professionals, parents or family members, and young people themselves. Referrals are completed through the online referral form on the Derbyshire Carers website, and parental consent is required for young people under 18. Both the young carer and the person they care for must live in Derbyshire in order to access the service. Encouraging families and young people to self-refer can be empowering and can help them access support at a time that feels right for them.



It is important to recognise that not every young carer needs to be referred for a formal assessment or specialist intervention. With understanding, flexibility and the right support in place at school, many young carers are able to engage fully in education and succeed alongside their peers.

EDUCATION LIAISON

Supporting young carers is not about adding another initiative – it is about knowing pupils well, removing barriers, and creating inclusive school communities where every child can access education and achieve.

Schools are not expected to do this alone. The Education Liaison at Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service works alongside schools to help develop confidence in identifying and supporting young carers, using the Young Carers Toolkit and the opportunity to work towards the Young Carers in Schools Award.

Support available to schools may include:

- CPD and awareness sessions for staff to build understanding of young carers and their experiences
- Support with assemblies and awareness activities to help pupils understand young carers and reduce stigma
- Guidance on developing policies and school procedures that recognise and support young carers
- Practical tools to support identification and recording within school systems
- Advice and partnership working with families and specialist services



SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS IS BUILT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE WORKING, SHARED LEARNING, AND ONGOING SUPPORT

DERBYSHIRE YOUNG CARERS IN SCHOOL QUALITY MARK

The Derbyshire Young Carers in Schools Quality Mark supports schools to strengthen their approach to identifying and supporting young carers through a structured yet supportive process. The Quality Mark recognises the work schools are already doing well, while providing practical guidance, training and resources to help embed good practice across the whole school community.

Working towards the Quality Mark helps schools build staff confidence, develop clear systems for identifying young carers, and create an environment where pupils with caring responsibilities feel understood and supported. It also provides schools with a clear framework to demonstrate their commitment to inclusion, safeguarding, attendance, wellbeing and achievement.

For school leaders and governors, the Quality Mark can also provide meaningful evidence of how the school is supporting vulnerable pupils and removing barriers to learning, supporting conversations around pupil wellbeing, equality and personal development within the wider school improvement agenda.

Achieving the Quality Mark is a positive recognition of a school's commitment to supporting all pupils and removing barriers to learning. It highlights the steps a school has taken to ensure young carers are recognised and supported, and that they have every opportunity to participate fully in school life.

Above all, the Quality Mark reflects a school's dedication to ensuring that young carers are seen, supported and able to succeed.

63% OF SCHOOLS REPORTED A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUNG CARERS' ACHIEVEMENT AFTER IMPROVING IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT PROCESS IN THE SCHOOL*

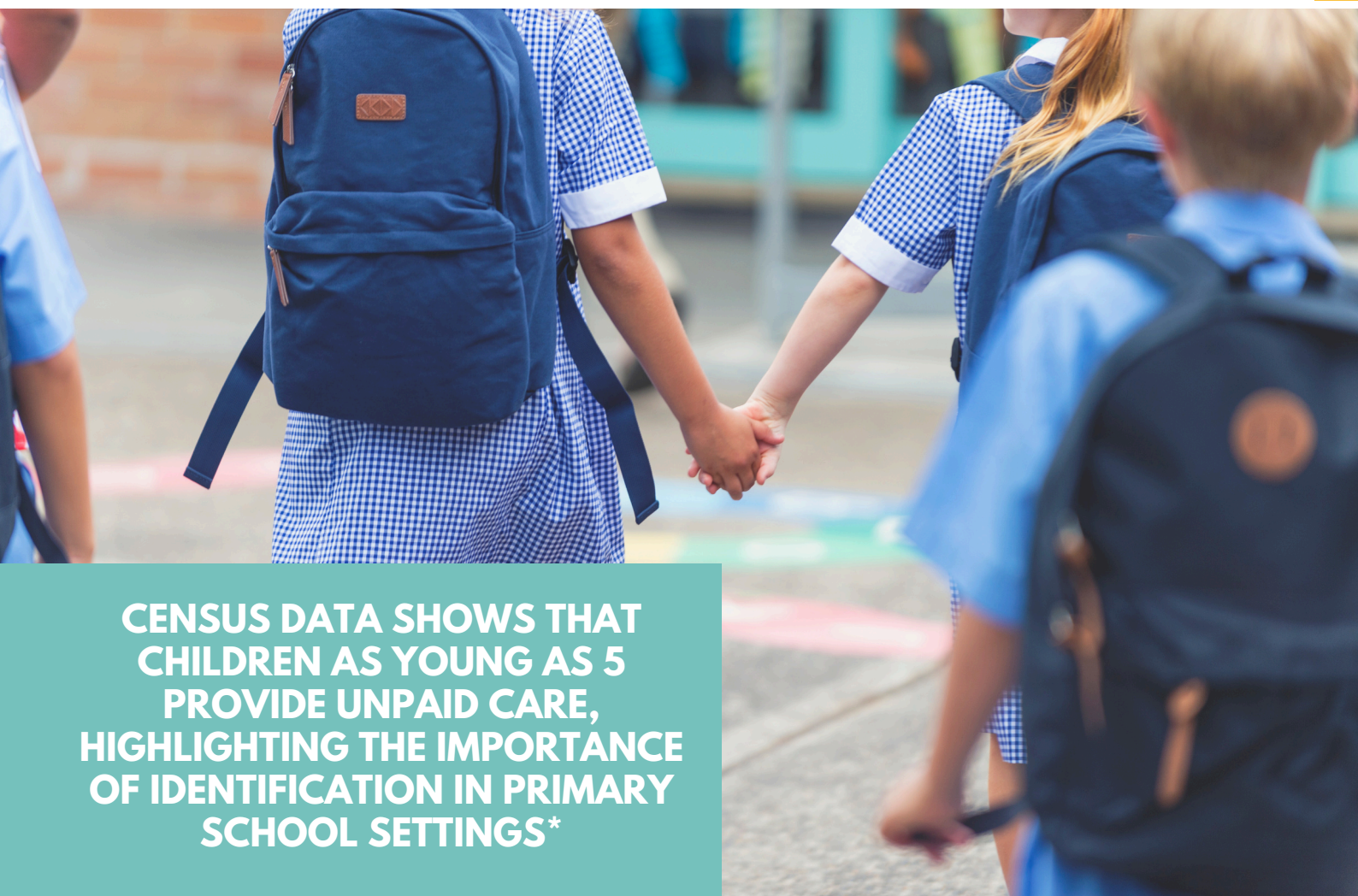


* Carers Trust and The Children's Society (2016) Young Carers in Schools: Impact report. London: Carers Trust and The Children's Society.

STARTING SCHOOL AS A YOUNG CARER

Some children begin school already living with caring responsibilities at home. Even at five years old, they may be helping to support a parent, sibling, or family member, often seeing this simply as part of everyday life rather than recognising themselves as carers. For these children, school may be the first place where their circumstances are noticed and understood.

Having clear identification processes from the point of entry into school can make a significant difference. By recognising young carers early, recording this on school systems, and ensuring there is a named member of staff and supportive policies in place, schools can better understand a child's circumstances and respond proactively. Early identification helps ensure even the youngest carers feel seen, supported, and able to thrive alongside their peers.



CENSUS DATA SHOWS THAT CHILDREN AS YOUNG AS 5 PROVIDE UNPAID CARE, HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFICATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL SETTINGS*

* Office for National Statistics (2023) Unpaid care by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Newport: ONS.

TRANSITION TO YOUNG ADULT CARER SUPPORT

For young carers, growing up can mean balancing their own future aspirations with ongoing responsibilities at home. As they approach adulthood, it is important that they are supported to think about their future education, employment, independence, and wellbeing, alongside their caring responsibilities.

For many young carers, this transition can be a particularly challenging time. Changes in education, services, and expectations may increase feelings of anxiety or uncertainty, especially if familiar support networks change or come to an end. Without clear guidance, young carers may feel unsure about what support they are entitled to or how to access help as they move into adulthood.

In Derbyshire, young people approaching adulthood can access support through the Derbyshire Carers Association Young Adult Carers service, part of the Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service, which supports young adult carers aged approximately 17½ to 25.

This service can offer:

- One-to-one support from a dedicated Young Adult Carer worker
- Opportunities to access a Carer's Assessment to understand the young person's needs
- Guidance around education, training, employment, and university
- Peer support groups and activities to reduce isolation
- Emotional wellbeing support and someone to talk to
- Advice on emergency planning and navigating adult services
- Advocacy with colleges, universities, or employers so that caring responsibilities are understood.



**20% OF YOUNG
ADULT CARERS ARE
NEET OR AT RISK***

* Learning and Work Institute (2023) Young adult carers and the 21-hour rule policy briefing. London: Learning and Work Institute.

TRANSITION - YOUNG ADULT CARER CASE STUDY

Schools can play an important role in helping older young carers understand their rights and the support available to them as they approach adulthood, ensuring they are aware of local services and feel supported to plan for their future while balancing their caring role.

Supporting young carers through this transition can help ensure their education, aspirations, and future opportunities are not limited by their caring responsibilities.



Case Study

Liam-aged 17.5

Liam was worried that he wouldn't be able to follow his dream to go to University to study Geology. He felt the pressure to stay at home and carry on with his caring role for his Mum. Through the support of his school and Young Adult Carers support worker, he was supported to apply to universities, apply for bursaries and self-identify as a Young Carer on his application too. Support would be in place at University for his start in September. Adult Social care were able to increase the support package provided for Mum to allow Liam to move away from home during term time.

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

For some families, the term young carer may feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable. Parents or carers may worry that they are being judged or that accepting support could lead to unwanted involvement from services. It is important to approach these conversations with sensitivity and reassurance.

Being identified as a young carer does not mean that anyone is doing anything wrong. In many families, children naturally want to help the people they care about. Recognising a young carer simply acknowledges the support a child may already be providing and ensures that the right understanding and support can be available if needed.

Key messages when speaking with families, when discussing young carers, it can be helpful to emphasise that:

- Support is about understanding, not judgement.
- Support is for the whole family, helping to reduce pressure and improve wellbeing.
- Young carer support does not mean children will be removed from their family.
- Children should still have time for school, rest, friendships and play.
- Accepting support is a positive step that helps ensure children can thrive.


Helpful ways to explain this

You might say:

"Your child helps because they care about their family. We just want to make sure that helping doesn't become too much for them."

or

"Support isn't about changing your family. It's about making sure you have the right help if you ever need it."



19% OF YOUNG CARERS GIVE FIRST AID, INCLUDING 16% OF THOSE AGED UNDER 11, AND HAVE TO SPEAK TO DOCTORS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS ON BEHALF OF THOSE THEY LOOK AFTER*

*Carers Trust (2026) Hundreds of thousands of young carers' futures at risk as school attainment gap widens. London: Carers Trust, 11 March.

SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS

When families do not want a referral

Some families may not feel ready to accept a referral to a young carers service. This should always be respected. Even without a referral, schools can still play an important role by ensuring the pupil is understood and supported within the school environment.

This might include keeping communication open with the family, offering pastoral support in school, and ensuring staff are aware of the pupil's circumstances where appropriate. Sometimes, as trust builds and families understand more about the support available, they may choose to access additional support at a later stage.



Caring responsibilities can sometimes mask safeguarding concerns. Schools should consider whether a caring role is excessive or inappropriate for a child's age, or whether a child is being relied upon to keep someone safe.

Any concerns should be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Supporting young carers and safeguarding are closely linked.

Caring and safeguarding

While caring for a family member is not, in itself, a safeguarding concern, schools should consider whether a child's caring role is excessive, inappropriate for their age, or places them at risk of harm.

SUPPORT AND CONTACT

Working Together

If your school would benefit from guidance, training, or support to develop its approach to young carers, we would welcome the opportunity to work with you.

Together, we can ensure young carers are seen, understood, and supported – so that caring responsibilities never limit a child's future, and every young carer has the right to dream about their future.

Contact Dominique Badman, Derbyshire Education Liaison

EMAIL - education@derbyshirecarers.co.uk

or to refer a young carer:

Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service

Website: <https://derbyshirecarers.co.uk>

(use the 'contact us or make a referral option')



**WORKING TOGETHER FOR
YOUNG CARERS.
BECAUSE EVERY YOUNG CARER
HAS THE RIGHT TO DREAM**

FURTHER SUPPORT AND SPECIALIST SERVICES

Kooth

A free, safe and anonymous online platform where young people can access mental health support, self-help resources and live text-based counselling with qualified practitioners.

Website: <https://www.kooth.com>

Shout

A free 24/7 text messaging service offering confidential support for anyone experiencing stress, anxiety, or emotional distress.

Website: <https://giveusashout.org>

Text: SHOUT to 85258

Carers Trust

A national charity that works with local organisations across the UK to provide information, advice and support for unpaid carers, including young carers and their families.

Website: <https://carers.org>

Sidekick

A confidential helpline where young people can text or email trained coaches for support with worries about family life, school, friendships or wellbeing.

Website: <https://sidekick.actionforchildren.org.uk>

Text: 07888 868059

Umbrella (SEND Support Service)

Provides information, advice and peer support for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Website: <https://umbrella.uk.net>

Compass – Changing Lives

Offers early intervention and emotional well-being support for children, young people and families experiencing mental health or well-being challenges.

Website: <https://compass-uk.org>

DIASS (Derbyshire Information Advice and Support Service)

Provides impartial information and advice for children and young people with SEND and their families about education, health and social care support.

Website: <https://derbyshireiass.co.uk>

FURTHER SUPPORT AND SPECIALIST SERVICES, CONT.

NHS Emotional Wellbeing Support

NHS services offer information, advice and support for children and young people experiencing emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties.

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults>

Owell

A digital wellbeing platform designed to help young people develop coping strategies, emotional awareness and resilience through online tools and support.

Website: <https://owell.com>

Neurodivergent Pathways

Provides support, advice and resources for neurodivergent individuals and families, helping them navigate education, health and community services.

Website: <https://neurodivergentpathways.co.uk>

Derby and Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing

Offers information and local resources to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families across Derbyshire.

Website: <https://joinedupcarederbyshire.co.uk>

Grief Encounter

A charity supporting bereaved children and young people through counselling, helplines and specialist programmes following the death of someone close.

Website: <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk>

Derbyshire Family Health Service

Provides health visiting, school nursing and public health services to support the health and development of children and young people.

Website: <https://derbyshirefamilyhealthservice.nhs.uk>

PEGS (Parental Education Growth Support)

A charity supporting parents and carers experiencing child-to-parent abuse or challenging family relationships through advice and specialist support.

Website: <https://pegssupport.com>

NEIGHBOURING YOUNG CARER SERVICES

Nottinghamshire Young Carers Service

Provides support groups, activities and advice for children and young people who help care for someone at home.

Website: <https://www.youngcarersnotts.co.uk>

Leicestershire Young Carers

Offers support, mentoring and activities for young carers across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Website: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/leicester-leicestershire-rutland-young-carers>

South Yorkshire Young Carers

Provides support, information and activities for young carers across South Yorkshire to help them balance caring responsibilities and school life.

Website: <https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk>

Staffordshire Young Carers

Supports young carers through one-to-one support, groups and advice to help improve wellbeing and reduce the impact of caring responsibilities.

Website: <https://www.staffordshireyoungcarers.org>

Lincolnshire Young Carers Service

Provides advice, groups and practical support for young carers across Lincolnshire.

Website: <https://lincolnshireyoungcarers.co.uk>