

Sandwell  
YOUNG  
CAREERS



# TEACHER TOOLKIT TO SUPPORT YOUNG CARERS

Looking after a vulnerable or dependent person is a huge responsibility and can significantly impact the life of young carers. As a teacher you are well positioned to help students who are young carers. You can provide more support in their studies, help them access support or simply be there to listen.

This toolkit highlights the multiple reasons why it is essential to include young carers within training programmes in schools.

It has been designed to help guide you in helping and supporting young carers and getting them the support they need. Young carers wish to be accepted and with our help we can remove the stigma of a caring role. Caring for someone is a huge self-sacrifice and can be a challenging and demanding role. Many are still in the process of learning and maturing, yet providing care can lead to young carers missing out on the life that children should and need to have to build their future and enjoy their life. We will be able to ensure a happy childhood and fulfil their entitled rights to education. A positive whole school ethos where young carers and their families are respected and valued by pupils, staff and the wider school community is crucial to ensure young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support.

## WHO ARE YOUNG CARERS?

Young carers are young people under the age of 18 whose lives may be restricted by their roles and responsibilities of caring. They may care for a parent, sibling or family member who may have one or more of the following:

- A physical or sensory disability
- A learning disability
- An alcohol or substance misuse problems
- Is elderly or infirm
- HIV/AIDs
- Mental health problems

## YOUNG CARERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A young carer will take on additional responsibility for their age. A young carer maybe providing the main caring role or sharing responsibility with another family member.

The caring task a young carer has to deal with can range from:

- **NURSING CARE:** administrating medication and/or injections; changing dressings; assisting with mobility.
- **PERSONAL INTIMATE CARE:** washing; dressing; feeding; helping with toilet requirements.
- **EMOTIONAL CARE:** listening and supporting the cared for through mental health issues.
- **FINANCIAL CARE:** running the household finances; paying the bills.
- **CHILDCARE:** taking responsibility of younger siblings in addition to their own caring roles.

## BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY YOUNG CARERS

Being able to identify, support and signpost young carers can provide a vital benefit to the lives of young carers. This will support young carers to improve their attainment, raise their self-esteem and build their confidence. Where they remain unidentified and without support, young carers may continue to face additional challenges.

Please refer to the identification poster found on the Sandwell Young Carers website at [www.sandwellyc.com](http://www.sandwellyc.com).

## IMPACT OF CARING

Being a young carer can have a severe significant and long lasting impact on a young person. This can include impacts on their physical and emotional health, socialisation and education.

- **Physical Health:** lack of sleep; poor diet; lifting heavy adults.
- **Emotional Health:** lower levels of well-being; stress; tiredness; mental health problems; lack of focus.
- **Socialisation:** isolation from their peers; limited opportunities to socialise or take part in extra-curricular activities.
- **Education:** unable to sustain the same work as their peer; struggling in lessons; struggling to hand work in on time; lower levels of attainment.



Early identification is essential  
for making sure they and their  
families get the support they  
need

## POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

These are things that you can do to provide a positive impact on young carers:

- Provide catch up classes;
- Provide flexible deadlines;
- Involve parents;
- Ensure access to or ability to use a phone during break times;
- Provide detentions at lunch time;
- Being open and accepting;
- Identify a Young Carers Lead whose role it is to:
  - Ensure teachers, pupils and parents understand the roles and responsibilities of young carers;
  - Keep colleagues up to date with young carers support developments;
  - Ensure young carers feedback is collected;
  - Be the main point of contact with local young carers services.

## TRAINING PROGRAMME

Training programs within your school are vital for all members of staff. Ensuring members of staff are able to access training on young carers will benefit not only the staff but the young carers within the setting. This is because:

- Young carers experience particular challenges in their education;
- Young carers may identify to any member of staff;
- Young carers information needs to be handled correctly and in line with the sharing protocol;
- Staff should not discuss a caring role in front of their peers;
- The young carers may care for a family member who faces challenges engaging with the school;
- Many young carers are hidden



## CARERS RIGHT TO AN ASSESSMENT

In April 2014, two new laws, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, came into effect with regards to young carers and their families. Where individuals are working in agencies with social care functions, they have a statutory duty to tell them their right to a Carers (Needs) Assessment should they come into contact with a young carer. Furthermore, such individuals are responsible for referring young carers for an assessment following consent from the parent and / or young person if they are able to consent. These Acts give particular emphasis on an assessment of their needs for support.

The young carer assessment is available for all young carers under the age of 18, regardless of who they care for and how often they provide care.

As young carers have a right to be supported and get the help they need, an assessment will find out if the Local Authority is doing enough to support the young carer to ensure the caring role does not:

- Mean they fall behind at school or college;
- Make their health worse;
- Mean they miss out on time with their friends;
- Make them feel worried, sad or lonely;
- Prevent them from getting or keeping a job;
- Prevent them from wanting to achieve goals for the future.

## PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE INVOLVED

A young carer can ask individuals to be within them when they are being assessed. This might be someone who:

- Will help the young carer speak up;
- Is able to understand words if the young carer is stuck;
- Will support the young carer and minimise their worry.

Examples of people who a young carer may ask are:

- Teachers;
- Doctors;
- Other family members;
- Family friends;
- Support workers.



# SANDWELL YOUNG CARERS



Sandwell Young Carers is a registered charity which aims to identify and support children and young people aged 5-18 years, living in Sandwell, whose health, education and social lives have been affected as a result of caring for a dependent family member. We offer a free service to young carers, professionals supporting young carers and parents with disabilities. We provide positive activities, family events, support packages for young carers and their families as well as raising awareness of young carers within health, education and social care.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the tools and information contained within this toolkit, a variety of additional resources have been produced by Sandwell Young Carers. Awareness raising materials for school staff, pupils and their families. This material can be emailed on request or posted to your school. Our young carers Survival Guide is available on our website to view or download on our website.



[www.sandwellyc.com](http://www.sandwellyc.com)

Sandwell Young Carers

@sandwellyc

## HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL FOR A YOUNG CARER:

Sandwell Young Carer's:



0121 525 8002



0121 525 7667

[www.sandwellyc.com](http://www.sandwellyc.com)



[support@sandwellyc.org.uk](mailto:support@sandwellyc.org.uk)

On Sandwell Young Carers website you are able to access and complete the referral which is sent to the Support Work Team. Once received, we will contact the family and, if eligible, they will receive a membership pack.

**THERE IS NO WAITING LIST!**



