

YOUNG CARERS

For more information on how to access support available for young carers in the area, including how to make a referral please see the **Barnardo's Kirklees Young Carer's Service website** or contact the project on Tel: 01484 426100
Email: kirkleesyongcarers@barnardos.org.uk

Background and Definition

The Children and Families Act 2014 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. Local authorities must offer a Young Carer's Needs Assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care for a family member and requires support. A similar provision was introduced in the Care Act 2014, requiring local authorities to consider the needs of young carers if, during the assessment of an adult carer or adult with care needs, it appears that a child is providing, or intends to provide, care.

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'.

Young carers undertake a wide range of caring roles and responsibilities in the family home including providing emotional support and personal care, undertaking housework and budgeting. The duty on local authorities to identify and assess the support needs of young carers applies regardless of the type of support they are providing.

The Children and Families Act 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.

Local Authority

Local authorities are expected to take 'reasonable steps' to identify children in their area who are young carers. The local authority must carry out an assessment if it appears that the young carer may have needs for support and, if so, should identify what those needs are.

The local authority must carry out a Young Carer's Needs Assessment whenever a young carer is identified and it appears they may need support. The assessment 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.

Overall, the Young Carer's Needs Assessment must consider 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 and, in particular, on their education and personal and emotional development. The assessment should take into account the strengths of a family, as well as identifying any challenges faced by its members.

The local authority must consult with persons with expertise and knowledge in relation to the young carer as part of the assessment process, including teachers, **health workers** and other relevant adults. It is important to speak to the child alone, wherever possible, and to observe how they relate with their parents and siblings.

What is my role?

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 assessments undertaken should always include discussions about children in the household to identify if they have caring responsibilities and may, therefore, require support as a young carer. If you are aware of an adult requiring significant care at home, please consider the impact on the child/ren and whether or not the child/ren is a young carer. Consider the following;

- How parental health impacts on their capacity to meet the child's needs
- Whether any of the young carer's needs for support could be prevented by providing services to:
 - The person cared for; or
 - Another member of the young carer's family.
- Whether any other assessment of the needs for support of the young carer or the person cared for has been carried out (and if it has, to take this into account);
- Whether the young carer is a child in need;
- Also to be taken into consideration is 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 and, in particular, on their educational and personal development. For example:
- Whether the young person's caring role limits their educational opportunities, perhaps because it means they have more absences from school
- Whether caring prevents the child from building relationships and friendships
- How caring affects the child's physical and emotional wellbeing.