

Young Carers

Young carers are children and young people (under 18) who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis. This care includes physical and/or emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, has a disability or misuses alcohol/substances. The [2021 Census](#) found there were around 120,000 young unpaid carers in England. However, [research from 2018](#) found that 22% of children were young carers and only a small proportion are actually identified. Young carer rights

were strengthened by the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) and the [Care Act 2014](#) ensuring young carers

More Information

Find out more about the importance of identifying and valuing carers via a separate Oldham

Safeguarding Adults Board [7-Minute Briefing](#). Positive Steps provide local help and support through the [Oldham Young Carers Service](#). Organisations providing more information and/or support for young carers include: [Carers Trust](#), [The Children's Society](#), [Bernardo's](#), [Action for Children](#), [Carers UK](#), the [NSPCC](#), the [NHS](#) and [YoungMinds](#).

Think Family Approach

A local Safeguarding Adult Review in relation to 'Lisa', found that a 'Think Family' approach did not appear to have been considered in any depth by practitioners and there was a lack of professional curiosity about the role of Lisa's children as carers for her. There were concerns that Lisa was self-neglecting but there were no referrals made about the potential impact this was having on her children. [Think Family](#) refers to the practice of considering the entire family unit when working with an individual. Adults' practitioners may come into contact with children, in the same way that children's practitioners may have contact with adults. All practitioners working with families should apply [professional curiosity](#) by considering whether there is a possibility that a young person may be a young carer. If this is believed to be the case, referrals for a young carer's assessment should be made to ensure any support needs are met. Any safeguarding concerns must be referred separately to either [Adults](#) or [Children's](#) Social Care.

Impact on Young Carers

Young carers in the UK face significant challenges due to their caring responsibilities. They often lack the necessary support to balance their care duties with their own needs and aspirations. The impact of caring responsibilities on young carers can be profound, leading to feelings of stress, anxiety, and missed opportunities for personal development. Education can be impacted due to struggles with school or college work. It may be difficult for them to concentrate at home and to complete homework. The young carer may feel lonely, overwhelmed or excluded. Friendships may become strained due to added responsibilities at home and being unable to participate in activities outside of school. The demands of caring can adversely affect their physical and mental health, leaving little time for self-care.

Positive Experiences

Young carers often develop a sense of purpose and are often more mature and have skills that their friends might not have. Being a carer can make young people feel good about themselves and proud of the life skills they learn such as resilience and practical, financial and time management skills. By making important, positive contributions to family life, a young carer can feel more valued and included.

Young Carer's Assessments

Local Authorities have a duty to assess whether a young carer needs support and what those needs are if: it appears that a young carer may have need for support; a request is received from a young carer or a parent to assess the young carer's need for support; or an assessment has been undertaken and circumstances have changed. Local Authorities must be proactive in identifying young carers. All young carers must be offered an assessment regardless of their age, who they care for, how many hours they provide support for, and why they care. Assessments must consider the young carer's age, understanding, feelings, preferences, the outcomes they seek from the assessment and the impact their caring duties are having on them.

Young Carer's Assessments

Young Carer's Assessments in Oldham

[Positive Steps](#) runs a [Young Carers' Project](#) that offers the Young Carer's Assessment, known as a 'Your Voice Document,' to understand their needs and develop a support plan. Practitioners can make referrals, and young carer's and parents can also request Young Carer's Assessments by contacting Positive Steps (0161 621 9400, youngcarers@positive-steps.org.uk or via an [online referral form](#)). The person completing the assessment will often be someone who already supports the young person, such as their Social Worker, Family Support Worker or another professional they feel comfortable with. The young person should always have a say in who helps them with the assessment.

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