

**Safeguarding Focus: What we need to know about young carers young carers**

*'They take on physical and emotional duties that adults usually handle. It can be scary.'*

(Action for Children)

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.

**Research highlights that:**

- there are an estimated 800,000 young carers in the UK, aged between 5-17.
- 1 in 5 secondary pupils are carers.
- 1 in 12 young carers provide more than 15 hours of care each week – this may include cooking, shopping, cleaning, caring for siblings, personal care such as bathing and toileting, paying bills, administering medicine, strenuous physical activity such as lifting.
- 1 in 20 young carers miss school because of their care responsibilities – on average, young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year.
- Young carers are more likely than the national average to be 'not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16-19.
- 80% have no statutory assessment of their needs.
- 64% have no support at all
- 40% of young carers have not told their school that they are a young carer

<b>Impact of being a young carer</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<p>compared to non-carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Four times more likely to be bullied</li> <li>▪ Twice as likely to be late for school</li> <li>▪ Twice as likely to have difficulty making friends</li> <li>▪ Twice as likely to be angry</li> </ul> <p>In addition:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance and punctuality issues</li> <li>▪ Tired, distracted, withdrawn</li> <li>▪ Poor focus</li> <li>▪ Poor progress</li> <li>▪ Withdrawn or angry</li> <li>▪ Anxious about someone at home</li> <li>▪ Low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ The need to be in regular contact with home</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased online risks</li> <li>▪ Social isolation and loneliness</li> <li>▪ Anxiety and depression</li> <li>▪ Missing out on school trips or clubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly does not complete homework</li> <li>▪ Misses after school clubs</li> </ul>
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### **How can schools support young carers?**

Young carers are very much a hidden group of children. Estimates show that as many as two children in every class of 30 could potentially be a young carer. We need to support wherever possible.

- Set up systems to identify, assess and support young carers and their family. Staff should use professional curiosity/ask open questions if you feel that a child may be a young carer.
- Gain an understanding of the needs of young carers.
- Raise the awareness of staff, pupils and families about young carers.
- Introduce a Young Carers School Lead.
- Commit to gaining the Young Carers in School Award.

### **Rights of Young Carers**

The Carers Trust maintains that young people should not be doing a caring role that;

- Makes them sad or lonely
- Means they will miss out on time with friends
- Makes their health worse
- Means they are doing less well at school
- Stops them from getting or keeping a job
- Stops them from achieving their goals for the future