

**Young
Carers**

Supporting Young Carers

A guide for Healthcare
Professionals



Should you need any more information please visit
www.southtyneside.gov.uk/youngcarers

Introduction

This booklet is to support healthcare professionals identify children and young people who have caring responsibilities and how they can be supported in a healthcare setting or during an interaction with a healthcare professional. It will also introduce the Young Carer ID Card and outline what this may mean in practice.

Who are Young Carers?

A Young Carer is someone aged 25 and under who helps to care for a parent, sister, brother, grandparent or another individual because they have an illness, disability, mental health difficulty or an addiction.

Older Young Carers, age 16–25, are also known as Young Adult Carers and they may have different support needs to younger carers.

Some children begin giving care from a very young age, and others become carers overnight.

Young Carers can undertake a range of activities which might include:



Helping someone get dressed, undressed, get washed or move around safely



Helping with housework, cooking, shopping or other everyday tasks



Help to keep someone company or provide emotional support



Help to store and give medications or collect prescriptions



Help someone to communicate

There are thousands of Young Carers across the UK who provide care for family members or friends. According to the 2021 census there are around 144,000 young people providing at least 20 hours of unpaid care each week. This figure does not represent any of the hidden Young Carers who do not recognise that their home life is different from that of their friends and those who are not receiving any support. There are approximately 1,200 Young Carers in South Tyneside.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, all Young Carers have the right to an assessment from the local authority regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide and how often they provide it.

The assessment needs to consider:



Whether it is appropriate for the Young Carer to provide care



The Young Carers need for support, and their other needs and wishes



If any of the Young Carers' need for support could be prevented by providing service to the person who is cared for, or another member of the Young Carers family

In South Tyneside, the Young Carers Service carry out all Young Carer Assessments on behalf of the local authority.



What is a Young Carer ID Card?

A Young Carer is not usually the next of kin. Sometimes Healthcare Professionals do not feel they can share confidential information with them. Young Carers can feel excluded from discussions and decisions about the person they look after where in reality they play a vital role in providing daily care and support.

The Young Carer ID Card aims to:

- ✓ Raise awareness of their responsibilities and give formal recognition to their role
- ✓ Discreetly let people know about their caring responsibilities without having to repeatedly share personal details
- ✓ Give the Young Carer confidence to ask for help or understanding from professionals
- ✓ Help prevent issues around age and consent. The card does not give the Young Carer automatic right to information. If in doubt, ask

Who will issue a Young Carer ID Card and what will it look like?

The Young Carer ID Card will be issued by the Young Carers Service in South Tyneside as part of the Young Carers Needs Assessment.

During this assessment a discussion with the Young Carer and often the person they care for will identify the needs of the Young Carer, which will be demonstrated by icons on the reverse of the card.



These icons will indicate the primary needs of the Young Carer, both in education and during an interaction with a healthcare professional. Use the icons as a prompt to discuss and agree how these can be supported during this episode of care.

On the occasion it is not possible to offer this support it is important to provide an explanation why.

Please note: not all Young Carers will have an ID card. You may be the first person to recognise they are a Young Carer. In this instance, you can contact or refer to the Young Carers Service in South Tyneside for further support.

Contact details and QR code for referral can be found in the back of the booklet.

What does this mean for me, as a Healthcare Professional?

- Take time to speak to the Young Carer to understand their caring role and responsibilities
- Be aware that the Young Carer might attend or sit in on a consultation as part of their caring role. As long as the person consents them to be there, enable them to stay. Do not presume the Young Carer should be asked to leave when discussing personal or sensitive information
- Recognise that the Young Carer may be the expert in the condition of the person they care for. It is important to respect their expertise and to work in partnership with them and your patient
- Ensure information is provided in a way that the Young Carer can understand and in a written format if needed
- Document on the patient's record that there is a Young Carer, including details of the agreement how they would like to be involved during interactions with healthcare professionals
- Signpost the Young Carer to additional support or when required make a referral to the Young Carers Service in South Tyneside on their behalf

If you recognise a Young Carer, or a Young Carer presents their ID card as a patient accessing your service

- Take time to speak to the Young Carer to understand their caring role and responsibilities – this may provide vital information to why the cared for person has been referred to your service
- Document on their patient record, that they have a caring role and who for
- Signpost the Young Carer to the Young Carers Service in South Tyneside for additional support or make referral for a carer assessment if required. If in doubt contact the Young Carers Service in South Tyneside for advice
- If the appointment is taking place in or is connected to a referral from school, ask the Young Carer if school is aware of their caring responsibilities. Additional support may already be in place. If not, seek consent to speak to their school

What else can your health setting or team do to support Young Carers?

- When a child or young person accesses a service, regardless of age, ask whether they look after someone. It can be helpful to provide examples of what this means to make it clear what is being asked. You may be the first person to ask them this question and have a key role to play in identifying and recognising someone as a young carer
- Ensure all patient records are consistent and up to date to identify the the child or young person as a Young Carer, both on their own and the record of the person they care for
- Display information about Young Carers and the Young Carer ID Card to raise awareness of your commitment to support them
- Ensure all information about the Young Carers Service in South Tyneside and other local support is up-to-date and visible
- Work with the Young Carers Service or the Carer Champion/ Coordinator of your organisation to deliver regular training and updates to your teams

Further support

If you require any further support or advice about Young Carers or the information within this booklet please visit

www.southtyneside.gov.uk/youngcarers



Carers Trust
www.carers.org



The Children's Society
www.childrensociety.org.uk



Young Carers Action Day at Carers Trust
www.carers.org/ycad





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South Tyneside Council



South Tyneside and Sunderland
NHS Foundation Trust