

Supporting Young Carers in Education

As of April 2018, young carers in Scotland have the right to a Young Carers Statement. This means that if you identify a young carer in your class, or school, you should offer them the opportunity to have a Young Carer Statement prepared which will highlight any support needs they may have. **Your local authority will be able to tell you who is leading on Young Carer Statements for your area.**

What is a Young Carer Statement?

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 makes provisions for a Young Carers Statement (YCS) to be prepared for carers who are under 18, or over 18 but still at school. The young carer must have access to the information in this statement.

When a young carer reaches 18 and intends to continue caring, the YCS will continue to apply until there is an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) in place.

Not all young carers will have a wellbeing need that requires a Child's Plan, but if a Child's Plan is already in place for a young carer, the YCS will be developed in addition to this so there is a document with a focus on their needs as a carer.

The YCS will identify personal outcomes for the young carer, and must contain information about:

- The impact of caring on the young carer's wellbeing (referencing SHANARRI guidelines)
- The extent to which the young carer is able & willing to provide care
- The extent to which the nature and extent of the care provided is appropriate
- The support which is needed, if any
- The support that will be provided, under the duty to meet eligible needs and the power to meet non-eligible needs
- Whether a short break is needed

Who is a young carer?

At Carers Trust, our definition of a young carer is **someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.**

Some young carers look after more than one person and may have health issues of their own.

Being a young carer can have a big impact on the things that are important to growing up

- It can affect a young person's health, social life and self-confidence.
- Many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring which can cause pressure and stress.
- In a survey, 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.
- 26% have been bullied at school because of their caring role.
- 1 in 20 miss school because of their caring role.

But young people can learn lots of useful skills by being a young carer, such as being good managers of time, having a sense of responsibility beyond their years.

With the right support, being at school can be respite for a pupil who is a carer. Without support, young carers can find attending school difficult.



How can schools support young carers?

There are lots of good examples of how schools can take an active part in supporting young carers. Here are just a few:

- Appoint someone in the school to be a point of contact for pupils with caring responsibilities – they should link in with the local young carers services.
- Consider raising awareness of young carers and what they do – survey work shows that **one in ten pupils** will have a caring responsibility. You can do this by inviting the local young carers service to come to your school. They can make presentations to pupils and staff.
- Dedicate classroom time to young carers. In Stirling, every high school has a young carers class that is part of the timetable. Young carers are referred by pupil support.
- Ask young carers you identify if they would like to have a YCS prepared to make sure that caring roles are reduced. Some young carers may want to continue caring but impact and intensity of caring roles should be appropriate to age.

To find out where your local young carers service is, call Carers Trust Scotland on 0300 772 7701 or e-mail scotland@carers.org

An easy read guide about the Carers Act (Scotland) 2016 and information about other support is available on the Young Scot website <https://young.scot/young-carers>

A jargon buster for the language used in the Act is available from Carers Trust and Scottish Government websites:

https://carers.org/sites/files/carerstrust/media/carers_scotland_act_2016_jargon_buster_for_young_carers.pdf

<https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Unpaid-Carers/ProgrammesandInitiatives/youngcarers>

