

EDINBURGH  
**YOUNG  
CARERS**

# Toolkit for Schools

Your guide to identifying,  
supporting and working with  
young carers and their families

Supported by





People really don't understand just how much caring takes over your life.

**Young Carer**



# What does the toolkit aim to do?

## For schools

The pack provides practical resources school staff can use with pupils to raise awareness of the issues faced by young carers. This pack can also be used alongside the “We Care” Schools for Young Carers Award.

It aims to:

Provide greater understanding of young carers, identification factors and their needs

Give ideas about useful support

Promote supportive school ethos

Provide practical tips for how teachers can support young carers and their individual needs

Importantly, using this pack will also help schools fulfil their duties under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended by 2009 Act.



1

### TOP TIP

Train staff in young carers' issues and to raise pupils' awareness.

2

### TOP TIP

Incorporate information on young carers into lessons within Personal and Social Education (PSE), using the sample lesson plans in this pack.

3

### TOP TIP

Include information from this pack as part of staff training, CPD, CLPL or staff meetings.

4

### TOP TIP

Create a Young Carers' Policy for Schools – to find out more about young carers and how to support them effectively, see the appendix for a sample version. This works alongside our document 'Supporting young carers in schools; good practice guidelines'.

5

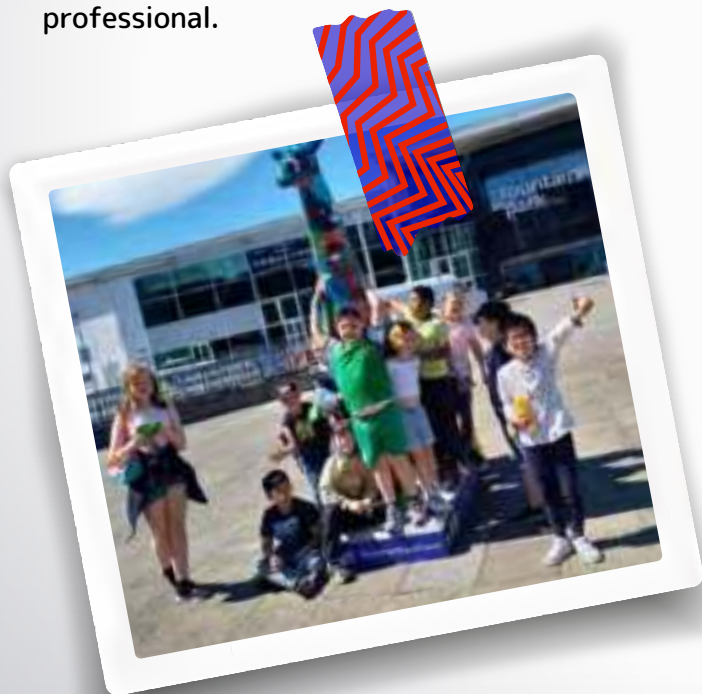
### TOP TIP

Provide information to parents and carers about the support being offered at school for young carers.



## For young carers

Using the pack can also help young people to identify themselves as a young carer. Many may feel the range of tasks they take on at home is 'normal', feel they do not have a right to a childhood as other children do or feel they are the only ones in this situation. Finding out during assemblies or awareness-raising sessions that they might be a young carer may encourage them to seek out the support they need, be that informal or professional.



## For teachers

Many school staff have good opportunities to identify young carers before situations reach crisis stage. Such opportunities may arise through their awareness of the child's broader family circumstances, their partnership working with parents or because professionals in other agencies have shared information about the young person's caring responsibilities.

Two toolkits can be used to accompany this resource pack. One toolkit has lesson plans that meet the outcomes of the first level of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Therefore it is most suitable for children in P2 – P4. The second toolkit is aimed at older children, in later primary school, and in secondary school, from P5 – S3.

This pack meets the outcomes for the second and third levels of CfE. Demonstrating an understanding of young carers and of caring responsibilities within families.



To download lesson packs click here



A recent study from Barnardo's showed that 40% of teachers could not identify a young carer.

James, 2017





# Useful Terminology

**Adult Carer Support Plans (ACSP)** A written record of how an adult is caring for another individual, what support they require, and whether they are willing to continue to care. The plan is written by a member of the local council's Adult Work Department.

**Cared for person** The person who is being cared for by the young carer or whose ill-health is impacting the young person.

**Carers (Scotland) Act 2016** An Act passed by the Scottish parliament and enacted from 2018. The Act ensures that unpaid carers are supported with their physical and emotional wellbeing and are more involved with the systems around caring. More details about the Act can be found in the Policies and Legislation section of this document.

**Carers Charter** A document explaining the rights that all carers and young carers have. [Can be viewed by clicking here!](#)

**Edinburgh Young Carers Collaborative** 3 young carers services in Edinburgh who work together to support young carers in the city of Edinburgh. The collaborative is made up of Space, Capital Carers and Edinburgh Young Carers.

**Local Eligibility Criteria** A set of criteria from each local authority which is used to make decisions on which individuals access certain support. A person can be entitled to support due to the council's duty towards them, under these criteria. If they do not meet the criteria then the local authority holds the power to offer support.

**Local Carers Strategy** Each local authority has to publish its individual strategy for supporting unpaid carers.

[Edinburgh City Councils strategy can be viewed by clicking here!](#)

**Respite or break from caring** Time away from the family or cared-for person to take part in an activity. This can be for a few hours or overnight. The local authority has a requirement to consider whether each individual carer should be offered some kind of respite, dependent on their circumstances.

**We Care, Schools for Young Carers Award** An award, created by Edinburgh Young Carers to support schools to work towards best practice for young carers. [Click here to find out more!](#)

**Young Carers Policy** A document that outlines how a school will identify and support young carers.

**Young Carer Coordinator** A member of staff (or team) in a school with responsibility for identifying, supporting and working with young carers. Ideally, the staff member should be a teacher or pastoral member of staff and all children should be aware of who their Young Carer Coordinator is and how to contact them.

**Young Carer Grant** A yearly payment of £308 to young carers in Scotland accessible to eligible young people aged 16,17,18.

[The grant can be accessed by clicking here!](#)

**Young Carers Statement** Young Carer Statement is a written record of a Young Carer's personal goals, their caring responsibilities and how these caring responsibilities impact their ability to achieve their goals.

**CHAPTER  
1**

**WHAT IS  
A YOUNG  
CARER?**

This section will discuss the support needs of young carers, what is inappropriate caring? And why do young carers remain hidden? We will also discuss the policies and legislation that supports young carers in Scotland.

**CHAPTER  
2**

**YOUNG  
CARERS AND  
HOW TO  
SUPPORT IN  
SCHOOLS**

Featuring discussions about the role of the Young Carer Coordinator, The We Care Award and information about Young Carers Statements.

**CHAPTER  
3**

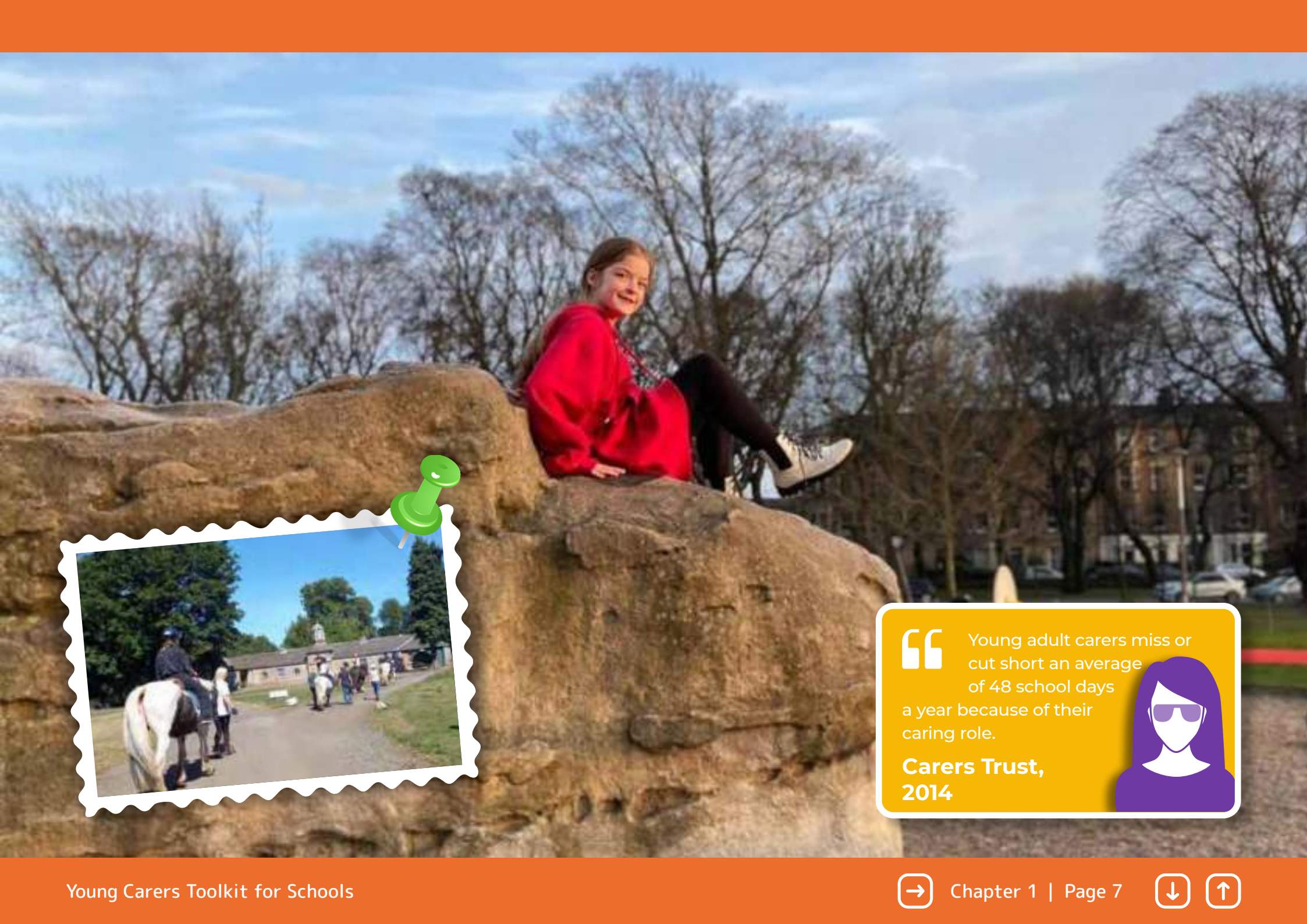
**WHO ARE  
EDINBURGH  
YOUNG  
CARERS?**

How to make a referral? Age and stage support offered and how to support our work.

**CHAPTER  
4**

**APPENDICES**

Supporting Young Carers in Schools; Good Practice Guidelines, Other organisations, Fiction which supports teaching and learning, Digital Resources and Example young carers policy.



Young adult carers miss or cut short an average of 48 school days a year because of their caring role.



**Carers Trust,  
2014**



# CHAPTER 1

## CHAPTER 2

## CHAPTER 3

## CHAPTER 4

### WHAT IS A YOUNG CARER?

- 9 Case study introduction
- 12 What is a young carer?
- 13 Who can identify a young carer?
- 14 How many young carers are in Scotland?
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- 22 Policies to support young carers  
(Carers Trust Scotland)
- 25 Why do young carers remain hidden?



Click on the page numbers to jump directly to that page.

Click the arrow at the foot of the page to jump back up to the contents pages.



# Case studies

The case studies below are designed to give you an insight into the lives of two hidden young carers. Both case studies are entirely fictional but are based on the situations and experiences that young carers face daily. Throughout this toolkit, we have included questions, highlighted with 'Let's review', to bring you back to these case studies. This will empower you to gain a further understanding of how being a young carer impacts the life and life chances of the young person.



## Case Study 1

### A hidden young carer

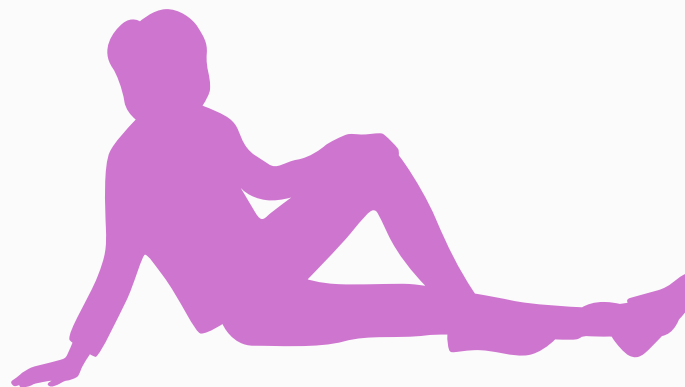
- Katy is fifteen years old and lives in a single-parent household with their Mam-Jane and two younger siblings who are at primary school
- Katy's parents are separated and Katy's father has a new partner
- Jane has been diagnosed with Arthritis and this has severely reduced her mobility
- Due to the pain, Jane has left her job and Katy's caring role has increased to over 20 hours a week

### How is Katy a young carer?

- Katy has taken on a parental role for their siblings
- The family are housed in a temporary-top floor flat which has left Jane housebound so Katy has to perform chores outside of the house
- Katy takes the younger children to school, does the shopping, cooking and cleaning. Katy also supports Jane with her mental health and sits with their Mam during the night
- Jane has started to smoke cannabis which has affected her mental health, Katy listens to their Mam's worries and tries to make her feel better

### How has being a young carer impacted Katy?

- Katy's school attendance is currently under 40%
- Katy is isolated, has very few friends
- They are often overwhelmed with her caring role
- They have a poor sleep pattern and diet
- They spend most of their free time on the internet talking to people in online chatrooms



While young carers are found across each region of Scotland, higher proportions of young carers are found in areas of higher deprivation.

**Maclean, 2021**





## Case Study 2

### A sibling young carer

- Jake is seven and lives with his parents and twin sister, Rachael
- Rachael was born with Sickle Cell disease, which means that her tissues and organs don't produce enough oxygen
- Rachael often struggles with periods of pain crisis and has recently suffered from a stroke that has paralysed the left-hand side of her body, and she has missed six months of school

### How is Jake a young carer?

- Jake is really worried and anxious about his sister, he does not like leaving her alone
- He sits with her in class, reminds her to drink water and always plays with her at breaks and lunch
- Jake is worried that his sister will have another stroke so he helps her to get dressed on a morning and follows her around the house to make sure that she is okay
- He is suffering from nightmares and refuses to attend school if his sister has to stay at home

### How does being a young carer impact Jake?

- His school attendance is under 70%
- He often gets angry and has had outbursts in the classroom
- He has very few friends at school and is not accessing extra-curricular provision
- He helps his sister with her school work before concentrating on his own



It's clear that young carers' isolation and loneliness is impacting on their ability to form meaningful connections, and to be out and about in the world.



**Carers Trust, 2022**

# What is a young carer?

## The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 define a young carer as:

A young person who is under 18 years old, or has attained the age of 18 years while a pupil at a school, and has since attaining that age remained a pupil at that or another school. In this Act “carer” means an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual which is known as the ‘cared for person’.

## Edinburgh Young Carers define a young carer as a young person who:

Has practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities for another person as a consequence of ill-health, disability, mental health difficulties or drug and alcohol use.

The crucial aspect is impact. If the ill-health of another impacts a young person then they can be identified as a young carer. Every young carer is different and is impacted in a different way.



## The Scottish Government

An estimate by The Scottish Government puts the figure at 7% of young people aged 4-24 in Scotland (93,000) as having caring responsibilities. However, it is thought that the prevalence of young carers could be far higher, with two recent UK surveys finding 8% and 12% of young people sampled reporting that they had moderate or high caring responsibilities (Robison et al 2017, p8).



Almost one-in-eight pupils said they provided care for someone in the household with almost one-third of them stating that no one knew about it.

**Robison, 2017**



# Who can identify a young carer

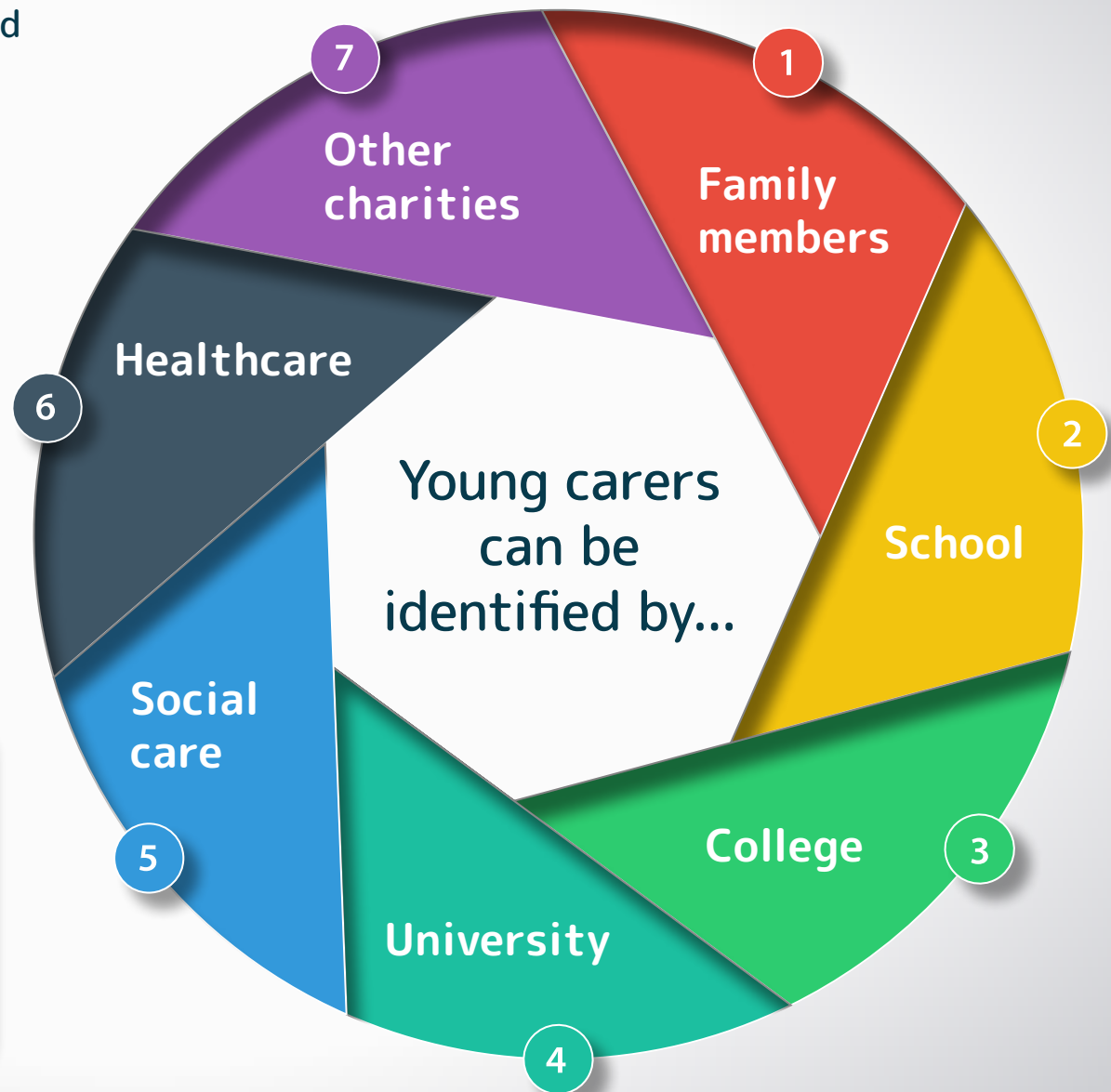
Any professional has the ability to identify and refer a young carer for support and respite.

It can often take many years for young carers to self-identify. However, children rely on the identification of an adult, and many families are reluctant to come forward because of fear of the consequences or a normalisation of their situation.



Young carers spent four years looking after a relative or parent before they were identified for support.

**Barnardos, 2006**



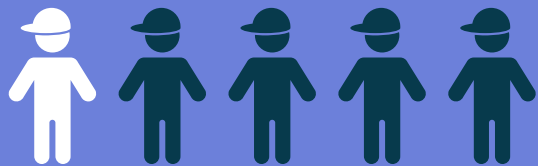


# How many young carers are in Scotland?

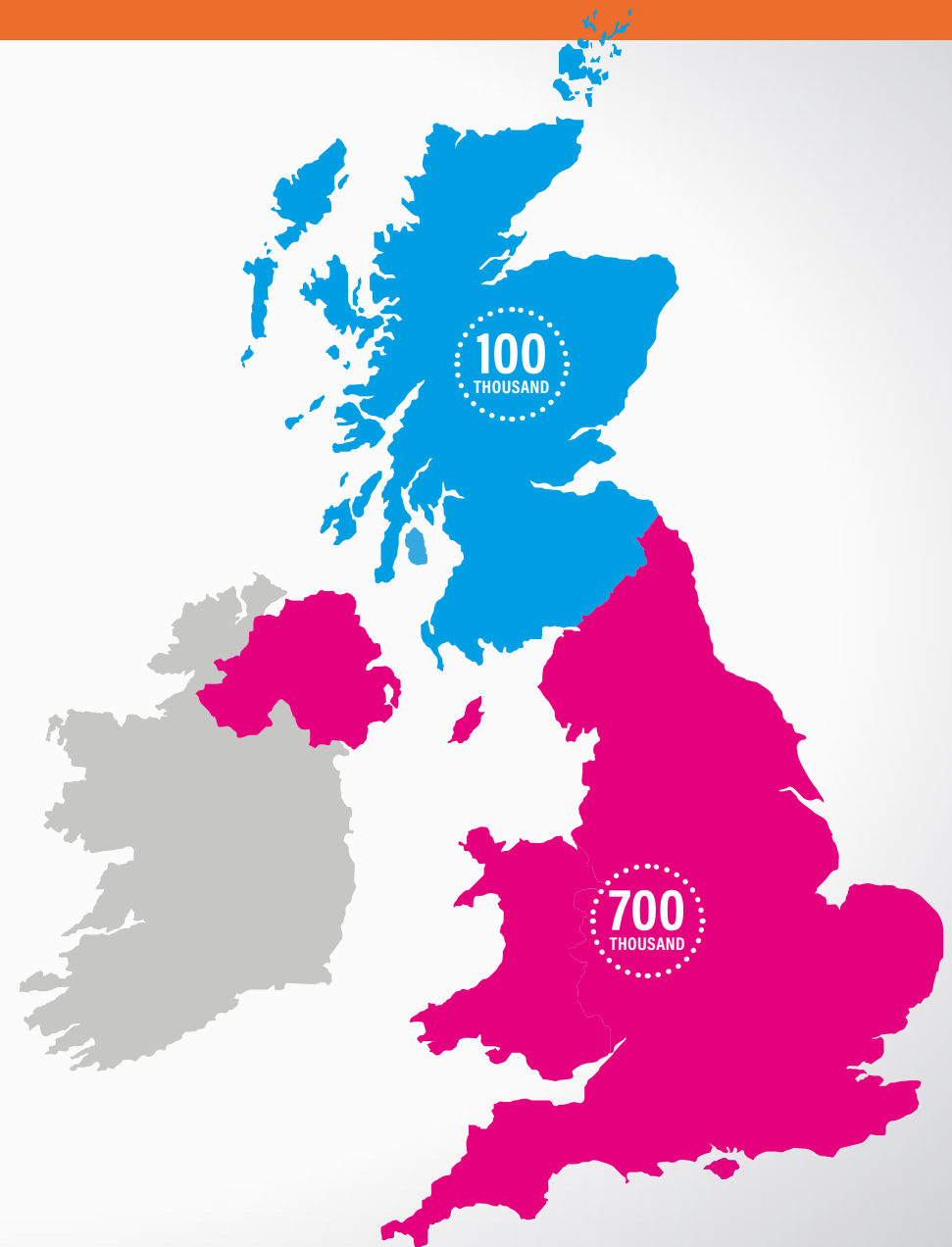
We do not have exact figures for how many young carers live in the UK or Scotland, despite young carers being discussed in legislation.

Current estimates say that around 800,000 young people in the UK have caring responsibilities at home and 100,000 in Scotland. Professor Saul Becker recently highlighted that in the last Census 40,000 under 12's were identified as having caring responsibilities at home, but this is believed to be an underestimate since adults within the home complete the census and many are hesitant about declaring their child as a carer.

When delivering training in school, Edinburgh Young Carers utilise the research from The University of Nottingham which states that 1 in 5 children has a caring role for another (Joseph et al, 2009)



However, it is important to not get too fixated on numbers since it is impossible to get accurate figures for the true number of young carers.



# What do young carers do?

No two young carers are the same and every child's experiences will be different. Here we aim to give you an overview of the wide range of tasks that young carers can complete, some such as 'communication care' are often overlooked as tasks completed by young carers.



Emotional  
Care



Personal  
Care



Domestic  
Care



Physical  
Care



Caring For  
Siblings



Communication  
Care



Health  
Care



Financial  
Care



To find out more information  
about the varied role of  
carers click here



## Let's Review

What responsibilities is Kate taking on within their family?

Consider the emotional and physical caring role that they are undertaking.

# When is caring inappropriate?

Young carers sometimes take on levels of excessive and /or inappropriate care and it is vital that this is flagged as a child protection concern and not allowed to continue simply because the child is young carer.

This will vary from child to child depending on age, ability and understanding. If you suspect that a child is taking on an inappropriate caring role then it is best practice to make a referral to a statutory agency.

The child is providing translation or interpretation of complicated healthcare issues which they may do incorrectly or may not understand

The child is put in danger by their caring role e.g. giving medication at a very young age, supporting an adult to bathe

The level of stress placed on that child is too great, and they are 'holding' the entire family by continuing to provide care

The child is taking charge of siblings without adult supervision

The child is taking on the 'parenting role'

The child is regularly supporting a sibling in school which is disproportionately affecting their own learning

The child is responsible for the family finances e.g paying bills, paying rent, budgeting or family administration tasks

The child is caring during the night and has their own sleep disturbed

The child is the sole carer and has been caring for an excessive amount of time

The child is caring for an excessive amount of others e.g more than two

The cared-for person requires significant help from multiple individuals



You should follow your school child protection procedures if you suspect that a child is taking on an inappropriate caring role or their role is leading to abuse and / or neglect.



A young person becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, risking impacting on his or her emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances.

Frank and McLarnon, 2008



## Let's Review

What responsibilities is Kate taking on within their family?

Consider the emotional and physical caring role that they are undertaking.



# The impact of caring

There are misconceptions around young carers and the impact that caring can have on the young person.

One significant impact is the misconception that young carers only undertake physical tasks so the impact of the emotional caring role can be forgotten. Also, growing up coping with a disability or illness of a loved one will result in psychosocial effects for young people in the vast majority of cases.

The nature and extent of such effects will most likely depend on a variety of factors, including:

- **The services and support offered to the family by friends and agencies**
- **Family structure and dynamics**
- **The nature of the disability and the personality of the child**

It often takes years for young carers to be formally identified which inevitably leads to young people taking on vast amounts of responsibility without any external support. Also, if the support offered is not correct.

Please refer to page 10 for information about the importance of statutory involvement if a child is taking on an inappropriate caring role.



Parental mental health difficulties were a factor in more than half of all serious case reviews.

**NSPCC, 2015**



It's clear that young carers' isolation and loneliness is impacting on their ability to form meaningful connections, and to be out and about in the world.

**Carers Trust, 2022**



## Examples of the impact of the caring role...

### NEET

They are more likely to be not in education, employment and training between 16–19, and this is significantly more likely to persist over 6 months.

*(Children's Society, 2008)*

### Experience high rates of bullying

one quarter reported bullying and abuse in school because they were a carer.

*(Children's Society, 2018)*

### Mental health issues

They are more likely to suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety. The Carers Trust, Scotland researched the impact of the Covid pandemic on the mental health of 228 young carers and **86% said their mental health was worse** than before the pandemic. 67% say their physical health is worse than before the pandemic. Carers reported feeling “Drained and exhausted and low mood”.

# 86%

of young carers said their mental health was worse than before the pandemic.

### School issues

There is a belief that young carers do not reach their full academic potential with lower exam grades than peers - young carers have significantly lower attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine B's and nine C's.

*(The Children's Society, Hidden from View, 2013)*



### Difficulty sleeping

In a Scottish study of young carers from 2003 almost two-thirds reported that they had difficulty sleeping and almost a third reported difficulties in eating.

*(Watt et al, 2017)*



### ASL

They are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have a special educational need or disability.

*(Additional support for learning)*

### Trauma

Although there has been no direct research into the link between an unsupported young carer role and trauma, we firmly believe that a trauma-informed practice approach can really benefit young carers.



## Examples of the impact of the caring role continued...

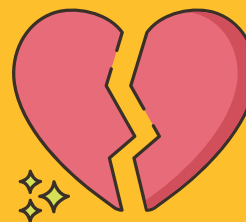
### Personal poor health

They are 1.5 times more likely to have their own poor health. They are unpaid and untrained. They are exposed to numerous risks, and their lack of knowledge about the medical diagnosis and lack of training contribute to those risks (*Leu and Becker, 2017b*).

Census data shows young carers are more likely to have a long-term condition or disability.

### Family break up

Young carers can be estranged- sometimes the stress of caring becomes too much and families break down.



### Financial issues



Because young carers are often unable to take part in the same opportunities as their peers this may decrease their life chances. Young carers do experience low social capital.

**Barry, 2011**

### Chaotic households

Chances and opportunities are less in comparison to friends.

### Impacted career choices

Often young carers go into caring professions feeling like these are their only skills and do not consider other career options which are open to them.



### Social problems

Because caring can dominate a child's life, young carers often cannot join in recreational activities and become increasingly socially isolated.

Social problems can include:

- Isolation from peers
- Behavioural difficulties
- Loss of childhood
- Disaffection
- Problems with social and personal development



### Let's Review

How do you think the chaotic nature of the family is affecting Katy?

Consider the emotional and physical caring role that they are undertaking.

# The needs of young carers

Young carers generally enjoy attending school but have some uniform ideas about how to improve the school experience. Quick ways schools can support:



A challenge for many sibling young carers is that they also have a secondary role within school compared to their sibling with a disability...They have some young carers who are called out of class to help manage a situation if their sibling is having a meltdown, as they are skilled in supporting the emotional regulation of their sibling. It blows my mind! That expectation that they have to fulfil that role.



**Professional interview**



It was really helpful being able to tell teachers why I was not able to hand in my homework for them to understand and out extra support in place for me.



**Young Carer**



I think my school has a Young Carer Coordinator but I don't know who that is.



**Young Carer**



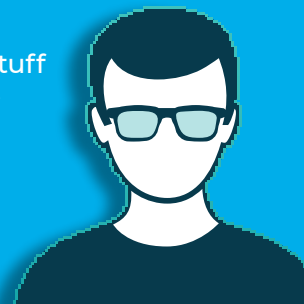
Young carers generally enjoy attending school but have some uniform ideas about how to improve the school experience.

Quick ways schools can support are...



I'm happy I'm at school..." even though I have to do work at school, I get like a little break where I also have nurture and stuff like that with my teachers and that, and it really helps, I really like it. Yeah, it's kind of my happy place, basically.

**Sibling young carer in focus group,  
Ask me, I'm here too**



### Let's Review

What one action, by a professional, one make a significant difference to Katy's life?

# Policies to support young carers

Although the Carers Act (Scotland) 2016 is the main act under which young carers' rights are specifically named and discussed there are numerous other acts that apply to young carers and should be taken into consideration when creating a young carers policy.

## Carers Trust Scotland – Young Carers' Rights

The Scottish Government recognise there are at least 30,000 young carers in Scotland, however, we believe this to be underestimated as many young carers in Scotland remain hidden. This could be for many reasons such as stigma, they are not aware they are a young carer or fear of professional services being involved.

Like all children and young people, young carers have rights and below are some of the policy and legislation that should be considered when supporting a young carer.



**Young carers are more likely to:**

- Receive free school meals.
- Have less than three hours sleep.

**Young carers are less likely to:**

- Live with both parents
- Have their own bedroom

**Robison, 2017**



## Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

All young carers in Scotland have rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. Young carers have a right to be offered a Young Carer Statement, this is an outcomes-based conversation and should include details about the care they provide, any inappropriate caring roles, the impact caring has on their day to day life including education and their wellbeing. The Statement should also detail what support the local authority will provide under the local eligibility criteria, including to a short break.



Download the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 Jargon Buster



Thank you to the Carers Trust Scotland for putting the information together for this section.

The child is at the centre of a wide range of policies legislation aimed at reducing harm and empowering them to reach their potential.

 The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 is the nationwide approach to supporting all carers 

**Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)**



**UNCRC Incorporation**



**GIRFEC/ Child Protection**



**The Edinburgh Carers Strategy**



**Carers (Scotland) Act 2016**



**ASL Act 2004**



## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scot's Law (Bill)

In March 2021 the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. Due to a challenge by the Supreme Court in October 2021 that certain sections went against the powers of the Scottish Parliament the Bill is currently being reconsidered.

However, if passed the Bill will protect the rights of children and young people including young carers in Scotland. Some of the Rights (but not limited to) included in the Bill which young carers have highlighted that are important to them include Article 3 - Best Interest of the Child, Article 12- Respect for Children's Views and Article 17 – Access to Information.

## Children and Young People's Act 2004 – Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

Getting it Right for every child ensures all children and young people including young carers in Scotland get help and support to grow up safe, respected and loved so they can reach their full potential. GIRFEC should be delivered as part of a whole family approach and allow partnership working to support the child or young person as and when they require it. It reflects the wellbeing indicators known often as SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included). These indicators often form the base of Young Carer Statements.

## Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004

All children or young people including young carers may require additional support in the long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education and to be included fully in their learning. Education authorities have duties to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of all their pupils including young carers.

Young carers also may be at risk of not making a successful transition therefore education authorities have specific duties to prepare pupils with additional support needs for their post-school transition. This should happen no later than 2 years before they leave school.



The implementation of the Young Carers Statement has ensured that young carers do not take on inappropriate caring tasks for their age and maturity and enables them to get the support they require to meet their needs. The act has raised awareness across schools and all relevant sectors which has enabled us to reach more hidden young carers year on year.

**Margaret Murphy:**  
CEO, Edinburgh  
Young Carers





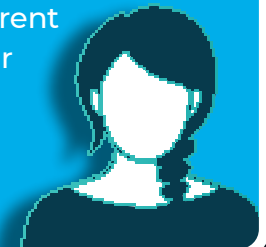
# Why are young carers hidden?

Young carers are often deemed as a 'hard to reach group'. Young carers and their families often describe being overlooked by services such as education and healthcare, even when young carers are sat in front of professionals. There are multiple reasons why a young carer and their family would remain hidden; by understanding and being aware of these reasons, professionals will be better placed to identify and offer support.

Family	Professionals	Society
A reluctance to discuss experiences which are not the norm and may encourage scrutiny of the family Aldridge and Becker (1993)	Professionals aren't aware of the wide variety of caring roles that children take on e.g. Providing support for a sibling, translation support or financial support	Children are aware of the stigma surrounding mental illness of parents so keep this a secret from others. (Cogan et al,2005)
Perhaps the cared- for person was a young carer so the role is normalised within the family environment A fear of service involvement and possible family separation	Some professionals concentrate fully on supporting the cared for person and don't consider the impact on the carer	The stigma around supporting certain conditions e.g addiction, mental health or HIV. Many families living with HIV fear breaches in confidentiality, and may be reluctant to access support for young carers because of this. (The Children's Society, 2018)
Lack of knowledge of support services that are available to help	Lack of visual prompts (e.g posters) to encourage identification	Stigma and embarrassment about providing certain types of care e.g. support to bathe or use the toilet
An expectation within certain cultures or groups that children should provide care and family support	Lack of a formal process of identification e.g entrance forms to schools	The notion of child carers is controversial; especially the idea that children aged 5 can provide care for a loved one.
Children may not realise that their role is different to their peers	Schools do not have time to dedicate support to young carers	Transgresses social norms of children as care-recipients and adults as care-givers and can be hard to understand
The perceived stigma around providing care for someone of a different gender. E.g. a daughter for her father	A misconception about a stereotypical young carer	As a society, we find it hard to discuss children providing carer



It's hard when my friends tell stories about going on trips, it's different (for me) because their siblings don't have the same disabilities.



**Young Carer**

CHAPTER

1

CHAPTER

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CHAPTER

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CHAPTER

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## How to Identify & Support Young Carers in Schools

- 29 Identification of young carers
- 30 Formal Identification of young carers
- 31 Understanding the role of the Young Carer Coordinator
- 33 7 ways to develop a whole-school approach
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- 37 What is a Young Carer Statement?
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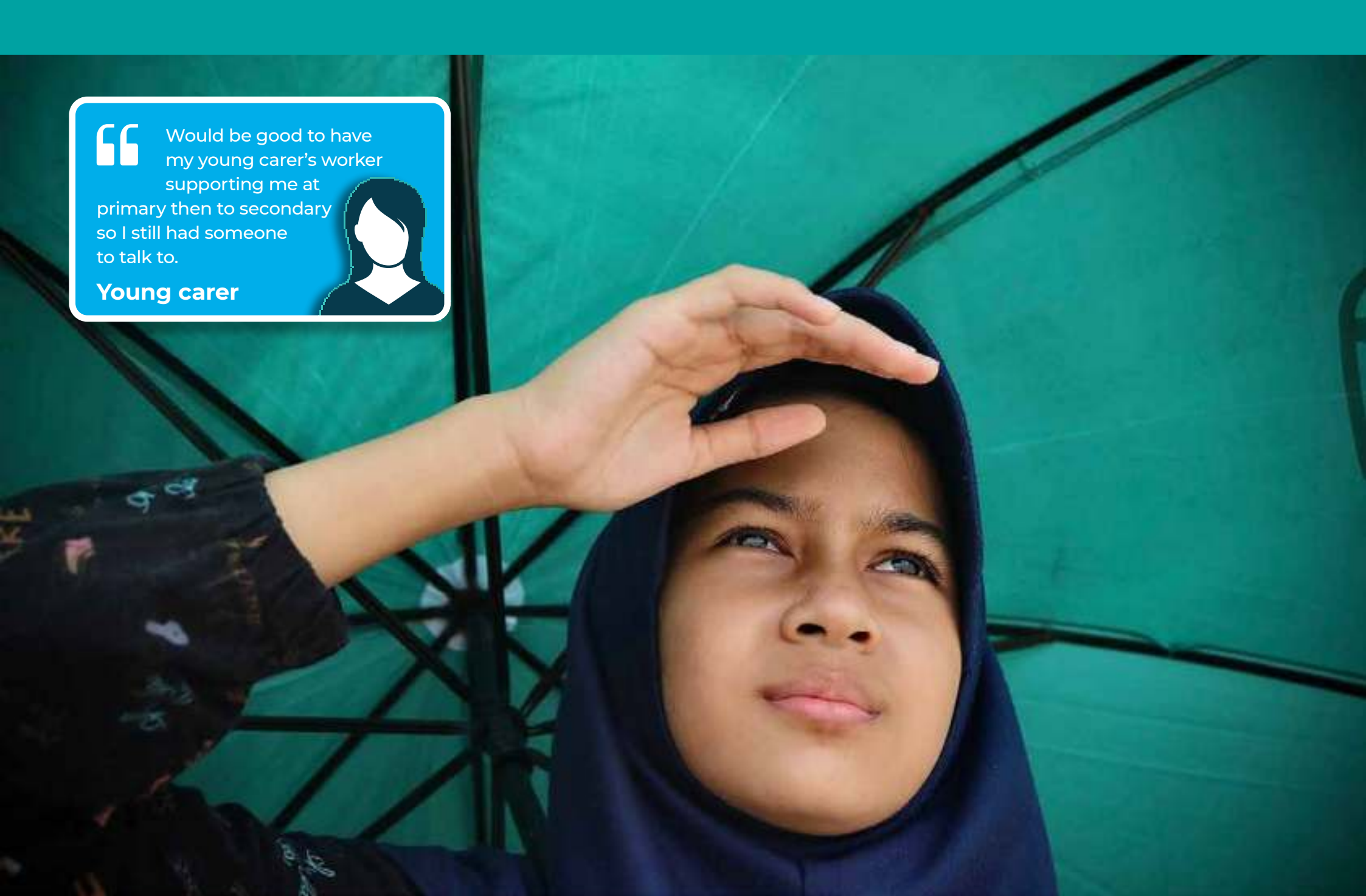




Would be good to have my young carer's worker supporting me at primary then to secondary so I still had someone to talk to.



**Young carer**





# Identification of young carers

Young carers are often challenging to identify because they keep their caring role hidden and secret or have been caring from such a young age, or for such a long time; therefore they do not realise that they are a young carer.

Many young carers fear they will become marginalised from peers or become involved in statutory investigation. For instance, they may worry the person they care for could get into trouble with the police or that they may become caught up in child protection proceedings or be taken into care.

There is a wide range of indicators that may not seem immediately applicable to young people in caring situations. The important thing is to be aware that behaviour may be masking an incredibly difficult and turbulent situation at home.

The development workers at Edinburgh Young Carers identified a number of consistent factors which young carers present:

Anxious, worried, concerned and wanting control

Lateness and frequent absence from school

Tiredness

A family member with a disability, illness, long-term health condition or drug/ alcohol misuse



What needs to be consistent is that they are asking the right questions and the correct pathway is in place to ensure these families get the specialist help they need.

**Robison, 2017**



I tried to tell a teacher and they didn't believe me. I never told anyone again.

**Young Adult Carer**



# Formal Identification of young carers

Professionals often speak about the difficulty when making a formal identification of a young carer. Below are a number of factors that we have seen exhibited by young carers.

However, it is important to recognise that children will not display all factors and may present some only at crisis point.

Behavioural difficulties – suddenly or ongoing	Very strong leadership skills-wanting to be in control of all situations
Academic performance below potential	Poor hygiene/ eating habits
Lack of concentration or focus	Physical illness
A sudden change of behaviour or attitude	Bullying
Negative attitude	Parents hesitant to be involved with school
Attention seeking behaviour	Fear of external services
Difficulties with social interaction	Not able to join in extra-curricular activities

In October 2017, Barnardo's conducted a YouGov survey of more than 800 teachers to better understand the current provision for young carers in schools. The survey found that 45% of secondary school teachers said they did not feel confident recognising a young carer. Over a third (36%) said they did not feel confident about referring any young carers they identified to external support services.



Edinburgh Young Carers run the School's Awareness Project with the aim of empowering teachers to identify young carers.

**Click here** to find out more about the project and how we can partner with your school.



## Let's Review

What responsibilities is Kate taking on within their family?

Consider the emotional and physical caring role that they are undertaking.

# Understanding the role of the young carer coordinator

It is best practice for every school to have a dedicated staff member responsible for identifying and supporting young carers. This could be a team of staff members who work together. Young carers report that they prefer the Young Carer Coordinator to be a teaching and pastoral staff member rather than a headteacher or member of SLT.

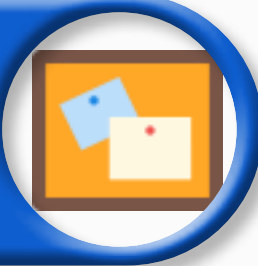
## Raise awareness

Work with EYC to raise awareness of young carers. Organise assemblies, invite EYC to speak, create posters and young carer checklists. Develop a whole school environment that is tolerant of family differences, caring roles, disability, mental health and drug and alcohol use.



## Create a young carer noticeboard

Use the noticeboard to identify the Young Carer Coordinator, discuss the role of a young carer in child-appropriate language and include information about support available for young carers; within the school and from external organisations. Contact EYC to receive a noticeboard template.



## Coordinate young carers policies

All young carers have the right to a Carers Statement. Offer all young carers a Young Carer Statement and develop a school Young Carer's Policy that reflects the young carers' needs. Create a policy that reflects the needs of young carers in your school. Refer to the digital downloads for a template policy and Good Practice Guidelines' for support



## Create and maintain partnerships

Maintain contact with statutory and voluntary services to provide support for young carers. Work with EYC to develop a young carer's card and work within your network of organisations to raise community awareness of young carers. Link in with your local young carers service to make referrals for all young carers to access a young carers statement'



## Identify and assess young carers

Work with EYC to raise awareness of young carers. Organise assemblies, invite EYC to speak, create posters and young carer checklists. Develop a whole school environment that is tolerant of family differences, caring roles, disability, mental health and drug and alcohol use.



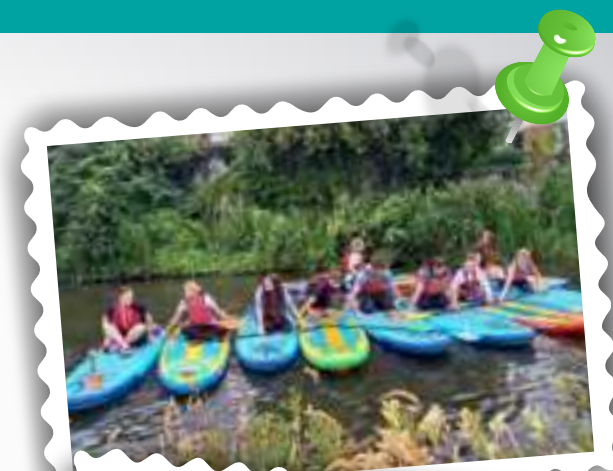
## Support young carers

Create a safe space for young carers to meet and share experiences. Encourage staff to check in regularly with young carers without singling them out to their peers. Ensure all staff are aware of supportive actions which can help and liaise with EYC to make referrals, organise groups and offer 121 check-ins.



## Organise professional development

Work with EYC to ensure all staff are aware of young carer identifiers and know how to support young carers. Organise CLPL from EYC, organise professional network meetings and consider taking part in the We Care Schools for Young Carers Award to develop best practice within your school.



Click here to further understand the role of the Young Carer Coordinator through our case study of Jennifer Goodall at Niddrie Mill.





# 7 ways to develop a whole school approach

Establishing a support framework for young carers based around a whole school approach is vital for removing the barriers to learning that young carers can often face. Providing the proper support at the right time will help young carers experience the same educational and life experiences as their peers.

1

## We care award

The award supports you in creating a whole school, sustainable approach that is manageable and works with all school staff and young carers. [Click here for more information.](#)



2

## Record young carers

Once a young carer has been identified, they should be registered on SEEMIS; this will ensure that they access the support they are entitled to.

3

## Whole staff awareness

School nurses can help by asking pupils if anyone at home is poorly and if they help look after anyone at home. Receptionists or admin staff are often the first contact for young carers. Ensure they are carer aware and deal with lateness or missed schooling sensitively. They can also be key to identifying hidden young carers.



# 4

## Tolerant approach

The school should promote tolerance of disability and mental illness. Bullies often use derogatory words to describe young carers' family members. A peer-led approach to bullying can help. Challenge bullying or isolation of young carers and help them integrate into existing groups run in the school.

# 5

## Consider access

Support parents with mobility problems when arranging visits to the school and attending school events, for example, ensuring premises are wheelchair accessible. Maintain regular phone contact with parents unable to come into school.

# 6

## Flexibility

Adult carers are entitled to flexible working arrangements to help them provide unpaid care. Therefore, children should be able to access this in school. Encourage all staff to be clear and flexible about deadlines. Also, consider a blended learning approach which means young carers can be with their loved ones on difficult days but still learn. We hear from young carers that this makes a massive difference and means they can continue in their education.

# 7

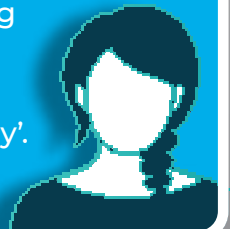
## Partnership working

Schools should have procedures in place for joint working between statutory and voluntary agencies in relation to young carers. They may need a multi-agency approach with liaison workers from education welfare, health and social services. Teachers and schools are not alone in identifying and supporting young carers – there is plenty of help and support available for staff.



I wish my school “flagged” that I am a young carer on the register, so if I am late I don’t have to explain why!

**Young adult carer**



# We Care Award



The We Care Schools for Young Carers Award recognises and rewards good practice around identifying and supporting young carers in schools across Scotland.

Run by Edinburgh Young Carers, but with support from young carer services across the country, We Care aims to encourage schools to develop their skills and experience in working with young carers.

By developing approaches, policies and regular self-evaluation, schools taking part in We Care will ensure that young carers are supported in achieving their identified personal outcomes and the barriers they may be facing to accessing a full education will be reduced or removed.

## Award themes

The We Care Schools for Young Carers Award encompasses five themes which encourage schools to evaluate and develop their practice and policy in working for, and with, young carers and their families:

- 1 Awareness and Understanding**
- 2 Identifying and Assessing**
- 3 Supporting**
- 4 Listening and Involving**
- 5 Working Together (Policy Development and Partnership Working)**



To register your school for the **We Care Award** contact [Jennifer.lewis@youngcarers.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.lewis@youngcarers.org.uk) or **click this link.**



We have identified around 30 young carers in our school since starting this award.

**We Care Award**  
**'We Recognise' school**



## Award Levels

We Care is a flexible and personalised programme which recognises that each school is on a different journey to supporting young carers, and so there are three different award levels that you can achieve.

Each level will provide opportunities to challenge and further your school's practice in each of the themes above. Click here to discover the benefits of taking part in We Care.



I feel that it (We Care Award) has given our Young Carers a sense of belonging in the school and how we value their role as a Young Carer.

Lisa Campbell,  
Doune Primary School



**Recognising Your Carers** is the starter level award which encourages schools to evaluate their baseline practice, and develop and adopt new ways of working which will commence the beginning of a journey to improving the young carer experience within schools.



**Developing Young Carers** is our intermediate level award for schools who have already achieved "Recognise" or are applying for them together. On your route to this level of We Care, schools will begin to build whole school approaches to identification and support of your carers, improving the health, wellbeing and educational attainment to students with caring responsibilities.



**Excelling for Young Carers** is the highest level award for schools who have already achieved 'Recognise' and 'Develop' or are applying for them together. In achieving this award schools will have been supported through a pathway which will initiate sustainable change for the benefit of young carers and their families and which young carers will have been involved in the co-production of.



# What is a Young Carers Statement?

**For detailed guidance and further information about young carers please contact your local young carers service.**

The Carers (Scotland) Act made provisions for a young carer Statement to be prepared for young carers who are under 18, or 18 and still at school.

However this is entirely optional and a Young Carers Statement should not be considered 'proof' of a young person's carer status. A Young Carer Statement is a written record of a young carer's personal goals, caring responsibilities, and how they impact their ability to achieve their goals. All young people with caring responsibilities should be offered a Young Carer Statement. However, this is entirely optional.

A young carer who opts out of completing a Young Carer Statement can request to complete one at a later date. The Local Authority has overall responsibility for the preparation of Young Carer Statements and this has been contracted to the Edinburgh Young Carers Collaborative.

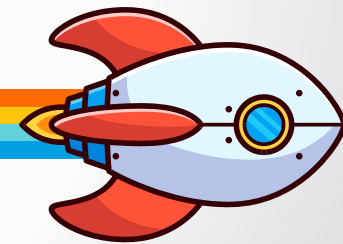
The Young Carer Statement replaces the Assessment of Needs process and will contain information about:

The extent the young carer is able and willing to provide care and whether the caring tasks are appropriate

The impact of caring on the young carer's wellbeing (referencing SHANARRI)

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



## What are the benefits of Young Carer Statements?

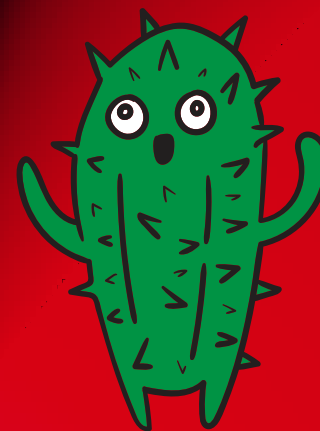
They identify a young carer's individual needs, personal outcomes and highlight the support needed to ensure that young carers can achieve their goals



They empower young carers to have a say in their caring responsibilities



They can provide early and preventative supports to avoid caring roles or situations reaching crisis level



By agreeing on clear goals and the support required to achieve them they can lead to better outcomes for young carers

01

02

03

04

05

They can highlight emergency and future care planning as well as a foundation for transition



## Who do I contact about completing a Young Carer Statement?

If a young carer has agreed to complete a Young Carer Statement and would like an agency specialised in working with young carers to do this then you can contact one of the agencies below:



## Can a young person choose who completes their young carers statement?

Yes, any professional can complete a statement for a young person.

Guidance for completing the Young Carer Statement is available from Edinburgh Young Carers website or through contacting your local young carers project.

## How do Young People access Young Carer Statements?

A young carer can self-refer or a referral can be made on their behalf through the self referral form found at this link.

A Young Carer Statement can be completed by Edinburgh Young Carers (North East and South East localities), Capital Carers (North West locality) or Space (South West locality).



## Does Parental Consent need to be sought to complete a Young Carer Statement?

No. Any young person aged 5-18 that wishes to have a Young Carer Statement is entitled to one and the local authority has a duty to accommodate this. As such, parental consent is not required if the child is able to understand what the statement is and is, therefore, able to give informed consent but good practice suggests making parents aware that the statement is being completed and the process. Some young carers may wish their parents to receive a copy of their Young Carer Statement, but this will be their choice.



Click here for more information about a Young Carers Statement. This leaflet is aimed at young people/children



Click here to make a referral for a Young Carers Statement



# Case Study 1 – Support Offered

Here we will outline the support plan to enable both case studies to develop more social bonds, lower isolation and feel more confident.

EYC support	School support	Social Work support	Other agencies
Referral to Drug and Alcohol Team. Worker makes contact with the family and begins to build a relationship.	Provide extra support for Katy's learning through their PSA	Chair regular child's planning meetings to ensure the right support is in place and the family are making progress	Refer mum to the local counselling service at Health in Mind.
Katy meets a Development Worker in school for a Young Carers Statement which highlights Katy's high level caring role and helps to identify their support needs.	Include Katy in their Nurture group to support their emotional well-being and help to build age-appropriate friendships	Complete an Assessment of Need	Provide funding for clothing and support for mum to access the local food bank
Katy continues to meet Laura 1:1 in the community. Laura uses a therapeutic, nurturing approach and becomes a trusted and dependable adult.	Ensure mum has completed school lunch forms and that Katy is getting extra if needed.	Refer the family to the Maximise service which supports mum with a benefit check (to ensure she is getting all she is entitled to) and Shelter Scotland to support with the housing situation.	
Katy attends the fortnightly 9-12 respite group with Gary. Here they get the opportunity to go on exciting outings with other young carers and have new experiences.	Continue to monitor their attendance and collect Katy from home on days mum is unable to leave the house	Support mum with strategies and routines at home including support from the GP to reduce her cannabis use.	



# Case Study 2 – Support Offered

Here we will outline the support plan to enable both case studies to develop more social bonds, lower isolation and feel more confident.

EYC support	School support	For family/cared for person	Other agencies
<p>Garden visit to speak to the family and make initial contact</p> <p>Playground support for Jake to become comfortable with the service</p> <p>Offer a Young Carers Statement</p>	<p>Funding, to support Rachael to have a dedicated PSA at school</p>	<p>Referral to Multi Cultural Family Base with family consent</p>	<p>Health in Mind referral</p>
<p>Offer a counselling referral</p>	<p>Recognise that Jake is a child/pupil first and foremost at school and should not be taking on a caring role whilst in school</p>	<p>Referral to Sickle Cell Society</p>	<p>Funding, to support Rachael to have a dedicated PSA at school</p>
<p>Support school to come up with a plan to support Jake in school</p>	<p>Jake to be part of the structured support working with the teacher/PSA to spot the signs when Rachael is in crisis</p>		<p>CAMHS referral</p>
<p>Possible respite support, with a focus that he can do other things or leave his sister and she will be ok (with Jake's consent to receive respite support)</p>	<p>Use his interests in school to divert his focus away from his sister and gentle reminder that teachers will keep his sister safe.</p>	<p>Support mum with strategies and routines at home including support from the GP to reduce her cannabis use.</p>	<p>Highlight Jake as a young carer to the family GP so he is updated about Rachael's condition and feels involved in her treatment</p>
<p>Small groups to build confidence in making friendships</p> <p>Referral for additional wellbeing support with Edinburgh Young Carers e.g Happy Heeds or It's Okay Not To Be Okay</p>	<p>Provision of a safe place &amp; adult he can go to when things are tough at home</p> <p>An offer of soft starts at school if Jake has had a tough morning</p> <p>LIAM support if appropriate</p>		



**93%** of survey respondents said that Edinburgh Young

Carers made them worry less.



**EYC Service  
Evaluation 2022**



CHAPTER

1

CHAPTER

2

CHAPTER

3

CHAPTER

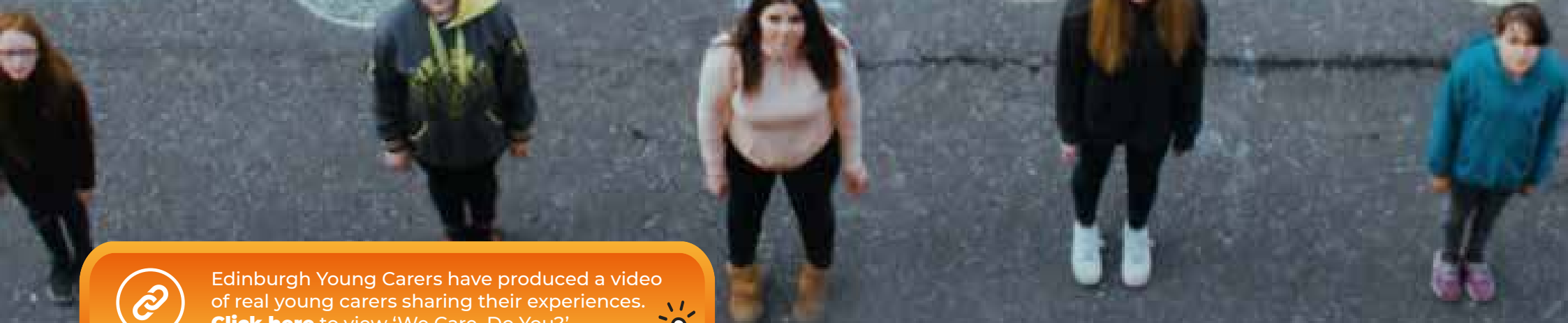
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## EDINBURGH YOUNG CARERS

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WE CARE  
DO YOU?



Edinburgh Young Carers have produced a video of real young carers sharing their experiences. **Click here** to view 'We Care, Do You?'





# Who are Edinburgh Young Carers?

Edinburgh Young Carers (EYC) is a voluntary organisation, established as a local young carers project in North East Edinburgh in 1994, and expanded to offer support to young carers city-wide in 1996.

We are now one of the largest dedicated young carers organisations in Scotland. We work with young carers across Edinburgh, from ages 5 to 25 years old. We work with around 400-450 young carers per year.

Our mission is to make a positive difference in the lives and futures of young carers, through support, information, respite, and personal development and training. Our services are young-person-centred and inclusive, and include providing practical and emotional support and information for young carers.

The support we provide is age-specific and determined by priority and need. Young carers we work with have an individual Development Plan, which enables our support to be tailored to the young person through a bespoke plan and allows us to measure their progress against their personal outcomes.

EYC provides the following support and services to assist young carers to cope with the stress and complexities of their family situation.

## Services offered

Information and advice

In-house counselling

Group and 1-1 support  
(and residential)

Partnership delivery

Young adult carers support  
and transition support

Research work

A dedicated Drug and  
Alcohol team

Young Carer Forum

School Awareness Raising  
Project and  
professional training

Young Carer Statements



It's important for the kids we support to know that we are there for the sibling young carers, not for the sibling. We might be the only part of their life that works like that for them



**Professional interview**

# EYC awareness raising in schools

Edinburgh Young Carers has developed a unique 'offering' to schools, enabling all school staff to become carer aware and for procedures to be followed when leading to the wider recognition of hidden young carers.

## Whole-school CLPL

Individual 'Young Carer Awareness CLPL' - We work with your SLT to understand the needs of your school and offer an individualised workshop for all school staff.

[Click here to find out more about our CLPL opportunities.](#)

## Young carer noticeboard

Having a dedicated space for young carers to go to for information and support can make a huge difference. EYC have created a free noticeboard that can be tailored to your school's colours and logo.

## In-person/ virtual assemblies

It is vital that young carers are given 'the words' to identify themselves to a trusted adult. Our 20 minute assemblies or 45 minute classroom workshops encourage more children to self-identify.

## Young carers policy support

We can work with your school to develop an individual young carers policy in partnership with children and staff

[Click here to see a sample Young Carers Policy.](#)

## Support and guidance

Not sure if you have identified a young carer or how you can support them further?

**Contact us, and we can offer guidance and support.**

## Drop In's

A member of staff can come into the school to openly allow young people to speak to a worker about their caring role and how they can access support.

## Information

We have a variety of videos, posters, leaflets and infographics to encourage greater awareness in your school



After the virtual assemblies, our pupils were able to reflect on their own circumstances and from this, we were able to make several referrals to Edinburgh Young Carers. Staff awareness was also raised and there has been much more dialogue between staff about supports and strategies we can offer to our children.

Thank you  
Edinburgh Young Carers.

**Niddrie Mill  
Primary School**



Edinburgh Young Carers works in South East and Central Edinburgh

**Click here** to find out more about young carers services throughout Edinburgh



# CLPL Opportunities

## Edinburgh Young Carers can deliver bespoke training in schools within the north/south-east and central locality

As part of the Schools Awareness Project we can work with your school to deliver whole-school training to identify hidden young carers. We can offer training from 60 minutes to a whole morning and can cover all or some of the following learning areas:



After taking part in the training with Edinburgh Young Carers, I will be more acutely aware of the possibility of a young person being a young carer and feel more confident that I could approach this and get them supports.

Training recipient



## Edinburgh Young Carers offers Young Carer Awareness Training to any professional who wants to learn more about young carers.

Our training is free and can be accessed virtually through Teams/Zoom or can be arranged in-person.

Our training can be tailored to your individual requirements and specific to your setting. We aim to make our training user-friendly, informative and full of 'top tips' which can improve your practice instantly! We offer young carer awareness training to any professional with the opportunity to identify a hidden young carer.

### Sectors currently covered:

01

Healthcare

Pharmacy

05

02

Schools/Colleges/  
Universities

Third-sector and other  
charities

06

03

Newly Qualified  
Teachers/ Probationary  
teachers

Local Government

07

04

Social Work

Housing Associations

08



The training was a fabulous refresh and will prompt me to have more conversations with pupils and families' training recipient.



Primary school



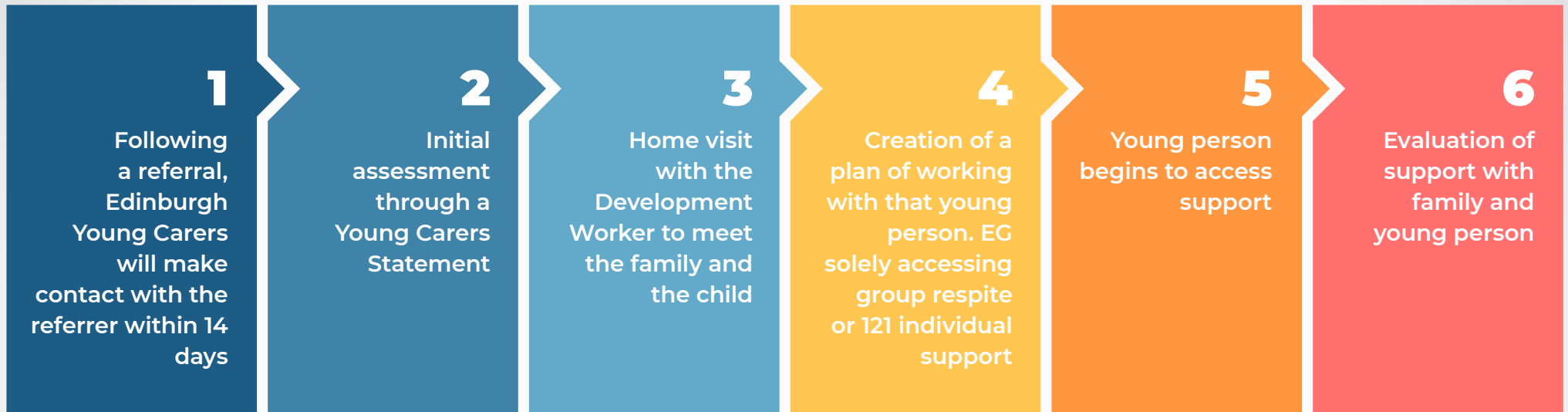
Please contact us to discuss training for your individual sector.





# Making a referral to Edinburgh Young Carers

## Overview of our service



### Let's Review

Katy's mum is hesitant to make a referral to a young carers service.

What information do you think would make mum more confident to allow Katy to join a service?

# Age and Stage Information and Support

After a successful referral is made to the project, the young person will be designated a Development Worker based on their age and/or needs.

Typically we offer fortnightly respite in the form of group activities which are chosen by the children and which give the children the opportunity to meet other young carers with similar experiences, make friends, have fun and get a break from their caring role.

There is no cost to families and the young people are transported to and from group by taxi to maximise the time they have and help break down barriers to participation.

Finally EYC offers young carers the opportunity to get a more substantial break from caring in the form of small residential retreats. These 1-2 night trips provide young carers with the chance to learn new skills, travel to new parts of the country and build relationships with staff and peers.

In addition, we offer 'Key Working' which allows the child to have a dedicated adult

to meet with and discuss their worries and concerns. This provides a safe, trusted adult in a stable environment who has the best interests of the child at the heart of all actions. Our Development Workers also partner schools and social work to attend child planning meetings, complete GIRFECS and make referrals to other organisations for wider support.



**Click here** to find out more information about the Edinburgh Young Carers counselling service and our remote offer.



# AGE AND STAGE SUPPORT

## 5-9 year olds

EYC has recently piloted a well-being project for the 5-9s, 'Happy Heids', which provides our more vulnerable young carers the chance to focus on positive coping strategies within a small group and therapeutic, nurturing environment.

The main aim of the 5-9 service is to provide them with opportunities to be a child and not just a young carer. This involves creating a safe space in which our young carers can build their confidence, relax, play, be listened to, and connect with others.

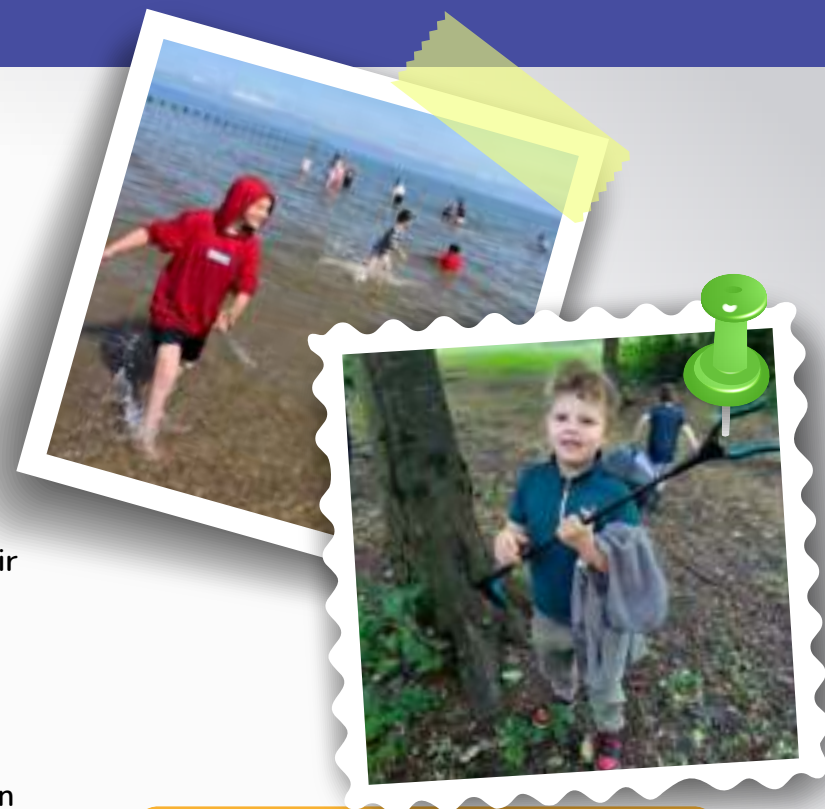
## 10-12 year olds

We offer peer support projects on themes such as wellbeing which focuses on crisis prevention rather than intervention, as well as supporting our young carers to successfully move onto high school.

## 13-15 year olds

There is a focus on creativity around areas such as dance, drama and music. The focus on creativity has allowed young carers to experience a wide range of creative art that had been closed to them. Several young carers have moved onto college or university to pursue photography, writing and drama, indirectly due to a spark of interest being ignited during these regular "taster" activities with EYC.

This is alongside some young carers pursuing a career in the outdoor adventure industry, again indirectly, sparked by EYC's regular outdoor adventures.



Would you like to find out more about how you can support our work.

**Click here** for information about how we use your donations





# Young adult carers

## What does the 16+ service do?

The 16-25 service offers respite groups and 1:1 support for young adult carers.

## Which activities do we offer?

Fortnightly respite groups, small coffee dates, 1:1s, transitional support into adulthood & access to counselling.



## Specific aims/projects





# Young Carers Forum

The Edinburgh Young Carers Collaborative are committed to giving young carers and young adult carers their say on how services are designed and delivered.

As such, plans are underway to reintroduce the Young Carers Forum, a group that will meet regularly to share their feedback, ideas, suggestions and, most likely, pizza. As well as helping ensure that services are relevant, well delivered and fun, it will also be an opportunity for participants to meet and work alongside their peers and feel that their voices are heard.

The format is yet to be decided, and will ultimately be decided by participants themselves. However if you'd like to know more, or know a young carer or young adult carer who might be interested in attending, please contact Jimmy.

Email: [jimmy.gordon@youngcarers.org.uk](mailto:jimmy.gordon@youngcarers.org.uk)

Tel: 07597 575 688



Would you like to find out more about how you can support our work. **Click here** for information about how we use your donations.



# Drug and alcohol / substance misuse team

Edinburgh Young Carers, and in particular the Drug and Alcohol service, seeks to make a positive difference in the lives and futures of young carers through **support, information, respite and personal development and promoting resilience.**

EYC support can be considered a protective factor in the life of children and young people affected by parental substance misuse, which will make it more likely for the child to develop resilience.

The negative impact of problems arising from parental substance misuse (particularly alcohol and illegal drugs) on children, young people and young adults has been well documented and has been acknowledged in two key government publications.



“ 40,000-60,000 children in Scotland are affected by their parents’ drug use.

**The Scottish Government, 2013**



“ The children described feelings of hurt, rejection, shame, sadness and anger over their parents’ drug problems. They often expressed a deep sense of absence and isolation which was conveyed in the often used phrase that their parents were not ‘there for them.

**Hidden Harm, 2003**



Download the alcohol harm reduction strategy for England document



Download Hidden Harm - Responding to the needs of children of problem drug users document



# Family Disruption

As a consequence of drug and alcohol use

The service offered by Edinburgh Young Carers is unique and for many families, we are the only service dedicated entirely to supporting the child. We do, however, take a whole family approach and recognise the difficulties, challenges and trauma that can arise when drugs or alcohol play a negative role in family life.

Funded by- CashBack for Communities



Celebrating rituals such as birthdays or Christmas

1

Children or other members of the family taking on a parental role

2

Unpredictable routines

3

Communication issues between family members

4

Impact of social life and family members can become increasing isolated and fearful about bringing an outside person into the family situation

5

Financial- extra stresses can come with a job loss or redundancy and the pressure of purchasing alcohol or drugs

6

Increased risk of aggression or violence

7

# Negative childhood experiences

High levels of violence

1

Experiencing or witnessing neglect or abuse – physical, verbal or sexual

2

Poor and/or neglectful parenting

3

Inconsistency from one or both parents

4

Having to adopt responsible or parenting roles at an early age

5

Feeling negative emotions such as shame, guilt, fear, anger and embarrassment

6

Possible neuro developmental consequences of substance misuse in pregnancy (e.g. foetal alcohol syndrome) that may contribute to developmental delays or intellectual disability

7



Parents who misuse substances may have difficulty controlling their own emotions. Harmful and excessive drinking can contribute to child physical abuse .

Cleaver,  
Unell and  
Aldgate, 2011;  
Velleman, 2001





Young people affected by parental substance misuse are particularly vulnerable to mental health problems and developing problems with alcohol or drugs themselves.

For these reasons, the D&A service works with children and young people from the age of 5 to 25, offering the young people the possibility to establish a meaningful relationship with the same key worker for as long as they need the service in order to promote consistency and stability.

Staff work closely with school, social services and other organisations involved in supporting the family as a whole. Children and young people are often referred to other organisations such as YMCA mentoring, Sunflower Garden, Circle, The Green Team and Venture Scotland.

## Services we offer



### Individual support

The role of the development worker is to support the young person in developing social and life skills to promote positive decision-making and enhance self-esteem



### Life skills support

Life skills support groups will provide a comprehensive, holistic approach to effectively support young carers from problematic drug/alcohol households to access life skills learning. The group will focus on 3 main areas: literacy, coordination, and motor skills outdoors.



### Swimming group

The overall focus of the group is to provide effective swimming skills sessions to young carers who are unable to sustain swimming lessons due to financial constraints, chaotic lifestyles or specific learning/developmental issues



### Literacy group

The overall aim of this group is to support and encourage young carers from problematic drug/alcohol households to better engage with literacy and make books more accessible



### Other coordination/motor skills

Each year different coordination/motor skills group sessions will aim to support the specific needs of young carers with problematic parental drug/alcohol use



### Social/friendship skills support

Happy Heids was designed in response to a growing need for there to be a well-being focus in the work provided by Edinburgh Young Carers

# Edinburgh Young Carers Siblings Project

## Ask Me – I’m Here Too!

In summer 2021, Edinburgh Young Carers published a research paper into the lived experiences of young carers providing care for siblings with a long-term illness or disability. The need for this research came directly from the voices and stories of sibling young carers and their families; we were supporting more and more sibling young carers whose families were finding it difficult to access support elsewhere, and who were coming up against a lack of understanding from professionals.

Over a third of the young carers we support at EYC are caring for a sibling, and this figure rises to over 50% for our youngest young carers in the 5-9 years age group. Yet, sibling young carers and the roles they play in their family are often overlooked by professionals.

## What did our research tell us?

Sibling young carers almost universally struggled to get attention and space in their families: this could be due to the behavioural or health needs of the cared-for sibling, or not wanting to place an additional burden on their families.

Sibling young carers found it difficult to open up to friends for fear they would be seen as different or misunderstood; friends rarely spent time around at their house.

Experiences at school were a mixed bag for young carers, with some enjoying the time away from caring responsibilities, but others finding challenges in accessing support and time away if their sibling attended the same school

Being a sibling young carer had huge impacts on their emotional wellbeing and identity, especially as they grew in age; much of this stemmed from having limited freedom, choices or involvement in decision-making; many sibling young carers didn’t know who they were without their caring role.

Transitions were incredibly difficult for sibling young carers, in particular transitions into adulthood; sibling young carers told us they needed more support and advocacy at an early stage to manage life’s transitions.

Sibling young carers need early intervention supports, which can include access to respite and “me-time”, whole-family support, wellbeing supports and therapeutic interventions.

Sibling young carers want to be acknowledged and recognised for the valuable role they play in their families.



### Let’s Review

Jake is at risk of being a hidden young carer because of his sibling support role.

Why do you think siblings are often ‘forgotten’ young carers?

# What can we do to support sibling young carers?



All sibling young carers are entitled to a Young Carer Statement to help them identify their own personal outcomes and build the right support for them. Sibling young carers and their families need access to appropriate and timely support services for the cared-for sibling and other members of the family; we need to work in partnership and involving health and social care to meet their needs.

'Ask Me - I'm Here Too!' has worked with sibling young carers in Edinburgh to create eight recommendations for professionals working across Scotland to take cognisance of and adopt to better support sibling young carers.

**Please read the full report here to find out more,** and get in touch at [info@youngcarers.org.uk](mailto:info@youngcarers.org.uk) to discuss how you can get involved to support sibling young carers, including access to sibling-focussed training opportunities.

# Case study follow up

## Case Study 1 - Katy

Things remain challenging for the family but Katy's attendance has improved and they appear happier in themselves.

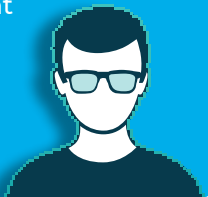
School report that they are more engaged in classes and appear less tired. Katy loves the EYC groups and has made some new friends, their follow up Footprint shows their caring role has reduced.

Mum says Katy is 'back to their old self'. and Katy have started spending quality time together doing 'Spa Nights'.

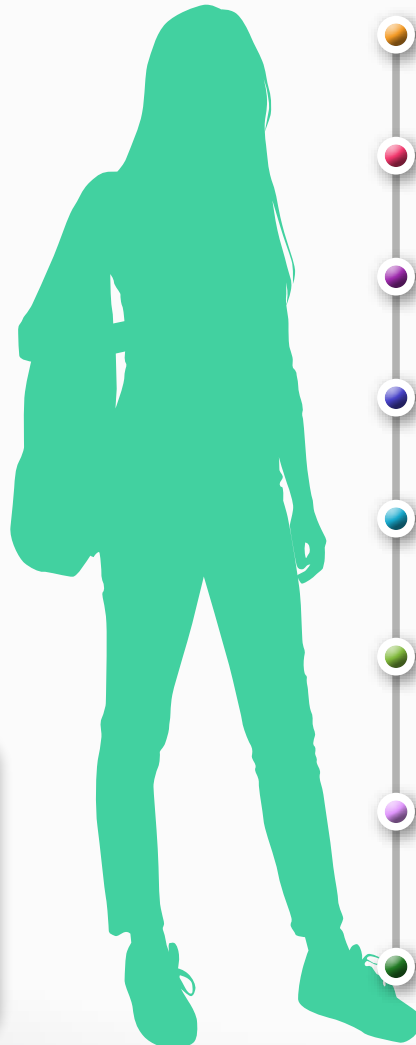


It has been absolutely amazing, I was really hesitant at first but I am so glad I joined.

Young Carer



## How our work made a difference



- Katy's attendance at school has improved
- Gradually over time, their caring role reduced
- Katy is more engaged with her school-work
- Katy is no longer coming to school tired
- They have made friends at Edinburgh Young Carers
- The family feel a lot happier knowing there is support available
- They look forward to coming to groups and have tried new activities
- Mum says Katy is 'back to their old self'. and Katy have started spending quality time together doing 'Spa Nights'.



## Case Study 2 - Jake

Following a successful referral, Jake's attendance has improved, and he is more sociable at school and has made more friends. After speaking with the GP.

Jake's sister has a dedicated worker for 25 hours a week. Jake now attends nurture/soft start and has a dedicated space he can go to in the class when he is worried about his sister and talk through his concerns.

Six months later, he now attends bigger groups at EYC and has made friends within the group. Jake is part of the planning process for his sister at school and feels more confident that she is safe in school.

Jake still focuses on his sister at school, but it is easier to refocus him on himself, and there are now regular planning meetings in place for the children.

In his Young Carer Statement, Jake mentioned that he would like to try drumming and EYC was able to access funding for some music sessions, which he is really enjoying.

## How our work made a difference

Jake's attendance at school has improved

He is more sociable and spends less time with his sister

Jake is attending a nurture group in school

He has access to 'soft starts' if he has a tricky morning

He has made a connection with the Young Carer Coordinator in the school and goes to them whenever he needs to talk

Six months on, Jake is attending groups with EYC

He plays an active role in planning the sessions

There are regular planning meetings for the children and Jake plays a role in these

Jake was offered a Young Carers Statement

In his statement, he said that he would like to try drumming and he has been accessing drumming lessons outside of school





**94%** of survey respondents said that Edinburgh Young Carers made them feel less lonely and isolated.

**Professional**





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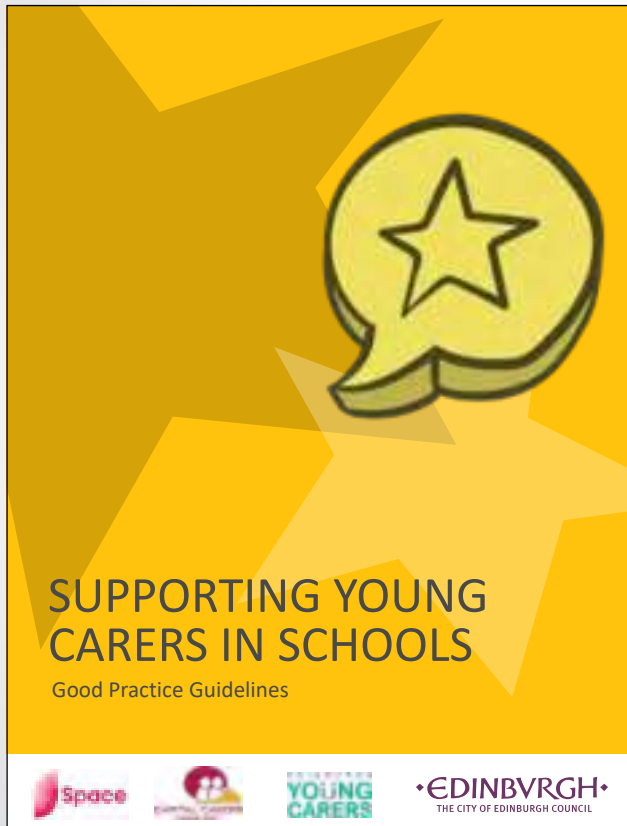






# Digital downloads

## Good Practice guidelines for schools



## How to use the guidelines in your school



## Example of a Young Carer's school policy



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[View PDF](#)

# Other Organisations



Our vision is that Scotland is the best place to grow up for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people. We offer a wide range of groups, activities, and events for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and their friends. Whether you want to meet other LGBT young people, gain skills and qualifications, or be more politically active, we've got something for you!



Edinburgh Food Project run eight foodbank centers across the North West, Central and East of the city. We are an independent charity that is part of, but not funded by, the Trussell Trust. The organization is powered by a team of over 200 volunteers who do everything, from collecting food donations in supermarkets, checking and sorting food in our warehouse, making up food parcels, welcoming clients to our foodbank centers with a cup of tea and a chat and helping them to pack up their food, ready to take home.

Contact: Edinburgh Food Project  
Warehouse & Office (no food distribution)  
Unit 12 New Lairdship Yards, Edinburgh. EH11 3UY



Shelter Scotland online advice pages are available to anyone with a homelessness or housing query, and our Helpline and Online Chat are open to those over the age of 16. The Edinburgh Community Hub also has a limited number of appointments each week for those over the age of 16 with urgent homelessness and housing issues in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas.

Agencies can refer to the Edinburgh Hub directly by emailing [EdinburghHub@shelter.org.uk](mailto:EdinburghHub@shelter.org.uk). This inbox is monitored between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and referrals are acknowledged within two working days.

Please note we operate a waiting list for appointments with an adviser, excepting emergency cases.







Stepping Stones supports children, young people, pregnant women and parents / carers living within North Edinburgh. Support ranges from one to one support to group work and covers a range of themes which are designed to support family's wellbeing and resilience. One to one support for primary aged children is available for those living within North Edinburgh.

Contact details - 0131 551 1632  
info@steppingstonesnortheastidnburgh.co.uk

Referral forms can be downloaded at  
www.steppingstonesnortheastidnburgh.co.uk/referrals



Established in 1991, the Rock Trust is one of Scotland's leading youth homelessness charities with operations in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and Perth. They work with over 600 young people between the ages of 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless each year. The Rock Trust's role is to advise, educate and support young people to build the personal skills and resources required to make a positive and healthy transition into adulthood, whilst avoiding or moving on from homelessness. All services are tailored to suit the individual needs of each young person, with an emphasis on creating choice.

To learn more about Rock Trust and the services they offer, visit their website at [www.rocktrust.org](http://www.rocktrust.org) or follow them on social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn.

To get in contact, call 0345 222 1425 or email: [hello@rocktrust.org](mailto:hello@rocktrust.org)



Space for Young Carers project (formally known as Broomhouse Young Carers project) aims to improve the quality of life for Young Carers in South West Edinburgh through group and individual support. They also provide information and advice to young carers to help build their confidence and self-esteem.

Please contact Space for Young Carers for more information at:  
Broomhouse Hub, 79-89 Broomhouse Crescent,  
Edinburgh. EH11 3RH

Tel: 0131 455 7731

Email: [amanda@spacescot.org](mailto:amanda@spacescot.org)

Email: [admin@spacescot.org](mailto:admin@spacescot.org)





Capital Carers (formerly known as North West Carers Centre) is a small grassroots organisation. Formed in 1997 by local Carers who wanted more local support. We are a non-profit making charity and have been providing tailor-made services to unpaid carers of all ages (5 – 90+) and the people they care for, for over 20 years.

We know that Young Carers do not always think of themselves as carers, but it is important that they are recognised and have access to the support they need. It is estimated that there are around 5,000 young carers in Edinburgh. Most of them are not recognised as carers and remain hidden, we would like to see them getting the support they need.

We offer support through; weekly groups, individual support, day trips and residentials, Young Carer Statements, Schools work, life skills, information and advice and advocacy support to Young Carers aged 5-18 and Young Adult Carers from 18-25 years old.



Richmond's Hope, supporting bereaved families Since 2003.

The charity provides a safe space for children to work through their grief both verbally and non verbally, to preserve memories of the person who has died, to explore their feelings, to develop coping strategies and to understand the impact the bereavement has had on their lives.

Richmond's Hope provides support for children and young people aged 4-18 years who have been bereaved.

Tel: 0131 661 6818



The Junction

The One-to-One Support Service at the Junction is a free and confidential service for any young person aged 12-21 who lives or goes to school in Leith or North East Edinburgh.

What is One-to-One Support?

Using the One-to-One Service gives you a chance to speak to a worker about what is on your mind. You can get weekly support for around 10 sessions and each session lasts about 50 minutes

Tel: 0131 553 0570





Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) provides listening services, information and support for anyone who needs to talk, including a web chat.

Tel: 0800 58 58 58



People Know How is a social organisation that delivery local projects around positive transitions, eliminating poverty and establish social innovation.

Tel: 0131 569 0525



Crossreach Support for children, young people and families. Various supports available to children and families with additional support needs.

Tel: 0131 657 2000



MCFB - Multi Cultural Family Base is an organisation based in Leith that works with children and families who are experiencing difficulties.

Tel: 0131 467 7052



Hub of Hope is a national database of mental health charities and organisations from across Britain who offer mental health advice and support.



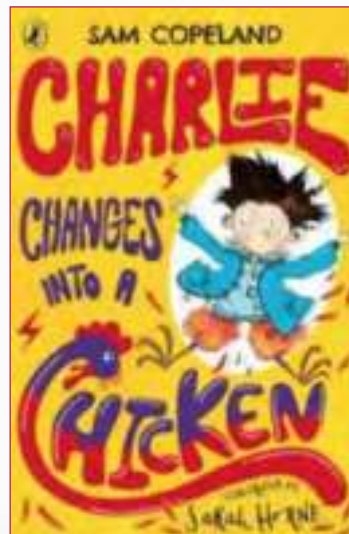
Citadel Youth Centre is a community based youth centre bse in Leith, since 1980. Support available in the Leith area around employability, family support and youth clubs.

Tel: 0131 554 0510



# Books, Videos and Resources

The books and stories on the following pages are suitable for primary aged children as part of supported reading or circle time discussions. They focus on issues of disability and difference, friendship, bereavement, siblings, caring and mental health.



This resources have been taken from 'Our Time' and 'CAMHS Resources'.

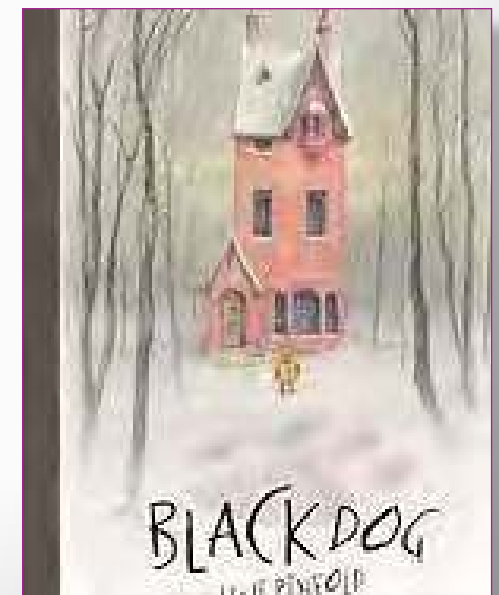
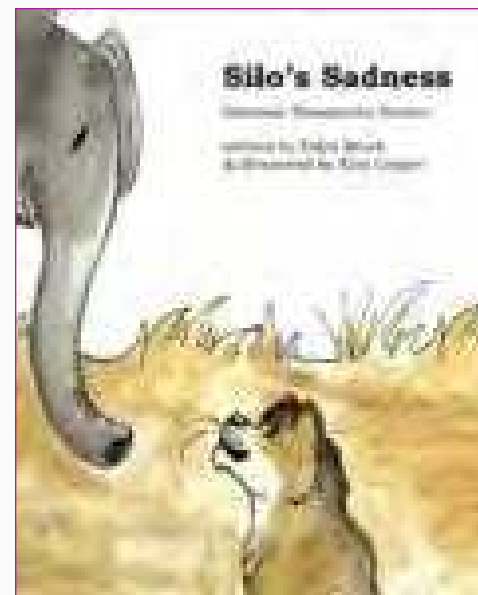
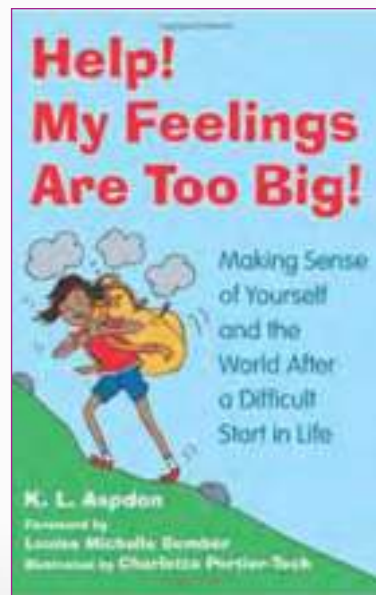
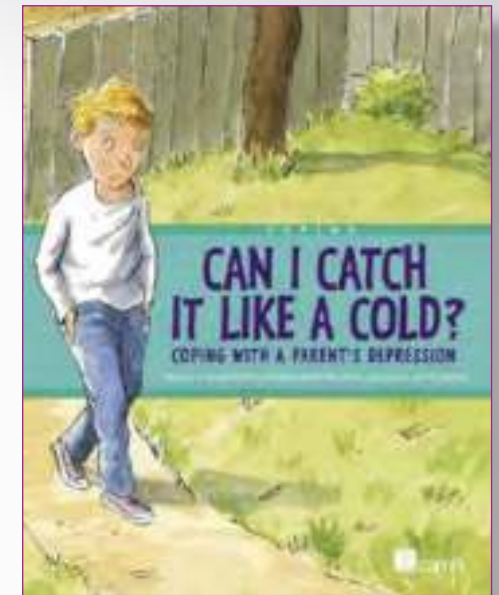
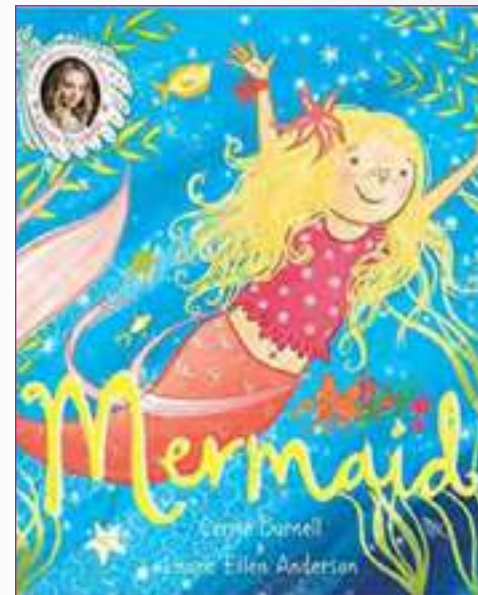
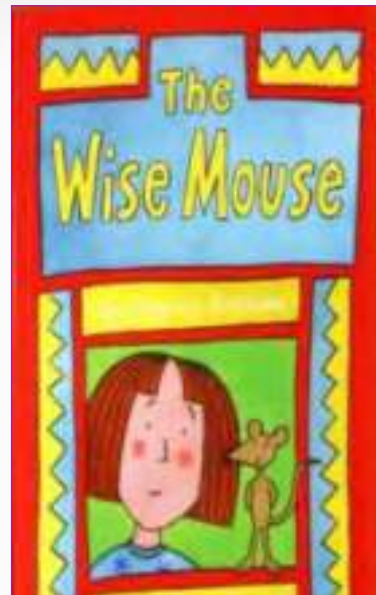
Visit Our Time



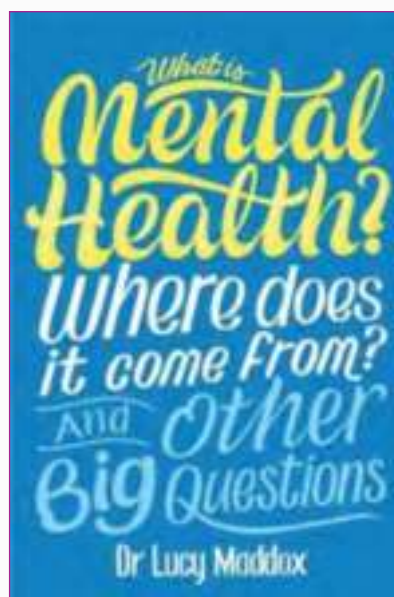
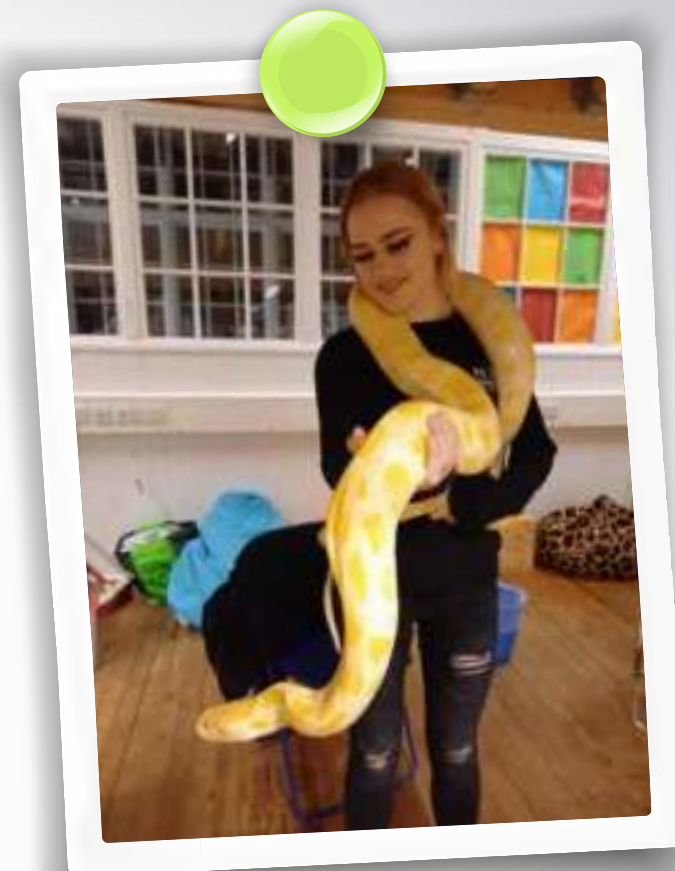
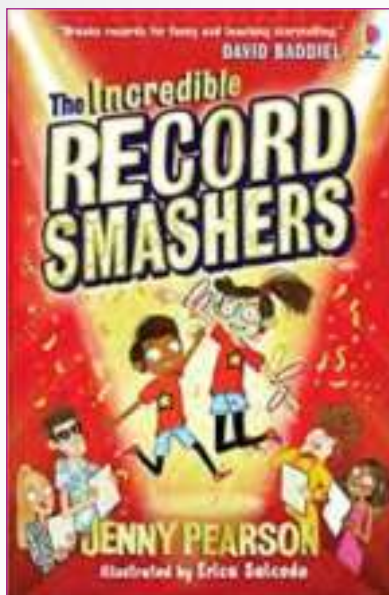
Visit CAMHS Resources








The books and stories to the right are suitable for upper primary/lower high school aged children as part of supported reading or circle time discussions. They focus on issues of disability and difference, friendship, bereavement, siblings, caring and mental health.





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Edinburgh Young carers have compiled a list of Apps that young people can download which can provide helpful hints and tips to improve their mental health



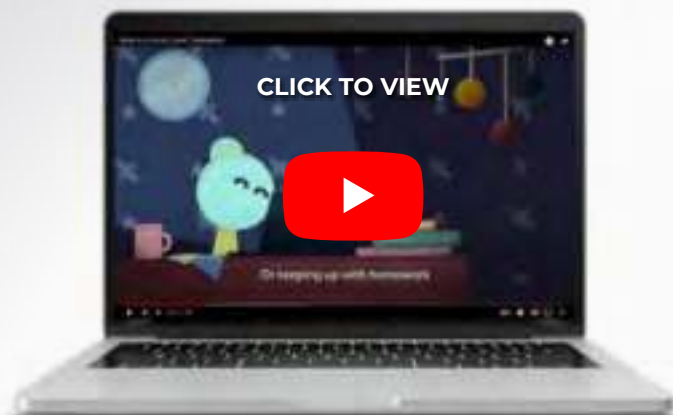
**100%** of respondents said that Edinburgh Young Carers helped them to become more confident.

**Professional**





### What is a young carer animation?



This is suitable for very young children to talk about caring and encourage children to identify as young carers.

### Out of the woods



This video is suitable for older primary children to encourage selfidentification.

### Who are Edinburgh Young Carers?



A video for children to find out more about Edinburgh Young Carers service.

### We Care do You?



Suitable for high school children to understand and hear the voices of young carers.

# Counselling service & remote offer

Edinburgh Young Carers free counselling service is open to young carers aged 10 to 25 who may benefit from support through talking, play and art therapy.

This is offered either as additional support to our core service or stand-alone and can be accessed by making a referral.

Counselling has proven to be an essential part of our service offering, as there are some things that a young person may not feel comfortable talking to anybody else about. Our trained counsellor has many years of experience in working with young people and offers a safe, confidential and impartial space to help young carers manage feelings of stress, fear, anger, grief, confusion and anxiety and develop life-long coping mechanisms to reduce anxiety and feel happier.

Visit Website 

Edinburgh Young Carers is still able to provide support to young people remotely. Examples of our virtual service includes:

- **Partnership working with organisations including Cool Creatures, Kids Kinga, Drama, Children's Library, Historic Environment Scotland, Yoga sessions**
- **Resources and activity packs through the post-Stem Packs, Mecoco self isolation pack, Art packs and Playdoh**
- **Increased social media presence including bake alongs, health and wellbeing tips, 'Pass the message', Gary's jokes**
- **Dance sessions to improve coordination and motor skills**
- **Weekly groups for all ages**





# Special thanks



Thank you to Capricorn Energy for supporting the production of this Toolkit.



Thank you to all the Young Carer Charities who provided vital information and Professor Saul Becker for his time in the production of this document.



Thank you to every young carer who provided their thoughts and feelings to aid the making of this document, and the whole team at Edinburgh Young Carers who supported the creation of this toolkit and the Young Carer Coordinators, particularly Jennifer Marr at Niddrie Mill Primary School who provided guidance and information.



# EDINBURGH YOUNG CARERS

Do you have any questions?

Suspect you have identified a young carer  
or want some support with what to do next?

Please reach out to your local young carers service.

## Edinburgh Young Carers

Visit Website 

Email 

## Space

Visit Website 

Email 

## Capital Carers

Visit Website 

Email 

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