



YOUNG WOMEN'S HUB

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Young Carers' Policy

August 2021

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Updated August 2021
To be reviewed August 2022

Policy statement

At the Young Women's Hub, we are committed to and fully recognise our responsibilities for supporting young carers; this policy has been developed to ensure that all adults are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of young carers. We will ensure timely and effective identification of students who are taking on a caring role.

Aims

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Young Carers approach to identifying, assessing, and supporting young carers.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

This policy is written with regard to the Children and Families Act 2014 – Section 96, the Care Act 2014 – Section 63, and the Care Act 2014 – Section 64. The Government recognises that schools have a vital role to play and are ideally positioned to identify young carers and to initiate support.

To reinforce this Ofsted recognises young carers as a vulnerable and disadvantaged group. It has strengthened its guidance in The Common Inspection Framework: Education, Skills and Early Years (Ofsted, 2015) stating that “in making judgements inspectors will pay particular attention to young carers”.

Policy aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of young carers.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school by increasing understanding and awareness of, and communication about, young carers.
- To ensure students at the school with caring responsibilities are identified and supported so they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy, and achieve their academic potential.
- To enable staff to understand how and when to request a statutory young carers assessment via the Early Help Assessment Tool.
- To encourage students who are impacted by parental ill-health, disability or substance misuse to self-identify and that the school works to a whole family approach and will signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support through the Early Help Framework via a MASH referral.

Raising awareness of young carers

Who are they?

A young carer is defined in law as a 'person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'. This includes 'providing practical or emotional support' (Children and Families Act 2014).

The Profile of Young Carers in Lewisham

According to the Census in 2013, there are 166,363, young carers in England. This is thought to be an underrepresentation of the true picture as many remain unknown to professionals. However, this is the best figure that we have.

According to the Office of National Statistics, in 2013 there were 13 million children in England. This means that at least 1.3% of children in England are likely to be young carers.

According to the Office of National Statistics (Sub-national Population Projection 2012) Lewisham has a population of about 290,000 people, with one in four residents aged below 19 years (72,500). Like all other local authorities, Lewisham does not have exact figures on the number of young carers in the area. Our estimates rely on the number of young carers who are registered with Carers Lewisham and known to the Social Worker for Young Careers.

4.1.4 Carers Lewisham have reported that they have 553 young carers registered with them. The Young Carers Social Worker (YCSW) has identified 195 young carers. The best we can estimate is that there are 842 known young carers in Lewisham or 1.16% of the overall population of children. This is slightly under the national profile where 1.3% of children and young people are thought to be young carers.

Age of young carers in Lewisham

Carers Lewisham have provided the following information overleaf about the age of carers. Although the age range is from 6-18, the majority of young carers are aged between the ages of 13-15.

What do young carers do?

The tasks and level of caring undertaken by young carers can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care, and the structure of the family as a whole.

Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.

These can include:

- Practical tasks – cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care – lifting or helping someone use the stairs.
- Personal care – dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Emotional support – listening, calming, being present.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Medication management.
- Looking after younger siblings.
- Helping someone communicate.

How does caring affect a child or young person's life?

- **Physical health:** Young carers are often severely affected by caring through the night, repeatedly lifting a heavy adult, poor diet and lack of sleep.
- **Emotional wellbeing:** Stress, tiredness and mental ill-health are common for young carers.
- **Socialisation:** Young carers often feel different or isolated from their peers and have limited opportunities for socialising. A quarter of young carers in the UK said they were bullied at school because of their caring role. Locally this was reported as high as 60% (Schools Anti-Bullying Audit).
- **Stable environment:** Young carers can experience traumatic life changes such as bereavement, family break-up, losing income and housing, or seeing the effects of an illness or addiction on the person they care for.

As a result, caring responsibilities have a significant impact on a pupil's learning:

- 27% of young carers of secondary school age in England experience educational difficulties or miss school (Dearden and Becker, 2004).
- If left unsupported, young carers can continue to struggle with school and have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (The Children's Society, 2013).
- Young carers are more likely than the national average not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) between 16 and 19. Of these, 75% had been NEET at least once (compared with 25% of all young people) and 42% had been NEET for six months or more (compared with 10% of all young people) (The Children's Society, 2013).

Why young carers can be hidden

- Their parent's condition is not obvious, so people don't think they need any help.
- They do not realise that they are a carer or that their life is different from their peers.
- They don't want to be any different from their peers.
- They believe that the school will show no interest in their family circumstances.
- They want to keep their identity at school separate from their caring role.
- It's not the sort of thing they feel can be discussed with friends.
- There has been no opportunity to share their story.
- They are worried about bullying.
- They worry that the family will be split up and taken into care.
- They want to keep it a secret and/or are embarrassed.
- They see no reason or positive actions occurring as a result of telling their story.

Possible Indicators that a child/young person may be a young carer

- Low attendance - lateness to or absence from school.
- Achievement – failing to reach their potential.
- Presentation –tired/ hungry/ unkempt.
- Not taking part in extracurricular activities.
- Social skills – under or overdeveloped.
- Isolated/ being bullied.
- Homework /coursework is late or poor quality.
- Anxiety/constantly worried.
- Behavioural problems and poor concentration.
- Physical problems.
- **No obvious signs – school may be a break from caring.**

Early help

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the right to a young carers' assessment, as well as the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards and student toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about young carers and how they can access support.

Young Carer's Assessment

- The school will utilise the Early Help Framework and if it appears a student has identified needs related to and associated with the negative impact of caring.
- Lewisham Young Carers is a borough-wide community-based service that ensures young carers and young adult carers are identified and can receive a carer's assessment, support plan and review under the statutory duty of the Council.
- The service can be contacted directly for advice and discussion about the pathway and if required guidance to complete the EHAT.
- Young carers themselves and /or family members are encouraged to contact the service to request the assessment and seek support.
- Once assessed the young carer will have an agreed support plan considering the needs of the whole family and aims to reduce the negative impact of caring on the child/young person.

Support at school

- The school will adapt its admissions process to provide opportunities for young carers and their families to self-identify and make them aware what support is available to them.
- The school will consider lunchtime detentions rather than after-school detentions.

- The school will allow young carers to use a phone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes to reduce the worry that they may have about a family member.
- The school actively seeks feedback from our young carers and their families to look at how we can improve the support we put in place for young carers.

Local Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health and this includes young carers. In Liverpool, there are organisations offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. These partners, which include Young Carers, deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

Whole school approach

We will ensure all appropriate policies reflect the needs of young carers and have mechanisms in place to monitor how many students are taking on a caring role and the outcomes for this group.

Supporting parents

School-Based Support - list the full range of support available to parents. This may include consideration for parents who have difficulty attending parents evening due to their ill health and/or disability.

Signed - Head of School

P. Wood

Signed - Chair

Anna Deane

