



Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Supporting Young Carers in Education



Who are Young Carers?

A young carer is someone under 18¹ who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol. They can also have emotional as well as practical caring responsibilities. The level of responsibility that is sometimes placed on young carers would normally be associated with that of an adult.

What do Young Carers do?

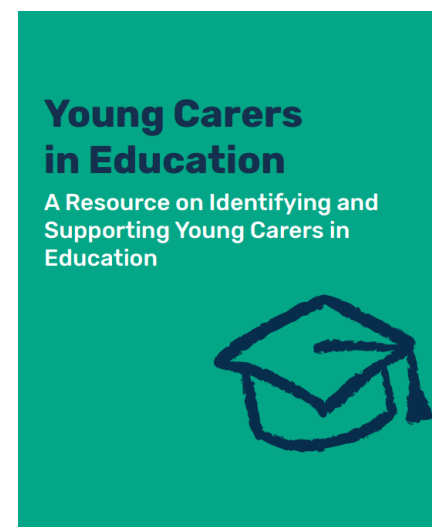
- Domestic activities - cleaning, laundry, washing
- Household management - food shopping, lifting, cooking
- Financial and practical management - withdrawing cash, paying bills
- Personal care - washing, bathing and giving medication
- Emotional care - making sure the person they care for is okay
- Sibling care - looking after a brother or sister
- Act as communication brokers for the cared for person, for example, those with language barriers

Some young carers look after more than one person and may have health issues of their own. Some young carers start giving care at a very young age and don't know they are carers. Other young people become carers overnight.

Hidden Young Carers

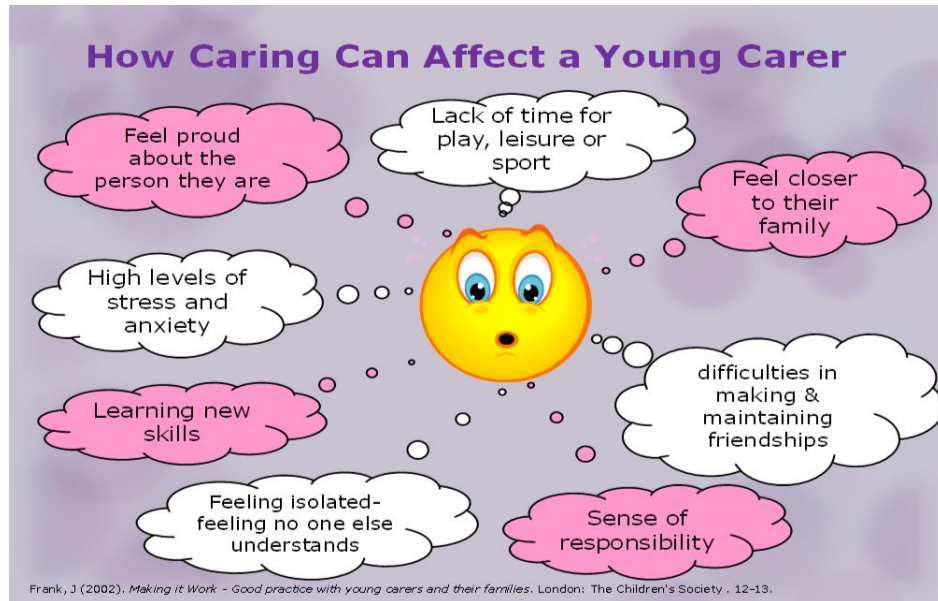
Often the condition of the person they care for is not obvious, so people don't think that the young person needs any help and/or the young carer:-

- does not realise that they are a carer or that their life is different to their peers.
- does not want to be any different from their peers or draw attention to their caring role.
- wants to keep their identity at school/college separate from their caring role.
- does not feel they can discuss with their friends.
- has not had an opportunity to share their story.
- is worried about bullying.
- is worried that the family will be split up and that they will be taken into care.
- wants to keep caring a secret and/or are embarrassed.



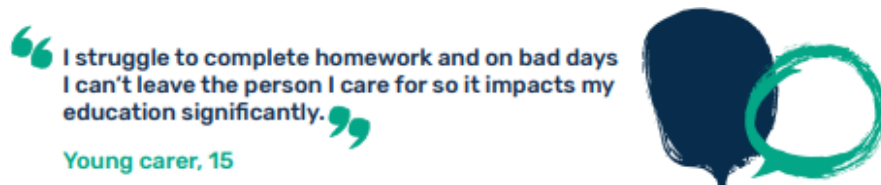
¹ [or has attained the age of 18 while a pupil at a school, and has since attaining that age remained a pupil at that or another school](#)

Impact of Caring?



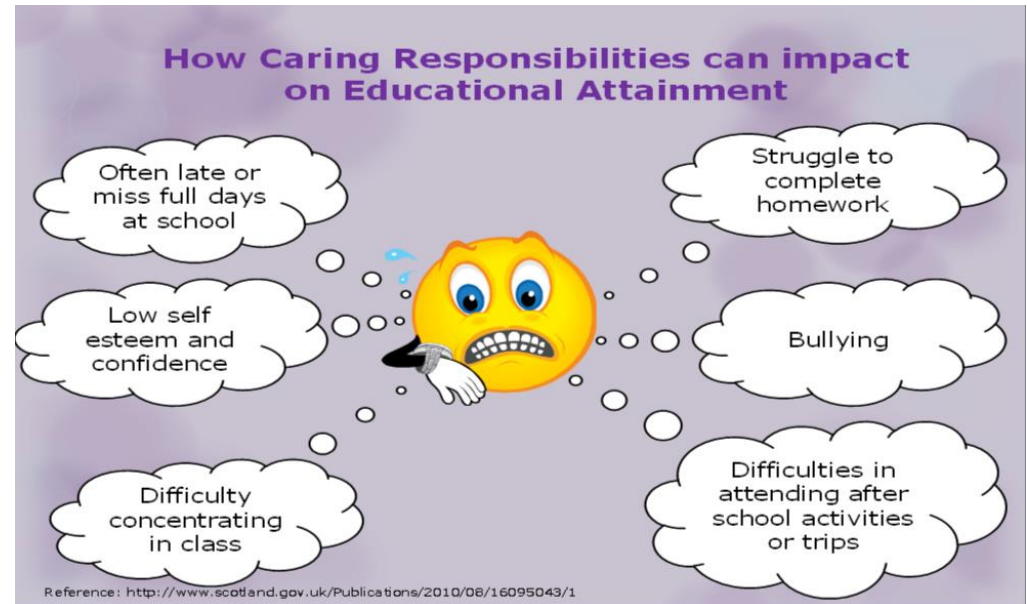
Diagrams provided by [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service](#)

The bubbles in pink illustrate some of the positive impact that caring may have on a young carer and the bubble in white illustrate some of the negative impacts.



Quote taken from Carer's Trust: [Young Carers in Education Toolkit](#) A Resource for identifying and supporting young carers

Why Young Carers can be vulnerable learners?



In addition to these factors young carers can:

- be distracted (for example, checking their phone often)
- be quiet/withdrawn
- be secretive about their home life
- get no time at home to study due to hectic or chaotic home life
- lack support for school activities such as parents nights/open days
- feel pressured to remain in a caring role and not progress onto further education

The Practical Bit for Practitioners - Ways to support Young Carers in education

Be aware

- notice young carers, get to know them, support them
- [Things Teachers Should Know About Young Carers](#)
- [Carers of Dundee – Support in School](#)
- You Tube: Perth and Kinross Young Carers Awareness [Podcast](#) 2020
- You-tube: [Echoes of Care – Being away from the person you care for](#)
- Education Scotland [Professional Learning webpage](#) – for practitioners, student teachers, and probationers

Raise awareness

- promote self-declaration
- share this [film](#) with your learners in a PSE class or assembly to encourage young carers to identify themselves

Change the narrative

- celebrate young carers and the valuable work that they do

- [BBC Scotland - The L.A.B Scotland, Young Carers Festival 2022](#)

Be creative

- in how we support young carers
- [PKAVS: Education Attainment Service](#)
- [Renfrewshire's Young Carers Packs](#)

Listen

- encourage young carers to have their say
- [Children's Parliament Survey – report summary](#)
- [Carers Trust Scotland Survey](#) – Being a Young Carer Is not a Choice
- You-tube: [A Message to Decision Makers](#)

Stay connected

- proactively engage young carers and their parents

Plan ahead

- for emergency situations and family support
- Exemplar: [Personalised Emergency Information](#) Sheet
- Exemplar: Perth and Kinross – [Young carers ID Card](#)
- [Signposting to Family Support Helplines](#)



The Legal Bit - Legislation, Policies and Guidance

The [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) was designed to support carers' health and wellbeing and help make caring more sustainable. The Act was implemented effect from 1 April, 2018 and measures include:

- a duty for local authorities to provide support to carers, based on the carer's identified needs which meet the local eligibility criteria
- a Young Carer Statement to identify carers' needs and personal outcomes
- a requirement for local authorities to have an information and advice service for carers which provides information and advice on, amongst other things, emergency and future care planning, advocacy, income maximisation and carers' rights

The key provisions are summarised in the [Carers' charter](#) which sets out carers' rights under the Act. (Further [links](#) to relevant legislation)

Young Carer Statement

Responsible authorities must offer a 'Young Carer Statement' to anyone they identify as a young carer. For any young carer who accepts this offer they must prepare a statement which should contain information about the young carer's circumstances and caring role such as:-

- the nature and extent of the care provided and the impact on the young carers wellbeing and day-to-day life
- the extent to which the young carer is able and willing to provide care
- whether the responsible authority thinks that it is appropriate for the young carer to be a carer for the person they care for
- emergency and future care planning, including any arrangements that are in place
- what 'personal outcomes' matter to the young carer in order continue to provide care, where that is appropriate, to have a life alongside caring, and to improve their health and wellbeing
- support available if they live in a different local authority are from the person you care for
- whether support should be provided as a break from caring
- support available locally
- any support which the responsible authority intends to provide to the young carer
- the circumstances in which the Young Carer Statement is to be reviewed.

When a young carer turns 18 their statement will continue until they are provided with an adult carer support plan. If they do not wish to continue providing care, they can choose not to have an adult carer support plan.

Who is responsible for preparing the Young Carer Statement?

The 'responsible authority' can be:-

- education, social work or a commissioned service
- the health board – where a young carer is a pre-school child
- another local authority – where a young carer attends a local authority school away from the area they normally live or
- the young carer's grant-aided school or independent school

Your local authority will be able to tell you who is leading on Young Carer Statements for your area ([COSLA – Links to Local Authorities](#)). When and how the young carer statement conversation is to take place will be agreed with the young carer. The responsible authority will normally provide a copy of the young carer statement to the young carer and any other person that the young carer requests, unless there is a reason that the responsible authority decide this would not be appropriate. For example, it might not be considered appropriate (or there may not be consent) to share sensitive medical information about the person who is cared for.

Key Policies and Guidance

Policy	Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 Carers' charter	Statutory Guidance Sets out carers' rights under the Act
Guidance	Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1 Children Missing from Education Home education guidance 2025	Guidance for promoting and managing school attendance Policy Guidance for home educating children
Other Relevant Legislation	Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 Additional support for learning 2017 (Code of Practice) Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024	Legislation for children's services provision Legislation for educational provision for any learner considered to have additional support needs including young carers Statutory guidance. Policy supporting families to receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. Statutory Guidance

Resources

Films for INSET awareness raising sessions	Carers Week: What's it like to be a Young carer? Scottish Young Carer's Festival 2024 Things teachers need to know about young carers Caring for Young Carers Webinar on Vimeo Caring for Young Carer's The importance of respite for young carers Young carer Thomas, 11, shares his caring story and highlights How important breaks are Life Transitions After School for Young Carers	Video by NES for Health and Social Care Staff Video by Young Carers
Professional Learning for Practitioners and Support	Carer's Trust Young Carers in Education Toolkit Education Scotland Professional Learning webpage Young carers support in Education Inclusive Education Engaging Parents and Families Young Carer Mental Health Toolkit Example of Local Authority Young Carers Policy	Professional learning and resources for educators. Young Carers Action Day 2024 Online learning resources on inclusive education A toolkit for practitioners South Ayrshire Young Carers Policy Link to pdf in folder
Signposting for Young Carers	Carers Trust Scotland Young Carer Package Young Carer Grant: Questions and Answers Enquire The Mix Childline	Links to local supports services Bundle of treats specifically for young carers Financial support for young carers Advice service about additional support for learning Support for under 25s.
Research and Data	Young carers: review of research and data – Scottish research There's nobody is there – no one who can actually help? Scottish Young Carers Festival 2025 Report	Insight into the daily lives and outcomes for Young Carers