

**Identifying and Supporting Young Carers
within your own setting**

Award Scheme



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Who are Young Carers?

Young carers are children and young people under 18 years old who provide unpaid care to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

Becoming a carer can happen to any one of us. According to UK statistics (BBC Report, 2018) 1 in 5 school aged children take on a caring role at home. This equates to just over 6000 children living in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.



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.

A young carer may undertake some or all of the responsibilities:

- **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 finances** – the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- **Medication management.**
- **Sibling care** - looking after younger siblings.
- **Helping someone communicate**

How caring can affect a young person

Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be associated with an adult. The child or young person does not necessarily have to be providing ‘hands on’ care to be recognised as a young carer. Even with services in place and other members of the family helping with the care, the emotional impact and restrictions due to illness or disability can still have an enormous impact on the young carer.

- **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 because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).
- **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.



How can your setting support Young Carers?

It is vital that Healthcare, Education and Support Agencies take an approach to identify and support young carers. This is essential because:

- One of the main reason young carers say they do not access support is **stigma**. A positive culture where young carers and their families are respected and valued by other young people, staff and the wider community is crucial to ensuring young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support.
- Many young carers are **hidden**. All staff need to know how to identify young carers to ensure they do not slip through the net.

A young person with caring responsibilities may self-identify to any member of staff whom they feel they can talk to and share their worries and concerns

All staff need to be aware of the internal process for sharing information about a young carer. This will help ensure that information is only shared with the appropriate consent and with a view to guaranteeing that a young person does not have to repeat their story several times



You might not think there are many young carers within your setting, but young people with caring responsibilities are not always easy to identify.

Identifying and Supporting Young Carers Award Scheme

RBWM Family Action is committed to making sure that caring is a positive experience for all their young carers. While they continue to provide care, young carers should be able to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. We are delighted to be able to offer Healthcare, Education and Supporting Agencies the opportunity to partner with our Identifying and Supporting Young Carers Award Scheme.

The scheme is focused on helping you to identify and support young carers within your own setting.

There are two elements to the Awards Scheme and when the criteria in each element is met, your setting will be able to gain a Silver or Gold award. These awards are to celebrate the ongoing commitment to young carers.



A young carer's family situation may change rapidly and ongoing formal and informal monitoring is therefore important.

Identifying and Supporting Young Carers Award Criteria

SILVER AWARD



- Nominate a Young Carers Champion/s within your organisation, and email their contact details to rbwm.yc@family-action.org.uk
- Young Carers Champion to attend the DHSC's Train the Trainer course, and subsequent reflective support sessions facilitated by Family Action Young Carers
- Sign a 'Working Together Agreement' with Family Action Young Carers, including a procedure to follow when referring a young carer to Family Action for a Young Carers Assessment
- Deliver Young Carers Awareness Training within your staff team and with young people
- In staff teams, identify young people who may be taking on a caring role at home

GOLD AWARD



In addition to the Silver Award criteria:

- Deliver frequent Young Carers Support Groups or Drop In sessions (minimum of 1 per half term)
- Liaise regularly with Family Action staff through individual support and Reflective Sessions with other Young Carer Champions to evaluate, support, advise and share ideas and resources.