

Centre

Supporting Young People

33

SECONDARY SCHOOL YOUNG CARERS PACK:

*Celebrating and Supporting
Young Carers in your School*



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Introduction to Centre 33

Centre 33 is a highly regarded local charity, with a proven track record of supporting vulnerable children and young people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Founded in 1981, our vision is that every young person is listened to, respected for who they are and receives support that enables them to be well and thrive.

We have delivered excellent local young carers services since 1999; continuing to develop our offer to young carers and their families through co-production, evidence-based practice and learning from evaluation. We are known for our expertise, innovation, accessibility and children and young people-focused services, which are embedded through active partnerships across family and community services.

We have designed this resource pack to reflect our values, ensuring the needs of young people remain at the heart of it. We ask secondary schools to do the same, and strive to create a school environment that celebrates and supports young carers.

Celebrating and supporting young carers in your school

Hopes and expectations for your school

What does being a young carer friendly school mean?

Centre 33 Young Carers Project works with primary schools to create an environment for young carers that is inclusive, safe and where young carers can reach their potential.

To be recognised as a young carer friendly school you are aiming to achieve the following:



Have a **named Young Carers Champion**

Have an **agreement** with your Young Carers

Deliver **whole school staff training** each year

Have a **Young Carers display board**

Ensure **awareness raising** is planned into the yearly curriculum. E.g., assembly, PHSE lesson, tutor time etc.

Understanding more about young carers

What is a young carer?

Young carers are children and young people under the age of 18 who provide care, assistance or support to another family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, or has a substance misuse problem. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks, taking on a level or responsibility that is inappropriate to their age or development. This can include providing practical and physical and/or emotional support.

Ryan, 16, is a young carer. Ryan's definition of a young carer is someone with 'a unique resilience and versatility due to their experiences with life which sometimes are a bit unconventional...the empathy is a very very big part. Young carers have done things you wouldn't normally have to do until quite a bit later down the line.'

Young people have told us they want professionals to understand that they are a young person first and foremost. 'Acknowledge us for our skills and attributes, being a young carer isn't our only attribute, there are so many multi facets as a human...don't think of us as just young carers. We are a lot of other things.'

Ryan, 16.

What support might a young carer provide?

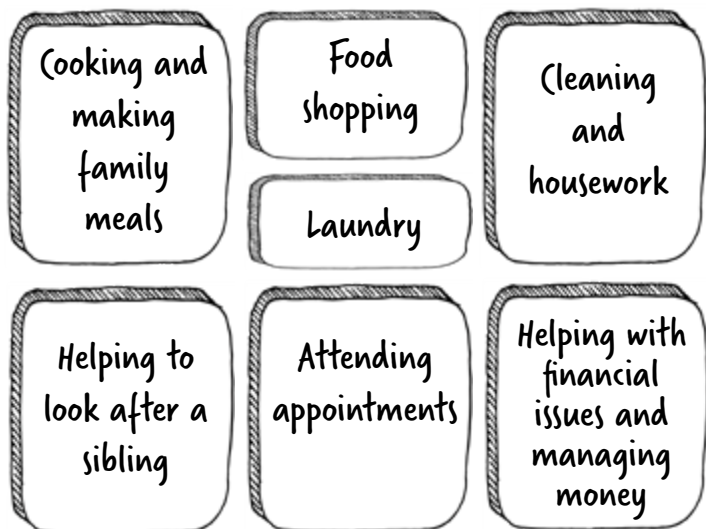
In general, support given by young carers can be divided into physical and practical support, and emotional support.

- Physical and practical support could range from 'reminding mum to take a tablet once a day' to 'helping mum get out of bed and get washed and dressed in the morning.'
- Emotional support could range from 'keeping my brother company and talking things through with him to make sure he is feeling OK' to 'preventing further suicide attempts from mum.'

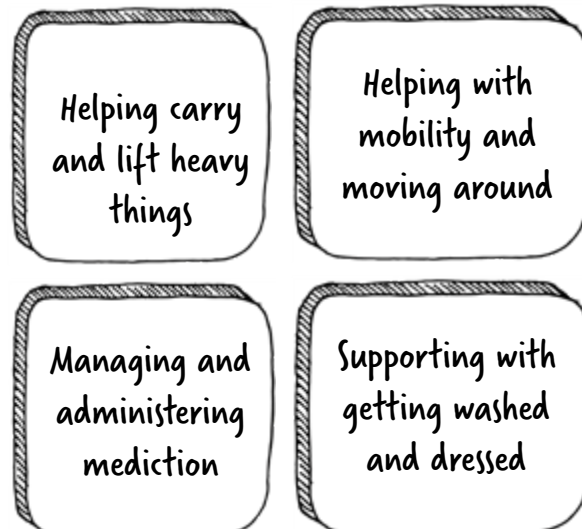
Examples of support a young carer might provide

Here are some examples of different types of support a young carer may provide. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that it will be different for every young carer.

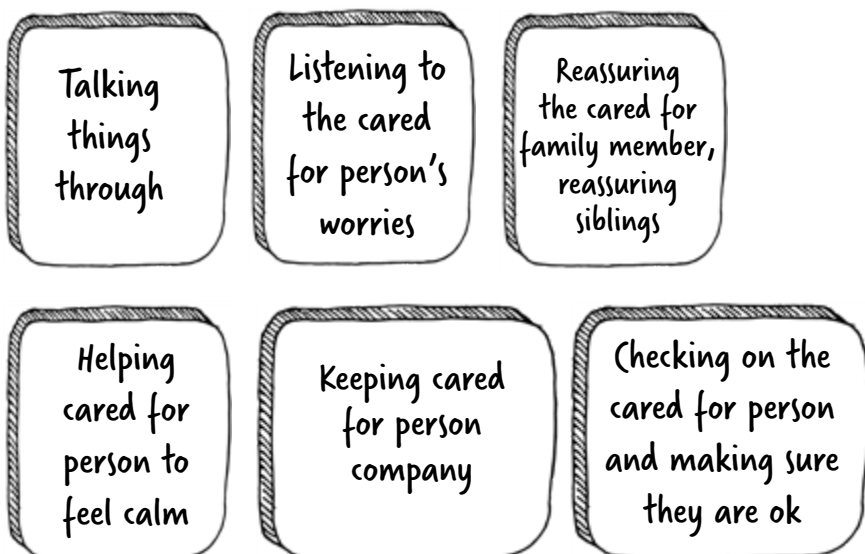
Practical support



Physical support



Emotional support



What we know about young carers



1 in 5

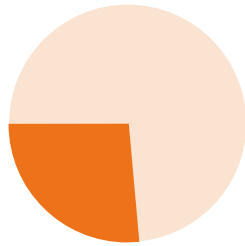
children and young people in the UK are thought to be young carers ¹

It is estimated that there are

800,000

secondary school aged young carers in England ²

27%



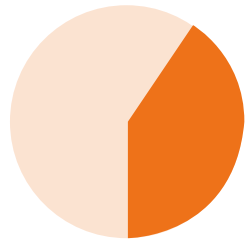
of young carers aged 11-15 are missing school due to their caring role at home ¹



only half

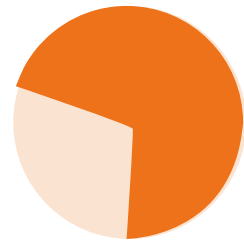
of young carers can identify a person in school who they feel understands their caring responsibilities and can support them ³

39%



of young carers said that nobody in their school was aware of their young carer status ¹

68%



of young carers experience bullying in school ³



over 1/3

of young carers report having a mental health problem ⁴

Centre 33 found that the top presenting issues for young carers in Cambridgeshire were:

- **worry and anxiety**
- **feeling stressed**
- **difficulties in family relationships**
- **lack of access to fun** ⁵

Of the 1027 young carers Centre 33 worked with in 2019:

37% felt very lonely

33% felt so bad they could hardly stand it

28% felt they didn't matter, some or all of the time ⁵

The impact of being a young carer

We know that being a young carer can impact on a young person's life in different ways. These are some of the top reasons young people tell us they feel positive about being a young carer:



Opportunity to learn new skills



Developing independence



Developing a closer bond as a family



A sense of pride and increased self-esteem



Being a good listener



Building resilience and the ability to overcome challenges



Specialist medical knowledge and practical skills such as First Aid Skills



Empathy and Kindness

The impact of being a young carer

We also know that being a young carer holds many challenges and in some circumstances can impact in the following ways:

Social

- Isolation
- Lack of contact with young people in the same age group
- Feeling 'different' to peers
- Limited time to themselves or for leisure activities

Emotional

- Low self-esteem
- Feelings of guilt or shame
- Feeling worried
- Experiencing mental illness, such as feeling stressed, anxiety or depression

Physical

- Physical health difficulties, such as joint pain
- Lack of self care
- Poor diet
- tiredness/disturbed sleep

Educational

- Challenges with important transitions such as leaving secondary school
- Impact on educational attainment leading to fewer educational opportunities at secondary school, college, sixth form and further education
- Unable to make free decisions about future aspirations

Sources

¹ Carers Trust (2019), Young Carers: Who are they? What do they do? www.carers.org/sites/default/files/media/young_carers_who_are_they_what_do_they_do_0.pdf

² University of Nottingham and the BBC (2018), New Research Suggests More Than One in Five Children in England Carry Out Some Care For Sick and Disabled Family Members, www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/pressreleases/2018/september/childrenengland-care-sick-family.aspx

³ Carers Trust (2019), Key Facts about Carers and the People they Care for, www.carers.org/key-facts-about-carers-and-people-they-care

⁴ The Children's Society (2020), Carers week 2020: 7 facts you might not know about young carers, www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/facts-you-might-not-know-about-young-carers

⁵ Centre 33, 2019-2020, Young Carers Annual Report

How can your school support young carers?

Identifying a young carer

It is not always easy to identify a young carer, especially as many young carers actively try to conceal their caring responsibilities and others are not aware of the differences of their family situation.

Talking to a young person, being approachable and providing an inclusive environment are the best conditions for identifying a young carer.

What to look out for in school

There are signs and indicators that school staff can look out for to help identify a young carer. These include:

regular or increased late attendance or absence

difficulty concentrating

requests to make contact with family members during the school day

struggling to complete homework or hand homework in on time

displaying physical health symptoms during play time or P.E lessons, such as back pain

stressed, anxious or tired

limited aspirations

false maturity, taking on a caring role with younger children

struggles or refuses to talk about the family situation

experiencing bullying, sometimes linked to their caring responsibility

struggling to make friends in similar age range

parents absent at parents' evening

unable to make use of extracurricular activities or school trips

isolation, unable or embarrassed to take friends home

academic performance below potential

How can your school support young carers?

We know that schools play a vital role in supporting young carers. Research shows that support within the school environment can help to reduce the emotional and educational impact of caring. Young carers value support from their teachers with helping them achieve their potential and 'this is best achieved through teachers having a clear understanding of the nature of children's caring responsibilities and providing stronger support around stressful periods...and transition points.'⁸



Awareness raising and identification

Raising the awareness of young carers with staff, students and parents at your school can help to identify and support young carers and help young carers to feel seen and heard. There are many ways you can do this. Use opportunities such as PSHE sessions and assemblies to talk about young carers. Centre 33 can help with this by delivering a young carers assembly in your school. Use opportunities, such as the school website or school newsletter, to communicate information about young carers. Make young carers visible – have information about young carers on noticeboards in your school.



Young Carers Policy

Centre 33 can help you write a young carers policy for your school.

Young Carers Champion

Identify a named member of staff who will act as your young carers champion. This member of staff will be the key contact with young carers in your school. Find out more about the role of the young carers champion on page 14

TALK! And listen...

Don't be afraid to talk about being a young carer with young people, including the positive and rewarding elements of their role, together with the challenges they may face. Openness to talk and willingness to listen are so important and will help staff to better understand each student's individual situation and caring role.

Transitions

We know transitions can be particularly challenging for young carers. Be aware of key transitions for young carers and what support they may need from school during this time, including starting secondary school, starting GCSE's, year 11 and moving onto a new place of education or work.

Staff training

Centre 33 can work with you to deliver training to your staff to help them identify and support young carers in your school.

Home work clubs or quiet spaces in school

Having clubs or identified quiet spaces that young carers can use is a great way for young carers to have an opportunity they may not have at home to stay on top of their school work.

Young carers groups

A young carers group is a great opportunity for young carers to get to know other young people at their school who are going through similar experiences, to talk, to feel supported and to have fun and relax.

The role of the young carers champion

Centre 33 asks secondary schools to identify a member of staff to be a Young Carers Champion. This named worker is the key link for young carers, their families and Centre 33.

Young carers tell us they don't want everyone at school to know about their caring role as this is something that is personal to them. Having one member of staff in school who is aware of all the young carers in their school ensures that young carers don't have to repeat their support needs to multiple professionals. Young Carers Champions are able to advocate on young carers behalf or share information with individual teachers if appropriate.

Having a named Young Carers Champion allows young carers to know who to contact in school if they need extra support or if their caring role has changed. It is important for the champion to build relationships with the young carers in their school so they notice any changes that may indicate the young carer needs further support. Centre 33 will ensure the champions are familiar with the pathways to refer young carers for further support if needed.

It is important that young carers are celebrated and that awareness of young carers is raised within your school. The champion will be responsible for ensuring the wider staff team attend training and assemblies delivered by Centre 33 and are confident to identify and support young carers. Champions play a key role in raising awareness of young carers with the whole school community, including young people, families, staff and governors, through information on the schools website, notice boards, newsletters and celebration events such as young carers awareness day.

We make a commitment with schools to sign a young carers agreement to ensure both Centre 33 and school are working together and understand our responsibilities in supporting young carers.

Setting up a young carers group in your school

What a Young Carers group needs...

A room!

This is all Young Carers need... a room to meet in.

Think about a space you can commit to using regularly that is inviting, spacious, relaxed and offers some privacy.

How to host a Young Carers Group

Identify staff who can commit to giving their time regularly to attend and facilitate the group.

Often groups are run by the Young Carers Champion, but there may be other members of staff at school who would be able to support the running of group.

Having the same member of staff helps the young people to get to know them and build trust.

We know that the possibility to develop close relationships with individual members of staff who can be spoken to as and when needed is something that young carers say is very important to them.

Who should I invite?

Young people who are identified as Young Carers - even if they haven't yet felt able to discuss their caring role!

When to run a Young Carers Group

Once you have at least 2 Young Carers identified.

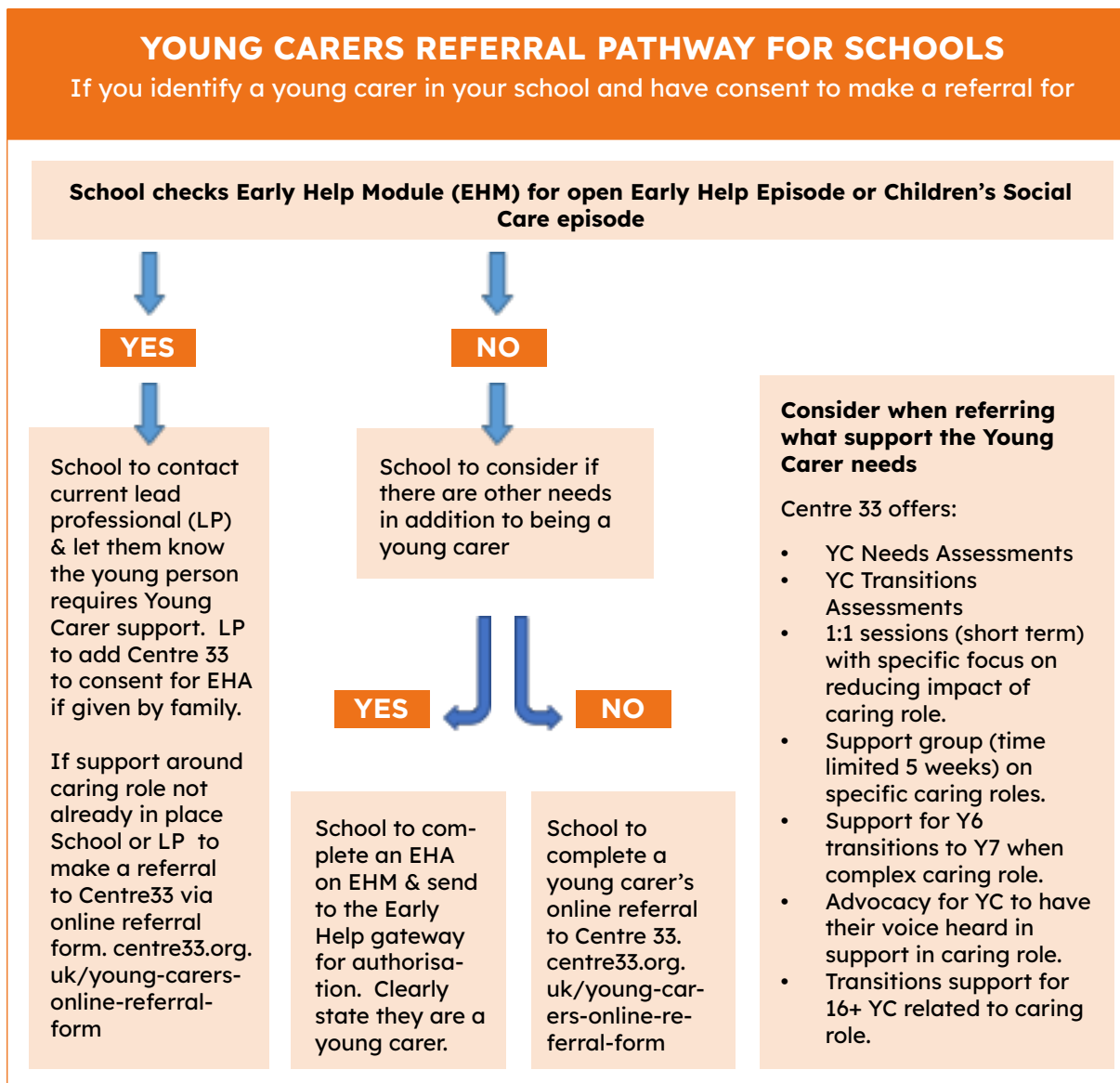
Try and make a regular time to hold the group, this could be weekly, fortnightly or even monthly depending on capacity in your school. Whatever you decide, it is important to have consistency, so the young people know when their next group is. We know that not all children will be able to attend an after-school group.

If you are from a School, you may want to think about having the group during the school day to ensure accessibility. This could be a lunch time, or at another time during the school day that feels appropriate.



How to make a referral for a young person

Please see our referral pathways diagram below to support you if you are referring a young person to the young carers project:



You can access our online referral on our website which can be found here: www.centre33.org.uk/help/caring/

Referrals for young people under the age of 13 require parental consent.

If you are interested in finding out more about any of the services listed on the page above, including staff training or assemblies in your school, then please contact us and ask to speak to a member of the capacity building team:

Telephone: 0333 4141809 Email: youngcarers@centre33.org.uk

What other support services are available at Centre 33

Centre 33 is here to support young people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with a wide range of issues. We are proud to make listening to young people the foundation of what we do. We are non-judgemental and here to help in whatever way we can.

Practical Support

As well as young carers support, Centre 33 can offer support to young people on a range of issues including practical help.

We are experts in housing and homelessness, sexual health, employment support and more.

Emotional Support

We also provide emotional support. Centre 33 is strongly committed to supporting young people with their mental health. It remains central to everything we do.

We offer one-to-one confidential counselling to young people aged 13-25.

Young people can drop into a hub or contact us via:

Helpline: 0333 4141 809

Text: 07514 783745

Email: help@centre33.org.uk

Website: www.centre33.org.uk

We also offer counselling in schools. We can offer:

- Confidential one to one therapeutic counselling for young people based in the school and during school hours.
- Sessions with a trained counsellor for a series of 50 minute sessions.
- Support for up to 6 students, once a week for a period agreed by Centre 33 and the school.

Centre 33 counsellors deliver the service according to the 'Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions' of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

If you are a school interested in offering counselling in conjunction with us then please get in touch help@centre33.org.uk
(Please note this is a service that we charge schools for).

