

Young Carers and the Assessment of Need

Definition of a Young Carer:

“A child or young person aged under eighteen who has a significant role in looking after someone else who is experiencing illness or disability” (Scottish Government, 2010)

The following description from Somerset County Council may be helpful:

“The types of tasks being carried out are often on a regular basis, significant or substantial which would usually be associated with an adult. The term does not apply for everyday and occasional help around the home that may often be expected of or given by children in families. This could be helping to care for a physically disabled parent or sibling, or a parent experiencing mental ill health, alcohol or drug misuse. The caring role would usually be having a detrimental impact on the young person's development in terms of difficulties at school, emotional difficulties or social isolation.”

Possible signs to be aware of (CEC Young Carers School Resource Pack)

- Tiredness during school hours
- Academic performance below potential
- Lack of concentration or focus
- Negative attitude toward relevance of topics
- May look and act depressed and unmotivated
- Swings in temperament
- Social emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Seeking attention
- Social isolation
- Poor eating habits
- Poor hygiene
- Displays parental skills
- Frequent physical illnesses
- Bullying
- Absences from school
- Limited engagement with parents
- Limited social activities

Young Carers have a **legal entitlement** to have their needs assessed. We use the Assessment of Need to fulfill this duty. (See the procedure: Carers: Information Sharing, Identifying, Assessment and Support for Young Carers)

Questions to be asked when completing an Assessment of Need:

1. Who do you care for in your family? (*name, relationship to you*)
2. What are the reasons you care for this person? (*e.g. illness, disability, substance misuse*)
3. What do you do to help? (*give examples of types of activities that could be involved, e.g. lifting, cleaning, mobility, medication, cooking, looking after sibling, managing money, attending appointments, bathing, toileting etc.*)

4. How often do you carry out these tasks?
5. Do you ever get up at night to help? (*how often?*)
6. Do you ever lift a person or equipment?
7. Does anyone else help you to care? (*who and how often?*)
8. What impact does this have on you at school and with friendships?
9. How does caring affect your school work or homework?
10. Have you ever missed school or been late because of caring? (*if yes, how often?*)
11. How does caring make you feel? (*identify positives and challenges*)
12. What worries you?
13. Is there someone you can speak to?
14. Is there anything you would like more help with?

Following the Assessment of Need

The response to a young carer's situation will depend on the understanding developed through the assessment of need. It may be that the young carer has no identified additional support needs. However, if additional support needs are identified, these can be met through the appropriate pathway as follows.

Examples of Pathways of Support for Young Carers

For all identified Young Carers

- Record on SEEMIS (see guidance at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/asl > Help with SEEMIS.)
- School Young Carers' Champion
- Whole school awareness in PSE and assembly
- School Young Carers' Policy

Pathway 1 in class

- Key relationship with Young Carer to monitor wellbeing (e.g. class teacher in primary, pupil support teacher in secondary)
- Flexibility with punctuality, attendance, homework
- Use of mobile phone

Pathway 2 in school

As for Pathway 1, plus:-

- Monitoring attendance

Pathway 3 partner agencies

As for Pathways 1 and 2, plus:-

- Consultation with / referral to one of the Young Carer organisations

A number of organisations (e.g. those working with children with disabilities) provide support for young people in caring roles. The following organisations specialise in working with Young Carers.

City-Wide: *Edinburgh Young Carers* (0131 475 2322, info@youngcarers.org.uk)

N.W. Edinburgh: *North West Carers* (0131 315 3130, marcia@nwcarers.org.uk or teresa@nwcarers.org.uk)

South West Edinburgh: *Broomhouse Young Carers* (0131 455 7731, youngcarers@broomhousecentre.org.uk)