

Young Carers Pledge – a supporting document

What is the Young Carers Pledge?

The Young Carers Pledge outlines the commitment that NHS employees are making to Young Carers.

What is a Young Carer?

A Young Carer is anyone under the age of 18 who provides unpaid care to a friend or family member who could not manage without them. This could be due to an illness, disability, mental health illness or substance misuse.

How was this pledge created?

The Young Carers Pledge is based on the Young Carers Wish list – this is a document that the Young Carers created to tell professionals what they wanted from them. The wish list is now part of the [Surrey Memorandum of Understanding for Carers](#). The pledge was formed by a group of professionals from the NHS, Local Authority and voluntary organisations.

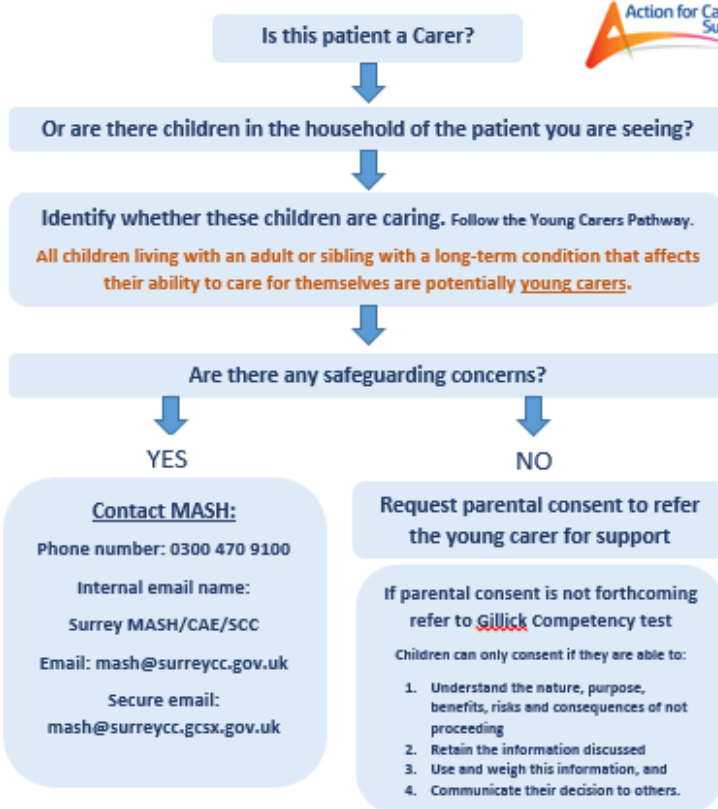


How can you embed the Young Carers Pledge into your every day practices?

It is very easy for Young Carers to go unidentified and unsupported. In Surrey, we have a Young Carer Pathway which supports staff to recognise and support Young Carers appropriately.

The NHS Young Carer Health Champions have developed their own film [Out of the Woods - YouTube](#) describing why they think it is important that they are identified and supported.

Surrey have a Young Carer Pathway to support professionals in the identification, support and referral process of Young Carers. The [Surrey Carers Prescription](#) is a fantastic, quick and simple way to refer Young Carers to expert support.



Safeguarding Children

A young carer is a young person under the age of eighteen who has a responsibility for caring on a regular basis for a relative who has an illness or disability. This can be primary or secondary caring and leads to a variety of losses for the young carer.

Surrey Young Carers Health Survey Key findings:

- Young carers were on average caring for 14 hours
- 11% had sustained an injury due to their caring role with less than half having told their GP they were caring for anyone
- 35% recognised the symptoms of an eating disorder
- 9% had self-harmed
- 60% find it difficult to socialise
- 62% stated they struggled to keep up with school work

If there are concerns that a young carer is at serious risk of neglect, abuse or harm, this must be referred to The Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by completing a MARF (Multiagency Referral Form).

Unless there is reason to believe that it would put the child at risk, young carers should be told if there is a need to make a referral if possible, the young carers consent should be sought through a discussion of why the referral must be made and the possible outcomes.

The extent and effect of their caring responsibilities may satisfy the criteria for Children in Need (S17 CA 1989) particularly where a child is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development because of their caring responsibilities or may satisfy the child protection threshold (S47 CA 1989) for being at risk of significant harm or may have suffered significant harm and compulsory intervention by children's social care is required and a strategy discussion convened.

Please read in conjunction with Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Procedures:

<http://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/hkpls/procedures-for-specific-circumstances/young-carers>

Use the [Surrey Carers Prescription](#) to refer to the [Surrey Young Carers Service](#)
To make an electronic referral via the Surrey Carers Prescription, log onto www.actionforcarers.org.uk/gp

How do you ask the right questions to identify a Young Carer?

Identifying a Young Carer is not always easy – perhaps the young person doesn't know that they are a Carer. To support professionals in having meaningful conversations with young people, Surrey have developed a Young Carer Identification Script with the input of the Young Carers themselves.

Young Carer Identification Script



Is there anyone in your family you care for that has a long term illness/disability/special needs or have mental health or drug/alcohol concerns?

•If the answer is YES – this person could be a young carer or young adult carer. Continue with the rest of the questions.

Who lives in your house? Does someone who doesn't live at home help you with caring?

•If this young person is the sole carer they might need help or support. However they might have this from family and/or friends who live nearby.

Do you listen to someone in your family and make them feel better when they are sad or down? If you stopped helping them would your family struggle?

•82% of young carers say that caring affects them emotionally, especially if there are Mental Health issues in the family. 40% will develop their own Mental Health issues if not identified early including: eating disorders, self harming, depression, anxiety, stress, panic attacks

Do you worry about your family when you're not with them?

•They worry they might fall, not take medication, harm themselves, drink, take drugs, not eat, not care for their siblings properly etc. This makes them anxious, stressed and unable to concentrate at school/college.

How does this make you feel? Do you feel lonely, left out, not understood or not listened to?

•Nobody asks how they are or how they feel about caring. The focus is on the person they care for. They might not realise that they are a young carer. They have no choice but to care and become isolated due to caring responsibilities.

How much free time do you have? Is there anything that your friends do that you are not able to do? Is there anything you would like to do if you could?

•Caring means that they can't always attend after school activities, go out with friends, have friends over or have a hobby. This adds to their isolation and stress and can lead to Mental Health problems.

How are things going at school? How does caring affect you at school?

•There are 2 young carers in every secondary school class. Many miss school. Their education suffers and their grades are lower than their peers who don't have caring responsibilities. Encourage them to tell someone at school that they are a young carer.

How many hours a day do you help at home?

•Caring can be emotional as well as physical. This could be looking after siblings, cooking, cleaning, calming someone down etc.

What does your day look like from when you wake up to when to go to bed?

•Use pictures or ask them to draw as it helps with those who might have language issues, learning difficulties or lack confidence.

14,700 reasons to support Young Carers in Surrey....

There are around 14,700 Young Carers in Surrey but only 2,200 of these are accessing support.

There are approximately 700,000 young carers in the UK (2010)

50,000 young carers look after someone with a mental health illness

68% of young carers are bullied in school

Young adult carers are TWICE as likely not to be in education, training or employment

38% of young carers develop a mental health issue as a direct result of their caring role and responsibility

Those who have a parent with a mental health illness are 2-3 times more likely to develop mental health problems themselves. Support can reduce the likelihood by 40%.

60% find it difficult to socialise

11% sustain an injury due to their caring role with less than half telling their GP

Young Carers care for an average of 14 hours a week

35% recognised the symptoms of an eating disorder

62% stated that they struggled to keep up with school work

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9% had self-harmed