



**Northamptonshire County Council**

# **Northamptonshire Young Carer's Strategy 2015-2017**

**Children, Families & Education**  
October 2015

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## 1. Introduction

In October 2013, the Government made a commitment to strengthen Young Carer's rights, and tabled amendments to the Children and Families Bill and the Care Bill (both enacted as legislation in 2014) to set out how both Acts will provide for Young Carers.

The term 'Young Carer' had not previously been fully recognised and detailed in legislation. For a local authority to have an obligation to a Young Carer (i.e. someone aged under 18 who provides care on an unpaid basis for another person), she or he had to be a 'child in need'. This has now changed, as both the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 address the needs of Young Carers clearly and directly.

This document has been developed in the context of the changes in legislation which were brought into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The law concerning Young Carers has been strengthened to support delivery of a set of specified principles for Young Carers and their families. The changes to the legislation mean that Local Authorities are required to put in place systems to work together, adopting a whole system, whole council, whole family approach to providing support for Young Carers and their families.

This Young Carers Strategy sets out Northamptonshire's model of identifying and assessing Young Carers in the county and how they will be supported enable them to live a full life, as well as protecting them from excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities.

## 2. Our Vision

Through the overarching vision for children and young people and supporting strategies, our aspiration in Northamptonshire is that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. This means that:

- All children are safe;
- All children achieve their best in education, are ready for work, and have skills for life;
- All children grow up healthy and have improved life chances; and
- Vulnerable children and young people are supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.

We know that caring for others has a big impact on young people and there is a vast difference on outcomes achieved by Young Carers compared to other children<sup>1</sup>.

- Many Young Carers' families live on reduced incomes as a result of being on benefits, limiting disability, worklessness;
- Young Carers often experience restricted educational attainment in school and the knock-on effect this can have on employment opportunities, careers and later life; and
- There is a greater likelihood that, compared to other young people, Young Carers will not be in education, training or employment between the ages of 16-19.

We want to bridge that gap, ensuring that Young Carers are identified, valued and supported with information, advice and support to enable them to achieve their potential.

We therefore want to ensure that Young Carers in Northamptonshire:

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<sup>1</sup> Hidden From View, Children's Society report, 2013

- Are identified at the earliest opportunity;
- Receive the same opportunities as their peers and have the support they need to learn, develop and enjoy a positive childhood;
- Feel supported to continue their caring role if they so wish;
- Have a life outside of their caring responsibility;
- Are not inappropriately caring;
- Are supported to remain healthy and safe and are treated with dignity; and
- Are enabled to fulfil their educational and employment potential

## 2.1. Who is a Young Carer?

A Young Carer is defined as a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care (including practical and emotional support) for another person<sup>2</sup>.

The support provided by Young Carers can be as the main carer or partial carer, however sometimes it is inappropriate for the young person's age and can impact on their education, social interaction, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.

Many children/young people will not see themselves as carers, but will see themselves as supporting another family member and doing what anyone else would do in their situation. Additionally, the parent or adult they are caring for may not recognise that the care they receive (or in the case of siblings, are supported in delivering) from a young person may be inappropriate and can have an adverse affect on the young person's outcomes.

## 3. Legislative Changes

The Care Act and Children & Families Act were implemented in April 2015. Both pieces of legislation provide a clear framework for local authorities to take a whole family approach to assessing and supporting adults and Young Carers and delivering support in a coordinated way, so that children and young people at risk of undertaking inappropriate caring roles are identified and protected.

A joint statement by Ministers Edward Timpson (Department of Education) and Norman Lamb (Department of Health) identified Key Principles to underpin implementation of the Care Act and Children & Families Act (including the Regulations and guidance on both Acts)<sup>3</sup>. These include:

- The starting point should be to assess the needs of the adult or child who needs care and support and then see what remaining needs for support a Young Carer in the family has;
- The presence of a Young Carer in the family should always constitute an appearance of need and should trigger either an assessment or the offer of an assessment to the person needing care;
- A whole family approach is key when assessing an adult needing care where there are children in the family providing care to the adult or undertaking wider caring responsibilities. The adult's assessment and eligibility for support should take into account their parenting responsibilities and the functioning of the family;

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<sup>2</sup> Children & Families Act 2014

<sup>3</sup> Joint statement on key principles for supporting Young Carers made by DH and DfE (updated 2015)

- Assessments should ascertain why a child is caring and what needs to change in order to prevent them from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities which could impact adversely on their wellbeing, education, or social development. It will be good practice to seek the views of children and adults separately, as it may be very difficult for children to say how they really feel in the presence of an adult who may also be the person they care for; and
- Consideration must be given to whether a Young Carer is a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989. The assessment must establish if they are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services and whether their health or development may be impaired if they or their family are not provided with support.

### 3.1.Care Act 2014

While the Care Act deals predominantly with adult social care, it makes new provisions for the carers of disabled children who are approaching their 18th birthday and Young Carer's caring for an adult.

The Care Act replaces much of the existing legislation for people that are being cared for and those who care for others. It became law in 2014 and most of the Act came into force in April 2015, with the rest following in April 2016. The Act places a new duty to promote wellbeing and take on new functions to ensure that people:

- Receive services that prevent, reduce and delay their care needs from becoming more serious; and
- Can get the information they need to make good decisions about care and support.

All carers are now entitled to a carer's assessment where the carer has an appearance of need are entitled to support if they meet the national eligibility criteria. The eligibility decision-making process for carers with support needs involves the consideration of the following three criteria:

- Do the needs arise because the carer is providing necessary care and support?
- Is the carer's physical or mental health affected or at risk of deteriorating, or is the carer unable to achieve any of eight specified outcomes<sup>4</sup>?
- Is there consequently a significant impact on the carer's wellbeing?

The wellbeing principles are also part of the eligibility criteria. As a local authority, NCC has to consider the impact of a person's role as a carer on their wellbeing. Similarly, they have to consider the impact of a disabled person's needs on their wellbeing. If the impact is significant then the eligibility criteria are likely to be met. When the assessment is complete, a decision will be made as to whether the carer's needs meet the national eligibility criteria.

Carers with eligible needs will have a support plan developed to meet their needs which will be agreed with the County Council. Carers support needs can be met through community, prevention and carers commissioned support or a direct payment that will only be offered if the support available can not meet the assessed unmet eligible need.

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<sup>4</sup> Carrying out any caring responsibilities that the carer has for a child; providing care to other persons for whom the carer provides care; maintaining a habitable home environment; managing and maintaining nutrition; developing and maintaining family or other significant personal relationships; accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering; making use of necessary facilities or services in the community; engaging in recreational activities

### **3.2.Children & Families Act 2014**

The Children and Families Act 2014 covers support for children and young people who may be Young Carers, and for disabled children receiving care and their families. The Act gives carers under the age of 18 the right to an assessment on the appearance of need – they do not have to request one. It also requires local authorities to assess whether parent carers within their area have support needs and, if so, what those needs are. The local authority must ask the parent, the disabled child if possible, and any other children the parent has, for their views. The requirement that carers provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis in order to be assessed has been removed as part of the Act.

## **4. What do we know about Young Carers<sup>5</sup>?**

The latest census results discovered there are currently 200,000 Young Carers in the UK. This has increased since the previous census by 25,000.

In England it is reported that there are a total of 166,363 Young Carers, compared to around 139,000 in 2001. It is recognised that this is likely to be an underrepresentation of the true picture as many remain under the radar of professionals.

The number of Young Carers aged 5-7 years old has increased by 80% in the last decade (10 years) to 9,371. The number of Young Carers under 10 years of age in England now totals 20,700.

Nearly 15,000 children up to the age of 17 provide more than 50 hours care a week with 1 in 12 Young Carers spending 15 hours a week caring. 1 in 20 Young Carers miss school because of their caring responsibility.

Young Carer's predominantly care for their sibling or parent:

- 51% of Young Carers look after a brother/sister
- 28% of Young Carers look after a parent
- 12% of Young Carers look after a grandparent
- 7% of Young Carers look after another child
- 2% of Young Carers look after another adult

2000 Young Carers are reported to have 'bad' or 'very bad' health.

Young Carers are more likely to be from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background.

### **4.1.Local Evidence**

Information about the number, range, services required and source of referrals for Young Carers in Northamptonshire is limited. However from the 2011 Census we are able to establish:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>

Hidden from view [http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report\\_hidden-from-view\\_young-carers\\_final.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report_hidden-from-view_young-carers_final.pdf)

The 2011 Census identified there are 1,404 Young Carers aged 0-15 living in Northamptonshire (This equates to just over 1% of the 0-15 population).

Poor health is much more prevalent amongst those who provide long hours of unpaid care.

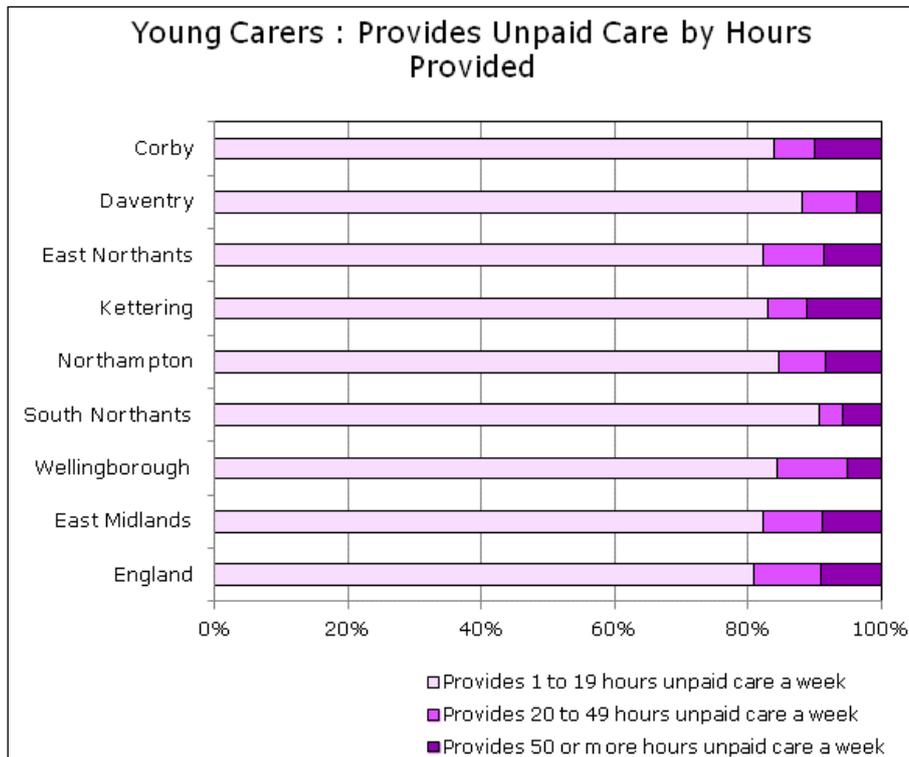
Although the proportions of carers in the young population are small, Corby is some way above the national average and Wellingborough slightly above. Northamptonshire and the remaining boroughs/ districts have below average proportions of Young Carers.

Area	Number Aged 0-15 Providing Unpaid Care	Population Aged 0-15	% of 0-15 Population who are Carers
<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>137,871</b>	<b>1.018%</b>
Corby	169	12,618	1.339%
Daventry	159	14,812	1.073%
East Northamptonshire	187	17,189	1.088%
Kettering	188	18,666	1.007%
Northampton	383	43,013	0.890%
South Northamptonshire	139	16,565	0.839%
Wellingborough	179	15,008	1.193%
<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>9,497</b>	<b>838,455</b>	<b>1.132%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>111,423</b>	<b>10,022,836</b>	<b>1.112%</b>

The vast majority (85.0%) of these Young Carers in Northamptonshire provide 1-19 hours of unpaid care per week. However, there are 102 young people (7.3%) who provide 20-49 hours per week and 109 young people (7.7%) who provide 50+ hours of unpaid care per week, (i.e. 211, 15% providing 20 hours or more hours).

Northamptonshire has a lower proportion of Young Carers who provide 20 hours or more of unpaid care per week (the top two categories) than is the case in England or the East Midlands. The county and all the borough/districts score below the national average for this calculation and only East Northamptonshire equals the regional percentage.

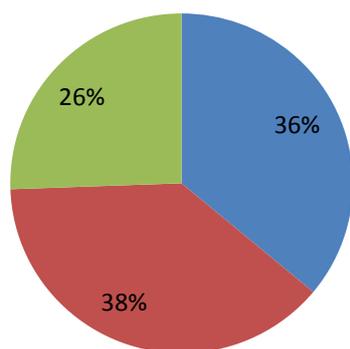
However, when looking specifically at the percentage of Young Carers who provide 50+ hours of care per week, Kettering and Corby exceed the national average, registering 11.2% and 10.1% respectively against a national average of 9.1%.



Whilst we recognise that the Census figures may be under-representing the number of Young Carers, within Northamptonshire, in June 2015, only 763 Young Carers are registered with support providers<sup>6</sup>.

### Young Carers (by age)

■ Under 14'S ■ 14-17yrs ■ 18-25yrs



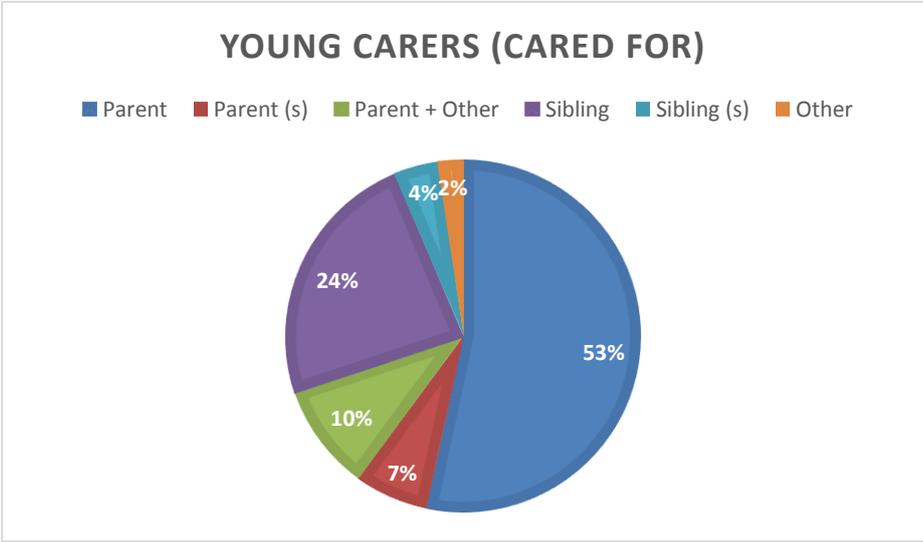
Under 14'S	275
14-17yrs	293
18-25yrs	195
<b>Total</b>	<b>763</b>

The majority of these (446, 57%) Young Carers are female.

<sup>6</sup> Subsequent data provided by Northamptonshire Carers.

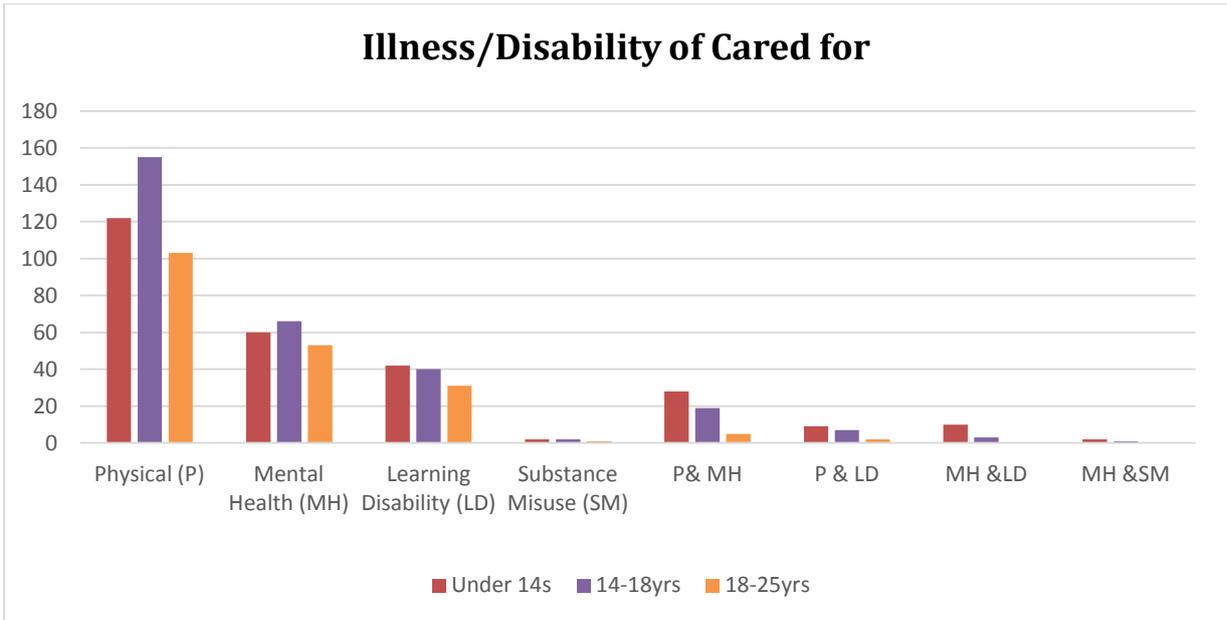


Young people take on their caring responsibility for a wide range of people, however as is evident in the graph below 70% of Young Carers in receipt of services are caring for a parent/s. Almost a third of the Young Carers supported care for a sibling. 4% of these care for more than one sibling.



We are aware that the figure for Substance Misuse may not be accurate as this is a hidden feature and exists in higher numbers but is presented via other presenting disabilities and through issues of 'self-medication' by adults coping with long term health issues.

The majority of Young Carers in receipt of services from Northamptonshire Young Carers are caring for somebody with physical health needs equating to 56%. A significant number 27%, are caring for somebody with mental health needs, and a smaller but still significant minority 17% are caring for somebody with a learning disability.



It is clear that information about the number of Young Carers in Northamptonshire is limited and it is an area we need to understand more fully. A key area for development is the identification of Young Carers. Since April 2015, 75 young people who have had an initial assessment<sup>7</sup> undertaken by Social Care have been identified as having potential caring responsibilities.

Month	IA factors for Young Carer
April	8
May	28
June	7
July	19
August	13
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75</b>

Whilst we recognise that progress is being made, we will be working closer with our partners, providers and schools to support them in identifying possible Young Carers.

<sup>7</sup> A short assessment of each child referred to Children’s Social Care focusing on establishing whether the child is in need or whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm

## 5. What outcomes do we want to achieve for Young Carers?

### 5.1. Identifying Young Carers

We recognise that in the past, we have struggled to identify Young Carers early to understand the extent of their caring role and the impact on their own development. Even then, may not be recognised quickly or fully assessed.

We want to be proactive in identifying Young Carers as soon as possible and not simply when the young person’s needs or those of the person for whom they are caring are at crisis point (often this is when issues such as absence from school, are being investigated).

We have therefore detailed a Young Carer’s journey in Northamptonshire at [Appendix 1](#).

### 5.2. Achieving our vision

In order to ensure that we achieve the vision for Young Carers in the county, and support them to achieve the best outcomes, we will take the following action:

Vision	How we will achieve this	Key activity to be undertaken
Young Carers are identified at the earliest opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure professionals have the skills and knowledge to be able to identify Young Carers.</li> <li>• Work with our partners to help raise awareness of Young Carers and their potential needs.</li> <li>• Have a clear process for identifying and recording Young Carers.</li> <li>• Work with schools and education establishments to ensure they are aware of the needs of Young Carers and are able to provide support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with BIPI to identify the key presenting issues for young people identified with caring responsibilities at Initial Assessment to understand the cohort further.</li> <li>• Liaise with OWD on possible training provision.</li> <li>• Identify key partners who can help identify Young Carers and work with them to establish a pathway with the LA.</li> <li>• Liaison/awareness raising with providers and schools.</li> </ul>
Young Carers receive the same opportunities as their peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure providers of commissioned services are equipped to support Young Carers.</li> <li>• Work with schools and education establishments to ensure they are aware of the needs of Young Carers and are able to provide support.</li> <li>• Ensure Young Carers are aware of the opportunities available to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with providers, schools and other agencies to ensure support is offered to Young Carers.</li> </ul>

Young Carers feel supported to continue their caring role if they so wish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to local support through effectively commissioned services.</li> <li>• By providing high quality, easily accessible information, advice and support which is timely and appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and re-tender support services for Young Carers based on feedback from them about the support they need.</li> <li>• Establish a protocol with adult social care on providing support to adults who are being supported by Young Carers.</li> </ul>
Young Carers have a life outside of their caring responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with adults services to identify support arrangements to help the young person live independently and enjoy social activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a protocol with adult social care on providing support to adults who are being supported by Young Carers.</li> </ul>
Young Carers are not inappropriately caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out timely and quality Young Carer assessments to identify caring responsibilities and any support needs</li> <li>• Work with colleagues in adult services to support parents and families to avoid young people becoming ingrained in inappropriate caring roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a clear pathway for assessing Young Carers.</li> <li>• Establish a protocol with adult social care on providing support to adults who are being supported by Young Carers.</li> </ul>
Young Carers are supported to remain healthy and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Young Carers to consider and address their own health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Ensure Young Carers are aware of the facilities/services available to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County-wide awareness raising campaign.</li> <li>• Ensure services are mindful of Young Carers needs when developing services/activities.</li> </ul>

## Links to other strategies

This strategy has a key link with the Adult Carer Strategy, and will have a strong relationship with many other strategies across the council.

## More information

### Contact Children's Services

- 0300 126 1000
- 01604 626 938 (out of hours)

[MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk)

### Northamptonshire Young Carers

<http://www.northamptonshire-carers.org/young-carers/>

Carers Support Line 01933 677907

General Enquiries 01933 677837

## Appendix 1 – Young Carer’s Journey

### Young Carer Journey – As Is September 2015

