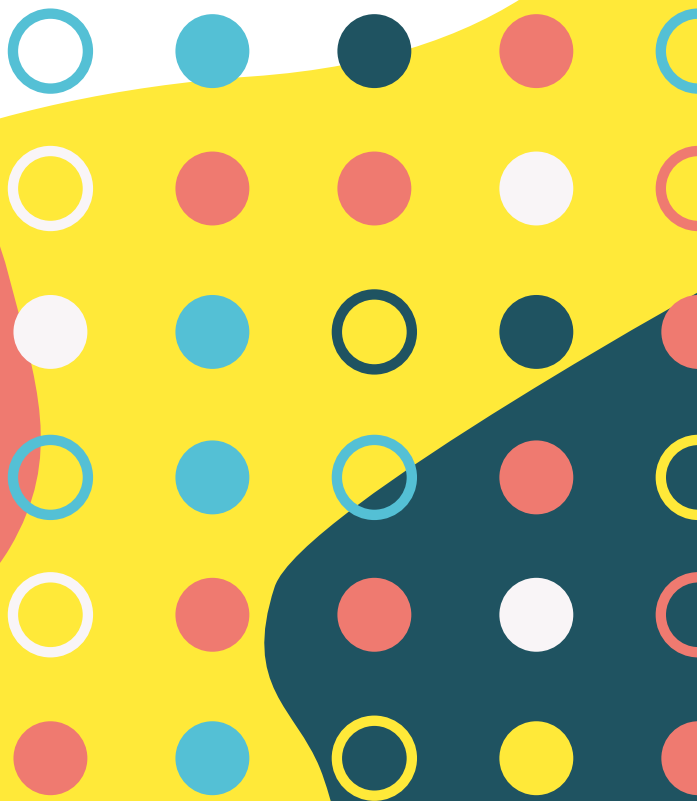


We Care **You Count**

A guide to help Young Carers with Post-16 options



WYC 2021

What's in the booklet?

We believe that every young carer – and their family – should be able to access the information and support they need to lead happy and healthy lives.

This booklet is designed to support you and your family through the later stages of secondary school and beyond.

It gives some ideas, tips and information about:

- How to access help with your caring role
- What your future options might be once you finish school
- Places where you and your family can get more information

There are also some contact details and websites at the end so that you can explore your options further and get in touch with anyone you'd like some support from.



Contents

Who is this for?.....	3-4
Young Carers support services.....	5-6
School and college support.....	7-8
Your Post-16 options.....	9-10
University support.....	11-12
What are Widening Participation programmes.....	13-14
The best way to learn more.....	15-16
Help with being away from home.....	17
Next steps.....	18
Your voice.....	19-20
Useful contacts.....	21-22

Who is this for?

This booklet includes lots of information for young people who provide care to a family member or friend. If this sounds like you, then you might be a young carer.

Am I a young carer?

If you're not sure if this booklet is for you, think about whether you:

- Live with someone who has an illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse problem
- Are taking on practical caring responsibilities, e.g. Personal care or providing medication
- Are taking on any emotional caring responsibilities, e.g. Listening to worries and providing comfort
- Are looking after other siblings because someone in the household has an illness or disability
- Are registered with a Carer Support Service

If you answered 'yes' to one or more of these bullet points, then you might be a young carer and this booklet is definitely for you!



DaggerTM

Young Carers Support Services

The most important thing to remember as a young carer is that there are lots of people and places that are there to offer you some help when you need it.



Your rights

As a young carer, you're likely to be providing care to someone close to you. It's important to remember that every young carer has a legal right to an assessment. A carers assessment can be a good way to make sure you get the information and support you need so that you aren't taking on caring responsibilities that prevent you from achieving the things you want to.

If you're unsure about whether you'd like an assessment then it might be a good idea to speak to a young carers support service

Other places to get support

In addition to your local service, there are national support services for carers too. Some of these provide specific help for young carers and others focus more on adult carers. If you'd like more information, you can scan the QR codes



What is a young carers support service?

One of the best places to find support is through a young carers support service. All young carers are entitled to support from their council and this is usually done through a support service.

The help on offer from support services vary a little from place to place, but your local service may provide:

- Someone who you can talk to about any challenges or concerns
- Help with accessing other useful services and agencies for you and your family
- Support with carers assessments
- Opportunities to meet other young carers and have a break from your caring responsibilities
- Fun trips and activities
- Help with future plans or goals (e.g. going to college or university)

Your local young carers services

There are two young carers services working in our region. To find out more about them, read the information below and follow the QR codes.

If you don't live in Warwickshire or Coventry, then the best thing to do to find your service is to do a simple internet search for services in your area, or check with your local council.



School and College Support

If you'd like more support, then it's also a good idea to speak to someone at your school or college.



Who to talk to

Your school or college might be in touch with the local young carers service and might have a member of staff responsible for supporting young carers. If you know who this is, then they're probably the best person to talk to.

If you aren't sure whether someone at your school or college has this responsibility, then try to speak to another member of staff. This can be a teacher or staff member who you feel comfortable with and trust.

You might be a bit worried about speaking to your school about your caring responsibilities, but it's important to remember that your school or college is there to help you and they can't offer support if they don't know.



Careers advice

If you have any questions about what your options are when you leave school, the best person to talk to will probably be your school or college's Careers Lead or Careers Adviser.

All schools and colleges are required to provide careers advice to all students. Your Careers Lead might also be aware of opportunities to learn more about your future options. They might be able to give you some ideas for work experience, for example.

They might also be in touch with local universities. Lots of universities run activities for young people so they can learn more about what it might be like to study a degree in the future.

There may also be a member of staff at your Carers Support Service who can help you with looking at your options and provide information, advice and University activities specific to you as a Young Carer.

TOP TIP

If you're offered the opportunity to take part in any careers-related activities, then it's really important to make the most of it where you can. Be proud of all the skills and knowledge you've developed from your caring responsibilities and ask lots of questions – you never know what doors these opportunities could open in the future!

Your Post-16 Options

It can feel very confusing making decisions about your future without the added pressure of your caring responsibilities. There are lots of options, but until you reach the end of what would be year 13 you must be in education or work-based training such as an apprenticeship.



Further Education

You can choose to continue your education at Sixth Form or college. Sixth Forms generally offer a range of subjects at Level 3, such as A Levels or BTECs.

Colleges offer a wide range of subjects at Foundation Level, Level 2 or Level 3 and a wide choice of vocational courses such as T-Levels. Most colleges also offer some subjects at Level 4 and some Foundation Degrees, so you could study to a high level without going to University.

If you are under 19 and studying up to Level 3 your course is usually fully funded.

For higher level study over the age of 19 you would be able to apply for an Advanced Learner Loan to fund your course. This is like a student loan that you start paying back once you are earning over a certain amount.



Apprenticeships

If you have a particular job in mind, then an apprenticeship might be a good option for you. People who complete an apprenticeship are employed by a company and are supported to complete their qualifications whilst working. You will be paid whilst completing your apprenticeship. The current minimum wage rate for apprentices is £4.15 per hour. This will rise to £4.30 per hour in April 2021.

You can complete an apprenticeship at various levels. For example, you could do a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship when you're 16 (equivalent of GCSE's or A Levels). Or you could decide to do a higher apprenticeship or even a degree apprenticeship after college or sixth form. Higher apprenticeships are the equivalent of part of a university degree and degree apprenticeships are the equivalent of a full degree. Degree apprenticeship employers pay you a wage and fund your degree.

University isn't for everybody; you might decide on a different option. There are lots of alternatives on offer!

ANOTHER GOOD TIP

You've probably developed some really valuable transferable skills through your caring responsibilities without even realising it (such as empathy, time management and communication) so try to write all of these down before applying for apprenticeships so that you can submit the best application possible.

University support

Universities often have lots of support available for students so that they can have the best possible experience while they study. Some of this support might be helpful for you too.



Money and budgeting

Lots of people have concerns about whether they can afford to go to university so don't worry if you're a bit unsure. What's important to remember is that everyone studying their first degree is entitled to financial support from the government – these are Student Finance loans. You can get a loan for your teaching (tuition fee loan) and a loan for your living costs (maintenance loan).

The idea of getting 'loans' might sound scary, but there are lots of misconceptions about what having one of these 'loans' actually means and the facts can end up getting lost.



Most universities also have additional funding support available for students. These are called 'bursaries'. Whether you're entitled to a bursary might vary from university to university, but it's always worth checking.

For example, did you know that:

- Everyone is entitled to a tuition fee loan that covers the cost of their degree course. This is paid directly to the university you're studying at.
- The amount of maintenance loan you can apply for is based on your family earnings. The maximum amount you could receive is around £7,700 per year if you live at home and around £9,000–£12,000 per year if you live away from home.
- At the moment, students won't start paying back this amount until they're in a job and are earning over £26,575 per year. At this point, they'll pay back 9% of the salary they earn over this. So, if your annual salary is £28,800, you'd pay back around £200 per year which works out to be £16 per month.
- If you haven't repaid all of the loan after 30 years, anything left to pay will be reduced to £0.

So, rather than a 'debt', funding your degree is a bit more like paying an extra bit of money every month when you're working. By the way, if you ever stop earning over the salary threshold, your repayments will stop until you earn over that amount again.

What are Widening Participation programmes?



All Universities offer these programmes. They are also sometimes called Widening Access or Outreach programmes and are aimed at helping young people from non-traditional backgrounds to go to University. Eligibility can be determined by where you live, which school you attend and whether you are from a low-income family.

Young Carers and those who have been in local authority care are also eligible to take part in these programmes.

In some cases, taking part in a widening participation programme can mean that you receive something called a Contextual Offer when you apply for University. This can be an up to 3 grade reduction from the published entry requirements for your chosen course. For example: If your course requires BBB at A Level, you may receive a contextual offer of CCC. You may also receive additional financial support at University.

Other places to get support

If you don't live in Warwickshire or Coventry, then the best thing to do to find your service is to do a simple internet search for services in your area, or check with your local council.

In addition to your local service, there are national support services for carers too. Some of these provide specific help for young carers and others focus more on adult carers. If you'd like more information, you can follow the links below:

There's lots of other support available at universities too.

Make sure to check out more information by researching and visiting universities. And look out for information about things like:



Accommodation

Lots of universities have accommodation on-campus and they will all have information and support services for finding accommodation nearby.



Wellbeing

Studying at university can sometimes have its ups and downs and sometimes things might happen that are out of your control that mean you need to put your wellbeing first. Wellbeing teams at university can support you during these times.



Societies

The social side of university is just as important as the academic side. Lots of universities have hundreds of societies that students can get involved with – you might even get the opportunity to start a brand-new hobby!



Some Universities offer a bursary (extra money that isn't a loan) to Young Carers.

Your Young Carer support service staff will often have links with Universities that offer additional support to young carers, so check with them too as they can be a good starting point to help you decide which Universities to research or consider.

The best way to learn more...

Everybody should be able to access the information and support they need to achieve their goals for the future. That's why lots of universities work with schools, young carers centres and other support services to provide activities and events for young people to have the opportunity to learn more.

You might find that the best way to learn more about university could be by taking part in these activities, particularly after you've finished Year 11. So, try to take up as many opportunities as you can.

If you're worried about balancing your caring responsibilities with any of these kinds of activities, try to:

- Speak to your school or college so they can provide you with the support you need
- Talk to your young carers service so that they can help where possible
- Speak to the university so that they can make sure they do everything they can to support you to take part in the activity

Some Universities provide taster visits for Young Carers. These are sometimes residential tasters to give Young Carers a sense of what living away from home in Halls might be like.

Taster visits are a great opportunity to experience a bit of University life and get lots of useful information and insight to help you with your decision making.

Ask your Carer Support Service if they provide any of these opportunities!

You don't have to talk to any of these places about anything you don't want to, but remember that your school or college, carers support service and university will want to help wherever they can.

Applying to university – top tips!

If you've decided that you'd like to apply to university then here are some top tips for making your application:

- 1 Start early! It's best to start thinking about University in year 11 so that you don't miss opportunities to join Widening Participation programmes or taster activities during year 12.
- 2 Make sure to do your research and pick a course that you think you'll enjoy. There are lots of useful websites you can use to research courses (see end of booklet).
- 3 Talk to your Carers Support Service to find out if they know what the offer is for Young Carers at the Universities you are considering applying to and if there are Widening Participation Programmes at those Universities that you could engage with.
- 4 If you can, try to visit universities before you apply. You can choose to apply for up to 5 universities on your UCAS application form. Researching and visiting these universities will give you a good idea of whether you feel the place is right for you.
- 5 When you write your application, think about any skills you think you've developed from being a young carer. These might be useful to include.
- 6 Your school will be asked to provide a teacher reference to accompany your application. It's really important to speak to someone in your school about being a young adult carer so that they can provide this context on your reference.
- 7 If you have a crisis during your exams it's always worth calling the University you've applied for to let them know. They might be able to take this into account.
- 8 And, for further down the line, some universities have additional support available specifically for young adult carers. If you are given the opportunity to identify yourself as a young adult carer to your university (e.g., through any paperwork sent out by the university) then it's a good idea to do this. If you're not sure you'd like to do this, try speaking to the university, your young carers service or school so they can help.

Help with being away from home

Some young adult carers choose to study at a local University so they can still live at home with the person they care for, but if you have decided that you want to go to a University away from home, the idea of leaving the person you care for can be worrying.

You have the right to study if you want to and as a young adult carer you have the right to get support to help you achieve your goals whether you are staying at home or moving away.

There are some things you can do to help this feel a bit easier.

- Contacting your local young carers service to get advice and to support you with.
- Contacting your local council to request a carers assessment so they are aware of the upcoming changes in your home situation and can make sure your family are getting the right support so that you can go to University.
- Speaking to the University that you want to apply to and letting them know you are a carer so that they can signpost you to any extra financial support or bursaries that would help with the cost of travelling home more often or being able to get back quickly in an emergency.
- When you have started University speaking to your tutors so they know that you are a carer and sometimes you might need to go home for an emergency or seek an extension on a deadline due to your caring responsibilities.
- Checking with the University whether they have a named person who supports carers, or whether there are any societies or social groups for students who are carers.
- Making time for yourself. Having a hobby or interest, or just going out with friends is important for your emotional wellbeing.

Next steps

We hope you have found this booklet helpful and wish you all the best with your future decisions!

Remember that, if you need it, help is out there so bear in mind our top tips and check out our useful contacts page for more information.

TOP TIPS

Talk to people

If you think you need help then it's really important you speak to someone about this.

Seek support

The best way to get support is by speaking to someone, whether that be at school, college or your local young carers service.

Recognise your skills

You'd be surprised by the skills you might have developed through your caring responsibilities, including time management, organisation, communication. These are very useful skills to have and are extremely important when thinking about apprenticeships, university or jobs in the future.

Follow your dreams

Even if you aren't sure what the future holds, it's still important for you to aim as big as you want to. Think about your goals and consider how you can achieve these. If you need help to reach them then reach out for support where you can.

Remember that you deserve the future you want

Some young carers feel worried or guilty about following their own goals and dreams, but you have the same rights as every other young person to achieve whatever you want to in life!

Look after you!

It is important to try to get enough sleep, eat healthily and get exercise to keep you well and able to cope with the pressures of caring. It is also important to seek support to look after your emotional wellbeing at times when things get stressful.

Take time out

Getting just a couple of hours away from your caring responsibilities can really help to reduce any feelings of stress, anxiety or isolation that young carers can sometimes experience. Your local young carers service will have a programme of regular groups and activities designed to give you a much-needed break.

Your Voice

University tasters for Young Carers

"Good atmosphere & good because we now all know that we can come & not be worried about not fitting in."

"I found it very informative because I now know about student life."

"I enjoyed my time thoroughly & found the experience beneficial as I was able to stay in the accommodation. I feel like I am more confident with moving away from home for Uni."

"At the University everyone is friendly & this gave me confidence to be myself & the confidence to go to University if I wanted to. This experience was really enjoyable & everyone should come & see what University is like."

"I feel more confident about going to uni now."

"Yesterday morning I was thinking, would I really be able to go to University with what I'm currently doing, but since I've seen the lecturers and the courses they'll provide, the way they'll support you, I'm really confident that I'll be able to come to University now."

Support from Carers Service around education & careers

"The information given has left me with lots more options to choose from"

"She's very fast at responding and is really well connected with universities and their programs I didn't know there were so many programs set to help me but thanks to the help I have gotten I have now applied to some"

"Young carers is like a 2nd family. Very supportive organisation who help everyone with certain needs and support by letting you be a volunteer so you know how to be a youth worker or support worker or project worker and how this job role is run. Being part of Young Carers helps you make new friends & they put you through training"

"Before I did all that, I just didn't know how to write a C.V. I didn't have the confidence to look for a job and after doing that I obviously improved and was able to."

Support from Carers Service for my wellbeing

"I feel better about myself because most people don't understand what it's like to be a young carer. They don't understand what sort of things they have to do and the sort of things we have to go through."

"Our support worker goes above and beyond to make sure we are all safe and have a positive attitude and outlook, if that isn't the case they will work with us"

"I now feel more positive about my future and my self-esteem is definitely higher than when I first started"

"the fact that they're always there"

"...because ...it was with other people... we shared experiences, and stories and everything on how we'd coped and how we'd struggled, and we shared experiences and helped each other"

"I can ask for help and my feelings do matter! I can discuss how I'm feeling with my friends. I am more confident in larger groups and can talk freely. And dance!"

"The Young Carers chats have been amazing. They have managed to let us keep in contact with each other and keep good relations. This really does allow us to get help we need when we need it."

"Young Carers gives us the peace of mind and enables us to chill with friends if we do not get social time at home, this helps us to have our own time."

Useful Contacts

Click on the bullet points to go to their website

Warwickshire
Young Carers

Young Carers
Coventry

Local Colleges

- Royal Leamington Spa College
- Rugby College
- Moreton Morrell College
- Evesham College
- Warwick Trident College
- North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College
- South Staffordshire College
- Stratford-upon-Avon College
- Coventry College
- Solihull College & University

Local Universities

- University of Warwick
- Coventry University
- University of Birmingham
- Newman University
- Aston University
- Birmingham City University
- University of Wolverhampton
- Staffordshire University
- University of Leicester
- De Montfort University
- Loughborough University
- University of Worcester
- Coventry University Group



Research Websites

- UCAS
- Career Pilot
- Informed Choices
- SACU Student
- National Careers Service



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**“Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You’re off to great places.
You’re off and away!”**

- Dr Seuss

