“My mum won’t accept support as she thinks she is OK, but it is me that ends up with it all.”

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Safeguarding officer
- Education welfare service

This chapter will support schools to:

- include young carers in child protection policies.
- be aware of child protection issues regarding young carers.

Synopsis

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, risking his or her own emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances.¹

There may be other factors, in addition to their caring role, linked to the parents’ illness or disability that may lead to safeguarding issues.

Your school has a duty

Schools have a duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Effective measures to safeguard children are those that also promote their welfare.

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) defines the safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children as²:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.
Your Local Authority also has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under s175 of the Education Act 2002.

Pupils who are young carers should be safeguarded in order to prevent them from undertaking inappropriate caring responsibilities for another person affected by ill-health and disability and from becoming a child in need.

**Children in need**

Children in need are defined by the Children Act 1989 as those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or those whose health and development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services.\(^3\)

As with any pupil, if you are concerned about their welfare, the usual school child protection procedures should be followed:

- Inform the named safeguarding officer who should follow the schools child protection procedures.
- If there are any safeguarding concerns of children, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures should be followed. The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

In order to safeguard the needs of young carers, an assessment of family circumstances is essential. A staff member within your school with a lead responsibility for young carers could be responsible for promoting and coordinating the support needed and for liaising with other agencies as appropriate. Adult and children’s statutory services can assess the needs of families and identify children in need.

The Whole Family Pathway is a resource for all professionals in a position to support young carers and their families and can be used to help identify who else can be involved in supporting the whole family. This is available at [www.youngcarer.com](http://www.youngcarer.com)

**Staff training**

Ofsted’s Safeguarding children review\(^4\) highlights the important role that schools can play in identifying young carers promptly so as to ensure that they are safe. In order to safeguard young carers, schools staff should be trained about the needs of young carers, including how to identify them and where to signpost them for support. This can include young people who may not see themselves as being a carer or those who do not want others to know about their caring role due to a fear of stigma and bullying or not wanting practitioners involved with their family.

**Other chapters to help you understand this topic**

- National legislation and guidance
- Staff training and awareness
- Assessment and monitoring
Key resources

➜ Lead professionals
Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), this guidance shows how the lead professional is a key element of integrated support. They take the lead to coordinate provision and act as a single point of contact for a child and their family when a range of services are involved and an integrated response is required.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/managersandleaders/leadprofessional/

➜ Safeguarding children
This is an Ofsted review of the arrangements that help keep children safe by eight inspectorates involved in regulating and inspecting services for children and young people.

www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk

➜ Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)
Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), this guidance sets out how individuals and organisations should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/workingtogether/workingtogethertosafeguardchildren/
