

## Dorset Guidance for Identifying and Assessing the Needs of Young Carers

### Contents

<b>1. Purpose</b> .....	1
<b>2. Context of the Work</b> .....	1
<b>3 Definitions used in this guidance</b> .....	3
<b>4. Identification of young carers and request for an assessment</b> .....	3
<b>5. Completion of an assessment</b> .....	5
<b>6. Ensuring our work is effective</b> .....	6
<b>7. Other sources of support for young carers</b> .....	7
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	9
<b>Dorset Young Carers' Pathway</b> .....	9
<b>Appendix 2</b> .....	10
<b>Early Help Hub – Guidance of notification that a young person may be a young carer</b> .....	10

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that young carers resident in the Dorset Council area have access to information, guidance and support to maintain or improve their wellbeing. For this to happen, young carers must be able to make their needs known, have those needs promptly assessed, and receive assistance that is tailored to their needs and known to be effective.

## 2. Context of the Work

- 2.1 Dorset Council has several legal duties with respect to young carers. **Section 17 Children Act 1989** places a duty on Local Authorities to assess whether a young carer in their area needs support and what those needs are if:

- it appears to the Local Authority that a young carer may have need for support
- the Local Authority receive a request from a young carer or a parent of a young carer to assess the young carer's need for support; or
- an assessment has been carried out, but the circumstances of the young person or person being cared for have changed

Under **section 96 Children and Families Act 2014**, the Local Authority conducting the assessment must pay attention to any education, training or

recreation the young person has and whether the young carer works or wishes to work.<sup>1</sup>

The **Young Carers' (Needs Assessment) Regulations 201518** require local authorities to look at the needs of the whole family when carrying out a young carer's needs assessment. Where appropriate, the Young Carers Family Worker may carry out a joint assessment with the Assessment and Support Co-ordinator (Adult Services), with the agreement of the young carer and adults concerned.

The Care Act 2014 says that councils must:

- Support young carers in transition to adulthood – this includes undertaking transition assessments for them
- Undertake carers assessments for adult carers (including those aged 18-24)
- Ensure that young carers are not left with inappropriate levels of caring responsibilities
- Produce a written record of whether the local authority consider the young person to be a 'child in need'

2.2 Our Dorset Children Thrive model brings together many services and types of support for children and young people across Dorset. The model means that we:

- Put children and families first
- Get it right first time
- Make services easy to access
- Develop our skilled and confident workforce
- Provide good quality, efficient services
- Measure the success of our work

These principles are embedded in our work with young carers.

2.3 The needs of young carers cannot be identified or met by Children's Services alone. We will work with:

- Adults Services colleagues who will often be the first to become aware of young carers' needs when assessing the parent(s) or sibling(s) under the Care Act
- Schools and colleges where teachers may be the first to notice the difficulties that a caring role can cause for a child
- Carers' organisations and other voluntary sector partners
- Healthcare professionals

---

<sup>1</sup> Information on the Children Act and the Children and Families Act from [Child Law Advice](#)

- 2.4 Above all, we need to listen to the voices of young carers who are already known to us and ensure that we develop our services in the light of their experiences. Only by listening to and understanding the experiences of young carers can we provide better information, guidance and support for them. The Children, Young People and Families Plan for Dorset includes specific work to better meet the needs of young carers. This work will be co-produced with young carers.
- 2.5 Dorset Council employees will be made aware of this guidance during their induction, and through training available on the Learning Hub.

### **3 Definitions used in this guidance**

- 3.1 Under the Children and Families Act 2014, a young carer is defined as:

*‘A person under 18 who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person. The concept of ‘care’ includes practical or emotional support, and ‘another person’ means anyone within the same family, be they adult or child’.*

The Children and Families Act definition excludes children providing care as part of contracted work or as voluntary work unless the local authority consider that the relationship between the person cared for and the young person under 18 is such that it would be appropriate for him/her to be regarded as a young carer.

- 3.2 A **parent** is anyone who holds parental responsibility for a child under the law. This will often be the child’s birth parent(s) but could also be their adoptive parent(s), Special Guardian or the local authority.

### **4. Identification of young carers and request for an assessment**

- 4.1. Dorset Council aims for young carers, and their families, to feel confident about seeking information, guidance and support that will assist them in their role. It recognises that this cannot happen unless it helps young people, families, and their support networks to be aware of young carer roles, the challenges these may bring and the support that is available. This support is set out on Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Young people may not be aware that they are carers or may not know how to find support in this role. It will often be an adult in their support network who first brings their need to the attention of local services. This could be the person they are caring for, a parent, teacher, youth work or healthcare professional.
- 4.3 **Where a parent or a family member identifies that a young person is a young carer they should contact Dorset Direct, who will pass them to the Early Help Hub.** The Early Help Hub will follow the process outline below in 4.4. The parent or family member should seek the permission of the young

person before doing so, unless they believe that either the young person lacks the capacity to give consent (in which case the parent's consent must be given), or that seeking consent would risk harm to the young person.

- 4.4 Where a health, social care or other professional (including officers of Dorset Direct) identifies that a young person is a young carer, they should make a referral to Dorset Council Children's Services Early Help Hub.** The Early Help Hub will follow the pathway set out in Appendix 1. This should be with the consent of the young person if they are able to give this (that is, where they have Fraser competency), and/or with the consent of their parent. Consent is not required where seeking it would place the child at risk of harm.
- 4.4.1 Where a significant risk of harm to the young person is identified, a referral should be made to the Children's Advice and Duty Team (ChAD). ChAD will implement the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedure.
- 4.4.2 Where it is identified that the child's health and/or development may be adversely affected or significantly impaired, allocation should be made to the relevant locality Early Help team. The Early Help locality team will carry out a further assessment so that additional services can be identified, and a lead worker appointed if required.
- 4.4.3 Where the initial contact has been made by a professional (see 4.5 above) the EHH practitioner will speak to them to gain further background information. Where 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 do not apply, the Early Help Hub will establish whether the young person meets the definition of a young carer set out at 3.1 and 3.2 above, through an initial telephone assessment.
- 4.5 Where a young person meets this definition, they will create Mosaic Early Help Involvement Request for the young person and commence an Early Help Assessment which will be assigned to the Young Carers Virtual Worker. In addition, the Early Help Hub will complete [FORM A](#) to ensure that the young person is registered with Carer Support Dorset as a carer.
- 4.6 Where the initial contact from a parent or professional is made to Carer Support Dorset, Carer Support Dorset will take the details of the enquiry and pass it to the Early Help Hub to contact the parent or professional. Carer Support Dorset will complete [FORM A](#) and notify the Early Help Hub that this has already been completed.
- 4.7 Where a young person does not meet the definition set out at 3.1 and 3.2 above, they are still eligible to be registered as a young carer, which can be done by the Early Help Hub at the point of initial enquiry. Registration as a

young carer is contracted by Dorset Council to Carer Support Dorset. Not meeting the definition does not preclude the young person from accessing other support as a young carer, such as MYTIME.

## **5. Completion of an assessment**

5.1 Once the Early Help Hub has established that a child or young person *may* have a significant caring role, a Young Carers Family Worker will carry out an Early Help Assessment to establish whether or not this is so. The assessment will be informed by the council's [Young Carers procedure](#), which gives a full account of the relevant legal requirements.

5.2 Where consent for the referral was given by a parent, the Young Carers Family Worker should commence the assessment by arranging an initial visit to the family home when both the parent and the young person being assessed are present. The cared for person and the young person should be seen on their own at least once during the assessment. It may help the young person to speak more freely if they are subsequently seen away from their home.

The initial assessment will seek to establish whether the young person has a young carer role that includes or may come to include tasks which are excessive or inappropriate, in particular to the carer's age, gender, wishes and feelings. If they are carrying out inappropriate tasks, they should be referred to the Young Carer team. Inappropriate tasks could include:

- Personal care such as bathing and toileting
- Strenuous physical tasks such as lifting
- Administering medication
- Maintaining the family budget
- Offering precociously mature, emotional support to the adult

5.3 The Young Carers Family Worker will also complete two carer assessment templates with the young person as part of the Early Help Assessment. MACA & PANOC are (psychometric) questionnaires which measure the extent and impact of a young person's caring responsibilities. The MACA is designed as a very short, easy to use, psychometric instrument which provides an index of the extent of caring activities that the young person is currently engaged in. The PANOC is a 20-item psychometric questionnaire designed to assess the positive and negative effects of caring activity

5.4 Once the Early Help Assessment is completed the Young Carers Family Worker will make a finding as to whether the young person carries out a significant caring role and make a recommendation as to whether they should be supported by the Young Carers Team. This will be reviewed and authorised by the Young Carers Team Manager.

5.5 Where support is provided by the Young Carers team this will include:

- Respite and time out from their caring role, such as organised activities for young carers during school holidays
- Signposting to any extra support that the young carer, or the cared-for person may need
- Acting as an advocate in school if necessary
- Offering one-to-one or small group support where appropriate

5.6 Young carers aged 17 plus should be identified as in transition to support from Adults Carer Support services. The Care Act 2014 requires that all young carers receive a transitional assessment prior to their 18th birthday, at a time when they are most likely to gain benefit from the assessment. Responsibility for ensuring that the transitional assessment is carried out rests with the Young Carers Team Manager within Children's Services and the relevant Locality Manager within Adults' Services.

5.7 If in the course of their assessment or subsequent work with a young person, the Young Carers Family Worker identifies a safeguarding need, they should seek the consent of the young person to make a referral to the Children's Advice and Duty (ChAD) team (save where seeking consent would place the young person at risk of significant harm, in which case referral should be made without consent). Should they identify that the young person and/or their family has support needs, the Worker should gain consent from the young person and their parent/carer to make a referral to the Early Help Hub.

## **6. Ensuring our work is effective**

6.1 Dorset Council will develop the means to measure the quality of our response to the needs of young carers by:

- Seeking feedback from young people and/or their parent(s) for each referral regarding both the quality of the referral pathway, and its outcome for them
- Seeking feedback from professionals referring young carers for assessment
- Recording the length of time between initial referral to the first point of contact (whether this be Carer Support Dorset, Dorset Direct or the Early Help Hub) and the completion of the Early Help assessment
- Recording the timeliness of transitional carer assessments; any assessment not carried out before the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday should be recorded as an exception

A report on these indicators will form part of each Early Help report to the Quality of Practice and Action Group (QPAG) in Children's Services.

- 6.2 Dorset Council will develop the means to report the effectiveness of the response to the needs of young carers through the following indicators:
- Number of young carers referred during each period
  - Number of carers added to the Young Carer register in each period
  - Total number of young carers on the register
  - Outcomes for each referral shown by pathway identified (for example, Safeguarding, Early Help, Carer Support)
  - Outcomes for the young people supported (for example, gains in terms of health, education, training, alleviation of poverty and exclusion)

These outcomes will be reported to the extended Children's Services Leadership Team (xCSLT) on a quarterly basis.

- 6.3 xCSLT will also review the effectiveness of partnership working arrangements to support young carers by reviewing each quarter:
- The sources of initial referrals for young carers
  - Quality feedback from professionals working with partner agencies
  - Awareness-raising and training carried out by Dorset Council and Carer Support Dorset during the period

## **7. Other sources of support for young carers**

- 7.1 Information about young carer roles and support will be available on the [Our Dorset](#) website.

- 7.2 Carer Support Dorset - Dorset Council has commissioned Carer Support Dorset to:

- Register young carers so that they are not overlooked
- Offer additional support and signposting to relevant services
- Support young carers to co-produce services with Dorset Council and other agencies
- Raise awareness of young carers and how to identify them, the needs they have and how to support them
- Support young carers to make a transition into adulthood where the young person will continue to be a carer into adulthood

See further information on [Carer Support Dorset](#).

- 7.3 Young carers can also access support through MYTIME, a Dorset based charity which supports registered and unregistered young carers. MYTIME can offer:

- Opportunities to take part in positive activities and a break from caring during school holidays with other young carers
- Access to weekly virtual youth groups

- Employability Programme providing support with access to further education and work
- Training for employees who support young carers

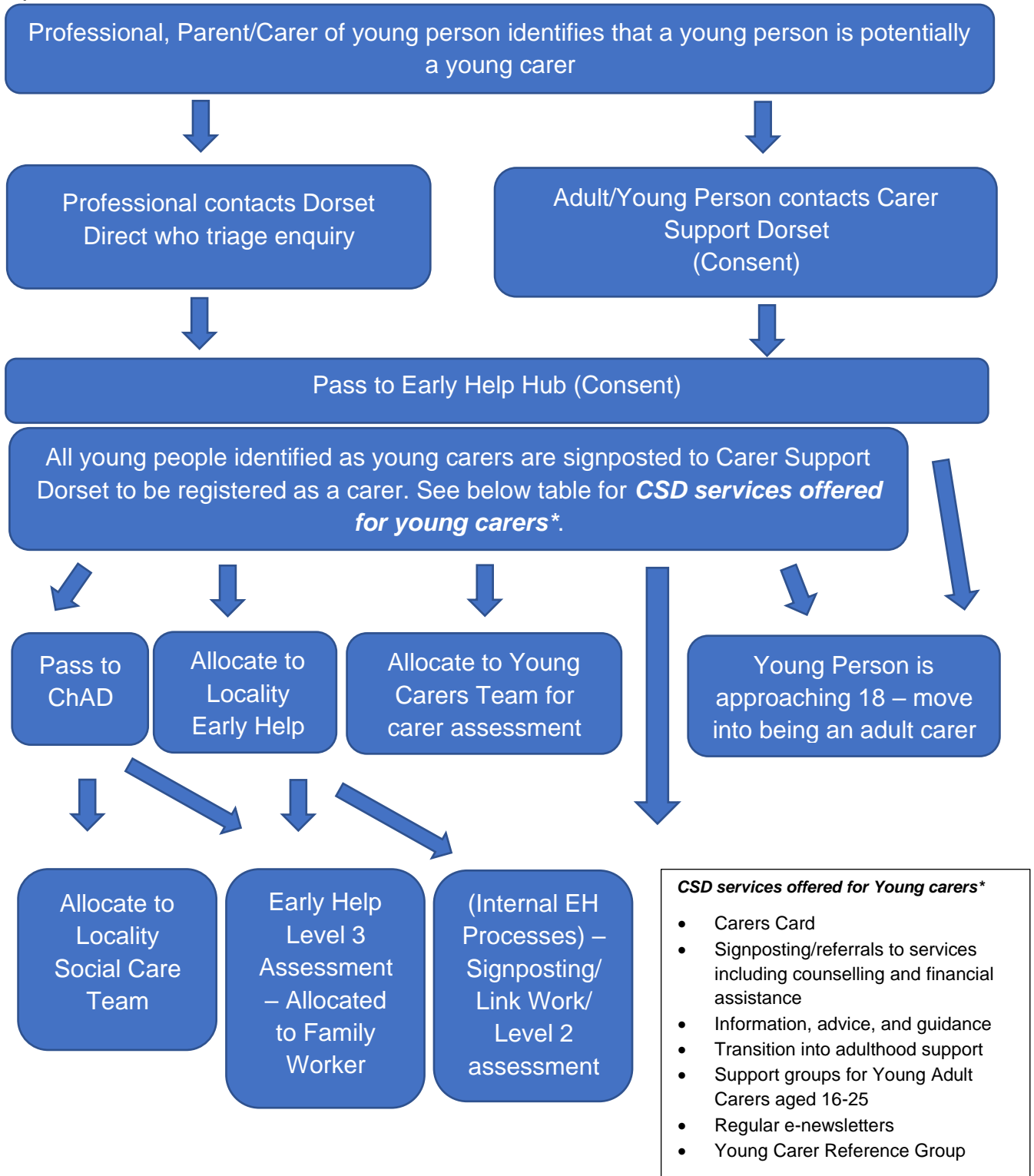
See further information on [MYTIME](#).



**Appendix 1**

**Dorset Young Carers' Pathway**

The pathway into the Dorset Council Young Carers' Service and the support they provide is set out below:



## Appendix 2

### Early Help Hub – Guidance of notification that a young person may be a young carer

#### Background

The Early Help Hub act as the first point of call for parents, carers and professionals that believe a child is undertaking a caring role. Anyone undertaking a caring role is entitled to be registered as a carer. In addition, Dorset Council has a duty to ascertain whether a child or young person undertakes a “significant caring role” and those that do, will be supported by the Young Carers Team. In some cases, the needs identified may need a whole family approach with an allocated family worker. This document sets out this process.

#### Process

The process will be as follows:

1. When either a professional or a parent/ carer contacts the EH Hub, the EH Hub Worker will make decision to pass a family to the relevant locality in the same way as with any other Early Help Involvement Request. This request will be sent to the locality for allocation to a worker for a whole family approach. This will need further assessment to be undertaken and a support plan to be produced.
2. The EH Hub Worker will **also** need to make a judgement as to whether a child or young person **might** be undertaking a ‘significant caring role’ and that as such an assessment by the Dorset Young Carers Team needs to be undertaken. The EH Hub worker should ascertain that the young person lives with the cared for person on a full-time basis.
3. To make this judgement the EH Hub should ask the following questions:
  - Do they undertake intimate personal care such as bathing and toileting?
  - Do they undertake strenuous physical tasks such as lifting?
  - Do they administer medication?
  - Are they responsible for the family budget, planning the family shop, or organising family meals?
  - Are they required to provide emotional support to an adult which is beyond the reasonable expectations of their age?
  - Do they undertake more than 2 hours of care/ household duties in a day on a regular basis?
  - Do they provide care to someone whose disability or condition may make them violent towards the young carer?

- Do they have any break or respite from their caring role (hobbies/leisure pursuits/spending time with friends, external family members, other than to attend school?)
- Do they care for a person who is involved in excessive alcohol consumption or substance misuse?

If the answer is yes to two or more of these questions, then the child or young person should be assessed as a young carer by the Dorset Young Carer Team. The EH Hub Worker does not need to explore these issues in depth but should provide a brief summary as to why the professional or parent/carer feels the young person should be assessed as a young carer. If in doubt, the EH Hub worker should exercise caution and ask for an assessment to be done.

4. The EH Hub worker should open an Early Help Involvement Request on Mosaic, outlining the reasons why they have concluded that the assessment is necessary, and then create an Early Help Assessment Level 3 and allocate this to the 'Young Carers Virtual Worker'.
5. In addition, the EH Hub worker should [complete the form from this link](#) **even if the young person is not going to be assessed by the Dorset Young Carers team. This form ensures that the child or young person will be put on the carers register, which is a statutory duty on the Local Authority.**
6. Where the EH Hub ascertains that an assessment of a 'significant caring role' is not required they can still signpost to other organisations for support:

**Carer Support Dorset** - Dorset Council has commissioned Carer Support Dorset to:

- Register young carers so that they are not overlooked (they process the MS Form from the link above)
- Offer additional support and signposting to relevant services
- Support young carers to co-produce services with Dorset Council and other agencies
- Raise awareness of young carers and how to identify them, the needs they have and how to support them
- Support young carers to make a transition into adulthood where the young person will continue to be a carer into adulthood

See further information on [Carer Support Dorset](#)

**MYTIME** - a Dorset based charity which supports registered young carers. MYTIME can offer:

- Opportunities to take part in positive activities and a break from caring during school holidays with other young carers
- Access to weekly virtual youth groups
- Employability Programme providing support with access to further education and work

See further information on [MYTIME](#).

