

Guidance for completing the Young Carer assessment

Best questions

The following guidance has been developed to support professionals in assessing children that may have a caring role or are impacted by being a young carer.

"A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol"

There are many elements to a caring role not all are visible such as a disability. Substance Misuse/Mental Health and alcoholism can be hidden from plain sight but have an impact on the children living in the home, some will be providing emotional, physical and practical support to others in the family.

The guidance has been divided into age groups to support the assessment of the child's caring role, as prompts to aid the interviewer to explore deeper into the child's daily life and the level of caring role that they have. The aim is to support the interviewer to develop a free-flowing discussion with the child using terms that they can understand according to their ability.

Within Lincolnshire the Early Help Team provide support in Localities:

Lincoln and West Lindsey

North Kesteven and South Kesteven

Boston and South Holland

East Lindsey

Further support can be found by emailing: youngcarers@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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Examples and recommendations of questions that could be used in assessing a child for a Young Carer role.

General questions all age groups



Do you understand what a young carer is?
Why do you think Mum/Dad/Sibling is unwell?
Is there anything you don't understand about your family member's illness?
What do you think your life would be like if your mum/dad/sibling wasn't unwell?



Describe a good day and a bad day in your home?
How does the good day make you feel?
How does the bad day make you feel?



What makes you feel proud of yourself?
What is your biggest achievement?
Is there anything you would like to do?
What are your dreams?



What support do you think you will need to meet your goals?
Are there things you wish people could understand about your life?
Would you be happy talking/going to a group with other children that help look after someone in their family?



Who within your family helps?
Who outside your family helps, friends etc?
What help do you feel that you need?



Do you ever feel like you want to have more time for yourself?
How can others help?

Top Tip

A young carer may put others before themselves, using questions focused on their wishes and feelings, aspirations and something they feel proud off, supports the assessment of their needs.

There are many tools you can use directed to the child's age and needs that help them share how supporting at home affects them. These tools make it easier for you, as the worker, to better understand their experiences. You can find a variety of tools on the [LSCP](#) website under the resources section, and more tools are available on the [Social Workers Toolbox](#).

Questions for 8 years and under



What do you do to help mummy/daddy/grandparent/brother/sister etc at home?



What special thing do you do that makes them happy?



If you are worried about mummy/daddy/grandparent/brother/sister etc who do you talk to, what would you do?



What's the most annoying thing you must do at home to help mummy/daddy/grandparent /brother/sister etc..?

Top Tip

Visual tools and graphics can be really helpful for starting conversations with children about their caring role. For instance, the frog and lily pad example, can make it easier for them to express themselves.



Questions for 8 to 13 year olds



How is your day different to your friends/siblings day?



Who washes your clothes, helps you get to school, cooks dinner?



Do you help your brothers/sisters to get dressed, ready for school, breakfast, teatime, homework, bathing, ready for bed etc...

Questions for 13 year olds and above



How does your caring impact on your own school life and home life?



Tell me 3 positive things about the person you care for?
Tell me 3 worries about the person you care for?



Have you always cared for your family member? What did life look like before you were a young carer? How is that different to life now?



Does caring have any effects on your own health? (physical and/or emotional)



Do you have anyone you already talk to about your caring? You're not alone and there is support out there if you want any (more) support



In 5 years time where do you see yourself? What do you think your caring role will be?



If you met yourself before your parent/sibling became ill what advice would you give yourself?

Top Tip

Identify what level of support they're giving and how it affects their day. Understand how the young carer sees themselves compared to others. Also, explore what support they might need in their caring role and how they want to be seen by others. Keep in mind that not all young carers want people to know about their caring role.

It can be really difficult for a child to talk about a family member with substance misuse or mental health issues. Discussing these hidden aspects of addiction or mental health can be challenging for the child. They may hesitate to share details about their home life. Not all children will recognise or openly share that their parent is struggling with mental health or substance misuse.

The questions below are designed to help us better understand what makes them a young carer and how this impacts their day-to-day life, well-being, and overall experiences.



Why do you think Mum/Dad/Sibling is unwell?



Are you worried about leaving Mum/dad/sibling alone... when you go to school, or out with friends?

Does this stop you going out of the home or going to see your friends, going to school?
What would help you feel happier to leave Mum/Dad/Sibling and have time to yourself?



If you could tell anyone about your parent's illness, what would you want them to know?



What happens when they are angry, sad, upset, in bed, not well..? Depending on the answer, following on with asking about the person they are worried about behaviour



How does a bad day impact on school/home life?



When you are out of the home and worried about the person you care for, what could others do to help lessen your worries?



If you met another young carer caring for someone with substance misuse/mental health illness what advice would you give them?
What would you want them to know?
What has helped you the most?