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## Background

Young carers are: children and young people under the age of 18 who provide regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances. This does not mean every day/ occasional help around the home. Based on 2011 census, it is estimated that there are about 4000 young carers in Lancashire

- 9% provide 50+ hours per week care
- 11.3 % provide 20-39 hours per week care
- 56.1% female (0-24s) - 61.2% of those undertake 50 hrs or more care per week

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## Why it matters

The impact of caring on children and young people is wide ranging and can include:  
 Feeling lonely (Missing out on friendships, feeling frightened and isolated, scared to tell anyone about their home circumstances)  
 Feeling excluded (bullied and stigmatised, difficulty getting to school on time, struggle to get involved in activities)  
 Feel overwhelmed (tired, worried and stressed, ashamed and guilty, high levels of responsibility with little support)  
 Struggling with school/ college work difficult to concentrate and/ or hold on to their tempers, difficult to do homework, non-attendance, unable think about future employment/ education.

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## Information

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 both address the needs and rights of carers. This includes duties for the identification, assessment and implementation of a support plan for young carers and parent carers of children under 18 years.

Whole family assessment is a new approach to assessing and supporting young carers. It considers the following:

- The impact of the adult's care needs on the child;

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- The identification of any child/ young person who undertakes a caring role;
- The parenting responsibilities of the adult/s

In regards to young carers at transition, the following must be considered;

- How to support young carers to prepare for adulthood.

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- A person centred transition plan, including key milestones to achieve;
- The needs of the young carer and how they may change

If you are assessing a vulnerable adult, it is essential that you ask about potential child carers and ensure you are able to recognise and respond to risks to their welfare. Identify how the adult's care needs will be met without relying on children and young people for care.

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## What to do

Where a young carer is a 'child in need' adult workers must;

- Refer to the independent [Young Carers' service-Barnardos](#),
- Refer to [Children and Family Wellbeing Service](#)
- Undertake a joint assessment where appropriate (provision in the Care Act and in S. 17 of the Children Act to combine a young carers assessment with that of the adult); or further investigation by Children's Social Care about safeguarding concerns if there is a risk of significant harm to the child.

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## Questions to consider

- Do we always ask an adult accessing Adult Social Care if they have dependents in the household?
- Do we always ask children and young people about their carer status?
- Are we clear about our legal responsibilities?
- Are we clear that this is a safeguarding issue?

