

Young carers strategy

2025 to 2030



Isle of Wight
Council

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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the refreshed young carers strategy for 2025 to 2030. Since the introduction of the 2019 strategy, we have seen significant improvements in both the recognition and support for young carers.

Our commitment to a partnership approach continues to have a significant impact, with increased awareness and understanding of young carers across those working with and supporting children and families. We have a growing number of young carer champions, and our young carers partnership continues to grow and develop.

We are seeing new and exciting offers that allow our young carers the opportunity to explore activities beyond their caring roles, meet new friends and importantly give them access to the same opportunities as their peers.

We are proud of our young carers and recognise the huge contribution they make to their families.

While we have seen significant improvements in the identification of our young carers, we still have a long way to go. We know that there are still too many children and young people with caring responsibilities that we do not know about yet. We know that more children are facing caring responsibilities at home and that family circumstances have become more complex. We recognise the need to further develop the support available to young carers, ensuring that the community recognises their contribution, importance and ensures that community support is available for all levels of support need.

Councillor Paul Brading, Chair of Children's Services, Education and Skills Committee

Part one



Introduction

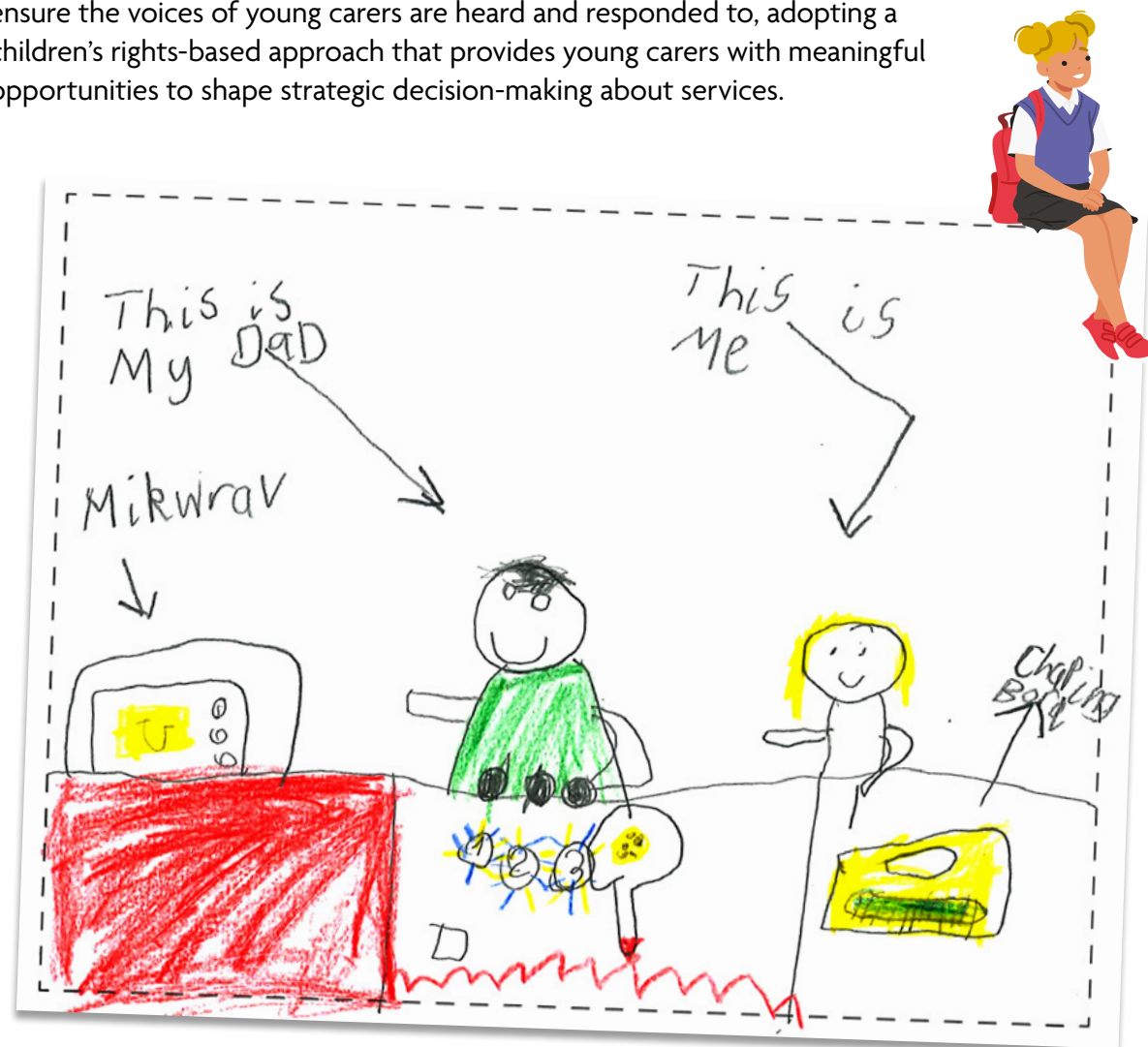


Our vision is that the Isle of Wight is a place where young carers have the right support at the right time for them and their families. Where their specific needs are considered within voluntary and community services, children and adult services, and targeted support services to ensure that they have the same opportunities and strong foundations for their future as other children.

Our refreshed 2025 strategy sets out the current situation and the aspirations for young carers living on the Isle of Wight. It reflects on the successes and the challenges in achieving these aspirations.

The key aims of the strategy are to:

- improve the identification of young carers and their families;
- increase communication between services, schools and families;
- reduce the need for young people to provide inappropriate care, minimising the potential for negative impacts on children and young people's health, wellbeing and future opportunities;
- continue to embed the offer for young carers into all services including universal and targeted;
- promote young carers' rights to a statutory young carers needs assessment and whole family support;
- ensure the voices of young carers are heard and responded to, adopting a children's rights-based approach that provides young carers with meaningful opportunities to shape strategic decision-making about services.



Legislation and local authority responsibilities



The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, both significantly strengthened the rights for young carers. The legislation and guidance in place ensures local authorities are proactive in identifying young carers, assessing their needs, and considering the whole family's needs, providing support and preventative services, and supporting the transition to adult services.

Here is a summary of the main legislation and guidance:

Children Act 1989 and **Children and Families Act 2014**: This requires local authorities to assess the needs of young carers under the age of 18 and provide appropriate support. The act aims to prevent children and young people from taking on excessive or inappropriate care responsibilities.

A local authority in England must assess whether a young carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are, if:

- it appears to the authority that the young carer may have needs for support; or
- there is a request from the young carer, or a parent of a young carer, to assess their needs for support.

Care Act 2014: This act works alongside the Children and Families Act to ensure a 'whole-family approach' to assessment and support. It places a duty on local authorities to identify young carers and assess their needs, regardless of who they care for or the type of care they provide.

The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015 sets out the requirements for local authorities ensuring assessments are appropriate to the young carers needs and circumstances: that there is consideration of the young carers age, understanding, family circumstances, wishes, feelings and preferences; that local authorities provide necessary information to enable effective participation in the assessment; that those completing the assessments are appropriately trained and knowledgeable. **Please note:** Young people, families and others who the family request can be sent a copy of the completed assessment if requested to do so.

The NHS Long Term Plan makes key commitments to young carers: to improve identification and support, publish top tips for supporting young carers, ensure emergency back up support is available in emergencies, introducing 'carer quality markers' and carer passports.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016 emphasises the importance of a whole family approach, assessment and support that prevents a young carer from excessive responsibilities, support to transition to adult care, promote a young carer's wellbeing considering their physical, mental and emotional health.



The overall goal is to ensure that young carers and their families receive the support that they need to ensure that children do not have inappropriate or excessive care responsibilities. These could be where:

- the young carer cannot access education, e.g. they are regularly absent from school;
- the young carer is prevented from building relationships and friendships.

Inappropriate caring responsibilities may be:

- personal care such as bathing and toileting;
- strenuous physical activity such as lifting;
- administering medication;
- maintaining the family budget;
- providing emotional support.

The **working together to safeguard children 2023** guidance emphasises the importance of a multi-agency approach to support young carers. This focuses on whole-family focus, early identification and support, multi-agency collaboration and a child-centred approach.

Since 2023 schools have been required to record the number of young carers in their census returns and from 2024 this includes independent schools.



Who are young carers and what do they do?



Who are young carers?

A young carer is a person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care to another person, unless under a contract or as voluntary work.

On the Isle of Wight, a young carers needs assessment will be offered when a young carer is providing care to a relative (usually within their homes) who has an illness, disability, mental health condition, or problematic drug or alcohol use. The care that they need to provide will be regular and will be needed to ensure the health, safety or wellbeing of the person they are caring for. The responsibility for this care would usually be done by an adult and goes beyond the day to day help that children would give as part of living in a family.

What do young carers do?

Young carers might do some, all or more of these things:

- Caring for other siblings
- Shopping
- Providing emotional support
- Pay bills
- Cleaning and laundry
- Help with getting up
- Help with getting dressed
- Communication
- Cooking
- Giving medicines

The impact of being a young carer

With the right support young carers can find caring a rewarding and enriching experience which can give them a great sense of pride and skills. This is often evident through their:

- **understanding and compassion towards others** – young carers can often develop great emotional intelligence which can help them build strong relationships in life;
- **development of life skills and problem solving** – young carers can learn to manage situations and their time, make decisions, develop practical life skills such as home management skills and how to navigate access to services;



- **sense of purpose and pride** – they can develop a positive feeling of self worth and fulfilment from helping their family, boosting their self esteem and confidence;
- **resilience** – young carers and their families can face many challenges, overcoming these together builds resilience, adaptability and skills to manage emotionally challenges in life;
- **strong communication skills** – they can develop their skills in communicating effectively with peers, adults and professionals enabling them to take these into their work and adult life;
- **strong community and peer support** – they are able to connect with people, those with similar experiences and with support networks building strong friendships and community belonging.

Access to the right support for a young carers' needs is critical to reducing the difficulties young carers can face; this may be access to community and social support, emotional and practical support, education support, support for their family and it may be one, some or all of these types of support are required.

Being a young carer can have significant effects on a child's well-being, education, and social life without support when this is needed. Some of the key impacts include:

- **Educational challenges** – Young carers may struggle to concentrate in school, fall behind on homework, or have frequent absences or lateness. These difficulties can often occur without clear explanation.
- **Social isolation** – They may have less time to meet friends, join activities, or participate in events their peers enjoy. They may also withdraw or avoid activities and seeing friends due to the impact of caring on their coping and energy levels. They may be reluctant to discuss their family circumstances which can impact on their relationships with others.
- **Emotional strain** – Many young carers experience stress, anxiety, and feelings of missing out on childhood experiences. They may present as more responsible or mature due to the additional responsibilities they have and can have a level of specialist knowledge regarding health or medication that is beyond the usual for a child of their age.
- **Physical and mental health issues** – The demands of caregiving can lead to exhaustion, poor physical health, and mental health struggles. It can mean young carers have less time available for their needs which can impact on their own care and presentation.
- **Limited future opportunities** – Young carers often face difficulties in achieving their academic potential, which can affect their career prospects.
- **Financial strain** – Some young carers take on responsibilities such as managing household budgets, which can add financial pressure.



Local and national landscape for young carers

The Isle of Wight

The number of children and young people aged 0 to 17 on the Isle of Wight is approximately 24,255 which represents about 17 per cent of the total population (joint strategic needs assessment 2023).

The Office of National Statistics in England reported in the 2021 census that there are 120,000 young carers aged between five and 17 years in England, which represents about 1.4 per cent. This is a self reporting figure.

Information on whether a child has been identified as a young carer has been collected annually through the school census from January 2023. Below shows the improvement of data being collected.

Table 1 – Pupil population recorded as young carers

	2022 to 2023	Change from 2022 to 2024	2023 to 2024	Change from 2023 to 2025	2024 to 2025	Total improvement
Isle of Wight	0.6% 101	+0.47% +77	1.07% 178	+0.39% +57	1.46% 235	+0.86% +134

In the 2023 census, **38,983** pupils were recorded as young carers, representing 0.5 percent of the pupil population

In the 2024 census, this number increased to **53,976** pupils, representing 0.6 per cent of the pupil population.

A high proportion of schools nationally continue to report they have no young carers: 72 per cent in 2024, compared with 79 per cent in 2023.

The **spring 2025 census** for the Isle of Wight shows that there are 254 out of 15,895 students who are Young Carers (1.5 per cent).



Table 2 – Young carers in education on the Isle of Wight

Year Group	Not young carer	Young carer identified by parent or guardian	Young carer identified by school	All children	Percentage are young carers
All children	15,663	105	127	15,895	1.5%
Primary school cohort	8,571	24	48	8,643	0.8%
Secondary school cohort	6,143	74	76	6,293	2.4%
Post-16 cohort	949	7	3	9,59	1.0%

The percentage of students nationally that are young carers is 0.8 per cent. There are **2,488** children with special educational needs on the Isle of Wight (15%) and are identified as requiring special education – approximately six per cent of all children (compared to 4.8 per cent nationally).

What young carers have told us

What is it like to be a young carer?

“It feels powerful and amazing”
(Child aged 12 years)

“It’s hard and can be tiring”
(Child aged 13 years)

“Good – I like helping people”
(Child aged eight years)

“I am really good at helping”
(Child aged eight years)



What does young carer support mean to you?

Trips, breaks, help, support, fun times!
(Child aged 12 years)

I have someone to trust!
(Child aged 13 years)

It gives me a break
(Child aged 11 years)

Its amazing!
(Child aged eight years)

Getting help for me
(Child aged eight years)

Having freedom
(Child aged nine years)

Having fun with my friends in the group
(Child aged eight years)



What is difficult about being a young carer?

**Trying not to
back chat in
school (because
its hard at home)**

(Child aged nine years)

**Its hard
leaving
him alone
(brother)**

(Child aged eight years)

**Getting
tired**

(Child aged eight years)

Not swearing. Being worried about Mum, I need to be with her all the time so she doesn't get hurt. She will get hurt without me there.

(Child aged nine years)

Doing the washing and understanding the machine

(Child aged eight years)



What do you need help with as a young carer?

**Nothing
because I
am fine**

(Child aged nine years)

Everything

(Child aged eight years)

**Not having too
many jobs**

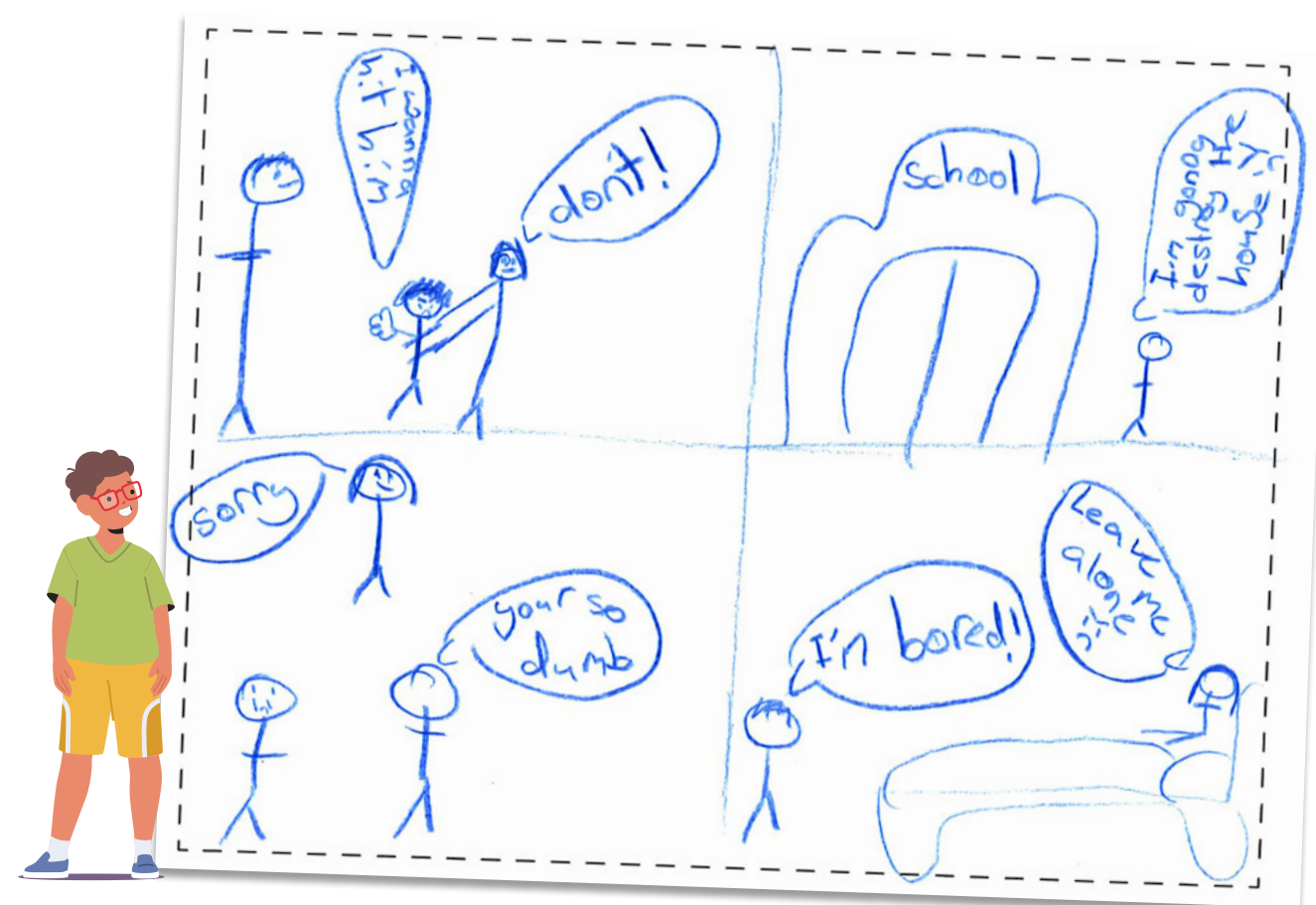
(Child aged eight years)

Everything

(Child aged nine years)

Nothing

(Child aged eight years)





Parents and carers tell us

What does young carer support mean to you?

Giving the children a reward and time for themselves. Also giving us a break.

Give him some time for him, away from responsibilities of helping at home. Its also lovely for him to interact with other young carers, which is so important.

What would be helpful for your child who is caring?

More activities – we understand that there is a lot of young carers so the spaces go quickly

My child is neurodiverse, so more activities suitable for neurodiverse children would be useful.

Case study 1: Benjamin, aged nine



(Please note that the young carer's name has been changed).

Benjamin's dad's physical health declined around September 2024. The family were already open to early help. Dad was having regular falls and required and some extra health equipment at home. Benjamin described this equipment as scary and when dad had fallen over, he had to protect his younger sibling from being scared. Benjamin described being a young carer as "hell" and thought that mum would get hurt if he wasn't there to look after her.

In school Benjamin's behaviour became unsettled and his attendance declined. Between September and December 2024 his attendance was 87 per cent. Benjamin would attempt to leave the school grounds to check on his parents.

In November 2024 Benjamin was registered with the local authority as a young carer, he also joined the in-school groups. Benjamin described this as "great to meet other people like me".

Between November and December 2024, the family's needs were assessed under a Section 17, child and family assessment, due to wider factors. This assessment concluded that early help was most appropriate.

Since Benjamin was identified and registered as a young carer he has frequent check-ins throughout the day with a nominated teaching assistant. He is able to call home at lunch times to check in on his parents, and he is able to work outside the classroom at times throughout the day when needed. He also enjoys attending activities within school but has not yet attended activities outside of school. The family liaison officer will support with booking these. Benjamin identified that he would like to attend an after-school club but finance was a barrier to this, he now attends a club once a week, funded by the school.

At Christmas time Benjamin voiced that he was sad that he wouldn't be getting many gifts, as finances continued to be a struggle, due to parental health. He was provided with a gift bag from MYTIME and a gift from the school-based gift service. The family were also able to access support from the Salvation Army.

Benjamin continues to be unsettled at times, but he has a good support network in school and calling home reassures him that his parents are ok. Benjamin is involved with the early help meetings, either by attending or giving his views. His attendance between January and April 2025 has increased to 95 per cent.



Case study 2: John, aged 17



(Please note that the young carer's name has been changed).

John became a young carer due to his older sister's mental health needs and his nan's medical needs. He received one-to-one support due to the following:

- John felt he could not share his worries with any other family members, John had limited contact with mum and no contact with dad.
- John would be reluctant to leave the house due to nan's health condition.
- John would struggle to regulate his emotions in the school setting and become angry and abusive towards staff.

Intervention provided and key issues

Social anxiety and regulating emotions – Weekly one-to-one sessions to enable John to learn techniques on how to manage anger in a classroom setting towards his peers. Time out passes given by school and building a relationship with his mentor reduced these struggles.

John had poor attendance in school due to worrying about nan at home as she was poorly – work based around putting in a safety plan for him when he is at school to reduce this and nan reassuring that she would contact him if there were any health concerns.

Confidence building sessions to be able to build relationships with staff in school.

John was feeling anxious about sitting his GCSEs, however by gaining confidence to work alongside his head of year, he was able to have a one-to-one throughout and this enabled him to complete all of his GCSEs in school.

John had poor friendship groups that were impacting on his daily life in school, keeping John focussed each week and giving him the time to speak about this in a confidential manner enabled him to overcome the peers who were bringing him down.

John always refused support from other agencies including the Youth Trust, and shared how he prefers having the one-to-one support each week rather than a counselling-based approach.

John's dream was to become a flight attendant, since leaving school last year he has attended South Down College in Portsmouth and commuted each day, which has been tough for him mentally and physically. However, I still meet up each month so I can continue to encourage and support him to reach his dream job.

John was anxious around starting at South Down College, but being able to liaise with their mental wellbeing team, I was able to make the college aware of John's young carer status and the struggles

he has, leading to support from his mentor and course leader throughout the year.

John completed some work experience at the Tui holiday shop in Newport and within a week they had offered him an apprenticeship. John works in the school holidays while he is finishing college

John also has two weeks left at college where he will be obtaining his air cabin crew qualification, this will set John on the correct pathway to becoming a flight attendant.

Voice of the child

"Having one-to-one support has been such an incredible experience and one that I am forever grateful and thankful for. Throughout my time at school I struggled with a lot of aspects that were indeed school related where times got too difficult and I couldn't see the light but with my worker it made an incredible difference to me not only in how I have formed as an individual but also how I overcome those difficult situations at school. Whether it was dealing with personal struggles or the struggles with school life knowing that I wasn't alone and had that support helped ease the weight on my shoulders and most definitely off my mind. The presence of someone who believed in me created that safe space for me and who would listen to me rumble on about things and someone who constantly reminded me of my strengths and my capabilities gave me the courage to keep going and to see that light even during the toughest times.

"One of the biggest things that I'm thankful for and would recommend to any young carer is having that one-to-one, because that consistent support gave me a safe space where I could express myself without fear of judgment, knowing that I had someone in my corner and someone to support me. The worker helped me see the good even when everything felt like it was falling apart. Her encouragement reminded me that falling down doesn't mean failing it just means you're human.



“Without the support from my one-to-one I genuinely don’t believe I would be where I am today if it wasn’t for the worker. I wouldn’t be pursuing my dream that I am today, and not only that she was more than just a support worker – they became a trusted guide who stood by me in and out of school. Someone who would speak for me when something wasn’t quite right at school. Her understanding, kindness, and commitment gave me the stability I needed to grow and succeed. Looking back at the last 18 months I’ve had support from the worker, I now realise how crucial that support was and I’m deeply grateful for the role they played in helping me become who I am now.”

Voice of the parent

“When at school John found times when he couldn’t cope, so having support for him was good. Over the past 18 months he has gained confidence in himself because of the guidance he received. He used to meet up with the worker with heavy heart but came home lifted and with renewed energy. This constant support has been very beneficial to him and I would recommended it to others because it does help.



Our vision

Our vision is that all young carers will have access to help, advice and support that they need. There will be ‘no wrong’ door to access support and this will enable young carers to be identified at the earliest opportunities. When they are identified there will be easy access to information and clear pathways in place that are easy to navigate if they require an young carers needs assessment.

Our vision is that together, through our work with our commissioned young carer service provider, our work with voluntary sector organisations, community services and statutory services, we will reduce the caring responsibility for young carers and ensure that inappropriate caring responsibilities do not fall to them. When they do need to support their family through caring, there will be support to help to reduce the impact.

Some young carers may require some free time doing an activity for themselves which in turn provides a break from caring. Some young carers may require enhanced support through group or one to one support to support them in managing the challenges they face and reduce the impact for them.

We cannot do this alone, to enact our vision we require all services, whether they are statutory or voluntary, to work to improve our identification of young carers and have support available from universal support through to more specialist intervention. We need to ensure that the offer is embedded across all of child and family services and a partnership work, as this will support to enable our vision to be implemented.



Partnership working

The young carers operational working group is established and will implement the refresh and delivery of the strategy with the aim to increase the identification and available support for young carers.

An action plan has been agreed and work streams delivered by representatives from young carers, schools, early help, commissioned service, children’s social care, adult services and voluntary sector partners.

Young carers have told us that they want their support to be delivered through schools and settings. In response to this, we are working with voluntary and community sector partners, and commissioned services who have dedicated resources in place to support the implementation of the strategy through:

- working with schools and education settings;
- other appropriate universal services and targeted support services.



Priorities



We have called these our priorities as they need to be done sooner than other things. Work to change the lives of young carers has been identified within each priority. An action plan will be written which shows what work will be done, when it will happen, who will do it and when it is expected to finish.

- 1. Raising awareness: support is available from universal to targeted services.**
- 2. Information, advice and support: is accessible and known to young carers, their families and those supporting them.**
- 3. Young carer and families voice: shapes support and services to meet changing needs.**

We need to ensure that there being 'no wrong doors' and young carers are being identified and assessed, and their families are receiving support to prevent inappropriate levels of caring, (regardless of which service comes into contact with them first)

Priority 1 – raising awareness

- Raising awareness through promotion and working with all partners across the universal and targeted support services.
- The wider workforce to understand who are young carers and the impact that caring has on them.
- Introduce a guide for people to support the identification of young carers and support them in considering when an assessment of their needs is required. **See Appendix 2 – A guide to support and assessment.**

Priority 2 – Access to timely advice and support

- Advice, guidance and information will be accessible to families, the community and professionals through a refreshed published offer.
- Ensuring that there is a clear pathway of support which is responsive to individual needs.
- Ease of access to support through a 'no wrong door' approach.

- Ensure agencies including education settings, commissioned service and the voluntary and community sector have pathways to share information.
- Ensure that an effective process is in place to facilitate a smooth transition to adult social care services.

Priority 3 – young carers and families voices

- Create a young carer voice forum.
- Ensure we capture the young carers and families voice throughout universal to targeted support services.
- Ensure we capture voices of those young carers not engaging with services.
- Use young carers and families voice to shape our commissioning arrangements and services available within the voluntary and community sector.
- Young carer representation at the early help and prevention board.

What will we do

- Create an action plan for each priority.
- Monitor and evaluate: regular monitoring and evaluation will enable further development and adjustment of support services. Progress will be monitored through the early help and prevention board and the local safeguarding partnership.
- Young carers and families voice: we will ensure that young carers and families voices are represented within work streams and the early help and prevention board.
- Reporting: provide annual reports on the progress and impact of the strategy.

Success measures

- All schools across the island will have a young carer support offer and know the pathways of support.
- Increase of completion of the school census data return.
- Increased numbers of young carers transitioning to the adult carers support offer.
- Improved educational, health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Increased completion rate of an annual survey for professionals, young carers and families.
- Increase within young carer opportunities through growth of the voluntary and community sector offer.



Appendix 1



A guide to support and assessment

	Universal support	Assessed support	Targeted support	Intensive support
The child or young person	Young carer has low level of caring responsibilities in the family home which they can manage without significant negative impact.	Young carer has low level caring responsibilities in the family home which they can normally manage without significant negative impact.	Young carer has medium level of caring responsibilities in the family home which may have a negative impact on their health, wellbeing, and life opportunities.	Young carer has high level of caring responsibilities within the family home that may have a significant negative impact on their health, wellbeing, and life opportunities.
Circumstances and key features:	Developmental needs of child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving age related expectations in education. Good attendance at school. Meeting developmental milestones. Emotional wellbeing is good. Socially interactive and skilled. 	Developmental needs of child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving age related expectations in education. Good attendance at school. Meeting developmental milestones Emotional wellbeing may be supported by targeted support such as ELSA or pastoral support. 	Developmental needs of child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School attendance and missing education which is attributed to caring role. At risk of social exclusion due to caring role. Poor self-esteem or requires emotional support. Emotional wellbeing is being supported by targeted support such as ELSA or Pastoral support or higher level intervention may need to be considered. 	Developmental needs of child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent absence from school, or missing from school regularly attributed to caring role. Is not able to take part in out of school activities, e.g. clubs or playing with friends due to caring role. Poor self-esteem or requires emotional support. Physical, mental, or emotional health is affected and requires support from specialist agencies.
	Family and environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive relationships. Secure and caring home. Good diet and kept healthy. Supportive networks. Access to positive activities 	Family and environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive relationships. Secure and caring home. Good diet and kept healthy . Supportive networks. Access to positive activities can be affected by caring role. 	Family and environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family or household member relies on child for some regular care. Relationships may be adversely impacted by caring role. Families' income may be affected by parental illness or disability. Services are engaged with the family on a regular basis to address family needs. Access to positive activities is limited by caring role. 	Family and environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family or household members relies on child for regular care. Relationships are adversely impacted by caring role. Families' income is affected by parental illness or disability. Requires significant support from agencies regularly. No, or significantly limited access, to positive activities due to caring role.
	Parents and carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has good support networks. Secure and caring home. Receive and act on information, advice and guidance. Able to access services. 	Parents and carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family has professional support which they can access. Family is well supported. Access to some services may be impacted by illness, disability or caring. 	Parents and carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family has a team of professionals involved in providing support. Services are engaged with the family on a regular basis to address family needs. Accessing services requires some support and is impacted by illness, disability or caring. 	Parents and carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family has little or no support from family and friends. Family needs significant support from agencies regularly. Limited access to services due to illness, disability, or caring.
What do I do next?	Access the information site: familyinfohub.iow.gov.uk/kb5/iow/directory/home.page	Request a young carers needs assessment if required: www.isleofwightfamilycentres.org.uk/young-carers-family-support	Direct to complete a young carers needs assessment request: www.isleofwightfamilycentres.org.uk/young-carers-family-support	Direct to complete a young carers needs assessment request: www.isleofwightfamilycentres.org.uk/young-carers-family-support
Level of assessment	No formal young carers needs assessment required	Young carers needs assessment	Young carers needs assessment	Young carers needs assessment
Further support available	MYTIME Young Carers www.mytimeyoungcarers.org Sibs www.sibs.org.uk	MYTIME Young Carers www.mytimeyoungcarers.org Sibs www.sibs.org.uk	MYTIME Young Carers www.mytimeyoungcarers.org Sibs www.sibs.org.uk	MYTIME Young Carers www.mytimeyoungcarers.org Sibs www.sibs.org.uk

Appendix 2



Signposting support poster



You can get a signposting support poster for young carers and their families by contacting:

Family and Community Services

Tel: 01983 823169

Email: family.communityservices@iow.gov.uk