

# Young Carers in Focus



# Know Your Rights

Human Rights  
Health and Social Care  
Education Bullying  
Skills and advice  
Work Money The Law  
Influencing Change



# Know your rights

## Welcome to the Know Your Rights pack for young carers in England!

This pack aims to make you aware of your rights – your human rights, your legal rights, and your rights to access things like benefits, support and advice.

Need to know where to find things out in a hurry? Our pack has lots of links to useful and interesting resources that can help you – and help raise awareness about young carers' issues!

Know Your Rights has been produced by Young Carers in Focus (YCiF), and funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

[Find out more about Young Carers in Focus](#)

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## How to use this pack

To use the pack, just click on the links to go straight to the pages you need. Each section is marked with its own logo that you can click to go straight to that section from anywhere in the pack. You can also scroll through the pack normally if you choose to.

You can also save a copy of the pack to your computer, or alternatively you can print it out.

To print out your own copy of the Know Your Rights pack, please click here.

### TIP:

Look out for **TIP boxes** like this one, to discover helpful tips, internal links or external links that provide additional support. **These coloured** links are external links to other websites. **These coloured** links will take you to other pages within the Know Your Rights pack.

### Disclaimer

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# Young Carers in Focus (YCiF)

The pack has been produced by Young Carers in Focus (YCiF), an exciting four-year programme giving young carers a chance to communicate, share their stories and advocate for the things that matter most to them.

## A safe social network for young carers

YCiF offers the country's first ever **safe social network for young carers in England** [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif), developed on the **Makewaves** website.

Through YCiF, you can reach out to other young carers, and tell policy and decision-makers about the changes you want to see! Young people from schools, colleges and youth groups can get involved by creating their own 'site' on the safe social network.

## The YCiF champions' network

YCiF is creating a national network led by 200 young carer 'champions', aged 10-25. Champions are speaking out on behalf of young carers, and creating content for the YCiF safe social network. They are receiving training and skills to improve their resilience, confidence, skills and knowledge.

Our champions also have the chance to become media spokespersons - they have featured in national newspapers, on BBC News, radio, Channel 4 TV, documentaries, magazines, blogs and on social media. Millions of people have found out about young carers and the issues they face as a result.

Young Carers in Focus is being delivered by The Children's Society in partnership with DigitalME, YMCA Fairthorne Group, Rethink Mental Illness and The Fatherhood Institute. It is funded by a Youth in Focus grant from the **Big Lottery Fund** [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk).

## Join the YCiF network

Are you a young carer? Visit [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif) now to see what's happening! You might even want to become a YCiF champion and receive special training!

Are you a project leader or teacher? Visit the site and **register** [www.makewav.es/story/414839/title/whatisycifhowdoigetinvolved](http://www.makewav.es/story/414839/title/whatisycifhowdoigetinvolved) now so that young carers in your group or school can create their own pages and get involved.

"As Children's Commissioner, it's my job to help promote and protect the rights of children and young people, including young carers, across England. I have spoken with many amazing young carers. I want you to understand your rights as a young carer so you can make the most of school, work, your health and social life. You play an important role in caring for someone you love, and you deserve to be recognised, listened to and supported."

**Dr. Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner for England**

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[Click here to be taken directly to a Hotlines page](#), with contact numbers and web pages of people you can contact – or turn to **Page 27**

# Human Rights

'Human Rights' is a term that is used a lot, but what does it really mean?

Human rights are basic, fundamental rights that affect everyone. They protect people from serious injustices – such as being forced into labour, abused or tortured – but they also help us in lots of other ways that we all take for granted.

Human rights are universal and protect the individual at all times, as opposed to the law which defines the system of rules for living in a particular country.

There are many different human rights documents, but they all cover certain key themes. Those documents covered here have been broken down into themes and rights that specifically affect young carers.

## The different Human Rights documents

- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) [Page 6](#)
- [European Convention on Human Rights / European Social Charter](#) [Page 6](#)

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## Young Carers in Focus

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The United Nations (UN) is a multi-national organisation created to encourage countries to work together. It promotes peace and security and agrees people's human rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was written by the UN to outline what rights children should have, and how countries should protect and support children. It is not signed into law, but it does provide guidance for best practice, which most countries have agreed to give.

The UNCRC defines a child as anyone under the age of 18, so everyone under the age of 18 can enjoy the rights in it, **regardless of their personal situation or circumstances.**

For more information about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, you can visit one of the following websites:

**The Children's Commissioner**

The Children's Commissioner is there to promote and protect the rights and best interests of all children and young people in England. The aim of the commissioner is to make young people aware of their rights, to let them have their say and for their views to shape decisions made about their lives. As children and young people, young carers can voice their opinions about their rights to the Children's Commissioner.

Visit the Children's Commissioner's website here:

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

**The Children's Commissioner also has a page about the UNCRC**, where you can give your views and opinions about human rights.

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/issue\\_rooms/the\\_united\\_nations\\_convention\\_on\\_the\\_rights\\_of\\_the\\_child\\_](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/issue_rooms/the_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child_)

There are also websites for the Children's Commissioners of:

**Wales:** [www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk)

**Scotland:** [www.sccyp.org.uk](http://www.sccyp.org.uk)

**Northern Ireland:** [www.niccy.org](http://www.niccy.org)

The **Children's Commissioner for Wales** has a 'Know Your Rights' game, where you can explore your rights under the UNCRC.

[www.childcom.org.uk/en/know-your-rights-game](http://www.childcom.org.uk/en/know-your-rights-game)

The Glasgow Association for Mental Health has done its own interpretation of the **UNCRC** for young carers, which you can find here:

[www.gamh.org.uk/media/1185/gamh\\_young\\_carers\\_charters\\_aw\\_web.pdf](http://www.gamh.org.uk/media/1185/gamh_young_carers_charters_aw_web.pdf)

**The European Convention on Human Rights (EHRC) and the European Social Charter**

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Social Charter are also human rights documents, but they are specific to European countries. They apply to every country in Europe except Belarus. These human rights are for everyone living in Europe, not just children, like the UNCRC.

**Full text versions of each document**

Each document is broken down into **Articles**, and each article is one human right. You can see the full text version of the **UNCRC** here:

<http://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/UNTS/Volume%201577/v1577.pdf>

Scroll down to page 46 for the articles in the convention.

The full text version of the **EHRC** can be found here:

[www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)

You can read the full text version of the **European Social Charter** here:

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/O35.htm>

## General Rights

You have a lot of rights, and they are protected in a number of ways. The main themes are covered below, but there are lots of others – take a look at the documents on [Page 6](#) if you want to know more.

### Basic rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Firstly, governments should do everything they can to make basic rights available to all young people (Article 4), and recognise that **every child has the right to live a happy life** and develop to the ‘maximum extent possible’ (Article 6).

Governments and services working with families should **respect the rights of families** to direct and guide their children. But services and professionals working with young carers should also realise that while young carers may behave like adults, they still need **guidance, and space to be young people and to learn, play and enjoy positive futures** (Article 5).

Most importantly, **young carers have the right to be consulted about everything that affects them and their families**. If you’re a young carer, your role is very important, and you have a right to be told about everything that affects your family before any decisions are made (Article 12).

## Health Rights

Health is a very important theme running through all the human rights conventions. Everyone has the right to remain healthy and to receive medical assistance when they need it.

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Under the UNCRC, **children have the right to healthcare**. Article 24 states that countries should provide the best possible standard of healthcare.

Article 23 states that countries should give specific attention to children with a mental or physical disability, and that children with any kind of disability should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.

Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children. **If you have a disability, or are caring for a child that has one**, you are entitled to get any help you need. This should be at an appropriate cost, or free of charge whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child.

This article also states specifically that **the family of the disabled child has to apply for this assistance**.

Contact your social services representative to find out what you can apply for, or contact your local council. **Find out who your local council is by using the government tool:**  
<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>

**Health Rights (continued)**

**European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** and **European Social Charter**

The stress and tiredness that can be caused by spending so much time caring might lead to ill health.

This affects your rights, because both the ECHR and the European Social Charter state that under European law, everyone has the right to be **free from the causes of poor health**, to be educated about how to remain healthy, and to receive good quality healthcare.

Article 11 of the European Social Charter specifically protects your right to stay healthy, so governments should **make sure that your caring role doesn't affect your health**.

Article 13 gives you **the right to healthcare and support** – you should be able to get healthcare, and get help to stop you being ill in the future.

**Social security and social welfare**

The European Social Charter has a number of articles that give everyone living in Europe the right to social security, social welfare and social services (Articles 12, 13, 14 and 16).

Under these articles, **social security** refers to your rights, amongst other things, to be protected against poverty or 'social exclusion', access to childcare and healthcare facilities, social housing, and legal protection under national and European laws.

**Social welfare** refers to your rights to receive benefits payments and guidance. You have the right to receive welfare payments to protect you if you lose your job (Jobseekers allowance) or if you need assistance to pay for housing (Housing benefit), benefits and legal protection to promote families (child tax credit and legal status of families), and a number of other benefits. Take a look at the **Money** section of this pack, if you want to know more about the benefits you may be entitled to.

Social welfare also gives you the right to free education up to the age of 16 (or up to the age of 19 for those who wish to attend Sixth Form college), free guidance and advice services, and to have financial and healthcare provision in cases such as maternity, illness, industrial accidents, long term dependency or old age.

These rights are very important; they mean that everybody has the right to a means tested 'safety net', and that **governments should promote the development and well-being of everyone**. This protection is hugely relevant to young carers, as it provides protection for you and your whole family.

For more information and an official breakdown of the social rights outlined in the European Social Charter, please visit the **Council of Europe** pages: [www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/default_en.asp)

For a simplified version of the charter:

[www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Presentation/CharterGlance/English.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Presentation/CharterGlance/English.pdf)

## Privacy

The right to privacy is an important part of human rights. **Individuals and families have the right to a private life**, and to be free from unlawful and unnecessary intrusion (Article 16 UNCRC, Article 8 ECHR).

However, if there is a justifiable reason, public services and professionals can get involved with your family's private life. They can assess families to make sure that they are safe and healthy, and provide assistance if it's needed.

State authorities that work with families have to try to do what's best for each person, taking into account their unique circumstances (UNCRC, Article 3). So if authorities know there is a young carer in the family, they can get involved to provide support. **In fact, in the UK, they now have a legal duty to do so** - which is in your interests, so you get the support you need.

## Freedom

Freedom is something we all take for granted, partly because it's protected as one of our most basic human rights. Naturally, freedom is protected for children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as well.

**Freedom of expression** gives children the right to express themselves freely and to do what they like, unless it causes harm to others or breaks national laws (Article 13).

It also gives you the freedom to learn and get information on what you want, which means that young carers have the right to be told about the support and benefits that are available. Nobody can deliberately withhold that information from them.

**Freedom of association** gives you the right to meet together and join groups, as long as it doesn't affect anyone else's rights. This means that you can join **young carer's projects, after school clubs or any other groups** that you choose (Article 15).

# Health and Social Care

If you're a young carer, there may be a variety of people, authorities or organisations helping you and your family.

These people are called 'professionals'. A professional can be anyone who is employed to ensure the well-being of the family, the young carer, or the person being looked after.

Here you can find out how they should be helping you, and what you can do to help them give you better support.

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## Young Carers in Focus

## Social care workers

Social workers are professionals working for your local council's social services department. Part of their job is to help children and families be safe, happy, and stay together.

There are two forms of social care. Adult social care services are responsible for people aged 18 or over, and children's services are for people under 18. The role of care services and the support they provide does vary between different local authorities. For more information, find your local authority here:

<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>

To encourage the different social care providers to work together, there is a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) developed by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and The Children's Society.

The joint MoU promotes partnership between all services working with children and families. You can direct any social care workers that are involved with your family to the MoU here: [www.adcs.org.uk/download/misc/working-together-to-support-young-carers-adcs-adass.pdf](http://www.adcs.org.uk/download/misc/working-together-to-support-young-carers-adcs-adass.pdf)

### Adult social care workers

The adult social care services assess the needs of adults with care needs. If the adult is eligible, they can assign a support or social worker to ensure that the adult is receiving the right level of care.

### Children's service workers

Children's services assess the needs of children in need to make sure that they are looked after properly and have access to everything they need to live full and happy lives. Children social workers do have the power to protect children in need by removing them from the family unit; this is very rare and is only used in extreme circumstances.

**You, or your family, can ask to be assessed for social support.** This means that, if eligible, social workers will visit your family, see what you need and put you in touch with others who can help you. If they know that there is a young carer in the family, they may also refer them to a **young carers' project**. They should also be able to provide extra support for the cared for person, so that you don't have to take on so much of a caring role.

You can **apply for a needs assessment** here:

[www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services](http://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services)

## Changing from children's to adult social services

The support services that can be accessed by young carers and their families can vary greatly around the country. What you are entitled to as a child and as an adult, and the age at which you can apply for this support, depends heavily on where you live.

If you aren't receiving support, or if you are but think you might be entitled to more, visit the government's **local authority finder** to find out who your local authority is.

<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>

You or someone in your family can then contact your local authority, or visit their website, to find out more about your local support services.

Your local authority may also have a 'transitions' team that supports young people between 16-25 when moving from Children to Adult Services.

**Carers Trust** have some useful advice on the transition to adulthood for carers. <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/transitions-to-adulthood-for-carers,3167,PR.html>

## Young Carers in Focus

**Doctors (GPs)**

If you have concerns about your own physical or emotional health, or you care for someone with a physical or mental illness, you can speak to a doctor or GP in a safe and confidential environment.

Once they know you are a young carer, your GP surgery can make sure they consider your specific needs. For example, you might not be able to come in for an early morning appointment, or if the person you care for cannot leave the house, a home visit can be arranged.

You can ask your GP if you're unsure about aspects of a treatment or medical procedure planned for the person you look after, including a hospital appointment or surgery.

As a carer, you are at a higher risk of becoming ill yourself or developing chronic conditions, such as back pain. **Routine health checks for carers** are being set up across England, and there's no harm in going in once or twice a year to talk about your role and how you're feeling. Your GP can also monitor the effects that caring can have on an individual's health, such as depression.

Lastly, GPs can **direct you to local sources of information and support**. This can be anything from leaflets in the practice to putting you in touch with carers networks. Your GP can also advise you on sorting out benefits and getting respite care from the local authority, issues which you needn't be afraid to ask about.

There is a lot of guidance available for doctors to tell them how they can help you. The next time the person you are caring for has to go to the doctor, here are some things you could show them:

**Young Carers GP Leaflet** – produced by **Young Carers in Focus** to provide guidance for GPs. Print one out and give it to your family doctor.

[www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u182/knowyourrights/gp\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u182/knowyourrights/gp_leaflet.pdf)

Direct the doctor to the **Include Programme's resources page** for more guidance and information about how to help you.

[www.youngcarer.com/resources/professional-resources](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources/professional-resources)

Here's a **GP checklist** that doctors can use to ensure that they are supporting young carers properly:

[www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce\\_user\\_files/Resources/Professional/Booklets/quick\\_checklist\\_feb\\_2012.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/Professional/Booklets/quick_checklist_feb_2012.pdf)

## Young Carers in Focus

## Emotional well-being

Remember to take care of your own emotional well-being and mental health. Young carer champions have 'Top Five Tips' for emotional well-being:

1. **Connect** Spend some quality time with other people including your friends and family, OR connect back with yourself and picture where you are.
2. **Be active** Play a team game or do something active with a friend, OR spend some 'me time' doing something you enjoy outdoors.
3. **Think positive** Take stock - what good have you done today? OR What positives are around you?
4. **Know where you are going** Take your time and be realistic AND look after yourself.
5. **Keep learning** Give yourself a chance to learn new skills AND feel a sense of achievement.

Watch our **Top Tips for Wellbeing video** on Makewaves:  
[www.makewav.es/story/415040/title/toptipsforwellbeing](http://www.makewav.es/story/415040/title/toptipsforwellbeing)

**TIP:** If you need to talk to someone outside of your family, you can **access a counsellor**.

You can get further support and information online from:

**Rethink Mental Illness:** [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

**Young Minds:** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

**Barnardo's:** Keeping the Family in Mind  
[www.barnardos.org.uk/keeping\\_the\\_family\\_in\\_mind.pdf](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/keeping_the_family_in_mind.pdf)

**Minds, Myths and Me:** A booklet about living with a family member with a mental illness, produced for young carers, by young carers.  
[www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Minds-Myths-and-Me.pdf](http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Minds-Myths-and-Me.pdf)

## Looking After Your Own Emotional Health and Wellbeing

As a young carer you will often find yourself looking after someone else in your family. Being a young carer can be challenging and sometimes we all need a little support and time out, just to be ourselves and relax.

Looking after yourself is not about being self-centred or uncaring. It simply means that you are allowed, and have the right to take care of yourself and recognise the pressures that you can face as a young carer.

Staying 'well', whether or not you have a physical or mental health problem yourself, means feeling that you have a sense of positive wellbeing which includes:

- Feeling good
- Being able to do the things that mean something and are important to you
- Feeling in Control
- Having the resilience to 'bounce back' if things go wrong or change (with some additional support if you need it).

## Young Carers in Focus

### Looking After Your Own Emotional Health and Wellbeing (continued)

'Wellbeing' is different for everybody, and people will do many different things to keep themselves feeling well. These could include:

- Talking to someone
- Doing some exercise (or physical activity)
- Taking a break (going for a walk, listening to some music, reading a book, watching a film)
- Trying some relaxation techniques

**Young Person's Wellness Plan** – this is available for project workers on YoungCarer.net – ask your project worker for more information about this.

## Looking out for the Emotional Health and Wellbeing of another

If you're worried about a parents' mental ill health, it can be hard to know where to go to for help.

Visit a health professional (such as your GP) if you're worried about your parents mental health. It's good if you can encourage them to come with you, but if they refuse, you can still go to your GP and tell them about your concerns and talk about any help you might need.

If your parent/sibling is already in touch with your local Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) you could contact them directly, or you could ask your GP to contact the most appropriate professional if you are worried (this could include a duty social work team or a mental health crisis team). Assessments relating to the mental health of the person you care for, should also take into account your needs as a young carer.

**The Royal College of Psychiatrists** is the professional body responsible for education, training, setting and raising standards in psychiatry. You can access free information leaflets and guides, covering a whole range of mental health issues. <http://rcpsych.ac.uk>

## Young Carers in families living with HIV

There is estimated to be more than 98,400 people living with HIV in the UK, so if you live in a family affected by HIV, you are not alone. There is a wide range of support available for people living with HIV including community support programmes and the information and support available online.

People are often concerned about being discriminated against if they or someone in their family is living with HIV. If you are worried about this, there are a number of resources that you can access confidentially. Furthermore, people working in HIV support services are professionals; their only responsibility is to improve the health and well-being of people affected by HIV. They do not judge people based on the illness, nor do they have the power or desire to deport families based on their HIV status.

### What do young carers affected by HIV want?

- Specialist HIV and young carers training sessions for all teachers, education professionals, social care and health professionals
- Have lessons about HIV and the impact on family members and young carers in schools
- Raise awareness of young carers affected by HIV all the time not just on World Aids day

## Young Carers in Focus

### Young Carers in families living with HIV (continued)

There is a lot of information about HIV available online, so if you would like to find out more please visit one of the following websites:

**Find HIV support services in your area:** [www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas](http://www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas)

The Children's Society's Include Programme also has a section dedicated to young carers in families affected by HIV.

[www.youngcarer.com/resources/families-affected-hiv](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources/families-affected-hiv)

They have also produced a pack with information about young carers for HIV professionals, find it here:

[www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce\\_user\\_files/Resources/Professional/Booklets/hiv\\_pros\\_booklet\\_2012\\_for\\_in\\_house\\_print.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/Professional/Booklets/hiv_pros_booklet_2012_for_in_house_print.pdf)

**CHIVA, the Children's HIV Association** has a website where you can get information about HIV and ask questions. [www.chiva.org.uk](http://www.chiva.org.uk)

**NAT** is a UK charity that promotes the rights of people with HIV and campaigns for fair and equal treatment. It has a wealth of help and support for people living with HIV. [www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk)

The **Makewaves YCiF portal** also has a channel dedicated to HIV. [www.makewav.es/ycif/c/hiv](http://www.makewav.es/ycif/c/hiv)

## Substance Misuse

If you are worried or experiencing peer pressure, and need some friendly, confidential advice about both legal and illegal drugs then talk to **Frank**:  
**Tel** 0800776600 or **SMS** 82111 or [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Lots of people drink alcohol and some people take drugs, and in some families, alcohol or drug misuse can make things difficult at home and cause problems or worries. If this is happening it can make you worry about all sorts of things and can affect different areas of your life such as school, home, friends or money. The most important thing to remember is that you did not cause it, and that help and support is available.

There is a lot of secrecy and stigma attached to drug or alcohol misuse but you have the right to receive information and support in your own right, as does the person who is struggling with drugs or alcohol.

If a family member that misuses substances has any contact with doctors, drug or alcohol workers (sometimes known as Recovery Workers) or social services, you have a right to be involved as well. Make sure that these professionals know and are aware of how you are impacted by the substance misuse in your family and that you are caring for them or other family members. You have the right to ask for help, to share your feelings with safe people and to be heard.

## Young Carers in Focus

## Substance Misuse (continued)

There's lots of support available online. Find out more from the following websites.

**STARS National Initiative** is a hub of information, resources and guidance run by The Children's Society with specific pages for young people.

[www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk](http://www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk)

They also offer a booklet to help you talk to support services about your parent's drinking: [www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk/sites/starsnationalinitiative.org.uk/files/stars\\_resource\\_booklet\\_final.pdf](http://www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk/sites/starsnationalinitiative.org.uk/files/stars_resource_booklet_final.pdf)

**National Association for the Children of Alcoholics** (NACOA) is a support service offering help, information and advice about how to cope with Alcoholism in the family. [www.nacoa.org.uk](http://www.nacoa.org.uk)

**Children of Addicted Parents and People** (COAP) have online message boards and a counselling service to help people talk about substance misuse. [www.coap.org.uk](http://www.coap.org.uk)

**The Betty Ford Center** is an American recovery centre that has advice and guidance for people with addiction. Visit their "Kids Corner" for information and activities.

[www.bettyfordcenter.org/family-and-children/children/resources-for-parents-and-kids/kids-corner/index.php](http://www.bettyfordcenter.org/family-and-children/children/resources-for-parents-and-kids/kids-corner/index.php)

**It is important for young people living in families affected by substance misuse to remember the 7 C's:**

- I didn't cause it
- I can't control it
- I can't cure it
- But I can take care of myself
- By communicating my feelings
- Making healthy choices
- And celebrating myself.

Taken from *Discovery Finding the Buried Treasure* by Jerry Moe

## Seeking Asylum

If your family have moved to England or are seeking asylum or have refugee status you can find out further information about rights and entitlements for you and your family here:

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

# Education

Here you can find information and resources about schools, colleges and further education. There are also links to help you with your school work and exams.

## Further education

Where to find college or university courses that suit you:

- Sixth form or college Page 18
- University Page 18

Apprenticeships and other training courses Page 19

Exams Page 19

Help with school work Page 19

Making teachers and school staff aware of young carers Page 20

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Page 21

**TIP:** You can gain skills and knowledge outside of formal education, and get accredited online. [Learn more about UK badges.](#)

## Further education Sixth form or college

Some people who study for A-Levels stay at their own school or go to their local sixth form college. However, if you want to study at a different school or go to another college, you can choose from any that suit you.

Here's an online college directory with contact details of schools and colleges in the UK: [www.colleges-uk.co.uk](http://www.colleges-uk.co.uk)

If you're interested, see if you can book yourself on to an open day so you can have a look around and meet the teachers.

## University

Choosing a university can be a tough decision, but you shouldn't have to make it alone. Most schools will have a careers department to provide you with as much advice as you need, so don't be afraid to ask for help.

**TIP:** Some universities offer continued support to carers through their Union. Don't be afraid to ask!

Think about what you want to get from the university experience, and use that to make your decision about whether to study, where to study, and what to study.

Whether you want to go to university for fun, to get a job, or just for the love of your chosen subject, think about what you can get out of your degree once you finish. Visit the Prospects website (see below) and see what jobs are available for graduates in your subject. Even if you aren't studying to get a better job, consider whether specialising in a different area of your subject will make it easier to find work once you've graduated.

**TIP:** You might be able to receive financial help with university living costs. See [Help with Housing Costs on page 41](#).

**University advice guide** has advice about how to apply to university, how to check you have the right grades, and how to go through clearing if you don't get the grades you want.

[www.universityadvice.co.uk/pdf/eGuide.pdf](http://www.universityadvice.co.uk/pdf/eGuide.pdf)

**University advice** is a website with information about the top universities in the UK, studying abroad and how to access student services.

[www.universityadvice.co.uk/Home.asp](http://www.universityadvice.co.uk/Home.asp)

**The Guardian university guide** is a regularly updated portal with league tables, news articles and information about subjects, courses and universities in the UK.

[www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide](http://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide)

**UCAS** is where you need to go to apply for universities, and to find a course. It can be a good starting point to see what's available, and where.

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

**Prospects** is the official graduate jobs website.

[www.prospects.ac.uk/careers.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers.htm)

**The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)** aims to encourage all adults to engage in learning of all kinds.

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

## Young Carers in Focus

### University (continued)

**You should not feel that going to university is your only option.** Don't let your school or peers pressure you into going to university if you don't want to. **Not Going to Uni** is a website with advice for many alternatives to university: [www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

**TIP:** The Open University run courses online that are discounted or free for certain young people including young carers.

[www.open.edu/openlearn/sites/www.open.edu.openlearn/files/open2files/carers.pdf](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/sites/www.open.edu.openlearn/files/open2files/carers.pdf)

## Apprenticeships and other training courses

### Traineeships

Traineeships provide essential work preparation training, Maths and English, and the work experience needed to get an Apprenticeship or another job. Traineeships are delivered by training providers and funded by the government. [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/traineeships.aspx](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/traineeships.aspx)

### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a system of training a new generation of apprentices to become competent in a particular skillset. Find out more about getting an apprenticeship: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

The Government have a useful guide to apprenticeships, with an online vacancies search engine and information about qualifications you can earn whilst completing an apprenticeship. [www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide](http://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide)

### Other training courses

Colleges also have other training opportunities, with courses in practical skills like plumbing, tiling or becoming an electrician. If you want to gain skills you should be able to find a course near you.

**City and Guilds** are a leading vocational education and training organisation, offering a wide variety of training courses, qualifications and apprenticeships. [www.cityandguilds.com](http://www.cityandguilds.com)

## Exams

Exams aren't the same in every school, and there isn't a clear schedule that tells you exactly when your exams are. Each school will use one of the exam boards, who create and mark all the exams that its students take.

It's up to your school to tell you when your exams are and to help you prepare for them. Your teachers should not only teach you everything you need to pass, but also show you a marking scheme and examples of past exam papers.

If you'd like to find past exam papers yourself, find out what exam board your school uses, and visit their website. Here are some links to the most prominent exam boards' past papers websites:

**Edexcel** [www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/student/Pages/pastpapers.aspx](http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/student/Pages/pastpapers.aspx)

**AQA** [www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/exams-guidance/find-past-papers-and-mark-schemes](http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/exams-guidance/find-past-papers-and-mark-schemes)

**OCR** [www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/prepare-and-practise/past-papers-finder](http://www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/prepare-and-practise/past-papers-finder)

## Help with school work

If you're struggling to keep up with homework, or if you're falling behind at school, make sure that your teacher is aware of your circumstances. Saying that you are a young carer is not just making an excuse – it is a valid explanation and reason for being behind.

## Young Carers in Focus

### Help with school work (continued)

You can **download the printable schools leaflet**, which will help make your teacher aware of what a young carer is, and give them resources so that they can better understand and help you.

**TIP:** Talk to your teachers before you get behind on your work and they might be able to help you stay ahead!

If you do want to catch up, or get ahead of the game, there are a number of things you can do to help you learn – like after school clubs or classes, reading at home, using online learning resources, or getting private tuition.

But if you aren't able to do any of these things, or if you don't have time, make your teacher aware that you are a young carer. Tell them why you can't keep up with homework or why you might be falling behind – that way they can find out how to give you extra support on your own terms.

**But remember** – you should also make time for yourself, so that you can learn and play and do what you want to do!

You can find more support here:

**GCSE Bitesize** has revision tips and advice for each subject and qualification: [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

**Grid Club** has games to help you learn and develop your skills: [www.gridclub.com](http://www.gridclub.com)

Some **schools and young carer's projects** have homework clubs or groups you can join to help you get work done on time.

## Making teachers and school staff aware of young carers

### Teachers

It may not always feel like it, but your teachers will want what's best for every student. Where there is guidance available, they will follow it to make sure that their pupils are being supported correctly.

**TIP:** Does your school have a **Young Carers' Standard for Schools** award? Let them know about it! See below...

The Young Carers in Focus (YCiF) project is working closely with schools. The **Young Carers' in Schools programme** is an award and framework for schools, that helps them build support, share learning and gain recognition for supporting young carers. Ask your teachers if the school has an award or provide them with the training frame.

[www.youngcarer.com/resources/ycif/young-carers-schools](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources/ycif/young-carers-schools)

You can also tell your teacher to go to the Include Programme's resources page. [www.youngcarer.com/resources/professional-resources](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources/professional-resources)

There is a **joint resource by both The Children's Society and the Carers Trust** that has good guidance for teachers and schools: <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/schools-resource-pack,6282,PR.html>

For more resources for schools, click one of the following links:

[www.makewav.es/ycif/c/resources](http://www.makewav.es/ycif/c/resources)

[www.youngcarer.com/resources/schools-resources](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources/schools-resources)

[www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/resources/school-resources/supporting-young-carers](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/resources/school-resources/supporting-young-carers)

## School nurses

Your school may also have a school nurse whom you can talk to about any medical or health concerns. A new scheme by the department of health means that these school nurses are receiving training and guidance on how to identify and support young carers.

This training means that school nurses understand the issues that can affect young carers. They are also trained to be impartial, trustworthy and helpful in order to help each young carer individually based on their needs.

### Printable schools leaflets

If you're comfortable telling your teacher that you are a young carer, you can either talk to your teacher in person, or you can simply print out, or send them a copy of the leaflet for schools. The leaflet was created by YCiF to tell teachers what a young carer is and to help them identify and support young carers, and can be found here: [www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u182/knowyourrights/schools\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u182/knowyourrights/schools_leaflet.pdf)

If you don't want your school to know that you're a young carer, you can post the leaflet to them or send it to them anonymously. You can include a cover letter for your school - find it here [www.makewav.es/story/590632](http://www.makewav.es/story/590632)

## Special Educational Needs (SEN)

If you or a sibling/dependent that you care for, identify with having a special educational need, you may be entitled to extra support and an assessment carried out by your local council to ensure that you are getting the support that you need.

Some special educational needs might not have been identified but some examples are:

- Behavioural/social (e.g. difficulty making friends)
- Reading and writing (e.g. Dyslexia)
- Understanding things
- Concentrating (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
- Physical needs or impairments

Visit the [Government webpage](#) for further information about getting support. [www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/overview](http://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/overview)

**Young Minds** have resources to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing whilst they are at school. Direct your parents or your teachers towards this resource, to help them to understand and support you. [www.youngminds.org.uk/training\\_services/young\\_minds\\_in\\_schools/resources/sen](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/young_minds_in_schools/resources/sen)

# Bullying

Being bullied isn't just a horrible experience – it's also a breach of your rights.

Everyone has the right to be themselves, and to be free from persecution.

So don't feel you have to suffer in silence – you can take action. Here you'll find lots of useful links to information, coping strategies, and hotlines you can call if you want to talk to someone.

Remember, everyone's situation is different, and only you can decide whether or not this advice will help you – and only you can follow it. It may take courage and determination to decide to get help, but these resources are a start.

**Being bullied at school?** **Page 23**

**Being bullied at work?** **Page 23**

**Staying safe** **Page 24**

**Online Safety** **Page 24**

## Being bullied at school?

All schools want to put a stop to bullying, so your teachers should definitely be willing to help.

What's more, all schools have strict government guidelines to help stop bullying, with lots of tried and tested methods to tackle it.

So with this in mind, you should never feel that your school can't help you.

Your teachers, parents or a school counsellor should be your first port of call if you're having trouble with bullies. But if you want more advice or support, or if you feel that your school isn't doing enough to help you, try some of these links.

### Childline

[www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bullyinginfo.aspx](http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bullyinginfo.aspx)

**Childline** also has a phone number that you can call at any time to talk about problems: **0800 1111**

**Beat Bullying** is a website with live chat and blogs. Counsellors and police officers are often in their chat rooms. There are also pages with anti-bullying tips and advice.

[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)

**Bullying UK** has a lot of general information for all age groups about how to deal with bullying, whether at school or in the workplace.

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

**Kidscape** is a UK based anti-bullying charity. They publish resource packs with tons of helpful information for teachers, parents and students. Go to [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) for more information.

Here's a direct link to a page for resources on bullying:

[www.kidscape.org.uk/resources/bully-pack](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/resources/bully-pack)

You can download any of these resources for yourself, for your parents or your teacher.

**The Government** has a useful page that tells you exactly what kinds of bullying are illegal. It also has guidelines on who you should report bullying to, and when you should get the police involved.

[www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school](http://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school)

## Being bullied at work?

Despite what you might think, bullying doesn't just happen at school. Even in the workplace, some people feel the need to bully others in order to empower themselves.

The rules about bullying at work are less strict than for schools, but you can still take action. Many forms of bullying count as abuse, which is illegal and punishable by law.

**The Government** has guidelines on when bullying becomes illegal.

[www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment](http://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment)

**Bullying UK** has advice for people experiencing bullying in the workplace.

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

## Young Carers in Focus

### Being bullied at work? (continued)

Most workplaces should take a stand against bullying, so take your concerns to your boss or manager or to the Human Resources department (if you have one).

Although bullying is very serious, it is not in itself a criminal offence. But bullying in the workplace could be, or lead to, a more serious criminal offence such as harassment, theft or assault. Review the government guidelines and decide if there is any legal action that you can take.

Remember that much of the advice and information around tackling bullying at school can apply to the workplace, so take a look at those too.

### Staying safe

Staying safe is really important. We all lead complicated lives, and we can all get into trouble and face problems.

**The Metropolitan Police** has a safety website with guides which are great ways to keep on top of everything and help you make the right decisions.

<http://safe.met.police.uk>

**Kidscape** also has resources to help keep young people safe. Some are for teachers and parents, but there's also a 'Street Sense' guide for young people.

[www.kidscape.org.uk/resources/child-safety-pack](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/resources/child-safety-pack)

If you're under 16, your identity is protected under UN laws. This means that if you are suffering, harassed or are the victim of a crime and want to report someone to the police, you'll remain completely anonymous. So don't worry that you might get into trouble with someone – they won't be allowed to know it was you who involved the police.

## Online Safety

### Staying safe online

The internet is amazing – it's never been easier to keep in touch with your friends or meet new people all around the world.

However, not everyone is who they seem, and it can be very easy to get in trouble online. The following websites have very useful advice to help you stay safe.

**Makewaves SAFE project** has top tips for staying safe online.

[www.makewav.es/safe](http://www.makewav.es/safe)

**Childnet** has tips, competitions, advice and blogs to help you stay safe online. It's also divided to provide more specific advice for your age group.

[www.childnet.com/young-people](http://www.childnet.com/young-people)

**Kidsmart** has loads of advice and links to safe sites, plus competitions and games for you to take part in.

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

**Thinkuknow** is divided into age groups to give you specific advice for people like you.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

### Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is a terrible way to use the internet – however, bullying via technology can be punished in just the same way as bullying in real life. If it's particularly bad, you can even get the police involved.

## Young Carers in Focus

**Online Safety (continued)**

Here are some websites with more information on how to combat cyber bullying.

**CyberMentors** is an online peer support system.

[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)

**Childline**

[www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/CyberBullying.aspx](http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/CyberBullying.aspx)

**Bullying UK**

[www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying](http://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying)

**Stop bullying**

[www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying](http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying)

**Reporting offensive and illegal materials**

If content is abusive or offensive, report it immediately to the host site (such as facebook or twitter) and ask for it to be removed.

**If you are contacted by someone online that you don't know** and they are being inappropriate, threatening or sexually abusive, you should tell an adult whom you trust **immediately**. You should then report this to the **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre** (CEOP). [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

**TIP:** Also check out **Click Clever, Click Safe**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/click-clever-click-safe](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/click-clever-click-safe) and remember to **Zip it, Block it, Flag it!**

# Skills and advice

As a young carer, you have a right to get as much help as possible. You have the right to gain skills, be given good advice, and access websites that can help to make your life easier.

In this section you'll find advice on:

Hotlines, Help-lines and Websites	Page 27
Young Carers' Services	Page 27
Counsellors	Page 28
Life Skills	Page 29
Leisure time	Page 29
Online Skills	Page 30

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (**NIACE**) has produced the correctly titled **Really useful book of Learning and Earning**, which has advice for everything about living independently and looking after yourself.

Find it here: <http://shop.niace.org.uk/ruble-yac-2014.html>

## Young Carers in Focus

### Hotlines, Help-lines and Websites

In an emergency, call 999 immediately.

If you need to contact the **police in a non-emergency**, you can call **101**. For more information, visit: [www.police.uk/101](http://www.police.uk/101)

If you're worried about anything in your life, or if there's anything that you want to talk about or get advice on, call **Childline** on **0800 1111** or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk).

If you're struggling to cope under the weight of your caring duties, need help with a specific problem, or just want general advice, call the **NHS Carers direct helpline** on **0808 802 0202** or visit [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/carerslives/updates/pages/carersdirecthelpline.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/carerslives/updates/pages/carersdirecthelpline.aspx)

If you or a family member is having trouble with the law, or have any legal questions or concerns and want to get advice, you can call the **Coram Children's Legal Centre** on **08088 020 008** or visit [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

If you or a family member has a mental illness or disability, and you want to get some practical advice or information about mental health, you can call **Rethink Mental Illness** on **0300 5000 927** or visit [www.rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice](http://www.rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice)

If you have a family member who struggles with an addiction to alcohol, or if you're worried about how much a family member drinks, you can call the **National Association for Children of Alcoholics** on **0800 358 3456**, or visit [www.nacoa.org.uk](http://www.nacoa.org.uk). It doesn't matter how old you are, or who the family member is, you can talk to them about anything.

If you have any concerns about housing, or if you need housing, **Shelter** has a free housing advice helpline – call on **0808 800 4444** or visit [http://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/how\\_we\\_can\\_help/housing\\_advice\\_helpline](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/how_we_can_help/housing_advice_helpline)

**Makewaves** provides a safe social network for young carers to share multi-media content and campaign for change nationally and locally. [www.makewav.es/YCiF](http://www.makewav.es/YCiF)

**The Carers Trust** has a supportive online community of young carers that can provide you with help and support, or an open discussion. Visit [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net) for more information.

### Young Carers' Services

There are **Young Carers' Services** all around the UK that specialise in providing support and respite for young carers. Many offer trips and events to give young carers a break from their caring duties, and they can give one-to-one support. The services can vary greatly, as some are unable to provide support once you are over 18, while others have specific young adult carers' groups for 18-25 year olds.

You can find your nearest young carers project and what they offer by using the **Include Programme's young carers' service locator**: [www.youngcarer.com/young-carers-services](http://www.youngcarer.com/young-carers-services)

Or by visiting **Makewaves**: [www.makewaves.es/ycif](http://www.makewaves.es/ycif)

You can refer yourself, or a family member can refer you to a young carer's project for additional support. You can also be referred after an assessment from Social Services. See **Page 11**

## Young Carers in Focus

### Young Carers Services (continued)

Finally, if you are already in contact with any young carers' services or professionals, you can show them the following guidance:

The Children's Society's Include Programme has created the **Whole Family Pathway**, to give professionals advice on how to help the whole family. [www.youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway)

The **ADCS**, which directs Children's Services in the UK, has advice on good practice for professionals when dealing with young carers. [www.adcs.org.uk/goodpractice/youngcarers.html](http://www.adcs.org.uk/goodpractice/youngcarers.html)

There are lots of other resources on the **Include Programme** website, some giving guidance to specific services. [www.youngcarer.com/resources](http://www.youngcarer.com/resources)

### Counsellors

Counsellors are people you can talk to about anything troubling you in your life. They don't have any agenda – they listen objectively and confidentially, and help you find ways to cope.

If you want to talk to someone outside the family, but who knows you and your situation, most schools have a **school counsellor** or other counselling service. You can talk to a teacher or school nurse about your situation, and if you're OK with it, they might be able to get the school to help you more.

Some school counsellors also get professional training and support from other charities like **Place 2 Be**. A list of Place 2 Be schools can be found here: [www.place2be.org.uk/what-we-do/where-we-work](http://www.place2be.org.uk/what-we-do/where-we-work), but other schools may be getting help elsewhere.

**It's good to talk** is a website run by a respected professional body called the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). You can enter your postcode and find counsellors in your area. [www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk](http://www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk)

**The Samaritans** believe that everyone should have someone to talk to, no matter what their situation. If you just want to speak on the phone in complete confidence, call **08457 90 90 90** or visit [www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us)

**Childline** also has a phone number that you can call at any time to talk about problems – **0800 1111** – or visit [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org).

## Young Carers in Focus

**Life Skills**

Eating healthily is a very important part of looking after yourself, and cooking your own meals is the cheapest and most effective way of doing this. When you leave home and live by yourself, these skills will be very important.

The **NHS Live Well** pages cover a variety of topics from food hygiene to improving your diet to information about eating disorders.

[www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx)

The **Change 4 Life** website is a guide to healthy living with lots of advice including: recipes, local activity finders and a guide on what's in our food.

[www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/be-food-smart.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/be-food-smart.aspx)

**BBC Food** has a huge range of recipes, you can search for a recipe based on what ingredients you have, what dietary restrictions you have or anything else. [www.bbc.co.uk/food](http://www.bbc.co.uk/food)

**The Children's Society** has also produced a cookbook with young carers, containing hints and tips, and quick and healthy recipes.

[www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce\\_user\\_files/Resources/E-bulletins/ycirecipe\\_book.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/E-bulletins/ycirecipe_book.pdf)

**TIP:** Remember to look out for your emotional well-being as well. Check out YCiF well-being planner

[www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/yp\\_wellness\\_plan.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/yp_wellness_plan.pdf)

**Leisure time**

Finally, let's not forget that young carers have the same right to get up, go out and have fun that everyone else their age has! Everyone's idea of fun is different, but here are some links with some general ideas, and some deals to get you interested.

**Merlin** is a company that owns many attractions around the UK ranging from theme parks to sea life centres – they almost always have 2 for 1 offers available. Visit [www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/merlin](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/merlin) for up to date information.

**Time Out** reviews everything from attractions to restaurants and beyond – you can search for your local area and find some ideas on things to do or places to visit. [www.timeout.com](http://www.timeout.com)

The **Days out guide** has huge lists of things to do all around the UK, and you can get 2 for 1 offers or other deals on almost everything if you have a national rail ticket for that day. [www.daysoutguide.co.uk](http://www.daysoutguide.co.uk)

There are a range of **museums** across England, and particularly London, that offer free entry to most of their exhibitions (such as the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Tate Modern).

**Makewaves** offers online support, activities and the opportunity to create a range of online films and digital content. Great fun if you're a budding filmmaker! [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif)

**Matter** is a new website for young adult carers to interact with one another, share caring experiences and challenges, and offer advice and support. <https://matter.carers.org>

**Young carers deserve to have some time to relax, and there's plenty on offer, so if you can save money whilst doing it, why not?**

## Online Skills

**Makewaves** is a safe social network that can provide young carers with the opportunity to create content, get involved in national and local change and be part of the YCiF programme, which includes planning events, and developing tools and advocacy for national change.

As part of this, the skills and knowledge that are showcased online are accredited with UK badges.

We are developing a set of digital badges, which are online awards to accredit the skills you can gain through YCiF. You can then show these badges to colleges, universities and employers to show off the skills you have!

**Find out all about YCiF badges here:**

[www.makewav.es/story/662169/title/whatareycifbadges](http://www.makewav.es/story/662169/title/whatareycifbadges)

# Work

Entering the world of work can be tough, with lots of challenges to face. There's no right or wrong way to go about finding and getting your dream job, but lots of help and support is available.

Make the most of it – don't just look for work in the papers or online, try to use everything out there. Have a look at the following links to decide where to go.

## Age-specific work time regulations and advice

- Under 13 Page 32
- 13-16 year-olds Page 32
- 16 and 17 year olds Page 33
- 18 and over Page 33

Career advice if you're still at school Page 33

Careers services Page 34

Apprenticeships Page 34

Online resources Page 34

Graduates Page 35

Volunteering Page 35

CVs and applying for jobs Page 36

Keep looking! Page 36

## Age-specific work time regulations and advice

Everyone has the right to be free from having to work more than a certain number of hours per week. The amount you can work depends on your age, job and whether you're still at school.

Children can actually start working at any age, but you should never be pressured into working if you don't feel ready for it, or if you're still in education.

### Under 13

If you're under 13, staying in school and having enough free time is very important. Normally, children this young aren't allowed to work at all, but you can work in television, theatre or as a model.

To work in these areas you will need to apply to your local council for a performance licence. The council will want your employer to prove that you will still be able to learn when you are working, and that you don't work too many hours. They will also make sure that you have a 'chaperone' (an adult to look after you) at all times.

To find out more, visit:

[www.gov.uk/child-employment/minimum-ages-children-can-work](http://www.gov.uk/child-employment/minimum-ages-children-can-work)

If you are this age and you are already thinking about what you want to do once you've left school, look at our [advice for people still in school](#) or [schools careers service](#) pages.

### 13-16 year-olds

At this age you're allowed to work for a few hours each day, but there are tight rules about how much you can work and when, and there is no minimum wage so what you are paid will be decided by your employer.

#### General rules:

You are not allowed to work:

- During school hours
- For more than 1 hour before school
- For more than 2 hours after school
- Before 7am or after 7pm
- Anywhere that may be harmful to your health, or in pubs or betting shops

#### During term time:

You are allowed to work:

- For a maximum of 12 hours a week
- For 2 hours a day on school days and Sundays
- For 5 hours a day on Saturdays if you are 13-14
- For 8 hours a day on Saturdays if you are 15-16

#### During school holidays:

If you are 13-14 you can work:

- For a maximum of 25 hours a week
- For 5 hours on a weekday or Saturday
- For 2 hours on a Sunday

If you are 15-16 you can work:

- For a maximum of 35 hours a week
- For 8 hours on a weekday or Saturday
- For 2 hours on a Sunday

To find out more, visit:

[www.gov.uk/child-employment/restrictions-on-child-employment](http://www.gov.uk/child-employment/restrictions-on-child-employment)

Big companies like supermarkets are unlikely to employ people in this age group due to the strict rules about when they are allowed to work. If you're aged 13-16, the best place to look for work will be local businesses, shops or newsagents (for a paper round). Your wages will be up to your boss as there is no minimum wage.

**Age-specific work time regulations and advice (continued)**

If you are this age and you are already thinking about what you want to do once you've left school, look at our [advice for people still in school](#) or [schools careers service](#) pages.

**16 and 17 year olds**

Want to work full time? After the last Friday in June in the school year that you turn 16, you're officially allowed to work for a maximum of 40 hours per week, and you're entitled to receive a minimum wage (this is less than the National Minimum Wage though – currently it's just £3.72 per hour).

To find out more, visit:

[www.gov.uk/child-employment/minimum-ages-children-can-work](http://www.gov.uk/child-employment/minimum-ages-children-can-work)

Go back to the main work page ([Page 31](#)) and select from the links menu to get advice on what to do next if you are looking for work. Or consider looking at our [Education](#) pages to get advice on how to apply for college or sixth form.

**18 and over**

If you're 18 or over, you're classified as an adult, so a different set of rules apply. You'll be entitled to work for 48 hours per week (including paid or unpaid overtime). You can work for more than 48 hours in one week as long as it averages under 48 hours per week, over a 17-week period.

This is designed to protect you from being forced into doing many hours of unpaid overtime. There are also a number of exceptions, and other rules that apply.

To find out more, visit: [www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours](http://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours)

You can also opt out of this restriction, but only if you're willing. It's illegal for employers to include an 'opt out' in an employment contract, or for them to choose employees based on whether they have opted out or not, so you should not be pressurised into working for more than 48 hours per week.

Find out more here: [www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours/weekly-maximum-working-hours-and-opting-out](http://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours/weekly-maximum-working-hours-and-opting-out)

**Career advice if you're still at school**

Young carers develop skills from an early age as they learn to be resilient, mature and capable, in order to look after themselves and their family.

**These are highly desirable skills!** Even if you lack the free time to do extra-curricular activities or go to clubs, you have lots of skills to put on your CV already.

If you have time, there are other things you can do to prepare for work.

Your **school's careers department** will be able to give you advice – ask them what subjects to take to get into a certain job, or where you can go to gain skills.

Be part of an **online community** where you can learn technical and social skills, and see how people interact online. Why not try the **Young Carers in Focus** social network on **Makewaves** ([www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif))? They offer rewards like online badges that demonstrate what skills and learning you have showcased on the site.

Go to **after school clubs** or take part in **extra-curricular activities** – these are things that employers like to see.

Think about **volunteering**. If there's a charity with a cause close to your heart, you can dedicate as much or as little of your time as you like, and you can learn skills and meet people who can give you a reference or help you find a job. Find out more on our volunteering page ([Page 35](#)).

## Careers services

### School careers service

Whether you're at school, college or university, there should be a careers advice service with experts who can help. If in doubt, ask your teacher or personal tutor how to get careers advice from your school.

### Job Centre

Whether you are applying for **Jobseeker's Allowance** or not (see **Page 40**), the Job Centre will still be able to provide free and impartial careers advice.

You can also visit their website and apply for work near you.

<https://jobsearch.direct.gov.uk/JobSearch/Browse.aspx>

### National Careers Service

The National Careers Service has tools to help you choose a career, advice on how to enter an industry, and tips on making a successful application.

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

### Open University

Open university provide online support on finding a job, interviews and opportunities for employment related to items studied, some are resources are restricted to registered students.

[www2.open.ac.uk/students/careers](http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/careers)

## Apprenticeships

If you've just left school, or if you're older but need experience, consider looking for an apprenticeship. There are plenty of industries you can choose to go into – you need no prior experience and it's a great way to get contacts, meet people and get on-the-job training.

Visit the **government's apprenticeship finding service** to find apprenticeship schemes near you: <https://apprenticeshipvacancymatchingservice.lsc.gov.uk/navms/forms/candidate/Apprenticeships.aspx>

**The Children's Society** also provides internship opportunities in a range of departments for young people over 18. You can find out more at <https://careers.childrenssociety.org.uk>

See more about **Apprenticeships and other training courses on page 19**.

## Online resources

Whether or not you have a clear idea of what you want to do, there's a HUGE amount of help online.

### How to look for jobs

Some job agencies charge the employer to advertise the vacancy online, and send out emails to lists of applicants looking for work. They will be free for you to use.

Here are some job agencies that work in this way:

**Jobsite:** [www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk)

**Monster:** <http://jobsearch.monster.co.uk>

**Reed:** [www.reed.co.uk/jobs](http://www.reed.co.uk/jobs)

**TotalJobs:** [www.totaljobs.com](http://www.totaljobs.com)

There's also a free government website that lists jobs in your local area: <https://jobsearch.direct.gov.uk/JobSearch/Browse.aspx>

## Young Carers in Focus

### Online resources (continued)

#### How to help employers find you

Other agencies are hired by applicants to find them work based on their skills, interests, and experience. This type of agency may charge you up front, take some of your first wage packet, or take a percentage of your wages from the employer. Visit **Agency Central**, a UK directory listing these job agencies.

[www.agencycentral.co.uk](http://www.agencycentral.co.uk)

#### Specific industries

If you're looking for more industry-specific websites, here's a link that might be a good place to start: [www.jobs.ac.uk/links/recruitment/websites](http://www.jobs.ac.uk/links/recruitment/websites)

## Graduates

Are you a graduate? All the age-relevant rights and advice given here applies to you. But there will be 'graduate' level jobs that you can get with your degree. You can normally use your universities career department to help you find work for several years after graduating.

**Prospects**, the government graduate jobs website, offers extensive advice for finding graduate jobs based on your degree, and advertises jobs aimed at recent graduates. [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

Look out for graduate-specific sections on most other **job agency websites** (see **Page 34**).

## Volunteering

Volunteering can be great way to gain the experience needed to start a career. It doesn't just mean helping out in a charity's shop – you can volunteer as an activist, at an activity centre or project, at a museum or gallery, and much more.

Why not take part in any local fundraising events? Do something silly, funny, worthy or sporty – contributing in any way to a charity is something great to put on your CV.

Find out more from the **government page on volunteering**, which also has information on volunteer's rights:

[www.gov.uk/volunteering/find-volunteer-placements](http://www.gov.uk/volunteering/find-volunteer-placements)

**V Inspired** is a charity that aims to connect young people to interesting volunteering placements: [www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com)

**Volunteering England** is a website with extensive information, advice and listings to help you find somewhere to volunteer: [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

Or you could volunteer for one of the **Young Carers in Focus** partners:

**The Children's Society** [www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do)

**Rethink Mental Illness**

[www.rethink.org/get-involved/volunteering-participating](http://www.rethink.org/get-involved/volunteering-participating)

**Makewaves** [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif)

**YMCA** [www.ymca-fg.org/work-for-us/volunteering](http://www.ymca-fg.org/work-for-us/volunteering)

## CVs and applying for jobs

The most daunting part of finding work can be the application process itself. Writing a CV or filling out an application form is a difficult thing to do, but there's lots of advice around.

The first step should be creating or updating your CV. You should include information about your education and work experience, but most importantly it should tell them your skills, and how you can add value to the company.

Some jobs will not ask for a CV, but want you to fill out an application form instead. Your CV will still be very useful for this as you can use some of the same information about your skills, education and experience. Try not to be put off by big application forms as it will all be worth it if you get the job.

It is also a good idea to tailor the information you give in each application to best suit that job. You can include more information in your CV about the skills they want, or write a targeted cover letter. Some of the links below give more information about this.

### Interviews

Everybody gets nervous about doing job interviews, but preparation is the key. If you are well prepared for an interview it will boost your confidence and make you less nervous. One way of doing this is practicing common interview questions (for more information, visit some of the careers advice pages below). You could also do mock interviews with friends to practice answering tough questions.

Here are some career advice pages from job agencies:

**Jobsite:** [www.jobsite.co.uk/insider/category/career-advice](http://www.jobsite.co.uk/insider/category/career-advice)

**Monster:** <http://career-advice.monster.co.uk/cvs-applications/careers.aspx>

**Reed:** [www.reed.co.uk/career-advice](http://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice)

**TotalJobs:** [www.totaljobs.com/careers-advice](http://www.totaljobs.com/careers-advice)

The **National Careers Advice Service** has excellent advice on all parts of the application process, and has a CV builder tool. <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/Pages/default.aspx>

**Prospects** has advice on job applications, including example CVs and cover letters, and advice on how to disclose disability.

[www.prospects.ac.uk/careers.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers.htm)

**LiveCareer** has a free CV builder that allows you to choose from templates and guides you through each section to help you create your perfect CV.

[www.livecareer.co.uk](http://www.livecareer.co.uk)

## Keep looking!

Don't forget, you can always increase your exposure to the job market - consider all these ways of searching:

- Local newspapers
- National newspapers or magazines
- National newspapers jobs websites
- Local advertising boards
- Local shops - you may see 'staff needed' signs, or you can drop your CV off with the manager in case something becomes available.
- Job agencies
- The internet
- Professional bodies or trade unions sometimes have job listings for work in their industry

**Try to be positive, no matter how long you've been looking! You never know where the next opportunity might present itself, so always keep an eye out and look in as many different places as possible.**

# Money

We all know how tight money can be at times, but there is often help out there in the form of benefits and tax credits. Each year billions of pounds of benefits go unclaimed by those who really need them...

In this section, you'll find information on some of the key benefits which you might want to look into and useful advice on:

Making money go further or understanding tough financial terms is a challenge for everybody. Fortunately, there are a number of advice services, charities and web pages to help you understand, budget and do everything you can to manage your money effectively.

The **Money Advice Service** is an independent, government-run free service giving tips for all aspects of money and finance:

- Use their free Health check service to make the most out of your money: <http://healthcheck.moneyadviceservice.org.uk>
- Visit their page with guidance on support available for young carers: [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/financial-support-for-young-carers](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/financial-support-for-young-carers)
- Or visit their home page to browse categories or search for advice relating to your circumstances: [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

For more general advice, and guides on how to save money on bills or shopping, visit **Money Saving Expert** [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com)

<b>What Benefits and Tax Credits are available?</b>	<b>Page 38</b>
<b>Organisations that might be able to help</b>	<b>Page 38</b>
<b>Help for carers 16+</b>	<b>Page 39</b>
<b>Help for under 16s</b>	<b>Page 39</b>
<b>Help with disabilities</b>	<b>Page 40</b>
<b>Help if you are out of work</b>	<b>Page 40</b>
<b>Help for those who are working</b>	<b>Page 41</b>
<b>Help with Housing Costs</b>	<b>Page 41</b>
<b>Student Housing</b>	<b>Page 42</b>
<b>Help for dependent children</b>	<b>Page 42</b>
<b>Help with debts</b>	<b>Page 43</b>
<b>Help with continuing education, training and employment</b>	<b>Page 43</b>

## What Benefits and Tax Credits are available?

There are hundreds of different benefits, so it is really important to make sure you get help to identify all of those which you may be entitled to. Below are some helpful websites to give you an overview of the benefits you could be entitled to.

Visit the **Citizens Advice Bureau** page on benefits:  
[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits\\_e.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits_e.htm)

Alternatively, you can use the **Government benefits adviser**:  
[www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser)

Finally, if you would like to browse through all the benefits pages yourself, you can visit the **Government benefits advice home page**, available here:  
[www.gov.uk/browse/benefits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits)

**TIP:** Alternatively a **benefits calculator** can give you a rough idea of what you may be entitled to:

**Turn2Us benefits calculator:** <http://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk>  
**Entitled to** [www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)

## Organisations that might be able to help

Getting help with your money can be a complicated business, but there are a number of organisations that could provide you with support to help you to make sure you are getting the money you are entitled to.

**Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)** provides free, impartial and confidential advice. Find your local CAB at the link below:  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm?txt\\_search=&local-bureau-sbmt=Search](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm?txt_search=&local-bureau-sbmt=Search)

**Turn2Us** have lots of advice about benefits that are available, that you may be entitled to receive: [www.turn2us.org.uk/benefits\\_search.aspx](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/benefits_search.aspx)

The **NHS choices** website can help you to find carers services locally:  
[www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Carers/LocationSearch/1796](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Carers/LocationSearch/1796)

If you need help with debts, a charity like **Stepchange** may be able to help you: [www.stepchange.org/Howwecanhelpyou.aspx](http://www.stepchange.org/Howwecanhelpyou.aspx)

## Help for carers 16+

### Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a benefit paid to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs. You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for. You must be 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them, and not studying over 21 hours a week

[www.gov.uk/carers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance)

### Carer's Credit

You could get Carer's Credit if you're caring for someone for at least 20 hours a week, who is Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payments, an Attendance Allowance or Armed Force Independence Payment

[www.gov.uk/carers-credit](http://www.gov.uk/carers-credit)

### Carer Premium

If you can't get Carer's Allowance because you are being paid another benefit that overlaps with it, you may still be able to get the carer premium.

The carer premium is an extra amount of money included in the calculation of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Council Tax Reduction (Rate Rebate in Northern Ireland) and Housing Benefit.

[www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/help-with-money/benefits-a-tax-credits/carers-allowance/the-carer-premium-and-the-carer-addition](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/help-with-money/benefits-a-tax-credits/carers-allowance/the-carer-premium-and-the-carer-addition)

### Getting a Carer's Assessment

Caring can result in lots of additional costs which can be difficult to afford. A Carer's Assessment is an opportunity to tell social services about the things that could make caring easier for you. This can provide direct help with the costs of providing care, which can include things like taxi fares, or help with housework and gardening.

To arrange for an assessment you should contact the Social Services Department of the Local Authority that is responsible for the disabled person. You can find out more about getting a carer's assessment on the Carers Trust website here: [www.carers.org/carers-assessment](http://www.carers.org/carers-assessment)

## Help for under 16s

If you are under 16 the person you care for may be entitled to additional support to reduce your caring role. You can point them towards The **Citizens Advice** "advice guide" which is a great place to start when looking to find out about help available for sick or disabled people:

[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits\\_e/benefits\\_sick\\_or\\_disabled\\_people\\_and\\_carers\\_ew/benefits\\_for\\_people\\_who\\_are\\_sick\\_or\\_disabled.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits_e/benefits_sick_or_disabled_people_and_carers_ew/benefits_for_people_who_are_sick_or_disabled.htm)

The **gov.uk website** also has information that can help you with this: [www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/disability-and-sickness-benefits](http://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/disability-and-sickness-benefits)

**TIP:** Young people (aged under 18) who provide care to adult family members are also entitled to an assessment of their needs. Assessments, of the whole family, should ascertain why a child is caring and what needs to change in order to prevent them from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities which could impact adversely on their welfare, education, or social development.

## Help with disabilities

There are several benefits available to supplement the income of people that are unable to work due to disability. Some are subject to assessment to determine the severity of your disability, most are also available whether you're in work or not.

### Disability Living Allowance (under 16):

[www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/overview](http://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/overview)

**Personal Independence Payment (over 16):** [www.gov.uk/pip/overview](http://www.gov.uk/pip/overview)

**Disability Premiums:** [www.gov.uk/disability-premiums-income-support](http://www.gov.uk/disability-premiums-income-support)

**Blind Person's Allowance:** [www.gov.uk/blind-persons-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/blind-persons-allowance)

**Reduced Earnings Allowance:** [www.gov.uk/reduced-earnings-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/reduced-earnings-allowance)

### Employment Support Allowance:

[www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance). This benefit has been created to replace the Severe Disablement Allowance and Incapacity Benefit. For more information visit the relevant pages:

[www.gov.uk/severe-disablement-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/severe-disablement-allowance)

[www.gov.uk/incapacity-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/incapacity-benefit)

**Attendance Allowance:** [www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/overview](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/overview)

If you are a higher education student living in England, you are entitled to apply for a **Disabled Students' Allowance** (DSA) if you have a disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

[www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview)

## Help if you are out of work

**Jobseeker's Allowance** (JSA) is a key benefit for people who are looking for work. To get this you are likely to have to meet several other conditions, including showing that you are seeking work. You can normally only claim Jobseeker's Allowance if you are 18 or over. Some 16-17 year olds can claim JSA, but if so you should seek advice since other support may be more appropriate.

### You can find out more about JSA here:

[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits\\_e/benefits\\_benefits\\_in\\_work\\_or\\_looking\\_for\\_work\\_ew/benefits\\_for\\_people\\_looking\\_for\\_work.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits_e/benefits_benefits_in_work_or_looking_for_work_ew/benefits_for_people_looking_for_work.htm)

If you are eligible, apply for Jobseekers Allowance as soon as you are looking for work because:

- You'll get minimal financial support
- It counts towards National Insurance contributions
- You can have meetings with employment specialists at the Jobcentre every two weeks for free. They can give you career advice, and help you find work in areas that interest you.
- You'll be made aware of training courses and seminars that might be of interest to you.
- If you're on income support, you can then become eligible for several other benefits.

### Help if you are out of work (continued)

To claim Jobseeker's Allowance you must go to a Jobcentre and apply for an interview.

For more information, and to check if you are eligible, please visit **the government's advice page** [www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance)

## Help for those who are working

If you are working, this doesn't necessarily mean you aren't entitled to receive benefits. If you are on a low income you may still be entitled to receive benefits like Housing Benefit and help with your Council Tax. Some benefits, such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment, may be paid no matter how much you earn. Working Tax Credit is normally only paid to working households.

**You can find out more about benefits for people in work here:**

[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits\\_e/benefits\\_benefits\\_in\\_work\\_or\\_looking\\_for\\_work\\_ew/benefits\\_and\\_tax\\_credits\\_for\\_people\\_in\\_work.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits_e/benefits_benefits_in_work_or_looking_for_work_ew/benefits_and_tax_credits_for_people_in_work.htm)

Additionally, there are a number of benefits that people can apply for to get extra income, either because they don't have any income from a job, or to supplement their incomes if they do.

**Income Support:** [www.gov.uk/income-support](http://www.gov.uk/income-support)

**Working Tax Credit:** [www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit/overview](http://www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit/overview)

**Maternity Allowance:** [www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/overview](http://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/overview)

## Help with Housing Costs

**Housing Benefit** is a benefit to help people living on a low income to pay their rent. It can be available whether you are living in public or private rented accommodation. You don't have to be out of work to get Housing Benefit, but it is affected by how much you earn.

**You can find out more about Housing Benefit here:**

[www.gov.uk/housing-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit)

You may also be entitled to **Cold Weather Payment** if you're getting certain benefits. Payments are made between 1 November and 31 March during periods of very cold weather.

**You can find out more about Cold Weather Payment here:**

[www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/overview](http://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/overview)

There are also a number of government grants, tax reductions and allowances to reduce the costs associated with housing. There are a number of tools to help you determine if you or your family are entitled to any of this support:

**Council Tax Reduction:** [www.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction](http://www.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction)

**Energy grants calculator:** [www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator)

**Free or discounted TV licence:** [www.gov.uk/free-discount-tv-licence](http://www.gov.uk/free-discount-tv-licence)

**Help using your benefits to pay bills:** [www.gov.uk/bills-benefits](http://www.gov.uk/bills-benefits)

**TIP:** For some good advice specifically for young carers on housing, visit the **Carers trust page on housing:**

[www.carers.org/help-directory/leaving-home-and-housing-options](http://www.carers.org/help-directory/leaving-home-and-housing-options)

## Student Housing

When you come to move out of the family home, you have certain rights to protect you from being treated unfairly by a landlord. Whether you're moving into student housing at university, or moving out permanently, your rights are protected and there is advice available.

There are a number of resources outlining your rights as a tenant in student housing. The law varies in each region of the UK, so make sure you visit the page relating to where you live.

The **National Union of Students** has all sorts of advice relating to housing and other things. Regional links take you to advice pages from **Shelter**, a UK homelessness and housing charity:

[www.nus.org.uk/en/advice/housing-advice/renting-a-home/your-rights-and-responsibilities-as-a-tenant](http://www.nus.org.uk/en/advice/housing-advice/renting-a-home/your-rights-and-responsibilities-as-a-tenant)

The **National Advice Bureau** has advice and information including your rights in both private and university provided accommodation:

[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/housing\\_e/housing\\_renting\\_a\\_home\\_e/housing\\_student\\_housing\\_e.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/housing_e/housing_renting_a_home_e/housing_student_housing_e.htm)

### Renting or leasehold

When renting or buying a leasehold property you also have rights as a tenant. These rights vary depending on where you live in the UK, so make sure you visit the relevant pages.

The **National Advice Bureau** has general housing advice, including your rights. [www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/housing\\_e.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/housing_e.htm)

**Shelter** has a page about your rights while renting or leasing.

- If you live in England, visit: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/renting\\_and\\_leasehold?gclid=CPyj1tu-hLoCFQqe4Aodyg4Amw](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/renting_and_leasehold?gclid=CPyj1tu-hLoCFQqe4Aodyg4Amw)
- If you live in Scotland, visit: [http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/advice\\_topics/renting\\_rights](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/advice_topics/renting_rights)

## Help for dependent children

There are lots of different benefits and tax credits for families with children, and for women who are expecting a child.

The **Citizens Advice guide** provides a helpful introduction to the support available:

[www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits\\_e/benefits\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_ew/benefits\\_for\\_families\\_and\\_children.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits_e/benefits_children_and_young_people_ew/benefits_for_families_and_children.htm)

The **gov.uk website** also has helpful information for families:

[www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families)

### Child benefits

All families in the UK are eligible for Child Benefit for any child under 16 (or 16-19 and in approved education or training). Find out more on the government website. [www.gov.uk/child-benefit/overview](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit/overview)

There are also other benefits and payments available for families with children.

**Child Tax Credit:** [www.gov.uk/child-tax-credit/overview](http://www.gov.uk/child-tax-credit/overview)

**Free school meals:** [www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)

**Guardian's Allowance:** Available to people caring for children whose parents have died: [www.gov.uk/guardians-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/guardians-allowance)

**Widowed Parent Allowance:** [www.gov.uk/widowed-parents-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/widowed-parents-allowance)

## Help with debts

If you or your family are struggling with debt, money can be a real problem. You have to be careful getting free, quality debt advice because some organisations have misleading names that sound like debt charities but are actually commercial businesses.

The **Money Advice Service** provides a list of free and confidential debt advice providers: [www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/where-to-go-to-get-free-debt-advice](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/where-to-go-to-get-free-debt-advice)

The **Citizens Advice Bureau** also has a section offering a variety of financial advice, from how to budget to how to deal with debt. [www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/debt\\_e.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/debt_e.htm)

## Bereavement Payment

When someone dies, unexpected costs usually follow which can contribute to unmanageable debt, but there is support available out there. If someone in your family's husband, wife or civil partner has died, they may be entitled to Bereavement Payment to help cover the unexpected costs at this difficult time. [www.gov.uk/bereavement-payment/overview](http://www.gov.uk/bereavement-payment/overview)

## Emergency support and welfare assistance schemes

Local authorities are now providing individual emergency loans and welfare assistance schemes, but each area provides different levels of help.

To find out what support is available near you, visit The Children's Society's website: [www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-views/our-blog/use-our-map-find-your-local-welfare-assistance-scheme](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-views/our-blog/use-our-map-find-your-local-welfare-assistance-scheme)

If you or your family are receiving income support, you can apply for **budgeting loans**: [www.gov.uk/budgeting-loans/overview](http://www.gov.uk/budgeting-loans/overview)

## Help with continuing education, training and employment

If you want to continue with your education, training or employment but are being held back for financial reasons, there are many benefits, grants and bursaries available to those who need extra support. Whether it's education, training, or your work that you need support with, there's help out there available for you.

Here are some key benefits which could help you with financial costs, being granted more flexible hours or even child care, whilst you are studying, training or working.

### Discretionary Bursaries

If you are aged 16 to 19, in full or part time further education, and need financial support to stay in education you may be entitled to a bursary directly from your school, college or university through the 16-19 bursary fund. To apply contact student support service in the institute you intend to study and see if they can support you.

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/312775/EFA\\_Advice\\_for\\_young\\_people\\_16\\_to\\_19\\_Bursary\\_Fund.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/312775/EFA_Advice_for_young_people_16_to_19_Bursary_Fund.pdf)

### Discretionary Learner Support

If you're aged 19 or over, on a further education course and facing financial hardship, you could get Discretionary Learner Support to help pay for accommodation and travel, course materials and equipment or childcare.

[www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support](http://www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support)

### Grants and bursaries for adult learners

Adult learners can apply for grants and bursaries to help pay for courses and training. Usually, you don't have to pay this money back.

[www.gov.uk/grant-bursary-adult-learners](http://www.gov.uk/grant-bursary-adult-learners)

**Flexible working**

Flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee's needs, e.g. being able to work certain hours or work from home. Employees who care for someone (e.g. a child or adult) have the legal right to ask for flexible working.

[www.gov.uk/flexible-working/overview](http://www.gov.uk/flexible-working/overview)

**Help with childcare costs**

You can also get help with childcare costs in the form of childcare tax credits, childcare support through your employer or financial support whilst you are studying.

[www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs)

**Parent's learning allowance**

Full-time students with children could get financial support each year whilst they are studying, to help with their learning costs.

[www.gov.uk/parents-learning-allowance/overview](http://www.gov.uk/parents-learning-allowance/overview)

Here are a few grants and bursaries you may be entitled to, which can help you get the additional financial support you need, to kick start your future or help you get back on track with your education or career.

**Educational Grants**

Family Action's Educational Grants Search helps you identify appropriate charitable funding for education or training, based on your circumstances and needs.

[www.family-action.org.uk/section.aspx?id=21211](http://www.family-action.org.uk/section.aspx?id=21211)

Family Action also have a useful PDF resource to help you with the applying for charitable funding for education and training.

[www.family-action.org.uk/uploads/documents/Grants\\_Guide\\_Final.pdf](http://www.family-action.org.uk/uploads/documents/Grants_Guide_Final.pdf)

**Student Cash Point**

Access thousands of grants, loans, bursaries, scholarships and awards available to support school leavers, college students and those ready to take the big step in to undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the UK.

[www.studentcashpoint.co.uk](http://www.studentcashpoint.co.uk)

You can also consider studying remotely; the Open University offers a range of courses that can be completed remotely with tutorial support.

Access to Success courses, for people with no experience of Open University or further education and on low incomes can be accessed for free.

[www.open.ac.uk/choose/ou/access](http://www.open.ac.uk/choose/ou/access)

# The Law

As a young carer it is important to know about what laws are in place to help you with your caring responsibilities. This section highlights some of the key contacts that are useful for you to know and some of the key policies that are in place to support you and your family.

**The Law and Young Carers**

**Page 46**

**The law if your parents separate**

**Page 46**

Everyone is protected by human rights, but each country has its own national laws as well. Some may offer more protection than basic human rights, while others may allow the government to change certain rights.

This means that England has its own set of laws, which you can find out more about below.

**The government** has advice on laws that affect young people here:  
[www.gov.uk/browse/justice/young-people](http://www.gov.uk/browse/justice/young-people)

**The Metropolitan Police** has a website for young people with lots of information about crime and the law, as well as general tips and advice:  
<http://safe.met.police.uk>

**Coram Children's Legal Centre** has a website with information about the law in the UK. If you have any questions about the law or anything you read here, if you have any legal concerns, or if you would like to get free legal advice, you can contact the Coram Children's Legal Centre.

Call free on **08088 020 008**, or visit their website here:  
[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

## The Law and Young Carers

### STOP PRESS! Historic change to UK law to help young carers!

Young carers have told their stories and made a historic difference to UK law! The new Children and Families Act has a section about young carers – which means that **all young carers are now entitled to an assessment** either on the appearance of need or in response to a request for an assessment from a young carer or their parent and the needs of everyone in the family must be considered. That includes you!

The New Care Act will also have new sections which remind adult social care teams to think about any children in the family and whether or not they might be a young carer and to assess if family is able to get more help.

### Key changes to the law for young carers

Now, when a child is identified as a young carer, the needs of everyone in the family will be considered. This will trigger both children's and adult support services into action – assessing why a child is caring, what needs to change and what would help the family to prevent children from taking on this responsibility in the first place.

This means that as a young carer, you can request an assessment from your local authority to receive support to meet your caring responsibilities.

YCiF Champion Becky has made a short video and blog about the changes in law which were announced in October 2013, which is available on Makewaves. [www.makewav.es/story/583900/title/historicchangeinlawsignalsneweraforyoungcarers](http://www.makewav.es/story/583900/title/historicchangeinlawsignalsneweraforyoungcarers)

## The law if your parents separate

If your parents divorce or separate, it's up to them to agree who you live with. Legally speaking, neither parent has a 'right' to live or spend a certain proportion of time with you. Instead, the law talks about 'parental responsibility' (PR) – a legal status which means they have a duty to care for and protect you.

PR gives a parent the right to contribute to decision making about your future (for example giving consent to medical treatment, choosing what school you go to, or what religion you are).

Mothers have PR automatically. Fathers get it if one of the following applies:

- they are married to your mother when you're born
- they are listed on your birth certificate
- they have entered into a parental responsibility agreement with your mother
- they have obtained a parental responsibility order from the courts.

### Contact with a parent who doesn't live with you

In some cases, when parents split up the children end up spending roughly equal amounts of time with each parent. However, children usually live mainly with one parent and have regular contact with the other.

The amount of contact you have with this ('non-resident') parent can vary widely. Depending on how old you are, you might legally have some say over decisions about this, but sometimes other things might still happen that mean you don't get to see each other as much as you'd like.

## Young Carers in Focus

**The law if your parents separate (continued)**

In some cases parents can be very angry or upset about splitting up. In these cases they might find it hard to agree on co-parenting arrangements. In rare cases, parents may get lawyers involved to determine how much time each parent spends with their children. If this happens, because they are angry with each other, parents may find it difficult to acknowledge how important it is for both of them to remain closely involved with your life, and in these cases, one of the parents may drift away.

Even if you don't get to see both parents as much as you'd like, you may be able to stay in touch by phone, email or on Facebook or other social media sites.

For more information and support for single parents, visit **Gingerbread**:  
[www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)

If you want to find out about child maintenance, visit **Child Maintenance Options** [www.cmoptions.org](http://www.cmoptions.org)

There's not much support out there for the children of divorced/separated parents, but a group of teenagers is working hard to change that. Find out more at **Kids in the Middle** [www.kidsinthemiddle.org.uk](http://www.kidsinthemiddle.org.uk)

# Influencing Change

What can you do to influence decision makers locally and nationally, to raise awareness of young carers and make sure they receive the support they need throughout their lives? This section has information on steps you can take to influence and works towards positive changes.

Influencing people and policy makers	Page 48
Having your say	Page 49
Local MPs and Services	Page 49

## Influencing people and policy makers

Young Carers in Focus (YCiF) is working hard to make people aware of young carers' issues. YCiF is lobbying for improvements in services for young carers, and for changes in the law.

As young carers, there are many ways that you can get your voice heard. You can help to raise awareness by talking to people or by signposting any of the professionals mentioned here to relevant guidance.

But there are also more direct ways you can get involved:

You can become a **Young Carers' Champion**. Champions receive extra training to improve their skills and knowledge, and they get the opportunity to become a spokesperson for young carers. Champions have appeared on national TV, magazines and newspapers to tell their stories and get their voice heard.

Collectively, your voice will be much louder than it will be as an individual. It is for this reason that YCiF has created the **Makewaves** young carers network. You have the opportunity to talk to other young carers and teachers, and you'll have the opportunity to have an input on things that affect young carers.

**Find out more here:** [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif)

## Young Carers in Focus

### Having your say

#### UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament is run by young people, and provides opportunities for 11-18 year-olds to use their voice in creative ways to bring about social change.

Ways to get involved and have your voice heard include supporting campaigns, joining debate forums, using social media to influence change and becoming a member of youth parliament.

**For more information and ways to get involved go to:**

[www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk)

#### Becoming a member of youth parliament

As a young carer, you could use your voice to influence change for young carers locally and nationally.

Your responsibilities as a member of Youth Parliament would be to find out the concerns and needs of other young people in your area, and represent these views to decision makers on a local, regional and national level. You would also have the opportunity to get involved in a variety of events projects and campaigns.

**Find out more about applying to be a member of Youth Parliament:**

[www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/myps/becoming-a-member](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/myps/becoming-a-member)

### Local MPs and Services

#### How to contact your local MP about young carers

Finding out more about your local MP and what local and national decisions they have helped and are helping to make, can give you an insight into what they are doing for young carers or what they could be doing better. The resources below can help you find out more about your local decision makers and how you can get in contact with them; ensuring that your voice and the voices of other young carers are heard.

#### Parliament's online MPs directory

This online resource can help you to track what MPs in your local area are doing, if they are doing anything to help benefit young carers, and what's missing; what could they be doing to improve local services for young carers?

This website allows you to find your local MP and learn more about them, including details of their parliamentary career, their political interests and contact information, including web and social media.

You can search for MPs by postcode if you are unsure who your local MP is: [www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps)

#### They Work For You

Find out more about your local area's representative through online resource They Work For You. Read debates your local MP has taken part in, see how they voted on topics of interest and sign up for email alerts.

This resource will keep you up to date on decisions being made that could affect young carers in your local area and nationally:  
[www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)

## Young Carers in Focus

### Local MPs and Services (continued)

#### Write to Them

You might want to voice any concerns you have about issues affecting young carers in your local area, or on a more national scale. Also remember that sharing positive experiences of support you receive is important too. If you have had positive experiences in your local area, in school or through your local young carers' service, then perhaps write to your local councillors or MP to let them know. Sharing these stories can persuade other MPs to influence change for young carers.

Write to your politicians, national or local about young carers through online resource **Write To Them**: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

Just type in your UK postcode to find out who your local representatives are; this includes your local councillors and your MP. Your councillors represent your Borough and are responsible for **local services**, and your MP represents you in the House of Commons. The House of Commons is responsible for **making laws in the UK**.

#### Coming Soon! YCiF Young Carers Policy Pack

Find out more about influencing policy by downloading/visiting the YCiF Young Carers Policy Pack, containing templates and information to get you started!

[www.youngcarer.com/policypack](http://www.youngcarer.com/policypack)

# About us

## Young Carers in Focus

Young Carers in Focus (YCiF) is an exciting four-year programme giving young carers a chance to communicate, share their stories and advocate for the things that matter most to them.

Funded by a Youth in Focus grant from the **Big Lottery Fund** [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk), YCiF is creating a national network led by 200 young carer 'champions' aged 10-25.

Young people taking part are receiving training and skills which will improve their resilience, confidence, skills and knowledge.

The aim is to increase their well-being and quality of life – particularly during transitional stages in their education, and as they move towards independence.

Visit the YCiF safe social network: [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif)

Young Carers in Focus is being delivered by The Children's Society in partnership with DigitalME, YMCA Fairthorne Group, Rethink Mental Illness and The Fatherhood Institute.

