



# Initiating Conversation

A professional's guide to discussing with parents/guardians why their child may be eligible for support as a Young Carer



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# DISCUSSING SUPPORT



Each family has a different make up, has its good days and bad, may go through times of emotional or financial hardship be it long or short-term and often does whatever is in their power to make the best of a situation.

It is very important that the conversations you have with parents or guardians about the possibility of their child(ren) being a Young Carer, is not to make them feel in any way inadequate, judged, guilty or unable to cope with family circumstances and should therefore be dealt with sensitively.

Quite often, there is either a history or pattern of trauma or illness within the family that may result in parents feeling understandably protective of their children and their parenting. This could be because they want to give them a happier or more stable homelife than they themselves may have experienced, or want to avoid their child from 'doing' the things they may have had to do as a child for their family and so perhaps don't see the emotional impact side of caregiving.

Some parents/guardians may see the 'label' of a Young Carer as a negative and have many ideas as to what this would mean for them including removing their child(ren) from the home or adding to the 'problem'. Giving reassurances where appropriate and explaining expectations and the benefits of referring their child(ren) as a Young Carer is key.

The language used is very important. If you have identified that a child may be a Young Carer but feel the parent/guardian may not be receptive, perhaps avoid the direct approach. Stating that "your child is a Young Carer and needs help" may not be well received for the reasons mentioned above.

Instead, acknowledge how their situation must be hard at times and that their child could benefit from support to relieve some of the things you have observed or they have mentioned. Please refer them to the parent/guardian resource should they wish to find out more or in need of further explanation.

# BENEFITS OF REFERRING



When discussing a referral with a parent/guardian it's important that expectations are set. Quite often we see referrals where professionals have advised families that their child would attend regular clubs and trips out which cannot be guaranteed. Our respite opportunities are dependant on additional funding we receive, what we're contracted to deliver, spaces available as well as age - many activities are for ages 8+.

The benefits of being referred could be more around the positive impact on their; education, wellbeing and social interactions.

## Education

We provide free Young Carers Awareness Training to all professionals as well as awareness raising assemblies in schools ensuring that Young Carers are normalised, identified and supported. One way is for the Young Carers to attend an in-school Young Carer support group. These regular groups have shown to improve attendance and attainment. Knowing they're not alone makes a big difference.

We may where possible be able to support or signpost families to receive help with finances such as; transport, grants and crisis support to ensure their child isn't missing in education.

## Wellbeing

Support can help Young Carers feel less isolated, particularly if they have worries around developing their cared for's condition or experience anger, frustration or resentment towards their cared for. Depending on the outcome of their carers assessment, we may be able to offer short-term 1:1 support (this is not counselling) to set some goals as well as offer our weekly online 'Time out Tuesday' sessions open to all registered Young Carers aged 5+. These give them a chance to connect with others, play games, do arts and crafts and have fun.

## Social Interaction

Through 1:1 support, if needed, we can identify and find any hobbies, clubs or interests the Young Carer wishes to access. We often hear that Young Carers would like more quality one-on-one time with their parent, particularly if their cared for is a sibling, this can help with any anger or resentment.

# WHAT TO EXPECT



The majority of our referrals come from schools and other professionals which is preferable however, we do also accept referrals from parents and guardians. When you are completing a referral, you need to have gained verbal consent from the parent/guardian for each child identified and ideally have had a conversation with the young person(s) so they're aware.

If not completed at the referral stage, we also require a separate consent form completed by the consenting adult to gather additional information about their child. This includes; their child's health needs, allergies, dietary requirements, who they're happy for us to inform e.g. their school/college as well as how they're happy for us to contact them e.g. calls only, emails only etc. If further information is needed in order to progress the referral, our team will be in touch either with the family or yourselves.

Every referred child is offered a carers assessment - this is essentially a national tool for Young Carers that aims to cover all scenarios so some questions may not feel relevant to them or reflect their family circumstances. This along with the the information stated on the referral form as well as conversations with the Support Coordinator, will help us identify the level of support needed for each referred child. The assessment is then repeated the following year or sooner should we be notified of any changes to circumstances or impact.

Once the young person has completed their assessment, we will be in touch with the parent/guardian and you as the referrer to advise of the outcome and level of support to be offered. This could be different for each child referred e.g. youngest child might be identified as low level in terms of caring responsibility and impact whereas their eldest child could be a medium or high level if has more responsibilities and emotional impact. We will also be in touch with you the referrer should we have difficulty making contact with the family to avoid closure.

# CONTACT US



If you would like to know more about our Young Carer service, or check whether a young person is already registered with us before submitting a referral, please see our contact details below.

Our team will only be able to discuss whether a young person is registered if we have parental consent to share that information.

Please note that our support would depend on the outcome of the child's individual carers assessment therefore we would not be able to advise what support could be offered ahead of the referral.

To speak to one of our Hub team call: 0300 111 110 or contact the local Support Coordinator if known.

To email: [youngcarers@imago.community](mailto:youngcarers@imago.community)

Website: [www.imago.community/Children-and-Young-People](http://www.imago.community/Children-and-Young-People)

## Our social media platforms:

Facebook: Imago Community

Instagram: [imagocommunityuk](https://www.instagram.com/imagocommunityuk)

X: [@imagocommunity](https://twitter.com/imagocommunity)



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