



Guidance for completing a Young Carers' Needs Assessment (YCNA) 2018

Introduction

This YCNA guidance document should be used when completing a YCNA.

This guidance has been designed with reference to the Children and Families Act 2014, The Care Act 2014 and the views and opinions of a Young Carers' Needs Assessment focus group. Several sessions were conducted in 2018/19, including Young Carers from North Tyneside Carers Centre: Young Carers Project to develop the North Tyneside Council Young Carers' Needs Assessment. We would like to thank these young carers for their hard work.

The YCNA has been created in line with the Signs of Safety model which 'is an evidence-based, questioning approach that keeps the child at the centre of the work with them and their family. The Signs of Safety model helps to identify what is working well for the family as a starting point for support and planning. It allows us to learn what the family wants and how they think changes can be made'.

Information about the Signs of Safety model can be found on the North Tyneside Council Website :

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1204/signs-safety>

Context

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act to make it easier for young carers to get an assessment of their needs and to introduce 'whole family' approaches to assessment and support. Local authorities must offer an assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care.

Assessments must consider whether the care being provided by the child is excessive or inappropriate; and how the child's caring responsibilities affects their wellbeing, education and development.

Purpose of a Young Carers' Needs Assessment

A YCNA should identify details of the young carers' caring role and how their wellbeing is affected. It should establish the outcomes that the person who is assessed wishes to achieve in their day-to-day life. It should include an action plan that supports the young person in meeting the outcomes that they wish to meet in their lives.

An assessment will support the local authority in determining the services, if any, that should be provided.

Who should be involved

A YCNA must involve and incorporate the views of the young carer, parents/guardian/cared for and any other appropriate person that the young carer requests.

Whole family approach

Parents must be involved in the process and a whole family approach should be taken, in order to ensure that meaningful change can occur and the whole family situation is explored.

However, it will be important to speak to the child alone, wherever possible, and to observe how they relate with their parents and siblings. It will be helpful, with the child's agreement, to speak to their teachers and to other relevant adults.

Families where a caring role is present may face challenges in their relationships with one another. The process of completing an assessment can evoke feelings that may be difficult for individual members to talk about in front of each other. With this in mind, in order to gather a whole picture and make the process as comfortable as possible, a combination of together and apart opportunities should be offered.

Young carers from the 2019 focus group impressed that parental involvement be acknowledged as a very important issue to them and that this must be sensitively approached, as most members shared that there were elements to their caring role that they would find it difficult to talk about in front of their parents.

If young people demonstrate anxious feelings or extreme worries about their caring role being discussed with their parents present, exploration will need to be done with the young person to understand their concerns before appropriate action is taken to deal with these worries.

From the Children and Families Act, "Parent", in relation to a young carer, includes–

(a) a parent of the young carer who does not have parental responsibility for the young carer, and

(/b) a person who is not a parent of the young carer but who has parental responsibility for a young carer.

Young person's voice

The young carers' voice should be at the heart of the process. Every effort should be made to help the young person to communicate their wishes and feelings. Assessments of young carers must recognise that each child is a unique person on their own journey to adulthood and maturity

Age appropriateness

Two documents have been created. One for under 12's and one for over 12's. The young person can complete the assessment of their choice, as long as everyone involved feels the young person has the capacity to work through it.

Step by step process when completing an assessment

- The purpose of the YCNA should be explained to the young carer and their parent.
- How collected data will be used and stored should be explained to those present.
- Those present should be encouraged to give as much information as possible so that the professional can build up a good picture of the needs of the young person and their individual and family situation.
- The young person should be given a choice of document to work from.
- A conversation should be had with the young person that decides how a whole family approach will be taken.
- The assessor should familiarise themselves with the content of the YCNA form.
- The assessor should identify the approach that they are going to use to gather the information from the young person and their family. This can include talking based tasks, creative exercises, arts based activities. This should be tailored to the individual's needs, in order to get the most out of them.
- As much time as is required should be taken to gather the information. The process should not be rushed. The assessment may take several sessions.
- Once the assessment is complete, the assessor should write up their thoughts on what they have learnt about the young person and family situation. During this section, the professional should consider whether the young person's caring role is excessive or inappropriate (see below for further information) and if they believe the child to be a Child in Need, with reference to North Tyneside's thresholds of need. If either of these are the case, North Tyneside's front door should be contacted and the person's situation should be discussed.
- After this, the professional, young carer and others involved should identify the main areas of concern and what the young carer wants. An action plan should be drawn up to overcome areas of concern and support the young carer to achieve their goals.
- Action plans must:
 - Include actions to reduce inappropriate levels of caring - eg. Referral to adult social care
 - Identify a trusted person in school who the young person can talk to

- Identify support which can be provided in the school eg. Counselling, thrive programme, young carers group, out of school activities.
- Explore activities for the young person outside of school eg. Brownies, scouts - but remember that transport can be a barrier!
- Include an application for a young carers specific ease card - admits the young carer and a friend free of charge into local authority leisure centres.
- Action plans should:
 - Involve SMART actions that will help to make a positive change in the life of the young person
 - Take into account all possible local support options, including in school support, LA services, voluntary services
 - Take into account the young person's family network
- To ensure that an assessor has thoroughly explored options of support available to a young carer, the professional should refer to North Tyneside's local offer document for young carers.

Recording

It is important that:

- Information is gathered systematically and carefully and precisely recorded
- Information is checked and discussed with the young carer and with the adults concerned
- differences in views about the child's caring role and how this affects the child's wellbeing is understood and clearly recorded
- a copy of the completed YCNA is kept by the professional and a copy is given to the young carer and their parents

What next?

Once completed:

- All YCNA's should be sent electronically to:
YoungCarerAssessment@northtyneside.gov.uk
- The YCNA will be reviewed and the assessor contacted for further information if necessary.
- The YNCA will be logged on North Tyneside Council's contact system and the young person will be flagged as a young carer.
- This is important so North Tyneside Council know the young carers in the borough.
- If you need any advice or guidance you can contact the email address above. You can also contact North Tyneside Carers' Centre.
- A review will be arranged in 12 months time - this is essential to monitor if circumstances have changed and identify potential transition periods in the young carers life - e.g. moving to secondary school.

Safeguarding

Throughout the assessment procedure, NT Safeguarding procedures should be taken into account and adhered to.

. How does it fit with other assessments?

- A YCNA **does not** replace a EHA/Statutory Assessment and therefore, should be conducted in addition to an EHA/Statutory Assessment, as it is specific to the young carer and their individual needs.
- A YCNA should always be a prompt to check if the person cares for has their care and support needs met. If it is felt that they have unmet needs, a referral for assessment to the appropriate service should be made. This is as important as completing the Young Carers' Needs Assessment. If the person being cared for receives additional support, the young person's caring role will likely decrease.
- Always check if anyone else in the family is a carer as they also need to be offered a young or adult carers assessment.

Excessive and inappropriate

This is defined in the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance as anything which is likely to have an impact on the child's **health, wellbeing or education**, or which is **unsuitable** for that particular child:

- Personal care such as bathing and toileting
 - Carrying out strenuous physical tasks such as lifting
 - Administering medication
 - Maintaining the family budget
 - Offering, precociously mature, emotional support to the adult e.g. if, in effect, the child is "parenting their parent"
- If a young person is missing school to care for a parent this is inappropriate levels of care.

"We don't want our parent/cared for to know EVERYTHING about how we are feeling, we are still young people and children first, We don't tell our mams and dads every single thing."

Young Carer from North Tyneside Carers' Centre.