Young Carers Welcome Pack

LINKED UP

CARE

FUN

WORK

STUDY

FUN
Everyone on Carers Link staff team is either a carer or has previous experience of caring as do many of our volunteers. We understand the day-to-day reality of being a carer.

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This booklet introduces you to us. Linked Up can help you with:

- Support and encouragement
- Information and advice
- Advocacy
- Social activities
- A listening ear when you need one

Our aim is to help you to have the best possible quality of life and help you progress through your caring role.
Who is a Young Carer?

A Young Carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem.

If you are a Young Carer, you probably look after a parent, a brother or sister but it may be someone else.

According to the 2011 UK census, in East Dunbartonshire 1 in 50 young people aged between 5 and 17 are a Young Carer. Of these 34% are aged 16 and 17, 33% are aged 13 – 15, 27% are aged 8 – 12 and 6% are aged 5 – 7.

What do Young Carers do?

There are lots of ways Young Carers can help. The day to day responsibilities will all be different but may include:

- **Domestic Chores** such as cooking, cleaning and shopping.
- **Practical support** such as helping someone out of bed, giving medication, managing money, helping someone to communicate, or keeping an eye on someone to make sure they are alright.
- **Personal Care** such as helping someone to wash or helping someone to go to the toilet.
- **Emotional Support** such as listening to someone who is feeling down, who wants to talk to you about their feelings, or who is distressed.
Need Support?

Linked Up is the bit of Carers Link that supports you, the Young Carer.

We will answer any questions you may have about your caring role, and we will normally arrange a home visit to see you and your family to discuss further the support we can offer.

“I’ve had lots of opportunities to make new friends, visit fun and interesting places. I get to be around people that understand my life”

Each caring situation is unique; and the support we provide will be specific to you and your particular circumstances. We can work with you 1:1 to support you, and we can offer you opportunities to meet other Young Carers at our groups. We can attend school meetings if you need extra support. If we don’t know the answer to something, we’ll always find someone who does!

“Dedicated staff who always do their best for the Young Carers. Promoting their self-esteem and wellbeing. Lots of fabulous trips and days out to explore”

“Young Carers is really fun because we get to do exciting things and I’ve loved meeting the other Young Carers”
Impact of being a Young Carer

Being a Young Carer isn’t always a bad thing. By helping in the family you can feel more valued and included. Providing care can also make you more mature, more confident and better able to deal with problems. You might also learn about managing money, looking after the home, caring for children, making appointments and dealing with health and social care services.

However taking on too many tasks and responsibilities can affect your mental health and your wellbeing (how you think and feel). Young Carers may need support with:

- **School/College** - 27% of Young Carers of secondary school age experience educational difficulties or miss school. (Carers Trust)

- **Physical and mental health** - the physical tasks Young Carers may take on (such as moving and lifting someone) can have long term effects on your own physical health. Providing emotional support can be difficult for a young person to deal with and can lead to you needing support with your own mental health.

- **Social** - being a Young Carer can limit your time for socialising and opportunities of meeting new people.

- **Money** - money can be tight for families who are caring for someone.

“I love seeing how happy and relaxed my two children are when they come home from a group. They have big smiles and are full of chatter!”
Ella

“I love that I can say how I feel and people actually understand.”

Ella is 13 and her younger sister Sophie is 5 years old. Sophie struggles with communication, still wears nappies and also has trouble with her mobility. Ella helps out a lot with tasks round the house and she spends a lot of her time playing with Sophie and keeping an eye on her which gives her mum a break to get other tasks done round the house.

“I help with cooking, cleaning and taking care of my sister.”

Ella’s mum struggles with poor mental health and feels that Ella worries a lot about both her mum and her younger sister. This means that Ella is providing practical and emotional care to both her mum and her sister.

“It sometimes affects me when I want to go out with friends but my Mum is having a bad day.”

Ella regularly attends our Young Carer group and has enjoyed the chance to try out loads of activities such as bowling, African Drumming, a drama workshop, and a visit from the Animal Man. She has especially benefitted from meeting other Young Carers and has made some really strong friendships which exist outside the group setting as well. Ella enjoys at being able to spend time with other Young Carers and finds it a comfort knowing that she isn’t alone in her caring role.
Paul

Paul is 12, and his 9 year old younger brother John has autism and a learning difficulty.

Paul’s mum feels that Paul misses out on opportunities that other children his age have, and that he takes on quite an adult role when looking out for his brother. She is concerned that Paul might worry about things to do with his caring situation and that he has no-one to talk to about this. Paul now attends Carers Link’s Young Carer group, and enjoys trying out new activities. He wants to encourage as many other Young Carers as possible to get the support he has received.

“The thing I enjoy most is having the opportunity to talk to someone who is in the same place as me and I can be let loose and I don’t need to think about the stress at home.”

Despite the challenges that caring brings, Paul is extremely positive about being a Young Carer and rarely dwells on the negatives of it.

“It has made me happier, kinder and more responsible.”
How we can help

You may find it difficult to talk to someone about being a Young Carer, but sharing your feelings with others who understand what it feels like to be a Young Carer can help. Linked Up are here to support you so that you always have someone that you can chat to.

How Linked Up can support you:

1:1 support:

We can visit you at home, or come along to your school and meet you on a one to one basis so that you can talk to someone about how you are feeling and what extra help you might need. We will get to know you so that we can support you in a way that suits you best.

Advocacy:

There are many situations where your views should be taken into account. Sometimes you need other people to speak up for you, and make sure other people listen to your thoughts and experiences. We can work with you to prepare a Young Carers Statement (see page 17 for details.)
We run monthly groups for different ages and areas. If you are a Young Adult Carer, these groups are more occasional.

Our groups give you the opportunity to meet other carers and have a break away from home. It is a chance to have some fun and create relationships with other Young Carers who are in similar situations. The groups take part in a range of different activities and also offer learning experiences. We have groups for different ages, and you will move through them as you get older.

On our Linked Up website (www.carerslinkedup.org.uk) we have a live chat feature that you can access if you need support or just want someone to talk to. Out of office hours you can leave a message and we will get back to you. There is also a forum where you can post or answer questions. Our online support is monitored and managed by a member of the Linked Up team.
Finding the time and energy to study in between caring can be difficult. Many Young Carers have poor attendance levels, and often struggle to meet deadlines. This might mean that you are left feeling frustrated and you may feel like leaving education altogether. Linked Up can support you to keep learning.

**We can:**

- Speak with your teachers or a university/college advisor to ensure that you get support to make learning as easy as possible
- Let you know of any grants that might be available to you
- Ensure that you are able to have time away from caring to attend school/college/university
- We can help you look for courses/learning opportunities that suit your interests, skills and needs, and help you to write a personal statement and complete course applications
Figuring out what career path to follow and getting into work isn’t easy for anyone. Young Adult Carers need to think about many additional factors when looking for a job to make sure that it suits them and their caring role. This can be very overwhelming and daunting.

If you are 16-25, here is how we can help:

- Ensuring that you and the person you care for are receiving enough support to allow you to get into work
- Help to look for possible job opportunities that suit your interests and needs
- Help with CV writing, job applications and interview techniques
- Help you develop new skills for employability e.g. First Aid
- Give you information about any financial aid that you might be entitled to
- Help to find work experience/volunteer opportunities
- Provide information and signposting to other services and organisations in the area who can help you get into work
Getting Linked up with Carers Link
Linked Up Pathway

You may contact us yourself or someone may contact us for you

We will get to know you (and maybe your family) so that we can find out what help you need

Help could include

- Advocacy
- 1:1 support
- Family support
- Groups
- Online support
- Holiday activities
- Young Carer Statement
Linked Up guidelines

At Linked Up we have guidelines that help us support a safe and welcoming environment.

- Consent forms must be completed before you attend your first group
- We will send your parent/guardian a message to remind you about a group meeting. This text will remind you of the location, time of group/activity
- A few days before the group we will send your parent/guardian a message to remind you about a meeting, which will remind you of the location and time of the group or activity. It will ask them to let us know whether or not you are attending the group, and whether or not you will need transport
- Once we know that you are attending we will arrange transport for you if needed
- A follow-up text will be sent to your parent/guardian to confirm transport method and the timings for pick-ups and drop-offs
- Please notify us as soon as you can if you are not able to attend, although we do appreciate that issues such as ill health can crop up at short notice
- We want to ensure that those that really need access to group support do not miss out, but it costs an average £17 per young person to attend the group, money which we need to raise to keep running the groups
Group guidelines:

- Respect others and individuals
- Respect confidentiality – if someone has shared something, don’t share it outside the group unless you have permission
- We have a zero tolerance of bullying
- Dangerous items or toys are not permitted at the group
- Good behaviour is required in transport vehicles
- Use mobile phones appropriately
- Wear appropriate clothing

As there are a lot of Young Carers attending our groups we have a waiting list, and we may not be able to offer you a place straight away.
Young Carers Rights

As a Young Carer or a Young Adult Carer you have a right to be supported and to get the help you need. Your needs are important. That is why there are laws that tell East Dunbartonshire Council that they have to find out what support you need by asking you some questions. This is called a Young Carers Statement.

Linked Up is committed to the promotion of the rights of children and young people and in particular all Young Carers have the right to:

- Make their own decisions and choices, to be a child, a carer or both.
- Be heard, listened to and believed.
- Be protected from physical and psychological harm.
- Information and choice.
- Stop physically caring.

All Young Carers have the right to be consulted about issues that affect them, to be supported to participate and to have their views taken fully into account.
Young Carers Statement

As a Young Carer you are entitled to a Young Carers Statement. The purpose of this is to identify your needs and how these affect your wellbeing, and to plan for the future. This will then support East Dunbartonshire Council in deciding which services, if any, should be provided.

What happens at the assessment and what happens afterwards?

If you or your parents request it, someone from the Linked Up team at Carers Link, a social worker from East Dunbartonshire Council, or a member of staff from your school, must prepare a Young Carers Statement. This conversation is different from the one adult carers have. It will decide what kind of help you and your family might need. At the meeting, someone will ask you questions to help them build a picture of how your caring role is part of your life. A Young Carers Statement can determine whether it’s appropriate for you to care for someone else, and takes into account whether you want to be a carer.

If you are worried about the written copy of the statement, or any particular information, being shared with your parent(s) you should let the person talking to you know.

What happens afterwards?

Afterwards, Carers Link will give you a copy of your statement and it will detail what you talked about, what will happen next, and whether the council thinks you, the person you care for, or someone in your family should get help.

Later on you will be told what help (if any) the council will give, and what help other services might be able to give.
Moving On

Linked Up will support you until you are 25, and after that you will be supported by the Carers Link adult support team. Throughout your time with Carers Link, you will go through different stages with us. In particular, the group you attend will depend on your age. Linked Up will guide you through your transitions, ensuring external support is still available to you as you get older.

**Group transition stages:**

Linked Up Junior Young Carers: 8 – 12
Linked Up Senior Young Carers: 12 – 16
Linked Up Young Adult Carers: 16 – 25
Carers Link Adult Carers: 25+
The Legal Stuff

Your privacy is important to us

Carers Link is registered under the Data Protection Act 2018, meaning we store your details on both paper and computer. This information is used not only to provide you with services but to record the need for our services and keep you up-to-date with newsletters. Any personal data you provide will be used by Carers Link to create and update a record of your contact and caring details.

This information is kept confidential and secure within Carers Link.

We treat all your information as confidential and won’t discuss it with anyone unless you give us permission to do so. But, sometimes we do have to tell someone without your permission. We would do this only if we believe your life or someone else’s life is in danger or you are being hurt (physically or emotionally) by someone. We would also have to tell someone if you told us that you are seriously harming another person or harming yourself.

Have a look at our privacy policy! You can also find this on our website.

Giving feedback:

We would also like to know what you think about our services, tell you how to provide feedback and make complaints. If you are happy or unhappy with anything please contact us. We will listen to what you have to say and use it to help us improve our service for carers.
Freephone: 0800 975 2131
Telephone: 0141 955 2131
Text: 07903 889 858
Email: enquiry@carerslink.org.uk
Website: www.carerslinkedup.org.uk
Instagram: www.instagram.com/young_carers_ed
Twitter: www.twitter.com/LinkedUp_ED
Facebook: www.facebook.com/carerslink
Office: Enterprise Centre, Ellangowan Road, Milngavie G62 8PH

Normal office hours are Monday—Friday, 8:30am to 5pm, but appointments outwith these hours can be arranged.
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