

Parent Handbook



Introduction

If your child is joining our young carer project you probably have a number of questions about us and about how the project works. We hope you find the following information useful, but you are always welcome to contact a member of the team if you have any questions. You can email us using info@carersresource.org or phone on 0808 50 15 939

What is Carers' Resource?

Carers' Resource helps unpaid carers find the support they need. We are a local charity supporting carers in Bradford, Harrogate, Selby and Craven districts of Yorkshire.

Our young carer service supports young carers from age 7 to 18 (from 5 in Bradford district). Each young carer we work with is in a different situation and we treat all young carers as individuals.

You can find out more about what we do by going to our website, www.carersresource.org

Who are young carers?

Young carers are children or young people under the age of 18 who provide regular and on-going care and/or emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or who misuses substances.

What does the Carers' Resource Young Carer service offer?

- Website and Social Media for information and peer support
- Budz (age 5 or 7-11) and UTime (age 11-18) - regular term-time youth clubs
- Trips, activities and breaks during school holidays
- Young Directions steering group – a chance for young carers to influence the services available to them and to speak out on things that matter to them
- Occasional support groups for specific young carers for peer support and education (e.g. a group for young carers struggling with anxiety)
- Liaison with and training for schools and other professionals
- One to one support when necessary

These are all dependent on available funding. The majority of our funding comes from the local authorities (BMDC and NYC), but we also do a lot of fundraising to get extra money especially for trips and activities.



The Young Carers and Families Team

You can find out more about our team members by visiting www.carersresource.org/young-carers/meet-the-team/

To contact a worker directly use their initial and surname of the worker to find their email address, e.g. jsmith@carersresource.org

If your family is working closely with staff members you may have their work phone numbers. Please note that they only have their work phones on when they are working and a number of the team members work part time.

We also have volunteers who help out at groups and with trips. All staff and volunteers have regular supervision and have been interviewed and DBS checked. You can always ask to see their ID badges if you are unsure (all workers and volunteers carry one of these).

Copies of our privacy statement and Children's Safeguarding Policy and our Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found through our website at www.carersresource.org/young-carers/information/policies-and-privacy-statement/

First Steps in Our Service

At the first meeting of a young carer worker and your child, we go through questionnaires called MACA and PANOC or 'The caring jobs I do' and 'How caring affects me'. These were developed by national charity Carers Trust together with Comic Relief. If you'd like to see a copy of the forms or the full guidance please let us know.

Using results from these we decide if your child has a:

- **Low impact of caring**, meaning your child is currently coping well with the level of caring required of them. We would ensure there was sufficient support available through the school, signpost to other services, and offer online support through our website and social media if required.
- **Medium impact of caring**, meaning your child seems a little more affected by caring and in addition to online support we would offer the opportunity to join a young carer youth group and invite them to come on at least one social activity per year to make friends with other young carers and have a fun break.
- **High impact of caring**, meaning your child has expressed feeling quite affected by their caring role and we will offer one-to-one mentoring in addition to the group activities and online support. There may be a waiting time for this support.

We understand that situations can change so if something happens and you feel your child's needs have changed please let us know and we can use the tools again to reassess.

One-to-one support - mentoring

One-to-ones usually take place in your child's school. We work with the school to ensure this does not impact learning in any particular subject. They are a chance for young carers to chat to a young carer worker about anything they like. It is a chance for them to tell us if there is any support they want or anything we can help their families with. It's also chance for a chat, moan and usually a laugh too. Sessions are confidential unless any safety concerns are raised. We will feed back to parents in general terms how young carers are coping, but only talk about specific subjects with the permission of the young carer.

Small group support

On occasion we run a short series of small groups for particular groups of young carers. These might include:

- young carers transitioning from primary school to high school
- sibling carers
- young carers whose parents have poor mental health

Regular groups

We separate young carers into different age groups for regular groups, which are held in various locations during school term-time. Our youth clubs are only for young carers registered with Carers' Resource.

- BUDZ : for young carers from the age of 5 (Bradford) or 7 (North Yorkshire) up to 11
- UTime: for young carers aged 11-18

What happens at a young carers youth club?

- Young carers will have a chance to relax, chat, play games and spend time with other young carers.
- There are always some planned activities, led by members of staff. In the past these have included: baking biscuits, making smoothies, learning how to juggle, playing table tennis, making tie-dye t-shirts and arts and crafts activities.
- Snacks and drinks are always provided. Please note that these are not meals.
- We try to encourage healthy eating and exercise.
- Smoking/vaping and energy drinks at youth clubs are strictly forbidden.
- There are behaviour policies for Budz and UTime which we ask parents and young carers to agree to.
- Young carers may only be collected from Budz by their parents and no other person, unless we have prior authorisation from a parent.
- Young carers may leave UTime unsupervised. If they leave before the end of the session we will inform parents.

Trips

We run day trips for young carers in school holidays. We gather information about the type of activity each young carer likes and try to invite them on trips we think they will enjoy. Places are limited but we ensure all young carers are invited on at least one per year. Recently we have been to:

- Bradford Ice Arena
- Hesketh Park Farm
- Cinema
- Pantomime
- Build a Bear Workshop

At the start of each school year you will be emailed links to an online annual consent form and a survey of possible types of activities. We need to have the consent form completed so that your child can attend clubs or trips. Your child can also indicate which types of trip they would prefer by ticking the activities listed. (Let us know if it is difficult for you to do these online and we can provide paper copies.)

There is usually a limit to how many young carers can go on each trip. If you reply to an invitation after the spaces are filled we will put your child's name on a reserve list and let you know if someone else drops out. Especially popular trips may have places allocated at random after a set date rather than on a first come first served basis to give everyone a fair chance.

Transport

We know that getting to and from groups and events can be a major problem for young carers and their families. We try and offer support where we can. Please:

- Bring and pick up your child if at all possible (taxis and transport are very expensive and our funds are limited)
- Use public transport if you can
- Let us know (as soon as possible) if you need to change or cancel transport arrangements. The taxi company can get confused with lots of changes.
- Be ready to leave when the taxi or lift is expected
- Be patient as sometimes we/taxis get lost or stuck in traffic. If the lift is over 15 minutes late then please text us (not ring because we're probably driving).

When a member of staff or a volunteer drops your son or daughter off at home we expect that you will make arrangements for their safety. **We will not be held responsible for a child left alone.** We will wait until they are through the door, but for high school age young carers we will not check that someone is home to greet them. If for any reason we are concerned about leaving a young person, and cannot contact you on any of the numbers provided, we will then contact emergency services as necessary.

We will always contact parents if an event ends early or later than originally planned. If you agree to your child making their own way to and from events, you must let us know. If your child is making their own way home, with your consent, then our responsibility ends when the activity ends.

Taxis

We always use DBS checked drivers. We have accounts with local companies; this means we can check which drivers have transported which young carers if there is a problem. We ask that parents inform us of any concerns or issues ASAP so they can be followed up with the taxi company.

If a young carer is going home by taxi please allow time for them to get home. Staff will leave phones on for 1 hour after end of an event. Phone numbers for relevant staff members can always be found on the event invitation.

Behaviour

We expect your child:

- not to swear
- to behave sensibly
- to stay safe and remain with a member of staff unless told otherwise
- not to smoke/vape, use drugs, energy drinks or alcohol.
- to follow any instructions given by a member of staff

All young carers are asked to sign up to our code of conduct. If a young carer breaks the code of conduct they will be given 3 chances. If they still don't follow the rules after 3 warnings, we will contact parents and they may not be able to attend the following group. If this happens more than once, we will contact you to discuss the situation further and they will not be able to attend our events until the issues are resolved.

When on trips and events, good behavior is essential to ensure safety of the group. We ask for your help in reinforcing this message to your child.

Smoking/Vaping/Energy Drinks

We operate a strict No Smoking/Vaping/Energy Drinks policy at all activities, trips, events and groups we run. If you or your child feel this is unfair or unrealistic please discuss with a worker.

If a staff member visits your home, we ask that you do not smoke or let anyone else in the house smoke in the room whilst the visit is taking place and for an hour or so beforehand to protect our worker's health.

Consent forms, medication and taking photos

We need your permission to work with your child, and to take them on trips or to groups. When we send you links to the online consent forms you must complete them if you want your child to receive support from us and be invited to take part in groups, trips and events. You will be sent these when we first start working with your family and then again each year.

When you sign this consent form you give permission for your child to be supported by us. This form covers all groups, individual work and any small group work with Carers' Resource and its staff.

It is essential for us to have as much information as possible to ensure your child's safety. Information will be treated in confidence and used only as necessary.

Please complete the consent forms in full and include **all** illnesses/conditions/medication (**including asthma**), and sign the form where necessary.

Medication

Staff will not give out or carry any medication unless parents have arranged this beforehand and completed the medication form. If your child is due to go on a trip or residential break, please ensure you have discussed any medication needs with staff in advance. Young carers can carry and administer their own medication if you feel they are able to do so safely. This will be your responsibility. Please also ensure that any asthma inhalers are brought to every activity.

Photos

We like to take lots of photos! A selection of photos from trips will be available to view on our website. On our consent forms we ask for permission to take pictures of young carers taking part in activities, and to use these for publicity, such as on our website. We respect your decision if you do not wish to give permission for this.

Important: Young carers must not take photos or videos of other young people without their knowledge or consent. It is especially important that they do not upload these to social media if the young carers shown in the images do not want them to. This will be dealt with by us as bullying and may lead to a ban from our activities.

Media

Local and national media sometimes ask us if they can speak to a young carer for their newspaper, radio show or television programme. Usually this is at short notice so we keep a list of who might be interested. There is a tick box on the consent form. We will make sure that your child and family's details and full names or personal details are only used if you are comfortable with that.

Information

As young carer workers we are asked a lot of questions about a lot of subjects! Of course we can't be experts in every area or know the answer to every question. What we can do is refer to other specialist agencies and find someone who can answer

your questions. We will make sure advice given on sensitive subjects, such as sexual health, drugs or alcohol, is always age appropriate and that any specific concerns are dealt with appropriately.

Talking to other people about your child

If your child has been referred to us by another organisation we will let that agency know about the progress of their referral.

Your child may discuss a variety of things with their worker. We will not tell you what they talk to us about unless they give us permission to do so. This is so that we can build up a trusting relationship with them and that they can talk openly. We do, however, encourage young people to talk to their parents. The only time we would share what had been discussed during a one-to-one session would be if we were concerned that the young carer or another young person could be hurt or harmed in some way and we would need to make sure they were safe. We would always talk to the young carer about this and tell them what was going to happen next. This may include talking to parents, and /or children's services or health professionals.

Occasionally we need to obtain advice from other workers, and may do this without giving the name or details of the young carer. However, if we feel the young carer needs further support, we will speak to them about who we would like to contact and why, before doing so. We usually do this with parent's consent but on rare occasions, and only if your child is able to make their own informed decisions, we may do this without the explicit consent of parents.

It is important to remember not everyone is comfortable telling others they are a young carer. Your child may see someone they already know at one of our groups or events – this is great, but please ask them to check before they mention this to anyone else or speak to them about being young carers when they are somewhere public.

Case files and data protection

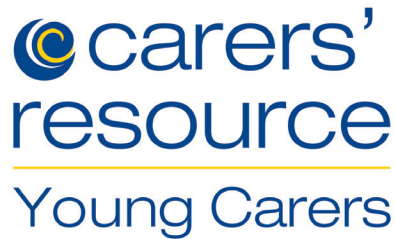
We keep a database of all people we work with and keep records of all our contacts with each person. All information is stored in accordance with GDPR. Young carers can ask to see what records we hold about them, please contact us for further information about this if needed.

Compliments and Complaints

We aim constantly to improve our service so feedback from young carers and their families is very important to us.

If you are worried, upset or concerned about anything that may arise as a result of your involvement with us, or if you want to complain about something that has happened, please contact us on 0808 50 15 939 or info@carersresource.org.

Similarly we would always like to hear about any compliments or positive comments you have so that we know what works well.



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