



Woolwich Polytechnic School

POLYMAT

Policy regarding Young Carers/Children that Care

Reviewed: February 2017

**Policy adopted by Governors: Presented to Governors for approval
February 2017**

Policy Review date: February 2019

Purpose

At Woolwich Poly we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education regardless of what is happening at home. We want all children to have the same opportunities and realise their ambitions, we want children who care to get the right support at the right time so that they are not disadvantaged by their circumstances. 'Children should not undertake inappropriate or excessive caring roles that may have an impact on their development. A young Carer (YC) becomes vulnerable when their caring roles risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing and their prospects in education & life.' Children are different from adult carers – they have rights as children and we all have obligations to safeguard and promote their welfare. Children that Care are Children First.

Introduction

A young carer is a student under 18 years of age who provides or intends to provide care to a family member of any age who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, frail elderly or misuses alcohol or other substances. At Woolwich Polytechnic we recognise that caring can involve practical, physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well-being. The level of responsibility assumed by a young carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up; as such it may impact on the education of the young person.

A young carer may do some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy.
- Personal care, such as dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Administering medication.
- Looking after or "parenting" younger siblings.
- Emotional support.
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family's first language.

Identifying a young carer

Unless the School is advised about a pupil's home circumstances, young carers risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some young carers worry about appearing different to their peers, bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers.

At Woolwich Poly the question of where a young person is a Child that Cares will be on admission forms, it is also highlighted in yearly assemblies. We know that many young carers do not realise that they are acting as a carer, it is simply what they do, Some carers want the right help and advice but are wary of interference or intervention into family life, they may not want to be different from their peers or do not appreciate how help and support can make a difference. (DJS research May 2016 Needs Analysis of Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in RBG)

Every young carer and their circumstance are unique. Some young carers are open about what they do but others try and hide what they do because of lack of trust in what professionals will do. For some young carers it can be a positive and useful experience, by enhancing their practical and life skills and can build self-confidence and maturity. However

on the other side Young Carers can struggle with juggling their caring role with their education and social lives, they may miss out on the same opportunities as their peers, may have to cope with complex emotions and may have to accept that their needs take second place.

Some of the warning signs that a student is in a caring role are:

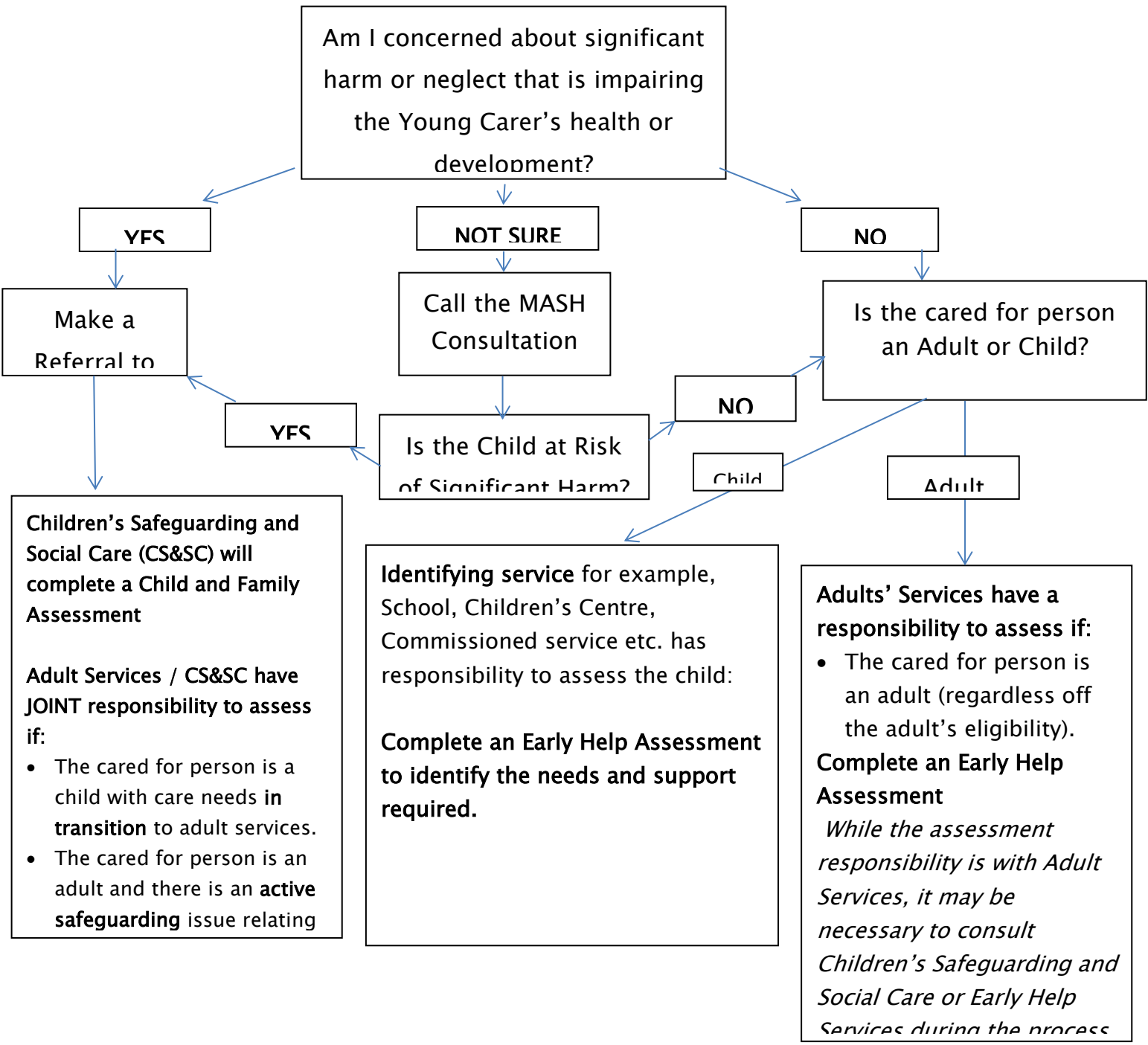
- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing periodically
- Tiredness in school
- Erratic responses to homework with incomplete, late or work not being presented.
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Under-achievement for potential capability
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
- Fewer peer friendships than expected but good relationship with adults and appearing mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to young carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
- Lack of interest in extracurricular activities, especially after school
- Apparent parental disinterest, e.g. non-attendance at parent's meetings, delays in responding to phone calls/letters, etc.
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The support that will be put in place will be at the very least of the following:

Where a young carer has been identified an assessment must always be carried out. This will be an Early Help Assessment or where there are concerns around significant harm or neglect, a social work led Children & Families Assessment. Before this the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Head of Year (HoY) should contact the Early Helpline to see if the young person (YP) is registered on the YC network. If the YP identifies themselves/identified by their family they will be monitored to see if and when an assessment is needed.

- At Woolwich Poly we respect the young person's right to privacy, we will provide the YC with information to encourage self-registration to the YC Network
- The HoY will be responsible for YC in their year groups. The HoY can put young carers and their families in touch with a lunch club that YCs can access, they will also be considered as a priority group for interventions
- Assemblies on the challenges faced by young carers to raises awareness of these challenges among the student body.
- Included in Safe guarding training for staff
- Will consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities e.g. detention, concerts, etc., due to their caring role.
- Allows young carers to telephone home during breaks and lunchtimes as appropriate.
- Can give parents advice about transport, e.g. in order to attend extra-curricular activities, detentions, etc.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parent's sessions due to family circumstances, we will try to make alternative arrangements, e.g. arrange parking, telephone consultation, etc.
- Where possible negotiate deadlines for homework, coursework etc.

Royal Greenwich Young Carers Assessment Pathway



Assessments and Review of the cared for person **MUST** include the needs of the Young Carer.

For advice and support in completing the EHA telephone the Early Help Practice Manager Consultation Line of 020 8921 4590