

Young Carers: Issues and Solutions

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Whose responsibility
is it to care?



11

MILLION

children are living in the UK

3
MILLION

live in households where there is
chronic physical or mental health
problems, illness or disability

2.5

MILLION

affected by their parent's mental
health problems

1.3

MILLION

affected by parental alcohol
problems

360,000

have parents who are drug users

Who are young carers and young adult carers?

“Young carers are children and young persons under 18 who provide, or intend to provide, care, assistance or support to another family member. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which would usually be associated with an adult.”

The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision.” *Saul Becker in The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Work*

Young adult carers are as above, but aged 18-24. Commonly, however, YACs *in transition* include 16 & 17 year olds too.

How many young carers aged under 18?

2001 Census

175,000 in UK (150,000 in E&W)

2011 Census

215,000 in UK (178,000 in E&W)

= 19% increase overall

Number of children caring England & Wales (Census 2001, 2011)

AGE	2001 England and Wales	2011 England and Wales	Increase	% increase
5 - 7	5,465	9,985	4,520	83%
8 - 9	7,834	12,148	4,314	55%
10 - 14	62,661	72,266	9,605	15%
15	21,402	23,848	2,446	11%
16 - 17	52,580	59,671	7,091	13%
All	149,942	177,918	27,976	19%

Hours per week spent caring, England & Wales (Census 2011)

AGE	1 - 19 HOURS	20 - 49 HOURS	50+ HOURS	TOTAL
5 - 7	7,177	1,166	1,642	9,985 (6%)
8 - 9	9,424	1,204	1,520	12,148 (7%)
10 - 14	59,262	7,043	5,961	72,266 (41%)
15	19,596	2,489	1,763	23,848 (13%)
16 - 17	47,309	7,520	4,842	59,671 (33%)
All	142,768 (80%)	19,422 (11%)	15,728 (9%)	177,918

BBC Survey 2010

4,029 pupils

8%

are involved in
personal and intimate
caring activity
(dressing, washing,
showering)

29%

are involved in emotional
care (keeping the person
they care for company,
keeping an eye on them,
taking the person out)

Number of young carers official and estimates

UK

215,000
2-3% (8%)

Australia

170,000
3-4%

USA

1.3-1.4m
3%

Sweden

25,000
7%

Italy

170,000
3%

Switzerland

8%

Germany

230,000
5%

Austria

42,700
3.5-4.5%

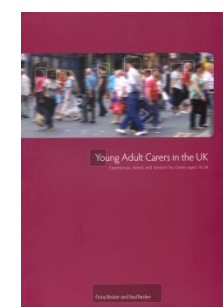
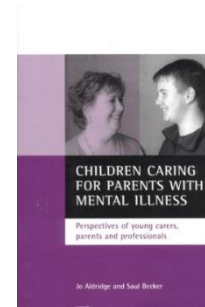
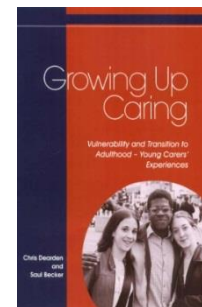
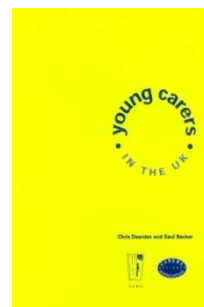
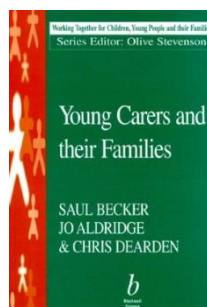
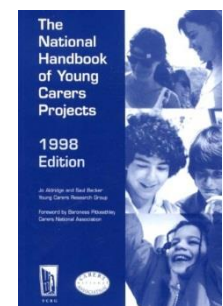
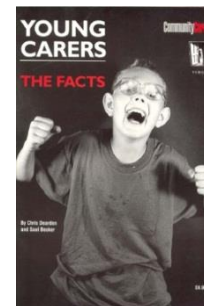
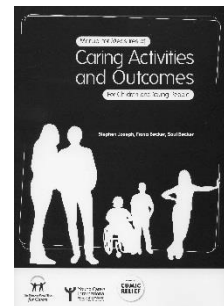
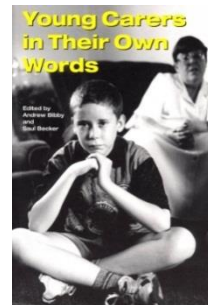
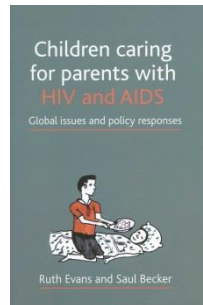
Netherlands

10%

1992 Start of Mainstream Research

- No reliable 'official' figures
- Virtually no research
- Few young carers projects or services
- No young carers law/policy
- No 'rights' or entitlements
- Little public or professional awareness or recognition

From humble beginnings



Today in the UK

Statistics

Research

Projects

Rights

Recognition

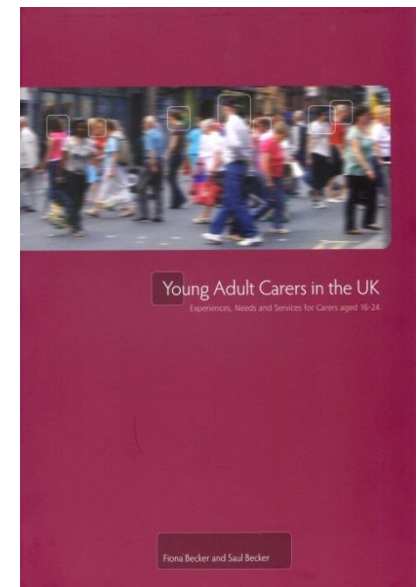
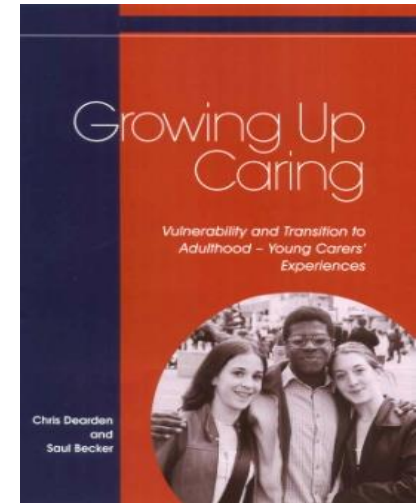
Outcomes

Negative	Positive
Restricted friendships	Resilience
‘Stigma by association’	Responsibility
Fear	Maturity
Silence and Secrets	Skills
Emotional problems	Control
Health problems	Inclusion

Transitions to Adulthood and YACs (2000, 2008)

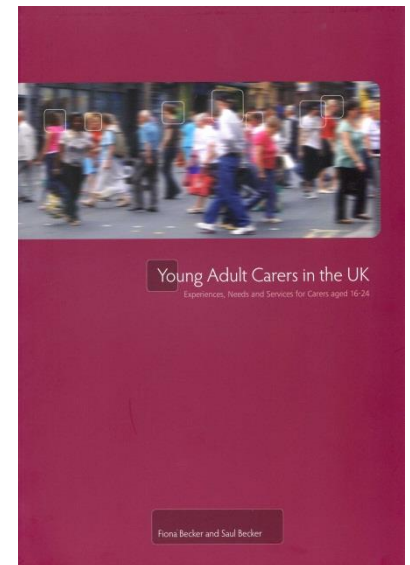
The process whereby young people move away from dependence for primary, emotional and financial support from their childhood family carers, and their needs for income, shelter and social life are met from a wider range of sources

- Educational problems
- Issues finding appropriate work
- Leaving home problematic
- Career & job choices influenced by skills gained
- Transition support is needed for those aged 16+






Young Carers Aged 16-17

- Most had cared throughout childhood
- Families expected them to do more as they got older
- School not supportive
- Lack of career advice
- Low income
- Concern about post 18 support
- Many young carers will continue care into adulthood
- Projects not good at transitions work



'Official' number of young adult carers aged 18-24

UK	Australia	US
		
230,000	178,000	3.6 - 5.5 million
5.3% of all people in this age group	9.1% of all people in this age group	
28% increase in numbers between 2001 and 2011		

YACs Online Survey (2013)

295 responses
Aged 14-25

25% at school
41% at college or uni
16% in work
16% NEET

YOUNG ADULT CARERS SURVEY

YACSURVEY.COM

Researching to improve the lives of Young Carers and Young Adult Carers

If you are a Young Adult Carer aged 14-25 and you provide care, assistance or support to another family member on an unpaid basis we are interested in your views and experiences of school, college or university and work.

[Please click here to go to our survey.](http://YACsurvey.com)

YACsurvey.com is a website of Professor Saul Becker and Dr Joe Sempik of the School of Sociology and Social Policy at The University of Nottingham. If you would like more information about this survey please contact joe.sempik@nottingham.ac.uk



Young Adult Carers at College and University

Dr Joe Sempik and Professor Saul Becker
Young Carers International
The University of Nottingham



Young Adult Carers and Employment

Dr Joe Sempik and Professor Saul Becker
Young Carers International
The University of Nottingham



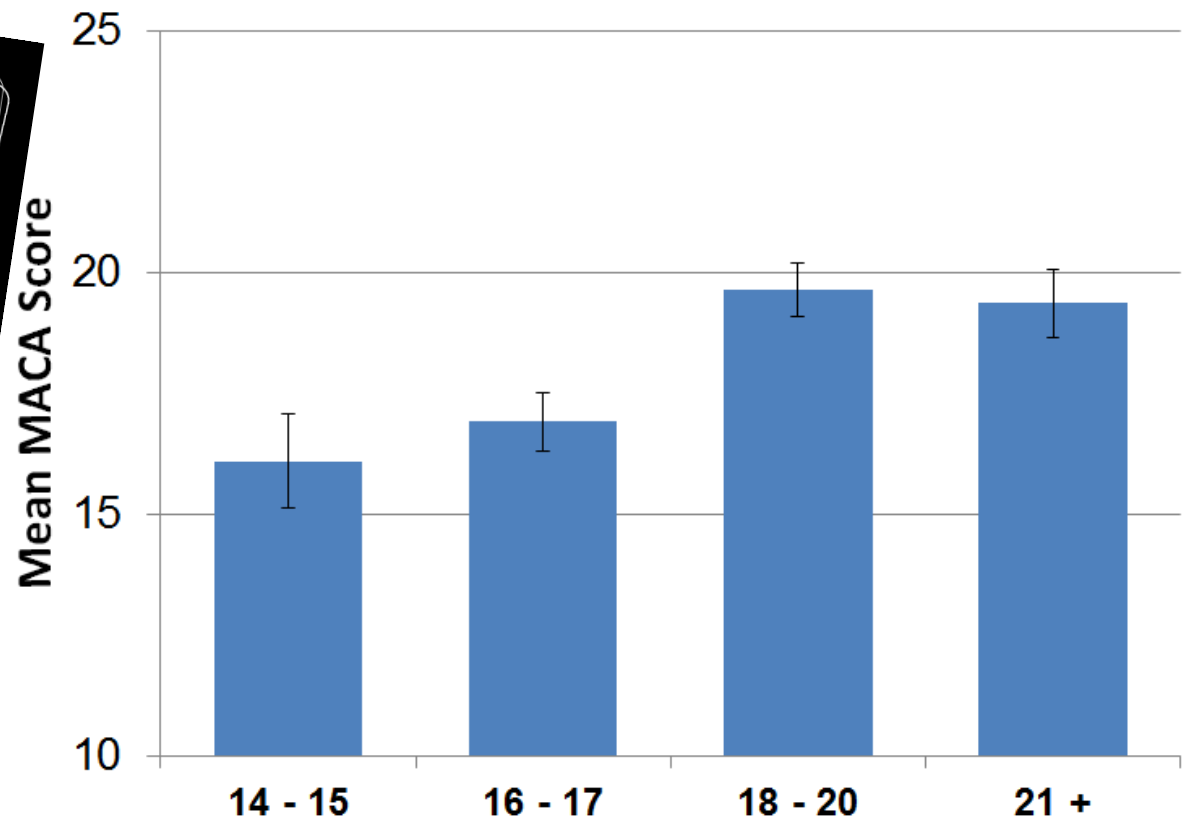
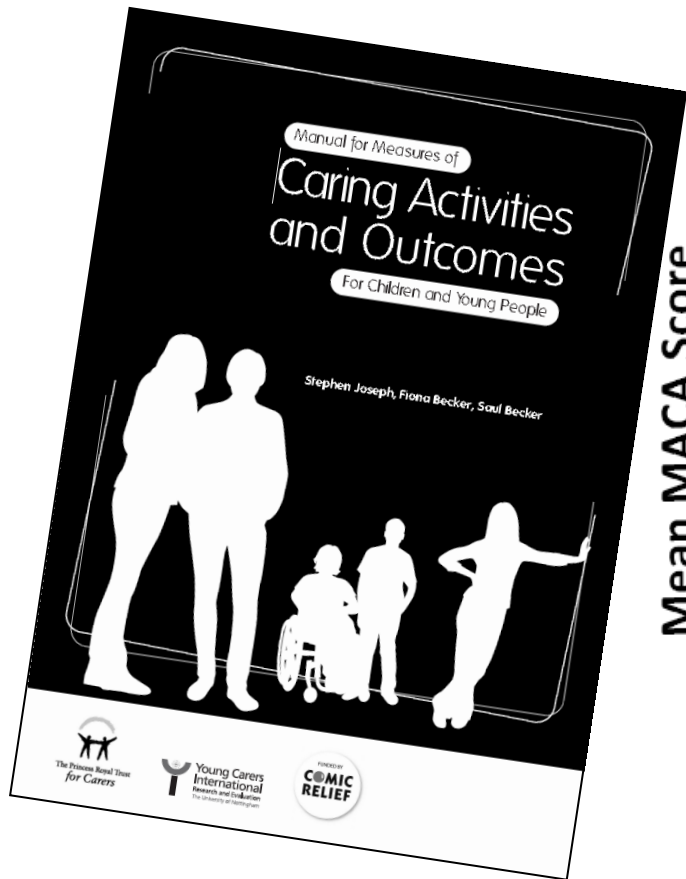
Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education

Dr Joe Sempik and Professor Saul Becker
Young Carers International
The University of Nottingham



Level of caring

Young Adult Carers: Age and Care Level



Age they started caring

10

Who they care for

52% care for their mother

14% care for their father

14% care for a brother

8% care for a sister

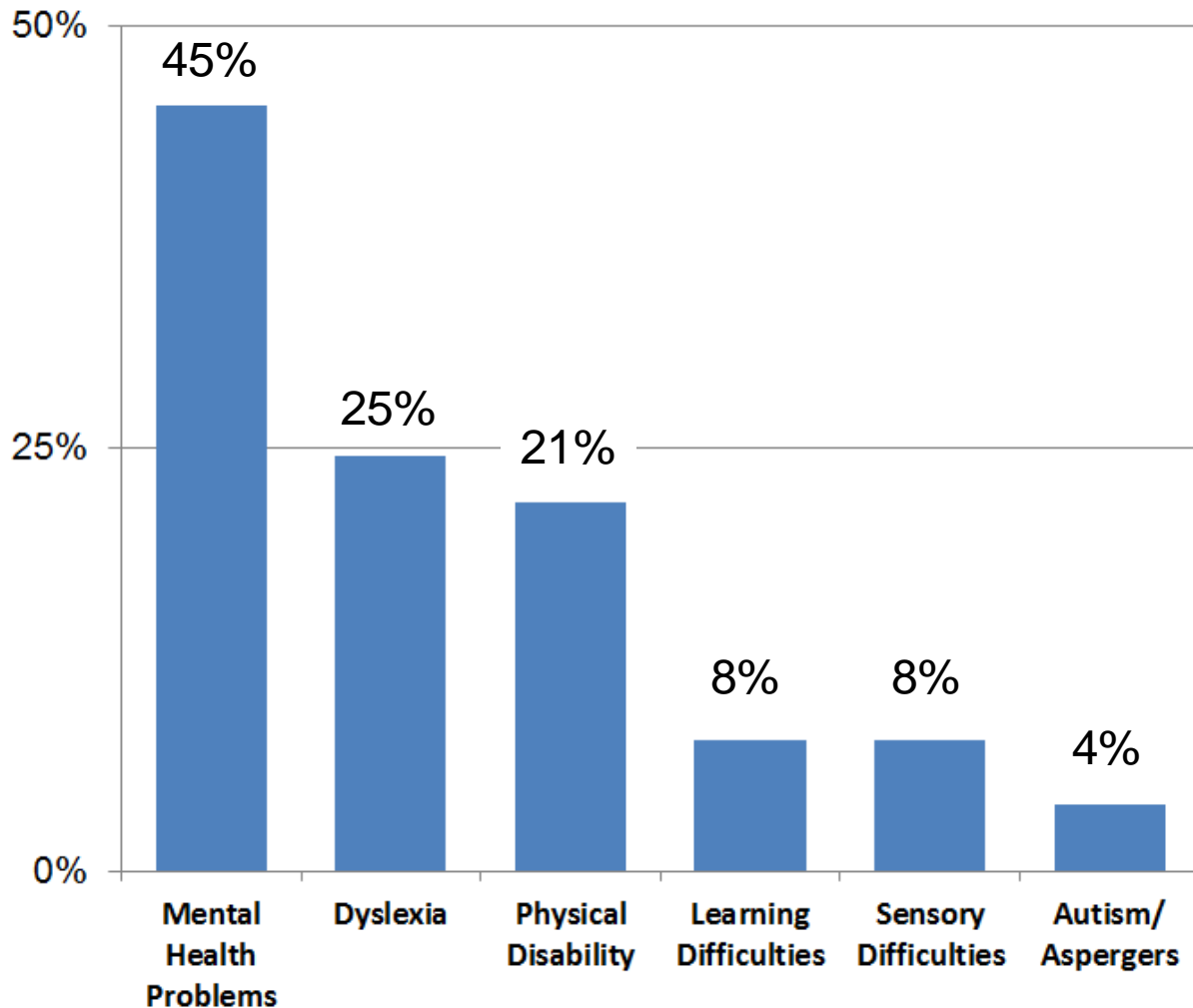
4% care for a grandparent

1 in 5 care for more than one person

Difficulties of the people cared for

Physical disability	Mental health	Long term illness
55%	49%	47%

Young Adult Carers: their own reported disabilities and difficulties



Absence and lateness for all YACs

School	College and University	Work
A quarter of all school days are affected	Half of days at college or university are affected	79 days per year were affected
5% of school days missed due to caring	3 days per month were missed due to caring responsibilities	17 days per year were lost because of caring

- # Why children become carers
- cultural, relational, structural -

A word cloud of factors influencing why children become carers. The words are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with 'Culture' at the top left and 'Love' at the bottom. The words are in various colors and sizes, indicating their relative importance or frequency. The words included are: Culture, Family, Illness, Duty, No Alternatives, Intergenerational, Socialisation, Disability, Poverty, and Love.

Culture
Family
Illness
Duty
No Alternatives
Intergenerational
Socialisation
Disability
Poverty
Love

A continuum of children's caring

CARING ABOUT

Low levels of caring and responsibility

Most children

'Routine' levels and types of caregiving, including some help with instrumental tasks of daily life

Little evidence of negative outcomes

TAKING CARE OF



Caregiving tasks and responsibilities increase in amount, regularity, complexity, time involved, intimacy and duration

CARING FOR

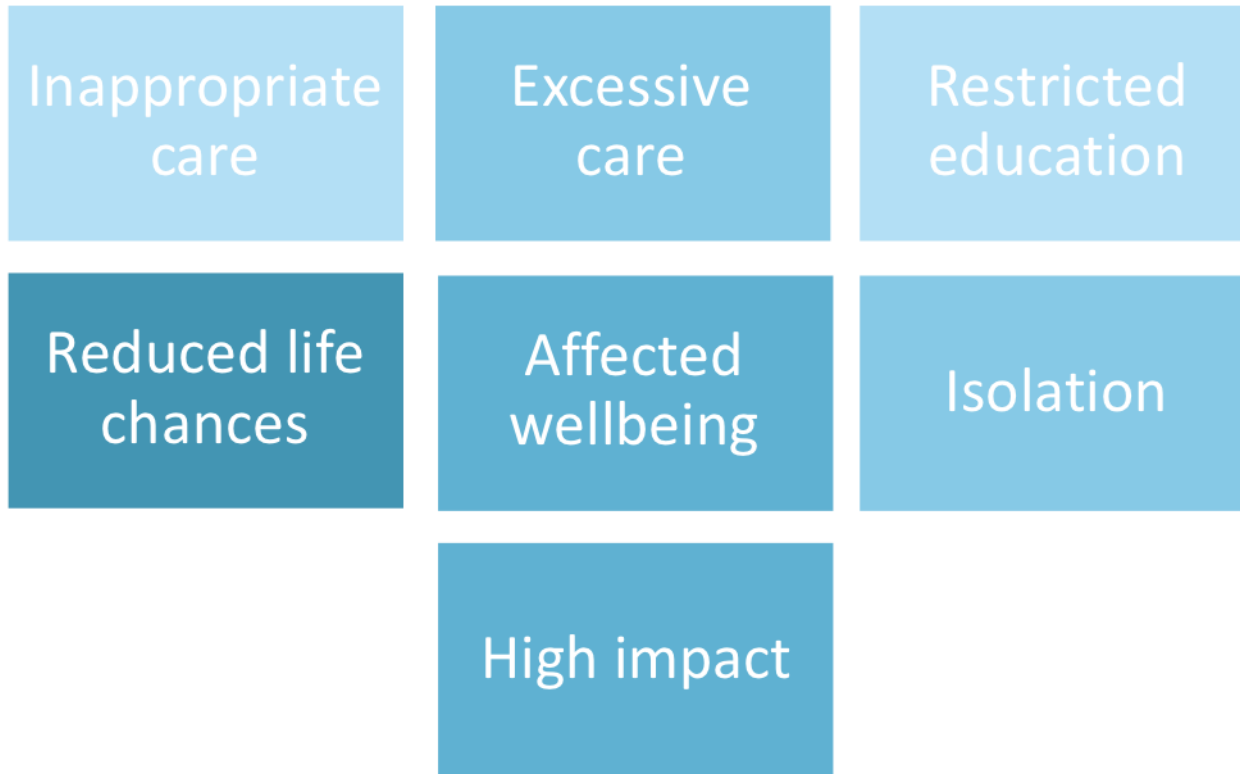
High levels of caring and responsibility

Few children

'Substantial, regular and significant' caregiving, including considerable help with instrumental tasks of daily life

Evidence of significant negative outcomes

From *Vulnerability* ...



... To *Growth*

Learn

Thrive

Achieve

Protected

Enjoy

Supported

Identified

Assessed

Flourish

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
1 Incorporated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive awareness at all levels of government and society of the experiences and needs of young carers• Sustained and sustainable policies and interventions aimed at meeting young carers' needs and promoting their health, well-being and development• Responses and law built on a foundation of reliable research evidence and clear legal rights	None

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
2 Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Widespread awareness and recognition of young carers amongst public, policy makers and professionals• Extensive and reliable research base, and growing• Specific legal rights (national)• Extensive codes and guidance for welfare professionals and national and local strategies• Multiple dedicated services and interventions nationwide	United Kingdom

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
3 Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some awareness and recognition of young carers among public, policy makers and professionals• Medium-sized research base, and growing• Partial rights in some regions• Small but developing body of professional guidance• Some dedicated services and interventions, mostly local but a few nationwide	Australia Norway Sweden

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
4 Preliminary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little public or specialist awareness and recognition of young carers• Limited research base, but growing• No specific legal rights but other laws may be applicable• Few, if any, dedicated services or interventions at national or local levels	Austria Germany New Zealand

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
5 Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing public or specialist awareness and recognition of young carers• Small but growing research base• No specific services or interventions for young carers, but other services might be applicable	Belgium Ireland Italy Sub-Saharan Africa Switzerland Netherlands US

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
6 Awakening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Embryonic awareness of young carers as a distinct social group	Greece Finland UAE France

Classification of in-country awareness and policy

Level	Characteristics	Example
7 No response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No apparent awareness or policy response to young carers as a distinct social group	All other countries ?

Messages from research

- **Need greater awareness of young carers and YACs by governments, professionals and policy makers**
- **Young carers face similar tasks and outcomes as older adult carers**
- **Services and interventions can improve YCs' health, education, wellbeing and future labour market participation/productivity**
- **Early interventions important to prevent caring roles from becoming 'institutionalised' within families**
- **Caring roles can be reduced when *families* receive adequate support and when YCs have personalised interventions, especially in transition years aged 16-17**



Messages from research



- **Aim is to reduce inappropriate and excessive caring and negative outcomes (moving YCs ‘from vulnerability to growth’)**
- **Whole family approach is needed**
- **Identification and assessment crucial for positive interventions and positive outcomes**
- **Research and evaluation is needed – what works and why?**

Thank you for listening!

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