

YOUR RIGHT TO RECOGNITION, RESPECT AND SUPPORT

**AN INFORMATION GUIDE
FOR YOUNG CARERS**

Carers Trust Wales is part of Carers Trust, an ambitious national charity committed to improving support and services for unpaid carers by:

- **Recognising and celebrating the essential contributions carers make**
- **Raising awareness of the barriers faced by carers of all ages**
- **Working with decision-makers to ensure that appropriate support is available to empower carers to live happy and fulfilling lives**

We work with Network Partners - local services that deliver direct support to carers - making the most of our collective experience, expertise and innovations.

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This guide has been funded by Welsh Government as part of delivering the rollout of the National Young Carers ID Card Project.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is for young people aged 18 and under who help to look after someone.

You might care for a parent, a brother or sister, a grandparent or a family friend. Whoever you look after, and whatever impact this has on your life, this guide is designed to help you work with professionals to make sure you get the information, support and advice you need.

There are thousands of young people across Wales who provide care for family members or friends. According to the 2011 census there are 21,611 young adult carers (aged 16–24) and 7,544 young carers (aged under 16) in Wales. More recently, the School Health Research Network survey found that almost 1 in 6 pupils in Wales' secondary schools have caring responsibilities.

We know with the right support you can balance caring with doing the things that matter to you such as staying fit and healthy, working towards a specific career, keeping up a hobby or spending time with friends.

Together, Carers Trust Wales, Welsh Government and local authorities across Wales are working to make sure that by 2022 all young carers can get an ID card so that other people recognise the support you provide. If your local authority is already offering a young carers' card, or will be providing a card in 2020-21, you can find details about your local scheme on the last page of this guide.

As part of developing this national approach we have done a lot of work with teachers, nurses, doctors, pharmacists and many other professionals to help them understand the challenges you face and how they can best help you.

This guide is designed to support you to have positive conversations with the professionals you might need help, support or advice from, whether or not you can access an ID card yet.

If you need information, advice or support please get in touch with your local young carers service using the contact details at the back of this guide.

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YOUR RIGHTS AS A YOUNG CARER

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is a law that gives rights to carers of all ages. It gives you the right to information, advice and assistance and to something called a Carers Needs Assessment if you or your local council thinks you might need support, or more support to help you with your caring responsibilities.

Within the 2014 Act a carer is described as:

“A person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child”.

A young carer is usually considered to be a person aged 18 and under. It is important to remember that you do not have to live with the person you care for or care for a certain number of hours, to be a young carer.

To help carers to understand their rights, Welsh Government have published a helpful booklet: Understanding your rights as a carer. In it they describe that well-being means:

- **Making sure you know about your rights and what they mean for you**
- **Being healthy**
- **Protection from abuse, harm and neglect**
- **Having access to employment, education, training, sports and leisure**
- **Having positive relationships with family and friends**
- **Being part of the community**
- **Having a social life**
- **Having a safe and secure home**

The Act means that local authorities and local health boards have to take action to make sure that your well-being is supported.

If you think more can be done to support your well-being you can contact your local council using the details at the end of this guide.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

As well as having rights as a carer, young people have other rights too. Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, champions the rights of children and young people in Wales and has lots of information on her website to help you: www.childcomwales.org.uk

WHY HAVE A YOUNG CARERS ID CARD?

There are lots of reasons young carers have told us they would like an ID card, including:

- **To raise awareness of their responsibilities and to give formal recognition to their role**
- **To discreetly let people know about their caring responsibilities without having to share personal details over and over again**
- **To give confidence to ask for help or understanding from professionals like teachers, doctors and pharmacists**

As well as making sure that all young carers can get an ID card by 2022 we will also give information to the professionals you might come into contact with to explain what the ID card means and to give them some ideas about how they can be helpful and supportive to young carers.

The ID cards may look different depending on which area you live in, and there might also be different ways to get one. Any young carer up to and including age 18 can access one, if available in your local authority area. As we've outlined, there are lots of benefits to having an ID card, but they're not compulsory and you can still access help and support if you choose not to have a card.

All cards will have the national ID card logo which was designed by two young carers:

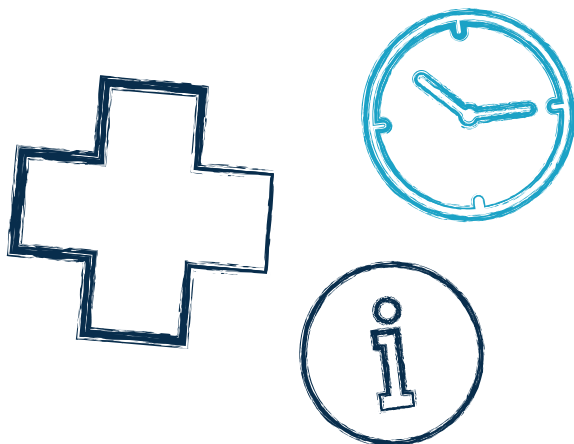
It will also include:

- **A photo of you**
- **Your name**
- **Your date of birth**
- **Details about the organisation that issued it to you**



Whether or not you have an ID card it's really important that you ask for information, advice or support when you need it. You might need more support at home, extra time for your homework, to be able to pick up a prescription for someone or many other things. Whatever it is you need, don't be afraid to ask.

The next few sections of this guide will give you some hints and tips about how to work with professionals to get the recognition, respect and support you need.



GP AND HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS





Young carers have told us that medical appointments either at your GP surgery or in hospital can sometimes present challenges including:

- **Being unable to make appointments outside of school and college hours so you can accompany the person you care for**
- **Being asked to leave the room during a consultation even if the person you care for wants you to stay**
- **Not having your views and experiences listened to**
- **Not being given enough information to help you care well**
- **Not having your caring role taken into account when discussing your own health and well-being**

Here are some top tips from us and other young carers about how to tackle some of these common challenges.

Top tips:

Working with the receptionist or diary secretary




-  They will ask you some initial questions to help identify what problem you are calling about and you may have an initial phone or video consultation with the GP or practice nurse
-  Let them know that you are a young carer when you book an appointment and are also registered with the GP surgery or hospital clinic. They can note this on your records, and those of the person you care for so that everyone who needs to is aware of your circumstances
-  Ask whether your GP surgery or clinic has a 'carers champion' or 'carers lead' to help you get the information and support you need
-  Ask if it is possible to book appointments outside of school or college hours



Remember a GP can only see one patient at a time. If you and the person you care for both need to be seen, because you each have different things to discuss, you will need to make two appointments. However, ask the receptionist if you can book appointments one after the other to make things easier for you.

Please remember that because of coronavirus you should follow the advice given when you contact the surgery or hospital, if you need to physically visit them. You may need to go to a specific entrance and wait to be allowed inside, apply hand sanitiser and wear a face mask. If you are unsure, ask.

Appointments with the GP or hospital doctor for the person you care for

-  Make sure the person you care for tells the doctor that they want you to stay in the room for the consultation. It is important to respect the person you care for and to leave the room if they ask you to do so
-  Make a list of any questions you might have with the person you care for so that you both remember the things you most want to ask
-  Keep a list of any symptoms or information that you know you want to share with the GP

Appointments with your GP or hospital doctor for yourself



Keep a list of any symptoms or information that you know you want to share with the GP



Make a list of any questions you want to ask



Make sure you tell your doctor that you are a young carer. It might not seem important to mention but it can help your GP to decide how best to understand and treat any health conditions you might have



If you find it difficult to talk about, write down information about your caring role and how it affects you and give it to your doctor

VISITING YOUR PHARMACY

Going to the pharmacy and understanding how to safely store and give medicines can be particularly stressful for young carers.

When talking about why ID cards could be a good idea, young carers told us that the main challenges are:

- **Being turned away when picking up a prescription**
- **Not having the confidence to ask for more information about where to store medicines, how and when to give them, or any possible side effects**
- **Getting to the pharmacy if it isn't close to home**

It is important to understand that pharmacists have a legal duty to make sure that they dispense (give out) medicines safely. Legally, there is no particular age when pharmacists should dispense medicines to you – they have to use their professional judgement.

Some of the things they may take into consideration include:

- **Whether they know you**
- **How mature and responsible you are**
- **How dangerous the medication they're dispensing is**
- **Whether they know in advance that you'll be collecting the medicines**
- **Why it is not possible for a delivery to be arranged or for an adult to collect the medicines**
- **Proof of your identity**

Top tips:



If you know you will be regularly picking up medicines ask a parent or guardian to phone or visit the pharmacy to let them know when and why you'll be collecting medicines. They can note this on their computer system and some use something called a Young Carers Authorisation Form (Medicines Collection) to help make things easier



Try and use the same pharmacy each time so the pharmacist and pharmacy staff get to know you



If you have proof of who you are like a Young Carers ID card, provisional driving license, student card or bus pass take it with you



Some pharmacies may be able to offer a home delivery service. You can speak to your local pharmacy team about whether this is something available in your area



If you want to know more information to help you store or give medicines safely don't be afraid to ask the pharmacist for advice. Many pharmacies now have private spaces to have these types of conversation



If the person you care for is struggling to keep medicines organised you could talk to your pharmacist about compliance aids or blister packs which are ways they can give you medicines marked with the time and day they should be given. It is safer for medicines to be stored in their original packaging, with the information leaflet, but it is worth discussing with your pharmacist if you think the person you are caring for needs more help

