



# MYTIME

## YOUNG CARERS

### **UNSEEN SACRIFICES: UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGES FACED BY YOUNG CARERS**

This report has been prepared for the Department for Education, the Department for Health and Social Care, The Office of the Children's Commissioner, The Department for Work and Pensions, Local Authorities - Children's Services, those working in education and those working with young carers.

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# UNSEEN SACRIFICES: UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGES FACED BY YOUNG CARERS

## REPORT SUMMARY

**When compared to their peers without a caring responsibility, young carers aged 5-11 perform significantly below age-related expectations in maths, reading, and writing at primary school.**

This report highlights the association between the disadvantages experienced by young carers and their educational outcomes. As result of the 2023 All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry on Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, Carers Trust published a report estimating that 10-13% of the pupil population could have caring roles<sup>1</sup>. This equates to approximately three young carers in every classroom and an estimated one million young carers nationally. It is vital that the contents of both this report and the one shared by the Carers Trust are noted, and urgent action is agreed, to improve the educational outcomes of this group of young people. Most of this demographic remains hidden - evidenced by the 2023 national school census which reported that 79% of all schools did not record having any young carers.

**Young Carers therefore represent both an obligation and an opportunity, where appropriate investment into research and policy could have a disproportionately high return in educational performance and ultimately untapped social and economic potential.**

This report is the first of its kind in exploring the link between primary school age children with caring responsibilities and attendance and attainment. It also exposes the link between children with caring responsibilities and low/no income families. The findings are stark, especially when compared to other groups of children such as those children who have a first language which is not English or are classified as disadvantaged.



*"The findings of this study raise serious concerns about inequalities in educational experiences and outcomes for children who are carers and what we should do about these. Those of us working with young carers are acutely aware that young carers experience significant disadvantages and inequalities in many aspects of their lives, including their psychosocial development, education, and their transitions to adulthood, higher education and paid work. The data presented here, whilst being a small study, show that being a young carer has a serious negative impact on their academic performance and outcomes – and these disadvantages will likely cast a shadow forward into young carers' adult lives and future opportunities. Schools need to be provided with the right training and tools to both identify young carers and to support them adequately and appropriately. Without urgent action we risk failing generations of children who provide care in their families, and perpetuating or amplifying the inequalities they already face – effectively punishing children for caring."*

**PROFESSOR SAUL BECKER** (he/him) | Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Founding Director of the Institute for Children's Futures, Faculty of Health & Education - Manchester Metropolitan University

<sup>1</sup> APPG on Young Carers and Young Adult Carers - Inquiry into life opportunities - Carers Trust

## IN THE SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY:

- ▷ **27%** of young carers are persistently absent from school in comparison to only 12% of their peers without a caring responsibility.
- ▷ **44%** of young carers receive Free School Meals (FSM) in comparison to only 17% of their peers without a caring responsibility.
- ▷ **53%** of young carers are allocated Pupil Premium in comparison to only 20% of their peers without a caring responsibility.
- ▷ **32%** of young carers are on the SEND register in comparison to only 18% of their peers without a caring responsibility.

## READING, WRITING, AND MATHS:

- ▷ Only **51%** of young carers reach age related expectations in reading, in comparison to 70% of their peers without a caring responsibility.
- ▷ Only **39%** of young carers reach age related expectations in writing, in comparison to 63% of their peers without a caring responsibility.
- ▷ Only **49%** of young carers reach age related expectations in maths, in comparison to 73% of their peers without a caring responsibility.

### YOUNG CARERS AND NON-YOUNG CARER COMPARISON DATA SETS

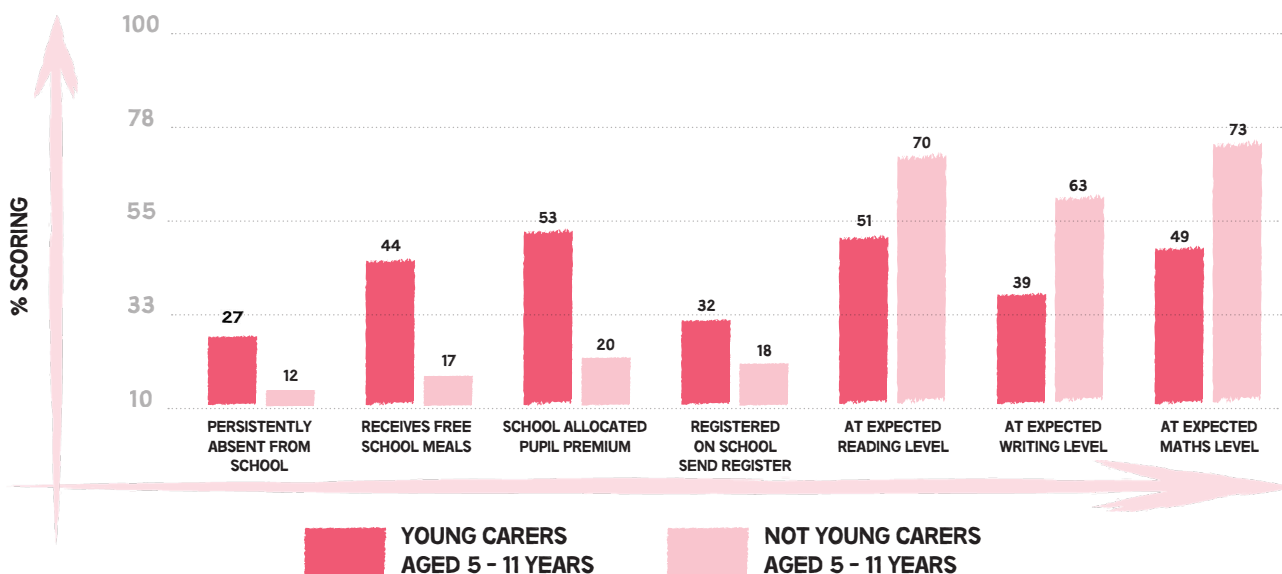


Figure 1 - MYTIME data provided by 7 primary schools based in Dorset 2024 – totalling 2,892 pupils

## COMPARISONS WITH NATIONAL DATA

Young carers are not recognised as a separate disadvantaged group, and therefore there is no national data set to compare **MYTIME**'s study with. As noted in Figure 1, half of the young carers in this study receive free school meals and / or are allocated Pupil Premium funding. They therefore sit within one or more recognised disadvantaged groups, but are in fact a distinct subset of pupils with specific educational needs. Where possible, comparison with national data, the trends highlighted in this study become even more concerning, highlighting the urgent need for young carers to be recognised as a distinct 'group' by schools and government agencies such as the DfE and Ofsted.

Disadvantaged pupils are ordinarily defined as: those who were registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years, children looked after by a local authority or have left local authority care in England and Wales through adoption, a special guardianship order, a residence order, or a child arrangements order.

Young carers are not classed as disadvantaged students and are not eligible for pupil premium funding unless they are eligible because of one of the factors listed above. As most schools are unaware of the number of pupils in their school that have caring responsibilities and unaware of the relationship between caring, low/no income and attainment, the majority will not divert pupil premium funding to support those who are young carers.

- ▷ Nationally, in 2023, **60%** of children with a first language other than English met age related expectations in reading, writing, and maths<sup>2</sup>. *(No **MYTIME** statistics)<sup>3</sup>*
- ▷ Nationally, in 2023, **60%** of children classified as disadvantaged met age related expectations in reading<sup>2</sup>. *(Compared to only **51%** of young carers in **MYTIME**'s study)*
- ▷ Nationally, in 2023, **58%** of children classified as disadvantaged met age related expectations in writing<sup>5</sup>. *(Compared to only **39%** of young carers in **MYTIME**'s study)*
- ▷ Nationally, in 2023, **59%** of children classified as disadvantaged met age related expectations for maths<sup>6</sup>. *(Compared to only **49%** of young carers in **MYTIME**'s study)*

## IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DATA – WHY WE MUST CARE:

Whilst there is data relating to the impacts of children not achieving age related expectations in reading, writing, and maths on education, health, and labour market outcomes, none of this has been explored alongside those who also have a caring responsibility. It is therefore vital that further research is conducted into how being a young carer impacts children's educational, physical and mental health, wellbeing, and labour market outcomes intersect.

<sup>2</sup>Academic year 2022/23 Key stage 2 attainment GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>3</sup>**MYTIME** study only collected data on reading, writing, and maths independently, and without sight of the statistical methodology used for combined national statistics, we have chosen not to attempt to replicate this statistic from our data sets to avoid unevidenced conclusions.

<sup>4</sup>Academic year 2022/23 Key stage 2 attainment GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>5</sup>Academic year 2022/23 Key stage 2 attainment GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>6</sup>Academic year 2022/23 Key stage 2 attainment GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## IMPACTS ON EDUCATION:

- ▷ Only **10%** of children who leave primary school below age related expectations in reading and writing achieve a pass at GCSE English and Maths <sup>7</sup>.
- ▷ Young people who usually do all their homework have higher attainment than those who usually did most of their homework and, particularly, those who usually only did some or none of it<sup>8</sup>.

## IMPACTS ON HEALTH:

- ▷ Children who are the least engaged with literacy are twice as likely to have low levels of mental wellbeing than their peers who are the most engaged<sup>9</sup>.
- ▷ Studies indicating that people who struggle with literacy are also more likely to have poor physical health<sup>10</sup>.

## IMPACT ON LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES:

- ▷ Only **60%** of individuals who were eligible for free school meals in year 11 were in sustained employment at age 27, compared to **77%** of their peers who were not eligible for FSM<sup>11</sup>.
- ▷ Only **58%** of individuals who were identified with special educational needs in year 11 were in sustained employment at age 27, compared to **78%** of their peers who were not identified with SEND.



*“Social Finance welcomes this milestone research by **MYTIME**, which highlights the poorer educational outcomes faced by Young Carers from an early age. By examining free school meals, pupil premiums, and SEND registers, **MYTIME** also highlights the need for young carers to be seen through a whole-child lens. This approach is crucial for practitioners and policymakers to deepen their understanding of how caring responsibilities intersect with other factors that can make our young people vulnerable to exploitation and exclusion.”*

**SOCIAL FINANCE** - Social Finance | Together, we make change happen

<sup>7</sup> Now the whole school is reading: supporting struggling readers in secondary school - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>8</sup> Understanding KS4 attainment and progress: evidence from LSYPE2- GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

<sup>9</sup> Mental wellbeing, reading and writing- National Literacy Trust (2018)

<sup>10</sup> How children and young people's mental wellbeing is related to their reading and writing experience- National Literacy Trust (2019)

<sup>11</sup> Outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals and identified with special educational needs- Department for Education (2018)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**MYTIME** Young Carers is calling for urgent action from Government Departments, school and education providers and local authorities to take note of the concerns raised by this study and agree to the following:

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND STATUTORY AGENCIES

- ▷ Provide funding to support the development and delivery of in school training programmes which enable schools to identify young carers and develop inclusion strategies to address attainment issues.
- ▷ Ofsted's education inspection framework should include reference to how inspections will assure young carers make progress towards achieving age related expectations in reading, writing and maths.
- ▷ Pupil premium eligibility for schools should be extended to include all young carers in line with the Service children pupil premium eligibility.
- ▷ Develop templates and guidelines for children's and adult's services carrying out young carers needs assessment and transition assessment.
- ▷ Mandate monitoring of the duties in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.
- ▷ The ADASS 'No Wrong Doors' Memorandum of Understanding<sup>12</sup> offers a framework which authorities, children's and adult services, and Integrated Care Boards, can use to ensure joined up approaches to both identify and support young carers and their families. This should be extended to include education professionals such as the regional Department for Education Directors<sup>13</sup>.

**"IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF TEACHERS WERE AWARE I WAS A YOUNG CARER AND KNEW WHAT IT MEANT, THEN IF SOMETHING WAS UPSETTING ME, THEY COULD HELP."**

**"I TOLD MY TEACHER THAT I CARE FOR MY MUM, SHE TOLD ME CHILDREN DIDN'T DO THAT KIND OF THING AND SENT ME OUT TO BREAK. I WON'T EVER TELL ANYONE AGAIN."**

**"TEACHERS AND OTHER STUDENTS KNOW WHO YOUNG CARERS ARE BUT NOT WHAT THEY DO, THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE WORRIED AND STRESSED ALL THE TIME."**

<sup>12</sup> 'no-wrong-doors-for-young-carers---mou-(final-version).pdf

<sup>13</sup> About us - Regional Department for Education (DfE) Directors - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS:

- ▷ Improve systems and processes to identify young carers at enrolment and throughout their time in education, including transition to secondary school, college, and further education and when pupils change school if they move to a new area during the academic year.
- ▷ Track and discuss young carers data and progress at Leadership level as with any other disadvantaged group.
- ▷ Focus attention on developing interventions which develop reading, writing, and mathematics to ensure young carers reach age related expectations.
- ▷ Allocate funding, which could include Pupil Premium, to identified young carers that supports plans for improved attendance and attainment, including promoting a love of reading amongst young carers.
- ▷ Support young carers and families with homework, by making reasonable adjustments and support available which considers the young carers role in providing care at home.
- ▷ Refer young carers to local young carers services and to local authorities, requesting Young Carers Needs Assessments<sup>14</sup> to be carried out.
- ▷ Include data on the SEND register which identifies those pupils as also having caring responsibilities.
- ▷ Educate school staff and pupils about the pressures young carers face in school and at home.
- ▷ Show commitment to young carers and sign up to the **MYTIME** Young Carers Level Up Programme and/or the Young Carers in Schools Award<sup>15</sup>.



*"The **MYTIME** report is further evidence of what we already know. Young Carers need more support across education and wider children's services to maximise their educational potential. Charities and organisations like **MYTIME** are pivotal in bringing about the positive change needed. Young Carers already face significant challenge and education needs to be the 'enabler' for this group of young people."*

**BEN ANTELL** - Director of Secondary Academies, United Learning

**"I TOLD MY TEACHER I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO COMPLETE HER HOMEWORK AND THE TEACHER SAID 'YES YOU DO'." IT MADE ME FEEL LIKE SHE THOUGHT I WAS LYING AND THAT SHE WASN'T LISTENING TO ME, SO I TRY AND AVOID GOING TO SCHOOL WHEN I HAVEN'T DONE HER HOMEWORK."**

<sup>14</sup> Young Carers' Needs Assessment ([local.gov.uk](http://local.gov.uk))

<sup>15</sup> **MYTIME** | How We Support Schools ([mytimeyoungcarers.org](http://mytimeyoungcarers.org))

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- ▷ Local authority adults and children's services should work together to ensure the Young Carers Needs Assessment provides a whole family approach and looks to reduce and prevent negative impacts of caring during childhood. Attention should be paid the educational outcomes and attendance of the young carer within this assessment.
- ▷ Write a clear young carers strategy for the region or county that ensures consistent recognition and support for young carers across the region ad works to reduce and prevent children taking on significant and inappropriate caring roles.
- ▷ Embed the 'No wrong doors' Memorandum of Understanding framework including engaging with Education professionals.
- ▷ Refer young carers to local young carers services in addition to carrying out a young carer needs assessment not instead of.
- ▷ Local Authorities should recognise in Education, Health, and Care Plans for children with SEND if the child is a young carer and how their own needs may be impacted by caring responsibilities. A referral for a young carers needs assessment should be made under the Children and families Act 2014 where it appears that the child is providing care.

**"I HATE STAYING AT HOME BECAUSE I CAN'T SEE MY FRIENDS, AND THEN I FEEL GUILTY FOR FEELING THAT WAY BECAUSE I DON'T ACTUALLY MIND LOOKING AFTER MY MUM, SHE NEEDS ME."**

**"I HAVE TO STAY AT HOME AND LOOK AFTER MY FAMILY, THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN SCHOOL SOME DAYS."**

**"I DON'T WANT IT TO BE SPREAD AROUND THE SCHOOL THAT I AM A YOUNG CARER, SOME CHILDREN ARE NOT VERY NICE, I DON'T KNOW IF THEY WOULD BE NICE OR NOT IF THEY FOUND OUT."**

**"I NEED SCHOOL TO BE SOMEWHERE I CAN GO AND TALK AND NOT FEEL GUILTY ABOUT WHAT I'M SAYING, I CAN'T DO THAT AT HOME"**



## WHO ARE YOUNG CARERS?

A young carer is legally defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as ‘a person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person<sup>16</sup>’. The ‘intends to provide care’ element of the definition requires that where there is someone presenting with ill health and / or disability a care needs assessment and support plan must be delivered by the local authority. This should be carried out under the Care Act 2014. These assessments should be provided early, and at presentation of long-term ill health and disability needs, to prevent and reduce caring roles being taken on by children that have negative impacts upon their wellbeing and life chances.

Those working with young carers recognise a more detailed definition, which is broadly agreed but may differ slightly with each organisation: Young carers are children who provide care for someone / multiple people living with ill health and / or disability and has care needs. This includes caring for someone with:

- ▷ a physical disability
- ▷ issues with mobility
- ▷ mental ill health
- ▷ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- ▷ long term life limiting illness(es)
- ▷ Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- ▷ living with alcohol or substance misuse
- ▷ brain injury
- ▷ dementia / Alzheimer’s
- ▷ frailty
- ▷ and many other health conditions

Young carers may care for one or more people in their family including those that may not live in the same household.

### MEET DANIEL – AGE 12



Daniel’s mum has multiple sclerosis and depression, and Daniel has been caring for her since he was just five years old. For as long as he can remember, Daniel has wanted to study medicine. More than anything in the world, he wants to know how to fix his mum.

But Daniel is falling behind in school. He worries about leaving his mum on her own, so his attendance is poor, his concentration too, and his teachers do not know how to help him, because they have no idea what Daniel has to contend with at home. His caring responsibilities take up so much of his time that he has no hobbies, no social life and it is taking its toll on his mental health. His confidence and aspirations are low, he is almost always tired and stressed, he lacks any real sense of identity outside of his identity as carer and he feels totally alone.

Daniel is a remarkable young man but when he grows up, he is not likely to study medicine. In fact, he is twice as likely as his peers to find himself out of employment altogether.

<sup>16</sup> Children and Families Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

## MYTIME YOUNG CARERS

**MYTIME** Young Carers is a national charity, based in Dorset, dedicated to improving long term outcomes for young carers. The **MYTIME** Level Up programme focuses upon improving the educational outcomes for all young carers. Through the Level Up programme **MYTIME** provides schools with training, tools, resources, strategies, and the support that they need to create supportive and inclusive environments for children who are young carers and improve their educational outcomes. This is helping to address the issues young carers face in education, by providing the support they need, and creating the conditions in which young carers can thrive and achieve their full potential.

A report published by **MYTIME** Young Carers on *Attendance and Attainment (2023)*<sup>17</sup> highlighted that young carers of secondary school age had double the rate of absence compared to their peers without a caring responsibility, which equated to missing an average of 27 days each academic year. The Department for Education's recently published national attendance statistics substantiated this research, reporting young carers to have a persistent absence rate of 39%; twice as high as their peers without a caring responsibility<sup>18</sup>. This study by **MYTIME** Young Carers examined the disadvantages experienced by young carers in comparison to their non-young carer peers; and the impacts of this upon their current and long-term educational outcomes and attainment. Recommendations are outlined for multi-agency professionals including statutory children's services, schools and education professionals. To improve the educational journey for young carers and their educational outcomes.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS REPORT

Whilst only seven primary schools participated in this study, data was provided for 2892 children in total, of which 130 were young carers (5.3%). The data provided included rates of persistent absence from school, whether the child was in receipt of free school meals, allocated Pupil Premium, whether they were registered on the schools Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) register and provided data for reading, writing, and maths. The data was analysed to demonstrate the differences in school experiences of young carers compared to their peers without a caring responsibility and the impact of this upon their attainment.

There are a number of limitations to this report, which warrant further consideration in future studies into young carers educational attainment:

**GENDER:** Whilst in national data sets for KS2 girls outperform boys in reaching age related standards in reading, writing, and maths, this study did not report on the gender gap for young carers.

**ETHNICITY:** This report did not examine performance of young carers or their peers without a caring responsibility based on ethnicity.

**SEND:** This study did not report on the performance of young carers who are also identified on the SEND register.

**SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS:** This report did not identify the characteristics of the schools- state maintained schools, LA maintained schools, sponsored academies, converter academies, free schools.

<sup>17</sup> **MYTIME** Young Carers

<sup>18</sup> Pupil attendance in schools, Week 10 2024 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK ([explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk))

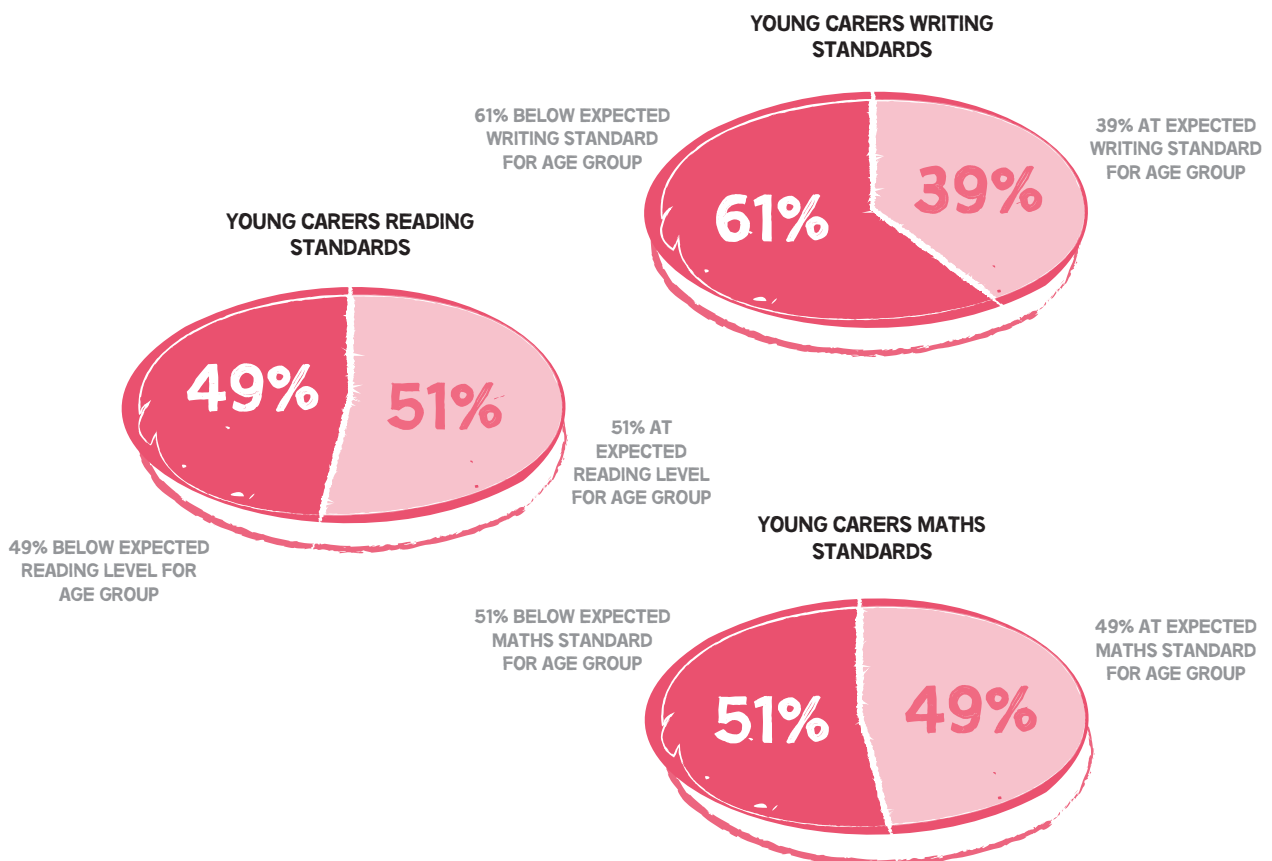
# KEY FINDINGS

A comparison of the young carer's outcomes compared to their peers without a caring responsibility highlighted a significant association between the disadvantages experienced by young carers and their educational outcomes.

## YOUNG CARERS EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN READING, WRITING AND MATHS:

This study found that only **51%** of young carers were achieving age related expectations in reading, in comparison to **73%** nationally<sup>19</sup>. Pupils who struggle to read quickly fall behind their peers across all subjects as they need to read accurately to be able to achieve in any subject. The links between reading fluency and attainment across all subjects are well documented. Being able to read fluently is key to any child's future academic achievement, physical and mental health, well-being, and economic future.

There is also a direct correlation between reaching age related expectations in reading, writing, and maths, and outcomes at GCSE across all subjects at age 16<sup>20</sup>. With only **10%** of disadvantaged children who leave primary school without reaching age related expectations, going on to achieve a standard pass at English and Mathematics at GCSE<sup>21</sup>. It is therefore essential that reading is made a priority to prevent pupils from falling any further behind with their education<sup>22</sup>.



<sup>19</sup> Academic year 2022/23 Key stage 2 attainment GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>20</sup> Early literacy skills and long(er) term outcomes: part one - FFT Education Datalab

<sup>21</sup> 'Now the whole school is reading': supporting struggling readers in secondary school - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>22</sup> Supporting secondary school pupils who are behind with reading – Ofsted: schools and further education & skills (FES) ([blog.gov.uk](http://blog.gov.uk))

## YOUNG CARERS AND SEND

Notably **32%** of the young carers included in this study were registered on their schools Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) register, whereas nationally only **13%** of children at KS2 are identified as SEND<sup>23</sup>. A pupil is categorised as having special educational needs if they are finding it harder than other pupils to make progress. These children are registered either as needing additional school support or as having an Education, Health, and Care Plan.

Research suggests that there are varying interpretations and practices across professionals, schools, and local authorities in both SEND identification and provision<sup>24</sup>. However, there should be consistent assessment and response in SEND identification and support planning as to whether the child's SEND needs are as a direct outcome of having a caring responsibility. Further research into the relationship between having a caring responsibility and also being identified as SEND needs to be conducted, so that appropriate support and interventions can be put in place.

## YOUNG CARERS AND PERSISTENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The MYTIME report published in 2023 highlighted that young carers of secondary school age have double the rate of persistent absence compared to their peers without a caring responsibility. This equates to an average of 27 school days missed per year, which over the course of five years in secondary education, would mean young carers miss 135 days of school, which is almost **70%** of an academic year<sup>25</sup>.

Young carers report missing school for a number of reasons, including:

- ▷ Feeling too worried about the person they care for to leave them.
- ▷ Needing to attend medical appointments with the person they care for.
- ▷ Not completing time homework on time and worrying about the consequences.
- ▷ Experiencing bullying from other pupils because of their caring role.
- ▷ Being too tired or stressed to attend school because of their caring role.
- ▷ Feeling unsupported by teachers, other pupils, and school systems.

Additionally young carers age 5-11 may not attend if their parent or carer is feeling unwell and is unable to take them to school.

Persistent absence from school and limited time to study outside of school will impact upon the young carers ability to catch up and reach the expected standards with their schoolwork.



<sup>23</sup> Academic year 2022/23 Key stage 2 attainment GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>24</sup> Early literacy skills and long(er) term outcomes: part one - FFT Education Datalab

<sup>25</sup> 'Now the whole school is reading': supporting struggling readers in secondary school - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## YOUNG CARERS AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGES

Children from socio-economically disadvantaged families are known to experience further challenges with their attendance and meeting age related expectations at school<sup>26</sup>. This study shows that **44%** of young carers were in receipt of Free School Meals and **53%** eligible for Pupil Premium; that is 2.5 times more likely than their peers.

Free school meals are available to pupils whose family is in receipt of benefits including Universal Credit. This is providing the family have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 per annum<sup>27</sup>. The cost-of-living crisis has only increased the financial challenges faced by families with more households fallen into poverty and the number of disabled people out of work has increased<sup>28</sup>.

Families where one or more people have a disability face higher household costs. This includes spending higher spending on essential goods and services, specialist equipment, insurance, energy, and therapies. On average, disabled households (with at least one disabled adult or child) will need an additional **£975** a month to have the same standard of living as non-disabled households<sup>29</sup>. These financial challenges result in families having limited or no money to pay for resources such as reading books, textbooks, and technology that young carers may need to help them to catch up and reach age related expectations in reading, writing, and maths.

The Pupil Premium grant is funding provided to schools to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in state-funded schools in England. It is allocated to schools for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or for looked after children. Currently schools do not receive funding for pupils with caring responsibilities. Pupil Premium is not a personal budget for individual pupils, and schools do not have to spend Pupil Premium to solely benefit those pupils who meet the funding criteria. However, schools can use it to support pupils with identified needs including those who have caring responsibilities<sup>30</sup>. Schools could seek to identify young carers through their Pupil Premium lists, and once identified direct funding towards supporting young carers. This could enable schools to provide additional academic support to ensure young carers reach age related expectations in reading, writing, and maths.

### FACTS AT A GLANCE



**44%**  
OF YOUNG CARERS ARE IN RECEIPT OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND 53% ELIGIBLE FOR PUPIL PREMIUM



**AN ADDITIONAL £975**  
IS NEEDED FOR DISABLED HOUSEHOLDS (WITH AT LEAST ONE DISABLED ADULT OR CHILD) TO HAVE THE SAME STANDARD OF LIVING AS NON-DISABLED HOUSEHOLDS

<sup>26</sup> Attendance and reading key barriers to disadvantaged pupils... | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

<sup>27</sup> Free school meals (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>28</sup> Disability Price Tag 2023: the extra cost of disability | Disability charity Scope UK

<sup>29</sup> Extra Costs | Disability charity Scope UK

<sup>30</sup> Pupil premium: overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

## YOUNG CARERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The findings of this study highlight the disadvantages faced by young carers and the impact this can have upon on their education, physical and mental health, wellbeing, and economic futures. If intervention and support measures are not offered when appropriate and at an early stage then as children and as young carers, they are having their right to education denied.

It is 10 years since the enactment of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 that placed duties upon local authorities to assess whether young carers in their locality have needs for support and what those needs are. Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 outlines the local authority's accountability to assess whether young carers in their area have support needs and that in carrying out a young carer's needs assessment, the local authority must have regard to the extent to which the young carer is participating in or wishes to participate in education.

It is stipulated that this must give regard to the extent the young carer is participating in education and consider their future aspirations. However, there has been a lack of consistency nationally in how this is implemented and currently there is no mandated monitoring of whether these duties of a local authority are being carried out. It is evident that a decade after this enactment young carers are still facing distinct challenges in all aspects of their wellbeing and with their educational outcomes, attendance and experiences within school and education settings.

The 2023 statutory guidance published for schools and education providers, on Keeping Children Safe in Education<sup>31</sup> highlights the following:

***'any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who is a young carer [and any pupil that] is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day'.***

Additionally, it outlines:

***'the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The Training should include... the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they: are alert to the specific needs of children in need.***

This report highlights that there is an urgent need to ensure that these rights are being met and that schools are provided with appropriate training to support the identification of young carers and interventions which will improve their academic attainment and experiences. This can only be achieved if the recommendations to government, schools, and local authorities listed above are actioned.

<sup>31</sup> Keeping children safe in education 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

# MYTIME

## YOUNG CARERS

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