

Young Carers Handbook

Practical information for young carers in North Somerset

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Produced in partnership with North Somerset Carers Partnership Board



Accessible information

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read, and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files. Help is also available for people who require information from the council in languages other than English.

Please email adultspolicy@n-somerset.gov.uk or ring 01934 888 888.



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Welcome

Welcome to the North Somerset Young Carers Handbook. This comprehensive guide is designed to support young carers in our community. Caring for a loved one can be both rewarding and challenging, and this handbook aims to provide you with the essential information and resources you need to navigate your caregiving journey.

Purpose and importance

The purpose of this handbook is to empower young carers by offering clear, accessible information on a wide range of topics. Whether you are new to caregiving or have been a carer for many years, this guide is here to help you understand your role, access the support you need, and maintain your own well-being.

All carers play a vital role in our society, often providing unpaid care that enables their loved ones to live with dignity and independence. Recognising the immense value of carers, this handbook is an important tool to ensure they are well-informed and supported.

What you will find in this handbook

- **Understanding carers:** Learn about the different types of carers and the crucial role they play.
- **Accessing support:** Discover how and where to find the support services available to you.
- **SEND local offer:** Information on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) local offer.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Tips and resources to help you take care of your own health and wellbeing
- **Financial support and advice:** Guidance on where to get financial assistance and advice.

- **Contingency planning:** Strategies for planning ahead to ensure continuity of care.
- **Training and volunteering:** Opportunities for training and volunteering to enhance your skills and experience.
- **In-education support:** Information on support available for carers who are also in education.
- **End of Life care:** Resources and support for providing end-of-life care.
- **Key contacts:** A list of important contacts to help you connect with the right people and services.

We hope this handbook will be a valuable resource for you, providing the information and support you need to continue your vital role as a carer.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to caring for your loved ones.



Are you an unpaid carer?

A carer is someone who looks after a relative, friend, or neighbour, who, because of age, poor mental health (including substance misuse), illness, and/or disability, cannot manage at home without help and support. The type of care you provide may range from personal care such as supporting someone to bathe, washing clothes and supporting during mealtimes, to visiting to provide company, shopping and housework, emotional support and supporting people to make and attend appointments.

Unpaid carers can live in the same household of the cared for person, or separately.

Carers who receive [carer's allowance](#) are also unpaid carers.

Young carers

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18.

A young carer is defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as: '...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'.

This relates to care for any family member (at any age) who needs support due to illness, disability, poor mental health (including substance misuse), or aging.

This also includes children and young people who have a brother or sister with a disability.



How to access support

The laws in the UK provide significant protections and support for young carers.

Here are the key pieces of legislation:

1. **Children and Families Act 2014:** This act requires local authorities to assess whether a young carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are. [The assessment must consider the young carer's well-being, education, and personal development.](#)
2. **Care Act 2014:** This act complements the Children and Families Act by ensuring that young carers are not left with inappropriate levels of care responsibility. [It promotes a whole-family approach to assessment and support, ensuring that the needs of the entire family are considered.](#)
3. **Children Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Families Act 2014):** [This amendment introduced new rights for young carers, ensuring they have the right to an assessment of their support needs, regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide, or how often they provide it.](#)

These laws aim to prevent young carers from taking on excessive or inappropriate care responsibilities and ensure they receive the support they need to thrive.

To refer for support for a young carer please contact Alliance Homes using their [Young Carers Referral Form.](#)

Young Carers Support Service – Alliance Homes

Alliance Homes offer young carers:

- Welcome groups
- Therapeutic groups
- Social meet ups
- Holiday workshops
- Day trips
- Residential weekends

- One-to-one support
- Online support
- Support in school
- They can speak on your behalf to other agencies such as social services, community mental health or education services.

[Support for carers | Alliance Homes](#)

[03000 120 120](#)

act@alliancehomes.org.uk

Bridging the Gap Together!

Bridging the Gap Together! (BTGT!) is a dynamic and independent Community Interest Company established in 2016 with a clear mission: to empower and support families, autistic children and young people, and people who are neurodivergent.

They offer the following activities:

- Chat and Craft family group
- Minecraft group
- Photography sessions
- Dungeons and Dragons group.

[Bridging The Gap Together - Welcome](#)

Other useful sources of information

[Advice and support for young carers | The Children's Society](#)

[Support for young carers and siblings - Sense](#)

[Support & Information For Carers | Young Carers | The Mix](#)

[Sidekick | Helpline for Young People | Action for Children](#)

[Young Carers in Schools](#)



Young carers breaks

Alliance homes offer young carers opportunities to be involved in. This includes:

Holiday workshops

These take place during each school holiday and are for young carers in both Primary and Secondary schools to catch up with each other and the friends they have made. They might be chilled out, where we just have fun and games, or might tackle a serious topic such as anxiety or sleep.

Day trips

It might be a trip to the theatre, a day of karting, a visit to the zoo or a picnic on the beach and provides a break from your caring role and a chance to meet other young carers.

Trips away

Alliance Homes run residential weekends for young carers during spring and summer. These weekends give them a longer break from their caring responsibilities.

Contact Alliance Homes

[Support for carers | Alliance Homes](#)

[03000 120 120](tel:03000120120)

act@alliancehomes.org.uk



Young carers and health and wellbeing

Caring for others can be incredibly rewarding, but it also comes with significant challenges that can impact the well-being of carers. Regular breaks, social connections, and access to health services are essential for your mental and physical health. Overall, ensuring the well-being of carers across all age groups is vital for their ability to provide effective care and maintain their own quality of life. See our list of [peer support local community groups](#).



Better Health North Somerset

[Better Health North Somerset](#) are a public health service funded by North Somerset Council. They are here to support the health and wellbeing of residents in North Somerset. The Healthy Lifestyles Advisors can provide **free** support to lose weight, eat well, get active, stop smoking and improve liver health with 1-1 and group offers available over a duration of 12 weeks.

You can self-refer for support around your health and well-being using their self-referral forms found on the website. You can contact Better Health North Somerset on 01934 888 888.



Talk to your GP

Tell your GP that you have caring responsibilities as soon as possible. They can then record this on your medical records. Informing your GP helps ensure you receive the support and care you need to maintain your own health while fulfilling your caring role. According to [Carers UK](#) your GP can:

- Provide information and advice on medical conditions and treatments for the person you care for, to help you feel more confident in your caring role.
- Make referrals to services provided by the NHS such as continence services and patient transport to hospital appointment
- Other sources of support and advice which could include the social services department and local voluntary agencies
- Arrange home visits to you or the person you care for if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to attend appointments at the surgery
- Arrange 'double' appointments for both you and the person you care for at the same time to avoid having to visit the surgery twice
- Arrange for repeat prescriptions to be delivered by your local pharmacy to save you picking them up
- Provide supporting letters and information to enable you and the person you care for to access benefits such as Attendance Allowance or the blue badge car parking scheme



Wellbeing resources

- [North Somerset Wellbeing Service](#) – A Leading Mental Health Charity
- reception@second-step.co.uk
0117 909 6630
- [Access Your Care](#) – Wellness Service
- [BNSSG North Somerset Mental health and Wellbeing directory of services for children and young people](#) – Directory of Services for Children and Young People
- [Vita health group talking therapies](#) – NHS Talking Therapies
- [Withyou](#) – Drug and alcohol support in North Somerset
- [Off the Record North Somerset](#) – OTR is a mental health social movement by and for young people aged 11-25 in North Somerset
- NHS free helpline service – 24/7 Support and Connect
0800 9531919
- Bristol Mindline – free helpline open seven nights a week (7 to 11pm)
0808 808 0330
- [Mindline Somerset](#) – open 24 hours a day seven days a week
01823 276 892 or 0800 138 1692
- ChitChat – seven days a week (9am to 9pm)
0333 002 0333
- [Samaritans](#) – open 24 hours a day seven days a week
116 123
- [SANEline](#) – For anyone over 16 years who needs to talk about mental health issues or crisis. SANEline is a national out-of-hours mental health helpline offering
 - specialist emotional support
 - guidance

- information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends, and carers

They are normally open every day of the year from 4 to 10pm on 0300 304 7000.



Financial support and advice

Citizens Advice North Somerset have a generalist and [specialist benefits team](#) that can advise and assist with problems related to benefits, including making claims and challenging decisions up to first-tier tribunal level.

Other useful places for help and advice include:

- Citizens Advice about [Universal Credit application](#)
- North Somerset Council [Household Support Fund](#)
- North Somerset Council [Pension Credit](#)
- [Holiday, activities and food \(HAF\) programme](#)



What if something happens to me, who will be there for the people I care for?

Plan for the unexpected: Your guide to creating a care contingency plan

Being a carer is an incredibly rewarding job, but we all know it's not without its challenges. That's why it's important to have a backup plan or a "contingency plan" in place. This plan is there to make sure the person you care for has continued support if you find yourself unexpectedly unable to be there. This is something you can create with family and friends and share with others around you.

What is a care contingency plan?

As a carer, a contingency plan will outline some basic information so that others can step in to help and provide the necessary care should you suddenly be unable

to. It might be due to an illness, a family emergency, or even just needing a short break. Having this written down ensures your loved one will be properly supported. This is something you can create and share with others around you.

What can a care contingency plan include?

Here are some essential things to include in your contingency plan:

- **Your contact details and those of the person you care for:** Names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses for you both
- **Emergency contacts:** Family, friends, neighbours, someone reliable who can be called upon quickly. Don't forget to ask their permission first
- **Medical information:** Details of ongoing conditions, medications (a clear list with dosages), allergies, and doctor contact info
- **Care routine:** What are the daily tasks they need support with? This could include getting dressed, bathing, eating, taking meds, etc
- **Likes and dislikes:** A few important preferences – their favourite food, TV shows, hobbies – can make transitions much smoother in the short term

Extra things to consider

- **House key access:** Where is a spare key or who has one safely, for when emergency support may need to enter the home?
- **Pets:** If the person you care for has a pet, include basic care instructions like feeding and walking times
- **Professional supports:** List any external agencies, respite services, or care workers already arranged with their full contact info

Creating the Care Contingency Plan

There are resources available online to help make this easy. Carers UK even has an interactive tool called [MyBackUp](#) on their website. You can also download

templates or just draft your own plan using Word or even write some handwritten notes.

A plan only works if people know it exists.

Here's what to do:

- Give copies of the plan to those emergency contacts (friends, family, etc.)
- Let your doctor, care worker, or social worker know you have one
- Keep a hard copy somewhere visible and easy to find. The refrigerator's a common place

Emergency Response Service (CERS)

The Carer's Emergency Response Service (CERS) is a service that offers you peace of mind if you experience an emergency. This could be an accident or unplanned hospital admission that prevents you from carrying out your caring responsibilities.

This is a free service.

The scheme is run by Carelink, our 24-hour response service. To register for the service, please contact Carelink on:

carelink@n-somerset.gov.uk

01934 412 063



In education support

School staff are there to help pupils get the most out of school. They can be a good person for you to speak to about any problems you have.

If you're missing lessons to help look after someone at home, or struggling to get your work in on time, talk to a trusted member of your schools staff about what you do at home so that they can understand what is happening and give you more help.

As a young carer, you might find school a place where you can forget about your caring responsibilities and feel "normal" for a while. But it can also be a place where you're under extra pressure or where people do not understand what your life is like outside school. It can sometimes be hard to juggle all your responsibilities as a young carer with the demands of teachers, friends and homework. It is important to talk to a person you trust about your experience. They can help.

Useful websites:

[Help for young carers - Social care and support guide - NHS](#)

[Advice and support for young carers | The Children's Society](#)



In work support

Some young carers work, or are completing apprenticeships. It is your choice whether to tell your employer about your caring role. To find out whether there is a carer's policy or any extra support for carers in your workplace, you could check your contract of employment, staff handbook, Human Resources (HR) policies or letter of appointment.

If there is a carer's policy then what support it offers will depend on your workplace. Examples include:

- Carer's leave (paid or unpaid)
- Time off to accompany the person you are looking after to appointments (paid or unpaid)
- A carers' support group or carers champion
- Flexible working arrangements

For further support about in work support for carers please contact:

- [Carers UK](#) or call 0808 808 7777 (Monday – Tuesday 10am-4pm)
- [ACAS](#)

Training

Opportunity North Somerset is home to a wide range of services that can help you achieve your personal and professional goals or take those first steps back into work.

You can meet with their friendly and supportive team and discuss your goals, and find out more about:

- employment support
- career development
- youth employment and wellbeing
- apprenticeship and work experience opportunities
- digital service access and skill development
- business start-up
- wellbeing and volunteering support services
- refugee and ESOL support

What they can help you with

- outlining a pathway to your chosen career
- CV and interview training
- training and upskilling courses
- how to identify transferable skills and understand the key requirements for a new role
- education and employment options for people with disabilities or health problems

Get in touch

If you would like to access support or have an informal conversation to find out more, get in touch.

Please fill out their short contact form and a member of the team will get back to you.

- [Skills Connect](#)
- Skills Connect – [North Somerset](#)
- [Youth Opportunity](#)



Volunteering

Anyone can volunteer. It can be very rewarding and is a great way to:

- Meet new people
- Gain new or use existing skills
- Get experience
- Make a big difference to your community

There are lots of easy ways to give your time to help others; from having a cup of tea with an elderly neighbour, to helping out in your local area or making a regular commitment to volunteer with a charity or community group.

Useful links about volunteering

- [Voluntary Action North Somerset \(VANS\)](#) – Volunteering opportunities
- [Get Volunteering](#) – Volunteer in North Somerset
- [Spark a Change](#) – Volunteer in North Somerset
- [Age UK Somerset](#) – Volunteer with us



Equipment

Helping the person you support in their home

Our equipment and demonstration centre at the Motex Centre in Weston-super-Mare displays:

- bathing displays
- shower units
- raised-level kitchens
- a variety of stairlifts
- a fully working through-floor lift
- adapted living rooms and bedrooms
- riser recliner chairs
- adjustable beds
- assistive technology

All the equipment is available for you to try out when you visit. The centre also has a selection of assistive technology gadgets for you to test.

Our knowledgeable occupational therapy staff can offer personal advice and help on what equipment is best for you (appointment necessary). We can also order any items for you that you wish to buy.

Equipment and Demonstration Centre

The Motex Centre, Winterstoke Road

Weston-super-Mare BS23 3YW

EDC@n-somerset.gov.uk

01275 888 804

Opening hours Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4pm

You can also use the [Medequip self-help tool](#). This will help you find products, equipment and technology that will help you live independently.



Carers Support in North Somerset –

key contacts

We understand that everyone has their own preferences when it comes to reaching out for support. That's why we've made sure to offer a variety of ways for you to get in touch with us. Whether you prefer a phone call, an email, a chat, or even a face-to-face meeting, we're here to help in the way that suits you best. Your comfort and convenience are our top priorities, and we're always ready to support you in any way we can.

Website

- [Support for adult carers](#) – Alliance Homes
- [Support for young carers](#) – Alliance Homes
- [Support for parent carers](#) – NSPCWT

Helpline

Support for young carers and adult carers

- Alliance homes – 03000 120 120 (choose option 3)
- Care Connect (North Somerset Council) - 01275 888 801

Parent Carers

- North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together – 01934 440 844
- Care Connect (North Somerset Council) – 01275 888 801

Online contact forms/email

Support for young carers and adult carers

- [Alliance homes](#)
- [North Somerset Council](#)

Support for parent carers

- North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT) - admin@nspcwt.org

Face-to-face

Support for parent carers

- [NSPCWT events](#)

Social media

Support for young carers and adult carers

- [North Somerset Carers Support](#)
- There are also [online communities](#) available to adult carers and young carers where you can find others in similar situations, share experiences, and access information and support from expert professionals.

Support for parent carers

- [NSPCWT](#)

Peer support and local community groups

It is often difficult to find the time to look after yourself and to find that little bit of ‘me time’ that is so important for your wellbeing and your ‘feel good’ factor.

Support groups are very important and can help you feel connected to other people in similar caring roles.

The following groups offer friendly support in North Somerset.

Young carers development

The YCD support young carers in year 9, 10 and 11 to access a combination of one to one and group mentoring to support their personal development, build on existing skills and introduce them to new ones.

<https://www.ycdt.org.uk/Group-Mentoring-Programme>

info@ycdt.org.uk

07368 366 660

Alliance Homes

Supports the voice of carers to be heard.

<https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/support/support-for-carers/>

03000 120 120

Alzheimer's Society – Active Minds, Weston-super-Mare

Meet new people, share your experiences, and enjoy fun activities in a group for people with dementia, their carers, family and friends. There's a wide range of activities with a focus on socialising in a friendly and informal setting.

[Active Minds](#)

0300 131 3945

Hutton Village Hall, 60 Church Lane, Hutton, Weston-super-Mare BS24 9SN

Portishead Youth Centre

From street dance to baking, or Dungeons and Dragons to just chilling with friends, their packed weekly schedule has something to suit all tastes.

[Portishead Youth & Community Centre](#)

kim@portisheadyouthcentre.co.uk

01275842461

National Autistic Society North Somerset Branch

Charity for autistic people and their families. This includes the facilities offered by the Lynx Centre. (Ben Nicholas – North Somerset Branch Chair).

[North Somerset Centre \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

northsomerset.branch@nas.org.uk

North Somerset People First

Self-advocacy services for people, 16plus, with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism.

[Contact | NSPF](#)

01934 426 086

The Campus, Highlands Lane, Weston-super-Mare. BS24 7DX

Big Worle hub

Resident led organisation

Throughout the week we run various group ranging from walking groups which start off at the Hub, a coffee morning and a lively craft club.

info@bigworle.org.uk

01934 708 119

Big Worle Hub, 11 Feniton, Clovelly Road, Worle BS22 6LN

Bridging the Gap Together

BTGT offer Chat and Craft family group, Minecraft group, Photography sessions and their very popular Dungeons and Dragons group.

sara.hughes6@btinternet.com

01934 811 008

Churchill & Langford Minibus Society

Resident led organisation

Using a wheelchair accessible minibus we provide a door-to-door service for all our society members' shopping, social and healthcare trips. We also provide transport for local clubs, societies and the "Good Companions" social isolation scheme.

jai.villageconnect@gmail.com

01934 852 589

Churchill ladies lunch club

Resident led organisation

Meeting 11 times a year at 7.30pm in the Reading Room opposite the Methodist church on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

margaretavery3@gmail.com

katieandshelagh@btinternet.com

Clevedon happy companions club

Resident led organisation

An uplifting weekly day out for our club members. It's a chance to make new friends, talk, laugh and learn and experience new things

clevedonhappycompanionsclub@gmail.com

Clevedon Men's Shed

Resident led organisation

Men's sheds are community spaces for men to connect, converse and create.

clevedonmensshed@gmail.com

01275 541 974 – Dave Young

Somerset Men's Shed

Men's sheds are community spaces for men to connect, converse and create.

<https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/somerset-mens-sheds/>

Nailsea community groups

Community support group

info@nailseacommunitygroup.co.uk

Nailsea Shedders

Community Workshop

Nailsea Shedders is a group of people who enjoy doing practical things and making music together to help reduce social isolation in the community.

<https://www.nailseashedders.org/contact-us/>

enquiries@nailseashedders.org

Sandford community cafe

Social group

cllynfa@yahoo.com

The Other Place

Community living room

alison@redportuk.com

West of England Rural Network

Support for matters that effect rural areas

tina@wern.org.uk

dick@wern.org.uk

Communication Cafe

Local peer lead social group supported by the local Deaf community, Citizens advice and NSC

07917 265 576

Bereavement Café WSM

Community Bereavement Support group

The first and third Friday of the month 10am-12pm

[Bereavement Cafe - Super Culture](#)

St Paul's Church Hall, Walliscote Rd, Weston-super-Mare. BS23 1EF

Cruse Clevedon

Community Bereavement Support group

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Hope Again

bristol@cruse.org.uk

0808 808 1677 Young person's helpline

0844 477 9400 main helpline number

Sole Survivors Nailsea

Community Bereavement Support group

01275 855 926 – Marjorie

01275 855 569 – Ann

STAR bereavement and loss Sandford

Community Bereavement Support group

Jai.villageconnect@gmail.com

[07946 182 338](tel:07946182338)

STAR Bereavement Yatton (and Congresbury)

Community Bereavement Support group

yandcstar@outlook.com

Pete's Dragons – Support for death by suicide

Peer support/walking group

zoe@petesdragons.org.uk

Black South West Network

Network Group

admin@bswn.org.uk

07495 329 990

Chinese Community Wellbeing Society

Support Group

Supporting the health and wellbeing of the East and South East Asian Community

joe@chinesecws.org.uk

0808 802 0012 – Joe Hui

Multicultural Friendship Association

Develop social networks and to share traditions and culture.

[MFA](#)

info@mfa-wsm.org.uk

Race Equality North Somerset

Volunteer-run charity promoting the rights, interests, welfare and wellbeing of minoritised ethnic communities in North Somerset. (Ian Noah – Trustee)

office@rens.org.uk

Refugees Welcome North Somerset

Support for asylum seekers in North Somerset accommodation

12 Waterloo Street, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1LG

Saricharity

Support for asylum seekers in North Somerset accommodation

<https://saricharity.org.uk/contact-us/>

0117 942 0060



Feedback

We value your feedback and welcome both compliments and areas for development. You can send us feedback through our website. If you have any concerns about any action or decision taken by the council, you should initially talk to the person you normally talk to. You can also contact our complaints manager at:

Complaints Manager, Town Hall,
Walliscote Grove Road, Weston super Mare, BS23 1UJ

complaints.manager@n-somerset.gov.uk

01275 882 171



Checklist for yougcarers

(adapted from ageuk)

Whether you've just started looking after a loved one or have been supporting someone for a while, this checklist will help you get the support and information you need.

Your wellbeing

- ☐ Get a carer's assessment from your local council.
- ☐ Register as a carer with alliance homes and your GP.
- ☐ Make time for yourself and your interests as often as you can.
- ☐ Take a break from caring – there are ways to arrange respite care/days out.

Your money

- ☐ Do you have access to good food? Toiletries? Equipment for school?
Talk to alliance, and your school about your situation
- ☐ Do you need financial support to do the things you enjoy? Talk to alliance about your situation.

Your work/education

- ☐ Tell your employer/education provider about your caring responsibilities.
Ask for a team around the child meeting for extra support.
- ☐ Think about asking for flexible working/reasonable adjustments at work or school.

For the person you care for

- ☐ Make sure they have a care needs assessment (adults)/s.17 assessment (children's)/EHCP assessment (children's) from the local council.

- ☐ Call Care Connect to speak to one of our advisors 01275 888 801.
- ☐ It may be useful to think about future care needs, and about what support they will need when your life situation changes.

Caring can sometimes feel lonely, and it's OK to admit it's all getting a bit much. Here's who you can talk to for advice, support, or just a listening ear (see our key contacts section):

- Alliance Homes
- Your school/college/work place.
- Your doctor or other healthcare provider
- A carer's group. For example, Carers UK
- Online forums
- Relative carers forums/support groups

Go to [Checklist for carers | Caring for someone | Age UK](#) for more information on everything in this checklist

