

Young Carers International: Reflections on 25 years of research, campaigning & life

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Whose responsibility
is it to care?



State



Informal



NGOs



Market



Who are young 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

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

How many young carers aged under 18?

2001

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

2011

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

19% increase

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 2.8%	Switzerland 114,000 5%
Germany 230,000 5%	Austria 42,700 3.5-4.5%	Netherlands 6%

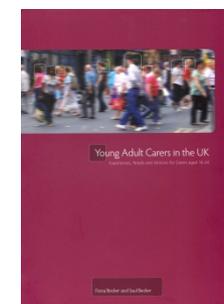
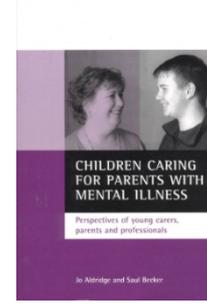
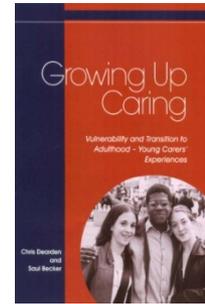
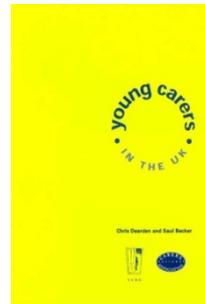
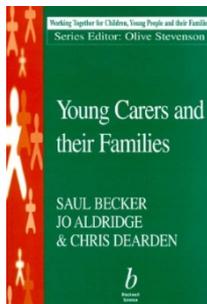
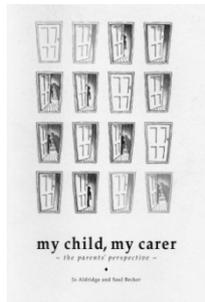
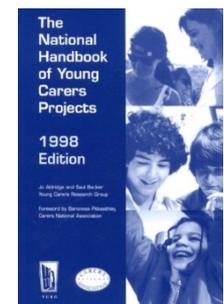
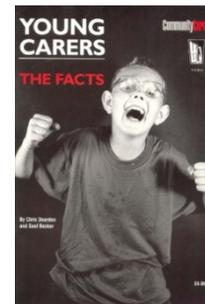
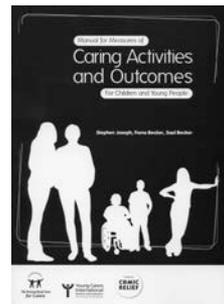
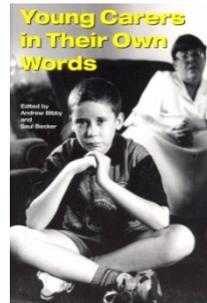
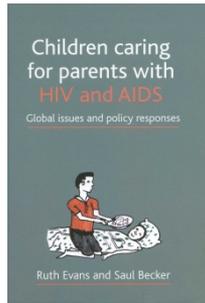




1992 Start of Mainstream Research

- 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





seven million reasons to care



UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Young Adult Carers at College and University

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



seven million reasons to care



UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Young Adult Carers and Employment

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



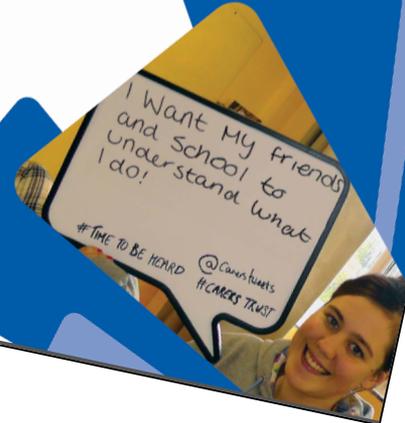
seven million reasons to care



UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

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



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

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 and 'Love' at the bottom. The words are in various colors and sizes, with 'Intergenerational' and 'Socialisation' being the largest. The words 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

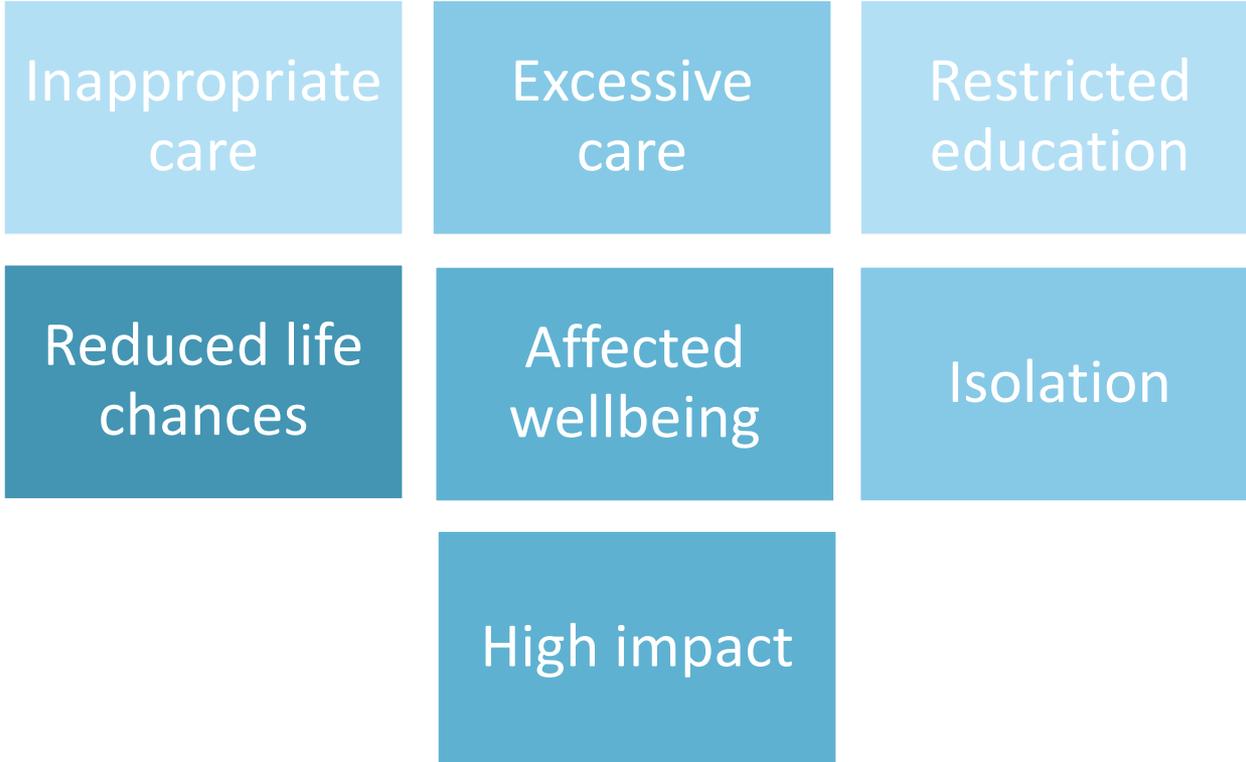
High levels of caring and responsibility

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 ?

Some key factors which influence a country's awareness and response to younger carers

1. National context

- Trustworthy, country-specific, research evidence-base
- Role of key NGOs (carers and children's)
- Reliable national statistics
- Media's role
- Role of individuals and young carers themselves
- Local (and Federal Government) and professional engagement

2. 'Policy transfer' across countries has taken place – similarities and differences

- Research, young carers projects, camps, family approach
- Led by national NGO carers' organisations
- Sharing ideas at International conferences and events

Messages from research

- Need greater awareness of young carers within countries, by professionals and policy makers
- Young carers face similar tasks and outcomes as adult carers
- Services and interventions can improve young carers' health, education and wellbeing
- Early interventions important
- Caring roles can be reduced when *families* receive adequate support



Messages from research



- Aim is to reduce inappropriate and excessive caring and negative outcomes
- Whole family approach is needed
- Identification and assessment crucial
- Research and evaluation is needed – what works and why?

Thank you for listening!

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