Somerset Council

Somerset Young Carers Strategy

2026-28



26-01-2026

Background and vision

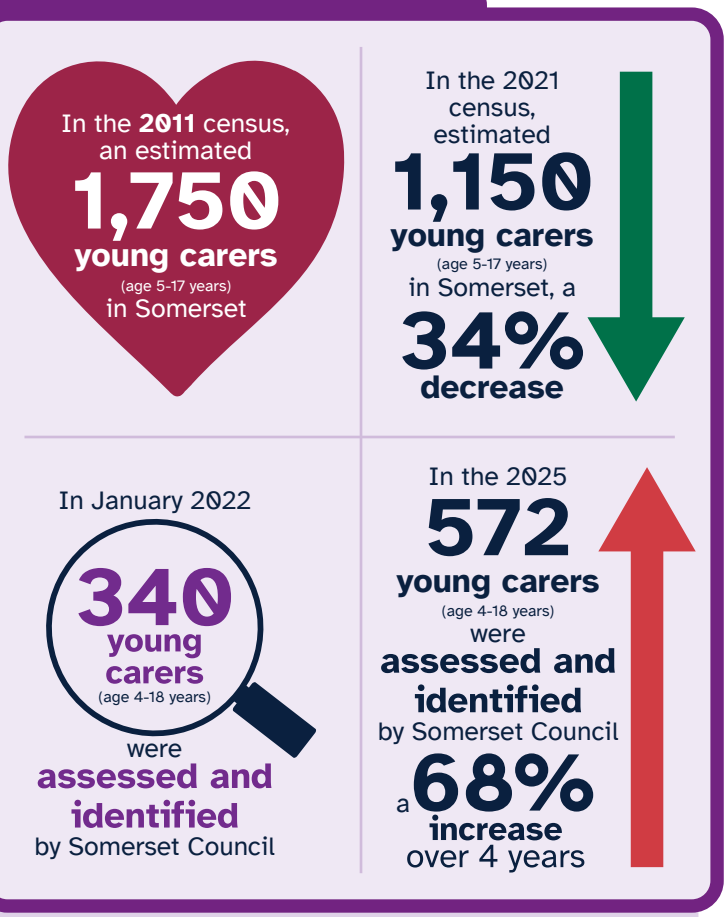
This strategy has been developed in response to Somerset's Commitment to Carers 2024: Valuing and supporting unpaid carers. The commitment to carers highlights a need to provide a special focus and additional resources to support young carers who are often overlooked. This strategy has been informed by recent consultation with young carers; the longer-term plan is to co-produce a needs assessment and strategy to support ongoing work in meeting the needs of young carers.

The vision is that all young carers in Somerset are identified, valued, and supported at the earliest opportunity, with seamless access to the right services at the right time. We are committed to a 'No Wrong Door' approach - wherever a young carer turns for help, they receive the support they need, without being passed between services.

1. Strategic Context

Who are Young Carers?

A young carer is a child or young person under 18 who provides care, assistance, or support to a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, has a long-term condition, or is affected by substance misuse.



Legislative Duties

This strategy aligns with:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Education Acts 2002 & 2011
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- SEND Code of Practice 2015

Somerset Young Carer Data

In 2011, an estimated 1,750 young carers (aged 5–17) were identified in Somerset, based on a South-West regional rate of 2.2%.

In 2021, applying the national rate of 1.4% to Somerset's population gives an updated estimate of 1,150 young carers - a 34% decrease.

In January 2022 340 young carers were identified and assessed by Somerset Council. In January 2025 529 young carers were identified and assessed – 56% increase over 3 years.

Somerset's Commitment to Carers – Outcomes for Young Carers

1. Identified early and recognised.
2. Supported to achieve their potential in education and training.
3. Helped to live a fulfilling life and be involved in decisions about their care.
4. Supported during transition to adulthood.
5. Provided with opportunities to participate in community and decision-making.



2. Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: **Early Identification and Access (No Wrong Door)**

Priority 2: **Participation and Co-production**

Priority 3: **Positive Activities and Social Opportunities**

Priority 4: **Whole-Family and Targeted Support**

Priority 5: **Advice, Information, and Guidance**

Priority 6: **Transition to Adulthood**

Priority 7: **Support in Schools via the Young Carers in Schools Programme**

Strategic Priorities for Young Carers

Priority 1

Early Identification and Access (No Wrong Door)

- Embed young carer identification protocols in all frontline services.
- Deliver multi-agency training on young carer awareness.
- Ensure clear pathways across all stakeholder agencies.
- Establish a lead young carer champion in every school and GP practice.

Priority 2

Participation and Co-production

- Establish a Somerset Young Carers Voice with representation from diverse backgrounds.
- Involve young carers in commissioning, service reviews, and strategy updates.
- Create feedback 'closing the loop' so young carers can see how their voices influence change.

Priority 3

Positive Activities and Social Opportunities

- Fund free/low-cost access to leisure, arts, sports, and holiday clubs.
- Further develop the dedicated young carer activity groups with transport support.
- Partner with local charities and youth organisations to co-deliver inclusive events.
- Embed respite opportunities as part of support planning.

Priority 4

Whole-Family and Targeted Support

- Adopt the 'Think Carer and Think Family' approach across all agencies.
- Develop integrated family support plans linking children's and adult services.
- Increase appropriate provision of parenting support, substance misuse and mental health interventions.
- Ensure young carers have access to Family Group Decision Making in line with Families First.

Priority 5

Advice, Information, and Guidance

- Provide transition-focused resources for ages 14–18.
- Develop appropriate accessible and neurodiverse-friendly assessments tools.
- Encourage schools and healthcare settings to distribute information about young carers rights.

Priority 6

Transition to Adulthood

- Implement joint transition planning from age 17, with Children's Social Care (CSC) and Thrive Somerset
- Ensure access to supported internships, career advice, and higher education guidance.
- Embed young carers in Local Offer and SEND transition pathways.

Priority 7

Support in Schools via the Young Carers in Schools Programme

- Promote and support schools to adopt the YCiS programme and work towards national award.
- Provide staff training to help schools identify, record and support young carers effectively.
- Ensure every school has a designated young carers lead.
- Integrate young carers' needs into school inclusion, attendance and wellbeing strategies.
- Celebrate achievements and share best practice across Somerset's education settings.
- Focus on improving young carers school attendance in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance

3. Governance and Delivery

Multi-Agency Governance Group

The Young Carers Strategic Partnership subgroup reports to the Carers Strategic Partnership Board, which will oversee delivery, with representation from a range of agencies as set out within the subgroup's terms of reference.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Reporting every other month to the Carers Strategic Partnership Board.
- Updates every other month to the strategic plan updated by the Young Carers Strategic Partnership subgroup.
- Development of a needs assessment by 2027 and a longer-term strategy from 2027-2030
- Outcomes aligned to the Somerset Commitment to Carers.

4. Conclusion

This strategy sets out a unified and ambitious approach to supporting young carers in Somerset. By strengthening identification, building responsive services, and working in true partnership with young carers and their families, we can remove barriers, raise aspirations, and create a culture where all young carers are empowered to thrive.



Glossary

Aspirations - Our hopes and ambitions of achieving greatness for young carers.

Closing the loop - The ending of a process, conversation or project by making sure that every step is completed, feedback and evaluation is acknowledged and that action has been taken.

Co-produce - A collaborative approach where professionals, children and young people work together as equal partners to evaluate, design and deliver changes to services.

Legislative Duties - This involves are duty to follow the guidance, rules and laws, as established by Acts of Parliament.

Needs Assessment - A process that identifies gaps in services to establish what changes, support and resources are needed to fill the gap.

Multi-Agency Governance - A collaborative framework where professionals and organisations will work together, to address issues that no single service can effectively do alone.

Neurodiverse - People's brains can work in different ways. Some people think, learn, or understand things differently. Being neurodiverse means having a brain that works in a unique way, like being good at some things and finding other things harder.

Participation - The active and equal involvement of children and young people in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. It involves creating opportunities, listening to children and young people's views and empowering them to lead the conversation.

Transition - The process or a period of changing. For example changing from children's to adult social care support.

YCiS - Young Carers in Schools