



L&W LEARNING AND
WORK INSTITUTE

THE LEARNING, WORK AND WELLBEING TOOLKIT:

Positive Career Choices for Young Adult Carers

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Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We strive for a fair society in which learning and work helps people realise their ambitions and potential throughout life. We do this by researching what works, influencing policy and implementing new ways to improve people's experiences of learning and employment. We believe a better skilled workforce, in better paid jobs, is good for business, good for the economy, and good for society.

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

The Learning, Work and Wellbeing Toolkit provides staff at carers services with information and resources to help young adult carers explore their options in learning and work, make informed choices about education, training and employment opportunities, and clarify and achieve their career ambitions.

Developed in partnership with carers services and their young adult carers, the toolkit includes tips and practical resources that carers services can use with young adult carers, either on a one-to-one basis or in groups, to help them think about, get into and keep education, training and employment opportunities. It also includes materials focussed on the professional development of staff and service improvement.

The Learning, Work and Wellbeing pack does not expect carers services to replace other organisations which have trained and professional staff employed to provide careers advice. Instead, the pack focusses on how you can prepare, refer and support young adult carers to get the most out of those specialist services.

Carers services have a crucial role in supporting young adult carers through many crucial transitions in their lives: from school to further or higher education, and from education into training or work, all of which will have a profound and lasting impact on their life chances and their families. This toolkit can help you to develop and improve the support young adult carers receive about education and work through professional development and partnership working. This may involve working with young adult carers to identify areas for your service improvement, but also crucially how you advocate and collaborate with external organisations which provide information, advice, guidance, support and opportunities in learning and work so that they more effectively meet the needs of young adult carers.

Although the pack has been developed for working with young adult carers, much of the information and activities can be adapted for supporting adult carers who may wish to seek out leisure, volunteering or work opportunities.

ABOUT POSITIVE CAREER CHOICES

Between April 2016 and March 2018, L&W was funded by the Department of Health to deliver Positive Career Choices. This two-year project aimed to enable young adult carers, aged 16-25, to achieve the same level of success in education and employment as their peers.

The key objectives of the project were to:

- Enable young adult carers to gain an informed understanding of their rights in relation to learning and work
- Support young adult carers to make positive and sustained transitions towards employment
- Enable young adult carers to overcome the challenges and disadvantages they face
- Improve young adult carers' life chances and wellbeing

By working with six carers services and their young adult carers, we developed the Learning, Work and Wellbeing pack to support these objectives.

We would like to thank the six carers services who participated in the project and made it a success:

- Barnardo's CareFree
- Camden Carers Centre
- Carers Federation
- Carers Leeds
- Warwickshire Young Carers Project
- WIRED Carers Service

We would also like to thank Nirav Bhundia, the young adult carer who took the photos used throughout this resource, and the young carers group who agreed to be photographed by Nirav.

YOUNG ADULT CARERS AND CAREER DECISION-MAKING

Young adult carers face greater barriers in education, training and employment than their peers, as they juggle caring responsibilities with learning and work. The knock-on effects of caring, such as loss of confidence, mental health problems and tiredness, also affect young adult carers in education and employment.

Evidence from The Children's Society¹ and Carers Trust² shows that young adult carers:

- are more likely to miss school than their peers;
- on average achieve nine lower GCSE grades than their peers;
- report lack of understanding and support from peers and professionals;
- feel they do not receive good careers advice at school.

As a result, young adult carers are considerably more likely than their peers to not be in education, employment or training, resulting in limited career progression throughout their life and a cycle of intergenerational disadvantage. Young adult carers often have lower aspirations than their peers, and a crucial role for carers services is to support young adult carers to raise their aspirations and to fulfil their potential. The support that young people receive from carers services, such as being able to talk to someone who they can trust and who understands their situation, can make all the difference in enabling young adult carers to develop high aspirations, achieve their goals and improve their long-term life chances.

Diversity

Of course, not all young adult carers will face the same barriers and challenges in education and work. Their situations as young adult carers will be affected by factors such as gender, ethnicity or disability. Generally speaking, boys and young men are not always recognised as carers even when they are, and also find it harder to seek out help when they are facing difficulties or distress. Girls and women generally tend to have lower work aspirations even when they have higher qualifications than their male peers. In some cultures, caring for others, particularly elders, is seen as a duty and fact of life, particularly for girls. Young people with disabilities and learning difficulties tend to be held back by other people's low expectations of them. These factors may not always be the result of overt discrimination, but instead arise because it is seen as the accepted norm, or as a result of unconscious bias.

1 The Children's Society (2013) Hidden from View: the experiences of young carers in England

2 Carers Trust (2013) Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education



It is important to be mindful that young adult carers may internalise these factors and may therefore be a means by which they limit themselves. When we work with young adult carers, we need to be mindful of these factors, challenging our own thinking as well as that of others.

The added impact of caring

As well as the factors above, caring responsibilities themselves can influence young adult carers in their decision making about learning and work. The physical and emotional work of caring, and the time pressures and financial constraints placed upon young adult carers, can have a profound impact on young people's decisions about education and work. A caring role is also likely to restrict young people's access to opportunities which can broaden their thinking about careers, such as extra curricular activities, work experience or part-time work. As a result, young adult carers often follow careers in the caring sector, which is characterised by insecure and low-paid work.

Transferable skills

However, despite these challenges, it is important to recognise that young adult carers acquire skills through their caring role that their peers may not have. Many of these skills are transferable to education, training and work, such as time management, money management, people skills and negotiating with others. So, while it is important to understand and break down the barriers that young adult carers face, support workers also need to help them recognise and value their skills and abilities, and understand how these can be applied in learning and work situations. This pack aims to help you do just that.

YOUNG ADULT CARERS' WELLBEING AND SELF-ESTEEM

Wellbeing is defined as how happy and contented we feel with our lives. This can include feeling healthy and safe, how we feel about our relationships with family, friends and colleagues, whether we feel our life has meaning and purpose, and whether we feel listened to and in control of our lives. A poor sense of wellbeing can result in feelings such as being fed-up, depressed, tired, anxious, ill and hopeless. On the other hand, positive wellbeing leads to feelings of confidence and contentment, and being purposeful, optimistic and energetic.

Self-esteem is the opinion we have of ourselves and level of belief that we can achieve things, that we are good enough and that we will be able to cope and face life's challenges. Positive self-esteem and confidence is a belief that you can succeed in life.

Many young adult carers will experience practical barriers to education and work because of their caring responsibilities, such as time and money, but at times the challenges they face will be internal barriers such as lack of confidence, anxiety and loss of self-belief resulting from poor wellbeing and low self-esteem. Carers Trust⁴ found that 45% of young adult carers report mental health issues – twice the national average – and often report feeling a failure and having no confidence, low self-esteem and a poor sense of wellbeing.



4 Sempik, J. and Becker, S. (2014) Young Adult Carers at College and University. Carers Trust.



Positive wellbeing and self-esteem affects how we make decisions about our choices in life and also how we deal with set-backs. It helps us to build resilience and perseverance. Promoting positive wellbeing in young adult carers is therefore crucial to enabling them to achieve their aspirations in learning and work. However, supportive and meaningful education and employment opportunities also build and sustain wellbeing and self-esteem. It does this in a number of ways, including:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the world around you
- Development of skills and abilities
- Satisfaction and sense of achievement
- Qualifications and recognition of what you have achieved
- An income and greater choices about how you live your life
- Status and sense of identity
- Friends and social contacts
- Pleasure and enjoyment, a sense of being active and engaged
- Hope for the future.

Therefore, getting into the right course or job is important for a young person's wellbeing and self-esteem. Not only this, but it is also important that a young person can sustain an opportunity and sort out problems and issues when faced with challenges.

YOUNG ADULT CARER INVOLVEMENT

Young adult carers were involved at all stages of the Positive Career Choices project. Three young adult carers were part of the Expert Reference Group which set the parameters of the project and reviewed its outputs; 22 young adult carers helped to develop the resources in this pack, piloted them and provided feedback on how they could be improved; and the design of the pack was also created by a young adult carer.

By involving young adult carers at all these stages of the project, we tried to make sure that this resource pack meets the needs of young adult carers and their support workers alike. The concept of young adult carer involvement also runs through the pack and informs how it can be used, so that young adult carers are actively engaged in activities rather than being passive recipients of support.

For carers services, listening to and involving young adult carers can happen at different levels and have many benefits for young people, as well as your professional development and the development of responsive services. Capturing and recording young people's involvement in the development of your service is a powerful way to show young adult carers that they have valuable skills to contribute and that their voice matters.

A key aspect of involving young adult carers is about recognising and rewarding their contribution. The pilots for Positive Career Choices were asked to log the activities of their young adult carer champions and note the skills that they used during those activities. These notes were then converted into testimonials for the young adult carers so that they can be used in future when they are seeking learning and work opportunities. We also hope that they will contribute to sustaining confidence and wellbeing.

We identified that young adult carers used a range of skills when participating in the project:

Personal skills

- Commitment to the task and/or project
- Enthusiasm
- Confidence
- Presenting ideas
- Pride in self and their work
- Knowing when to ask for help or advice
- Taking initiative

Working with others

- Able to speak up and communicate ideas
- Listening to others
- Handling feedback and disagreement
- Understanding other perspectives and ideas
- Empathy – understanding other’s viewpoints
- Negotiating changes and adaptation
- Collaborating and working together
- Awareness of equality and diversity
- Challenging stereotypes

Leadership skills

- Making things happen and bringing other people along with you
- Keeping others focussed on a task
- Keeping self and others to time in order to complete a task

Vocational skills

- Using numbers
- Using speaking and writing skills
- Writing for different contexts and media
- Using IT skills – social media, internet, virtual communication
- Creativity – thinking up new ideas
- Artistic skills – drawing and designing, using images to portray ideas

As this pack aims to help you support young adult carers to see the skills they have and how they can be applied in a learning or work setting, it is especially important that you recognise and record the skills young adult carers use when engaging with your support.

The following table highlights the different ways in which young adult carer involvement can happen.

Deciding their future	Their ambitions, dreams, fears and worries are heard and acknowledged as they think about and plan for their future. You can provide them with the time and space to think about and plan for their future within the context of their caring responsibilities. You can also prepare them so that they get the most out of information, advice, guidance, learning and employment services and opportunities. Supporting young adult carers to make their voice heard reduces the chances of other people making decisions on their behalf, or of their unique abilities and needs not being fully recognised.
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Peer support	Some of the activities can be done in groups or pairs to facilitate the sharing of ideas, collective problem-solving and mutual support. This can break down the sense of isolation that people can face when grappling with ideas of what to do in life, how to get what they want and claiming ownership of their skills and abilities. Working with others can help young people to find strength in knowing that others face the same doubts and anxieties, and provides opportunities for hearing positive feedback from others.
Their skills development	Young adult carers' active involvement in activities enables them to develop skills such as communication, negotiation, creativity, innovation, planning and working with others. It is important to acknowledge the skills they use during the activities, and to encourage them to view these as important transferable skills.
Developing better support	Actively engaging young adult carers in influencing the support that your service offers enables them to feel that their views are important. It will also result in your service offering more responsive and effective support.
Your skills development	Many of the skills you have developed as a carers support worker will be transferable to supporting young adult carers into learning and work, but you may need to use the skills in different ways.
Understanding the system	As you work with young adult carers, you will realise how the system is geared up to get young people into learning and work. But, as importantly, you will gain an understanding of what doesn't work and where the barriers are. You will also get a sense of what needs to change and how the system could be more inclusive for young adult carers.
Partnership working	This increased understanding of how the system works or doesn't work will inform which organisations you should try and build partnerships with. Actively involving young people in the process of partnership working is also important in order to inform and shape new working arrangements. The voice of young adult carers can be a powerful tool in engaging and inspiring new partners.

'THINK, GET, KEEP'

The Learning, Work and Wellbeing pack uses a framework called 'Think, Get, Keep' to organise the different resources included within it. The 'Think, Get, Keep' framework was developed to be used with individuals who may require a longer-term and more holistic approach to support their career learning and management.

By 'career learning', we mean the development of self-awareness and the full recognition of the skills and abilities that enable us to make informed decisions, based on our aspirations. 'Career management' is the process by which we get, keep and progress in our education and employment.

Using the model with young adult carers

Young people go through a number of transitions between the ages of 16 and 25 in order to achieve their aspirations. For young adult carers, these transitions can be more challenging than for their peers, and so often require the kind of approach which the 'Think, Get, Keep' framework aims to support.

The 'Think, Get, Keep' model:

- Is about access to education, training and work, but it is also about remaining in and progressing in those opportunities.
- Recognises that some people experience greater social, emotional, cultural and structural barriers to education, training and work.
- Helps people to identify and overcome the challenges and barriers they face.
- Is about identifying strengths and skills as well as coping strategies and promoting independence.
- Is a learning process for the young adult carer and also for the support worker.
- Recognises that you may work over a long period of time with a young adult carer and provide timely support that is appropriate to the stage they are at.
- Is also about how we develop the services that young adult carers need and want to support them.
- Promotes wellbeing and self-esteem throughout this process, and therefore young people's resilience to be independent in their own career management.

'Think, Get, Keep' is a cyclical model that we all tend to use when we need to make decisions about what we want to achieve. We all go through a process of thinking through our options based on our personal ambitions and preferences. We all take action to get what we want and then to maintain and sustain what it is we have achieved. At some point, for example when a course ends or we are ready to move on in our careers, we begin the process again by thinking

about what the next step will be, but this time we build on what we have achieved and learnt so far to inform how we can get what we aspire to. This pack aims to make this process explicit to young adult carers so that it is a learning process, one that builds on their strengths but also dismantles the barriers they may face because of their situation.

Think – setting your goals, thinking about who you are, where are you now, what you want to be and how you are going to get there

Get – what you need to do and be supported to do in order to get what you want to achieve

Keep – how you keep on doing what you want to do, what support is helping you get to where you want to be



When using the 'Think, Get, Keep' framework, it is important to bear two things in mind:

- We don't always have one idea of what we want to do in life, or just one action that we can take to get to where we want to end up. For example, a person might want to be an engineer and will need to consider whether to go into higher education or do an apprenticeship. Or they might not be able to decide between engineering or becoming an architect. So the person might want to have two (or more) action plans going at once.
- We don't smoothly go from '**Think**' into '**Get**', then to '**Keep**' and then round again. Sometimes we might think about what we want but realise that there are some barriers in the '**Get**' stage that can't be overcome, so we have to go back to thinking. For example, in the '**Get**' stage a person realises they have missed a deadline for applications, so they have to '**Think**' about how to usefully spend a year while they reapply. Or they may reach the '**Keep**' stage and discover that their course is not working out for them, so they need to go back to '**Get**' to sort out the challenges they are facing, or move back into '**Think**' to decide whether to take a different path.



Using the model for your own professional development

For carers support workers, 'Think, Get, Keep' can also be used as a framework for your own professional development in supporting young adult carers to think about, get and sustain learning and work opportunities. You may need to:

- Think – what skills do you already have that enable you to do this? What skills do you want to develop?
- Get - how will you develop those skills? What opportunities do you have for your own professional development? What, if any, barriers do you face in pursuing professional development?
- Keep - how will you maintain your skills? How will you ensure you have the opportunities to utilise your skills and continuously develop? Is this part of your own career development and future progression?

Using the model to develop better support and services

The model of 'Think, Get, Keep' can also apply to the support that your service provides to young adult carers. You may be developing a way of working with young adult carers to support their education, training and employment that is new to you. Increasingly, you may need to address

these issues in order to tackle the social exclusion and limited life chances that many young adult carers face. As you do so, it will be important for you to create services that are not reliant on the skills and expertise of one worker but embedded into the whole of your service's offer to young adult carers. As such you might want to:

- Think – what services do you want your organisation to offer? What resources and expertise already exists within your organisation?
- Get - How can you upskill staff to work effectively with young adult carers on their career aspirations? What professional development is needed across the organisation? How can those skills, knowledge and resources be shared across the organisation?
- Keep - Do you need to seek partnerships? Do you need to create an organisational strategy?

Using 'Think, Get, Keep' in different contexts

	Young adult carer	Your own development	Service development
Think	Setting the initial goal by enabling the young adult carer to think about who they are, where they are now, what they want and what the enablers and barriers are for them.	What skills do I have to support young adult carers in education and work? What skills do I want to develop? What resources are available to me?	What level of support to help young adult carers in education and work do we want to provide? What do we currently do? What needs improving and what can help us?
Get	What are the practical steps the young adult carer needs to take to get what they want? What support might they need? How can they get that support?	What steps do I need to take to develop the skills I want to develop? How do I get more resources to do this work? Who can help, who can I involve?	What practical steps can we take to upskill staff? What resources can we use to do this? Who can help?
Keep	The young adult carer has achieved their goal. Are plans in place to help them sustain it? Are plans in place in case of difficulties or crises? Do they have a support network in place?	How do I maintain my professional development and continuously improve? What is my own career progression?	How do we ensure that we maintain the service we are trying to develop? What opportunities are there for partnership working so that it is sustainable?

USING THE PACK

This resource pack provides a number of activities to use with young adult carers at various stages of the 'Think, Get, Keep' process.

- Guidance is provided as to when to use the activities and how to use the activities, but use your judgement. Some activities can be used when working one-to-one with young adult carers and some are better done in a group. Adapt the activities according to the young adult carers you are working with to take account of their age or, when working with a group, how well they know each other. Also consider having mixed groups of young adult carers and staff, so that there are opportunities for learning on both sides.
- Be creative. Use the resources in different ways, or get young adult carers to think of different activities. For example, you could develop your own case studies.
- The more interactive you make the activities the better. Try to avoid just giving young adult carers the activities to complete on their own, but try to do activities in pairs and groups. Use the activities to create opportunities for sharing and learning.
- This pack also uses existing resources, such as 'The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning' and 'Value My Skills cards' and suggests ways to use them.
- Don't stop with the pack. Research other resources and websites for more information and materials. Get on mailing lists for college prospectuses and open day events. Start your own Facebook page or Pinterest boards to share other resources.



Supporting young adult carers in to learning, training or work can only be achieved if it is underpinned by the capacity of carers support workers and carers services to provide effective support to young adult carers in these areas, so at the end of each section are activities for your own professional development or for organising internal training for colleagues.

The following table outlines which activities can be used at various stages of the 'Think, Get, Keep' process.

	Working with young adult carers	Your own development	Service development
Think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies 1-4 ● Value My Skills ● The Skills Wheel ● My day, my skills (activity 1) ● The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning ● My Job Ideas (activity 2) ● Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel (activities 3 and 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-assessment tool (activity 9) ● Case studies 1-4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-assessment tool (activity 9) ● Case studies 1-4
Get	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies 3-6 ● Snakes and ladders ● Overcoming barriers (activity 6) ● STAR (activity 7) ● The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning ● At-a-glance planner (activity 8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies 3-6 ● Action Plan for Professional Development (activity 10) ● Overcoming barriers (activity 6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies 3-6 ● Creating an address book (activity 11)
Keep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies 7-10 ● Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel (activities 3 and 4) ● Overcoming barriers (activity 6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case Studies 7-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies 7-10 ● Partnership Building (activity 12)

THINKING

This is the first and most important part of the 'Think, Get, Keep' model. Without taking the time to think through what we want in life, we risk ending up doing something that isn't right for us and for which we are not suited. It can also be the most difficult stage. A few individuals seem to be born with a sense of vocation, but for the rest of us, and especially young adults, it can be hard to think about what you want to do and what you are good at.

Working with young adult carers

The '**Think**' stage is about giving young adult carers the time, space and opportunity to think about what they want to do in life. Between the ages of 16 and 25 is a period of growth and change for young people, and so it is important to build in time for them to think and revisit their ideas and goals as they change and develop. For young adult carers, this can be particularly difficult because they may perceive that they:

- have very little time to sit and think;
- have no one to talk to or who will listen to them;
- have to think about the needs of others all the time and forget to think about themselves;
- don't feel they have a range of life experiences to draw on and from which to learn about themselves;
- find it embarrassing to talk about themselves, especially to talk about what they are good at;
- have low confidence and self-esteem so they don't feel that they are good at anything;
- have a low sense of wellbeing and feel that everything is pointless;
- don't know what the options and possibilities are and feel overwhelmed.

For carer support workers, this stage requires use of listening and questioning skills and other guidance skills, particularly when working one-to-one with young adult carers. It is also about providing the space and time for young adult carers to talk about their ideas, ambitions and worries to somebody who understands their situations and who they are confident will listen, support and encourage them. It may be done over time and involve one-to-one conversations, group discussions or activities.

Activities



Case studies

The case studies are designed to prompt discussion amongst a group of young adult carers. They can help them to consider different perspectives, put themselves in the position of another person and find solutions to problems.

The case studies are in two parts, so that you can pause and consider each situation and what the person could do. The second part of each case study highlights how a situation can change for the better or worse depending on what action is taken.

Case studies 1 to 4 (Daniel, Afia, Abdul and Connor) can all be used to prompt discussion about the 'Think' stage. In each case study, discussion should focus on tips and techniques for thinking about and discovering what you want to do, what you enjoy doing, what your ambitions are and what your interests are.



Value My Skills cards

Here are three ideas for using the Value My Skills cards:

Skill Sorter

This activity can be used when working one-to-one with a young adult carer. The aim is to help them think about the range of skills they already have and to focus on the skills they want to use and develop through learning or work. It is helpful to get them to think about skills they use all the time in their caring role or in other areas of their life, and how they can be applied to learning and work situations.

1. Sort the cards into three piles using the headings 'I enjoy doing this', 'I don't mind doing this' and 'I don't enjoy doing this'.
2. When the cards are sorted, make a note of the skills in the 'I enjoy doing this' pile. Note whether there are more from some categories than others. The categories are Managing, Emotional, People, Practical, Creative and Data.
 - Can the young person think of situations or jobs where they might have to use these skills?
3. The 'I enjoy doing this' pile can be further sorted into three piles: 'I want to improve this skill'; 'I need to improve this skill'; 'I don't need to improve this skill'.
 - What further education and training opportunities might be available to enable the young person to develop the skills they want or need?
4. If the young adult carer is in a position to apply for education, employment or training, they can use the skills they identified through the skills sorter activity to complete the STAR (activity 7).

Skills Matrix

This activity aims to help young adult carers think about which skills they are most confident with and which skills they enjoy using. It can help them identify where they need to develop in order to achieve their aspirations and think about how they might go about this.

It helps to have a large piece of paper or surface to do this activity.

1. Place the category cards 'I'm good at this', 'I'm OK at this' and 'I'm not so good at this' along the top of the piece of paper.
2. Place the cards 'I enjoy this', 'I don't mind this' and 'I don't enjoy this' down the left-hand side of the paper.

For example:

	I'm good at this	I'm OK at this	I'm not so good at this
I enjoy doing this			
I don't mind doing this			
I don't enjoy doing this			

3. Then ask the young adult carer to sort the skills cards into the different boxes, depending on how much they enjoy and how good they feel they are at using each skill.
4. The skills in the top left-hand box are the skills that the young person might want to be able to use in a learning or work opportunity.
5. Use some of the other headings in the pack, such as 'I want to improve this skill'; 'I need to improve this skill'; 'I don't need to improve this skill', to further sort the skills cards in the other boxes. This will help the young adult carer prioritise where they want or need to develop skills and build an action plan based on these. There may be skills that the young adult carer doesn't enjoy using or doesn't feel confident at but may still need to develop in order to get the learning or work opportunity that they want. This could include maths or English skills, which are essential for getting onto higher level courses and important in lots of jobs.

Skills Builder

This activity can be used with a group of young adult carers who know each other well enough to give feedback to each other.

It can be hard to recognise your own skills; we often take for granted the skills we use every day. Other people often see skills in us that we do not recognise. This activity encourages participants to talk about the skills they think they have and to help each other recognise their skills.

1. Make sure the cards are shuffled and then deal each player 8 cards each. Put the remaining cards in the middle of the table.
2. Each player puts their cards face up in front of them and sorts into two piles:
 - 4 'Keep' cards – the skills that the player knows they have and can do well.
 - 4 'Swap' cards – the skills that the player doesn't think they have or that they don't enjoy using.
 - If a player doesn't think they have 4 cards that they want to keep then they can swap them with cards from the pile in the middle, until they have 4 they want to keep.

3. Each player takes a turn to explain one 'keep' card by telling the group why they think they have that skill and how they have used it in the past. Then they choose a 'swap' card, choose a member of the group who they think has that skill and give an example of how they have used it. They then give the card to that player to put in their 'keep' pile.
4. Continue until each player has explained all their 'keep' cards and all their 'swap' cards have been given to other players. Players can use the pile in the middle to find other skills if they cannot match their swap cards to any of the other players.
5. At the end, each player can complete a STAR (activity 7) with the skills in their keep pile.
6. After the game, discuss the following with players:
 - Is it easy or difficult to talk about your skills in front of others?
 - Why is it important to talk about your skills and what you have achieved?
 - Were you surprised when other people said you had skills and gave examples of how you have used those skills?
 - Did you agree with them?
 - Is it easy or hard to tell people what skills they have? How does it feel to do that?



The Skills Wheel

Like the Value My Skills cards, the Skills Wheel has been designed to help young adult carers think about the skills they have, that they enjoy using or want to develop.

The Skills Wheel includes different skills to those on the Values My Skills cards. It can help young adult carers think about an even wider range of skills and recognise their abilities. It can also provide a different way for young people to sort and prioritise their skills. The Skills Wheel can be used in conjunction with the heading cards in the Value My Skills pack to help with sorting and prioritising.



My day, my skills (activity 1)

It can be easy to overlook some of the skills we have, just because we use them every day to get things done. They become almost second nature and we don't always recognise them as skills anymore, they are just things we do. Many of those skills are transferable skills and could be used in lots of different situations.

This exercise uses the activities that a young adult carer does from when they wake up, to when they go to bed, to help them think about the skills they use on a daily basis. The activity can be used in conjunction with Value My Skills cards or the Skills Wheel to help identify the skills used in certain activities.

This activity can be used in one-to-ones with young adult carers or with young adult carers in pairs. Ask them to complete the activity, writing down all the things they do during a 'typical' day. Then look at each task or activity and identify the range of skills they use and demonstrate by carrying out that task.

Doing this with the young adult carer or getting them to work in pairs with someone they know and trust can make this activity easier because other people will recognise the skills we use when we don't always see them in ourselves.

At the end of the activity, prompt discussion by asking questions:

- Were you surprised by the amount of skills you use throughout a 'typical' day?
- Did you identify skills you didn't think you had?
- Have you listed skills that you want to be able to use in a learning or work situation?

At the end of the activity, young adult carers can go on to complete a STAR (activity 7), My job ideas (activity 2).



My Job Ideas (activity 2)

Once a young adult carer has identified the skills they have, want to use or develop, the next step is to think about the kind of jobs that require those skills.

Young adult carers will need up to date information about jobs and specialist support to think about the right education and training pathways for them, so when it is appropriate you should refer them for a careers interview with an information, advice and guidance specialist (for example, a National Careers Service adviser).

Your role is to help the young person think about the job opportunities available to them, raise their aspirations and awareness of different roles, and prepare for the more in-depth discussions they will have with an IAG specialist. There are many ways to find out about the range and diversity of jobs in the labour market, for example:

- The National Careers Service <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> has a 'job profiles' page which provides information on over 800 different job roles. Each job profile explains the skills and qualifications needed to do the job, what the work would be like, the pay you could expect to receive and what the career prospects are.
- icouldCareers <https://icould.com/> has a Buzz Quiz that provides job ideas matched to your personality preference.

As you work with young adult carers to help them think about potential future careers, encourage them to complete the My Job Ideas table (activity 2). This will help them to keep track of their thoughts and will be useful for them to show to an IAG specialist if they go for a careers interview.

You can also help them think about the skills and training they might need for different jobs, their values in relation to work, and how their caring role might affect their aspirations:

- Have they completed the activities using the Value My Skills cards, the Skills Wheel or the Skills Matrix? Do the skills they identified match the skills needed to do the jobs they are interested in? Do they want or need to develop those skills further, or learn new ones?
- Is further study or training required for the type of work they are interested in? Do they know what courses or training is required? What are the different options (e.g. further or higher education, apprenticeships)? Where can they find out more information about this?
- What salary can they expect to earn in the jobs they are interested in? Is money important to them? Have they noticed different salary levels depending on qualifications or types of work, e.g. finance jobs compared to caring jobs? Does this affect their job ideas?
- Depending on the young person you are working with, you might also need to talk about other aspects of career decision making:
- Aspirations – does being a young adult carer affect their aspirations and the choices they are making? Does it feel okay to step outside of their caring role and want to do something different? Do they think other people expect them to go into caring?
 - Stereotypes – do they feel that they and others have expectations about what they will do for a job based on, for example, their gender, background, ethnicity or disability? How might this affect the salary they can expect to earn? Or their longer-term career prospects?
 - Where can they go to get further information, advice and guidance about jobs and different education and training routes? What kinds of information and advice do they want or need?



The Wellbeing Teller (activity 3)

This activity aims to enable young adult carers to think about the wider aspects of wellbeing and what they can do to improve and maintain their wellbeing. It is based on a children's game called Fortune Teller, but behind this light-hearted approach some serious messages and discussions can take place.

The Wellbeing Teller helps young adult carers to think about four aspects of health and wellbeing:

- Being Me – how we think and act towards ourselves.
- My lifestyle – how we live and choices we can make about our health.
- My time – how we spend our time and activities we undertake.
- Around me – how we connect to others and opportunities.

1. Use the template and instructions on activity 3 to make a Wellbeing Teller. Use this as a demonstration of what the wellbeing teller looks like and how it can be used with young adult carers.
2. Provide copies of activity 3 so that young adult carers can make their own wellbeing teller.
3. Play with the wellbeing tellers and use them to prompt discussion:
 - Why do they think the actions in the teller help to build confidence and wellbeing?
 - Are there any that surprise them?
 - Do they already do these things to maintain their wellbeing and confidence?
 - Do they do other things to build their confidence and wellbeing?



The Wellbeing Wheel (activity 4)

After doing the Wellbeing Teller activity, you can move on and work with young adult carers to complete a Wellbeing Wheel. This encourages them to score their wellbeing indicators and identify areas to work on.

1. Either working by themselves or with someone they trust, ask young adult carers to complete the wellbeing wheel and score themselves by circling a number in each section. Complete the scoring in a coloured pen and ask them to join up the scores so that they create a spider web effect. Fill in the date when they scored themselves.
2. Then ask the young adult carer to complete an action plan using their scores to decide what they want to do to improve their scores. They don't have to fill in all the sections, but it is important to prioritise action where they may be worried or in need of support.
3. The next time the wheel is completed, use a different colour so that any change in their wellbeing and confidence can be seen. After each session, review progress and complete a new action plan.



The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning (RUBLE)

The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning for Young Adult Carers (RUBLE) is a fantastic resource that is packed with information and activities, including a diary for writing in appointments and things the young adult carer might want to remember.

Young adult carers might want to take a RUBLE away with them to complete in their own time and on their own, or you can use sections with them individually or in groups as part of your work to support them in thinking about, getting into and keeping learning and work opportunities.

Here is a list of the different sections of the RUBLE which can be used during the 'Think' stage.

Section	Pages	Activity
Positive Statements	14-15	Useful activities in helping young adult carers to think about what they enjoy and want to get out of life.
Personal Skills	17-19	Use these pages with the Value My Skills cards or with My Day, My Skills (activity 1).
Taking up work	43-45	Use these pages with the Value My Skills cards or with My Day, My Skills (activity 1).
Positive Statements	10-16	Useful activities to use with the Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel and activity 5 when they need to say what actions they will take, particularly 'Being Me'.
Being a Young Adult Carer	20-23	Useful activities to use with the Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel and activity 5 when they need to say what actions they will take, particularly 'Being Me'.
Looking after your health, wellbeing and happiness	55-64	Useful activities to use with the Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel and activity 4 when they need to say what actions they will take, particularly 'Being Me'.
Looking after your money	116-128	Useful information for budgeting.

What Employers Want

Another activity you might do with young adult carers to help them think about employment and job opportunities is based on our What Employers Want project.

What Employers Want is a participatory research project which enables organisations and services to train their young people to carry out interviews with employers. The aim is for young people to find out for themselves what employers want from job applicants, instead of simply being told by career professionals. Our experience suggests that this approach is far more beneficial, with participants telling us that they:

- Developed a range of skills, for example, communication, team work and research skills
- Gained a better insight into the skills and attributes that employers value
- Increased their confidence in applying for jobs and speaking directly to employers
- Improved their understanding of what can help increase their chances of gaining employment
- Increased their knowledge and awareness of local employers who offer apprenticeships and work placements to young people
- Were offered a job as a result of the project!

In 2017, Barnardo's CareFree successfully ran What Employers Want with a group of young adult carers in Leicestershire, so we know that this approach works well for young people with caring responsibilities too.

To find out more about the project and download guidance on running What Employers Want with your young people, visit www.whatemployerswant.org. There's also a short guide for young people looking for work which includes the findings from the original project, which you can share with your young adult carers.



Having worked through the 'Think' stage, young adult carers should now have a clearer idea of what they want to do in learning and work, what they enjoy, Now it is time to move on to the 'Get' stage.

Your own development

Supporting young adult carers to raise their aspirations and access learning and work opportunities is about being an agent for promoting social inclusion. It can be a complex task that involves working in a person-centered way with young adult carers while also seeing the bigger picture and being able to bring about change in education and employment systems. All of this usually happens in the context of time and funding constraints and changing policies and priorities.

As a carer support worker, you will probably have many of the skills needed to support young adult carers to access learning and work. Some of the resources included in this pack aim to help you think about these skills and whether you need or want to develop in any areas to carry out this work more effectively.

The '**Think**' stage should give you the time and space to consider the skills you have to support young adult carers in education and work, the skills you want to develop and the resources available to help you achieve this.

Activities



Self-assessment tool (activity 9)

In thinking about your own professional development, you need to consider the following questions:

- Where am I in my career and professional development?
- What do I want to achieve? In the short and longer-term?
- What are my values? What is important to me?
- What are my skills, abilities and interests?
- What skills do I want or need to develop?

Activity 9 has been developed to show the range of skills, knowledge and competencies needed to work with young adult carers in order to support them into learning and work. You may want to add others to the list.

Use activity 9 to self-assess your current skills, competencies and knowledge. It can seem like a long list but you will find that you probably have many of the attributes already, or there may be some that really interest you and which you want to develop further. Use the titles in the Value My Skills cards to complete your own skills matrix, so that you prioritise skills you want to develop, enjoy using or think that you need to develop.

You can do this exercise on your own, with a friend or colleague, or in an appraisal meeting with your line manager.



Case studies

Case studies 1 to 4 (Daniel, Afia, Abdul and Connor) are all about the skills and knowledge you need to support a young adult carer in the '**Think**' stage and to help them in their decision-making.

Read each case study and consider the following questions:

- What would you do in each situation?
- What skills and knowledge do you have to help the young adult carer make a decision?
- What are the gaps in your skills and knowledge? Can you develop these?
- At what point would you refer the young adult carer to another agency?
- What agencies in your local area could you refer the young adult carer to?
- How would you go about referring the young adult carer?

Service development

The **'Think'** stage can help you to consider your service more widely and whether it meets the needs of your young adult carers. You might want to think about what support your service currently offers to help young adult carers raise their aspirations and access learning and work opportunities, and how this could be further developed.

These activities are designed for you to work in groups with colleagues.

Activities



Case studies

Case studies 1 to 4 (Daniel, Afia, Abdul and Connor) are all about the skills and knowledge you need to support a young adult carer in the **'Think'** stage and to help them in their decision making.

Working as a group, use the case studies to discuss how your organisation would work with the young adult carer in each case study. Consider the following questions:

- As an organisation what would you do to support the young adult carer in each case study?
- As an organisation do you have the skills and knowledge to support a young adult carer in the **'Think'** stage?
- Are these skills and knowledge spread evenly across the organisation? What could be done to share knowledge and build the skills of all?
- What are the challenges faced in your organisation in supporting young adult carers in similar situations?
- Do you know what local agencies you can refer young adult carers to in order to support them?



Self-assessment tool (activity 9)

1. Work with a group of colleagues and complete a Self- Assessment Tool each. Support each other in completing, feedback to each other the skills and knowledge you have seen your colleagues demonstrate.
2. As a group identify the strengths and gaps you have as a team.

GETTING

The 'Get' stage is about taking action to secure the learning and work opportunity that the young adult carer is aiming for. This is a 'doing' stage and might involve applying for courses, training or jobs, completing application forms and preparing for interviews. It might also involve finding out about and applying for funding for travel or equipment costs, sorting out additional support for the person who is being cared for, or deciding how to declare caring responsibilities. Equally as important, this stage might involve getting support and encouragement to help with confidence and self-esteem.

Working with young adult carers

The skills that young adult carers identified that they have in the 'Think' stage can be used to help them through the 'Get' stage. For example, if a young adult carer identified that they have good negotiating skills as they have been able to arrange better services for the person they care for, they can use these to negotiate learning support or flexible working for themselves.

As a carer support worker, you will be using the same skills as in the 'Think' stage, e.g. listening, questioning, challenging and supporting, but you may also bring your knowledge of organisations that can help, sources of support and funding, rights and entitlements. Part of your role will be to work with the young adult carer to access the support they need and to encourage them to keep going.

Activities



Case studies

Case studies 3 to 6 (Abdul, Connor, Carmen and Laura) can all be used to prompt discussion about what actions can be taken in the 'Get' stage. For each case study, discussion should focus on what the young adult carer can do to achieve their goal. Make sure that you encourage the group to think about strategies for building confidence and positive wellbeing as well as sorting out practical things like learning support, funding or respite breaks.



Snakes and Ladders

This activity aims to encourage young adult carers to think about and share the challenges (snakes) and enablers (ladders) that will either prevent or enable them to achieve their ambitions in learning and work. It is based on a children's game, but behind this light-hearted approach some serious messages and discussions can take place.

- When someone lands on a snake and has to go down the board, talk about what could have prevented or helped this situation.
- When someone lands on a ladder and goes up the board, ask whether the young adult carers are aware of or have used that support. How helpful was it? Did it enable them to get what they wanted?
- Count the number of snakes and ladders. Does the ratio of snakes to ladders reflect young adult carers' view of the challenges they face compared to the support available?
- Ask if they were aware of the challenges and enablers identified in the game. Can they think of any other challenges or enablers that they might experience?



Overcoming barriers (activity 6)

Turning an ambition or dream into reality can seem scary, overwhelming and complicated. It can feel like there are too many things to sort out, on top of all of the other things that a young adult carer might have to do as part of their caring role. Times of transition from one opportunity to another and dealing with change can also feel like going into the unknown. If their confidence is low, these tasks can seem even more daunting to a young person and it can seem easier to put things off or just not bother.

This exercise is about identifying all the challenges, no matter how big or small, a young adult carer faces in achieving their ambitions, and then working through each one to think of solutions and who can help.

Remind the young adult carer of all the skills and abilities they identified for themselves in the '**Think**' stage that they can now use. Remind them of the wellbeing actions to make sure they maintain their confidence and wellbeing through this transition stage. Make sure they put a date to actions they are going to do so that they don't miss important deadlines.



STAR (activity 7)

In the '**Think**' stage, there are activities you may have used with young adult carers to help them think about the skills they have and want to be able to use or develop in learning and work. The '**Think**' stage is about building self-awareness of all they have to offer when they are trying to get what they want to achieve.

The '**Get**' stage is more practical and it is important to build up a bank of evidence of when a young person has demonstrated the skills they identified during the '**Think**' stage. In applications or interview for learning or work opportunities, it is not enough for a young person to list the skills they have, they need to be able to back up those claims with examples of when and how they have used those skills to get things done.

The STAR will help young adult carers record examples of when they have used the skills they have identified in themselves. These can then be used when completing applications forms, or can be recounted in interviews.



At-a-glance planner (activity 8)

When a young adult carer wants to get into an opportunity such as a course, training programme or job, there are usually important dates by when they have to apply for the opportunity, for funding or for support.

The at-a-glance planner (activity 8) will help young adult carers to keep track of these dates and deadlines. This can be particularly useful if they want to apply for several opportunities (either because they want to keep their options open or to have a fall-back plan if their first choice doesn't work out).

Disclosure

During the 'Get' stage, it is important to discuss with young adult carers whether they want to disclose their caring responsibilities or not. It can be useful to draw up a list of pros and cons of disclosing with the young person so they can make an informed decision.

The RUBLE has a useful section on disclosure – see below.



The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning

Here is a list of the different sections of the RUBLE which can be used during the 'Get' stage:

Section	Pages	Activity
Positive statements	10-16	Useful activities to use with the Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel and activity 5 when they need to say what actions they will take, particularly 'Being Me'.
Positive statements	14	Use this activity with the STAR (activity 7).
Being a young adult carer	20-23	Useful activities to use with the Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel and activity 5 when they need to say what actions they will take, particularly 'Being Me'.
Taking up learning	30-36	Useful information to use if a young adult carer is applying for a learning opportunity.
Telling your learning provider that you are a carer	33-36	Useful information to support a young adult carer to tell a learning provider they are a carer and what they should expect.
Taking up work	37-42	Useful information if a young adult carer is applying for a job.
Action planning and getting to your goal	46-54	Useful to put down everything that the young carer needs to do to get a learning and work opportunity.
Looking after your health, wellbeing and happiness	55-64	Useful activities to use with the Wellbeing Teller and Wellbeing Wheel and activity 5 when they need to say what actions they will take, particularly 'Being Me'.
Hints and tips for job-hunting	89-102	Useful information and worksheet for keeping track of progress.
Taking up work and managing your money	107-115	Useful information on managing money when getting and keeping employment.
Looking after your money	116-128	Useful information for budgeting.

Your own development

After thinking about your professional development in the 'Think' stage, you can start taking action to develop your skills and knowledge in the 'Get' stage.

Activities



Case studies

Case studies 3 to 6 (Abdul, Connor, Carmen and Laura) are all about helping young adult carers through the 'Get' stage. They can help you identify the practical steps you can support the young person to take in order for them to achieve their aspirations. As you read through the case studies, consider the following questions:

- What support would you provide to the young adult carer to help them get the learning or work opportunity that they want?
- What are the barriers faced by the young adult carer?
- What strategies would you use to help them overcome these barriers?
- How would you support the young adult carer to build and sustain their confidence and wellbeing during this transition?
- What other agencies or support is available in your local area to support this young adult carer into a learning and work opportunity?
- What are the protocols for referring and working with multiple agencies?
- If you are successfully working with other agencies to support young adult carers to get into learning and work, what is working well?
- What are the gaps in getting the support for young adult carers to access learning and work opportunities in your local area?



Action Plan for professional development (activity 10)

Having completed the self-assessment tool and prioritised the skills you want to develop, you can now move on to creating an action plan for your professional development (activity 10).

When you are thinking about how to get the development opportunities you need, think creatively. You might want to consider some of the following:

- Reading and research – use the list at the end of this booklet for suggestions on further reading and resources.
- Become a reflective practitioner – keep a log book of the work you are doing, note what works well and what could be done better. Use the STAR (activity 7) to log your own evidence of the skills you have demonstrated in your work and wider life.
- Buddying – work with a colleague to support each other. This could involve discussing cases (be mindful of confidentiality), sharing ideas on how to work effectively with a young adult carer or observing each other when you work one-to-one with a young adult carer (seek the permission from the young adult carer first). Run group sessions and activities together, such as the ones in this pack and reflect on what you have learnt, what went well and what could have gone better.
- Mentoring – seek out a colleague in your organisation or in another organisation to mentor you. This can be done face-to-face or might simply be a regular telephone catch up. Alternatively, you could become a mentor to a colleague; this can be as much a learning experience for you as it is for them.
- Involve yourself – if there are new projects or initiatives taking place, volunteer to get involved.

- Get out and about – attend open days, go on visits to other agencies. Ask if you can job shadow colleagues in partner organisations.
- Seek out formal professional development – use websites like the Career Development Institute (www.thecdi.net) to find out what is available. Find out what the training budget is in your organisation.



Overcoming barriers (activity 6)

Use activity 6 to identify your own barriers to accessing professional development. These could include finance, time, caring or parental responsibilities, or confidence. Think creatively and just as you would if you were working with a young adult carer. Don't forget to think about colleagues, family members and other people in your network who may be able to help.

Service Development

The 'Get' stage can help you and your colleagues to take action to improve the service you offer to young adult carers.

Activities



Case studies

Case studies 3 to 6 (Abdul, Connor, Carmen and Laura) are all about helping young adult carers through the 'Get' stage. These examples can help you and your colleagues consider the ways in which your service supports young adult carers to overcome challenges and whether there are any gaps in your practical support that you could address.

Work with a group of colleagues to consider each of the case studies and the following questions:

- How would your organisation provide support for the young adult carer to get the learning or work opportunity that they want?
- What are the barriers faced by the young adult carer?
- What strategies would your organisation use to help them overcome these barriers?
- How would your organisation support the young adult carer to build and sustain their confidence and wellbeing during this transition?
- What other agencies or support is available in your local area to support the young adult carer into a learning and work opportunity?
- What are the protocols in your organisation for referring and working with multiple agencies?
- If your organisation is successfully working with other agencies to support young adult carers to get into learning and work, what is working well?
- What are the gaps in getting the support for young adult carers to access learning and work opportunities in your local area?



Creating a local address book (activity 11)

This activity is designed to help you identify as many external agencies as possible that can play a part in supporting young adult carers into learning and work. The aim is to create a directory of organisations that can help you and your colleagues to support young adult carers into learning and work opportunities. This might include learning or training providers, employment services and careers advice services, but it could also

include health and wellbeing services, voluntary work providers, housing support, and organisations that can provide respite care. They might be local, national or online. Think holistically.

- Get a group of people together. In this activity, diversity and a range of knowledge and expertise is better. Include young adult carers and colleagues from different parts of your organisation.
- Split the group into smaller groups of 2-3 people and hand each group some post-it notes and a pen. Ask each group to come up with as many organisations and sources of help and information as they can. Ask them to write the name of one organisation on each post-it.
- Allow 10 minutes for this activity. At this stage quantity is better than quality. There are no wrong answers - it is better to discard a suggestion than not to include it in the first place. By working fast and trying to think up as many suggestions as possible, group members can be as creative and lateral thinking as they like.
- Put some flip chart paper on the walls with headings such as 'education', 'training', 'work', 'health', 'money', 'equipment' or 'leisure'. Leave some flip charts blank.
- After 10 minutes, ask the participants to put all their post-it notes on the flip chart paper under the most appropriate heading. Ideas that do not fit under any heading can be put on the blank sheets.
- With the group, look at all the organisations they have come up with. Remove any duplicates. Look at the ones on the blank flip chart paper and see if they can be sorted into categories. When you have sorted as many as possible into categories, look at each organisation and decide whether they provide information or support for the **'Think'**, **'Get'** or **'Keep'** stage.
- Hand out copies of activity 11 to the group. Ask each group member to take a different post-it and complete the worksheet about that organisation as fully as possible. Ask them to put their name on the worksheet as you may need to go back to them later to clarify some of the information.
- At the end of the session, collect in all the worksheets and create a folder of them (hard copy or online). Think about how you will organise all the information you have collected. Can you divide them into categories of support and opportunities? Can you colour code or tag the organisations according to **'Think'**, **'Get'** or **'Keep'**?
- Share with colleagues as a resource to use when they are working with young adult carers.

KEEPING

Once an individual has accessed a new opportunity the tendency is for support to be withdrawn. We often assume that the original goal has been achieved and now the person is sorted, but they could experience lots of challenges once they get into education or work.

This is particularly the case for young adult carers who can experience a range of barriers to remaining in, being successful and progressing in learning and work, including:

- The person they care for may develop new needs or have a relapse that takes their time and attention.
- They may find it stressful and exhausting to fit their caring responsibilities around their new commitments.
- Additional costs that they hadn't anticipated putting pressure on their budget.
- Beginning something new can be stressful and tiring and it can feel overwhelming.
- They may face hostility or lack of understanding about their caring responsibilities.

Working with young adult carers

As a carers service, you may need to continue the support you provide to a young person even after they achieve their aspirations. This might include practical support such as



signposting them to other agencies that can help and provide advice, or directly contacting their provider/employer to explain their situation. Emotional support is also important during this stage. This can include:

- supporting them to pay attention to their wellbeing, enabling them to recognise that change and new situations can be stressful and tiring;
- helping them to find ways of dealing with and adapting to a new set of pressures;
- helping to maintain motivation by enabling them to recognise their successes and achievements; and
- supporting them to deal with potentially difficult situations and setbacks such as declaring their caring responsibilities and requesting flexible working.

Activities

The activities in the **'Keep'** stage are the same as those in **'Think'** and **'Get'** stages, but the discussions around them will be different.



Case studies

Case studies 7 to 10 (Peter, Priya, Josh and Poppy) can all be used to prompt discussion about what support might be needed in the **'Keep'** stage. In each case study, discussion should focus on actions and sources of information and help for remaining and succeeding in learning and work.



The Wellbeing Teller and Wheel (activities 3 and 4)

You may have worked with young adult carers in the **'Think'** stage to make a Wellbeing Teller and complete the Wellbeing Wheel. This may be a good time to re-visit it.

- Have their scores changed?
- Do they need to address some issues now that they didn't before?
- Are the actions they take to maintain their wellbeing and confidence the right ones for them now?
- What can they do now to maintain positive wellbeing and confidence while in learning and/or work?



Overcoming barriers (activity 6)

When we begin a new opportunity we will probably have high hopes for it – that we will enjoy it, be good at it, meet new people and make friends. Sometimes things don't turn out quite as we hoped and we can face challenges and set-backs. When we are new in an organisation, either in education or work, we don't always know how to deal with difficult situations, who to turn to, what support is available or who we can trust.

The overcoming barriers exercise is about identifying all the challenges a young adult carer faces, no matter how big or small, and then working through each one to think of solutions and who can help.

Remind the young adult carer of all the skills and abilities they identified in themselves in the **'Think'** stage that they can now use to keep their learning or work opportunity. Remind them of the wellbeing actions to make sure they maintain their confidence and wellbeing through this stage. Make sure they put a date to actions they are going to do so that they don't allow the situation to drag on and become an even bigger problem.

Remaining in touch with the young adult carer and making sure that they are aware that you can continue to support them is also important when they want to move on to a new opportunity or progress in their current learning or work situation.



The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning

Here is a list of the different sections of the RUBLE which can be used during the 'Keep' stage.

Section	Pages	Activity
Don't give up	76	Use with overcoming barriers (activity 6).
Looking backwards and forwards	88	Useful exercise to boost motivation when a young adult carer is in learning or work, or wanting to progress in learning and work and wondering what they have achieved so far.
Taking up work and managing your money	107-115	Useful information on managing money when getting and keeping employment.
Looking after your money	116-128	Useful information for budgeting



Your own development

The 'Keep' stage can also help you to consider how you can maintain and update your professional development.

Activities



Case studies

Case studies 7 to 10 (Peter, Priya, Josh and Poppy) are all about helping the young adult carer through the 'Keep' stage. They help you to identify the practical and emotional strategies you can use to support young adult carers to remain in their learning or work opportunity. As you read through them consider the following:

- List the challenges faced by each adult young carer that are jeopardising their ability to remain in learning or work.
- What strategies would you use to help them keep their opportunity?
- If disclosure is an issue, what support could you give?
- What entitlements does each young adult carer have to support them in their learning or work placement?
- How do you maintain contact with a young adult carer once they are in learning or work?
- What agencies or support could they access?



Action Plan for professional development (activity 10)

You can continually review and update your professional development action plan as you access opportunities and develop your skills and knowledge. It is important that you keep identifying and taking up development opportunities, to ensure that your practice stays up-to-date. You can also follow up formal development opportunities with informal activities to consolidate your learning, such as doing further reading and research or becoming a buddy or mentor to share what you have learned. Think creatively about how you can share and maintain your new skills and knowledge.

Service Development

After making changes or improvements to your service or the support you offer in the 'Get' stage, you will want to ensure that you have processes and partnership in place to maintain this good practice. Constantly reviewing and evaluating your service is an important way of ensuring that it provides effective support for young adult carers to keep their opportunities.

Activities



Case studies

Use case studies 7 to 10 (Peter, Priya, Josh and Poppy) with a group of colleagues to discuss how your organisation supports young adult carers to remain in learning and work. Consider the following:

- List the challenges faced by each adult young carer that is jeopardising their ability to remain in learning or work.
- What strategies would you use to help them keep their place?
- If disclosure is an issue, what support could you give?
- What entitlements does each young adult carer have to support them in their learning or work placement?
- How do you maintain contact with a young adult carer once they are in learning or work?
- What agencies or support could they access?





Partnership working (activity 12)

Having worked through the case studies and created an address book of organisations, you will probably have identified some organisations that it would be helpful to work in partnership with. These relationships with external agencies can be crucial in supporting young adult carers to keep their learning and work opportunities. It can also ensure that when young adult carers access other services, they get appropriate, high quality support.

Partnership working can happen in many different ways. It could involve having a named contact within other organisations, establishing referral protocols, providing or receiving training, developing new ways of joint working or bidding together for project funding. However, successful partnership working is underpinned by some key factors:

- Leadership – the ability to empower staff within partner organisations to work together; the ability to build consensus and shared understanding. This might include enlisting the support of managers and leaders of your service, but it is also about recognising your own leadership role in bringing about change in the way you and others work.
- Common understanding – ability to understand other organisational cultures, values and ways of working; an understanding of roles, responsibilities and division of work.
- Shared purpose and values – sharing the same vision; building trust and valuing the contribution of all; setting aims and goals; co-ordination of policies and service delivery; accepting strengths, weaknesses and limitations; and ensuring the active involvement of all.



- Learning and development – aiming to improve performance and outcomes; monitoring and evaluation; investing in skills development; sharing what works well and what doesn't.
- Communication – at all levels, providing timely information.
- Performance management – ensuring sound partnership structures; effective management practices; ensuring there are sufficient resources; and taking accountability for actions.

There are also a number of pitfalls to establishing and sustaining partnerships which it is important to be aware of, and avoid of course. These can include:

- Failure to inspire and engage others
- Lack of clear purpose
- Lack of commitment
- Difference in values and working styles
- Inadequate understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Failure of communication
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation
- Allowing financial and time commitments to outweigh the realisation of benefits.

Building partnerships itself is a 'Think, Get, Keep' process:

- **Think:**
 - You need to identify potential partners. These will be organisations that will add value and help you achieve better access to learning and work opportunities for young adult carers.
 - The organisations you want to partner with may have little knowledge of the needs of young adult carers; at this stage you may need to spend time raising awareness to inspire their commitment to work in partnership with you and ensure that you begin to develop a shared understanding and vision. Presenting facts and information (such as those on the infographic - found at www.learningandwork.org.uk/our-work/youngadultcarers) can be helpful, as can stories from young adult carers and what has worked for them.
 - You also need to be clear about what you want to achieve out of the partnership, having some data on how many young adult carers might benefit and what success would look like. It helps to know a bit about the organisation and what their mission and values are. Then you can tailor information and plans so that they readily see the benefits of partnership working.
 - Lastly, think through with them what the partnership activity would look like. Who will it involve? What will they do? What resources are needed? Securing leadership buy-in at this stage is also helpful because it can unlock resources and commitment.
- **Get:**
 - As you begin to carry out the partnership activity, you need to ensure that activity is kept on track. Are all the partners doing what they said they would do, are timescales being met and issues being dealt with?
 - Regularly review activity, communicate progress to all stakeholders to keep partners on board and motivated.
- **Keep:**
 - As you review progress and deal with issues in the early stages you may begin to identify opportunities to build capacity and extend the partnership work.
 - Make sure you also celebrate successes and identify lessons learnt as this can secure on-going commitment from partners.

Activity 12 will help you work through these stages of building successful partnerships with external agencies.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND READING

The following websites and resources provide further information on young adult carers and their needs in relation to learning and work:

Amazing Apprenticeships (www.amazingapprenticeships.com)

This website has lots of resources to help inform young people about apprenticeships and promote this route to young people.

Briefing for careers guidance workers

This briefing is for all professionals who provide careers support to young people. You can use it to explain who young adult carers are, why they need specialist careers support and how careers practitioners can enable young adult carers to make informed decisions about learning and work. It can be downloaded from www.learningandwork.org.uk/youngadultcarers.

Career Development Institute (www.thecdin.net)

The CDI is a UK-wide professional body for all professionals who provide careers support. They provide a range of useful resources to help you think about your IAG practice, including a code of ethics, resources, training and events.

Carers Trust Professionals (professionals.carers.org)

This website has lots of information, advice and resources for professionals supporting carers of all ages. The resources can be filtered by only show those relevant for staff working with young adult carers.

Carers UK (www.carersuk.org)

Carers UK provides information and resources on health, work and careers and finances for carers of all ages.

Do-it.org

This national website advertises volunteering opportunities in your local area. It could be useful if a young adult carer is interested in doing some volunteering.

Employers for Carers (www.employersforcarers.org)

This group is a network of employers who are committed to providing good support to employees who are carers.

Get In, Go Far (www.getingofar.gov.uk)

This is the government's apprenticeship and traineeship website which provides lots of information on these programmes.

icould.com (www.icould.com/buzz)

This website is full of career ideas, advice and tips including videos and teaching resources which you can use with young adult carers. The link above takes you to a fun quiz which can help young people start thinking about their career values and what they might be interested in.

Learn, Work, Care (www.learnworkcare.org.uk)

This website by Learning and Work Institute brings together a range of information, research and resources which will help you support young adult carers into learning and work.

The National Apprenticeship Service

(www.gov.uk/education/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-internships)

This government service provides a wealth of information on being an apprentice, trainee or intern and the different courses available. It also enables young adult carers to search and apply for apprenticeships and traineeships.

The National Careers Service (nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)

The National Careers Service provides free information, advice and guidance about education and careers to anyone aged 19 and over in England. They can be accessed face-to-face, over the phone or online. Their website provides a range of information on different sectors and jobs, has a 'skills health check' for young people to assess their skills against particular roles, and provides labour market information to help young people think about the future prospects of different careers. You can also refer a young person to a full guidance interview with a NCS adviser through the website.

The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning (RUBLE)

This resource by Learning and Work Institute was developed specifically for young adult carers and provides useful information and activities about education and work options as well as living independently. It can be downloaded from www.learningandwork.org.uk/youngadultcarers.

Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities

This guide by Learning and Work Institute and Carers Trust aims to help colleges and carers services improve the support for young adult carers in Further Education. It can be downloaded from www.learningandwork.org.uk/youngadultcarers.

UCAS (www.ucas.com)

The UCAS website includes a range of guides and training tools on applying for university which young adult carers might find useful if they are interested in Higher Education. Their website has a dedicated page for young adult carers.



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