



Title	An exploration of young carers' experiences in secondary school and their perceptions regarding their future career: a scoping review
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Title: An exploration of young carers' experiences in secondary school and their perceptions regarding their future career - a scoping review

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Abstract:

Compared with their peers, young carers are at a higher risk of being 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training). Using the Arksey & O'Malley (2005) framework, this review aims to map out the literature on young carers' experiences of caring while attending school and their future career perceptions.

The key themes that emerged from the literature include; Impact of the caring role on education and future aspirations, Positives gained from caring, School awareness and multiagency support. Greater support in secondary school along with multiagency collaboration are key influences on the likelihood of young carers maximising their career opportunities.

Key messages (if applicable):

(Summarising the main messages from the paper in up to four bullet points)

1. There is a level of concern for young carers when considering their future careers
2. A lack of awareness in schools and multiagency collaboration impacting on young carers attending secondary school
3. There are a number of positive attributes and skills to be gained from being a young carer. These need to be accentuated further by young carers and by those who have a responsibility for supporting their future career opportunities

Key words/short phrases:

adolescent carer - education - employment - scoping review

JEL codes - NA

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Introduction

Family carers are the main source of care provision for people living at home with illness or frailty. An ageing population worldwide, together with an increase in chronic and life limiting illnesses such as cancer, dementia and neurodegenerative disease will inevitably lead to greater demand for family support (World Health Organisation, 2022). This has become even more apparent since the onset of the global Covid-19 pandemic (Phillips et al, 2020).

'Young' carers are an emerging group providing unpaid / informal care for relatives. Their increasing numbers have been attributed to more single parent families, increased substance misuse and an ageing population (Family Carers Ireland, 2020). Legislation in the UK define a young carer as " a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person" (Children and Families Act 2014).

Some research defines young persons aged 15-17 who have a caring role as 'in transition' and refer to them as 'adolescent young carers' (AYC's) (Lewis et al, 2022; Santini et al, 2022).

For this article, the term 'young carer' is used to refer to adolescent carers of upper-level secondary school in the age range of 16 to 19 years.

Despite the emergence of various definitions and categorisations, many young carers do not identify with these and along with their relatives, simply see the care they provide as part of 'normal' family life (Fives et al, 2010). Others may begin caring quite suddenly, due to a change in a relative's health (National Health Service, 2021). The care they provide typically exceeds the range of household activities adolescents would commonly be involved in. These additional tasks such as cooking, housework, shopping, personal care provision, help with socialising, and offering emotional support, are often undertaken over prolonged periods (Matzka and Nagl-Cupal, 2020).

A 'hidden' element in family caring, can contribute to young people's hesitancy in self-identifying as young carers and availing of support (Nap et al, 2020). Young people involved in caring for a relative with mental health or addiction issues may 'hide' this out of shame, fear or stigmatisation (Chikhradze et al, 2017). Some may be anxious about the possible intrusion of

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4 social workers in their lives, and some parents are unwilling to acknowledge their child's role
5 as a young carer (Darling et al, 2019).
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9 Inconsistencies in the use of language and terminology ('caring for', 'caring about', 'young
10 carer') can lead to mixed understandings and unclear communication for adolescents involved
11 in a caring role (Leu et al, 2020; Kelly et al, 2017). The result can be hesitancy among young
12 people in coming forward and in self-identifying as a 'young carer.' Notwithstanding these
13 hidden elements in the caring role, there is evidence that providing care within their homes can
14 negatively impact young carers' wellbeing and lifestyles (Robison et al, 2020; Becker et al
15 2019; Fives et al, 2010; Callaghan et al, 2016).
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24 The transition to young adulthood is a major developmental period when adolescents develop
25 their personalities and begin to think more about their future (Gee et al, 2021). This can be a
26 consequential time for young carers, who may have experienced marginalisation due to their
27 caring role (Hamilton and Redmond, 2020). Young carers can therefore be viewed as needing
28 greater acknowledgement and support in particular when choosing a career, which may be
29 missing if their parents are experiencing ill health or other debilitating problems. Young people
30 who combine being a student in school with being a young carer at home must juggle the
31 demands of schoolwork, maintaining friendships and extracurricular activities along with
32 tending to the needs of family members. During their final years of school, having to decide
33 about future employment, training and education can add extra pressure. For young carers,
34 keenly aware of their caring role at home, considering their future involves strains not
35 experienced by their peers. Decisions made about employment and education when providing
36 care can influence a person's life for many years (Roling et al, 2019) and have been shown to
37 result in long-term carers being poorer, unhappier and less healthy (Carmichael and Ercolani,
38 2016).
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52 It is recognised that positive experiences and support in school can enhance career prospects
53 (Hamilton and Adamson, 2013; OECD, 2020). Previous research has indicated young carers
54 are more likely to be 'NEET' (not in education, employment, or training) (The Children's
55 Society, 2013). Caring can negatively affect their ability to engage fully in school, culminating
56 in a lack of self-confidence and qualifications (Nap et al, 2020; Eurocarers, 2019). This
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4 disadvantage can persist into third level education; young adult carers have been shown to be
5 more likely than other students to miss college days or to leave college without completing
6 their studies (Kettell, 2020; Becker and Sempik, 2019). These findings suggest a mismatch
7 between what young carers desire to achieve in education, and what they actually do, due to
8 their involvement in a caring role.
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15 To provide greater clarity and insight into this issue, further exploration is warranted. As a
16 preliminary search of relevant literature highlighted fragmented information, a scoping review
17 was conducted to map the extant literature on young carers' experiences of caring while
18 attending secondary school and their perceptions about their future careers. To answer our
19 broad question, '*What is known from the literature about young carers in school and their*
20 *perceptions regarding their future career?*', the main objectives of the scoping review were to:
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- 26 ● Explore the extent and format of previous and current research investigating young
27 carers' experiences of caring and their future aspirations while attending upper second
28 level education
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- 30 ● Map the research literature to help identify gaps
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- 32 ● Examine any theoretical frameworks that underpin research on young carers'
33 experiences of caring
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38 **Method**

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40 A scoping review of the literature, using the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework to explore
41 the literature on young carers, their school experiences, and their future career perceptions,
42 was conducted. A scoping (rather than systematic) review was chosen as the aim was to map
43 the extent of knowledge and identify gaps in the literature, not to analyse or inform clinical
44 guidelines (Pollock et al, 2021; Lockwood et al, 2019).
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51 Following Joanna Briggs Institute (2019) guidance, the "PCC" mnemonic ('Population,
52 Concept, and Context') was used to frame the scoping review question, the population being
53 young carers, the concept being their future careers and the context their experiences of family
54 caring while attending secondary school¹. Our search strategy took account of the varied
55 terminology used in different jurisdictions to ensure all were included.
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6 The scoping review was conducted and reported in accordance with the Joanna Briggs
7 Institute (2020), Peters et al, (2020) an updated guidance scoping review template, and the
8 PRISMA-SCR reporting checklist ('Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and
9 Meta-Analyses – Extension for Scoping Review') (Tricco et al, 2018). A peer-reviewed protocol
10 was published in the Health Research Board Open Research platform (Moloney et al, 2020),
11 incorporating reviewers' recommendations. Publication of the protocol, based on the principle
12 of enabling open access to the review question and methods, supported the validity aspect,
13 with a rigorous and transparent process adhered to (Lockwood et al, 2019). Mixed methods
14 studies, and qualitative and quantitative peer-reviewed articles were included, to meet the
15 highest level of academic credibility and strengthen the overall findings.
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26 Grey literature was incorporated to source empirical findings; these were included to give a
27 balanced view of the evidence, enrich the findings and to reduce publication bias (Paez, 2017).
28 Sources included Google Scholar (pp1-5), the 'OpenGray' literature database and international
29 family carer websites. An online hand search of the journals (*International Journal of*
30 *Adolescence and Youth, Journal of Career Development and International Journal of Inclusive*
31 *Education*) was also undertaken. Any titles and reference lists of articles that included
32 information about school pupils, caring and future careers were reviewed in the hand search.
33 Tyndall's (2010) checklist, which includes the components 'Authority, Accuracy, Coverage,
34 Objectivity, Date, and Significance', was applied as a critical appraisal tool when reviewing the
35 suitability of the material.
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45 **Search strategy**

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47 Five electronic search engine databases were searched in the scoping review [PsycINFO,
48 Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) (EBSCO), Academic
49 Search Complete (EBSCO), ERIC International Education Literature, Applied Social Sciences
50 Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) (ProQuest)]. As most research on young carers had emerged
51 since 2000, the search was limited to articles published between 2000 and 2020. Only English
52 language articles were included, as translation resources were not available.
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Our search strategy was based on key search terms related to the focus of the research (Table 1); these were inserted into each of the chosen databases' search criteria. A librarian at the researchers' affiliated university was consulted. Inclusion and exclusion criteria, outlined in Table 2, aimed to include peer-reviewed studies and empirical articles that would add to the understanding of the issues experienced by young carers in school and their future career perspectives.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE X Table 1: Search Terms

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE X Table 2: Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

INSERT X HERE Figure 1: PRISMA Diagram - Scoping Review Outline

Literature selection

A total of n=622 articles were imported from Endnote into Covidence (University College Dublin, 2020). The number of grey literature sources was n=65 giving a total of n=687 articles. Duplicates were removed prior to screening by two reviewers. A second reviewer was a librarian familiar with the process of screening articles. The reviewers met prior to screening for clarification purposes and, after reviewing a small number of articles independently, the reviewers discussed any concerns and clarifications. As illustrated in the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1), after n=52 duplicates were removed, both reviewers independently screened n=635 articles based on titles and abstracts. When reviewers disagreed, they met to discuss the 'conflicts' until a consensus was obtained. Sources of evidence that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded at the title and abstract screening stage. A total of n=596 articles were deemed irrelevant as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. A total of n=39 full text articles were assessed for eligibility. A final total of n=12 articles that met the inclusion criteria were included, n=10 of which were from the database searches and n=2 were empirical articles from the grey literature. These articles were then extracted and analysed.

Synthesis of the evidence

The empirical article reports were charted in an Excel data extraction chart by the first author and verified by the librarian (Table 3).

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6 Table 3: Final Scoping Review Articles Extracted - Insert X HERE
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9 Following Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) method, a narrative thematic analysis summary was
10 used to present the findings in relation to the scoping review question and objectives. This was
11 achieved through descriptive thematic analysis, discussion and critique, while cross-
12 referencing with the data extraction charting table information.
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16 **Results**

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19 Analysis of the final n=12 articles provided an overview of what is known about young carers in
20 school and their perceptions regarding their future career.
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23 The review generated n=10 peer-reviewed studies spanning three continents, including from the
24 UK (n=6), Canada (n=2) and Australia (n=2); common conclusions were identified throughout.
25 Six articles were of a qualitative design, one adopted a mixed methods approach and three were
26 quantitative research studies. The studies reviewed were published between 2003 and 2020,
27 the majority in the last five years. There were more female than male study participants and
28 qualitative sample sizes ranged from n=3 to n=31. Survey sample sizes ranged from n=33 to
29 n=1,341. No identified studies used official data or large scale data sets. Two (UK) grey literature
30 articles (Google Scholar, OpenGray) with empirical data met the inclusion criteria.
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40 Thematic analysis of the literature generated three themes: :
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- 42 1. Impact of the caring role on education and future aspirations
 - 43 2. School awareness and multiagency support
 - 44 3. Positive attributes of being a young carer
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49 *Theme 1 - Impact of the caring role on education and future aspirations*

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52 Young carers worry about their future and are less likely to see themselves entering further
53 education (Thomas et al, 2003; Robison et al, 2020; Plummer, 2012). Adult support workers
54 also report that, as a way of coping, young carers tend to focus on the present as they are
55 afraid to have hope, and that some young carers see a bleak future and are hesitant to look
56 too far ahead (Plummer, 2012). Limitations on young carers' aspirations arise from absences
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4 from school and diminishing educational performance, due to how caring impacts young
5 carers' ability to achieve desired grades and secure future opportunities (Becker et al, 2019;
6 Stamatopoulos 2018; Lakman et al, 2017; Dearden and Becker, 2002).
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10 In the UK, pioneers of young carer research Becker and Sempik (2019) suggest that the
11 context of caring influences outcomes. Their quantitative research, which involved an online
12 survey, identified young carers who attributed their poor educational performance to the
13 demands of their caring role. Their home life interfered with their ability to engage fully in
14 education and involved absences, leaving early and getting called away by family members
15 during school. Becker and Sempik (2019) also show that such ongoing interruptions have
16 negative effects on young carers' ability to achieve good grades for further education, thereby
17 limiting their access to employment.
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25 In Australia, 'older' young carers (i.e., those nearing adult age) were shown to be more prone
26 to have negative views about the effects of caring on their futures than younger carers, who
27 expressed a much greater sense of possibility about the future. Hamilton and Adamson's
28 (2013) mixed methods research found constraints on older young carers' capacity to make
29 decisions about their education, career and moving out of the family home. Educational
30 choices were heavily shaped by the need to continue caring. Many young carers reported that
31 the unpredictable nature of their relative's illness meant that decisions about their future were
32 based on perceptions of their relatives' needs at that time (Hamilton and Adamson, 2013).
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41 Overall, the scoping review found that young carers' future aspirations and post school
42 expectations are shaped by a perceived lack of ability to manage caring alongside myriad
43 negative feelings and the demands of education and examinations (Robison et al, 2020;
44 Becker and Sempik, 2019; Stamatopoulos, 2018). Mixed feelings, including guilt, relief and
45 concern for the family they are 'leaving behind', create an impact on young carers' feelings and
46 motivations regarding their careers after secondary school (Robison et al, 2020; Mc Dougall et
47 al, 2018; Plummer, 2012; Thomas et al, 2003). Some reported feelings of guilt, ranging from
48 wanting some immediate 'alone time', away from their family, to feeling guilty about accepting
49 a place at university. Proximity to the family home was in some cases the main reason for their
50 choice of university/higher education, rather than their preferred institution, and in some way
51 lessened young carers' 'guilty' feelings on leaving the family home (Stamatopoulos, 2018).
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6 In contrast, for some young carers thoughts of being 'held back' created feelings of resentment
7 towards family members (Alyward et al, 2018), further straining family relationships and
8 communication. Young carers' choice of future education and employment could also be
9 limited by practical circumstances. These included needing to travel far from home, inflexible
10 work hours, lack of support from employers, the availability of part time rather than full time
11 positions, financial disadvantages which affected benefit entitlements and career advice that
12 lacked information about entitlements regarding their caring role (Alyward et al, 2018).
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20 *Theme 2 - School awareness and multiagency support*

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23 The review highlighted the need for secondary schools to offer services to ensure that those
24 who need support can easily access it (Choudhury and Williams, 2020; Alyward et al, 2018;
25 Stamatopoulos, 2018; Heyman, 2018; Lakman, 2017; Heyman and Heyman, 2013; Thomas et
26 al, 2003; Dearden and Becker, 2002).
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32 Schools are viewed as being in a position to increase awareness of young carers through
33 information sessions, classroom curricula and building mechanisms for identification and
34 referral (such as attendance monitoring and promoting connections among young carers).
35 Findings included studies which highlighted that teachers and social workers can be well
36 placed to support young people in schools as they have daily contact and engagement with the
37 school ((Choudhury and Williams, 2020; Heyman 2018; Stamatopoulos, 2018; Lakman 2017).
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45 The empirical data uncovered in the review indicate the need for employers and education
46 providers to offer training and awareness programmes for all staff, not just for students; this is
47 needed to reduce stigma and the inconsistencies that can exist for young carers in school and
48 as they begin their transition to employment (Aylward et al, 2018; Lakman, 2017).
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53 Although the studies recognised that schools are an appropriate support platform for young
54 carers, the review revealed challenges still to be overcome. Thomas et al (2003) received a
55 poor response from schools when trying to identify young carers and concluded that this
56 indicated a failure to recognise the important role young carers endure. When support for
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4 young carers was organised, their desire to remain ‘hidden’ could be another barrier.
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6 Insensitivities in the education system, and evidence of young carers being bullied at school,
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8 were among the reasons given for preferring to keep their caring secret (Heyman, 2018;
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10 Lakman, 2017).

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12 This theme also highlighted the importance of multiservice involvement and a coordinated
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14 approach to supporting young carers in school. Studies included in the review indicated that
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16 young carers’ needs assessments were infrequent, with poor communication leading to a lack
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18 of coordinated multiagency working a key factor (Choudhury and Williams, 2020; Thomas et al,
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20 2003; Heyman and Heyman, 2013; Plummer, 2012).

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22 Young carers themselves voiced concerns about service shortcomings, particularly inadequate
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24 social services support, which they felt made it challenging for them to cope in ‘the present.’
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26 Several studies concluded that services need to adopt a more integrated approach and to
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28 consider the ‘whole family’s needs’ (Choudhury and Williams, 2020; Heyman and Heyman,
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30 2013; Thomas et al, 2003). They argued that adopting a more family-centred approach is more
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32 effective in meeting young carers’ needs. Knowing that effective support is in place for their
33
34 family member could alleviate the worry and stress young carers experience and allow them
35
36 more time to address their aspirations.

37 *Theme 3 – Positive aspects of being in a young carer role*

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39 The final theme that emerged in the scoping review relates to young carers’ positive attributes.
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41 Plummer (2012) highlighted when they are recognised and supported, young carers report
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43 their school environment as a positive experience. School offers them stability amid the
44
45 unpredictability that can be part of the young carer role. Young carers valued school when
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47 support and kindness were offered, when they were not singled out, and when they had
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49 someone in school to talk to about their caring responsibilities.

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52 While some support workers perceive caring as involving risks to young carers prospects,
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54 many young carers reported personal gains due to caring (Heymen, 2013). Increased
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56 resilience in managing stress, coping with adverse events, closeness to family, as well as a
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58 sense of responsibility, achievement, maturity and empathy were among the positive personal
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60 attributes young carers reported (Robison et al, 2020; Stamatopoulos, 2018; Heymen and
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4 Heymen, 2013; Plummer, 2012; Thomas et al, 2003). A point of particular interest in Heymen's
5 (2018) research, highlighted alongside young carers' competence in mastering domestic
6 duties, was that young carers themselves valued personal growth, self-assertion and the
7 determination to achieve equal standards of care for everyone above achieving specific
8 career-related skills.
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15 Young carers' positive social awareness and community connections made through related
16 young carer activities e.g. fundraising, were also identified in the literature. Their increased
17 social awareness was exemplified by better understanding of disability, with greater awareness
18 of differences seen as additional positive attributes (Choudhury and Williams, 2020; Plummer,
19 2012).
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24 Some articles emphasised the transferability of skills acquired through caring for securing a
25 job, and claimed these would be useful for their future employment (Aylward et al, 2018). Skills
26 gained could shape and 'springboard' their future employment choices, for example in jobs that
27 require effective communication and caring attributes (McDougall et al, 2018; Hamilton and
28 Adamson, 2013; Plummer, 2012).
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35 In general, the studies suggest that young carers believe the skills and understanding they
36 develop in the caring role are positive and provide meaning and justification for what they do.
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39 *Theoretical Underpinning*

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41 Almost half the articles applied a theory to enhance insight and understanding.
42 Choudhury et al (2020) used 'Ecological Systems Theory' to explain the factors that affect
43 young carers' educational inclusion. This theory recognises that the different environments in
44 which the young carer is situated (home, school, society) affect each other. A challenge or
45 crisis in one system affects the young carer's capacity to function effectively between systems.
46 The theory offered a useful lens for exploring young carers' experiences, as it recognises the
47 holistic inclusion of the various environments (home, school and society) that young carers
48 need to navigate daily. In Choudhury's (2020) research, application of this theory emphasised
49 how educational opportunity can be limited for young carers. Important factors that need to be
50 present include the support of a key person within the school and identification of the role of
51 external supports in strengthening young carers' inclusion in their educational setting.
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6 Heymen's (2018) use of the Affirmation Model of Disability explained young carers'
7 experiences in dealing with society's reactions to their association with their disabled relative.
8 This theoretical lens emphasised the positive value (individual and collective) of both the
9 disabled person and the experiences of the young carers who supported them. Heymen found
10 this model, despite being developed by people who are disabled to explain the first hand 'lived
11 experience' of disabled people, could be applied to young carers, although it was not
12 considered capable of fully explaining young carers' experiences.
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21 Hamilton and Adamson (2013) found the 'bounded agency' theory offered a useful and robust
22 framework for understanding how young carers' agency is shaped by their past experiences,
23 opportunities in the present and hopes for the future. Their research aimed to investigate the
24 impact of caring on young carers' education, employment, health and social life. A main finding
25 was that younger carers' responses differed from those of older carers as they were more
26 hopeful about the future. This was an interesting aspect revealed through use of the bounded
27 agency concept, which can be considered valid for use in future research on young carers.
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35 Stamatopoulos's (2018) used Daly and Lewis's (2000) social model of care to help understand
36 the multidimensional nature of caring work. This model postulates that care involves attending
37 to the physical and emotional needs of dependent adults and children within the economic and
38 social frameworks in which they are conducted (Daly, 2021). Stamatopoulos (2018) showed
39 that young caring can be understood as a form of hidden labour, with some benefits, but rather
40 more penalties. Care provided was seen as labour that occupies time - time that could have
41 been used for education, training, employment or making social connections. While the model
42 was developed to theorise adult caregiving, it was considered a useful framework for
43 understanding young caring. The model focuses on 'care' and 'work' as overriding concepts,
44 although it was unclear how discussion of these was framed in the focus groups or how young
45 people expressed what these concepts meant to them. A more detailed explanation of how
46 young carers define 'care', 'labour' and 'work' would be needed if this theory is to be applied in
47 future research on young carers. This is particularly important given the ambiguity young
48 carers may feel regarding terms associated with their role (Kelly et al, 2017).
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6 Overall, the theories used in the studies considered offered useful insights and interpretations
7 of young carers' experiences and of the context for their behaviours and decisions.
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10 **Discussion and recommendations**

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13 The aim of the scoping review was to find out what is known about young carers in school and
14 their perceptions of their future career, and to highlight gaps in the literature.
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17 Theme 1 showed that a variety of strong emotions are experienced, amid practical
18 circumstances that influence young carers' future choices. Feelings such as guilt, worry and
19 concern for family members seemed to limit their options and emerged as a significant aspect.
20 This topic has become more salient given recent similar findings in Europe on young carers'
21 negatively impacted health status (Gallagher et al, 2022; Lewis et al, 2022). Mental health and
22 social supports, particularly for emerging adult students (Chevrier et al, 2022; Wepf and Leu,
23 2022), need to be more readily available, and supports needed to include young carers'
24 personal development and future perspectives (Van Der Werf, 2022).
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33 In most of the articles identified, it was unclear if the young carers studied were pupils at
34 upper-level in secondary school, pointing to a need to explicitly identify young carers'
35 experiences at this stage of schooling. Hamilton and Adamson (2013) observed that
36 realisations and concerns can be more salient for 'older' young carers than those who are
37 younger; young carers in their final years of secondary school have an immediate need, and
38 experience time pressure in deciding on their futures, while simultaneously providing care. In
39 comparison, younger carers have more time to consider their futures and are not confronted
40 with the realities of managing state examinations and decisions about their future. That said,
41 bullying and unhappiness was reported by Lloyd's (2013) research with young carers in
42 primary school which could also have implications for their long-term educational outcomes.
43 This suggests the need for future research on young carers' supports that carefully
44 distinguishes between age groups in which different pressures concerning identity formation
45 and educational and future-oriented decision-making apply.
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58 The need for awareness of young carers in schools, was evident in all the articles (Choudhury
59 and Williams, 2020; Robison et al, 2020; Becker and Sempik, 2019; Heyman, 2018; Mc
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4 Dougall et al, 2018; Stamatopoulos, 2018; Lakman et al, 2017; Hamilton and Adamson, 2013;
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6 Heyman and Heyman, 2013; Thomas et al, 2003). This could attributed to barriers in
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8 educators' awareness; their difficulties in identifying and supporting young carers, young
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10 carers concealing their caring role and inadequate school policies (Mansell et al, 2020).
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13 The importance of schools' awareness programmes for young carers was also emphasised In
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15 the grey literature (Family Carers Ireland, 2020; Carers Trust UK, 2020; Carers Australia,
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17 2020; Young Caregivers Association Canada, 2020; Aylward et al, 2018; Dearden and Becker,
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19 2002; Plummer, 2012). Initiatives such as an identification card, tools for schools and
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21 educational bursaries led by family carer associations have been introduced in the
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23 aforementioned countries as a response to the supports needed for young carers.

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25 Despite this, few young carers in the studies reported using these, indicating a possible lack of
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27 awareness and communication between such programmes and young people needing
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29 support. Addo et al (2021) found that not all young carers seek formal community-based and
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31 professional support services; some use social media and informal supports in their schools.
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33 This suggests that prior to implementing supports, adequate time and preparation are needed
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35 to select the most appropriate communication platforms and to involve knowledgeable
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37 personnel experienced in young carer issues. This is another gap in knowledge that future
38
39 young carer research could address.

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41 Overall, the reported studies highlighted limited government and policymaker recognition of the
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43 services needed to support young carers and a lack of coordinated multiagency involvement
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45 (Choudhury and Williams, 2020; Heyman, 2018; Thomas et al, 2003). Although some policy
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47 recognition is occurring through expansion of the international research network arising from
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49 Leu et al's (2021) 'Country Classification of Awareness Grid,' there remains a continued lack of
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51 formal recognition which severely needs to be addressed before significant changes can
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53 occur.

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55 The review highlighted challenges facing young carers, however the positive aspects of caring,
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57 including the development of personal attributes - maturity, compassion, resilience, empathy,
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59 and life skills are significant also (McDougall et al, 2018; Heyman, 2018; Heyman and
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61 Heyman, 2013; Plummer, 2012). These findings align with new research (Wepf et al, 2022)
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4 that identifies being in a caring role can be a platform for positive progression as a person and
5 suggests the process of 'benefit finding' (taking positives from challenges) may improve coping
6 skills and mental health.
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10 That said, the challenge of how to avoid treating every young carer's experience as the same
11 and aligning these positive impacts to the contextual factors that mean every young carer's
12 experience is different, remains (Lakman et al, 2019).
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17 Young carers see personal characteristics and aspirations at the forefront of future choices
18 (Heyman, 2018). Career guidance counsellors need to be mindful of this in advising young
19 carers at upper-level secondary school. Poor careers advice or inattention to the transferability
20 of caring skills to the workplace can mean young carers miss opportunities (Awkward et al,
21 2018). Heyman (2013) also showed that young carers may not emphasise the positives of their
22 caring role, fearing it may detract from a full understanding of their situation, or lead to
23 resources being withdrawn when they are thought to be coping well. Positive aspects of being
24 a young carer can nevertheless be very significant for career progression, particularly in the
25 context of increased demand for employees with interpersonal and 'soft' skills - empathy,
26 imagination, entrepreneurship, and resilience (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and
27 Development, 2020).
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39 Future career readiness programmes in secondary schools are a potential solution and can
40 strengthen vulnerable adolescents' foundational skills and support them to access educational
41 and labour market opportunities (Gee et al, 2021). This is underscored by other studies (Knopf,
42 2022; Day, 2021; Runacres, 2021; Kettell, 2020) that evidence young adult carers' struggles to
43 cope in third level education, dropping out of chosen courses in favour of a less demanding
44 one that 'fits' with their caring role.
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51 The studies identified indicate how theories can be used to explain and understand young
52 carers' roles. Scope for developing a new theoretical model that combines young carers'
53 experiences and future perceptions in a robust framework should also be considered.
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57 **Limitations**

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4 As scoping reviews do not evaluate the quality of the studies identified, this paper has not
5 attempted this. Our inclusion criteria also meant that any studies exploring the situation of
6 young carers who have dropped out of school were not considered. By only including English
7 language articles, we will inevitably have missed insights from relevant studies published in
8 other languages. Few studies explored diversity in young carers' cultural and psychosocial
9 backgrounds, which is likely to affect their experiences, so our review also missed this
10 dimension. The thematic findings presented relate only to the studies reported, will be affected
11 by the methods they employed, and cannot be generalised to all young carers.
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21 **Conclusion**

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23 Our scoping review aimed to identify what is known about young carers in school and how they
24 perceive their future careers, to highlight gaps in knowledge. Findings suggest concern about
25 young carers as they consider their future careers is warranted. Our review provides a strong
26 rationale for more research on young carers that addresses these gaps in the literature.
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29 Some of the articles included in the review drew on specific theories and used conceptual
30 frameworks that may be useful for future researchers studying young carers' perceptions and
31 aspirations. Missing were theories that focussed on individual 'lived experience' and the
32 cultural and psychosocial contexts for young carers' roles and experiences, which future
33 researchers should also be encouraged to explore.
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42
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48 **Conflict of Interest**

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51 The authors declare that there is no conflict of Interest
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¹ Second level education ('secondary school') is used to denote post-primary education and senior level or 'upper grades' (levels 10-13) denote older pupils aged 16-19 years. Across Europe, various terms are used for this group including 'vocational school', 'high school', 'grammar school', 'preparatory school', 'senior secondary school' and 'upper secondary school'.

Figure 1

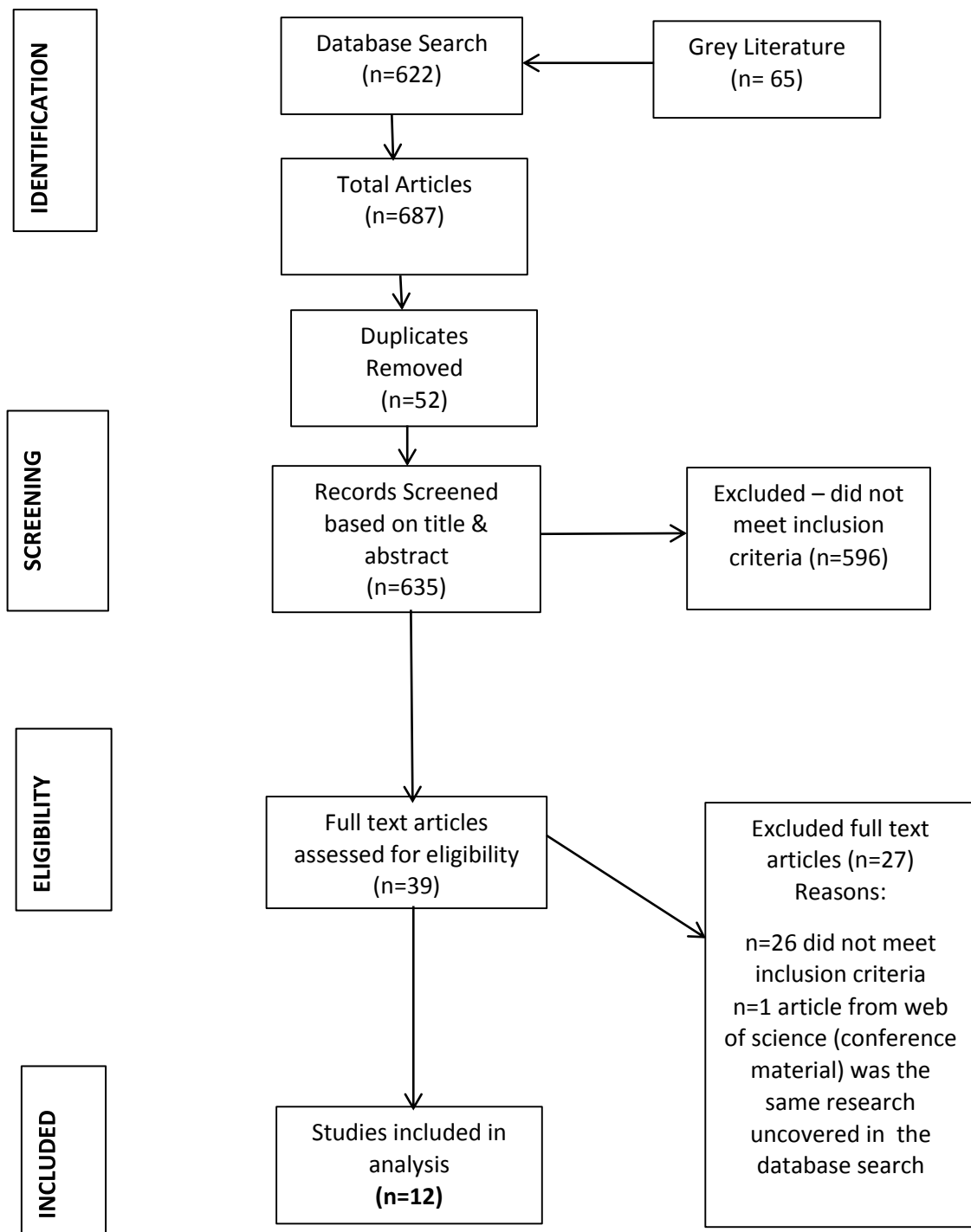


Figure 1:PRISMA diagram

Table 1: Search Terms

String 1 Young	Young OR Adolescent OR Child OR Teenager OR Young Adult OR Juvenile OR Schoolgirl OR Schoolboy OR Youth OR Student OR Pupil
String 2 Carer	Carer OR Caregiver OR Care Provider OR Informal Carer OR Caring
String 3 Young Carer	Young Carer
String 4 Second Level School	Secondary School OR Secondary Education OR High School OR Senior Cycle School OR Grammar School OR Upper Secondary School OR Middle School OR School Institute OR Post-primary OR Comprehensive School OR Vocational School
String 5 Future Career	Future Career OR Career OR Future OR Prospects OR Aspirations OR Expectations OR Future Opportunities OR Livelihood OR Profession OR Workforce OR Occupation OR Job OR Life Path OR Labour OR Employ*
Process:	Combine String 1 and 2; results provide String 3. Combine String 3 with String 4 and 5 to reveal articles for title and abstract screening.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion
Sources of evidence confined to the English language
Sources of evidence published between 2000 and 2020
Sources that contain evidence of young carers attending secondary education
Sources that contain evidence of young carers' perceptions regarding their future education, or employment
Exclusion
Sources of evidence relating to younger carers in lower-level secondary school
Sources of evidence that relate to young carers who did not complete upper-level secondary education
Individuals who are attending upper-level secondary school as a second attempt
Non-English language studies

Table 3

AUTHOR, YEAR	TITLE	ORIGIN	AIM	DATA COLLECTION	THEORY	MAIN FINDINGS
Choudhury, D. & Williams, H. (2020)	Strengthening the educational inclusion of young carers with additional needs: an eco-systemic understanding	UK	To identify the eco-systemic factors that strengthen the educational inclusion of young carers	Semi structured interviews	Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and bioecological theory of human development	Multiagency involvement with schools central to supports being offered for young carers
Robison, O.M.E.F. et al, (2020)	The health, well-being and future opportunities of young carers: a population approach	Scotland	To investigate the prevalence of young carers and to explore any differences between young carers and their non-carer counterparts	Survey		Young carers less likely to see themselves entering further or higher education
Becker, S. & Sempik, J. (2019)	Young Adult Carers: The Impact of Caring on Health and Education	UK	To explore the perceptions and experiences of young adult carers with regards to their health and their experiences of education.	Online Survey		Caring role effects young carers abilities to get good grades and progress well through education and into appropriate employment
Heyman, A. (2018)	What do young adult carers learn through supporting family members? Extending the Affirmation model	UK	To explore the views of young adult carers about what they had learned from their caring experience	In-depth biographical interviews	Affirmation Model of Disability Theory (Swain & French 2000)	Young carer's entire career can be shaped by caring. Teachers and social workers are well placed to support
McDougall, E. et al, (2018)	Something that happens at home and stays at home": An exploration of the lived experience of young carers	Australia	To explore the lived experiences of young carers	Semi-structured interviews		Positive aspects - Most young carers benefited from their caring role with many stating skills they developed in the role would help with their future
Stamatopoulos, V. (2018)	The young carer penalty: Exploring the costs of caregiving among a sample of Canadian youth	Canada	To explore the benefits and challenges of youth caregiving	Focus group	Daly and Lewis's (2000) social model of care	Diminished educational performance felt most by those nearing the end of their secondary schooling
Lakman, Y. et al, (2017)	Young Carers' Educational Experiences and Support: A Roadmap for the Development of School Policies to Foster their Academic Success	Canada	To explore whether young carers experience negatively impacts their education and what support services, if any, they would like offered in Canadian schools.	Survey		Awareness and support services needed in schools
Hamilton, M. & Adamson, E. (2013)	Bounded Agency in young carers' life course stage domains and transitions	Australia	To explore the diversity of young carers' responsibilities and their relationships	Interviews and Questionnaires	Bounded Agency (Rudd & Evans 1998)	Young adult carers career realisations different from younger carers expectations
Heyman, A. & Heyman, B. (2013)	The sooner you can change their life course the better': the time-framing of risks in relationship to being a young carer	England	To explore the perspectives of young carers and specialist young carers workers about the lives of and prospects for young carers.	Interviews		Positives and negative aspects in the caring role
Thomas, N., et al, (2003)	'Your friends don't understand': Invisibility and unmet need in the lives of 'young carers'	Wales	A report of key findings of previous research on young carers circumstances, hopes and expectations for the future.	Interviews & Focus Groups		Lack of awareness in schools. Needs a 'whole family' approach. Needs multiagency involvement

Aylward, N. et al, (2018)	Barriers to Employment for Young Adult Carers - Research Report	UK	To explore the factors that affect young adult carers' aspirations and decisions about employment	Survey		Education staff require further support and training to improve their understanding and awareness of young adult carers and their support needs in education
Plummer, C. (2012)	Who Cares? An Exploration, using Q Methodology, of Young Carers and Professionals Viewpoints	UK	To explore the views of children and young people identified as young carers, and of professionals, about young carer roles	Q Methodology		Positives and negative aspects in the caring role