

Introduction

“Each school will have young carers and just one individual teacher or support worker can make all the difference.”

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, in partnership with The Children’s Society, has produced this resource to help schools develop a deeper understanding of the issues faced by young carers across the UK and to help schools develop support for this pupil group.

The 2001 census identified 175,000 young carers in the UK, with 13,000 caring for more than 50 hours per week. It is believed that these figures are a vast underestimation of the scale of the problem and indeed, more recent research by the BBC (2010) points to the more realistic number of 700,000 young carers in the UK.

This research found approximately 8% of the secondary school pupils surveyed had caring responsibilities; that is one in 12 pupils. Previous research has found that 68% of young carers were bullied and 27% experienced educational difficulties or missed school because of their caring responsibilities. This rose to 40% where there was parental mental ill-health or substance misuse. Research also suggests that of the young carers in your school, only 39% will be known by staff.

Trying to balance caring responsibilities while growing up can have a significant impact on a young person’s health and wellbeing. At school, **attendance, behaviour** and **achievement** can all be affected. Ofsted recommends that councils and partners should ensure that professionals within universal services are aware of the needs of young carers so that they can be identified and supported.

The key to supporting pupils who are young carers is through **early preventative work** and **supporting families** in ways that prevent inappropriate caring.

Supporting Young Carers: a Resource for Schools promotes a **multi-agency approach**. It will help your school to remove the **barriers to learning** experienced by this vulnerable group of pupils and will:

- Inform your school about the impact of caring on a young carers’ education and their needs.
- Highlight guidance and legislation and good practice approaches already seen in some schools.
- Help you identify and assess young carers in your school.
- Help you develop a framework of support using a whole-school approach.

The resource contains case studies, awareness-raising materials and **time-saving tools**, which you can download and print. It also directs you to further relevant information and resources should you wish to develop specific areas in more depth.

We aim for *Supporting Young Carers: a Resource for Schools* to be used by all staff, senior management teams and governing bodies. The content, while aimed at secondary schools within the UK, can also be transferred to primary schools and further education colleges.



Who are young carers?

"I don't know how to define a young carer or what I'd look for, but basically someone who is caring for someone close to them, physically, mentally and emotionally, and it's stopping them from having what you would call a normal teenage life."¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School leadership team
- Governing body

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform staff of what it means to be a young carer and the emotional and physical impacts that caring may have.

Synopsis

Young carers are children and young people who look after someone in their family who has an illness, a disability, or is affected by mental ill-health or substance misuse. Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks and level of caring undertaken by young carers can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care and the structure of the family as a whole.

What does it mean to be a young carer?

Young carers can experience conflicting emotions, such as loving the person they care for, while resenting the burden of care, or being proud of what they do as carers, while resisting the restrictions made on their young lives. This can lead to the young person feeling guilty or confused and perhaps further isolated from their peer group.²

Research shows that 81% of young carers care for a parent, often a single parent, and 58% of care recipients are mothers because single parents are more likely to be mothers than fathers. A quarter look after a disabled sibling, often when parents reach breaking point.³ It is important to remember that young carers helping to look after a sibling are often overlooked. It is also very important to remember that not every child whose parent or sibling is ill or disabled is necessarily a young carer.

A young carer may undertake some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.



- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy.
- Personal care, such as dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Administering medication.
- Looking after or “parenting” younger siblings.
- Emotional support.
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family’s first language.

Some young carers may undertake high levels of care, whereas for others it may be frequent low levels of care. Either can impact heavily on a child or young person.

What are the effects of being a young carer?

A young carer’s personal and physical development, physical and emotional health, as well as social opportunities can all be affected by the family situation and their caring role. Young carers learn practical and caring skills at an early age and can be wrongly seen as “copers”. However, it is important to remember that they are ordinary young people with the same emotional needs as others their age.

- A young carer’s physical health is often severely affected by caring through the night, repeatedly lifting a heavy adult, poor diet and lack of sleep.
- Stress, tiredness and mental ill-health are common for young carers.
- Many experience traumatic life changes such as bereavement, family break-up, losing income and housing, or seeing the effects of an illness or addiction on their loved one.
- Inappropriate caring roles during childhood can impact later in life, affecting a young carer during the transition to adulthood or in adulthood itself. This can include long-term impacts on physical or emotional health, further education and/or career opportunities.

Why are young carers hidden?

Many young carers receive no (or very little) help during their childhoods. It is difficult to believe that their issues go unnoticed. There are specific reasons for this. Firstly, adults’ services often fail to recognise their clients’ needs as a parent and children’s services often intervene too late when a young person’s caring role has caused damage to their well-being and they are at crisis point. Adults’ and children’s services often struggle to work together effectively and fail to look at the needs of the whole family. Families are often wary of intervention by services and conceal illness, particularly mental ill-health and substance misuse, while some parents don’t recognise their child’s caring role. Young carers feel they will be bullied if other young people find out about their caring role.



Other chapters to help you understand this topic

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- 20** Pupils with parents with mental ill-health
- 21** Pupils caring for someone with a disability
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- 23** Pupils from migrant families

Key resources

→ Professionals website

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Professionals website, is an open resource for all professionals and decision-makers who come into contact with carers' issues.

www.carers.org/professionals

→ YCNet

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' dedicated website for young carers, providing information, advice, email support and supervised message boards and chat sessions.

www.youngcarers.net

→ The Children's Society website

Information on and for young carers and their families.

www.youngcarer.com

→ Refugee Toolkit

Developed by The Children's Society Family Health Inclusion Project and funded by the Department of Health, this is a tool for all adult and children's services practitioners, education, health and other agencies in contact with refugee and asylum seeking families. Particularly those working with families affected by ill-health and disability and where there are young carers.

www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk

¹Thomas, N. (2001). *A Study of Young Carers in Wales. Perspectives of Children and Young People*. University of Wales.

²Leadbitter, H. (2008). Whole Family Pathway. The Children's Society:
<http://www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Whole%20Family%20Pathway.pdf>

³Dearden, C. & Becker, S. (2004). *Young Carers in the UK: the 2004 report*. Carers UK and The Children's Society.

Young carers and their education

"We spend most of our time at home or in school, so it's vital that schools recognise and understand our needs, wants and aspirations."

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform staff of the impact that a caring role can have on young carers.
- inform staff about how these impacts can lead to barriers in learning.
- develop a whole-school approach to supporting young carers in your school.

Synopsis

27% of young carers aged 11–15 experience educational difficulties or miss school, rising to 40% where children are caring for a relative with drug or alcohol problems.¹

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, risking impacts on his or her emotional or physical well-being, educational achievement or life chances.²

The impacts of caring

Young carers, like all young people, have hopes and dreams, stresses and worries. However, not only do they have the pressures experienced by all those their age, they also have the added responsibilities of caring for a family member; responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.

School can be a haven for young carers where they can forget their caring responsibilities. For some, school can be a place of safety and normality away from the chaos of home. For others, school can be a miserable place: where they are misunderstood, bullied and where the pressures of work compound their already difficult lives.

As a result, young carers can often encounter barriers to their learning. The impacts of these can be variable, severe and enduring. Schools should aim to counter such impacts by removing or lowering any additional barriers to their learning caused by their family circumstances and by



ensuring that they have equal access to education and career choices as their peers.³

It is important to remember that your school doesn't need to do everything. Instead it should aim to involve a range of professionals, and local and national agencies to provide a broad spectrum of support.

Underachievement

There is much anecdotal evidence of young carers underachieving at school from those working with young carers and former young carers themselves. Currently very few schools are monitoring the achievement of this particular vulnerable group.

Withdrawn and unnoticed

Some young carers become very quiet and withdrawn and some may immerse themselves in their work and be seen as model students.

Missing school

Young carers can miss significant amounts of their education due to their family situation and caring role. This may involve missing large chunks of school or frequent shorter absences. It is likely that a proportion of school absence is due to young carers who may be struggling to juggle the combined demands of caring and education. Some young carers are physically present in school, yet admit to feeling unable to access their education fully due to worry or stress. They may also find accessing extra curricular activities difficult or impossible due to caring demands, financial reasons, or because of transport difficulties.

Missing deadlines

Young carers sometimes find meeting homework and coursework deadlines difficult, because of the additional demands on them at home. They may not cope with the accumulative stress of trying to juggle home and school life.

Bullying

Young carers are often the victims of bullying at school. Some young carers are bullied because of the condition or illness of the person they care for, whilst others can be bullied because they appear to lack social skills or seem more mature than young people of the same age. Social isolation at school will impact on a young carer's well-being and their ability to engage fully in school.

Behavioural issues

Some young carers may react with negative behaviour. They may keep negative feelings to themselves to protect their parents from additional stress and anxiety but may not be able to keep their feelings in at school.

Bereavement and loss

It is important to remember that although young carers (and families) may try hard to juggle their responsibilities, including keeping up with their education, sometimes it is the latter that falls off the list of priorities when up against other issues such as the fear of a bereavement, or bereavement itself.



Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4 Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 5 Attendance
- 6 Behaviour
- 7 Addressing bullying
- 8 Transport to and from school

Key resources

Professionals website

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website dedicated solely to professionals who work with adult and young carers in health, education or and social care.

www.carers.org/professionals

Toolkit for primary school teachers

The Trust has developed a complementary resource specifically for primary school teachers to help them identify young carers at an early age. The toolkit also has resources which will help primary school children understand the concept of being a young carer.

www.carers.org

¹ Dearden, C. & Becker, S. (2004). *Young Carers in the UK: the 2004 report*. Carers UK and The Children's Society.

² Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: key principles of practice*. The Children's Society.

³ Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: key principles of practice*. The Children's Society.

National legislation and guidance

“A young carer may be a child in need under the Children Act. The key issue is whether the child’s welfare or development might suffer if support is not provided to the child or family.”¹

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School leadership team
- Governing body

Please note that some of the information in this chapter is now out of date. We will be updating this chapter soon.

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform staff of the most recent legislation and guidance in your nation as it applies to pupils who are young carers.

Synopsis

There exists a great deal of legislation and guidance concerning young carers which affects schools. Young carers are at particular risk of not achieving the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes and, increasingly, guidance issued from government departments and local authorities cites that the delivery of these outcomes requires a planned and coordinated approach. The *Children Act 2004*, the *Children’s Plan* and the *Children’s Act 1989* are thus highly relevant alongside further legislation specific to carers.

Ofsted reports that councils and partners should²:

- ensure that professionals within universal services are aware of the needs of young carers so they can be identified and supported.
- consider ways to ensure that adults’ and children’s services work together to deliver holistic assessments and services that meet the needs of the whole family.

As part of a joint commitment to help take forward the National Carers Strategy 2008, the Association of Directors of Adult Services (ADASS) and the Association of Directors of Children’s Services Ltd. (ADCS) have developed a *Model Memorandum of Understanding*³ on working together to support young carers. The Model encourages schools to:

- have a named staff member with lead responsibility for young carers and to recognise this role within continuing professional development.



- establish a policy to encourage practice that identifies and supports young carers, such as adapting school arrangements if needed, provision for personal tutors and private discussions and access to local young carers' projects.

UK-wide legislation

The following pieces of legislation are UK-wide whilst nation-specific guidance can be found below.

Carers and Disabled Children Combined Policy Guidance Act 2000 and Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004⁴

These acts provide young carers with varying rights to an assessment of their needs, which must take into account their right to an education.

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995⁵

Highlights that an assessment of a young carer's needs must take into account the right to education.

Children Act 1989⁶

If a child does not have the opportunity or is unable to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, then they are regarded as being in need. This in turn means they are eligible for a range of support services.

The *Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*, which gives guidance on S.17 of the Act, includes a section on young carers stating that effective support will require "good quality joint work between adult and children's social services as well as co-operation from schools and health workers...Young carers can receive help from both local and health authorities." See paragraphs 3.61-3.63.

Guidance: England

Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: A caring system on your side, a life of your own⁷

The Government's strategy sets out a vision for carers and states that 'children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the *Every Child Matters* outcomes'.

Children Missing Education⁸

This guidance highlights good practice, which already exists in Local Education Authorities, for identifying children missing from education, those at risk of going missing, helping them move back into education (or alternative provision) and maintaining contact to prevent them slipping through the net again. This will help ensure all children and young people receive the universal services they are entitled to.

Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Advice and guidance to schools and local authorities in England on managing behaviour and attendance⁹



Schools can help young carers by helping the family to contact appropriate community care or adult services to provide more support for the person being cared for to help reduce the responsibilities of the young carer, and by providing flexible and sensitive support to the young carer.

Delivering every child matters for young carers¹⁰

The barriers faced by young carers in achieving the *Every Child Matters* outcomes are outlined and support structures to minimise those barriers are identified.

Drug Strategy¹¹

This recognises that children and young people in families affected by substance misuse face particular challenges. Some risk falling into inappropriate caring roles and it is vital that the welfare of these children is protected and that they can access appropriate support. Mainstream children's services need to be equipped to spot the symptoms of substance misuse in a child's family.

Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP)¹²

This is a joint initiative between the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health which promotes a whole-school/whole-child approach to health. It aims to help schools increase the support offered through identification and awareness raising.

Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families¹³

This examines the assessment and delivery of services for young carers and their families.

The Children's Plan¹⁴

This contains many of the key issues for young carers and their families and looks at all aspects of a child's wellbeing through the lens of the *Every Child Matters* outcomes. It also outlines the guiding principles that all children and families deserve services that work together for them and that it is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later.

Your child, your schools, our future: Building a 21st century school system¹⁵

This White Paper expands on the key aims of the *Children's Plan* to ensure that the well-being and the *Every Child Matters* agendas are fully incorporated within schools.

Many of the proposals within the White Paper should improve support for young carers and their families and these are very much in line with the recommendations within this resource.

Guidance: *Scotland*

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)¹⁶

GIRFEC is the overarching approach to supporting children and young people in Scotland and to effective inter-agency working to deliver the right support at the right time for every child in Scotland.

→ [Getting It Right For Young Carers: The Young Carers Strategy for Scotland: 2010-2015 Summary](#)

www.scotland.gov.uk



Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004/2009¹⁷

This lies within the principles of *GIRFEC* and ensures that every pupil who has a support need within the education system is identified and supported with that need.

The Act promoted a multi-agency approach and recognises that problems encountered at school are not necessarily based in education; further support can be required due to a caring role for example.

Curriculum for Excellence¹⁸

The curriculum in Scotland has been revised and a new approach implemented through the *Curriculum for Excellence*, the purpose of which is encapsulated in the four capacities: enable each child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen, and an effective contributor.

Health and well-being are one of the building blocks of this new curriculum and so there will be a more active approach to mental health and emotional well-being. Young carers are expected to benefit from this 'whole-school' approach.

Guidance: Northern Ireland

Department of Education, Northern Ireland¹⁹

The Department of Education in Northern Ireland recognises that young carers may experience difficulties in reaching their full potential due to their personal circumstances.

In partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland has issued a DVD for schools to raise awareness of the issues confronting pupils when coping with a caring role. The DVD has been used in training and awareness-raising seminars for school principals and staff.

Schools are encouraged to refer any pupil experiencing difficulties because of caring responsibilities to the Education Welfare Service so that access to additional supports can be secured.

Other developments within education, which are seeking to address barriers to learning, will benefit young carers. The Department has been working in partnership with all key statutory, voluntary and community sector stakeholders and interested parties to develop a *Pupils Emotional Health and Well-being Programme*. The agreed Programme will focus initially on the post primary sector and address how a pupil's emotional health and well-being is promoted by the school, what supports are available for a pupil under stress and what support is available to a school in the event of a crisis. The Programme will contribute to the building of resilient emotional health and well-being. It will provide the framework for integrating a range of current activities, policies and systems within schools, such as curriculum work on personal development, counselling, anti-bullying work, suicide prevention, promoting good behaviour, healthy schools initiative and pastoral care into a coherent and consistent approach.

Further information on support provision for carers in Northern Ireland can be found at:

→ [Nldirect government services: Caring for someone](http://nidirect.gov.uk/index/caring-for-someone)
www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/caring-for-someone.htm



→ [Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety: Review of the support provision for carers](#)

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/review-of-support.pdf

Guidance: *Wales*

Children and Young People: Rights to Action²⁰

Children and Young People: Rights to Action contain the seven core aims to supporting children and young people in Wales based on the principles set out in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*. The Welsh Assembly Government has shown its commitment to the Convention by adopting it as the basis for policy making for children and young people in Wales in 2004. The Welsh Assembly Government believes that working in partnership is the most effective approach to realising the desired outcome of securing the well-being of every child and young person in Wales and across the UK and supporting them to realise their rights and achieve their full potential.

Education and skills in Wales is the responsibility of the Department for Children, *Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)*, within the Welsh Assembly Government.

Cymry Ifanc Young Wales²¹

The Government is currently consulting on this *Statutory Guidance for Youth Support Services 11-25* and *Learner Support Services 14-19*. This revised Guidance reinforces the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to young people, first set out in *Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People 11-25* in Wales in 2000 and 2002, which still receives wide approval and admiration in the UK and across Europe.

The new Guidance sets out entitlements for all 14-19 year-olds in a maintained school or further education college, several elements of which will be of particular importance to young carers, including:

- an entitlement to personal support as part of their learning pathway.
- an individual plan for his or her learning. It should be their major personal planning and self-reflection tool and should include, where relevant, experiences, activities or support in any part of their life.

For more information about the above, please use the links below:

→ [14-19 Learning Pathways²²](#)

Learning Pathways is based on the fundamental principle that our young people should be given every opportunity to realise their potential and leave school better prepared for life and work.

→ [Extending Entitlement: Support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales, Direction and Guidance, July 2002²³](#)

This provides an underpinning structure within which the principles of *Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales* and the *Green Paper Learning is for Everyone* can be put into practice at local level.



Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 5** Attendance
- 6** Behaviour
- 7** Addressing bullying
- 10** How can school governors help?
- 11** School leadership teams
- 13** Developing a school lead for young carers and their families

Key resources

→ Children Act 2004: Guidance on the 'duty to cooperate'

Legal underpinning for the transformation of children's services as set out in the (*Every Child Matters: Change for Children*) programme.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/about/guidance/dutytooperate

→ Every Child Matters

Resources for schools to achieve (*Every Child Matters*) outcomes.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/ete/

→ Behaviour and Attendance

www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance

www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour

→ Bullying

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn

→ National Carers Strategy 2008

Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities.

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085345

→ Rights and inclusion

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/1995050.htm

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

www.unicef.org/crc

→ SCIE Guide 9: Implementing the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

Offers quick and easy access to information that will aid the implementation of the 2004



Act alongside previous related legislation.

www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide09/index.asp

→ **Targeted Youth Support: Young carers after school club**

Description of an after-school club set up for young carers in greater London.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/EP00224/

¹*The Children's Act Report 1995 - 1999*. (2000). Department of Health: www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4081933.pdf

²*Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families*. (2009) Ofsted: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers/(language)/eng-GB)

³*Model Memorandum of Understanding*. (2009). Association of Directors of Adult Services (ADASS) & Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd. (ADCS): www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/AMOU.%20youngcarers.pdf

⁴*Carers and Disabled Children Combined Policy Guidance Act 2000 and Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004*. Department of Health: www.carersnet.org.uk/acts/equalact/combined.pdf

⁵*Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995*. Office of Public Sector Information: www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1995/ukpga_19950012_en_1

⁶*Children Act 1989*. Office of Public Sector Information: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga_19890041_en_1.htm

⁷*Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own*. Department of Health: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085345

⁸*Every Child Matters: Children Missing Education*. Department for Children, Schools and Families: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/ete/schools/childrenmissingeducation/childrenmissingeducation>

⁹*The National Strategies: Advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on managing behaviour and attendance*. Department for Children, Schools and Families: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/154426>

¹⁰*Delivering Every Child Matters for Young Carers*. (2006). The Princess Royal Trust for Carers: <http://static.carers.org/files/trust-guidance-delivering-every-child-matters-for-young-carers-2177.doc>

¹¹*Tackling drugs, saving lives*. The Home Office: <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk>

¹²Healthy Schools: <http://home.healthyschools.gov.uk>

¹³*Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families*. (2009). Ofsted: www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers

¹⁴*The Children's Plan*. (2007). Department for Children, Schools and Families: www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan

¹⁵*Your child, your schools, our future: Building a 21st century schools system*. Department of Children, Schools and Families: www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem

¹⁶*Getting it right for every child*. The Scottish Government: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec/programme-overview

¹⁷*Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*. The Scottish Government: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/welfare/ASL

¹⁸*Curriculum for Excellence*: www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.asp

¹⁹Department of Education, Northern Ireland: www.deni.gov.uk

²⁰Children and Young People: Rights to Action: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/rightstoaction/?lang=en>

²¹*Cymry Ifanc Young Wales - Statutory Guidance for Youth Support Services 11–25 and Learner Support Services 14–19*. Welsh Assembly Government: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/consultation/101209youthsupporten.pdf>

²²*Learning Pathways 14 - 19*. Welsh Assembly Government: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/learningpathways1419/?lang=en>

²³*Extending Entitlement: support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales Direction and Guidance*. (2002). Welsh Assembly Government: http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/4038232/4038211/extending_entitlement/DGEE.pdf?lang=en

Barriers to learning faced by young carers

"I bring my worries and troubles to school and I cannot concentrate with my school work and my teachers tell me off."

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school

This chapter will support schools to:

- understand the barriers to learning faced by young carers at home and in school.
- see that a caring role can be positive and can engender life skills.
- put solutions and support into place for pupils who are young carers.

Synopsis

Research and practice highlights that young carers can face many barriers to their learning, both at school and at home. Some of these are more practical and include wider educational experiences, such as problems accessing after school clubs, whereas others are more emotional or psychological, such as difficulties in concentrating due to worrying about a parent at home.

A pupil who suddenly begins to, or repeatedly misses deadlines, or whose attendance fluctuates, may be struggling to cope with caring demands at home. It is essential that staff try and get to the root causes of a pupil's problem before they are labelled as troublesome or lazy.

Be aware that breakdowns in the relationship between a young carer and the school are possible. Pupils who do not find their school understanding, supportive or accommodating of their situation, may feel resentment, frustration and anger and may react with poor behaviour, thus beginning a negative spiral.

Poor attendance can in turn lead to low self-esteem or the loss or exclusion from a peer group. This can become entrenched, leading to further social withdrawal, possibly bullying and decreased school attendance. It is vital therefore to address such barriers as soon as possible.

Barriers to learning faced by young carers

Young carers can face barriers to their learning in the home and at school. Psychological, emotional and physical barriers to their learning can be met in both home and school.



Some barriers can, of course, be attributed to any pupil. Young carers, however, are particularly vulnerable.

See resource 4.1. for solutions to some of the barriers faced by young carers. Completing or contributing to a CAF assessment can initiate the solution for many of the barriers. For more information on assessment and monitoring, please see Chapter 24 'Assessment and monitoring'. A Children in Need assessment may also be more appropriate for some pupils who have significant needs. Support from a young carers' service is also helpful.

Life skills and positive aspects of caring

The experience of being a young carer can have positive aspects: young carers can be highly self-motivated multi-taskers, coping with and achieving at school while undertaking a caring role. Many transfer their caring experiences into career and job choices having developed the key skills and competencies needed for their families to function.¹ These skills include effective communication and management capabilities, often coupled with a mature outlook. There is, however, currently no way of accrediting these skills so that colleges or employers recognise them.²

Compassion, consideration, determination, empathy, understanding and tolerance of disability and illness can also all be acquired through a caring role. But, the negative aspects of caring often outweigh the positive.

It is important that recognition of a caring role does not inadvertently encourage the continuation of inappropriate care, nor that caring becomes a cause for celebration and not action. It is also important that careers advisors do not assume that the care profession should be the only career path for young carers and that they help them to explore all options. Equally, young carers' abilities to cope and achieve should not be allowed to mask their need for support.³ (Dearden and Becker, 2000)

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 5** Attendance
- 6** Behaviour
- 7** Addressing bullying
- 17** Early intervention and preventative work
- 18** Identification of young carers
- 24** Assessment and monitoring

Key resources

As well as the toolkits available in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Every Child Matters (ECM)

See *The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Guidance: Delivering Every Child Matters for young carers* for a detailed list.

<http://static.carers.org/files/trust-guidance-delivering-every-child-matters-for-young-carers-2177.doc>



→ **Include Project: Information for teachers and school staff**

The Children's Society.

<http://www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/nateducation07.pdf>

¹Frank, J. Tatum, C. & Tucker, S. (1999). *On Small Shoulders: Learning from the Experiences of Former Young Carers*. The Children's Society.

²Dearden, C. & Becker, S. (2000). *Growing Up Caring: Vulnerability and Transition to Adulthood – Young Carers' Experiences*, Youth Work Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³Dearden, C. & Becker, S. (2000). *Growing Up Caring: Vulnerability and Transition to Adulthood – Young Carers' Experiences*, Youth Work Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.



4.1 Barriers to learning and possible solutions

Your school can use the following list of practical solutions to help integrate into your existing pastoral systems or personalised plans.

Use *The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Guidance: Delivering Every Child Matters for young carers* for a detailed list: <http://static.carers.org/files/trust-guidance-delivering-every-child-matters-for-young-carers-2177.doc>

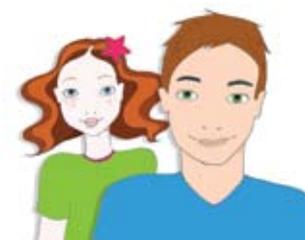
Barriers to learning in school	✓	Possible solutions
<p>Poor attendance, due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the caring role or a secondary consequence of the caring role. • a psychological or emotional barrier (see below). • transport difficulties. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification (Please see Chapter 18 'Identification of young carers'). • Refer to adults' and/or children's services to obtain more support in the home. • Referrals to other agencies and professionals. • Amend home to school transport policies to reflect needs in relation to transport difficulties.
<p>Limited or no access to clubs and extended schools opportunities.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate transport and respite care provision to help young carers to participate.
<p>Isolation and feelings of detachment from other children. Bullying which can be directly related to a young carer's caring role.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunchtime or after-school peer support group for young carers. • Peer mentoring support (train peer mentors in young carers issues). • Adequate transport and respite care provision to help young carers participate in after school activities. • Signposting to www.youngcarers.net. • Available staff to talk to in confidential settings. • See Chapter 7 'Addressing bullying'.
<p>Financial constraints at college due to family situation, little time for a part-time job, together with being unable to claim Carer's Allowance.</p>		<p>Support through the 16–19 Bursary Fund discretionary element.</p>



Barriers to learning at home	✓	Possible solutions
The pressure to complete homework/coursework deadlines competes with the caring role.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate deadlines for homework at times when the pupil's caring role increases. Sometimes young carers need some flexibility. • Refer to external agencies for more support in home.
Space at home is limited or an adequate working environment may not be available, due to financial constraints or because the care needs of a parent or sibling make concentration at home difficult.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework support club.
Financial constraints, including lack of resources such as a computer, money for school trips.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider financial bursaries or grants, such as www.educational-grants.org • Consider loan of equipment.
Reduced support from home, due to the family being preoccupied with the illness or disability of the person being cared for.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra support with work and/or homework support club. • Lunchtime or after school peer support group for young carers. • Parenting support groups to be coordinated in schools.
Limited wider educational opportunities and life experiences, such as travel or family days out, due to added responsibility at the home, financial constraints or other issues related to the person in need of care.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to a young carers' service or other youth provision. • Liaise with extended services.
Little support or encouragement with career choices.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available staff to talk to in confidential settings. • Recognition of positives and transferable skills. • Support from local careers service.



Psychological and emotional barriers to learning	✓	Possible solutions
Anxiety and depression.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with family and if needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – refer to health services such as GP and/or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
Tiredness, stress, worry or low concentration.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with family and if needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – refer to social services, health services and voluntary sector organisations, where appropriate. • More agency support for the family. • Family respite. • Available staff to talk to in confidential setting. • Allow young carers to telephone home if they are worried about a family member.
Lack of concentration during exams due to caring responsibilities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider notifying an examination board about young carer's circumstances.
Low motivation, or school work low down on the young carer's list of priorities, due to other more pressing demands or responsibilities, such as terminal illness or bereavement.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available staff to talk to in confidential settings. • Refer to local young carers', condition specific services and/or bereavement support service, where appropriate.
The feeling that no one understands their experiences and that professionals do not listen.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available staff to talk to in confidential settings. • Peer mentoring support (train peer mentors in young carers issues). • Signposting to www.youngcarers.net
Struggling with shyness, low self esteem and confidence.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunchtime or afterschool peer support group for young carers.
Young carers displaying behavioural issues which are related to caring role. Feelings of guilt, anger, resentment and confusion.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available staff to talk to in confidential settings. • Behavioural support. • Family mediation. • Age-appropriate information on relevant illnesses and conditions provided in a timely manner.
Low academic aspirations/little encouragement to continue into further/higher education or training.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from local careers service. • FE and HE establishments to identify and support young carers and consider flexible entrance requirements.



Barriers for parents	✓	Possible solutions
Parents with a disability face difficulties in supporting their child's education if parenting or care needs are not being effectively met.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and colleges are accessible to parents who are disabled or have a long-term illness. Communication strategies include provision for any parent with a visual, hearing or communication impairment, as covered in the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1995</i> with regard to access to goods, services and facilities. • Intervention for example from a parent support adviser.
Difficulties in attending parents evenings and other school functions, due to disability, long-term illness, or because the event clashes with a medical appointment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure school parents' evenings are accessible to parents with disabilities or who find it difficult to leave the house without support. • Consider alternatives, such as home visits and phone calls where appropriate to support and encourage parents to attend.
Parents missing out on vital information perhaps due to stays in hospital.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan communication with family.
Parents unable to engage, due to communication impairments or language barriers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan communication with family. • Provide interpreters and/or translators at school events and in communications. • Use large print newsletters, audio/podcast information bulletins.
Parents are unable to attend events due to lack of transport.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with adults' services to ensure care packages reflect transport needs.

Attendance

"If I'd have gone to school regularly, I would have done all right, but, under the circumstances, I felt I couldn't. It would have just made me feel more guilty, if you know what I mean. I just didn't want to do that."

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Education welfare service
- Attendance officer
- Inclusion staff
- Parent support adviser

This chapter will support schools to:

- understand why young carers may be late to or absent from school.
- support pupils and address attendance issues.
- understand how educational provision can be made for young carers whose attendance and education has been interrupted.

Synopsis

Caring responsibilities can lead to lateness or absence from school. Absence often forms patterns and can occur either over extended periods or can be shorter and more frequent in nature.

If the pupil's absence is due to caring for someone with a long-term or recurring illness, this may be an indication of inadequate levels of support from adults' services and should, therefore, be addressed as a priority.

Low or sporadic attendance, or patterns of absence, can often be one of the first indicators of a caring role. Your school should aim to identify and support young carers before attendance becomes an issue.

Young carers can struggle when juggling two roles

"Young carers often make enormous efforts to manage their caring responsibilities and maintain full school attendance. However, some may struggle to cope all the time and subsequently their education, physical and mental health may be affected. Young carers can often feel as if they have somehow failed or feel extremely guilty for not coping."¹



Young carers often say that when forced to choose between staying at home to look after the person they care for and going to school, caring will come first. Young carers often miss after school activities to rush home and look after a parent or collect younger siblings from school. Conversely, punctuality can also be compromised when young carers have to transport younger siblings to school.

Inadequate support in the home for the person needing care can lead to the young carer missing school to care for a parent for example, by carrying out tasks that need to be done or by keeping them company. This can create isolation from peers and from friends, and the young carer may then prefer to stay at home where they feel valued and safe.

Addressing attendance issues

Patterns of non attendance are often an indicator of a young carer's underlying need, such as insufficient support for a parent during the day. Schools should also look for and address secondary barriers to learning that may stem from a pupil's caring role, such as anxiety or bullying which can then impact on attendance.

By working alongside pupils and their families, your school can help address needs and resolve the underlying causes of absence. This will probably mean involving other agencies.² Facilitating the return of punctuality or full-time attendance requires a strong relationship with the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The EWS and parent support advisers play a vital role in forming a bridge between school and parents and working with parents is the key to supporting young carers effectively.

Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance states that your school should ask the family if they are willing to contact community care or adults' services for more support for the person being cared for so as to reduce the need for the pupil to take on inappropriate caring responsibilities.³ Ensuring that support is in place is paramount; if the person with care needs has appropriate support in place, pupils should feel more confident in coming to school and less anxious about leaving that person.

The family may welcome efforts to advocate on their behalf for better support arrangements to be in place. Your school should respect a family's decision should they be unwilling to discuss support needs. You should, nevertheless, consider and address the pupil's welfare using their usual assessment procedures.

Please also refer to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

It is vital that your school balances a supportive, flexible approach towards the young carer and their family alongside the consistent message of the importance of education to the pupil.

As well as missing school, young carers may well be missing out on after school clubs and activities (because of transport issues, having to return home promptly to care for someone at home or to pick up or look after siblings).

Drawing up an emergency plan for a young carer may help prevent future school absence.



Other chapters to help you understand this topic

27 Crisis or emergency plans

Key resources

→ **DCSF Advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on managing behaviour and attendance**

Provides advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on managing the behaviour and attendance of groups of pupils at particular risk.

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/154426>

→ **Behaviour, Attendance and SEAL (Secondary)**

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/behaviourattendanceandseal>

→ **Behaviour, Attendance and SEAL (Primary)**

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/behaviourattendanceandseal>

→ **School attendance**

Advice and guidance provided by Teachernet.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/attendance/

¹Baker, G. (2002). *Unseen and Unheard: The invisible young carers*. Carers Lewisham, Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

²Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: key principles of practice*. The Children's Society.

³Department for Children, Schools and Families' *Guidance on behaviour and school attendance*: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour

Behaviour

*"Sometimes I get angry and I..... I like lash out, you know?
It's just how I feel inside."*

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Education welfare officer
- Attendance officer
- Inclusion staff
- Parent support adviser

This chapter will support schools to:

- identify some of the links between being a young carer and negative behaviour in school.
- develop approaches to working with young carers who are exhibiting negative behaviour.

Synopsis:

Young carers are not immune to difficulties at home leading to negative behaviour within school. Worry, stress, pressures, confusion, a disrupted or chaotic family situation and feeling misunderstood or unsupported can all lead to poor behaviour in pupils.

There can be a big difference between the young person who seems 'mature beyond their years' in the home environment, where they are very protective of a family member with needs, and the young person who takes out their pent-up frustration or stress at school. The link between a young carer's family situation, their caring responsibilities and their behaviour should not be ignored and needs to be addressed in an appropriate and sensitive way.

Understanding the signs of behavioural issues

There is often a link between the pupil's home life and their behaviour in school. Pupils do not walk around school wearing a 'carer label', however, and so it is easy to miss or overlook the reasons behind poor behaviour. Increased awareness amongst staff members of a pupil's caring role and home environment will result in a more appropriate response to the pressures that the young carer is under. Problems often occur when staff have not been informed and consequently handle a particular situation inadequately.



Young people all react to situations differently. The behaviour of one pupil may be up and down just as their caring role and family situation is up and down, whereas another pupil may have been the 'model' student who then 'cracks' after years of caring.

If the root of the problem is not addressed and the young carer feels that no one understands them, their behaviour is unlikely to improve and it is possible that their relationship with your school may worsen.

Of course, young carers should be expected to follow the same rules as any other pupil and young carers themselves tell us that they want to be treated like their peers. However, by seeing and understanding that the root of the problem may be coming from the pressures and emotional turmoil that many young carers face at home, issues can be handled with more sensitivity and understanding and thus more positive outcomes are more likely to be achieved.

Pupils will not open up to every member of staff, only those with whom they feel comfortable and whom they trust. It is, therefore, important that young carers are aware of available staff with whom they can share home life.

Young carers advise that it can be good to be asked by staff how they are or how the person they care for is, provided it is done so privately. Professionals often skirt around the issues, whereas the 'direct' approach, although perhaps difficult, may often be best.

Detentions

Consideration should be given to lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions which may cause excessive conflict for a young carer who has after school caring responsibilities. If a young carer has to get home quickly to check on the person they care for and support them, then they will most likely not attend the after school detention, thus getting themselves into more trouble. Young carers tell us that detentions in lunch time are a much better option.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 5 Attendance
- 6 Behaviour
- 27 Crisis or emergency plans

Key resources

→ DCSF Advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on managing behaviour and attendance

Provides advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on managing the behaviour and attendance of groups of pupils at particular risk.

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/154426>

→ Behaviour, Attendance and SEAL (Primary)

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/behaviourattendanceandseal>



→ **Behaviour, Attendance and SEAL (Secondary)**

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/behaviourattendanceandseal>

→ **School attendance**

Advice and guidance provided by teachernet.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/attendance/

Addressing bullying

*"That is why I left school...because of the bullying...being different."*¹

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Peer mentors
- Pastoral support lead
- School leadership team

This chapter will support schools to:

- understand the reasons why young carers can be bullied.
- identify and address incidences of bullying towards young carers.
- reduce incidences of bullying towards young carers.

Synopsis

Research by the National Centre for Social Research found that one of the main characteristics of bullying victims aged between 14 and 16 was that they had a caring responsibility.²

Young carers may experience bullying due to a number of different reasons³:

- They may have greater maturity than (and therefore not accepted by) their peers.
- They may have minimal social skills.
- They may find it harder to make and sustain friendships.
- They may be withdrawn.
- They may be over-sensitive.
- They may have untidy or unclean clothing or general appearance.
- They may be teased or ostracised because of family circumstances.
- They may be seen as isolated or different.
- Fellow pupils may make fun of them or of their family's problems.
- They may find it difficult to have a social life, or be isolated from peers.



To help support young carers who are bullied, your school can:

- make sure that any bullying policies reflect the specific needs of young carers.
- train peer mentors on the specific issues that affect young carers.
- set up a peer support group within school.
- ensure that staff are available to offer emotional support and understanding.
- ensure tight confidentiality, so that young carers can identify themselves as young carers, access support discretely and know that conversations and questions about their home life are carried out in private.
- work towards an environment where disabilities and issues around caring are taught and understood.
- address bullying through good partnership working between the school and an outside agency such as a young carers service.
- try to ensure that young carers are able to attend after school clubs and activities where they can build peer groups.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 12** Developing a schools policy for young carers and their families
- 33** Raising awareness amongst all pupils

Key resources

→ YCNet

Information for young carers on being bullied.

www.youngcarers.net/at_school_and_college/12

→ Beatbullying

Charity working with children and young people deeply affected by bullying.

www.beatbullying.org

→ DCSF

Embedding anti-bullying work in school.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01136-2009&>

→ Teachernet

Information on specific types of bullying.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/specifictypesofbullying/

¹Dearden, C. & Becker, S. (2000). *Growing Up Caring: Vulnerability and Transition to Adulthood – Young Carers' Experiences*, Youth Work Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

²www.natcen.ac.uk/study/the-characteristics-of-bullying-victims-in-schools/findings

³Frank, J. (2002). *Making It Work: Good practice with young carers and their families*. The Children's Society.

Transport to and from school

“It is important that Local Education Authorities recognise that some parents will require assistance if they are to fulfil their responsibility to ensure their children attend school each day. Such assistance should be provided in ways that support rather than undermine parents’ involvement in their children’s education.”¹

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Attendance officer
- Home school liaison officer
- Parent support adviser
- Safeguarding officer
- Education welfare service

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform parents with disabilities about getting support with transport to school.

Synopsis

Family circumstances can make transport to and from school difficult and so young carers may often be late to school or even miss it altogether.

The implementation of the *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* means that local authorities must provide adequate support to parents with disabilities who need support in getting their children to school.

Why might a young carer have difficulty in getting to school?

There are several reasons why young carers may have transport problems in getting to school:

- A parent may be unwell and therefore unable to transport their child to school.
- Another family member, perhaps a sibling, may be unwell or need to attend an appointment.
- An older young carer may be responsible for escorting a younger sibling when a parent is unable to due to their illness or disability.

It is important to be mindful that a family’s needs can change and parents with episodic illnesses may find transport difficult at times when they are unwell.



Providing transport support

Having a disability or illness can result in great difficulties for parents in getting their children to and from school and thereby fulfilling their responsibility to ensure their children attend and engage with school. Currently, only families who live beyond “walking distance” from school – two miles for children under eight and three miles for those over eight – are automatically provided with free transport, but local authorities and county councils can give help to families who live within “walking distance” if the family is in “special circumstances”. The *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* makes such help mandatory for some disabled parents.²

The *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* has placed a duty on the public sector to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and to eliminate discrimination. Local authorities are, therefore, obligated to amend their home to school transport policy if, for example, that policy relied on parents with disabilities accompanying their children along a walking route for it to be considered safe, and where the parents’ disability prevented them from doing so. In such circumstances, a reasonable adjustment would be for the local authority to provide free home to school transport for the children of disabled parents.³ This applies even if the disability, for example MS or mental ill-health, does not affect the parent every day.

Some parents may choose to use their direct payments in order to buy assistance that would allow them to support their child in getting to school by themselves. Direct payments are cash payments made to individuals who have been assessed as needing services, in lieu of social service provisions.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 5** Attendance
- 8** Transport to and from school
- 27** Crisis or emergency plans
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work

Key resources

→ Home to school travel and transport guidance

Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

<http://static.carers.org/files/dfes-home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance-3108.pdf>

→ Effective attendance practice in schools: an overview

Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=13959

→ Advice to Schools and Local authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance

Developed by the Department for Education and Skills for groups of people at particular risk.

www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance

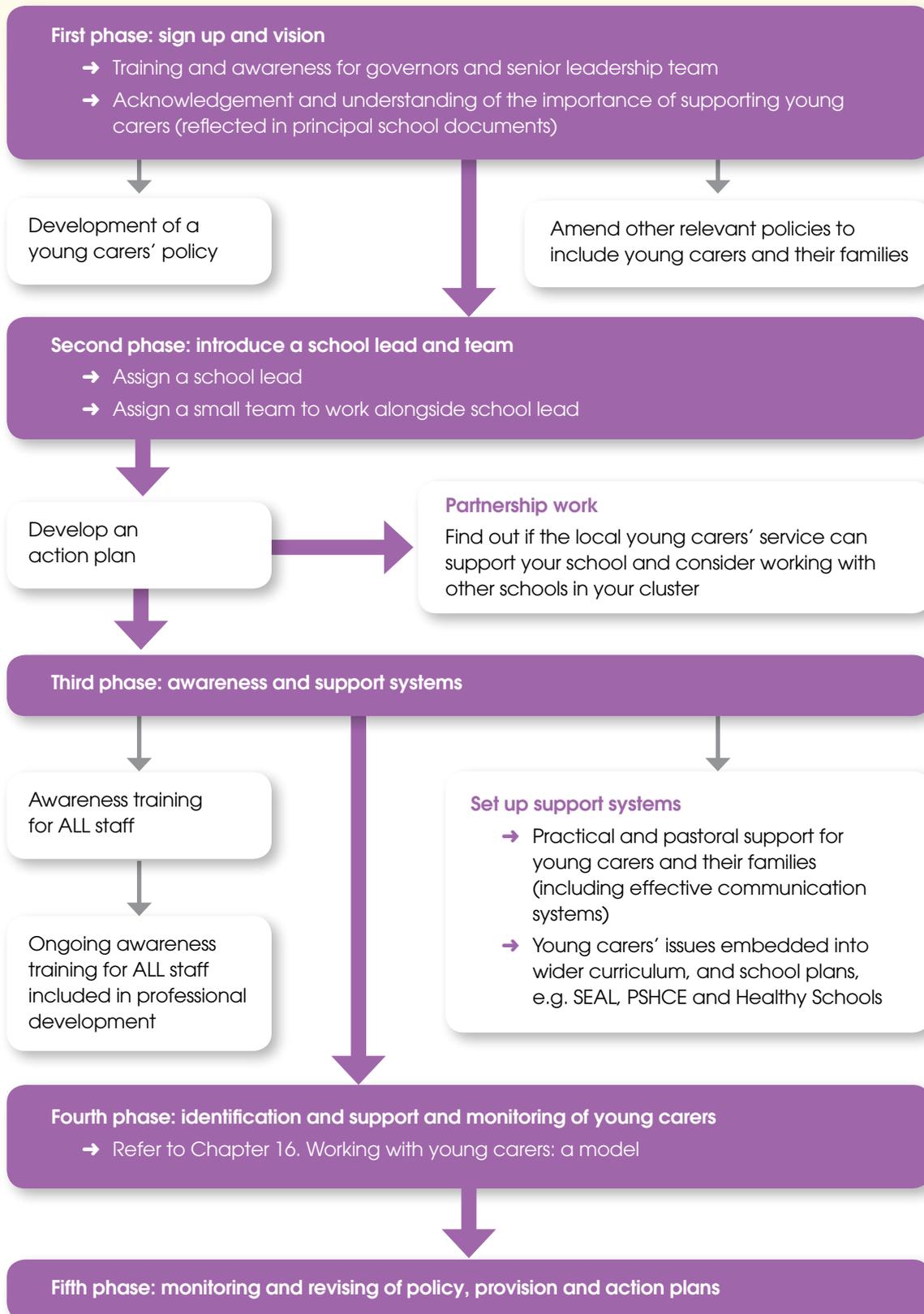


¹Morris, J. (2004). *Disabled parents and schools: Barriers to parental involvement in children's education*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk/publications/disabled-parents-and-schools-barriers-parental-involvement-childrens-education

²www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/articles/school-transport,3091,PR.html

³Department for Children, Schools and Families. *Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance*: <http://static.carers.org/files/dfes-home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance-3108.pdf>

A model for setting up a framework of support



How can school governors help?

“Governing bodies in schools make provision for policy and practice that supports young carers and promotes good communication with their families.”¹

Who is this chapter for?

- Governing body
- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school and team
- School leadership team

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform governors of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting young carers.

Synopsis

As a governor, you should be aware that not only are young carers attending your school, but that young carers have specific needs for which your school should be making adequate provision. Your school should consider designating a governor to take special interest in the provision of services and support for young carers and measure its effectiveness.

The role of governors in supporting young carers' needs

In Ofsted's evaluation schedule for schools², the following are all pertinent to the support of pupils who are young carers:

- School inspectors should evaluate:
 - how rigorously governors and supervisory boards challenge and support leaders and managers, holding them to account for tackling weaknesses and further improving outcomes for all pupils.
- School inspectors should take account of:
 - the rigour of the governing body's procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and pupils.
 - how effectively governors fulfil their duties to promote community cohesion and inclusive practice relating to special educational needs, race equality, disability and gender equality.
 - the extent to which the governing body understands the school's performance data and has an accurate picture of how well all the pupils are achieving compared with those in other schools, as well as how different groups of pupils within the school are performing.



- governors' understanding of barriers to learning, including attendance and behaviour issues, and what the school is doing to overcome them.

See the tool at the end of this chapter to facilitate your evaluation of how your school stands in its support for young carers and to use as a guide on what steps should be followed to develop your school's support further.

The new framework for the inspection of maintained schools in England³, contains seven main judgments for pupils' outcomes and all are highly relevant to young carers. In addition to the five *Every Child Matters (ECM)* outcomes, pupils' behaviour, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be judged.

Being a young carer can impact on these particular areas of their life, particularly in relation to behaviour and social development. It is, therefore, key that schools support young carers in these areas, with the aim of removing barriers to learning so that they have the same access to education as their peers.

Judgments on the effectiveness of the provision in schools will include the effectiveness of care, guidance and support provided and for young carers they need all three of these in order to prosper in school and reach their full potential.

Among the leadership and management judgements each of the following are especially pertinent to supporting young carers through a whole school approach:

- the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers.
- the effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being.
- the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination.
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 2** Young carers and their education
- 3** National legislation and guidance
- 11** School leadership teams
- 12** Developing a school policy for young carers and their families
- 13** Developing a school lead for young carers and their families

Key resources

As well as the tool at the end of this chapter and those in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Supporting young carers

A survey by Ofsted exploring how effectively young carers were identified by councils and their partners

www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers



¹Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: Key principles of practice*. The Children's Society

²Evaluation schedule of judgements for schools inspected under section five of the Education Act 2005, from September 2009:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Evaluation-schedule-of-judgements-for-schools-inspected-under-section-five-of-the-Education-Act-2005-from-September-2009

³Evaluation schedule of judgements for schools inspected under section five of the Education Act 2005, from September 2009:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Evaluation-schedule-of-judgements-for-schools-inspected-under-section-five-of-the-Education-Act-2005-from-September-2009



10.1 A checklist for governors*

This checklist helps you to evaluate where you feel your school is now in terms of supporting carers and demonstrates what needs to be achieved in order to provide further support. The following questions assume that evidence is available to support the responses.

Management			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Has your school established procedures to support young carers and if so, how effective are they? → Has any budget allocation been made to support the particular needs of young carers? → What funding streams is the school accessing to support young carers in school? 			
	Yes	No	Notes
The school has begun to identify young carers.			
A school lead has been identified.			
The school has adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL, etc.			

Policy			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Is there a whole-school policy on young carers? Is appropriate reference made to young carers in other school policies and is this effective? → Are the needs of and provision for young carers expressed clearly in the Ofsted Self-Evaluation Form sections, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A2.8, 2.9 and 2.11 • A3.3 and 3.4 • A4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 • A8.1 • B 1.26 (Extended Services) → Are the needs of and provision for young carers expressed in other major school documents? 			
	Yes	No	Notes
All school policies reference the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers.			
All relevant documents (Self Evaluation Form (SEF), Prospectus, School Profile, etc.) show reference to groups of vulnerable pupils, including young carers.			



Provision

- Is the school taking steps to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully involved in school life and activities?
- How effectively does the school link with outside agencies and support young carers to access them? Does the school signpost children and young people to them?
- How does the school communicate with the parents of the young carers and how effective is this?
- Has there been a rigorous review of the curriculum and assessment that takes account of vulnerable pupils, including young carers?

	Yes	No	Notes
The school is making provision for groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers, enabling them to make appropriate progress throughout the school.			
Young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.			
The school is supporting the particular and identified needs of young carers with a whole-school approach.			
The school uses appropriate curriculum opportunities, such as Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship Education (PHSCE), Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (RRR) and Health and Safety within the curriculum, to address the needs of all pupils including young carers.			

**Developed in Hampshire as part of The Children's Society/Include partnership.*

School leadership teams

“Research has emphasised the importance of changing schools’ organisational structures and senior management teams are crucial in driving those changes and ensuring that good practice becomes embedded in the school’s organisational structure. Similarly, having tools in place, such as a young carers’ policy, and pre-prepared lesson and assembly plans may also assist in bringing about a sustained approach to supporting young carers.”¹

Who is this chapter for?

- School leadership teams
- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school and team

This chapter will support schools to:

- ensure that all teaching and non teaching staff are aware of the issues affecting young carers.
- develop a policy to support young carers and their families.
- implement a whole-school approach towards supporting young carers.
- ensure that staff work with external agencies and other professionals, providing a multi-agency approach that supports the whole family. This includes working with adults’ services in order to support the adult with care needs.

Synopsis

School leadership teams should be aware that all schools will have young carers and that these young carers have specific needs. Many young carers face enormous barriers to learning. It is vital that the leadership of the school puts in place measures to identify and support young carers.

Why is the role of school leadership teams important?

Without identification and support, young carers are at risk of underachieving. Understanding the needs of young carers and providing them with support will help attendance, behaviour, achievement and well-being, as well as help them to reach their full potential.

Establishing a support framework for young carers based around a whole-school approach is vital for removing the barriers to learning that young carers can often face. Providing the right support at the right time will help young carers experience the same educational and life experiences as their peers.



A whole-school approach of support should be underpinned by policy and aim to develop a culture of understanding and respect where young carers and their families feel safe and confident to seek support. It should include how support is managed and provided, training of staff, teaching on the issues of caring and disability using relevant parts of the curriculum and wider school activities, such as assemblies, PHSCE and SEAL, and working in partnership with other agencies. Above all, it should enable pupils who are young carers to help shape the support.

Framework for the inspection of maintained schools in England from September 2009²

Under the framework for inspection, there are seven main judgements for pupils' outcomes, all of which are highly relevant to young carers. In addition to the five *Every Child Matters (ECM)* outcomes, pupils' behaviour, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be judged. Being a young carer can impact on these particular areas of their life, particularly social development. It is, therefore, key that all schools support young carers in these areas with the aim of removing barriers to learning so that they have the same access to education as their peers.

Judgments on the effectiveness of the provision in schools will include the effectiveness of care, guidance and support provided. For young carers, all three of these are needed in order to prosper in school and reach their full potential.

Among the leadership and management judgements each of the following are especially pertinent to supporting young carers with a whole school approach:

- 3 The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents.
- 4 The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being.
- 5 The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination.
- 6 The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 2 Young carers and their education
- 3 National legislation and guidance
- 12 Developing a school policy for young carers and their families
- 13 Developing a school lead for young carers and their families

Key resources

See the tools at the end of this chapter.

¹Informal feedback provided following an Include partnership training session: **The National Young Carers Initiative**

² *Framework for the inspection of maintained schools in England from September 2009*. Ofsted: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Framework-for-the-inspection-of-maintained-schools-in-England-from-September-2009>



11.1 Checklist for school leadership teams

Use this checklist to ascertain what steps your school has taken so far.

Policy and Planning	Yes	No	Notes
A nominated school lead is in place and a team has been identified to support this role.			
A regular programme of awareness-raising for all staff about the needs of young carers is in place.			
There is adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL etc. The needs of young carers (and their families, where appropriate) are reflected in all policies and practice.			

Management	Yes	No	Notes
There are secured pastoral arrangements supporting the needs of young carers and these are linked with available support out of school.			
Appropriate communication systems are in place for the parents of young carers.			
There is reference to young carers in appropriate sections of the Self Evaluation Form (SEF)/school profile/school development plan.			

Monitoring, evaluation and review	Yes	No	Notes
There are opportunities to develop all pupils' awareness of the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils, such as young carers in, for example, PHSCE, SEAL and RRR work.			
Steps have been taken to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully included in school life and activities.			
Systems have been established to monitor the well-being and academic progress of young carers.			
There is a robust and regular programme of self-review to monitor and revise provision for young carers.			

**Developed in Hampshire as part of The Children's Society/Include partnership*



11.2 Case studies: schools*

The following schools have established support for young carers and here you can read about why and how they support them, any challenges they have met, benefits, future developments and top tips.

Harrop Fold High School, Salford, England

Why support young carers?

The relationship between Harrop Fold High School and Salford Young Carers' Service has been in development since September 2007. Salford City Children Services Department commissioned, as a pilot scheme, the Young Carers Education Project from Salford Young Carers' Service to address the rising concerns regarding young carers and their education.

It was felt that by supporting young carers within the school, it would both benefit and support pupils and the school, those pupils who were young carers would feel less isolated and it would help the school community understand issues and behaviour.

Our aim was to:

1. deliver awareness-raising sessions to all pupils in the school via citizenship/PHSE lessons. The young carer support worker delivered a formal workshop to all students highlighting issues faced by and support available to young carers.
2. develop a process for students within the school to self-refer if they felt they may be a young carer.
3. support young carers within the school both individually and via group drop-ins.
4. increase awareness amongst all professionals working within the school community.

The school has ten recognised young carers, six pupils who are being monitored via school in case situations deteriorate, a further seven recognised young carers who have left school since the commencement of the project and nine new young carers who have since been recognised and who are now receiving support because of the Project's involvement with the school.

The scheme has been highly successful and the Young Carers Education Project now operates in nine high schools across the city and has identified 30 young people who were previously unrecognised as young carers.

What support is in place?

- The young carers' support worker is a highly visible presence in school one morning a week and is situated in the pastoral office. They support pupils via one-to-one meetings in school and informal drop-in sessions during break times. They have access to a computer and printer.
- Year leaders across school provide support with student timetables and during one-to-one sessions.
- Year leaders can follow the agreed referral process to refer students to the young carers' service.



- Year leaders liaise weekly to discuss pupils on a need to know basis.
- Home visits are carried out, with year leaders if required, and the young carers' support worker attends family action meetings to give input, thus providing good representations of young carers' needs and views at meetings with other agencies and professionals.
- When the young carers' support worker is not present in school, year leaders can make contact via telephone and email.
- Salford Young Carers' Service's contact details are displayed on all year notice boards.
- Recognised young carers can access support in and outside of school.
- A young carers' newsletter is regularly emailed to all year leaders.
- All new year seven pupils undergo awareness-raising sessions. Refresher sessions are available for years ten and 11 and these tie in with exam topics when needed.

What challenges have we met?

Support for young carers is strong and consistent. The young carers' support worker liaises regularly with the year leaders and this relationship has resulted in excellent support for identified young carers in and out of school. However, year leaders are aware that further young carers have still not been identified to the young carers' support worker or themselves. The continual challenge is to continue trying to remove the stigma and fear that inhibits some young carers from seeking support.

Benefits of supporting young carers

The young carers' support worker and year leaders understand the unique situations of the young carers and how these can impact issues such as attendance, achievement, and emotional well being. Young carers consequently feel emotionally supported by the school.

Barriers to learning are being identified at an early stage and this reduces students' feelings of isolation and stress.

Future developments

1. School work will continue to highlight the support services available and provide young carers with an opportunity to self-refer.
2. Salford Young Carers' Service's contact details will continue to be displayed.
3. Year leaders to investigate raising awareness during assemblies to target all young carers attending the school. More frequent workshops will be delivered by Salford Young Carers' Service.
4. Possibility of staff workshops for awareness-raising purposes.
5. Potential of a more flexible referral process, for example a grading process of need required, (since some pupils who have not met criteria have not benefitted from support) and the further development of tiered support for pupils.



Top tips

- Have a school-based support worker.
- Link the support worker into a team, such as the pastoral team.
- Treat the support worker as a member of the main school team, whilst allowing them to maintain independence. It is important to show balance as pupils access the service because it is seen as being different from normal school support.
- Make posters and information available to all pupils.

Llanfyllin High School, Wales

Why support young carers?

We recognise the benefits to individual pupils of enabling Powys Young Carers' Service to offer support within our school. Informal support has been developing for several years and this has been recently formalised with an agreement to host a series of awareness-raising workshops with all KS3 pupils, plus a staff training session during INSET time.

Our school has found six young carers at KS3 who registered with Powys Young Carers' Service and four at KS4 who are also registered.

What support is in place?

The headmaster acts as the formal lead on external partnerships, whilst the pastoral managers act as the link to the Young Carers' Service.

Current support arrangements are based on the needs of each individual young carer and one-to-one sessions are provided by the Young Carers' Service outreach worker. Support includes "talk time" for young carers with our pastoral team who will pass on appropriate information to all staff working with individual young carers if circumstances are difficult. We try to offer an understanding approach at all times.

What has worked?

We have provided training to all staff during a one-hour workshop, whilst KS3 pupils have taken part in a structured PHSE workshop. Both workshops were carried out by a support worker from Powys Young Carers' Service.

One-to-one support is excellent and Powys Young Carers' Service offers this support at the end of a phone with great response times.

The Service consistently offers useful and pertinent advocacy at core group meetings and the trips and clubs offered by them seem popular and a great opportunity for young carers to have some respite.

What challenges have we met?

There have been some issues regarding confidentiality which we are trying to rectify. These are due to Powys Young Carers' Service's working policy whereby a young carer must give consent for the Service to inform the school of their caring status. Currently, the outreach worker is only able to advise how many pupils are young carers and not their identity.



Benefits of supporting young carers

Young carers often appear to feel isolated from their peers. The Carers' Service offers support, understanding, and friendship and instils a form of normality to pupils who have had to harbour a number of difficulties in their lives.

Future developments

We are currently piloting Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and will explore the community-focused school arena to ascertain if we are able to offer further support outside of school time.

Llanfyllin High School would like to see a rolling programme of year seven PHSE workshops in the first term every year to highlight what Powys Young Carers' Service offers to young carers and what we as a school can do to support during this difficult period of transition.

Top Tips

- Make time to create good relationships with young carers support workers.
- Do whatever you can to create space for listening and understanding young carers' needs.

St. Joseph's High School, Northern Ireland

Why support young carers?

As part of their internal pastoral care work with pupils, staff within the school became aware that there were young carers in the school who needed support and assistance.

It was recognised that in addition to support from staff, young carers would benefit from the support of external specialist carer agencies. Having researched and consulted with external agencies, and following an initial visit by the young carers project officer from Newry & Mourne Carers' Centre, schools staff were briefed on young carers' issues and advised how they could provide assistance. Our school thrives on the welfare of children and believes that young carers should be recognised more and given additional support in their education.

We invited the Carers' Centres' Young Carers' Project to give a presentation to all pupils in years eight, nine and ten in November 2009. This was organised through the Extended Schools Programme.

The greatest needs within the school are:

- identification for emotional and financial support.
- staff awareness and understanding for unmet deadlines and discipline.

Once pupils are identified, pupils are provided with the option of counselling. Twenty pupils have identified themselves as young carers.



What support is in place?

The school has updated its pastoral care policy to reflect the issues and needs that young carers face daily and to ensure that staff have more empathy with pupils who are carers.

The extended schools programme coordinator acts as the school lead since they hold the bursary. They work hand in hand with Newry and Mourne Young Carers' Project to offer ongoing support. Form teachers and head of years also work closely with the Project to identify pupils with problems. All information is confidential.

The whole school – pupils, teachers and parents - is approached during assembly to raise awareness. We also organise visits from local health professionals. Importantly the young carers officer also liaises with feeder primary schools to provide comprehensive support to young carers and family carers.

What has worked?

Identification of pupils who are young carers. Once identified, an assessment procedure is carried out by Newry and Mourne Young Carers' Project.

What challenges have we met?

Translating policy to practice and getting this to be accepted by both staff and pupils and raising the awareness with all.

Benefits of supporting young carers

It enables a more holistic support for the young carers as well as offering empathy, listening, counselling and ultimately giving young carers a voice.

Future developments

We plan on organising a club or society with Newry and Mourne Young Carers' Project who will offer a listening ear in school once a month and will include young carers' input in any planned events or activities.

Top tips

- Go slowly, listen and always treat young carers as special, unique and valued.
- Make yourself or a counsellor available.

**Case studies were correct at time of writing (November 2009).*



11.3 Young carers: snapshots of challenges faced and solutions, and positive methods of working

Here, young carers provide snapshots into some of the challenges they face on a daily basis, as well as tips to teachers and pupils on how these challenges can be overcome. Also, included below are examples of ways in which pupils have been supported in schools. These will be helpful for you and your school to understand the issues and be able to make the small changes necessary so as to avoid even larger impacts on pupils' lives.

Challenges

A

Challenge

I am 11 and I look after my sister who has seven different learning difficulties. I swapped classes in year six, which my old teacher didn't really understand. My mum came into school and explained to my new teacher about my sister and this made things easier. If I was late I could say because of my sister and I wouldn't have to go into detail.

Tip

My tip would be to have a time out with a member of staff to talk to and cheer you up if you were upset or stressed.

B

Challenge

I am 16 and I look after my mum who has depression. When I have to help mum get up in the morning and I miss the bus, I arrive to school really late. I used to have to explain my situation every time or I'd get a detention, so I started to skip school if I was going to be late.

Tip

Schools should have a system in place so that I don't have to keep repeating what is going on at home.



C

Challenge

When I was at primary school, I was in the middle of a spelling test when we heard my brother who is autistic shrieking outside. He was having a “meltdown”. Everyone got up and looked out of the window. The classroom assistant was chasing him all over the field. My teacher asked me, in front of the whole class, to go and “sort him out”. When I got to his class, his teacher wouldn’t let me in and said they had it in hand, but I didn’t feel like they did. They didn’t know him as well as me. I knew they weren’t doing the right things and I could have made things better for him much quicker. I was really worried for the rest of the morning and felt like crying.

Tip

Schools need to think about how young carers feel in situations like this and should have a plan worked out if they are to be involved in any situation concerning their brother or sister. Some children don’t want anything to do with their siblings at school, whereas others, like me, get more worried if they are used to caring and then are not allowed to in school.

D

Challenge

I don’t know which teachers know what about my family situation. I only know that my head of year has been told, but don’t know what he has done with the information. Sometimes the teachers are understanding and other times they aren’t. I am too scared to tell them if I have a problem getting my homework done, because I don’t know if I am going to get shouted at. I get all panicky before the lesson if I know I haven’t done it, so I go to the school counsellor instead of going to lessons. Then I get more behind because I have missed another lesson.

Tip

School should agree with the young person which teachers are told about you being a young carer and exactly what they are told. I think it should be up to me to decide who knows. Also, agree a system for the young person to let a teacher know if there has been a problem without having to explain again and again or in front of other pupils. Something like a card you could show without having to say anything. You could then talk to the teacher privately after the lesson.

E

Challenge

I am 17 and I have been caring for my mum who has fibromyalgia for over two years now. I’ve missed coursework deadlines and have been late for registration. My friends find it difficult to talk to me about it.

Tip

Talk to teachers about what you’re going through and they will help you sort your work out. Also, don’t be afraid to tell your friends what’s happening and say it’s ok for them to talk about it.



F

Challenge

Sometimes I forget to get my homework diary signed when there is a lot of stuff going on at home and I have had detentions for not having it signed on the right day. The teacher wouldn't let me explain and said that we had all been warned. Besides, I don't like to bother my mum to sign when she is not well.

Tip

Have a system in school so that I can let the teacher know that there is a problem with getting it signed without having to say anything in front of the whole class or get shouted at.

G

Challenge

I was really tired, because things at home were not good and I hadn't slept properly. In PE I got a lunchtime detention for changing too slowly! I had to stand outside the staff room for half an hour and by the time the teacher let me go they had finished serving lunch so I had nothing to eat. I hadn't had any breakfast either because there wasn't time and I would have missed the bus. I was really upset and hungry so instead of going to lessons I went and told the school counsellor what had happened and she said that teachers were not allowed to make you miss lunch and she would speak to the PE teacher. Later the teacher came back to me and said someone had told her I was upset. She said I was silly for getting upset over a lunchtime detention. I didn't go to school the next day.

Tip

All teachers should be made aware of young carers' issues. Young carers need someone in school to help them explain their situation when teachers don't listen or don't fully understand.

Positive methods of working

A

What's working?

Every tutor group at my school has been challenged to raise money for charity. The one that raises the most gets a trip out. I have helped my young carers' project to do assemblies about young carers at my school and so my tutor group has chosen to raise money for young carers. I feel really proud that I have helped other people to understand and that they want to raise money to help people like me.

Tip

Doing assemblies at school can be a good way of getting other pupils to understand about young carers. You don't have to take part unless you want to, you can let the project workers do it but it sounds a lot better coming from a young person themselves.



B

What's working?

When I first started secondary school it was really hard to cope with all the new rules and demands on top of everything else. Then I started going to a weekly lunch time drop-in session for young carers. It is run by my local young carers' project. We can go along with any problems and get help in school to sort them out. The young carers' worker can explain things to the teachers when I don't know what to say to them or when I am too scared. Sometimes at drop-in we just have a laugh. We can take a friend along if we want to. If we need to we can have a one-to-one meeting with the young carers' worker in school.

Tip

Schools need to have a system for supporting young carers who have issues in school and should make sure that there is an adult present who can help young carers to speak up.

C

What's working?

Sometimes it is really hard to fit in at secondary school when you have got other things on your mind. I am now in year ten and I have been trained as a peer mentor for young carers in my school. I have two pupils: one in year seven and one in year eight. I have asked my tutor if we can use my tutor room to talk in at lunchtime.

If I would have had a peer mentor when I was in year seven, I would have asked them about all kinds of things, like what do you do if you can't get your homework done because of caring, or what do you do if you are late in the morning, or who to go to if you are worried about your mum while you are at school.

Tip

Sometimes, it is easier to talk to another pupil, such as a peer mentor, rather than a teacher. Plus, they can look out for you around school, especially at lunchtimes, and check you are ok and can help you to talk to a teacher or young carers' worker if you are worried about what to say. I think every school should have them.

D

What's working?

I am a 15 year old boy and I live alone with my mum who has ME and depression. My dad died earlier this year. I am expected to achieve very good GCSE grades, but I have become unable to go to school. I don't know why. The thought of going makes me ill. My mum is too unwell to support me to go, so I stay at home.



Instead of fining my mum or insisting on a medical diagnosis for authorised absence, my learning mentor and my deputy head formed a plan with my young carers' worker. I can go into school for short periods at times when I choose, can work in a more 'grownup' room away from the classrooms and I have a maths disc so that I can work at home. My teachers liaise with my mentor and communicate with me via email.

Tip

Be creative in your response. Don't rule something out just because it's not the way you would usually do it.

Developing a school policy for young carers and their families

“Over half the councils’ schools had a young carers’ policy and a designated teacher with responsibility for young carers. As a result, the highest levels of referrals to the young carers’ project came from schools.”¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School leadership team
- Governing body

This chapter will support schools to:

- ensure that there is a policy that supports young carers and their families in both a whole-school and holistic approach.
- ensure that the policy is translated and embedded into school and curriculum plans.
- monitor the effectiveness of policies in relation to young carers and their families.
- provide opportunities for pupils and their families to feed their ideas into any support that is being developed.

Synopsis

The Statutory Directors for Children’s Services (ADCS) and Adult Social Services (ADASS), (2010)² encourages schools to put a policy for young carers in place and Ofsted (2009) cited having such a policy in schools as good practice.

A caring role can impact heavily upon a young person, creating barriers to learning both in school and at home. Young carers can often be victims of bullying and so, in addition to a policy specific to young carers, it is essential to revisit all policies, including your school’s bullying policy, to make sure that they are really working for young carers.

It is vital that the voices of young carers and their families are heard in the development and delivery of these documents.

Establishing or revising a policy for young carers

Each school should have a policy in place that recognises the needs of and outlines the provision



of services for young carers. This can either take the form of a new policy developed specifically for young carers, or it can be the revision of an established policy or policies. This policy should then be monitored to make sure that it is, and continues to be, effective.

The policy should reflect a whole-school approach to supporting young carers, as well as detail how your school will work alongside other professionals and agencies, including the voluntary sector, to provide a more coherent and holistic support framework.

The policy should also consider the needs of the family as a whole, including parents who may need further assistance due to mobility or communication difficulties, so that they are fully engaged with the education of their child.

The policy must also translate into school plans to ensure that measures are embedded.

Bullying

Much of the bullying experienced by young carers results from the stigma associated with certain disabilities and health conditions, such as mental ill health or substance misuse. Strong policies on bullying, inclusion and anti-discrimination, which identify young carers as a group of pupils at particular risk, can help to reduce this.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 3** National legislation and guidance
- 10** How can school governors help?
- 11** School leadership teams
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work
- 29** Access, support and involving parents with disabilities.

Key resources

As well as the tool at the end of this chapter and those in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Young carers, parents and their families: Key principles of practice

Supportive practice guidance for those working directly with or commission services for young carers and their families.

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=1111523736.htm

→ Young Carers: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities

Developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, this document contains an exemplar school policy.

<http://static.carers.org/files/young-carers-guidance-for-schools-las-08-07-ok-3128.doc>

→ Professionals website

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website dedicated solely to professionals who work with adult and young carers in health, education or and social care:

www.carers.org/professionals



→ **Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families**

Developed by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers

¹*Supporting young carers: Identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young carers and their families.*(2009). Ofsted: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Supporting-young-carers/(language)/eng-GB)

²*Working together to support young carers: A model local memorandum of understanding between statutory directors for children's services and adult social services.* (2009). Department of Children, Schools and Families: www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00678/



12.1 School policy checklist

The following points should be considered when creating/revising your school's policy for young carers. Please adapt these accordingly.

Young carers – A model school statement for pupils and families

At (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) we are aware that pupils in our school may well have caring roles at home.

We believe that all children and young people should have equal access to education, regardless of what is happening at home and that no child should have to take on inappropriate or excessive caring responsibilities.

When a young person does look after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or substance misuse problem, they may need a little extra support to help them get the most out of school.

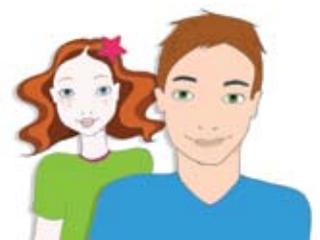
We aim to understand the issues faced by young carers and to have a separate policy for young carers stating how we will support any pupil who helps to look after someone at home.

We aim to support young carers through a whole-school approach and through working with other agencies and professionals, with the understanding that support for the whole family is in the best interests of the young carer.

Current policy	✓
<p>The school is aware of paragraph 2.28 of the School Admissions Code 2010 which under the section 'Social and medical need' states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">'...it is acceptable to give higher priority to children or families where there is a social or medical need (for example, where one or both parents or the child has a disability that may make travel to a school further away more difficult).'</p> <p>For more information, see www.education.gov.uk</p>	
The school views young carers as any other pupil, but understands that they have the additional burden of caring responsibilities.	
The school will keep up to date with national and local developments and with legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.	
The whole school is committed to meeting the needs of young carers so that they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and have equal access to their education as their peers.	



A school lead will be assigned and will have special responsibility for young carers and their families. Pupils and families will be made aware of the identity of the schools lead.	
Training on young carers' issues will be embedded in ongoing professional development for all staff.	
During the school enrolment process for new pupils, the school will identify whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → parent(s) or family members have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health problems. → the pupil helps to look after them and if this has an impact on their education. 	
Pupils who are young carers will be identified along with any additional needs they may have.	
Individual plans will recognise the child's/young person's specific needs as a young carer.	
The school will use and evaluate data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers.	
The school will aim to offer support to improve attendance and pupil's well-being.	
The right to pupil's and families' privacy will be respected and the school will only share information with professionals and agencies on a "need to know basis" in order to support pupils and families.	
Information about support available for young carers and how to access it will be made clearly available to both pupils and families.	
The school recognises that young carers and their families need to receive coordinated support by the school, working in partnership where appropriate with general practitioners, young carers' services, behaviour and education support teams.	
Young carers will be referred or signposted to other support agencies and professionals as appropriate, including the local young carers' service.	
The school will refer or signpost families to other support services when appropriate.	
The school adheres to the <i>Disability Discrimination Acts (1995, 2005)</i> .	
The school is accessible and welcoming to parents with disabilities and/or illness, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings or other school events. Home visits will be considered where appropriate.	



The school will offer additional support to remove any communication barriers with parents, so that parents are able to be fully engaged with the education of their child.	
The school will identify those young carers at risk of falling into the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) category and take appropriate actions to address this.	
The school will offer support to the young person and their family during the transition process, sharing agreed information with their new school/college lead for young carers and their families.	
Relevant aspects of the curriculum, such as The National Healthy Schools Programme, SEAL, personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE education) and RRR, will be used to encourage positive approaches by all teachers and staff working with young carers.	
The school will use the curriculum to promote a full understanding, acceptance of, and respect for, issues such as caring, disability and impairment, for example, embedding the challenges faced by young carers into PSHE education lessons curriculum.	
The school will consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities, such as sports coaching or concerts, due to their caring role. The school will also consider lunch time detentions rather than after school ones.	
The school will consider how best to support those parents who find it difficult to escort younger children to school.	
The school will allow young carers to use a telephone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes so as to reduce any worry they may have about a family member.	
Where possible, the school will negotiate deadlines, for example, for homework and coursework, in advance.	
Other appropriate policies, such as a bullying policy, will take young carers into account.	
The school will actively seek feedback and ideas from young carers and their families in order to shape and improve provision for young carers.	

Developing a school lead for young carers and their families

“Without the support of my teachers, I wouldn’t have continued my academic career in the way that I have ...and I really do thank them for helping me get my university place to carry on the dream that I had for my career without letting it get affected by my caring role.”

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- A small team supporting the school lead
- School leadership team

This chapter will support schools to:

- establish an appropriate school lead with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- establish an appropriate support team, where possible, to work alongside the school lead.
- share good practice with schools leads based in other schools.

Synopsis

It is recommended that each school assigns a school lead, with specific duties and responsibilities to support young carers in school more effectively. The aim of the school lead is to develop a framework of support which is embedded within the whole school.

Helping your school to develop best practice

Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk advises schools in England that young carers are at particular risk and that a member of staff should be designated to have particular concern for them.¹

More recently, in a *Model Memorandum of Understanding* on working together to support young carers developed by the ADASS and ADCS², schools are encouraged to “have a named staff member with lead responsibility for young carers and to recognise this role within continuing professional development”.

Young carers, parents and their families: Key Principles of Practice also recommends that



schools and colleges have a named member of staff who is responsible for carers to aid early identification and intervention. The role should be accountable for promoting and coordinating the support needed, informing and working with governors and the school leadership team and liaising with other agencies.

In quantifying the post, your school may want to consider allocating an additional Teacher Learning Responsibility (TLR) point to this role.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society have, together, developed an exemplar job description for a school lead for young carers and their families using government statutory guidance and advice, current good practice in schools and young carers "Top Ten Tips for Schools".³ The job description will help your school to identify a member of staff who is best suited to this position and serve as a useful tool to assess current school practice with young carers and implement a whole-school and curriculum approach. An exemplar job description can be found in the resources listed below.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 9 A model for setting up a framework of support
- 11 School leadership teams
- 12 Developing a school policy for young carers and their families

Key resources

School Lead for Young Carers and their Families: An exemplar job description

Developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society.

http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/Professional/school_lead_exemplar_2012.pdf

Local Authority Toolkit

Funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and have designed a range of tools to aid local authorities in creating protocols and strategies to meet Every Child Matters Outcomes for young carers and their families.

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=200813131330.htm

Professionals website

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' dedicated website professionals who work with adult and young carers in health, education or and social care:

www.carers.org/professionals

¹DCSF Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/154426>

²*Working together to support young carers: A model local memorandum of understanding between statutory directors for children's services and adult social services.* (2009). Department of Children, Schools and Families: www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00678/

³'Young Carers Festival 2006, Young Carers give Top Ten Tips for Schools', in Frank, J. and McLarnon, J. (2008) *Young carers, parents and their families: Key Principles of Practice. Supportive practice guidance for those working directly with, or commission services for, young carers and their families.*

Staff Training and Awareness

*"It is also important that all your teachers know, without you having to keep telling new people all about being a carer whenever you don't make a school work deadline. It feels like I've got to explain myself so many times."*¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school and team
- outside agencies such as a local young carers' service
- Other professionals working with the school

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform teaching and non teaching staff of the issues affecting young carers in your school.
- develop staff induction training on young carers' issues.
- incorporate issues affecting young carers into ongoing professional development.
- ensure that all staff are aware of how to initiate both internal and external support.

Synopsis

It is important that all staff within your school are trained in and understand the needs of young carers, the issues they and their families face and the barriers they experience to learning. It is recommended that staff be familiar with possible indicators, the importance of early identification and how to initiate timely support.

Who should be trained and what to include

Young carers consistently say that they want someone in their school with whom they can talk and share any worries and concerns. It is often a member of non teaching staff who first becomes aware of a young carer's situation, which is why it is imperative that it is not solely teaching staff who benefit from training. Issues often arise when supply teachers encounter pupils who are young carers and they are unaware of the issues so it is wise to include them in training and awareness-raising as much as possible.

Training and awareness-raising should be embedded into ongoing professional development so that young carers remain at the forefront. Reminders on staff notice boards along with other prompts are also useful and a strong link with your local young carers' service will elevate young carers on the 'radar'.



In addition to an understanding and awareness of the issues faced by carers, staff should be aware of the importance of a whole-school approach as well as the procedures for bringing in support from within and from outside the school. It is also useful to understand the implications of SEAL and how these lessons can help promote an understanding and awareness of young carers and their families' needs.

It may be beneficial to utilise outside agencies, such as a local young carers' service to provide support with staff training. Your school might want to consider inviting other professionals working within your school to join training sessions, and even share training with other schools in the same cluster group. A model of "twilight training sessions" developed in Hampshire and promoted by The Children's Society and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, for example, has proven particularly successful at developing staff knowledge in an interactive way.

Staff training should cover:

- the barriers, issues and needs faced by young carers.
- the impacts of being a young carer.
- why young carers are often hidden and the possible indicators of a young carer.
- the importance of whole family support and of multi-agency working and what support is available both within and outside of the school.

It is worth noting, however, that issues may arise during training sessions for staff who have also been carers or who are currently carers. It may be useful to make information available for adult carers, such as the NHS Carers Direct Support line as well as information about carers' support organisations.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 14** Staff training and awareness
- 18** Identification of young carers
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work



Key resources

As well as the tool found at the end of this chapter and those found in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Healthy School e-learning module

A Healthy Schools young carers e-learning module is available to help school staff who work with young carers. The aim of the module is to increase understanding in schools of particular issues and challenges facing young carers and their families.

<http://static.carers.org/e-learning/>

→ Poster for school staff (included in this resource)

As developed by The Princess Royal trust for Carers and The Children's Society.

→ Supporting pupils who are young carers.

Information for teachers and school staff.

www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/nateducation07.pdf

→ Teachers TV: Supporting young carers

A look at the support that teachers can give to young carers.

www.tes.co.uk

→ Teachers TV: Young carers

Young carers discuss the hardships at home.

www.tes.co.uk

→ SCIE Film: Parental mental health and child welfare – a young person's story

This film is about 18-year-old Cait who has been caring for her mum since she was seven.

www.scie.org.uk

→ Listening to young carers: A tool for those working with young carers and their families

Young carers discuss the issues they face and solutions to help them improve their lives.

DVD available at www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/DVD%20Order%20Form0805.pdf

→ Information for staff who may be carers

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers at www.carers.org

Crossroads Care at www.crossroads.org.uk

Carers UK at www.carersuk.org

Carers Direct at www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect



14.1 Young carers' top ten tips for schools

The Children's Society, in partnership with YMCA Fairthorne Manor, organises an annual festival for young carers to have the opportunity to have fun, relax and forget about their daily worries. The young carers are consulted on a range of issues, including education, health and young carers' projects to find out what services they want. Below is some feedback from them on how you can help make their school day easier.

You may also find postcards containing messages for education professionals from young carers useful at www.youngcarer.com.

1. Recognise that our responsibility as carers can affect our education and schoolwork.
2. Find out about us, what we need and how we are not like other students.
3. Take time to find out about individual problems at home. Sometimes we're too embarrassed to tell you ourselves.
4. Don't automatically punish us if we're late. Sometimes we can't help being late because we're helping out at home.
5. Provide more support such as lunchtime drop-ins or homework clubs.
6. Be flexible – give us more time and help to do homework or coursework.
7. Include information about young carers and disability issues in PHSE lessons.
8. Let us phone parents if we need to find out if they are OK.
9. Make sure there is a clear and up to date notice board showing where we can get support in the community.
10. Make sure that teachers are offered training on young carers and disability issues both at university and on INSET days.

1Being a young carer. Views from a young carers workshop. (2006). Commission for Social care Inspection: www.csci.org.uk/publications/childrens_rights_director_reports/young_carers.pdf

Who else can help?

“Young carers often have wide range of different needs and barriers to their learning. It is important therefore to support them with a wide range of skills.”

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school and team
- Other staff, professionals and agencies
- Peer mentors

This chapter will support schools to:

- offer young carers holistic support by a range of professionals.
- train peer mentors and offer additional support for young carers.

Synopsis

Your school should not feel as if it has to do everything and should ensure that full use is made of the available support services, such as education welfare, the youth service, social services and Connexions. Staff should be aware that young carers are entitled to an assessment of their own needs from children’s services, and that joint working with adults’ services will enable help to be provided that could benefit the whole family.¹

Parent support adviser

A parent support adviser working with parents in a school context to support their children’s learning can be a key role for supporting young carers and their families. The relationships that parent support advisers (PSAs) have with parents, school colleagues and partners from other children’s services contribute to the range of benefits that improve learning opportunities for pupils and their families. Evidence from schools suggests that PSAs have been particularly successful in engaging harder-to-reach families, both in supporting their children to participate in curriculum and out of school activities and their parents in taking a more active interest in school life. Schools report that a PSA’s focus on early intervention helps prevent issues from escalating into crises and reduces the number of referrals occurring at a later stage, when family circumstances have become more serious and require a more urgent and complex response.

School nurse

The school nurse is often in an ideal position to acknowledge the difficulties young carers can, especially if the young person goes to them for help and they can refer them to health and other services to support them and their families.



Connexions

Connexions provides a network of personal advisors who can offer advice and support to young carers and put them in touch with appropriate specialist and support services. They are particularly useful for young adult carers, aged 16+ who are beginning to think about important life chances, such as employment, further/higher education or training. Being a young carer can have a significant impact on a young carer's transition to adulthood so a Connexions personal adviser can play a critical role in helping them to think about the different options available to them.

School counselling

Counselling in schools can offer a significant level of support to children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young carers may experience bereavement, loss, relationship difficulties, anxiety and bullying. These are major issues which can impact on the child's emotional well-being and lead to deterioration in their behaviour.

Educational psychology

Educational psychologists tackle the problems encountered by young people in education, such as learning difficulties and social or emotional problems². When referring a pupil, include any details about their caring role which may impact upon their learning. Educational psychologists will want to explore any circumstances at home that may be impacting on the child's learning ability. If they engage with parents, they should also take into account any circumstances which could prevent parents from attending assessments and meetings.

Education welfare officer

Education welfare officers work in Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs). Their role is to work with children and parents and to support the school strategically, focusing on improving attendance of pupils within school.

Education welfare officers should check whether a young person's absence is a direct result of their caring role. However, the emphasis should be on early identification and support of young carers and preventing a caring role from disrupting attendance in the first place.

Recommendations for education welfare officers include the following³:

- If a young carer is routinely absent from school, consideration must be given to the health status of a relative at home to whom that young person may be providing care.
- Ask the parent(s) what support and/or services they would like to access, to enable their child to return to school and to help ease the level of care given by their child to a relative at home. The longer a child is absent from school, the more anxious they may feel in returning to school because of the concept they have as to how far behind they may be with their studies in comparison to their peers.
- Ask the child what support they would like to receive from their school which may help them feel more confident in returning to school. Remember to ask if the child would feel less anxious leaving the person for whom they care for, if they were given access to a telephone during the school day. Also ask the parent(s) and child if they can identify a teacher who can be given details of their caring responsibilities at home.



Learning mentor

Learning mentors are a key role within the *Department of Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) Excellence in Cities Initiative*. They provide one-to-one support for children who are experiencing problems in school, including young carers, and help them to access support.

School librarian

It would be useful for your school to hold books and DVDs portraying young carers and their families affected by disability and illness.

Extended schools co-ordinator

Good communication between schools staff and schools coordinators regarding young carers is important. School coordinators should be aware of the needs of young carers and offer support.

Youth service or specialist young carers' service

These services can support young carers in many ways from emotional support, skill development, providing opportunities for building peer groups, social activities and social development.

Peer mentors

Peer mentoring or "buddying" schemes are a great way of supporting young carers and helping them to feel included within the school. It is useful to provide training to help them in their role. The following top tips provided by young carers at the National Young Carers Forum are useful:

- Respect my silence, I'll talk when I'm ready.
- Be a good listener.
- Don't tell everyone my life story, I tell you things in confidence.
- Don't think I'm unreliable, just understand I have commitments.
- Don't treat me as any different because just being with friends is an escape.
- Don't feel awkward around me. This is my life and I'm fine with it.
- Try and work around my plans as I can be very busy at home.
- Be supportive and cheerful.

Safeguarding officer

Staff should never ignore any aspect of a situation that indicates that there are concerns about children's safety and they require protection from harm. Where there are safeguarding concerns staff should work in partnership with others to identify and respond to any young carers who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It is the safeguarding officer's responsibility to receive and act upon any reported concerns about the safety and welfare of any child in the school, including concerns about the impact of inappropriate caring responsibilities upon a child's welfare.



Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work
- 30** Working in partnership with a young carers' service
- 33** Raising awareness amongst all pupils

Key resources

As well as the tools found in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

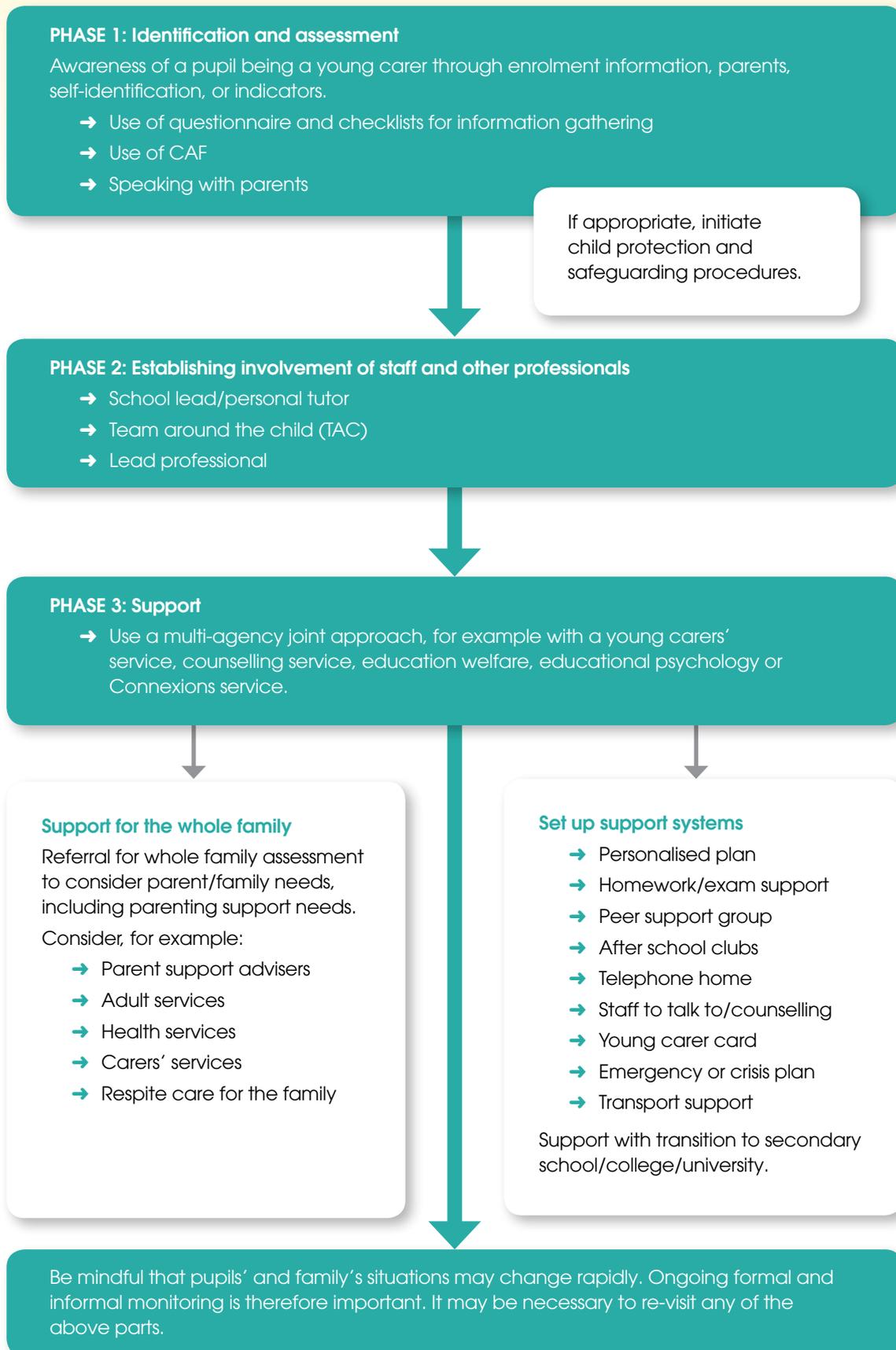
- **Find your local young carers' service**
www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=projects.htm
- **Checklist for supporting and signposting young carers – Checklist for Health Professionals**
www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Nat%20Quick%20checklist.pdf
- **Connexions**
www.connexions.gov.uk
- **Connexions: Peer Mentoring and Schools**
www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?catalogueContentID=1014&pid=151
- **DCSF: Education Welfare Officer Case Study**
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/case-studies/educationwelfareofficer/
- **DCSF: Behaviour and Educational Support Teams (BEST)**
www.dcsf.gov.uk/best/
- **Healthy Schools: Good Practice Example of a Peer Mentoring Scheme**
<http://resources.healthyschools.gov.uk/v/c2a8fa02-be47-425c-8818-ed284315a3b5>
- **Information for Health Professionals**
Developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.
www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/health,3065,PP.html
- **Mentoring and Befriending Foundation National Peer Mentoring Programme**
www.mandbf.org.uk/projects/
- **Whole family pathway: A resource for practitioners**
www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Whole%20Family%20Pathway%2010th.pdf

¹Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on dealing with groups at particular risk. Department of Children, Schools and Families: http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/154426?uc=force_uj

²British Psychological Society: www.bps.org.uk

³Baker, Geraldine (2002) 'Unseen and Unheard: The Invisible Young Carers.' Carers Lewisham, London.

Working with young carers: a model



Early intervention and preventative work

*"It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later."*¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School leads or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- "Feeder" primary schools, sixth forms and colleges
- Parent support advisers

This chapter will support schools to:

- identify, support and monitor young carers at the earliest opportunity.
- implement specific procedures for the early identification of young carers, including pupils who commence mid-term.
- establish ongoing procedures to facilitate the identification of young carers throughout their school career.
- develop crisis or emergency plans for pupils where appropriate.
- reduce or prevent negative impacts on a young carer's education.

Synopsis

Young carers can go unnoticed in school for years; under-achieving and failing to respond to support that does not tackle the root causes of their problems. Early identification, intervention and prevention are vital to avoid any negative impacts on their education and to ensure emotional and physical well-being.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) states that "preventing poor outcomes from arising in the first place benefits children, young people and families directly. In addition, failure to prevent problems, impacts not only on the family, but also society more widely".²

Why is early intervention necessary?

Juggling the responsibilities of a caring role, along with the pressures of education can be exhausting and burdensome for a young carer. Schools must develop systems of support before young carers' lives are negatively affected.



Education welfare officers, educational social workers, school nurses and other staff are in a position to identify a young carer through absence, but it is more desirable to identify a young carer before they are rooted in a caring role, before their attendance or behaviour drops or a negative relationship develops with the school. Failure to prepare support can impact upon a pupil, leading them to spiral towards further problems and disengagement.

Low level intervention

Some illnesses and disabilities are, by nature, extremely variable whilst others are degenerative, but all have differing impacts on a young carer's role. It is better to support pupils through early intervention rather than allowing them to struggle later on, if and when their circumstances become more difficult. Even when a young carer appears to be coping reasonably well and caring responsibilities seem limited, ensuring a support framework is in place and that the pupil is comfortable in accessing this framework (if they wish) is ideal.

Pupils who have already accessed low-level support are less likely to refuse further support should their caring role increase and their home situation worsens or becomes chaotic. Pupils who have met other young carers at peer support groups, for example, or those who have already talked with a member of staff, might feel more confident in seeking and accessing further support if and when their needs are greater. Moreover, preventative work, such as emotional literacy work and work around resilience, offered to young carers with low-level needs is valuable.

Identification

It is important that schools put in mechanisms that facilitate early identification. Please refer to Chapters 4 'Barriers to learning faced by young carers' and 27 'Crisis and emergency plans'.

Crisis or emergency plans

Drawing up an emergency plan for a young carer may help mitigate negative impacts. Please refer to Chapters 4 'Barriers to learning faced by young carers' and 27 'Crisis and emergency plans'.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 18** Identification of young carers
- 24** Assessment and monitoring
- 27** Crisis and emergency plans

Key resources

→ Early Intervention: Securing good outcomes for all children and young people

This document draws together a wealth of research and good practice with the aim of supporting Children's Trust Boards and their constituent partners to bring greater consistency, rigor and impact to the way early intervention is organised and delivered locally.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=viewallpublicationsbydate&PageMode=publications&Type=AllPubsByDate&DateRange=4&Phase=0&Topic=0&PublicationType=5&FreeText=&>



→ **Early identification, assessment of needs and intervention – The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people: A guide for practitioners**

Updated to reflect policy developments and include revisions identified in consultation with practitioners and managers across the children and young people's workforce.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=IW91%2f0709&>

→ **Barnardo's ARCH Project (Achieving Resilience, Change and Hope)**

This project works with children and young people between 5 and 14 who have emerging emotional and behavioural difficulties. The project also works with their parents or carers.

www.barnardos.org.uk/arch.htm

→ **Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families**

HM Treasury and Dept. for Education and Skills

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/cyp_disabledchildren180507.pdf

¹DCSF: *The Children's Plan. Building brighter futures*: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/downloads/resources/Stakeholder_Presentation.ppt#326,11, *The Children's Plan sets out some ambitious goals for 2020*

²*Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families*, HM Treasury and Dept. for Education and Skills 2007: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/cyp_disabledchildren180507.pdf

Identification of young carers

“When I found out about her family situation I suddenly understood why she was often late and seldom did her homework. I was amazed at just how well she had done, but frustrated that we as staff had not known.” (Teacher)

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead and their teams or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Senior leadership team
- “Feeder” primary schools, 6th forms and colleges
- Parent support adviser

This chapter will support schools to:

- identify young carers and their families before their caring role impacts on education.
- help young carers feel that school is a secure and safe environment so that they have the confidence to talk to a teacher or staff member.
- provide appropriate opportunities for young carers to self identify.

Synopsis

In the past, some pupils have struggled through the education system without being recognised as a young carer; their needs and those of the person for whom they are caring are often only identified at crisis point. Even then, the extent of their caring role and the impact on their own development may not be recognised quickly or fully assessed.

Schools should be proactive in identifying young carers as soon as possible and not simply when education welfare officers are tackling absence. A secure environment should be created so that young carers and their families feel comfortable enough to self-identify. The earlier a young carer is identified, the less likely an inappropriate caring role will become engrained.



Self identification

Before encouraging young carers to come forward, it is helpful to understand the reasons why they may feel uncomfortable doing so:

- They worry that the family will be split up and taken into care.
- They want to keep it a secret and/or are embarrassed about the person who is ill or has disabilities.
- They may not realise that they are carers or that life is different to that of their peers.
- They don't want to be any different from their peers.
- They believe that the school will show no interest in their family circumstances.
- School is different; they have a new or different identity.
- It's not the sort of thing that can be discussed with friends.
- There has been no opportunity to share their story.
- They are worried about bullying.
- They see no reason or positive actions occurring as a result of telling their story.

Young carers are not easy to identify and many will actively try to conceal their caring role.

Good practice in identification

Some young carers may tell their teacher about their additional responsibilities. A member of staff may be alerted to their caring role following conversation with the pupil or by direct information from parents or carers. Before your school actively seeks to identify young carers, it is strongly recommended that support for pupils should already be in place. In addition, it is important for pupils to see that it is readily accessible before they identify themselves as young carers.

Good identification stems from a whole-school approach. The following are practical ways of doing this.

1. Provide training to all relevant school staff which includes:
 - Reasons why young carers and their families do not wish to be identified.
 - Possible indicators of a young carer.
2. Publicise information about available support.
3. Raise awareness of the issues faced by young carers to pupils and staff.
4. Develop a secure and safe environment where pupils have the confidence to let staff know that they are a young carer.
 - implement a school lead and ensure that pupils know who that school lead is.
 - promote positive images of disability, illness, mental ill-health and caring throughout the school curriculum and environment.¹
 - develop policies and practice to prevent bullying, stigma and to raise the self-esteem of children who are young carers.²



5. Provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to self-identify.
 - Publicise how pupils can access support effectively.
 - Offer comfortable methods of communication for pupils to self-identify, for example by way of emailing the school lead, using a school post box or completing an intranet questionnaire.
 - Provide opportunities for identification following assemblies and PHSE lessons.
 - Use an awareness raising event, such as Carers Week.

6. Create an environment whereby families have the confidence to inform your school that their child has caring responsibilities.
 - Stimulate good communication between your school and families.
 - Ensure that your school meets the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005*.³

7. Adapt your admissions process to provide opportunities for pupils and families to inform schools that:
 - the pupil has parents or other family members who have illness or disability, or who is affected by mental ill-health or substance misuse.
 - the pupil helps to look after them and what impact this has on his/her education.
 - the family is in touch with support services that could reduce the young carer's role. (Some families may choose to keep their illness or disability a secret, but offering signposting and information about other services at an early stage can make all the difference.)

8. Develop good partnership working with your local young carers' service and use awareness-raising by the local service as an opportunity to identify young carers.

9. Use a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/or other assessment tools when a pupil appears to be a young carer or is in need of extra support.

Where can your school get more support?

Various tools have been produced to aid identification, (see Key resources). It is vital to ensure as much privacy as possible when any forms are being completed as some young carers will find divulging personal information difficult. Consider asking students to fold forms, or even use envelopes or a secure box.

Young carers have a right to an assessment of their needs.⁴ When it is found that a pupil may be taking on inappropriate levels of caring, you may need to involve other agencies and complete a Child in Need Assessment.⁵



Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 12** Developing a school policy for young carers and their families
- 14** Staff training and awareness
- 16** Working with young carers: a model
- 17** Early intervention and preventative work
- 18** Identification of young carers
- 24** Assessment and monitoring
- 31** Transition from primary to secondary school
- 34** Information for young carers and parents

Key resources

As well as the tool found at the end of this chapter and those found in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ **Young Carers' Project Student Questionnaire Guidance for Tutors and Young Carers' Project Student Questionnaire**

A resource pack for people working with young carers. p37 - 38.

<http://static.carers.org/files/young-carers-resource-pack-0307-3130.pdf>

→ **Every Child Matters (ECM)**

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Guidance: Delivering Every Child Matters for young carers:

<http://static.carers.org/files/trust-guidance-delivering-every-child-matters-for-young-carers-2177.doc>

→ **Include Project: Information for teachers and school staff**

The Children's Society.

<http://www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/nateducation07.pdf>

→ **Whole Family Pathway**

Page 21: What do you do if you identify a young carer? The Children's Society.

www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Whole%20Family%20Pathway%2010th.pdf

→ **Early identification, assessment of needs and intervention – The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children and young people: A guide for managers**

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=IW90%2f0907&>

¹Frank, J. (2002). *Making It Work: Good practice with young carers and their families*. The Children's Society.

²Frank, J. (2002). *Making It Work: Good practice with young carers and their families*. The Children's Society.

³*Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005*: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/DisabilityRights/DG_4001068?CID=DWP&TYPE=Sponsoredsearch&CRE=DisabilityDiscriminationAct

⁴*Carers (Recognition & Services) Act 1995*: www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1995/ukpga_19950012_en_1

⁵*Children Act 1989*: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/ukpga_19890041_en_



18.1 Possible indicators of a young carer

The following is a list of possible indicators of a young carer. Many can be indicative of other issues too. Together, they may help you build a profile of a pupil. Further sensitive information and appropriate questions may then, in turn, lead to a pupil letting you know that they are a young carer.

Is the pupil...	✓
...often late or missing days or weeks off school for no reason?	
...often tired, anxious or withdrawn?	
...having problems socially or with making friends? Conversely, do they get on well with adults and present themselves as mature for their age?	
...a victim of bullying? This is sometimes explicitly linked to a family member's disability, health or substance misuse problem.	
...depressed?	
...finding it difficult to concentrate on their work?	
...having difficulty in joining in extra curricular activities or is unable to attend school trips?	
...isolated because of their family situation or because they lack social skills with their peers (and yet they are confident with adults?)	
...not handing in homework/coursework on time, or completing it late and to a low standard?	
...anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative?	
...displaying behavioural problems?	
...having physical problems such as back pain (perhaps from heavy lifting)?	
...secretive about home life?	
...showing signs of neglect or poor diet?	



Are parents (or another relative)...	✓
...sick, have a disability, illness or substance misuse problem? (Remember that not all children who have a family member who is ill or with disabilities is a young carer.)	
...difficult to engage with?	
...not attending parents' evenings?	
...not communicating with school?	

Pupils with parents affected by substance misuse

"I need school to understand how hard it is and why our homework is late and why we are tired after mum has been on a bender."

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Safeguarding officer

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform all staff about the specific impacts and needs of young carers affected by substance misuse.
- enable pupils to get support and understanding at school.
- inform staff about when and how to involve other support agencies and professionals.

Synopsis

Children and young people who care for a parent affected by substance misuse may undertake physical tasks, such as domestic chores, dealing with bills, or nursing a parent suffering from drug or alcohol withdrawal, but it is often emotional support that is prevalent in their caring role.

Due to stigma, fear of intervention from services and not wanting to 'betray' a parent, young carers of a parent affected by substance misuse can be even more reluctant tell anyone about their family situation than those looking after someone with a physical disability.

In addition to the common impacts experienced by young carers, these children may experience additional, specific impacts such as further emotional impacts and safety issues.

The statistics

- There are between 250,000 and 350,000 children of problem drug users in the UK today. That's about one for every drug user.¹
- Between 780,000 and 1.3 million children in England are affected by parental alcohol problems.²
- There are 2.6 million children living with a hazardous drinker.³
- In Britain, 335,000 children live with a drug-dependant parent.⁴



How does parental substance misuse affect young carers?

Not all young people who live in families where there is drug or alcohol misuse have a caring role or experience difficulties at home. The focus of this chapter is on parental substance misuse, but it is worth noting that there are also cases where a young person is helping to care for a sibling affected by substance misuse.

Both research and practice have shown that children of parents who have a substance or alcohol misuse problem can experience very chaotic lives which lack routine. When in school, they may be worried about the safety of their parent and fear what or who they will find on returning home. They may miss school and social activities to keep an eye on their parent and have few friends as a result. They can be angry, confused, ashamed or even feel guilty. They can feel like their parent loves drugs and/or drink more than them. They may be embarrassed about the state of their home (often taking on more domestic tasks) and feel unable to invite friends home. They can be teased or bullied because of a family member's dependency on drugs or alcohol and may feel very isolated. They may also have to deal with the aftermath of alcohol and substance misuse. Much of these can contribute to behavioural problems so that they are withdrawn and secretive about what is happening around them.

Additionally, parents affected by substance misuse may experience impaired patterns of parental care. This in turn may lead to a higher risk of:

- physical neglect or abuse.
- threat of domestic abuse.
- poor or limited diet.
- missed health appointments, such as the dentist or vaccinations.

Like many young carers, this group of young carers may experience bullying, stigma and isolation and display behavioural difficulties. In addition, where children are caring for a relative with drug or alcohol problems, the incidence of missed school and educational difficulties is much more marked with 34% missing school and 40% in total missing school or having other indicators of educational difficulties.⁵

Parents may worry about discrimination and the impact their drug or alcohol dependency may have on their child. Issues surrounding their child's schooling, such as problems with behaviour or attendance problems, can cause further stress.

Like many young carers, these children need someone to talk to and for their needs to be understood. They need to understand that they are not responsible for their parents' choices and that it is not their fault. Early intervention is key to supporting pupils with parents affected by substance misuse.

What do young carers affected by parental substance misuse want?

- More understanding from school.
- More people to talk to who can deal with situations.
- Extra support with school work.
- School to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs within the curriculum.



- To know other children and young people who are affected by parental substance misuse.
- School nurses to check they are ok, undertake home visits and meet the family.
- To be taught more life skills.

Safeguarding children affected by substance misuse

“Drug use by parents does not automatically indicate child neglect or abuse. A social worker has to establish in what ways, if any, drug use is putting children at risk and what the role drug use has in the life of the family.”⁶

However, children and young people are sometimes exposed to circumstances which compromise their safety; they may witness or experience violence, be exposed to drugs and drug equipment or to other adults visiting the home. They can be at a high risk of experimentation with drugs or alcohol.

What can your school do?

Hidden Harm, a report which sets out the findings of an inquiry carried out by the Advisory Council, focusing on children in the UK with a parent, parents or other guardian whose drug use has serious negative consequences for themselves and those around them, makes the following recommendations⁷:

- All schools should identify at least one trained designated person able to deal with the problems that might arise with the children of problem drug and alcohol users.
- Ensure constant vigilance of known vulnerable young people and provision of additional pastoral support.
- Provide pupils with information if they do not want to talk to a teacher.
- Know how to access sources of support for the child and family and when to involve other agencies.
- Encourage and support participation in supervised extra-curricular activities.
- All education services and schools should have critical incident plans and clear arrangements for liaison with their local social services team and local area child protection committee when concerns arise about the impact on a child of parental problem drug or alcohol use.
- General teacher training and continuous professional development should include a broad understanding of the impact of parental problem drug or alcohol misuse on children.

If you are concerned about the well-being of a child the school child protection procedures should be followed. Chapter 25 ‘Safeguarding’.



Dual diagnosis

Some parents can have both mental health ill-health and substance misuse issues. It is, therefore, important to maintain effective links between all agencies involved to provide extra support should they need it.

In families affected either by mental ill-health or substance misuse, it is important to listen to the child and monitor how this impacts on their well-being and development. Please refer to Chapter 20 'Pupils with parents with mental health'.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 20** Pupils with parents with mental ill-health
- 24** Assessment and monitoring
- 25** Safeguarding

Key resources

→ ADFAM

National organisation working with and for families affected by drugs and alcohol. Provides training for people working with substance users.

www.adfam.org.uk

→ Frank

A national website and helpline providing drug information.

www.talktofrank.com

→ Mental health and substance misuse: A practical guide for professionals and practitioners

Toolkit produced by Rethink.

www.turning-point.co.uk/inthenews/Documents/Dualdiagnostoolkit.pdf

→ NACOA The National Association for Children of Alcoholics

Provides information, advice and support to children of alcoholics and people concerned with their welfare (including education professionals).

www.nacoa.co.uk

→ Supporting pupils with substance misusing parents: Information for teachers and school staff.

Booklet produced by The Children's Society to raise awareness of some of the issues experienced by children and young people, due to their parents' problematic substance misuse.

www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/NatDrugsLftt2nd.pdf

→ The Children's Society STARS Project.

A website for anyone working with, children, young people and families affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse.

www.starsnationalinitiative.org.uk



¹*Hidden Harm: Responding to the needs of children of problem drug users Executive.* (2003). Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. Home Office.

²*Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England.* (March 2004). Prime Minister's Strategy Unit.

³*New estimates of the number of children living with substance misusing parents: Results from UK national household surveys.* (2009). BMC Public Health 2009, 9:377: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/9/377/

⁴*New estimates of the number of children living with substance misusing parents: Results from UK national household surveys.* (2009). BMC Public Health 2009, 9:377: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/9/377/

⁵Dearden C. & Becker S. (2004). *Young Carers in the UK: the 2004 report.* Carers UK and The Children's Society

⁶Mounteney, J. & Shapiro, H. (1997) *Drugs, Children & Families – a guide for professionals.* Venture Press, Birmingham

⁷Hidden Harm. *Responding to the needs of children of problem drug users.* (2003). The report of an Inquiry by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs: <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/acmd/hidden-harm.html>

Pupils with parents affected by mental ill-health

“My mum has a mental illness, but no one told me why she was acting so weird. None of the doctors told me. It was scary. I had to find out for myself. They didn’t think about how I was feeling and worrying.”

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Safeguarding officer

This chapter will support schools to:

- ensure that staff are informed about the specific impacts and needs of young carers affected by substance misuse or mental ill-health.
- help pupils find support and understanding at school.
- ensure that your school knows when and how to involve other support agencies and professionals.

Synopsis

Mental ill-health is often misunderstood; there is still great stigma associated with it. Research, guidance and practice highlights that children and young people who live and care for a parent or family member with mental ill-health are often more reluctant to tell anyone about their family than those caring for someone with a physical disability.

Like all young carers, children affected by mental ill-health in the family experience many common impacts associated with a caring role, but they may experience further specific impacts, such as emotional impacts and safety issues.

The main focus of this chapter is on parental mental ill-health, although a young carer may also be looking after a sibling. It is also important to remember that not all children whose family members have mental ill-health will experience difficulties or be young carers.



The statistics

Of the UK's 175,000 young carers, over 50,000 - 29% - are estimated to care for a family member with mental health problems.¹

Between 25% and 50% of children living with a parent with severe mental ill-health will experience some form of psychological disorder during their childhood or adolescence, and between 10% and 14% will be diagnosed with a psychotic illness during their lifetime.²

Stigma

Young carers looking after a parent with mental ill-health are often hidden because:

- there is no visible illness or disability.
- the illness may be episodic.
- the young carer and/or the family is reluctant to seek support.

Some young carers go to great lengths to conceal the mental ill-health within their families and make up excuses for their parent's behaviour. They can also experience significant confusion and emotional upheaval due to the episodic nature of mental ill-health.

Parents may worry about discrimination and the effect their illness has on their child. Issues surrounding their child's schooling, such as behaviour or attendance problems, can add to stress which may further aggravate their illness. Parenting ability may also be impacted.

Young carers whose parents have severe mental ill-health can live under large psychological stress which, in turn, can affect their own emotional health and well-being. Unemployment, poverty, familial stress and lack of support because the family fears intervention can all affect the young carer negatively. The young carer can be further impacted if the parent has to spend time in hospital and the family is separated.

Providing young carers with information

A parent's behaviour or even treatment is often not explained to the child or young person and this can lead to misunderstanding and confusion. Research indicates that age-appropriate information helps children to cope because:

- children often imagine that things are worse than they are and so providing information therefore reduces fear.
- understanding the illness can help the child empathise with and respect the person with the illness.
- the child will realise it is not their fault.

The child's age, level of understanding, culture and the parent's wishes must be considered when providing information in all cases. Parents may also require help to understand why the child might need information about their mental ill-health.



Additional caring responsibilities

Young carers of a parent with mental ill-health can have further caring responsibilities, including significant emotional support, such as keeping the parent company or cheering them up, and checking they take their medication.

The added emotional role is often the hardest for the child and can often result in a role-reversal between parent and child.

Children with parents who have mental ill-health can feel withdrawn, anxious, confused and worried which can cause them to have behavioural difficulties and be violent or self-destructive. In some cases, children can adopt paranoid or suspicious behaviour as they believe their parents delusions. These can all affect the child's education as they experience stigma and isolation leading to them being victims of bullying which in turn can lead to further isolation.

What do children say they need?

- Good quality, age-appropriate information.
- Someone whom they can trust to talk to and ask questions.
- Someone to contact in a crisis.
- Practical help.
- To know their situation is not uncommon.
- Issues to be discussed confidentially.
- Support and understanding at school.

Safeguarding children affected by parental mental ill-health

It is not inevitable that children are at risk of significant harm because they care for a parent with mental ill-health. If you are concerned about the well-being of a child, school child protection procedures should be followed. Please refer to Chapter 25 'Safeguarding'.

What can your school do?

- The development of a whole-family approach is key to supporting young carers with parents affected by mental ill-health. Your school should work with other agencies to enable this.
- Consider offering the pupil, or referring the pupil for an assessment following the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
- If there is another parent in the family who is not affected by mental ill-health, involve them in support and consider also involving the child's extended family.

Dual diagnosis

Some parents can have both mental health ill-health and substance misuse issues. It is, therefore, important to maintain effective links between all agencies involved to provide extra support should they need it.



In families affected either by mental ill-health or substance misuse, it is important to listen to the child and monitor how this impacts on their well-being and development. Please refer to Chapter 19 'Pupils with parents affected by substance misuse'.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4 Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 24 Assessment and monitoring
- 25 Safeguarding

Key resources

→ Supporting children who have a parent with a mental illness

Produced by The Children's Society:

www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Mental%20Illness%20Leaflet%206th.pdf

→ MyCare: Young carers' resilience, coping strategies and cultural differences in caring for parents with a mental illness

Produced by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the Mental Health Foundation, this document explores the experiences and needs of children and young people between the ages of 10-21 years whose parent/guardian(s) have a serious mental illness.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/children-and-young-people/mycare/

→ SCIE Guide 30: Think child, think parent, think family: a guide to parental mental health and child welfare

This guide is about working with parents who have mental health problems and their children. It provides guidance on policy and practice and makes recommendations for key areas of professional education, workforce development and research. It also provides links to useful resources and contact details of relevant organisations.

www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide30/index.asp

→ Keeping the family in mind

Resource aimed at anyone who works with parents with mental health difficulties, their children and their families.

www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications/books_and_tools_tools_for_professionals.htm

→ Partners in care

Leaflets produced through partnership between The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Royal College of Psychiatrists.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/campaigns/partnersincare.aspx

→ Dual diagnosis toolkit – Mental health and substance misuse: A practical guide for professionals and practitioners

www.turning-point.co.uk/inthenews/Documents/Dualdiagnostoolkit.pdf

¹Dearden C. & Becker S. (2004). *Young Carers in the UK: the 2004 report*. Carers UK and The Children's Society

²Devlin, J.M. & O'Brien, L.M. (1999). *Children of parents with mental illness. I: An overview from a nursing perspective*. Australian & New Zealand Journal of Mental Health Nursing 8(1), pp19-29.



20.1 Information on mental health for young carers

The following resources contain age-appropriate information for children and young people.

→ YCNet

Section on caring for someone with a mental health problem section:

www.youngcarers.net/i_care_for_someone_who/30/#

→ When a parent has a mental illness

Film produced by produced by Dr Alan Cooklin with funds from the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Images of Psychiatry Campaign:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo/youngpeople/caringforaparent.aspx

→ Need to Know: A guide for young people who have a parent with mental illness

Booklet for children or young people with a parent being treated for mental ill-health which is particularly helpful for those aged 11 to 14:

[www.nsfscot.org.uk/uploads/attachments/1250083009___NSF\(Scotland\)-Needtoknow.pdf](http://www.nsfscot.org.uk/uploads/attachments/1250083009___NSF(Scotland)-Needtoknow.pdf)

→ Mental illness in your family?

A *Young Minds* booklet for children and young people with someone in their family with mental ill-health:

www.youngminds.org.uk/publications/all-publications/mental-illness-in-your-family/file

→ Minds, myths and me

Fact pack for young people who live with someone with a mental illness produced by Gloucestershire Young Carers:

www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/Website%20copy.pdf

Pupils caring for someone with a learning disability

"I love my brother, but I feel my needs always come second – I have to keep explaining why he acts the way he does and it makes having a social life very hard."

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School leads or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform staff about the specific issues relating to caring for a family member with a learning disability.

Synopsis

Young carers of people with a learning disability can experience feelings of embarrassment as the person they care for and their family may be seen as 'different' by their peer group. Living with a person with learning disabilities, whether a parent or sibling, can be hard, since the attention in the family is often focused on the person with learning disabilities and school work may be neglected as a result.

Dealing with the prejudice and negative perceptions

Young carers helping to look after a sibling, a parent or an older relative with a learning disability can find it difficult to get space and time away from the family to study or just to be themselves when living with a person who may not understand the need for privacy. Young carers can feel isolated from their peers as activities like inviting friends round feels embarrassing or difficult. Feeling obliged to explain why the person they care for may look or behave differently can be complicated or upsetting. Some young carers try to 'cover up' for the person's disability as a coping strategy. Dealing with the prejudice and negative perceptions of others can be challenging for these young carers who may have spent their entire lives living with a person with learning disabilities. Older siblings may find themselves caring for younger non disabled siblings as parents' resources are diverted to the person with the disability.

Those caring for parents or other adults with learning disabilities may undertake less practical tasks but more tasks such as helping with benefits and financial issues. They may be required to advocate on behalf of the adult, or talk to health and social care professionals. There may be confidentiality issues to be resolved.



Planning for the future

If their parents have had a negative experience of school or have been educated outside the mainstream school system, the young carer may be disadvantaged by having to negotiate their own path through school, which may in turn impact on course and career choices. These young carers may also lack support and motivation with homework and course work and such problems may not be easily identified if the parents are unable to attend parents' evenings.

Caring for a person with learning disabilities, whether as an adult or as a young carer, can be a life long and stressful experience. Young carers may feel daunted by this responsibility and worried about how they will manage their caring as they grow older. Young carers of siblings may worry about what provision will be made for their sibling when their parents die or become unable or unwilling to continue caring for them.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

14 Staff training and awareness

Key resources

→ Supporting Family Carers of People with Learning Disabilities

Produced to help develop and provide the best possible information and support to family carers of people with learning disabilities.

www.carers.org/professionals/social-care/articles/learning-disabilities-resources,5538,PR.html

Pupils caring for a sibling

"I would like my life to be that my sister not be ill and to be able to get to sleep at night"

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform staff about the specific needs of pupils caring for a sibling.
- help pupils who care for a sibling.

Synopsis

Almost a third of young carers have responsibility for the care of a brother or sister.¹ Sibling carers, more so than those caring for a parent, are often unidentified and their caring responsibilities, needs, experiences and feelings can go unrecognised in schools and by professionals.

Sibling carers tell us that young carers' services or specific sibling support groups are often the only place where they are recognised and given support.

What does caring for a sibling entail?

- Communicating for their sibling.
- Looking out for their sibling and protecting them from other children – particularly emotionally.
- Supporting their sibling with homework.
- Emotional support.

There is a positive side to caring for a sibling as the carer develops various life skills, including relationship skills. However, their lives can also be heavily restricted and they can experience negative impacts, such as:

- lack of quality time with parents.
- reduced parental attention and support from parents.
- lack of time and space for themselves and activities geared to themselves.
- social exclusion and prejudice because of the sibling.



- friendships and leisure may be difficult. Young carers may find it hard to invite friends home for example.
- impacts due to poverty and limited transport opportunities, where families need to prioritise a disabled child.

Feelings

Sibling carers can worry about their brother or sister and often lack information or understanding about their sibling's illness or disability. In addition to feelings of frustration, guilt and anger (feelings which are shared with other groups of young carers) sibling carers may also feel:

- embarrassment about their sibling's behaviour.
- insignificance due to limited parental attention.
- anxiety about who will care for their sibling in the future.

Key resources

→ Rethink

Information for siblings who have a brother or sister with a mental ill-health.

www.rethink.org/how_we_can_help/rethink_siblings/information/

→ Siblinks

A network for young people who have or have had a family member affected by cancer to gain support and provide information.

www.siblinks.org

→ Sibs

A UK-wide charity for people who grow up with a disabled brother or sister.

www.sibs.org.uk

¹Dearden C. & Becker S. (2004). *Young Carers in the UK: the 2004 report*. Carers UK and The Children's Society

Pupils from migrant families

"We end up becoming translators, legal advisors, housing advisors and carers for the whole community."

Who is this chapter for?

- School staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school

This chapter will support schools to:

- understand the specific needs of young migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking young carers.
- Help young carers of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families.

Synopsis

Young carers from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families often face long waits to entry into school and sometimes do not get a place in school at all.

Once in education they often face additional issues specific to their caring role and family situation which can impact upon their well-being and achievements in education, as well as their transition into the school and the community.

Not only may young migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking people have the responsibility of caring for someone in their family, but they have the added impact of coping with this responsibility in a strange culture and unfamiliar surroundings and in a new language, alongside the stigma and unsettlement of being a refugee.

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people are particularly vulnerable due to the physical and emotional disruption and trauma they may have experienced.

Barriers to learning

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people who take on a caring role need support and understanding in managing these responsibilities and their education, because the additional burden of having to care for a family member who is mentally or physically unwell can be detrimental to their own integration into the school and community.

Young carers from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families can experience:

- racist bullying.
- loss of identity.



- loss of friends and family from the country they have come from.
- concerns about the future, such as fear of returning to the home country.
- lack of English skills and knowledge of systems, such as the education system.
- stresses in the family, such as poverty or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- disruption to education due to migration.

Child interpreters and translators

Following migration, children often acquire competence in the new language before their parents due to their young age, because of their integration in school or because they have been learning English in their home country. As a result, the role of interpreter or translator often falls to the child in situations. This can involve:

- asylum claims.
- dealing with health services, including medical information.
- dealing with social services, including assessments.
- school issues, during enrolment or parents' evening.
- benefits agencies.
- shops and local community.

Pupils can often be absent from school as they attend appointments with their parents to take on the role of interpreter and/or translator. Children should not be expected to interpret information that is inappropriate for their age or that the parent may want to be kept confidential and all services need to be aware of this. Therefore, when communicating with parents who do not speak English, it is good practice to provide confidential interpreting services such as Language Line at www.languageline.co.uk

For more information about children interpreting, accessing professional interpreters and using Language Line see the *Supporting refugee young carers and their families: A toolkit for ALL practitioners* at www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk

Rights and entitlements

Schools have a duty to monitor and assess how their policies affect minority ethnic pupils and parents.

To develop good practice for inclusivity, schools should actively promote equality of opportunity and ensure that newly-arrived pupils and families do not experience additional barriers that will impact on their progress and well-being.

Children from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds have the same entitlement to education as all other children. Local authorities have a legal duty to ensure that education is available for all children of compulsory school age appropriate to their ability, aptitudes and any special educational needs (SEN) that they may have. This duty applies irrespective of a child's immigration status or rights of residence.



The Department of Children Schools and Families' guidance on *Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children* states that:

"The children of asylum seekers and refugees should have the same opportunity to access education as all other children. There is a broad recognition that teaching the children of asylum seekers and refugees can be both challenging and rewarding: newly arrived children from overseas need help to settle in and they can greatly enrich the school community."

For more information see:

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/asylumseekingandrefugeechildren/

Schools should also take into consideration the health needs of newly arrived children and young people:

"Newly arrived pupils and families from overseas may have health needs that need to be addressed. The physical and mental health of a family can have a significant influence on a pupil's capacity to learn and settle into a new school environment."

For more information about the rights and entitlements of overseas students and the general duties on schools to support their needs, see the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency at www.qcda.gov.uk/7260.aspx

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 29 Access, support and involving parents with disabilities
- 33 Raising awareness amongst all pupils

Key resources

As well as the tools found in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Language Line

High quality and professional **telephone interpreting** and **translation services** to help communicate with your limited English speakers whether over the phone, in writing or in person.

www.languageline.co.uk

→ New Arrivals Excellence Programme: Guidance

Developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) this guidance works on the principle that all newly arrived bilingual learners have a right of access to the National Curriculum and that provision for newly arrived EAL learners is not separate but integrated into all subject areas.

www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97335/

→ SHARED Futures

DVD and resource pack promoting the integration of refugee children and young people in school and the wider community.

www.sharedfutures.org.uk/index2.html



→ **Supporting refugee young carers and their families: A toolkit for ALL practitioners**

Developed by The Children's Society Family Health Inclusion Project and funded by the Department of Health this is a tool for all adult and children's services practitioners, education, health and other agencies in contact with refugee and asylum seeking families. Particularly those working with families affected by ill-health and disability and where there are young carers.

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=200894163854.htm

→ **Supporting the education of asylum-seeking and refugee children**

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/asylumseekingandrefugeechildren

→ **Teachernet**

www.teachernet.gov.uk

Assessment and monitoring

“When young carers are identified, it is vital that their wellbeing and academic progress is frequently monitored.” (Head teacher)

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School leadership team
- Safeguarding officer
- Your local young carers’ service
- Other external services

This chapter will support schools to:

- monitor and safeguard the well-being and academic progress of young carers in your school.
- provide appropriate support to young carers in your school.
- provide appropriate signposting and referrals to young carers and their families in your school.

Synopsis

Young carers have a right to an assessment of their needs.¹ Statutory services should ensure that young carers are not expected to carry out inappropriate levels of caring responsibilities.

Where it is found that a pupil may be taking on inappropriate levels of caring, a Child in Need Assessment may be needed, as well as involving other agencies.²

The assessment should also take into account training, employment and leisure needs during assessment.³ Young carers aged 16 and 17 have different needs to those of younger carers.

The tools

There are various tools that your school and local services can use to determine the extent of a pupil’s caring responsibilities. The outcomes of assessment and monitoring should inform any additional support.

Refer also to the tools found at the end of this chapter.



Remember to ensure that as much privacy as possible is provided for the young carer when they are completing any forms as they may find divulging personal information difficult. Consider asking pupils to fold forms, use envelopes or a secure box. Consider using a questionnaire on your own school intranet.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Recent updated CAF guidance for managers and practitioners states:

“Particular regard may need to be given to joint working between children and adult services when CAF has been undertaken specifically because of child or young persons’ caring responsibilities. There may also need to be contact with children with disability teams in the case of sibling carers. Go to www.youngcarer.com for details of the Children’s Society Whole Family Pathway which signposts professionals to services which will support the Whole Family where there are unmet care needs.”

Consideration should be given as to whether school staff are best suited to adopt a lead professional role within the CAF process.

Manual for Measures of Caring Activities and Outcomes for Children and Young People

This manual contains a range of tools relevant for assessment and evaluation work with young carers to complement what is already known about a young person and their family, including existing information gathered in the course of formal assessment processes, such as a CAF or core assessment.

www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/assessments,3063,PP.html

Assessment questionnaire for young carers

Produced by North Yorkshire County Council in association with Carers’ Resource (Harrogate, Craven and Airedale), this is an age-appropriate form to be completed by young carers.

<http://static.carers.org/files/ycassesstnycc-3105.pdf>

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 16** Working with young carers: a model
- 25** Safeguarding



Key resources

→ Assessments

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website for professionals working with carers of all ages contains assessments advice for professionals on assessments and also highlights the latest government guidance on supporting young carers and their parents.

www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/assessments,3063,PP.html

→ Early identification, assessment of needs and intervention. The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people: A guide for practitioners

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CAF-Practitioner-Guide.pdf>

→ Whole Family Pathway

www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Whole%20Family%20Pathway%2010th.pdf

¹Carers (Recognition & Services) Act 1995: www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1995/ukpga_19950012_en_1

²Children Act 1989: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/ukpga_19890041_en_1

³Carers (Equal Opportunities Act) 2004: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040015_en_1



24.1 Barriers to learning: a checklist to use with pupils

The aim of this checklist is to aid assessment and highlight any specific barriers a young carer might be facing in order to inform what support needs to be put in place and what should be included in a personalised plan.

The questions are not intended to be used in a quick 'one-stop questioning session', and instead careful thought needs to be given as to when and how and by whom the questions are used.

When

The answers to these questions might also be gathered over a period of time as a school works with a young carer. As trust is built, pupils may well divulge additional information.

How

The checklist aims to aid assessment and therefore should be used in conjunction with other assessment tools, such as the CAF. Different members of staff may well gain knowledge about different areas of the checklist. This information will be most valuable if pooled together to give a wider picture of support needs.

By whom

The checklist should be used by appropriate staff trained in safeguarding procedures as questions may elicit disclosures that trigger safeguarding procedures. Questions may also bring out emotional reactions in pupils in which case additional support will need to be implemented.

A staff member who has been supporting a young carer would be best suited to using this checklist, for example a schools lead, pastoral staff, a tutor, school nurse or perhaps staff from a young carers' service.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Do you have problems attending school, or being late for school?</p> <p>Is this because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → your caring role or as a result of your caring role? → difficulties with transport to school? <p>You don't want to come to school? – Can you say why?</p>			
<p>Are you able to go to after-school clubs and activities?</p> <p>Is there any after-school club or activity that you would like to go, but you are unable to?</p>			



Are you able to concentrate and focus on your school work?			
Do you feel isolated at school?			
Do you feel different from other pupils?			
Do you feel there is anybody who understands your experiences and who listens to you?			
Do you have friends at school?			
Do you feel supported at school?			
Are you motivated to do your school work?			
Do you feel confident to share with other pupils about your caring role?			
Do you feel confident talking to staff?			
Do you feel tired at school? Is this because of your caring role at home?			
Are you stressed or worried about someone's safety or health?			
Are you able to concentrate during exams?			
Do you feel angry at school?			
Do you want to go on to college, university or further training?			
Are you being bullied?			
Are your parent(s) able to attend parent's evenings and other school events?			
Do you have difficulty in completing homework or coursework due to your caring role?			
Do you have a room or space to study at home, free from disturbances?			
Do you have a computer to work on at home?			
Are you tired at home because of your caring responsibilities?			



Is someone able to support you with your work at home?			
Are you getting support from your parent(s) around the choices you have to make when you leave school – such as going to college/ university/ getting a job?			
Do you feel able to do what you really want when you leave school?			
Are you missing out on Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) due to your caring responsibilities and home situation?			
Is there anything else you can think of that's getting in the way of your school work?			



24.2 Young carers support options

Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

Please tick the options you would find helpful	✓
Access to telephone to call home if worried or concerned.	
Access to the school nurses' office, Connexions service or (INSERT TEACHER'S/STAFF MEMBER'S NAME)	
Support to enable homework and coursework to be completed.	
Weekly/fortnightly lunchtime peer-support group for young carers.	
Respite, such as outings, trips etc.	
A named person to talk to when things get tough.	
Information about the illness or disability of the person you care for.	
Information about being a young carer.	
Support to write a crisis plan in case the person you care for needs to be admitted to hospital.	
What else would you find helpful?	



Confidentiality agreement

I agree that the following people can be told of my caring responsibilities:

Designated lead staff for young carers in school:

Head of year

Tutor

Subject teacher/s

Please sign _____ Date _____

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24.3 Family support: a questionnaire

Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

(INSERT SCHOOL OR COLLEGE NAME) is committed to supporting all of our students in reaching their full potential and particularly want to be proactive in improving support for students who undertake long-term caring responsibilities for a family member. But, we can't help or offer support if we don't know about you!

Any information given on this questionnaire will be treated confidentially by (INSERT STAFF NAME) and will only be shared at your request following discussion with you.

Please complete the following. If you answer yes to any questions, (INSERT STAFF NAME) will arrange to meet you:

1. Does a member of your family have a long-term illness, disability, drug or alcohol addiction or mental health problem?
Yes **Go to Q2** No **Go to Q9**
2. Do you help with personal care such as dressing, washing etc?
Yes No
3. Do you help with physical care such as lifting, physiotherapy or giving medication?
Yes No
4. Do you help manage the family budget, collecting prescriptions, paying bills?
Yes No
5. Do you help with practical tasks such as housework, shopping, cooking?
Yes No
6. Do you give emotional support, such as helping cope with emotional issues?
Yes No
7. Do you look after younger brothers and/or sisters?
Yes No
8. Do you help with interpreting (because of hearing, visual or speech impairment, or because English is not the first language of the family)?
Yes No



9. Do you worry about your situation and how you are coping?

Yes No

10. Would you like to know what help is available for you and the person you care for from other agencies?

Yes No

Please put completed questionnaire in a sealed envelope to ensure your confidentiality and put in the box provided. Thank you

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Safeguarding

“My mum won’t accept support as she thinks she is OK, but it is me that ends up with it all.”

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Safeguarding officer
- Education welfare service

This chapter will support schools to:

- include young carers in child protection policies.
- be aware of child protection issues regarding young carers.

Synopsis

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, risking his or her own emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances.¹

There may be other factors, in addition to their caring role, linked to the parents’ illness or disability that may lead to safeguarding issues.

Your school has a duty

Schools have a duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Effective measures to safeguard children are those that also promote their welfare.

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) defines the safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children as²:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.



Your Local Authority also has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under s175 of the *Education Act 2002*.

Pupils who are young carers should be safeguarded in order to prevent them from undertaking inappropriate caring responsibilities for another person affected by ill-health and disability and from becoming a child in need.

Children in need

Children in need are defined by the *Children Act 1989* as those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or those whose health and development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services.³

As with any pupil, if you are concerned about their welfare, the usual school child protection procedures should be followed:

- Inform the named safeguarding officer who should follow the schools child protection procedures.
- If there are any safeguarding concerns of children, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures should be followed. The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

In order to safeguard the needs of young carers, an assessment of family circumstances is essential. A staff member within your school with a lead responsibility for young carers could be responsible for promoting and coordinating the support needed and for liaising with other agencies as appropriate. Adult and children's statutory services can assess the needs of families and identify children in need.

The *Whole Family Pathway* is a resource for all professionals in a position to support young carers and their families and can be used to help identify who else can be involved in supporting the whole family. This is available at www.youngcarer.com

Staff training

Ofsted's *Safeguarding children review*⁴ highlights the important role that schools can play in identifying young carers promptly so as to ensure that they are safe. In order to safeguard young carers, schools staff should be trained about the needs of young carers, including how to identify them and where to signpost them for support. This can include young people who may not see themselves as being a carer or those who do not want others to know about their caring role due to a fear of stigma and bullying or not wanting practitioners involved with their family.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 3** National legislation and guidance
- 14** Staff training and awareness
- 24** Assessment and monitoring



Key resources

→ Lead professionals

Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), this guidance shows how the lead professional is a key element of integrated support. They take the lead to coordinate provision and act as a single point of contact for a child and their family when a range of services are involved and an integrated response is required.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/managersandleaders/leadprofessional/leadprof/

→ Safeguarding children

This is an Ofsted review of the arrangements that help keep children safe by eight inspectorates involved in regulating and inspecting services for children and young people.

www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk

→ Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)

Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), this guidance sets out how individuals and organisations should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/workingtogether/workingtogethertosafeguardchildren/

¹Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: Key principles of practice*. The Children's Society

²*Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Every Child Matters. Department of Children, Schools and Families: **www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/workingtogether/workingtogethertosafeguardchildren/**

³*Children Act 1989*. s17(10): **www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/ukpga_19890041_en_**

⁴*Safeguarding children review*. Ofsted: **www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk/Safeguarding-Children/2008-report**

Supporting learning: a personalised approach to education and support

“Treat us like other pupils but remember we have extra problems outside of school and we need extra support.”

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- All staff

This chapter will support schools to:

- look at, consider and address the barriers to a young carer’s learning.
- establish personalised plans to recognise a pupil’s specific needs as a young carer and their family situation, such as support to enable the pupil to complete homework and coursework.
- recognise the importance of regular and communication with parents regarding the progress of their child.
- recognise the importance of provision that enables young carers to attend after school activities.
- recognise the importance of education provision for young carers whose attendance and education has been disrupted, and the need to take steps to reduce and/or remove such instances.

Synopsis

Even though young carers may share many specific barriers to their learning and achievement, each pupil’s situation will be different.

Personalised plans, devised by the school in conjunction with the young carer and their family should recognise the pupil’s specific needs as a young carer and take into account the family’s situation and how it impacts on the young person’s education.

Greater sensitivity to the individual

Most young carers say that when forced to choose between staying at home to look after a loved one and going to school, caring comes first. It is vital that schools balance taking a supportive, flexible approach with giving the pupil a consistent message that their education is important. A personalised approach to education and support can work particularly well for a young carer.



One of the founding elements to making education more personal focuses on having greater sensitivity to the individual. The White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*¹ discusses the needs of each child and refers significantly to a “Pupil Guarantee”². Whilst it acknowledges that schools already encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to the needs of each individual pupil, it introduces a new pupil guarantee which also ensures that:

- every secondary school pupil from September 2010 receives personalised support from a personal tutor who knows them well, has an overview of their progress, and ensures any learning needs or issues are quickly addressed.
- all secondary school pupils have access to high-quality careers education and information, advice and guidance so they can make informed choices about learning, work and lifestyles and are well supported during transitions.
- every pupil goes to a school that identifies their additional needs quickly and is linked up to health and other specialist services, so they can access the help they need swiftly and easily.

The idea is that for all pupils, there will be at least one person who knows them “in the round”, not only for academic progress, but also for their personal development. This person will track the pupil’s progress more closely through the development of a personal support plan.

A good assessment of a young carer’s needs is necessary to inform a personal support plan. Personal support plans should include:

- flexibility around deadlines and extra support, for example when caring roles increase.
- an assigned member of staff to talk to.
- provision to be put into place so that young carers can access after school clubs and activities.
- additional support which is needed to overcome barriers to learning. Tutors and schools should draw support from other in-school professionals and from a wider group of practitioners.
- a review of support in the home for any pupil whose education is affected by caring responsibilities.
- a crisis or emergency plan which for some young carers may form an important part of a personal support plan.

This plan, together with a tutor’s regular communication with parents, will ensure that young carers are less likely to fall behind and schools will be able to respond more quickly if any problems emerge. It should also address any barriers that parents face which prevent them from becoming fully engaged in their child’s education.

If a pupil is struggling to keep up with their work due to their caring role, the answer should not immediately be for them to drop a subject. This is not a capability issue. Letting a young carer reduce their timetable does not provide equal access to education as their peers and this, of course, should be the overall aim. However, for some pupils this may be precisely what will make the difference between succeeding with other subjects and failing at several. As a last resort therefore, when other support has been put in and the young carer is still struggling with their



workload, dropping a subject may be an option. This should be considered carefully however. Potential benefits such as reducing coursework and giving the young carer time and space within school to complete homework or coursework (which they may be finding difficult to complete at home) should be carefully considered and balanced with the loss of a subject and singling the young carer out. Long-term implications need to be explained to the pupil and their parents in order for them to be able to make a well informed choice.

Greater sensitivity to the family

Caring and family responsibilities can sometimes be extremely variable. For some, family circumstances can often move from one crisis to another, whilst for others, situations may be stable for a long time with some periods of uncertainty and instability. As such, particular sensitivity should also be shown to the family as a whole, in order to support parents' engagement with the school and their child's learning. Schools need to be understanding of a parent's disability and how it affects them, for example they may require frequent hospital visits, or have difficulties visiting the school. The 21st Century School "Parent Guarantee"³ talks about ensuring that parents have access to a range of extended services, including information and support on parenting skills and advice on parenting issues.

Whatever a young carer's situation may be, it is also sensible for schools, together with the young carer, and preferably their parents, to develop a crisis plan to support pupils further (if and when young carers need extra help during a family emergency) and avoid any unnecessary school absence.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4 Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 27 Crisis or emergency plans
- 28 Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work
- 29 Access, communication and involving parents with disabilities

Key resources

As well as the tools found at the end of this chapter and those in the above suggested chapters, the following resource is key.

→ Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system

Department of Children, Schools and Families:
www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem

¹ *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*. Department of Children, Schools and Families: www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem

² *The Pupil Guarantee*. The Department of Children, Schools and Families: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/8356-DCSF-Pupil%20Guarantee.pdf>

³ *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system – The Parent Guarantee*. The Department of Children, Schools and Families: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/8357-DCSF-Parent%20Guarantee.pdf>



26.1 A young carer card*

Schools might want to consider introducing a 'young carer's card'. This could be credit card sized and display the pupil's name and signature of an appropriate member of staff.

A young carer's card offers the following benefits:

- Pupils will no longer have to repeat their family situation to staff.
- It will set out any agreed situations where a young carer requires some flexibility due to their situation.

There are many situations whereby a pupil may need some flexibility, such as:

- homework and coursework deadlines.
- needing to call a parent during break times so they are not worrying about them.
- not being able to attend after school detentions.

The young carer's card should be reissued annually along with frequent reviews of the young carer's needs.

Schools should be aware that in the event a card is lost or stolen, a pupil's personal details may be compromised and therefore consider carefully how this scheme is implemented.

**As developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Sunderland Carers' Centre.*

Crisis and emergency plans

"I missed a lot of school because he wasn't well and I didn't like leaving him in case he fell over and he couldn't reach a phone or pull the cords... I went twice a week, that was it."

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Education welfare service
- Home school liaison officer
- Parent support adviser
- Attendance officer

This chapter will support schools to:

- draw up a crisis or emergency plan as appropriate for pupils.
- provide additional support to pupils so that they are able to attend school in periods of crisis.

Synopsis

Drawing up an emergency plan for a young carer may help mitigate impacts if a young carers' situation at home becomes more difficult or if there is an emergency. Having an emergency plan in place may help in the event of a family member going into hospital or if their condition deteriorates. With no plan in place, then it is possible that a young carer might suffer with their attendance, attainment and emotional health and wellbeing.

Crisis or emergency plans

For some pupils, situation can become more difficult over time and for others, situations can vary between periods of stability and chaos.

The deterioration in health of a family member or the admission of a parent to hospital can put great stress on a family. As well as transport to school, other school routines such as completing homework on time, attending after school clubs or communications between the family and the school, such as important deadlines or paying school dinner monies, can suffer. In these situations, young carers and their families can need increased support.

It is therefore advisable to draw up a plan in advance of a crisis or emergency, or the increase of a caring role, alongside other agencies involved with the family, including adults' services, the school and the young carer. Crisis plans are most effective if your school adopts a multi-agency



approach and any contingency plans that may have been drawn up with other professionals or agencies should ideally be linked to the school plan. Remember pupils (and their families) are the experts in how their caring role and their family situation changes, and how these affect their schooling so they must be involved in the formulation of any such plans. Knowing that there is a plan in place can significantly reduce the worry for both pupils and parents.

When developing your crisis or emergency plan, consider:

- what other agencies need to be involved, when they need to be involved and how to refer to them.
- an assessment or review of the pupil's and the family's needs.
- how the school will communicate with parents.
- special measures the parents and family can use to communicate with parents.
- what additional support is required from the school and when.
- transport to and from school.
- ensuring continued attendance.
- flexibility with coursework deadlines and how this will be implemented.

In a genuine crisis, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) advises that "a school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made. The school should set a time limit for the absence and set some school work so the pupil does not fall far behind while at home. It may also be appropriate for a pupil whose close relative is in the final stages of terminal illness to take time off school to be with them".¹

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 5** Attendance
- 8** Transport
- 26** Supporting learning: a personalised approach to education and support
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work

¹www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour

Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work

“When doing an assessment it is important to understand how the condition or illness affects the whole family and how families’ needs and individual’s needs may differ but also affect each other.”

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Education welfare service
- Home school liaison officer
- Parent support adviser
- Other professionals working in the school
- Outside agencies

This chapter will support schools to:

- signpost and refer young carers and families to other appropriate services, such as your local young carers’ service or a counselling service.
- identify and address inappropriate caring roles by working in partnership with other agencies.
- signpost or refer parents to services that will be able to support their parenting needs.
- work in partnership with outside agencies, such as the youth service, local young carers’ service, social care or health services.

Synopsis

For young carers, better support for the whole family and the person they care for is their top priority.

In order for a young carer to achieve their potential within school, they may not only need extra support for themselves but also for their family. By ensuring that the person with the disability or illness has their care needs met adequately by other service providers means that young carers will be protected from inappropriate caring roles and may be more able to take part in learning and school opportunities successfully.



Schools are in a good position to recognise when a young person's development and well-being is being affected, but are often not able to offer practical support to the whole family. Signposting or referring families to other services can make a huge difference and working with other agencies, including health and adult's services, can prevent a pupil's caring role from impacting upon their own well-being.

Parents with disabilities

Parents with disabilities have the same human and civil rights as non-disabled parents. Parents with ill-health or disabilities should be supported in their parenting role as well as with their health care needs.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Disabled Parents Network and The Children's Society have adopted a broad and inclusive definition of 'disabled' to include anybody with an actual or perceived physical, sensory, emotional or learning impairment, long-term illness, blood-borne viruses, including HIV and AIDS, drug or alcohol dependence or a person with a mental ill-health, victims of war and torture. It is recognised that not all people included in this definition would define themselves as disabled.

Providing support

Referring young carers and their families to other organisations for additional support can provide the pupil with more time to complete homework, attend school and overcome some of the barriers to their learning. Schools should consider how they will link with adult's and children's services, health services, the voluntary sector, such as a local young carers' service, and other organisations who are working with the family. Links to children's disability teams might be useful, where a young carer is helping to care for a sibling.

Completing a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) or attending a TAC (Team around the Child) meeting can be highly beneficial when working in partnership with other agencies or planning appropriate whole-family support. At this stage issues around caring and ill-health and disability and how this can impact on the pupil's well-being and their education should be made clear.

Services provided to parents enabling them to fulfil their parenting responsibilities, as well as supporting their care needs, should also be made available. Services that assist disabled adults with parenting may be provided either as part of a service to disabled adults or a service to support children, or both. Refer to the Disabled Parents Network (DPN), a national organisation of and for disabled people who are parents or who hope to become parents, and their families, friends and supporters.¹

Differences of opinion

It is important to remember that "...there may be differences of opinion between the children and parents about what are appropriate levels of care for the child to carry out. Such differences may be out in the open or concealed. The resolution of such tensions will require good quality joint work between adult and children's social services, as well as co-operation from schools and health care workers. This work should include direct work with the young carer to understand his or her perspective and opinions" as well as consultation with the parent by adult services.²



See the Whole Family Pathway for more information about partnership working and who could be involved in supporting young carers and their families at www.youngcarer.com

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 15** Who else can help?
- 16** Working with young carers: a model
- 24** Assessment and monitoring
- 25** Safeguarding
- 29** Access, support and involving parents with disabilities
- 30** Working in partnership with young carer' services

Key resources

→ Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/caf/cafframework/>

→ Team around the Child (TAC)

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=IW92%2F0709>

→ Find your local young carers project

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=projects.htm

→ Disabled Parents Network

National organisation of and for disabled people who are parents or who hope to become parents, and their families, friends and supporters.

www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/site/site.cgi

→ Keeping the Family in Mind

Resource pack developed by Barnardo's.

www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications.htm

→ Whole Family Pathway

<http://www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Whole%20Family%20Pathway.pdf>

¹Disabled Parents Network: www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/site/site.cgi

²*Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*. (2000). Department of Health: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4003256

Access, support and involving parents with disabilities

*"Most teachers don't understand that we need to be involved."
(Parent with disabilities)*

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- School leadership team
- Parent support adviser
- Home-school link

This chapter will support schools to:

- support parents with disabilities to enable them to engage in their child's education on the same level as with other parents.
- ensure they are accessible to parents who have ill-health or disabilities.
- ensure your communication with parents takes into account any illness or disability and provide a range of formats accordingly.
- avoid relying on young carers to translate for parents.

Synopsis

Poor communication between a school and parents can be the result of an illness or disability within the family. Poor communication with parents, or parental difficulties in accessing the school, such as parents' evenings, can compound any barriers for a young carer.

Schools should be accessible to all parents including those affected by disability or illness and those whose first language is not English. Good communication with parents will mitigate many of the issues ensuing from a pupil's family situation and caring role.

Physical access

Schools and colleges should be accessible to parents who are disabled or have a long-term illness. Communication strategies include provision for any parent with a visual, hearing or



communication impairment (as covered in the *Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005*) with regard to access to goods, services and facilities.¹

Communication and language barriers

Schools should make allowances for parents who find it difficult to access parents' evenings and should find additional ways of communicating with them. Provisions should be made for parents with a visual, hearing or communication impairment. They should be asked in what format they would prefer school reports, which could include Braille, large print, 'easy-read', CD or verbal discussions, and sign language interpretation at meetings.

Home visits, taped letters or school reports translated into other languages are all possible solutions for parents from migrant, refugee or asylum-seeking families who may need support to be involved in their child's education. This can require additional language and translation services being made available during enrolment or parents' evenings. It is not appropriate for the child to be used as an interpreter or translator for their parent.

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 8** Transport to and from school
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work

Key resources

- **Morris, J (2004), *Disabled Parents and Schools, Barriers to Parental Involvement in Children's Education*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.**
<http://www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk>
- **Disability Discrimination Act (1995)**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1
- **Disability Discrimination Act (2005)**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/ukpga_20050013_en_1
- **Disabled parents and school**
Information provided by DirectGov.
www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Disabledparents/DG_10037906
- **Supporting refugee young carers and their families: A toolkit for ALL practitioners**
Developed by The Children's Society Family Health Inclusion Project and funded by the Department of Health this is a tool for all adult and children's agencies in contact with refugee and asylum seeking families.
www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk/showPage.php?file=index.htm

¹Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: Key principles of practice*. The Children's Society

Working in partnership with young carers' services

*"Services only have a partial picture of the family's needs due to a lack of joint working and information sharing which can lead to families receiving multiple, uncoordinated responses."*¹

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Senior leadership team
- PSHCE coordinator
- Healthy schools coordinator

This chapter will support schools to:

- provide additional, coordinated support to young carers and their families.
- carry out good partnership work with external agencies such as young carers' services.
- receive support by specialist agencies in identifying hidden young carers and supporting young carers.
- establish plans or protocols to work with other agencies.

Synopsis

Working in partnership with a young carers' service can greatly enhance school support for young carers and can often help facilitate identification of young carers.

The *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system* White Paper highlights that Ofsted is currently introducing a new grade for partnership working to show the importance of working in partnership with other services effectively promote better outcomes for pupils.

Young carers' services

There are over 350 young carers' services across the UK, many of whom offer a variety of ways to support young carers. Young carers' services usually support children and young people aged between 5 and 18 through the provision of clubs, activities, respite breaks, one-to-one and family support. Providing transport to activities is a big part of a young carers' service as few families have transport of their own.



Your local young carers' service may also provide emotional support through the use of mentors or counsellors. Young carers' workers are catalysts for positive change in young carers' lives, and are often someone that the young carer can depend on. Sometimes these are the only adults that a young carer will trust.

Young carers know that other young carers supported by the service are in a similar situation to them – they won't have to explain why their lives are different, or make excuses for not being able to go out and do the things other young people take for granted.

In addition to peer support, many young carers' services work with the whole family. They are seen as a lifeline by parents because they help parents to access services and benefits to which they are entitled. Many families do not receive support from anywhere else.

Young carers' services often offer support to young carers through a school-based programme. This type of support can include:

- lunchtime or after-school groups.
- delivery of assemblies on young carers.
- delivery of or support with PSHCE lessons.
- individual or group work with young carers.
- peer mentor training.
- training and awareness-raising amongst school staff.

When embarking on work with a young carers' service, schools should have a clear understanding of the aims and scope of the service. Other procedural issues and ways to support the service working within the school should be addressed beforehand and perhaps set out in a protocol or agreement. Moreover, schools should explore what can be delivered alongside the support of the local young carers' service. A support group, for example, managed jointly by school staff and staff from a young carers' service can be very effective.

Schools and local authorities in some areas have allocated specific funding to working in partnership with a voluntary sector organisation in order to support young carers who are at risk of missing substantial amounts of schooling.

Funding may be possible through extended schools funding. See *Extended schools funding guidance* at www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=12859

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work



Key resources

→ Young carers' services

A database of young carers' services across the UK:

www.youngcarer.com

→ Doing the Right Thing Well in Schools: A Good Practice Guide for working with young carers in schools

Produced by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers to assist Scottish young carers' services to work in partnership to evaluate and improve the quality of the work done with young carers and their families, and to encourage and enable schools to eventually be self sufficient in their support for young carers.

www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/education,3064,PP.html

→ Managing Behaviour and Attendance: Groups of pupils at particular risk

Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) advice and guidance for schools and local authorities on managing behaviour and attendance tells schools in England that young carers are at 'particular risk' and that schools should consider designating a member of staff to have responsibility for young carers.

http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/154426?uc=force_uj

¹Reaching Out: Think Family. Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Taskforce: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/think_families/think_families.pdf



30.1 Effective partnership with young carers' services: a checklist

Tasks	✓
Verify the young carers' service CRB checks.	
Agree child protection procedures and how the young carers' service will work with these through the school.	
Agree procedures for dealing with the awareness of any unlawful or potentially unlawful activity.	
Agree procedures for data protection and data sharing.	
Be clear of the scope and capacity of the young carers' service.	
Understand the eligibility criteria that the young carers' service works to and which pupils they would work with in school.	
Agree which staff member(s) will be the main link between school and the young carers' service.	
Agree on aims and objectives for the work to be undertaken in the school.	
Agree on a protocol for when and how parents are informed of the involvement of the young carers' service.	
Agree on a protocol for if and when the young carers' service can contact the young carer or family independently of the school.	
Agree on rooms, equipment and resources the young carers' service can use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Offer rooms with privacy, where pupils feel comfortable. → Offer access to the school staff room and a PC. 	
Agree on the duration and times the young carers' service will be in school.	
Agree methods of communication between the school and the young carers' service.	
Agree communication to changes in normal working schedule, for example due to sickness or school closures.	
Agree how pupils will communicate with the young carers' service.	



Understand when and the procedures for how pupils might be supported externally by the young carers' service.	
Agree how the young carers' service will report to the school, for example an annual progress report.	
Ensure the young carers' service is informed of school closures/staff sickness, schedule changes, such as fire alarm drills.	
Set up a pigeon hole for the young carers' service.	
Support the young carers' service to use specific funding streams accessible to schools.	
If appropriate make the young carers' service the school's charity.	
Put information about the young carers' service on a notice board and consider adding the young carers' service staff photos.	



30.2 An example of work in a school by a young carers' service

Support offered to the school:

- Awareness sessions for all pupils years 7 to 11 in the first instance.
- After initial involvement awareness sessions for all new year 7 pupils and refreshers for other groups if requested.
- Regular drop-in/support sessions for young carers within a school. Both individual and group support.
- Fast-track referral system within each school for the school, plus feed back and possible action for pupils not seen as young carers.
- Help in developing school policies to include young carers.
- Awareness sessions for all workers within the school community.
- Training for school mentors.
- Joint work around issues such as behaviour, attendance and achievement.
- System that allows young people to self-refer.
- Regular information updates for school notice boards on issues relating to young carers.

What we offer known young carers within a school:

- Regular contact on the young carer's terms.
- Individual support within school, including negotiation with the school to resolve blockages to learning/achievement.
- Access to support away from school either via one to one sessions or involvement in support groups.
- Confidentiality within the school unless pupil at risk or happy for people to be made aware.

**Developed by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Salford Young Carers' Service.*

Transition from primary to secondary school

“Moving from a primary school to a secondary school is a difficult stage for any pupil. Particular care needs to be put in to support pupils like young carers who have extra needs to ensure that pastoral support is continued and not lost.”

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Year head
- Transition lead
- Careers’ services
- Young carers’ services
- “Feeder” primary schools

This chapter will support schools to:

- build strong links with school leads from schools that feed into each other in order to improve information sharing and tracking of young carers at key transition stages.
- identify young carers as soon as possible when they begin secondary school.
- ensure all pupils, including late starters, are aware of who their school lead is, what support is available and how to access it.
- support young carers and their families with a coordinated approach by a range of agencies before and during a transition period.

Synopsis

As with all pupils, transition from one educational stage to another requires particular care. This is even more vital with young carers as there are particular issues associated with being a young carer that can make a crucial difference if acknowledged and addressed.

It is good practice to build strong links and communication between staff leading on young carers from establishments feeding into each other in order to provide support during the transition process. Indeed, further value is added with multi-agency work, for example with additional support from a young carers’ service.



Good practice for pupils in transition from primary to secondary school

Providing opportunities for families to inform the secondary school that a pupil has caring responsibilities before they start is valuable so that support can commence from the outset. Primary schools may also be in a position to encourage the pupil and their family to advise the new school of their family situation or to set up a meeting with the secondary school's carers lead.

Hertfordshire Young Carers Project has developed a transfer plan to support young carers as they move from primary to secondary schools and suggest that primary schools should:

- make available to the secondary school and the parent(s)/guardian(s) an outline of the support currently being received by the pupil, such as that by a family worker, school nurse or other agency, as well as any additional support offered by the primary school.
- organise an additional visit to the secondary school with parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss family circumstances and give the young carer the opportunity to explain what it is like for them. (The young carer could have this information written down; some young carers find it difficult to talk about their caring role).
- introduce the young carer to the link worker or named person in the secondary school.

The secondary school also has a role to play during this transition and it is useful if:

- the school has a relevant member of staff to liaise with feeder primary schools and ascertain whether there are young carers in year six transferring to secondary school.
- the head of year seven is aware of the caring circumstances and the support the young carer has received during their time at primary school.
- the head of year seven or form tutor meets with the young carer while they are still at primary school to explain how they support young carers.
- the head of year seven or the form tutor makes contact with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to explain the support that is available prior to the young carer joining the secondary school in September.
- a relevant member of staff offers a home visit where this is appropriate, as in some cases parents are unable to attend open evenings and parents evenings.

Hertfordshire Young Carers Project's full report can be found at www.koolcarers.org.uk/resources.htm

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 17** Early intervention and preventative work
- 32** Higher and further education
- 34** Information for young carers and parents

Higher and further education

"My dream is to go to university and it has always been in my head that I wouldn't go to university too close (to home) because it was my way of gaining independence. However, I am not sure I can go because it means leaving home and there isn't the support there for everyone else if I go."

Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school.
- Transition lead
- Year head
- Young carers' services
- Colleges and universities
- Careers services

This chapter will support schools to:

- put in place support to enable young adult carers to access the college, university or the workplace that they choose.
- ensure young carers do not miss out on EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) payments due to their caring responsibilities.
- support young carers to achieve qualifications and a career path of their choosing.
- ensure caring experiences, skills and other strengths gained are positively acknowledged and included in young carers' CVs.

Synopsis

Further Education (FE) colleges should be aware of young carers' issues and have policies and practices in place to support them so that young carers are not disadvantaged and are enabled to have equal opportunities to attend courses if they wish. Flexibility and/or support with coursework demands may be needed at times for some young carers.



Good practice in transition from secondary school to further education

As with the transition from primary to secondary school, further education colleges should also be aware of any young carer moving up from secondary school. Schools should, therefore, pass on any relevant information as appropriate or encourage and support young carers and their families to volunteer this information.

Young carers may need more intense support when moving on from school into further education or the workplace or with living on their own and establishing relationships. The majority of young carers' services offer support to young carers up to the age of 18 and some offer specific programmes of work to support transition issues.

Schools and colleges should also ensure extra support is available, or that the young carer is linked into other service providers, such as health, careers, benefits agency, adult social care or adult carers' services (at age 18) to support them at this potentially difficult period.

A young carer moving away from home, perhaps to college or university, should trigger a review of the care needed for the person who needs care.

Note that at the time of writing, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society were unaware of any UK university with support in place for young adult carers.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

EMA is a weekly payment of up to £30 per week for eligible learners attending a valid learning programme. It is paid directly to the young person and can help with the day-to-day costs of staying in learning.

EMA guidance advises learning providers to consider whether a young person has any caring responsibilities that have an on-going effect on their attendance and where necessary providers should explore solutions personally with the young person.¹

Thinking about the future

Although many young carers have acquired specific skills from their caring role, careers advice should not hastily encourage young carers into pursuing a career related to caring. It is likely that young carers need additional support in realising the breadth of options available to them and broadening their horizons. It is important for someone to be available to listen to possible concerns a young carer may have about their future, moving away from home and their aspirations.

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work
- 31** Transition from primary to secondary school



Key resources

→ **Andy's story (a university student)**

www.youngcarers.net/who_can_help_me/89/240

→ **Young Adult Carers in the UK: Experiences, Needs and Services for Carers aged 16-24**

The research is a 'mixed-methods' investigation and includes a literature review, secondary analysis of 2001 Census data, a survey of 25 young carers projects, a survey of 13 adult carers services, five focus groups with 29 young carers aged 16 and 17, discussions with staff at focus group sites, and in-depth interviews with 25 young adult carers aged 18-24 across Britain.

www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/articles/young-adult-carers-research,4382,PR.html

→ **Young Adult Carers Access to Education and Training**

Policy briefing paper and a project summary report, produced by NIACE with funding from the Nuffield Foundation, to raise awareness of the issues around access to education and training for young adult carers, aged 16 - 25, as they go through key transitions.

www.niace.org.uk/current-work/young-adult-carers-access-to-education-and-training

¹Frank, J. & McLarnon, J. (2008). *Young carers, parents and their families: Key principles of practice*. The Children's Society

Raising awareness amongst all pupils

“There was one girl who teased me about it and said my mum was insane and a freak and that I was going to end up like her, because she didn’t understand and because she knew how much it hurt me. So I think the more people that understand the better because less people would be able to get away with saying that kind of thing.”

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- PSHE education coordinator
- Healthy schools programme coordinator
- SEAL coordinator

This chapter will support schools to:

- embed young carers’ issues into relevant aspects of the curriculum, such as the National Healthy School Programme, personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE education), SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) and RRR (Rights Respect and Responsibility).
- promote a full understanding, acceptance of and respect of young carers’ issues in the curriculum.
- ensure your school has up-to-date teaching materials on young carers’ issues.
- teach pupils about disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and substance misuse.
- portray positive images of young carers and disability dispelling any negative or stereotypical images of young carers and disability.
- encourage young carers and families to ask for support.
- reduce incidences of bullying relating to young carers.

Synopsis

Bullying experienced by young carers can sometimes be the result of the stigma associated with some disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and substance misuse. Raising awareness of young carers’ issues amongst pupils in school will help young carers to gain understanding and support from their peers.

Young carers themselves have suggested that young carers’ and disability issues be included in PSHE education lessons, assemblies and other relevant parts of the



Steps to take before-hand

It is strongly recommended that a whole school support system is already in place before your school actively begins to identify young carers and raise awareness of young carers amongst pupils. Raising awareness may encourage some pupils to consider issues relating directly to themselves for the first time and so it is important for them to see that support is already available before they speak to an adult. This should include:

- a named person within the school that pupils can talk to following the assembly or lesson.
- establishing ground rules with the class to provide a safe environment should a young person identify themselves within the lesson.
- sensitivity around case studies or materials you use, ensuring they reflect positive images of disability and the reality of being a young carer.

Challenging stereotypes

Teaching all pupils about disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and substance misuse, the issues surrounding a caring role in a non sensationalist way and providing an opportunity to challenge stereotypes will help them to understand that a caring responsibility in the home is a way of life for some people and that anyone could become a young carer. It is beneficial to teach pupils that young carers are no different to other young people and that they have the same hopes, dreams and pressures as all young people, but with the added pressures of a caring role.

Raising awareness of carers, disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and substance misuse can help create more empathy towards young carers and more understanding as to why they may sometimes seem unsociable, stressed, worried or angry. It will also help pupils acknowledge and value the complicated responsibilities that young carers can have and may explain why they can't attend clubs or why they have to rush off after school. Not only will this help remove the stigma associated with certain disabilities and illness, thus help prevent bullying, but it will also help young carers to talk about their responsibilities with their peers.

By embedding these issues within the curriculum, it is likely that a more accepting and understanding environment will be built over the long-term, one where young carers feel safe and confident to share their stories and where they are accepted for who they are and supported by peers.

How to raise awareness amongst pupils

- Use relevant parts of the curriculum, such as PSHE education, SEAL and The Healthy School Programme, to inform pupils of the issues.
- Use assemblies to provide opportunities to promote knowledge and understanding of disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and substance misuse and the issues surrounding a caring role.
- Invite relevant local services to make presentations about topics, such as mental ill-health.



- Provide information about sources of support on notice boards.
- Train peer mentors within the school on the specific issues surrounding young carers.
- Make books and films available in your school library.
- Ensure that parents with ill-health or disabilities feel able to be part of the school community.

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 29** Access, support and involving parents with disabilities
- 30** Working in partnership with young carers' services

Key resources

As well as the tools found at the end of this chapter, the following resources are key.

- **PSHE education in primary and secondary schools**
Information provided by Teachernet
www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/pshe/
- **Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL): Improving behaviour, improving learning**
Curriculum resource to help primary schools develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills, including assemblies and follow-up ideas for work in class.
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal/>

'Young Carers Festival 2006, Young Carers give Top Ten Tips for Schools', in Frank, J. and McLarnon, J. (2008) *Young carers, parents and their families: Key Principles of Practice. Supportive practice guidance for those working directly with, or commission services for, young carers and their families.*



33.1 Lesson and assembly planning

There are a range of materials available to help you plan assemblies and PSHE education and SEAL lessons in both primary and secondary schools. Your local young carers' service may also be able to help you. Find your nearest service at www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=projects.htm

You may also find useful 25.3 'Building your library' and 35.4 'Sample role play for an assembly, drama, PHHCE or SEAL lesson'.

Film

→ DVD on listening to young carers

Produced by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society in partnership with The National Young Carers Forum for England, this DVD is divided into short chapters in which the young carers talk about the common issues they face and the solutions that will help to improve their lives. It powerfully informs the viewer how it feels to be in their situation and is a useful tool for all agencies working with these families.

www.youngcarer.com

→ Teachers TV

Young carers describe the hardships they face at home and how difficult this can make coping at school.

www.teachers.tv

Quiz

Consider starting the lesson or assembly with an interactive quiz to get pupils to learn more about young carers. Ask pupils true or false or multiple choice questions. You can find up to date facts and figures about young carers to include in your quiz at: www.youngcarers.net or www.youngcarer.com

Case studies

Case studies produced by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society can be used to help raise awareness. Here are some examples as to how they can be used: are available to use with young people in the classroom. Please see 35.2 'Young carers' stories'.

- Write a diary entry from the young carer's perspective.
- With the young carers' family in the centre, draw a mind map of all the different challenges the young carer and their family may be facing. Add to the map how each family member might be supported and by whom.
- With the young carer in the centre, map what problems, concerns or worries the young carer may have in different situations (at home, at school, with friends, with leisure time, in the future).
- From the perspective of a best friend, write the young carer a letter of support that shows respect for what they do and how they cope.
- From the perspective of a young carer write a letter to a best friend.



Exercise: A day in the life of a young carer

Get pupils to think about the day in the life of a young carer, including a list of responsibilities and any thoughts and feelings that a young carer may have, for example:

- 06:15 Get up and make breakfast and a cup of tea for mum.
- 06:45 Wake up brother and feed him.
- 09:15 Get to school. Late and have to explain why, again.
- 12:00 Call mum at lunch and check she's okay.
- 15:00 Get home.
- 17:00 Make tea and get everyone organised for the next day.
- 21:00 Finally sit down and watch some TV.

Research exercise

Use the website www.youngcarers.net to research information about:

- Facts about young carers.
- Different illnesses and disabilities.
- How caring may affect a young carer.
- What sort of support there is for a young carer.

Ask pupils:

- By viewing the films of young carers featured on www.youngcarers.net what would you say are young carers' main worries?
- If you were given a pot of money to be used for helping young carers, what would you do with it?

For more information

→ **Matty's Hand**

A musical play which tells the story of a young carer called Matty who looks after her recently widowed mother who has MS. The play tells how Matty juggles her responsibilities at home with the daily pressures of school life.

<http://www.yorkcarerscentre.co.uk>

→ **Primary drama/young carers' project**

Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS) has developed a primary drama/young carers' project. It is targeted at years two and three but is easily adaptable.

Using "the smartest giant in town", the project raises positive awareness of physical and emotional issues around caring and support available in and around school for young carers and their families.

The supporting information attached to the project relates to Hampshire strategies, but incorporates national guidance and legislation and is easily adaptable for use in any



local authority.

For more information, please see www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias.htm

→ **NHS Choices**

Information, including videos, from young carers about how they cope at school.

<http://www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/young/young/Pages/Overview.aspx>

→ **Teaching Expertise: Assemblies for schools**

Plans about young carers to achieve SEAL outcomes

http://www.teachingexpertise.com/search/google?cx=014420112192009446918%3A9bykuclqai4&cof=FORID%3A11&query=assemblies+young+carer&form_id=google_cse_results_searchbox_form#939

→ **A lesson on young carers can be seen at the National Curriculum Online**

<http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/assessment/nc-in-action/items/personal-social-and-health-education/7/2248.aspx>



33.2 Young carers' stories

The following young carers' stories will be helpful to use in class to raise awareness amongst your pupils. For further young carers' stories, please see the links at the end of this section.

Ahmed, 15

Ahmed looks after his mother who has a physical disability following an attack in their home country of Afghanistan. He has to look after the house and take care of his mum because her disability stops her from being able to do it. He does all of the cooking and prepares breakfast, lunch and dinner for both of them. Often he goes home from school at lunchtime to help his mum with lunch and to check she is okay.

After school Ahmed has to do all of the food shopping and clean the house. He also helps his mum with her personal care, including helping her to get dressed, bathing her, helping her go to the toilet and giving her medication. He doesn't like doing these tasks very much.

Ahmed's mum doesn't speak much English and so she relies on support from Ahmed to translate information when she sees the doctor or when the social worker visits. Ahmed misses a lot of school to go to appointments with her.

Ahmed is happy at school and has a lot of friends, but he finds it difficult to concentrate and keep up with his school work, as he worries about his mum when he's at school and struggles to finish his homework in the evenings because of everything he has to do when he gets home.

- How do you think Ahmed feels?
- What would help Ahmed at school?
- What would help Ahmed at home?

Eric, 14

Eric lives with his mum, dad and sister. His sister is autistic. Eric finds school very difficult, because the other pupils don't talk to him. He doesn't have many friends and his classmates think he is strange because he behaves "too grown up". They also make fun of his sister and laugh at her which upsets him even more because he is protective of her.

Eric gets into trouble at school, because he can't always finish his homework if he has to look after his sister in the evenings. Sometimes his sister scribbles on his homework and the teachers tell him off or ask him why he has done it. He doesn't tell them it's his sister because he worries his classmates will hear him and laugh at his family.

Sometimes Eric goes to a local young carers' group after school. He has friends here who also look after someone with a disability. At the group he can relax and he likes to play football. He feels the other young carers understand him there.

- How do you think Eric feels?
- What would help Eric at school?
- Why do you think he feels the other young carers understand him?



Louise, 13

Louise lives alone with her mum. She also has two older brothers, but they have both moved out. Her mum is an alcoholic and sometimes she has to go to hospital if she has been drinking too much. Louise is worried that if her mum carries on drinking then she will die, but she doesn't feel that she can talk to her mum about it.

Louise does all the housework and washes and irons her own uniform. She does all the shopping and makes sure all the bills are paid. She often finds bottles of drink around the house which she empties, but then her mum gets cross and they end up arguing.

When Louise is at school she is very quiet because she is worried that her mum is out buying more alcohol. She doesn't invite friends home after school in case her mum is drunk. She has also started to get bullied. When Louise isn't at school she makes sure she goes everywhere with her mum because she worries when she is away from her.

- How do you think Louise is feeling at school?
- What would help Louise at school?
- What would help Louise at home?

Susie, 11

Susie often misses school or arrives late, so she's always behind with her work. When she is at school she is often in a bad mood and she's quite bossy so her classmates don't talk to her very much and she doesn't have many friends.

Susie lives with her mum and her brother Jake who is nine years old. Her mum has been diagnosed with a mental health problem called bipolar disorder. This makes her behave differently on different days. She calls these "good days" and "bad days". Neither Susie nor Jake really understand what bipolar disorder is as no one has really explained it to them. They don't understand why their mum can sometimes act strangely.

Susie's mum is supposed to take medication to keep her feeling well. She doesn't always take it though so Susie has to boss her. Susie also has to look after the house and Jake. She often thinks that she is more like a parent to him than a sister.

Susie feels like nobody understands what it is like for their family. She thinks people at school will laugh at her or make fun of her mum, so she doesn't want anyone to know.

- How do you think Susie feels?
- What do you think would help Susie at school?
- What do you think would help Susie at home?



Verity, 12

Verity lives with her mum and her younger brother David who is five years old. Verity's mum uses a wheelchair which she controls with her chin. Everyday, Verity gets up very early, makes breakfast for everyone and helps her brother get dressed. She then takes him to primary school before she goes to school.

A carer, organised by the social worker, visits Verity's mum everyday to help her get up and dressed. Verity doesn't really like this because it is someone different everyday and feels it's like having strangers in the house.

Verity picks David up from school everyday and cooks tea for everyone. She often helps her mum to eat. Verity then does the housework before starting her homework.

Verity doesn't go to friends' houses much because she worries her mum will be lonely and so she stays at home and talks to her to make sure she's happy. Verity gets very worried during the night as she would be unable to get her mum out of the house in an emergency.

- How do you think Verity feels when she is at school?
- What do you think would help Verity when she is at school?
- What do you think would help Verity at home?

Further young carers' stories are available at:

→ **YCNet**

www.youngcarers.net

→ **NHS Choices**

www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/young/young/Pages/Youngcarersstories.aspx

→ **TeacherNet**

www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/library/youngcarersandschools/youngcarers



33.3 Building your library

Your school or college can help raise awareness of disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and substance misuse and the issues surrounding a caring role through reading material and film. You may find the following list useful. Also included are links of where to buy them.

→ **Adamson, J. & Adamson, G. (2003). *Topsy and Tim Make a New Friend***

Topsy and Tim are delighted to learn that their disabled friend Jenny is going to join their class. Lots of the children have never seen anyone in a wheelchair before but their teacher explains all about it and the class soon discover that Jenny really is no different to them.

www.amazon.co.uk/Topsy-Tim-Make-New-Friend/dp/1904351174/ref=sr_1_61?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259746501&sr=1-61

→ **Almond, D. (2009). *Skellig***

Michael's new baby sister may have a damaged heart. He feels alone and unsure. When he discovers an angel dying in the garage, Michael enlists the help of his new friend Mina in caring for him.

www.amazon.co.uk/Skellig-David-Almond/dp/0340997044/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259674706&sr=1-1

→ **Anderson, R. (2007). *Big Ben***

Matthew's older brother Ben has Down's Syndrome and Matthew is horrified when Ben turns 16 and has to go off to a special school. Gradually Matthew comes to realise that this is best for Ben and that he will need to find his own friends. When Matthew's teacher decides to focus on Ben for a class project on interesting people in the community the class comes to recognise what an amazing person Ben is.

www.amazon.co.uk/Big-Ben-Rachel-Anderson/dp/1903015707/ref=sr_1_332?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259840762&sr=1-332

→ **Bates, D. (2000) *The Shape***

Julia's mum is seriously depressed following the sudden death of her youngest daughter, Katy. As Julia struggles to understand her mother's illness she encounters a supernatural being in her room, at first terrifying but ultimately bringing comfort.

www.amazon.co.uk/Shape-Dianne-Bates/dp/1865083534/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259674184&sr=1-1

→ **Bette, P. (1992). *Becca's Race***

The story of Digby who has to look after his younger brother when his sister is diagnosed with leukaemia.

www.amazon.co.uk/Beccas-Race-Bette-Paul/dp/0590550527/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259661027&sr=1-1

→ **Brownjohn, E. (2002). *All Kinds of Bodies***

A lift-the-flap book that explores physical features, abilities and disabilities and confirms that no matter how we look on the outside, under the skin we are all the same.

www.amazon.co.uk/All-Kinds-Bodies-Lift-Flap/dp/1857075609/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259663853&sr=1-1



→ Cole, H. (1994). *Bring in the Spring*

Sarah is physically disabled. She hears and understands everything at her special school, but they just push her around in her buggy and talk to her as though she were three years old. Then Bel arrives on work experience and recognises Sarah's attempts at communication.

www.amazon.co.uk/Bring-Spring-young-adult-books/dp/0099254816/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259662711&sr=1-2

→ Connolly, M. (1999). *It isn't Easy*

This is the story of a child, after his brother is killed in an accident. It follows him and his parents through their reactions, their feelings of sadness and anger and pain, and shows how they begin to come to terms with what has happened.

www.amazon.co.uk/Isn't-Easy-Margaret-Connolly/dp/0192723677/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259679725&sr=1-3

→ Cowen-Fletcher, J. (1996). *Mamazooms*

A boy's wonderful mama takes him zooming everywhere with her, because her wheelchair is a zooming machine.

www.amazon.co.uk/Mamazooms-Jayne-Cohen-Fletcher/dp/0590457756/ref=sr_1_25?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259838965&sr=1-25

→ Cross, G. (2002). *Tightrope*

Ashley is the sole carer of her severely arthritic mother but she has another secret life, as a dare devil graffiti artist who sneaks out at night and risks her life to write her pseudonym in extraordinary places.

www.amazon.co.uk/Tightrope-Gillian-Cross/dp/0192719122/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259245299&sr=1-2

→ Desai, A. (2001). *Village by the Sea*

Set in a small fishing village near Bombay. Lila and Hari, aged 13 and 12, struggle to keep the family, including two young sisters, going when their mother is ill and their father is usually the worse for drink. When Hari goes to Bombay to find work, Lila seems to be responsible for everything.

www.amazon.co.uk/Village-Sea-Anita-Desai/dp/0141312718/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259247091&sr=1-1

→ Dickens, C. (1857). *Little Dorrit*

Set in the mid-nineteenth century. Following the death of her mother Amy, Dorrit takes on the role of supporting her father and becomes 'little mother' to her siblings.

www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_ss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=little+dorrit

→ Dickinson, P. (2005). *The Gift Boat*

When his beloved grandfather is struck down with a massive stroke, Gavin is devastated. He is determined to prove the doctors wrong and find a way to reach his real grandfather, trapped inside the paralysed body in the hospital bed.

www.amazon.co.uk/Gift-Boat-Peter-Dickinson/dp/0330420852/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259668589&sr=1-1



→ Elliot, R. (2010). *Just Because*

Clemmie can't do much. She can't walk, talk, move around much, cook macaroni, pilot a plane, juggle or do algebra...but her little brother Toby loves her all the same – just because. In this heartwarming picture book we are painted a picture of Clemmie through Toby's eyes and what we discover is not her severe mental and physical disability, but of what a perfect big sister she truly is.

www.amazon.co.uk/Just-Because-Rebecca-Elliott/dp/0745962351/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1273597343&sr=1-1

→ Feeny, J. (1999). *The Day My Parents Ran Away*

Sarah finds herself looking after her two younger sisters when her father has a nervous breakdown and leaves home. When her mother follows him, she struggles to keep things normal and to keep other adults from finding out.

www.amazon.co.uk/Day-My-Parents-Ran-Away/dp/0140385126/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259248857&sr=1-5

→ Fine, A. (2006). *The Granny Project*

Ivan and his brother and sisters cannot believe it when their parents want to put their grandmother into a home for the elderly. They refuse to allow this to happen and find out what it is like to look after someone else.

www.amazon.co.uk/Granny-Project-Anne-Fine/dp/0552554383/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259247786&sr=1-1

→ Fowler, T. (1991). *The Wind is Silver*

When tragedy strikes the Robinson family, it is Jennifer who must take charge and draw on all her reserves of strength in a year that will alter her and the family forever.

www.amazon.co.uk/Wind-Silver-Puffin-Books/dp/0140346635/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259659243&sr=1-5

→ Gavin, J. (1991). *I Want to be an Angel*

Four short stories including Little Effie who is responsible for her family.

www.amazon.co.uk/Want-be-Angel-Jamila-Gavin/dp/0749709871

www.amazon.co.uk/Two-Weeks-Queen-Morris-Gleitzman/dp/014130300X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259659606&sr=1-1

→ Green, J. (1999). *I'm Special*

Written for young children, this book focuses on three common types of disability and shows the day-to-day experiences of disabled children. It is intended to help children deal with emotions they experience in their everyday lives and contains notes for parents and teachers, with suggestions of ways to promote an understanding of disability, through discussion and role play.

www.amazon.co.uk/Special-Your-Feelings-Jen-Green/dp/0750225750/ref=pd_sim_b_2

→ Haddon, M. (2004). *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*

A story about Christopher, an intelligent youth who lives in the functional hinterland of autism. Every day is an investigation for him because of all the aspects of human life that he does not quite get. When the dog next door is killed, Christopher becomes quietly persistent in his desire to find out what has happened.

www.amazon.co.uk/Curious-Incident-Dog-Night-time/dp/0099450259/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259668231&sr=1-1



→ Hames, A. & McAffrey, M. (2005). *Special Brothers & Sisters*

A collection of real-life accounts from the brothers and sisters of children with special needs, disability or serious illness, ranging in age from 3 to 18 years. They explain, in their own words, what it's like to live with their siblings.

www.amazon.co.uk/Special-Brothers-Sisters-Disability-Seriousillness/dp/1843103834/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259244267&sr=1-1

→ Hardy, T. (1891). *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

Set in the 19th century the young Tess experiences hardship, tragedy and lost innocence whilst feeling responsible for her family and others around her.

www.amazon.co.uk/Tess-dUrbervilles-Penguin-Popular-Classics/dp/0140620206/ref=cm_cr_pr_product_top

→ Hudson, C. (2005). *In a Little While*

A heart-warming story about a family member who is in hospital, and very much missed. Wobbily Fang brings mummy all the home comforts in hospital until she is all better and smiling again.

www.amazon.co.uk/Little-While-Charlotte-Hudson/dp/0370326563/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259665317&sr=1-6

→ Ironside, V. (2003). *The Wise Mouse*

Maria is a little girl who's very worried about her mother who behaves oddly at times. One night, Maria feels a tap on her shoulder and wakes to find a wise mouse sitting on her duvet who can talk to her about all her worries. Illustrated by Nick Sharratt, this book aims to help 5–11 year-olds understand what is happening to a family member who may be experiencing a mental illness.

www.amazon.co.uk

→ John, L. (2010). *My Chair*

I can play tag in my chair, I can dance in my chair, I can play with my friends in my chair!

www.amazon.co.uk/My-Chair-Start-Reading-Just/dp/0750260084/ref=sr_1_308?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259840183&sr=1-308

→ Laird, E. (2007). *Oranges in No Man's Land*

Since her father left Lebanon to find work and her mother tragically died in a shell attack, ten-year-old Ayesha has been living in the bomb-ravaged city of Beirut with her granny and her two younger brothers. The city has been torn in half by civil war and a desolate, dangerous no man's land divides the two sides. Only militiamen and tanks dare enter this deadly zone, but when Granny falls desperately ill Ayesha sets off on a terrifying journey to reach a doctor living in enemy territory.

www.amazon.co.uk/Oranges-Mans-Land-Elizabeth-Laird/dp/0330445588/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259663331&sr=1-1

→ Laird, E. (2006). *Red Sky in the Morning*

Twelve-year-old Anna is looking forward to the birth of her baby brother. Ben arrives, but is disabled and will never be like other children. Anna loves him with her whole heart, but she finds herself unable to admit the truth of Ben's condition to her school friends.

www.amazon.co.uk/Red-Sky-Morning-Elizabeth-Laird/dp/0330442902/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259660017&sr=1-1



→ **Langston, L. (2005). *Mile High Apple Pie***

A moving account of a girl's relationship with her grandma. The little girl grows up and her grandmother grows older. At times it is difficult coming to terms with grandma not remembering things, but there are still some very special things grandma does remember.

www.amazon.co.uk/Mile-High-Apple-Laura-Langston/dp/0099443880/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259665804&sr=1-1

→ **LeBlanc, S. (1999). *A Dragon in your Heart***

A book specially written for children to help them understand the meaning of cancer and to allow them to understand what is going on.

www.amazon.co.uk/Dragon-Your-Heart-Sophie-Leblanc/dp/1853027014/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259664899&sr=1-1

→ **Leicester, M. (2006). *Special Stories for Disability Awareness***

A collection of short stories where the heroes and heroines are disabled children who defy the stereotypes associated with being disabled.

www.amazon.co.uk/Special-Stories-Disability-Awareness-Professionals/dp/1843103907/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259837553&sr=1-7

→ **Lloyd, C. (1997). *The Charlie Barber Treatment***

This story is about a boy who loses his mother and has difficulty expressing his sadness. It shows this it is all right to cry, and that often you need to cry and let your feelings out instead of letting them build up inside you.

www.amazon.co.uk/Charlie-Barber-Treatment-Carole-Lloyd/dp/0744554578/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259679725&sr=1-6

→ **Mahy, M. (1995). *Memory***

Johnny blames himself for his sister's death. He searches for Bonny, who was his sister's best friend. During his search he meets up with Sophie, an elderly lady who has senile dementia. He is horrified to learn she lives alone, and decides to do something about it.

www.amazon.co.uk/Memory-Puffin-Teenage-Fiction-Margaret/dp/0140373047/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259660256&sr=1-3

→ **Meyer, D. (1997). *Views from Our Shoes***

Siblings share their experiences as the brother or sister of someone with a disability. Their personal tales introduce young siblings to others like them, perhaps for the first time, and allow them to compare experiences.

www.amazon.co.uk/Views-Our-Shoes-Growing-Brother/dp/0933149980/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259242759&sr=1-1

→ **Meyers, C. (1999). *Rolling Along with Goldilocks and the Three Bears***

A favourite children's story with a 'special-needs' twist. This story unfolds with many of the familiar scenes of the classic tale. Here, Baby Bear uses a wheelchair, goes to physical therapy, and ultimately makes friends with Goldilocks.

www.amazon.co.uk/Rolling-Along-Goldilocks-Three-Bears/dp/1890627127/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259666907&sr=1-1

→ **Moore, I. (2001). *Daughter***

The story of 14-year-old Sylvie who lives with her divorced mother. Sylvie arrives home one



day to find her mum standing on the balcony of their flat, possibly about to jump. Sylvie struggles to come to terms with what is happening, but the truth of the matter is that her mother has Alzheimer's disease. The roles of parent and child are quickly reversed as Sylvie has to take on the responsibility of looking after her mother.

www.amazon.co.uk/Daughter-Ishbel-Moore/dp/0192718746/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259660555&sr=1-1

→ **Moore, G. (2010). *Catherine's Story***

This is a story about a very special girl with disabilities called Catherine. It's a delightful, positive and happy story.

www.amazon.co.uk/Catherines-Story-Genevieve-Moore/dp/1845076559/ref=sr_1_315?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259840498&sr=1-315

→ **Moore-Malinos, J. (2007). *It's OK to be Me! Just Like You, I Can Do Almost Everything!***

It doesn't matter anymore that I am in a wheelchair. I know I can do almost everything the other kids can, and that makes me happy!

www.amazon.co.uk/Its-Ok-Be-Me-Anything/dp/0764135848/ref=sr_1_357?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259841131&sr=1-357

→ **Pielichaty, H. (2002). *Jade's Story***

A moving account of how a teenager copes with the problems of mental illness. Jade's father has schizophrenia and this story relays the ups and downs of their family life as they try to cope.

www.amazon.co.uk/Jades-Story-Helena-Pielichaty/dp/0192751646/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259673716&sr=1-1

→ **Pullman, P. (1997) *The Subtle Knife***

The second book in the Dark Materials Trilogy. Will is alone in looking after his mother who has mental health problems.

www.amazon.com/Materials-Trilogy-Golden-Compass-Spyglass/dp/0440238609

→ **Roy, J. (1997). *A Daughter Like Me***

The tale of three sisters Ella, 13, Bessie, 11, and Jude, six, who are left to fend for themselves when their father disappears after their mother is killed in a car accident. Too scared to tell an adult and terrified of being taken into care, this story is told through the eyes of Bessie.

www.amazon.co.uk/Daughter-Like-Me-Jacqueline-Roy/dp/0140379274/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259747437&sr=1-5

→ **Sallis, S. (1994). *No Time at All***

Two disabled children love their new bungalow by the sea. It even has its own spectral steam-train which only they can hear each night. The train holds many mysteries, which will change their lives.

www.amazon.co.uk/No-Time-All-Susan-Sallis/dp/0552528137/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259661573&sr=1-3

→ **Shriver, M. (2002). *What's Wrong with Timmy?***

This is the story of eight-year-old Kate, who, while at the park with her mother, notices



Timmy, a boy who looks and behaves differently from the other children. Kate wonders if there is something “wrong” with Timmy, but when her mother introduces her to Timmy, the seeds of friendship are planted. Soon Kate and Timmy are laughing and playing together, and Kate learns that she and Timmy have a lot in common - that in fact, there is nothing “wrong” with Timmy at all.

www.amazon.co.uk/Whats-Wrong-Timmy-Maria-Shriver/dp/0316233374/ref=sr_1_351?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259841131&sr=1-351

→ **Spiegler, M. (2006). *Missing Mummy: Living in the Shadow of an Alcoholic Parent***

A collection of 30 poems written by a former young carer for an alcoholic mother, speaking about the carer’s emotions throughout this period.

www.amazon.co.uk

→ **Taylor, V. (2010). *Caitlin’s Wish***

Life is good for Caitlin until her father becomes disabled, then everything changes in her life and she struggles to accept what has happened to her family. Based on a true story, this is a storybook for young carers.

www.amazon.co.uk

→ **Thomas, P. (2005). *Don’t Call me Special***

A book to introduce children to disability. It explains that assumptions people sometimes make about those with disabilities can end up hurting feelings. The book encourages children to get to know friends before making guesses about them based on what they look like.

www.amazon.co.uk/Disability-Dont-Call-Special-First/dp/0340911077/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259664240&sr=1-3

→ **Valentine, J. (2008). *Broken Soup***

This story follows the life of 15-year-old Rowan, whose life changes dramatically when her older brother Jack dies. Rowan finds herself playing mum to her five-year-old sister Stroma, when her dad decides he can’t take it any more and moves out, leaving her already fragile mum in an even worse state.

www.amazon.co.uk/Broken-Soup-Jenny-Valentine/dp/0007229658/ref=sr_1_50?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259680759&sr=1-50

→ **Vlamakis, G. (2004). *What About Me?***

Jamie is initially confused, resentful, jealous and sad when his sister Susie has to go to hospital and his mother spends a lot of time there with her. He acts up to get his parents attention other times withdrawing into silence. Through the love and understanding of his parents he is eventually able to realise he is much loved and appreciated.

www.amazon.co.uk/What-About-Me-Siblings-Children/dp/0855723408/ref=sr_1_9?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259835194&sr=1-9

→ **Whiteside, S. (1999). *Tears After Dark***

An account of a young boy, growing up in a family torn apart by alcohol and drugs.

www.amazon.co.uk/Tears-After-Dark-Sally-Whiteside/dp/1900796716

→ **Wild, M. (1999). *Jenny Angel***



Jenny Angel believes that she is her brother's guardian angel. He is very ill and she is sure that if she keeps watch over him she can save his life. Their mother knows that nothing can save him and they share his final few days during which Jenny continues to talk to him in her usual way.

www.amazon.co.uk/Jenny-Angel-Viking-Kestrel-picture/dp/0670845051/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259679725&sr=1-5

→ **Willis, J. (2001). *Susan Laughs***

A story about a girl who uses a wheelchair and the things she enjoys doing each day.

www.amazon.co.uk/Susan-Laugh-Jeanne-Willis/dp/0099407566/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259668045&sr=1-1

→ **Wilson, J. (2002). *Sleepovers***

New-girl-in-school Daisy is finding her feet with a new group of friends who take it in turns to have sleepover parties. Daisy is faced with telling her new friends about her mentally and physically disabled older sister and she is unsure how they will react.

www.amazon.co.uk/Sleepovers-Jacqueline-Wilson/dp/0552547093/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259244798&sr=1-1

→ **Wilson, J. (1999). *The Illustrated Mum***

This is the story of Dolphin who lives with her sister Star and their mother Marigold who suffers with depression and misuses alcohol.

www.amazon.co.uk/Illustrated-Mum-Jacqueline-Wilson/dp/0440863686

→ **Wilson, J. (2008). *The Mum Minder***

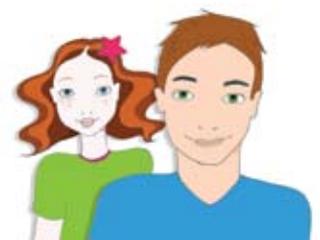
Sadie's mum, who is a childminder, gets the flu so all the other mums get together to sort out the childcare arrangements. Sadie often has to take control and also has her mum to look after and calls herself a mum minder.

www.amazon.co.uk/Mum-minder-Jacqueline-Wilson/dp/0440868254/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259662064&sr=1-1

→ **Zindel, P. (1990). *A Begonia for Miss Applebaum***

Discovering that their beloved former teacher is terminally ill, 15-year-old Henry and his friend Zelda accompany her on her excursions to the colourful parts of New York and join her in confronting death with quiet courage.

www.amazon.co.uk/Begonia-Miss-Applebaum-Bantam-starfire/dp/0553287656/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1259662494&sr=1-1



33.4 Sample role-play for an assembly, drama, PSHCE or SEAL lesson.

Developed by Winchester & District Young Carers Project, this is a simple, versatile approach to get young people to think about how it would feel to be a young carer. This should be led by a facilitator with a fairly good knowledge of young carer-related issues. You should tailor this activity to the age of the young people you are working with.

Set up

- Set up a domestic setting, perhaps a kitchen or living room, using visual aids like a chair, table, bed, kitchen equipment, etc.
- Ask for a three volunteers to role play the parts of a young carer, a sibling and a parent who has a disability or illness.

Ask the actors to role play. But explain that whenever you say “freeze” they must freeze! When you say “go” they should resume acting.

Getting started

- Ask the parent their name, their disability and how it affects them.
- Ask the young carer their age and what they like doing, such as football or playing music, and add “*But you don’t get much chance to do that these days, do you?*”
- Ask the younger sibling their age and their favourite game.

Then suggest some scenes to act, using phrases like “*Mum is hungry and would like something to eat. The younger brother/ sister just wants to play*”.

Begin the role play with “Go” then at appropriate times call out “Freeze” and ask each actor what they are thinking or how they feeling.

Other scenarios

- The younger sibling needs looking after and mum needs her medication.
- Two friends have come to ask the young carer to come out to play (use extra volunteers from the audience), but the washing up and the ironing need to be done and the young carer’s brother has spilt his drink over the sofa.
- The young carer takes their younger sibling to school and sees his/her friends walking in a group.
- At school the young carer falls asleep in class. The teacher tells the young carer that they should go to bed earlier and not watch so much TV.
- A teacher asks why the young carer has not done their homework, in front of the class.

Use these storylines, characters, settings and questions to start you off and then adapt your own.

Do leave time to de-brief and discuss what the actors and audience have learnt about being a young carer or another member of the family.



33.5 Young carers give top tips for their peers

At a workshop about “respect” the National Young Carers Forum came up with the following messages for their peers:

- Respect my silence; I’ll talk when I’m ready.
- Be a good listener.
- Don’t tell everyone my life story, I tell you things in confidence.
- Don’t think I’m unreliable, just understand I have commitments.
- Don’t treat me as any different because just being with friends is an escape.
- Don’t feel awkward around me. This is my life and I’m fine with it.
- Try and work around my plans as I can be very busy at home.
- Be supportive and cheerful.
- Accept me for who I am.
- Do not judge me or my family.

You can also find these messages on postcards at www.youngcarer.com/Includetraining.