

Young Carers and School

The
Children's
Society

No child
should feel
alone

During 20 years of consulting with young carers, we have consistently been told about the particular challenges and demands that impact on their capacity to enjoy and achieve at school. Research shows that:

- As many as **1 in 12** secondary school-aged children could be young carers. That is two in every class (BBC 2010).
- **27%** of young carers (aged 11–15) miss school or experience educational difficulties. This figure is 40% where children care for a relative with drug or alcohol problems (Dearden & Becker 2004).
- Young carers have **significantly lower attainment** at GCSE level – the difference between nine B's and nine C's (The Children's Society, Hidden from View, 2013).
- Young carers are **more likely** than the national average not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19 (The Children's Society, Hidden from View, 2013).
- A **quarter** of young carers said they were bullied at school because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).

Young carer's experiences:

'For me I had specific teachers in my school. If there was a time that I felt down or stressed I would go to them and speak to them about how I am feeling, which helped quite a lot.'

'Ensure teachers are offered training on young carers and disability issues both at university and on inset days.'

'Thank you for starting a young carers group in our school and setting an example to others on how to treat us.'

'You need to teach people [schools] more about young carers and what we go through. We get bullied for it and it's not right.'

'Please take into consideration that there are young carers at school you don't know about.'

'Understanding that schools are supportive can mean the difference between attending or not. They [school] care more about our uniform and homework than our education.'

A '**young carer**' is defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as: '...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person.'

This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances.

The **key principle** is that: 'Children should not undertake inappropriate or excessive caring roles that may have an impact on their development. A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical well-being and their prospects in education and life.'

The **Children and Families Act 2014** amended the Children Act to make it easier for young carers to get an assessment of their needs and to introduce 'whole family' approaches to assessment and support. Local authorities must offer an assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care.

Children Act 1989: Section 17ZA 1(a) [inserted by section 96 Children and Families Act 2014] If any child or young person is identified as carrying out a caring role, this should result in an offer of a needs assessment for the adult requiring care and support, and the local authority must consider whether to undertake a young carer's needs assessment under the Children Act 1989. Refer to our 'Supporting Young Carers and their families' introductory booklet for more information.

Although young carers need extra support they are no more likely to find it from statutory agencies than other children (The Children's Society Hidden from View, 2013).

Ofsted Common Inspection Framework 2015: 'In making judgements, inspectors will pay particular attention to the outcomes for young carers.'

Young Carers in Schools is a free England-wide initiative that makes it as easy as possible for schools to support young carers, and awards good practice.

Run jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, the Young Carers in Schools Programme¹ works across England to share good practice, provides relevant tools and training, and celebrates the great outcomes that many schools achieve for young carers.

Young Carers in Schools offers:

- **Young Carers in Schools Award** – These awards enable schools to gain recognition from several leading charities for effective practice and provide free webinars unpicking different criteria in the award, to make raising outcomes and getting recognition for your school as easy as possible.
- **Young Carers in Schools: A step-by-step Guide for School Leaders, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff** – This guide makes it as easy as possible to identify and support young carers, and the resource includes templates, tools and guidance.
- **Professional Development Events** – These half-day events bring schools and those working with them together to tackle common challenges, share good practice and gain expertise.
- **A termly eNewsletter** – This spotlights good practice, highlights relevant policy developments and updates, and lists key dates from the programme.

Schools who have achieved their young carers in schools award have found increased levels of identification of young carers within their school, increased well-being and confidence of young carers, and increased attendance and attainment.

Youngcarersinschools.com

Support

The Children's Society (2016) Supporting Young Carers and their Families resource sets out key legislation and best practice guidance. Further resources are available from the Include Programme website. **youngcarer.com**

A School Nurse Young Carers Pathway **gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299270/Young_Carers_pathway_Interactive_FINAL.pdf** helps to guide school nurses to the right support for young carers, raise awareness of young carers and provide advice and guidance to school nurses. **youngcarer.com/resources/schools-resources/school-nurse**

The Kids Time Foundation 'Who Cares?' Project provides a fully comprehensive kit of materials and a support system for teachers and students. Primary and secondary schools can use the kit to address the needs of young people affected by parental mental illness, as well as the attitudes of others towards them.

The Macmillan Cancer Support toolkit provides information and resources for teachers to support pupils to talk about cancer within schools.

National Aids Trust (NAT) has launched resources for schools. There is a new assembly plan on HIV in the UK today, teachers' lesson notes, case studies and worksheets.

¹youngcarersinschools.com