

Young Carers in Schools

Building, sharing and recognising young carers support in schools



“ I care for my 14-year-old sister who has cerebral palsy and learning difficulties. Sometimes she can wake up several times in the night, which means I lose out on sleep, and that makes me very tired for school. I’ve been a young carer since I was eight. ”

Ruth, 16

How many young carers are there in school?

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who provide or intend to provide care for another person. They often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.

It is likely that there will be many young carers at every school.

There are over 177,000 children in England and Wales taking on huge caring responsibilities at home, often for several hours each day, before and after school (UK Census, 2011).

In reality, this shocking figure is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg. Further research (BBC, 2010) suggests there could be 700,000 young carers in the UK. That means about one in 12 secondary aged pupils have caring responsibilities. Often, these children are caring for relatives without their teachers' knowledge and are slipping through the net.

This can have a significant impact on their attendance, attainment and wellbeing at school. Young carers have told us how it affects them, and research highlights the extent of the problem.

How will supporting young carers raise attendance, attainment and wellbeing?

Young carers experience particular challenges and demands that impact on their capacity to enjoy and achieve at school. Research shows that:

- 27% of young carers (aged 11–15) miss school or experience educational difficulties (40% where children care for a relative with drug or alcohol problems) (Dearden, C, Becker, S, 2004).
- A quarter of young carers said they were bullied at school because of their caring role (Carers Trust, 2013).
- They are more likely than the national average not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) between 16 and 19 (The Children's Society, 2013).
- 81% of young adult carers said their caring role makes them or had made them more stressed (Carers Trust, 2017).
- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (The Children's Society, 2013).

“I've had experience of using and working with lots of other programmes and I have found them not to be as supportive or as useful as the tools available through the Young Carers in Schools programme.”

Assistant Director of Inclusion,
Milthorpe School, York

What can your school do?

By taking part in the Young Carers in Schools programme, schools will be able to show that they are meeting the needs of a particularly vulnerable group of pupils (specifically mentioned in Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework, 2015).

Run jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, we are working to improve the identification and support of young carers in schools across England. This initiative has been funded by The Queen's Trust and Big Lottery Fund.

“As a young carer you often have many worries which can limit concentration.”

Young carer

Supporting Young Carers in Schools: A Step-by-step Guide for Leaders, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff – helping you step by step, this resource contains essential tools, templates and guidance. With a tool for each step, no school needs to start from scratch.

“Schools are perfectly placed to offer the support these children and young people need. ...Young Carers in Schools will act as an invaluable resource for schools in providing the right assistance to pupils as and when they need it.”

Children and Families Minister,
Edward Timpson

How does the programme equip schools to meet young carers' needs?

Through the programme, schools will have access to:

A baseline review – enabling you to prioritise what to do next, this tool contains helpful signposts to the programme materials most relevant and useful to you.

Webinars, videos and case studies – providing unmissable, expert advice from award-winning schools, unpicking hot topics, and highlighting key guidance on how to apply successfully for a Young Carers in Schools Award.

Termly eNewsletters – spotlighting key policy developments and new resources, and the very latest programme news.

Young Carers in Schools Award – enabling your school to gain recognition for effective practice from several leading charities.

What does Young Carers in Schools achieve?

72 award-winning schools reported dramatic impacts on attendance, achievement and confidence of pupils with caring responsibilities following their participating in the programme:

- 89% had identified more young carer in their schools, identifying almost 500 young carers in total.
- 60% had witnessed a positive impact on the achievement of young carers at their school.

How was Young Carers in Schools developed?

Following extensive consultation with schools, young carer services, local authorities and multi-academy trusts, and an initial pilot of the Award, the programme was rigorously tested by 94 schools across England in 2014.

Rolled out across England in April 2015, the programme is now hugely successful, engaging more than 700 education providers, awarding 109 schools for their good practice and reaching an estimated 1,400 sector professionals to date (February 2017). This tried and tested package consistently receives highly positive feedback from school leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff.

More about the partners

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

The Children's Society is a national charity that runs local services to support children and young people who are at risk of exploitation or harm, living in care, or let down by the systems meant to protect them.

How to get involved

Find out more and get involved by visiting <https://youngcarersinschools.com>

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