

# STEP ③

## Step 3: Securing Commitment of School Leaders



## Key information

Effective identification and support of young carers in schools requires the development of a whole school approach where young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support. It is therefore vital that your senior leadership team (SLT) and governing body understand young carer issues and are committed to meeting their needs.

This step is crucial not only to the development of provision that meets young carers' needs but also to ensuring that the SLT and governing body have the information and resources they need to fulfil their wider roles.



Introducing a Young Carers Senior Leadership Team Lead, and ensuring information is available to governors about young carers will help schools achieve the Bronze level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.

Having a named Young Carers Lead Governor in place who raises awareness and ensures policies and practices are inclusive of young carers will help schools achieve the Gold level of the Award.

## How does the identification and support of young carers form part of the wider role and responsibilities of the SLT and governing body?

The SLT and governing body are accountable for ensuring the school provides a highly cohesive learning environment which fosters equal opportunities and meets the diverse needs of the pupils at the school.

To fulfil this role effectively, the SLT and governing body should be aware that:

- Many pupils attending their school will have caring responsibilities.
- Young carers are a vulnerable and disadvantaged group, specifically mentioned in Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2015). As a result, these pupils will have specific needs to which the school must respond.



Research into the circumstances of over 1,000 young carers highlighted that only 4% of adult family members being looked after by young carers were in employment (Dearden and Becker, 2004). This highlights the significant number of young carers eligible for free school meals who would benefit from targeted support funded through the Pupil Premium.

Head teachers and school governing bodies are required to publish details online each year of how they are using the Pupil Premium and the impact it is having on pupil achievement. It will be important for them to show how the school is using this funding to meet the needs of eligible young carers.

## Why should schools have a Young Carers Senior Leadership Team Lead and a Young Carers Lead Governor?

It is crucial that the development and implementation of the school's provision for young carers is led at an SLT and governing body level so that:

- Young carers' needs are reflected in whole school planning and, where appropriate, the whole school improvement plan.
- The school has an inclusive environment where young carers and their families feel comfortable and safe to tell staff about their caring role and access support (NB stigma is a commonly cited reason for young carers keeping their caring role hidden.)
- There is appropriate timetabling of staff training and curriculum planning.
- Use of school resources such as the Pupil Premium funding, target young carers.
- All school staff know how to identify young carers so that, for example, the School Attendance Officer can recognise potential young carers when discussing attendance issues with pupils, office staff can identify a young carer when registering a late pupil and/or teachers notice signs that a pupil is a young carer (see Step 7: Raising awareness of school staff about young carers).

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**“ Once identified, young carers have become more confident to reach out for support. As a consequence, attendance has increased as have their school grades. ”**

Young Carers School  
Operational Lead

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- All staff know what action they can take within their everyday practice to support pupils with caring responsibilities, for example office staff pass on messages to pupils from a family member, when appropriate; and teaching staff are flexible, for example, around negotiating homework deadlines (see Step 6, Tool 1: Checklist of support young carers might need).
- There are appropriate protocols for sharing information between staff so the young carer does not have to repeat their story.
- Links are made with wider school policy to ensure alignment with the school's approach to meeting the needs of young carers and their families (see Step 5, Tool 3: Checklist of other principal documents which should reference young carers).

## Various tools accompany this Step to support you to raise the awareness and secure the commitment of your governing body and SLT:

- Tool 1: Young Carers Senior Leadership Team Lead duties checklist.
- Tool 2: Exemplar introductory letter to governors about young carers.
- Tool 3: Role and responsibilities of a governing body: ensuring effective provision for young carers and their families.
- Tool 4: Checklist to support governing bodies evaluating the effectiveness of their school's provision for young carers and their families.
- Tool 5: Targeting Pupil Premium support to young carers: Good practice examples.

You will also need to ensure that the SLT and governing body are familiar with the information about young carers issues contained in Step 1: Gaining an understanding about young carers.

The SLT may also want to look at Step 4: Introducing a Young Carers School Operational Lead. Step 4 provides further information about designating a member of staff who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school's provision for young carers and their families. Depending on its size and organisational structure, the school may want to incorporate this role at senior leadership level.

### References

- The BBC (2010), with assistance from The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, surveyed 4,029 pupils in ten secondary schools and found 337 had caring responsibilities.
- Dearden, C and Becker, S (2004), *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* (Carers UK and The Children's Society).
- Ofsted (2015), *Common Inspection Framework* (2015).



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