Welcome to the Connecting Young Carers quality award for schools. This resource has been designed to help your school become Young Carer Positive. This award builds and recognises Highland schools good practice in identifying and supporting their young carers. There are an estimated 29,000 young carers in Scotland - 4% of the child population (aged 4-15)*. For many, school is a safe place where young carers are nurtured, can be with friends and can achieve. School is ideally placed to identify and support young carers allowing them to reach their full educational and personal potential. Increased awareness, knowledge and identification of young carers in your school will ensure that your young carers remain a priority and are supported to attain.

2011 census

* For Highlands Children Outcomes

- Children and young people receive the help and support they need to optimise their well-being at every stage.
- Children and young people get the best start in life and enjoy positive, rewarding experiences growing up.
- Children and young people are equipped with the skills, confidence and self-esteem to progress successfully in their learning and development.
- Children and young people are supported to achieve their potential in all areas of development.
Why is this important to my school?

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 legislates that the local authority will be duty bound to recognise and prepare a Young Carer Statement that summarises the needs and actions that should be taken to address any barriers that young carers face.

This award will ensure that schools and staff are prepared and confident to deliver this within the current Highland framework via Child Plans or pastoral notes depending on need. This award will aid your school in embedding a culture that is young carer positive, ensure young carer’s needs are addressed, that they are not at a disadvantage in their education and help build schools and pupils capacity to support young carers.

Who completes this award?

The award is for school staff to complete however we would encourage as much collaboration with pupils and families as possible.

How do I get my school involved?

Schools contact Connecting Young Carers to apply to take part in the award. Schools can apply at any time in the school year.

Connecting Young Carers will provide schools with both paper and e-mail copies of the guidance and evidence submitting forms.

The award will consist of three components - Seen, Heard and Supported with a final case study to complete the awards. There are 15 areas we ask schools to provide evidence for. All sections must be completed in order to be considered for the quality mark.

Schools will be supported by the Schools Liaison Worker who will be available to offer advice to complete the award. The Schools Liaison Worker will also be available to assist with awareness raising amongst staff and pupils and providing resources such as video links, case studies and useful information.

The school can submit their evidence by e-mail or hard copy. Modules can be submitted one at a time in order to gain feedback, or all three can be submitted at the end.

There is no current timescale for completion however we would recommend up to six months to complete.

Once all pieces of supporting evidence have been submitted, the completed folder will be reviewed by a panel who will make a decision in regards to awarding a quality mark to the school. If the panel feels there is insufficient evidence in any of the sections your school will be advised and supported to address any gaps in evidence.

Evidence can take many forms, from a policy, newsletter, minutes of meetings, poster campaign. We encourage schools to be as creative as possible.

Does this work in both Secondary and Primary schools?

The award can be delivered in both primary and secondary schools. Smaller primary schools may prefer to partner together in their local clusters to share practice and resources.

What will my school gain from this?

By the end of this award your school will be recognised as ‘Young Carers Positive’ and receive a quality mark that can be displayed on all school literature. The award lasts for the duration of three years. Your school will be able to demonstrate

- Increased Staff capacity to identify and support their young carers
- Increase in staff and pupils knowledge and awareness of young carers
- You have created an environment where young carers and families feel comfortable coming forward
- You have contributed towards removing some of the stigma associated with caring
- Young carers report Increased attainment , achievement and attendance within the school
- Young carers report increased wellbeing
- Increased engagement from families
- Young carers are empowered to help shape their support and affect change
The Pupil Equity Fund & Young Carers

Targeting the pupil equity fund to support young carers in your school can improve educational and health outcomes. Although the Pupil Equity Fund is allocated on the basis of free school meal eligibility, Head teachers may use their professional judgement to bring additional children in to targeted interventions.

Young carers are identified in the Highland Risk Matrix as one of the pupil groups who may be at risk of under attaining, therefore they should be considered when proposals are put together for Pupil Equity Funding resources and interventions, especially if they fall into other indicators of risk including SIMD, school absence and free school meal entitlement which is quite common across the young carer group.

Due to the demands of caring or the stress associated with living with a family member who either has a disability, long term health condition, experiences mental ill health or issues with substance misuse, young carers can often encounter barriers to their learning. These can include low attainment, social isolation, school absence and issues around their own health and wellbeing. Such impacts can seriously affect a pupil’s future, wellbeing and life chances. Preventative and creative uses of the Pupil Equity Fund can mitigate some of the inequalities and barriers they may face and close the attainment gap.

Embedding good practice by identifying young carers and encouraging families to engage will ensure that schools are better able to accurately design and implement interventions that will benefit young people in caring roles.

The school will be able to demonstrate that young carers and their needs are considered when shaping school services.

Examples of using the Pupil Equity Fund

Specific interventions for young carers.

Where a school has identified a considerable or particular need amongst their young carers they may wish to focus on delivering a specific programme or project that addresses their wellbeing or educational attainment

- Targeted numeracy or literacy programmes – homework clubs or additional study sessions to ensure young carers don’t fall behind
- Wellbeing programmes or nurture groups to increase resilience, confidence, coping skills or building positive friendships
- Health information or practical skills delivered to young carers and/or their families such as
  - Practical First Aid Skills, mental health awareness, dealing with an emergency, healthy eating etc...
  - Input from other Third Sector, condition specific health organisations or partner agencies delivering relevant information and training for young people and/or families
  - Promote and develop opportunities through various culture, leisure, and health and wellbeing initiatives, either delivered by school staff, third sector or other youth agencies
- Creative arts projects, issue based or otherwise that develops creative skills, emotional literacy and confidence.
- Peer mentoring to support those most at risk of not achieving – senior school pupils matched with younger pupils.
- Additional counselling for young carers in crisis.

Included

Many young carers report that they do not always want to be singled out as a separate group. Additionally some pupils in caring roles and their families may not acknowledge the extent of the caring situation yet may still be of concern in regards to achieving and attainment.

Instead young carers say they value being included with their peers and the opportunity to participate as much as possible in school life, both educationally and socially.

It may be more appropriate to ensure young carers at risk of underperforming benefit from and are included in

- Targeted numeracy and literacy interventions
- Health and wellbeing initiatives

This approach would promote inclusion of young carers with their peers and encourage positive participation in the school environment. Many health and wellbeing interventions would also serve as an opportunity for respite for some young carers.

Collaboration

Identifying and supporting young carers can present a challenge when spread across a particular geographic area. Collaborative working across Associated Schools Groups (ASGs) can be a cost effective and sustainable way of building capacity within schools and communities, ensuring young carers are enabled to achieve their full potential. Sharing of good practice, successful interventions and maximizing of resources across ASG’s will ensure that staff have confidence in dealing with young carer issues and would also ensure more young carers are able to benefit.

Families and young carers as stakeholders

In line with the Pupil Equity Fund national guidance, parents and pupils should be involved in the planning and shaping of services and initiatives. This presents schools with the opportunity to consult with both young carers and families about what is the best way forward to engage families and support children that are carrying out a caring role.
**Outcomes:**

- School and staff will be able to identify young carers.
- Young carers will feel confident about approaching their school and identifying as a young carer.
- All pupils will be knowledgeable and supportive of young carers.
- The school will embed a culture of good practice where young carers are consistently on the agenda and become a topic at the forefront of the school environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
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<th>BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>Schools are able to demonstrate that they have identified the young carers in their schools and maintain accurate and up to date records.</td>
<td>1.1 Young Carers are marked on SEEMiS accompanied by relevant pastoral notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>A designated member of staff is appointed to act as point of contact for young carers, families and young carer projects. Designated member of staff will be knowledgeable about young carer issues.</td>
<td>1.2 A designated member of staff is appointed to liaise with young carers and their local young carer project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>All staff are aware of young carer’s issues and the barriers they face.</td>
<td>1.3 Guidance and senior management staff participate in young carer awareness training, staff attend a relevant conference, provide their own internal staff training, staff read relevant legislation, implementation of a young carers policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>All pupils are continually educated, informed and involved with raising awareness about young carers.</td>
<td>1.4 PSE lessons, assemblies, noticeboards, newsletters, information on school website, information on school social media, letters home, lesson plan, videos showed, presentations shown, statement from a pupil (not necessarily a young carer) photo of a group work session, examples of posters made by young people, schools fundraising days, information day for parents and pupils, enrolment form, online questionnaire for pupils. Information delivered to pupils should be continually updated and visible for pupils.</td>
</tr>
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**CRITERIA**

- **1.5**
  - The wider curriculum includes continued education and lessons that address young carers'. Information about young carers is incorporated throughout health, wellbeing and other relevant subject lessons. Use opportunities within health and wellbeing lessons to highlight young carers, when discussing disability, substance misuse, and mental health. Can be evidenced in lesson plans, lesson presentations, specific subject projects etc.  
  - Young carers remain at the forefront of the school environment. Remove any stigma that may surround caring.

- **1.6**
  - Young carers have the opportunity to identify themselves in a safe and confidential environment  
  - Young carers will recognise that their school is young carer positive and feel confident to identify and seek support.
Young carers will report increased wellbeing

Pupils will be supported to address barriers to their learning, allowing them to thrive and

Heard
Outcomes:
• Young carers will report increased wellbeing
• Young carers will become proactive in shaping the support they require in school
• Young carers will report that they are regularly consulted and feel included in their school

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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Young carers are proactively and continuously consulted.</td>
<td>Young carers will feel included in any discussions about how best to represent and support them.</td>
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<td>Young carers have the opportunity to voice any concerns or thoughts they may have in regards to their school environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Families are consulted about how best to support their children. The school demonstrates a non-judgmental approach towards parents, incorporating a whole family approach to supporting young carers.</td>
<td>Families will be included around the support their young people may require.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examples of how the school is disability friendly, makes adjustments for parent/guardians affected by disability or illness. How is this communicated to families?</td>
<td>Families will feel more confident about approaching and engaging with school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Young carers are represented throughout school matters. Young carers are positively involved in shaping schools policy and support for young carers.</td>
<td>Young carers and the issues they face are embedded within school culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young forum minutes, statement from young carers, statement from other pupils, young carers contribute to schools newsletters, supported to give talks to peers or staff. Young carers are encouraged to participate with Highland Youth Parliament.</td>
<td>All pupils will have an understanding of young carers and seek to address any issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young carers are encouraged to participate in positive activities and empowered to affect change.</td>
<td>Young carers are given the opportunity to access relevant health and wellbeing information and informed about social opportunities available to them.</td>
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CRITERIA POSSIBLE EVIDENCE BENEFITS
2.1 Minutes of meetings with young carers, 1:1 sessions with young carers, feedback forms from young carers, statements from young carers, art project, video project, any evidence demonstrating consultation with young carers. Please be creative.

Evidence can take the form of digital copies of any paperwork, photos, presentations, videos, posters, statement from pupils. Please be creative in how you record your evidence.

Supported
Outcomes:
• Pupils will be supported to address barriers to their learning, allowing them to thrive and reach their full potential
• Improved attendance, attainment and achievement within your school
• Young carers and families will feel confident approaching schools to disclose their caring situation
• Young carers report improved well-being

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<td>3.1</td>
<td>Young Carers needs are assessed. Young Carer Statements are produced by the relevant responsible authority.</td>
<td>Meet the legal requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Young carer’s needs are assessed and met with a Form 1 or where young carers require a more detailed plan these can be summarised on a Child’s Plan. Review all young carers who currently have a Child’s Plan and ensure that the caring role has been noted.</td>
<td>Young carers report improved wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Young Carers are given the opportunity to be supported in their school in a group environment. This does not have to be a specific young carer group. Can take the form of a nurture group, resilience boosting activities or inclusion in whole school initiatives.</td>
<td>Young carers report improved wellbeing.</td>
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<td>A young carer drop in, young carer specific nurture group, including young carers in current health and wellbeing initiatives, peer led support group, peer mentoring group, specific project work, 1:1 meet ups for some young carers. How this is achieved will be different in every school and will depend on what young carers have identified as most suitable for them.</td>
<td>Creation of peer support networks.</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>Young carers have access to relevant health and wellbeing information and informed about social opportunities available to them.</td>
<td>Provide a space for young carers to thrive.</td>
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<td>School regularly distributes information that is useful to young carers, condition specific information. An information board, a young carer is supported to access break funding.</td>
<td>Children and Young people receive the help and support they need to optimise their wellbeing at every stage.</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>Young Carers supported to access universal and community services.</td>
<td>Young carers report increased wellbeing.</td>
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<td>Where appropriate young carers are referred for additional support to Children’s Service Workers, Primary Mental Health Services. Young carers supported to participate in current school and youth groups. Transport policy that ensures young carers are catered for.</td>
<td>Young carers are included with their peers.</td>
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<td>Young Carers supported to access their local young carer project if they wish. Not all young carers will wish to be part of a young Carers project however ensuring they have informed choice is important.</td>
<td>Opportunities to meet other Young Carers. Participate in further positive activities.</td>
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<td>Referrals to Connecting Young Carers or another local young carer project. Leaflets and newsletters made available. Private space for young carer’s workers to meet young people if required.</td>
<td>Access to break funding where young carers can direct their own respite.</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>Signposting families and young carers to other relevant and useful agencies that will benefit them.</td>
<td>Schools demonstrating whole family approach. Families are empowered and informed to seek further support if required.</td>
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<td>Hold condition specific information for families, other support agencies for families, information newsletters for families.</td>
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Evidence

Seen

Outcomes:
- School and staff will be able to identify young carers,
- Young carers will be confident about approaching their school and identifying as young carers,
- All pupils will be knowledgeable about young carers,
- The school will embed a culture of good practice where young carers are consistently on the agenda and become a regular topic.

When submitting evidence please write in the relevant evidence box what you are submitting as evidence, also please number any attachments ie pictures/statements with the relevant number eg. 1.3 statement from staff member.

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Evidence

Heard

Outcomes:
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- Young carers will become proactive in shaping the support they require in school
- Young carers will report that they are regularly consulted and feel included in their school

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**Supported**

Outcomes:

- Pupils will be supported to address barriers to their learning, allowing them to thrive and reach their full potential.
- Improved attendance, attainment and achievement within your school.
- Young carers and families will feel confident approaching schools to disclose their caring situation.
- Young carers report improved well-being.

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“If information about young carers and disability issues were included in PSE lessons that would help people understand.”

“It helps to be able to call home during breaks to check my mum’s ok.”

Please contact a member of the team on 01463 723563 youngcarers@connectingcarers.org.uk