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(Also available at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers))

## ***Introduction***

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This guide has been produced by the West Sussex Young Carers Team to ensure that School Leadership Teams and School Governors in the County have access to relevant information and advice in order to provide quality support for young carers within their educational setting.

School leadership teams should be aware that 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. Subsection 12 of the Care Act 2014 places a requirement of Local Authorities to monitor the numbers of young carers in their Authority. Schools have a pivotal role to play in assisting with this.

The Common Inspection Framework published in 2015 sets out how Ofsted inspects maintained schools and academies, and includes Young Carers as a group that inspectors will pay particular attention to when observing how well a school helps children and learners to make progress and fulfil their potential. Where appropriate, by using a small proportion of the Pupil Premium to support young carers, schools can mitigate some of the inequalities and barriers that young carers face, raise pupil attainment, and improve the life chances for this significant and vulnerable group.

The guide is designed to be a starting point for schools wishing to establish or update their policy and procedures for supporting young carers. It contains information about the needs of young carers, a model which could be used to set up a framework for support, checklists for school leadership teams and governors, appointing a school lead for young carers, staff training and lesson/assembly ideas.

The West Sussex Young Carer's team have also produced a booklet for pastoral and support staff within schools, which offers practical advice and guidance for supporting young carers within school and should be used alongside this guide.

### ***1. Young carer definition***

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A young carer is a young person under the age of 18 whose life is affected by the care needs of another person, who may have any disability or long-term illness. This could be anybody with a physical or learning disability, long term physical illness, mental health problem, someone who misuses drugs or alcohol, has HIV/Aids, or is elderly and frail.

The care they provide could be personal, practical or emotional. The person they care for is usually someone they live with and could be a parent, sibling, grandparent or other relative.

Young carers provide, or help to provide regular or continuing care and emotional support to that person and take on a level of responsibility usually associated with an adult.

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.

## 2. School issues for YCs, facts and figures

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In October 2012, Edward Timpson, the minister for Children and families said:

*"Schools have a key role in identifying and supporting all young carers. We look to schools to create a supportive environment that responds to each child's personal circumstances. It is important that head teachers and governors are allowed the necessary local freedom to exercise their welfare responsibilities in the most appropriate way. Ofsted take particular interest in the experiences of more vulnerable children, including young carers, during inspections."* (Hansard, 2012).

*"Schools have a key role in identifying and supporting young carers. We must ensure that every child has the opportunity to meet their full potential".* (Department of Education, 2013)

### Some facts and figures:

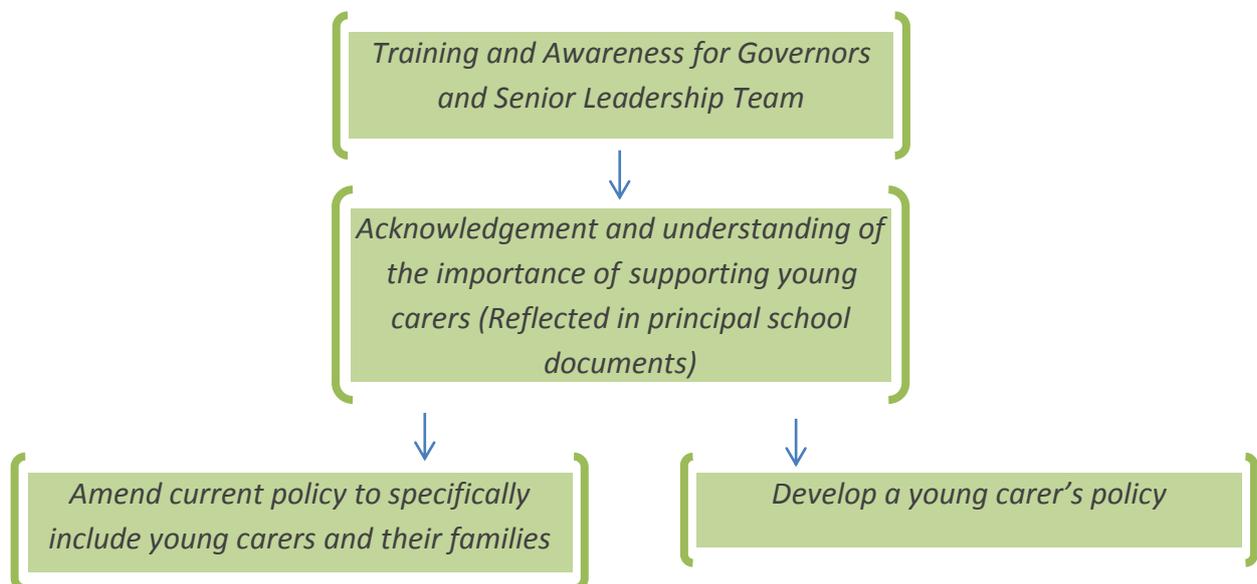
- **27%** of young carers (secondary age) experience educational difficulties or miss school, this rises to **40%** where pupils are caring for someone who misuses drugs or alcohol.
- **68%** of young carers experience bullying at school
- **39%** said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.
- Case Study: Oxfordshire County Council mapped attainment at Key Stage 4. In 2009, before the school started an initiative to support young carers, **only 13.5% achieved 5 GCSE A\* - C grades**. In 2012, this had risen to 40%.
- **One in 12** young carers is caring for more than **15 hours per week**. Around **one in 20** misses school because of their caring responsibilities.
- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
- Young carers aged between 16 and 18 are twice as likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Audit commission 2010)
- Experience shows us that whatever the caring role a young person is taking on, it is likely that while a young carer is at school or college, they will be anxious about what is happening at home and that this can affect their ability to learn and succeed.

### 3. Model for setting up a Framework of support – Policy

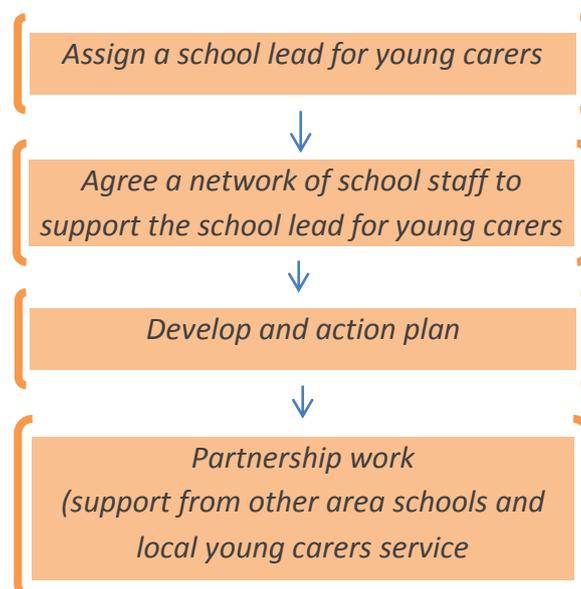
Supporting Young Carers in School: An Introduction for Primary and Secondary School Staff, (Carer's Trust, 2013). This guidance suggests a model for a framework of support and a model for working with young carers in school. This enables schools to look at the resources and support they already have to offer young carers and to ensure that this is developed in to a robust and realistic policy.

#### Setting up a framework of support: a model

##### Phase 1: Sign up and vision



##### Phase 2: Introduce a School Lead and Support Structure

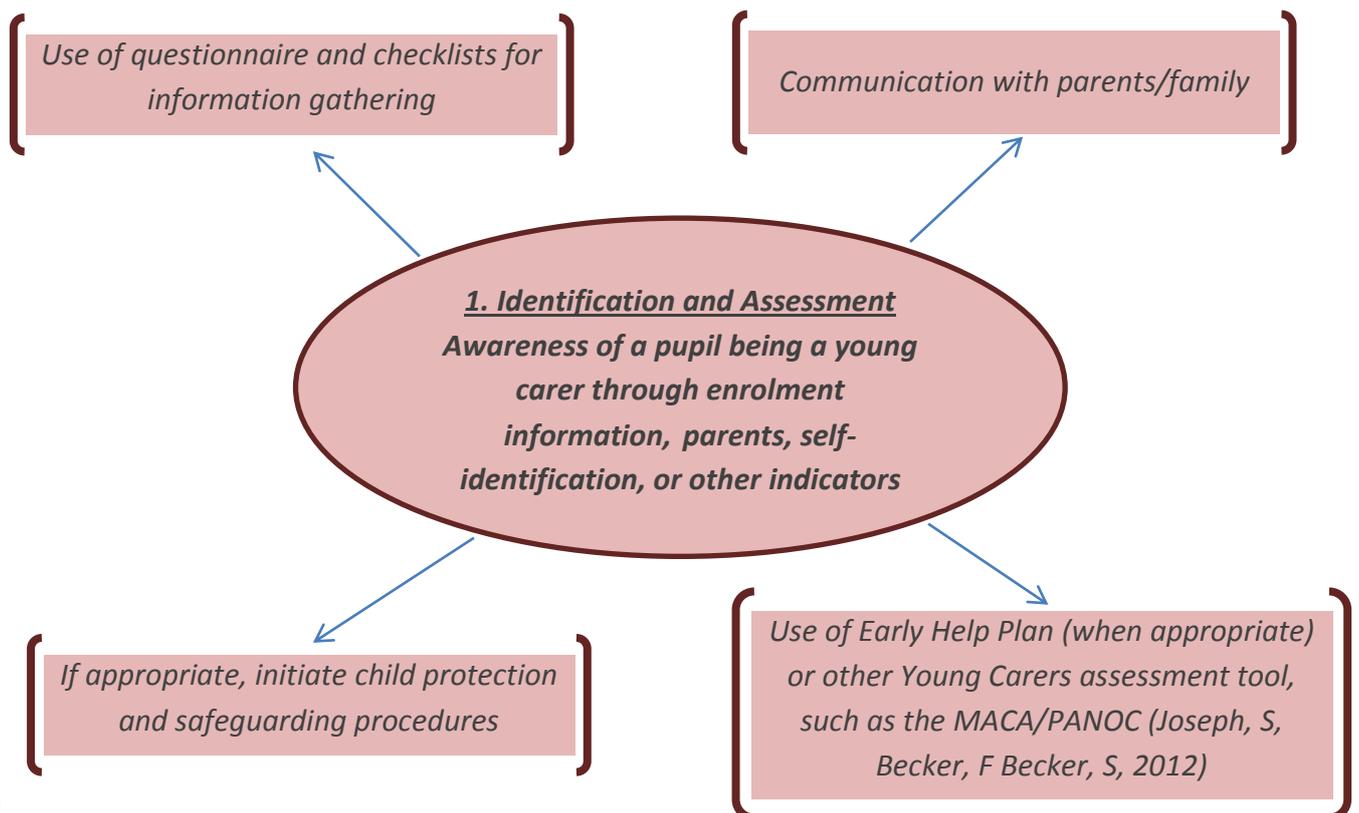


### Phase 3: Awareness and support systems



### Working with Young Carers: a model

### Phase 4: Identification and support of young carers



School Lead for young carers/personal tutor

Young Carers Service

**2. Establishing involvement of staff and other professionals as appropriate**

Team around the child (when appropriate)

Lead Professional (when appropriate)

**3. Support**  
Use a multi-agency approach, for example with young carers' service, counselling service, education welfare, educational psychology or careers service. Support for the whole family to consider parent/family needs, including health and social care needs and parenting support.

Parent support advisers

Adult Services

Health Services

Adult Carer's Services

Respite care for the family

Personalised plan

Telephone access

Young Carer Card

Emergency or crisis plan

Regular review of attendance and attainment and implement support

Homework/exam support

Transport support

Staff to talk to/Counselling

Peer support group and After School Clubs

Support with transition to secondary school/college/university

**Be mindful that  
Pupils and  
Family's situations  
may change  
rapidly**

***Phase 5: Monitoring and revising of policy, provision and action plans***

On-going formal and informal monitoring is important. It may be necessary to re-visit any of the above phases and reviews of policies should be embedded in senior leadership and Governors meetings.

See checklists for School Governors and Leadership Teams – sections 4 and 5.

## 4. How can school governors help?

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

### **Checklist for Governors**

#### **Management**

Has the school begun to identify young carers?

Yes	No	Notes:

Has a school lead has been identified?

Yes	No	Notes:

Does the school have adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL, etc?

Yes	No	Notes:

Points to consider:

- 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?

#### **Policy**

Do school policies reference the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers?

Yes	No	Notes:

Do all relevant documents (Self Evaluation Form (SEF), Prospectus, School Profile, etc.) show reference to groups of vulnerable pupils, including young carers?

Yes	No	Notes:

Points to consider:

- 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
- Are the needs of and provision for young carers expressed in other major school documents?

### Provision

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.

Yes	No	Notes:

Young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.

Yes	No	Notes:

The school is supporting the particular and identified needs of young carers with a whole-school approach.

Yes	No	Notes:

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.

Yes	No	Notes:

Points to consider:

- Is the school taking steps to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully involved in school life and activities?

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- b) To be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating the support they need and liaising with other agencies as appropriate.”

It is recommended for the School Lead to pull together a small team of appropriate staff members to support them with this role.

There is further guidance about the role of the school lead at:

**[www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce\\_user\\_files/Resources/Professional/school\\_lead\\_exemplar\\_2012.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/Professional/school_lead_exemplar_2012.pdf)**

An exemplar job description is included in Appendix 1 of this booklet

## ***7. Lessons and Assemblies***

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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 curriculum.

### **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.

As well as the suggestions in Appendix 2 of this booklet there are many ideas for lessons and assemblies which will help to raise awareness of disability/illness and young carers at:

<http://static.carers.org/files/33-raising-awareness-amongst-all-pupils-5905.pdf>

## 8. Staff Training, Awareness and Further Information

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There are 2 online training modules which are ideal for ensuring that all staff in schools have a good understanding of the needs of young carers:-

- 1) Part of a resource from '**Healthy Schools**', which focusses on supporting young carers in the school environment. The module is suitable for both primary and secondary school staff and can be accessed here:  
<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/Young-Carers-Web-Pub-v13/player.html>
  
  - 2) '**Young Carer Aware**' is an e-learning module aimed at all professionals who may come into contact with young carers in West Sussex. This is currently available through the West Sussex Young Carers Team via the West Sussex Learning and Development Gateway (WSSCC). <http://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/cpd> (Search for 'Young Carer Aware' and select 'Online Learning' under event type.
  
  - 3) '**Identifying and Supporting Young Carers in School**' – a learning resource for staff and students produced by West Sussex Young Carers Service. This resource provides top tips, advice, guidance and training for school staff, in addition to lesson plans.
- ➔ Further information about the support that West Sussex Young Carer's Team offers and how to access our service is available at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers)
  
  - ➔ The current Young Carer's Strategy for West Sussex can be found at the above web address
  
  - ➔ There is an additional resource produced by West Sussex Young Carers – A booklet aimed at staff in a Pastoral or Support role. This gives practical advice and ideas for supporting young carers in school. Copies can be requested from the team by emailing [youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk)

## 9. References

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- **Hidden From View: The Experiences of Young Carers in England. (The Children's Society 2013)**  
[http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report\\_hidden-from-view\\_young-carers\\_final.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report_hidden-from-view_young-carers_final.pdf)
- **Supporting Young Carers in School: An Introduction for Primary and Secondary School Staff. (Carer's Trust 2013)**  
<http://static.carers.org/files/supporting-young-carers-in-schools-booklet-6860.pdf>
- **Care Act 2014**  
<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/care.html>
- **School Lead for Young Carers and their Families: An exemplar job description. (The Children's Society 2012)**  
[www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce\\_user\\_files/Resources/Professional/school\\_lead\\_exemplar\\_2012.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/Professional/school_lead_exemplar_2012.pdf)
- **Supporting young carers: A resource for schools. (Original publication by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society, 2010 – updated 2011.)** <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/schools-resource-pack,6282,PR.html>
- **Healthy Schools e-learning module**  
<http://static.carers.org/e-learning/>

## Appendix 1

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### **School Lead for Young Carers and their Families: an exemplar job description**

Please read in conjunction with the following information - i) Supporting Young Carers: A resource for Schools @ [www.carers.org/professionals](http://www.carers.org/professionals) , ii) The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Guidance: Delivering Every Child Matters for Young Carers, iii) [www.youngcarers.com](http://www.youngcarers.com)

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **Leadership, management and strategic development**

As an active member of the school Leadership Team you will:

- Ensure whole school commitment in meeting the needs of young carers so that they are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school
- Ensure the Head Teacher and Governing Body are fully informed about the strengths and areas for improvement in the teaching and learning of young carers ensuring that staffing and resource needs are highlighted
- Lead, manage and develop whole school policy and practice with young carers and a clear action plan
- Monitor the effectiveness of relevant existing policies such as anti-bullying and review them on a regular basis to ensure that the needs of young carers are recognised and met within them
- Participate fully in a whole school evaluation of the various barriers to learning faced by young carers in different areas of their lives
- Monitor school practice and evaluate its impact on the well-being of all young carers. Report strengths, weaknesses and recommendations to the Senior Leadership team for inclusion in the school development plan
- 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

## **Ensure systems are in place to identify young carers**

- Offer support to the young person and their family during the transition process, with sharing information with their new school/College Lead for young carers and their families
- Use and evaluate data effectively to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers. Highlight barriers to achievement such as low attendance rates, issues with attitudes to well-being, learning, and behaviour etc. and work with appropriate colleagues to address these

## **Identifying young carers**

- Support colleagues to understand the reasons why young carers and their families may be reluctant to self-identify
- Put in place systems and appropriate opportunities for young carers and their families to identify themselves
- Help develop a school ethos where young carers and their families feel safe and able to self-identify
- Encourage young carers to self-identify, by paying due regard to confidentiality, their right to privacy and the sharing of information when appropriate
- Identify through the school enrolment process for new pupil, whether:
  1. The pupil has parents or other family members who have disabilities or other long term physical or mental health problems?
  2. The pupil helps to look after them (either practically or emotionally) and what impact this has on his/her education
- Ensure that the needs of young carers are appropriately assessed. Be that in school – perhaps by using an Early Help Plan – or by other agencies if deemed more appropriate

## **Teaching and learning in relation to all pupils**

- Use relevant aspects of the curriculum (The National Healthy School Programme, SEAL, PHSCE, RRR etc.) to encourage positive approaches by all teachers and staff working with young carers
- Ensure the curriculum promotes a full understanding, acceptance of and respect for the issues such as caring, disability and impairment (e.g. ensure there is a range of books (including novels) with a young carers theme)

- Encourage the effective use of the PSHE curriculum to explore the roles and responsibilities of young carers and the impact these can have. Use opportunities such as PSHE lessons as vehicles to promote positive images of disability and challenge stereotypes

## **Professional Development**

- Support colleagues to understand and appreciate how SEAL relates to young carers and their families
- Ensure training on young carers' issues (including the needs of young carers from different groups such as sibling carers, those caring for parents with mental ill-health and refugee and asylum seeking families) is included in all staff inductions and incorporated into ongoing professional development (be aware that training sessions may raise issues for any staff who were young carers themselves)
- Keep up to date with national and local developments and with legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families. Inform staff of these developments as and when necessary
- Lead on, develop and enhance the practice of other staff by supporting them in recognising young carers and their needs
- Liaise with other staff such as school nurses, the Healthy Schools Coordinator, PSHE Coordinator, inclusion staff and other professionals working in the school

## **Pastoral support for pupils**

- Ensure that all pupils (and staff) are fully aware that there is an identified School Lead with special responsibility for young carers and how the support can be accessed
- Ensure pupils have access to staff to talk to and to understand their individual circumstances
- Encourage pupils to discuss any barriers they may face – e.g. around homework and extra-curricular/extended schools activities
- Investigate and use creative approaches such as peer mentoring and peer support groups to meet the needs of young carers
- Access support through outside agencies and professionals such as a local young carers' service

## **Supporting Disabled Parents**

- Evaluate how accessible the school is to parents who have mobility and communication difficulties. Put processes in place to address any barriers
- Be aware of the legal requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 and how it relates to school transport and disabled parents, disseminating this information as appropriate
- Advise on how young carers can communicate between home and school during school time e.g. discreet phone home card
- Encourage parents to discuss any barriers they may face and any additional help they may need in supporting their child so that they may engage fully in their child's education – e.g. around homework and extra-curricular/extended schools activities

## **Communication**

- Ensure that young carers and their families receive coordinated support by communicating effectively with internal and external support agencies – working in partnership where appropriate
- Ensure noticeboards display up to date information, additional support and resources for young carers and their families
- Advertise the contact details of the young carers service and other support agencies in the local area e.g. community noticeboard
- Provide translated materials or interpreters to involve parents who do not speak English in their child's education
- Be aware of the legal requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 and how it relates to communication with disabled parents, such as sending letters in audio format

## ***Appendix 2 – Resources for lessons and assembly***

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### **‘Identifying and Supporting Young Carers in School’ – a learning resource for staff and students:**

This is available to download from <http://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Page/7645>. The resource contains lesson plans for assembly and PSHE education, and lessons in Art, Music, English and Drama in both primary and secondary schools.

### **Lesson Ideas from Supporting Young Carers: A Resource for Schools:**

#### ***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](http://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](http://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](http://www.youngcarers.net) or

[www.youngcarer.com](http://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.

→ 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](http://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](http://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?



## Contacting us

 **01903 270300** Young Carers Service

 **[www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/youngcarers)**

 **[youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk)**



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