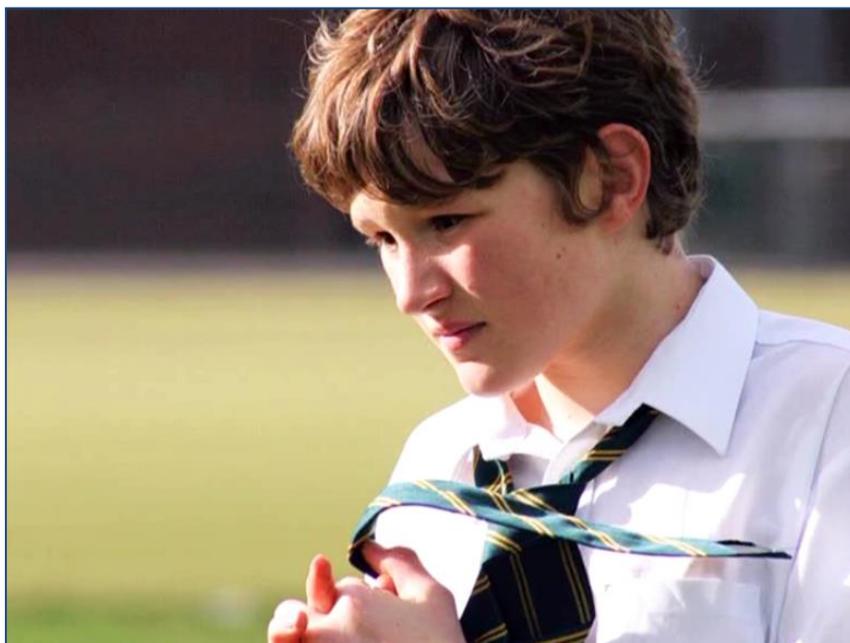


SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS IN SCHOOL

A MANUAL FOR SCHOOL LEADERS, TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF



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There are, on average, *two* young carers in every classroom in every school in the UK¹. One of those carers will be having difficulties in their education because of their home situation².

This manual is intended to assist all staff in schools in understanding young carer issues, and provides guidance and resources to identify and support pupils affected by these issues.

What is a young carer and what do they do?

A young carer is someone aged up to 18 who provides unpaid care for a family member or friend who has a long-term physical or mental health problem or disability, or a drug or alcohol dependency.

Some young carers are the main carers in the household; others supplement the caring undertaken by other members of the family. The caring tasks include:

- **Domestic tasks** (e.g. cooking, cleaning, shopping)
- **Personal care** (e.g. helping with mobility; washing; dressing; giving medicine)
- **Emotional support & supervision** (e.g. watching over someone; providing company and a 'listening ear')
- **Sibling care:** Looking after an ill or disabled sibling (or a non-disabled sibling where a ill or disabled parent is unable to provide this care)
- **Communication support** (e.g. interpreting; answering phone or door)
- **Financial management:** (e.g. budgeting; paying bills)
- **Self-care:** Looking after themselves, where a ill or disabled parent is unable to provide this care

Difficulties with relationships, roles, routine and income are more likely to occur when a family member has a disability or long-term illness. Whilst some young people cope very well in these circumstances, there are many who experience stress-related problems and who struggle in their learning as a result.

How many young carers are there?

The 2011 Census report stated there were over 166,000 young carers living in England (with 200,000 in the UK as a whole). However, significantly, the Census questions do not specify the range of conditions requiring care, such as mental illness and drug and alcohol dependency; so without these prompts, the results do not reflect these groups.

In 2010, the University of Nottingham conducted research on behalf of the BBC that estimated there are *at least* 700,000 young carers UK (14,000 of whom currently live in Surrey). The report estimated that 8% of secondary school students provide moderate to high levels of care¹. *We can therefore currently estimate that a minimum of 1 in 12 schoolchildren have significant caring responsibilities.*

30% of young carers are under 10 years of age².

To provide a context and point of comparison with the above figures:

- 2 million children in the UK live with at least one parent experiencing mental illness³
- 2.6 million children in the UK live with an adult who is a 'hazardous' drinker of alcohol⁴
- In 2007, Surrey had the highest levels of 'hazardous' drinking in England⁵
- 705,000 children in the UK live with an adult who is a 'harmful' or dependent drinker (i.e. alcoholic)⁴
- 335,000 children in the UK live with an adult who has a dependency upon illegal or prescription drugs⁴

Young carers are often hidden from view, at least at first sight. The caring they perform can take subtle, yet significant, forms (such as emotional support) that may even be unacknowledged within the family. Many carers may be unaware that support exists or fear having involvement with such services.

As a result, information on caring roles of young people is rarely volunteered and may even be denied upon enquiry. This can obviously make identifying carers amongst a school population a challenge, and so it is often more helpful to consider the *impact* upon a young person of living with an ill or disabled relative, rather than focusing upon a 'carer' label as such. The effects upon wellbeing and achievement are usually visible to school staff and can be a clearer signifier that support is required than what is or is not spoken about.

What is the impact upon their education?

More than two-thirds of young carers feel 'stressed' and 'depressed' because of their role.²

With support, being a young carer brings benefits, and many express pride in their role. Adversity can bring a family closer together. Young people who grow up taking care of a relative can develop life skills that ensure they are resourceful, independent individuals with emotional resilience – the qualities of all healthy adults.

These young people need to be supported towards this end, but without encouraging the continuation of caring roles that are inappropriate. Although a young carer may be appearing to cope, they may still need support. If a family would struggle to function without the young carer's involvement, it indicates that the young person is doing too much and that their parents need care provision from the statutory services.

Caring responsibilities can raise a number of barriers to learning for many young people. These barriers can manifest whilst a pupil is in infant school, and can persist into adulthood, restricting opportunities to access further and higher education, and employment.

- In a 2013 study, half of young carer reported that their caring role a negative effect on their school work⁶
- Young carers leave school with the equivalent of 9 GCSE grades lower than their peers who have no caring role⁶
- A 2000 study reported that a half of the carers surveyed had missed school because of their caring role and a quarter had left without any GCSEs⁷
- Young carers are up to 3 times more likely than non-carers to become NEET⁸

Consistent tracking and support of young carers is required throughout their education – ensuring that information on their needs is shared at every point of transition within and between schools and colleges.

For many young carers, problems with their education can manifest in these areas:

Attendance

Many young carers turn up for school late or miss whole days for a number of reasons related to their home circumstances: they are staying home to be close to the person they look after; they are experiencing stress-related illness; they have transportation difficulties*; or there is an established pattern of problems at school. Some also miss out on school trips and clubs.

*Surrey County Council, as the local education authority, can take parental disability into account when considering a school admission or a free transport application, if it assists a pupil's attendance, under their 'exceptions to policy'. Parents who are receiving maximum Working Tax Credit and children who are eligible for Free School Meals qualify under the policy as standard.

Achievement

Problems with school work can result from emotional stress or physical fatigue, leading to lack of concentration and inability to process information. Lack of time to complete homework or revise because of their caring responsibilities is also a common difficulty.

Relationships and behaviour

Some young carers have problems interacting with school staff and their fellow pupils. How they deal with stress varies widely – some may be withdrawn, and some may be disruptive. Some young carers challenge the authority of staff (a sign that they may be struggling with changing between their adult role at home and being a child again at school).

Home-School communication

Some parents with disabilities and health problems have difficulties in attending parent evenings or review meetings, or in reading standard letters and reports from the school, which reduces their positive involvement in their child's education.

Young carers are a specific group within the vulnerable pupil category; OFSTED recommend the identification and support of young carers as 'best practice' in schools, sixth form and FE colleges, making necessary adjustments where able.

Many of the issues experienced by young carers in their education fall within the bounds of two of the four new key OFSTED areas: *achievement*, and *behaviour and safety*. By supporting young carers, schools are also attending to duty to promote their *spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*.

Advice from OFSTED on best practice in supporting young carers can be found at:
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-young-carers>

For young carers, school can either be 'a sanctuary or a source of misery'⁸. For some, school is a means of escape from home life, where they can enjoy learning, see friends and be 'normal'; for others, school is a place where they feel isolated and unsupported (and sometimes even *punished* for having caring responsibilities). A 2010 survey found that over 50% of the young carers who responded felt that they had no support from their teachers, despite their being aware of their pupils' caring role. 39% of the respondents stated that none of their teachers were aware that they were carers⁹.

The awareness, understanding and response of teachers are key elements in determining how school is experienced by its pupils. A positive, empathetic school *culture* is crucial to supporting young carers.

How to identify and support young carers

“Schools have a key role. They are well-placed to identify young carers at an early age. Any teacher who has regular contact with a child should take a keen interest in their welfare. Schools cannot meet their obligation to support vulnerable children without being well-versed in this subject. And remember, that this is not only a moral obligation but a statutory one as well.”

Edward Timpson, MP and Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Education, speaking at the Young Carer Conference, London, 26th February 2013

The following is taken from the recommendations made by the Government in 2008¹⁰:

“Schools can help young carers in two ways:

Firstly by helping the family, if they are willing, to contact appropriate community care or adults’ services to provide more support to the cared-for person, thus reducing the need for the pupil to take on inappropriate caring responsibilities.

Secondly, by providing flexible and sensitive support to the young carer when their caring role is particularly stressful or making it hard for them to complete work on time.

In a genuine crisis, a school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made. The school should set a time limit for the absence and set some school work so the pupil does not fall far behind while at home. It may also be appropriate for a pupil whose close relative is in the final stages of terminal illness to take time off school to be with them.

Should the pupil’s absence be due to their caring for someone with a long term or recurring illness, this may indicate an inadequate level of support from community care/adults’ services. The family may welcome efforts to advocate on their behalf for better support arrangements to be in place for future emergencies. If the family is unwilling to discuss their support needs, that must be respected. The school should nevertheless consider and address the pupil’s welfare using their usual assessment procedures.

Schools should consider designating a member of staff to have responsibility for young carers. Pupils and parents should be made aware of what to expect if they contact this staff member, for instance through publicising a School Policy on young carers.”

Tips for School Support Staff

The provision of core support to parents from Adult Social Care Services, the Children with Disabilities Teams and the Mental Health Services is the most effective way to alleviate the caring role held by the children in the family. These teams have 'Carer's Champions' that can liaise with school staff and families (please refer to Appendix 1).

The *additional* involvement of Children's Services is required in cases of suspected neglect or abuse.

Making a referral to the local young carers service should also be considered, for supplementary support such as social activities with their peers (please refer to Appendix 2).

Carers that undertake regular and substantial care are entitled to an assessment from the core services to provide support for their needs. Carers under 16 years of age can receive a Carer's Assessment from Social Care teams, if the cared-for person has received a Community Care Assessment for their needs. Carers over 16 years of age can request a Carer's Assessment in their own right, even if the cared-for person has declined their own Community Care Assessment.

The support that follows on from Carer's Assessments can include Carers Direct Payments that can be used to fund leisure activities that provide a break from caring, as well as other uses (however, any replacement care worker costs or respite care costs must be covered by the cared-for person's budget).

The government recommendations on the previous page mention the provision of 'flexible and sensitive support'. Young carers need flexibility at times on such things as deadlines for assignments, and attendance during crises, but whilst they may be granted some concessions, they must still adhere to the 'school rules'. Indeed, such structure is a valuable form of support in itself for young people with unpredictable home lives. And so, assistance for vulnerable pupils is often a balance of flexibility *and* structure.

Many young carers do not realise that they are carers until they perceive the impact of their responsibilities upon their lives. Even if that impact causes significant discomfort or problems, many young people will not identify themselves as carers to others until they are offered help directly, and until they feel that they can trust that offer.

Therefore, the identification of carers by schools requires a proactive and consistent approach, by both formal and informal means; the promotion of a culture and structure of support to foster trust, followed by a process of asking questions with sensitivity.

Broadly, these are the stages for identification and support, which are given in detail from page 14, with related resources:

- **Structure**

- Assigning a young carer 'contact' within the staff team to co-ordinate support
- Establishing clear communication channels between the teaching and pastoral teams
- Establishing a record where carers can be registered and their progress can be tracked
- Providing regular INSET and CPD, to new and existing staff, on carer issues

- **Policy**

Creating a policy or charter detailing the various forms of practical and educational support available at school (including PSHE*; see pages 14-16)

- **Promotion**

Promoting this policy on regular basis, via various mediums, to families, pupils and staff

- **Enquiry**

Making enquiries to families, pupils and staff members

- **Consultation**

Consulting with families and pupils on their individual needs

*PSHE is a valuable form of support. Schools can use education to provide useful information to all pupils (60% will be carers at some point in their lifetime¹¹), and to challenge the stigma of problems such as mental illness and addiction (25% will experience mental health problems in adulthood¹²).

It is important for schools to 'normalise' the seeking of help and support. Providing lessons on the skills of emotional health and where to find help aids the resilience of both the young people and the staff. Increasing the understanding of such issues benefits school culture and reduces the isolation and bullying that many young carers experience – all facilitating higher achievement levels across the whole curriculum too.

A note on information sharing

The sharing of information on individual young carers is essential to provide the required support. Sometimes information can be kept 'hidden' within a file or within a team of pastoral workers, and not shared with classroom teachers and assistants – even when consent has been granted by the pupil. This may be intended to preserve privacy, but confidentiality that is too strict limits awareness and can prevent the right kind of support being provided by the right person at the right time.

When consent for information recording and sharing is given by the family (or a pupil that has the competency to provide consent), a confidentiality agreement normally allows the sharing of data within the school. Such consent should be re-confirmed when sharing with third-parties outside of the school (unless child protection measures are required).

With the sharing of information about young carers across the staff teams, only minimal details are required. It is good practice for a school to take a 'need-to-know' approach: if a caring role is negatively impacting upon a pupil's attendance, or their concentration, assignments, or behaviour, there are clear benefits in classroom teachers and assistants being informed of this circumstance.

For instance, if a teacher is simply aware that a child is a carer and is currently experiencing considerable stress from that situation, that awareness can lead to discrete and empathetic assistance.

Be mindful that family situations involving health problems (particularly mental illness) can fluctuate. There are often unpredictable changes for young carers at home, and so additional support within school needs to be flexible and reviewed regularly.

Please refer to your school's own data protection policy and procedures. Guidance on information sharing in schools is available from:

www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/strategy/integratedworking/a0072915/information-sharing

Bereaved young carers

"Death neither obeys the school timetable nor appears on it. It enters the classroom without knocking."

In losing a parent or sibling, a young carer will experience grief, just as any child would, but in addition, they may have anxieties that they failed in their role as carer, or feel a sense of loss of the responsibility itself.

When someone dies people react with varied and changeable feelings, including numbness, guilt, anger, sadness, fear and relief. They may experience physical symptoms, including fatigue, nausea and lack of concentration. With the death of a parent, the family may be dealing with financial difficulties and all the changes that may entail, as well as the inherent emotional challenges.

School can be a valuable part of the pupil's life during the period following the bereavement because of the consistent structure it offers. After consultation with the family, all staff should be made aware of the death and given any other significant information, to enable both support and a normal routine for the pupil upon their return. Informing classmates of the situation will help with this. For younger classmates, also informing their parents may help them to deal with any anxieties that may arise. To begin with, flexibility for the returning pupil on attendance and work load may be required.

The school should provide a good listener for the young person to talk to – perhaps a staff member chosen by them. The school can make a referral to a specialist support service if necessary, but this should not be a substitute for the continued availability of familiar people – many bereaved people do best with the help of those in their everyday environment.

In their Own Words

"Sometimes they're more focused on Richard getting the right results than seeing the whole picture. Because his marks have dropped as his father's condition has got worse." *Parent*

"I think they could listen better, there seems to be no communication within the school. Even though I was telling the Head of Year the other teachers were never aware of his situation." *Parent*

"They should talk about it more. Something not hidden. There are a lot of kids that do it but don't know that they are a carer." *Parent*

"The teachers need that understanding that he may want just five minutes out of class to get his head sorted. It's a lot of pressure and emotions for young kids that are going through so much anyway." *Parent*

"My English teacher, she knows that I can't get my homework in on time and says 'I understand' but other teachers are like 'Rachel you've got a detention.' So it's like they don't know what's on the other side of you, what's going on outside of school and things." *Young carer*

"I have missed school once. My mum wasn't well and I wasn't well cos I stayed up and every time I heard something I thought something bad was going to happen so I didn't get any sleep." *Young carer*

"It bothers me when I'm not in school because I like being at school, because then you can be like a normal person for once you don't have that kind of responsibility but in the back of your head when you are at school you've got like I need to go home and do this I need to get this sorted out I need to help with this and then it's just that gets on top of you really so." *Young carer*

"Like say if my mam's in hospital I'll go into school quite sad and just sit in my lesson and not talk or anything but then when she comes out I'm all happy and my teachers and my friends all wonder why I change my mood like that... but they don't understand that I'm a young carer and it's just that way and whatever my mam's illness is like, if it's bad I'll go to school angry and if it's good then I'll go to school happy." *Young carer*

Source: Family Action, Be Bothered report, 2012

Young carers' suggestions for schools

- Recognise that our responsibility as carers can affect our education and schoolwork.
- Find out about us, what we need and how we are not like other pupils.
- Take the time to find out about our problems at home. Sometimes we're too embarrassed to tell you ourselves.
- Don't automatically punish us if we're late. Sometimes we can't help being late because we're helping out at home.
- Provide more support such as lunchtime drop-ins or homework clubs.
- Be flexible – give us more time and help to do homework or coursework.
- Include information about young carer and disability issues in PSHE lessons.
- Let us phone parents if we need to find out if they are OK.
- Make sure there is a clear and up-to-date community notice board which has support information for us and where else we can get help in the community.
- Ensure teachers are offered training on young carers and disability issues both at university and on inset days.

Young carers at the Young Carers Festival 2006

The stages to identify and support young carers

- 1) Structure
- 2) Policy
- 3) Promotion
- 4) Enquiry
- 5) Consultation

1) Set-up the structure

- Assign a staff member as the key **contact** for young carers, linking with parents, pupils, teaching and pastoral staff. Also liaising with external agencies such as Adult Social Care and Health services and local charities.
- Establish clear channels of **communication** between leadership, teaching and pastoral teams, for the sharing of information on pupils who are carers.
- Create and maintain a **register** of pupils with caring roles; enabling tracking of attendance, grades, etc (this list can feed into the school's Risk of NEET Indicators list)
- Create and maintain **awareness** of young carer issues by providing regular INSET and CPD sessions to new and existing staff: school leaders, governors, teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral staff and front desk staff
Briefings and trainings are available from Surrey Young Carers; contact details in Appendix 3
In addition, a weblink to the Healthy Schools E-Learning Module on young carers is provided in Appendix 5

2) Select the forms of support your school can offer

- A Young Carer Contact (see above)
- Excellent staff awareness and communication on young carer issues (see above)
- Individual support plans (see the recommended elements below) created with the pupil and family * with review meetings scheduled regularly
Consultations with the Education Psychology, Education Welfare and Behaviour and Learning Support services if necessary, as part of the support planning
- A Young Carer Card Scheme (identifying young carers to staff and summarising the support plan)
Or:
 - Home-School diaries for parents and teachers to communicate pupil's progress and concerns

- Ease of accessibility for parents with disabilities to attend Parents' Evenings, or provision of alternative means of communication
- Access to school counsellor or school youth worker for listening support
- Access to homework club and after-school clubs
- Access to a telephone for young carers needing to check-in with home
- Financial assistance for school trips
- PSHE lessons on young carer issues; embedded into curriculum
Resources available from Surrey Young Carers – contact details in Appendix 3
- PSHE lessons on mental / emotional health; embedded into curriculum
- Information on disability and caring issues in the form of leaflets, booklets, books and DVDs in library / resource centre
- Transition support to secondary school, college or university (including the handover of reviewed Individual Support Plans, as appropriate)
- Provision of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance giving special consideration to the barriers young carers face in accessing further and higher education and employment
- Provision of a young carer support group (operating as a simple lunch group, or providing cookery classes and other skills training, or performing a 'forum' function to feed into the school council).
- Young carer representation on the school council, with processes to feed in the views of pupils who are carers.
- Access to local services for parents and young carers (*see appendices 2 & 3*)

3) Promote internal and external support

- Promote the Young Carer Contact to families, pupils, staff and agencies
- Promote the school's forms of support (as suggested in Sections 1 and 2 above) in a young carer policy or charter * to families and pupils

Using:

- regular articles in the school newsletter
- letters or ParentMail
- the Home-School Agreement
- the school website
- Promote local, national and web resources with posters and flyers in the reception area / library / on notice boards
- Promote the support available to pupils via assemblies and PSHE lessons

Once the structure is established, and the support is being promoted, regularly and consistently, the following stage will yield more results:

4) Make enquiries

- Include questions on school enrolment form (with a statement of support) *
- Check the School Census data on pupils with disabilities, to identify sibling carers on roll
- Check the register of pupils subject to Child in Need and Child Protection measures, to identify circumstances of parental illness and disability
- Identify disabled parents through a Public Sector Equality Duty scheme survey.
- Survey senior pupils, following assembly talks, to invite self-identification *
- Provide drop-in sessions, following assemblies, to allow identification
- Make routine enquiries to all staff to update the list of carers for Pastoral Support Meetings. *Use our 'Signs to Assist Identification' on page 21 to aid this process.*
- Make routine enquiries to previous schools at pupil transition meetings, to compile a list of carers
- Include young carers status on the Common Transfer File (sent to the new school, using SIMS via DfE)

5) Consult

- Consult with young carers and parents on their preferred forms of support in school and on improvements to policy and practice
- Appoint young carers to the school council, to represent the views of the carer cohort

*Templates are included in this manual, on the following pages

Template school young carers policy

Please refer to the process on the preceding three pages; SYC Education Advisers can also assist your school in creating a policy

Young carers look after someone who has a long-term physical or mental health problem, disability or a problem with drugs or alcohol. This may take the form of domestic chores, personal care, supervision, emotional support or another form of assistance.

At _____ (school / college name) we believe that all young people have the right to an education. If a young person looks after someone, we know that they may need additional support to help them get the most out of their education, and we aim to meet their needs.

Our school:

- Has a designated member of staff who has special responsibility for young carers. *Currently our designated contact is _____.*
They will introduce themselves to you to offer and arrange any additional support you may require.
- Is sensitive towards young carers' needs, and aims to show discretion. We respect pupils' privacy and will only share information about their circumstances with people who need to know, in order to provide help and to ensure safety. Pupils and parents are consulted before information is shared.
- Expects pupils to attend registration and lessons on time, every school day. However, we provide reasonable flexibility on attendance if absence is due to providing emergency care. In the event of emergency care being required, absence may be allowed for a short while, and school work sent home, until alternative arrangements for care can be made by the family. Please speak to us if this becomes an issue.
- Has links with local services providing support to families with care needs, including local young carer services.
- Provides additional tuition for young carers, and flexibility on work deadlines, as required. Please speak to us if you require this support.
- Provides both individual listening support and a lunchtime support group for young carers.
- Provides access to a telephone to enable you to call home during breaks, if required.
- Liaises with the local authority to provide assistance for disabled parents in getting their children to school.
- Assists parents with disabilities and health problems in accessing parent's evenings, and communicates in a way that meets their needs.
- Uses the Pupil Premium to assist eligible young carers in their education, including accessing curriculum based trips
- Will consider alternatives if pupils are unable to attend after school activities (e.g. sports clubs) due to their caring role. Please speak to us if this is an issue.
- Will enforce detentions during the lunchbreaks if pupils have caring responsibilities after school.
- Runs sessions on young carers in the PSHE programme for each year group, to help all pupils understand the issues, carers' rights and the support available.

Template letter to parents

Dear Parent,

At ---- School we are developing our support for young carers. Young carers are young people who have caring roles for family members or friends with physical or mental health problems or disabilities, or drug or alcohol problems.

My name is _____ and I am the main contact person for young carers in the school. I liaise with pupils, families and staff in order to ensure that pupils who are carers are able to achieve and to enjoy their education. I enclose a copy of the school's Young Carer Policy for your reference, so that you are aware of the forms of support that the school can provide. The school is in contact with Surrey Young Carers, a charity to whom the school can refer for further assistance.

If your family is affected by any of the issues mentioned above, and you and your son/daughter would like support, please indicate this on the reply slip below, or contact me at the school so that we can arrange to talk. If no help is required just at this time, the school would still appreciate your sharing of any circumstances that may have an impact upon your child's education as they progress through the school. This will allow us to be aware and offer support as required. Anything you do tell us will be treated sensitively and will not be shared without your knowledge.

Yours faithfully,

(School's young carer contact)

Name: _____

Child's name: _____

My son / daughter is a carer.

Brief details: _____

I would like to arrange for support in-school. Please contact me to discuss this. YES / NO

Best form of contact: _____

Please return slip to: (Name of young carer contact, school address)

Or contact on (phone number / email address)

Template article for school newsletter or ParentMail

At _____ School we are developing our support for young carers. Young carers are young people who have caring roles for family members or friends with physical or mental health problems or disabilities, or drug or alcohol problems.

My name is _____ and I am the main contact person for young carers in the school. I liaise with pupils, families and staff in order to ensure that pupils who are carers are able to achieve and to enjoy their education. A copy of the school's Young Carer Policy for your reference, is available (*on request / below / via this weblink*) so that you are aware of the forms of support that the school can provide. The school is in contact with Surrey Young Carers, a charity to whom the school can refer for further assistance.

If your family is affected by any of the issues mentioned above, and you and your son/daughter would like support, please contact me at the school on _____ so that we can arrange to talk. If no help is required just at this time, the school would still appreciate your sharing of any circumstances that may have an impact upon your child's education as they progress through the school. This will allow us to be aware and offer support as required. Anything you do tell us will be treated sensitively and will not be shared without your knowledge.

With thanks and best wishes,

(School's young carer contact)

Template query and statement of support on admissions / enrolment form

Family circumstances

Are there any support needs that you or your child has?

For example, the health or disability issues of a family member*; recent separation or bereavement.

_____ School is committed to providing discrete and sensitive support to families, to meet pupils' needs and ensure their optimum attendance, learning and personal development.

Please provide brief details below, and we can arrange a convenient time to meet and discuss your child's needs. If required the information you provide can be shared with your child's teachers on a need-to-know basis, with you and your child's consent. With any future changes in family circumstances please do keep the school informed to assist us in helping your child.

Details: _____

*If your child is providing practical or emotional support for a family member, in-school and local support is available for young carers. Please ask for further details.

Signs to assist identification

Working through the questions below will help you to draw up a list of pupils who are providing care, or are affected by a relative's condition. None of the answers are indicative of caring roles in and of themselves, but like jigsaw pieces, if put together they create a picture that will indicate challenging home circumstances, likely involving illness and disability.

It is worthwhile to consult with colleagues – teaching and support staff, reception staff, pastoral staff, the Safeguarding Officer and the School Nurse during this process. Please follow your school's data protection and confidentiality policies when recording and sharing information.

Are any of your pupils:

- Regularly arriving late for school?
- Regularly missing days of school, marked as authorised or unauthorised absence?
Some young carers miss school to stay close to the cared-for person
- Appearing physically neglected – missing breakfast, lacking clean uniform, etc?
- Appearing to be regularly tired?
- Regularly complaining of aches and pains?
- Regularly appearing withdrawn or anxious?
- Regularly challenging adult authority?
Some young carers struggle with switching between being the adult at home and the child at school
- Appearing isolated from their peers?
- Having regular problems in concentrating upon their work?
- Regularly failing to complete homework on time?
- Listed as Child in Need, subject to a Child Protection plan, or Looked After Children where parental ill health or substance dependency issues are involved?
- Registered with disabilities or ongoing health problems, including mental illness? (Refer to your SEN Disability Register and School Census data). Do they have any siblings at your school (or arriving soon), who might be looking after them?

Are any of your parents:

- Regularly not responding to school correspondence?
This may be because of a communication problem
- Regularly not attending parent's evening?
This may be because of an inability to attend
- On low incomes, and unable to afford school related expenses? (Refer to your Free School Meals Register) *This may be because of disability or illness related unemployment*

Young Carers

Do you provide help for someone who is disabled, ill, frail, experiencing mental illness or drug or alcohol problems?

This might be:

- Helping with housework and cooking
- Helping with washing and dressing
- Keeping an eye on them
- Cheering them up

You might be helping in other ways. You might simply be worried about the situation.

We know that if you are caring for someone in your family, that school can sometimes be tough.

We would like to know about all of our pupils who are looking after someone, so that we can provide help at school when it is needed. Please help us to help you by answering these questions, and I will arrange to meet with you soon for a quick chat. Any information you give us will be treated with sensitivity, and will not be shared without your knowledge.

Name:

Form:

Even if you don't need help right now, it is very helpful for us to know if you are a young carer, so do please give me your name and form. To remind you, all information will be handled sensitively.

Once completed, please put this sheet in the post box by my office.

Thank you.

(Name of school's young carer contact)

Template pupil support plan

Name:

Young Carers contact in school:

Year Group	Caring circumstances	Needs	Support Strategies	Other agencies involved
<p>Year 7</p> <p>From Anytown Junior School</p>	<p>Tommy cares for his mother, who has mobility problems and depression</p>	<p><u>Info from Junior School:</u></p> <p>Tommy has few friends. Needs social opportunities.</p> <p>Difficulties concentrating at school due to worrying about mother. Needs listening support and the ability to call home.</p> <p>Longer journey into new school; travelling by bus. Needs bus pass.</p> <p>Needs extra support in organising homework.</p>	<p>Head of Year, Form Tutor and Subject Tutors to be given relevant details of circumstances and support plan. Tommy given young carer card.</p> <p>Flexibility on homework deadlines required. Place at homework club.</p> <p>Identify interests, encourage joining school club. Invite to young carer club.</p> <p>Provide family with info on School Counsellor.</p> <p>Introduce Tommy to office staff and location of phone, so that he can call home.</p>	<p>Adult Services; Children's Services</p> <p>Local Young Carers Project</p>

Completed by:

Date:

Review due:

Template young carer card

Front


ANYTOWN SCHOOL

YOUNG CARER CARD

Name: Tom Smith Form: 7C



Back

Issue: Office phone use

Tom Smith, because of his special home circumstances, is authorised by me to use the office telephone to call home. He may leave class to answer emergency calls.

Signed.....Headteacher

Valid until

Appendix 1: Carers and the law

The following acts state responsibilities to children and to carers.

Children Act 1989

Young carers should be seen as Children in Need if:

"They are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health and development without the provision of services."

Under Section 17 (1) of the act every local authority has a duty:

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need
- To promote the upbringing of such children by their families

If there are substantial concerns over the physical or emotional welfare of a young person, Child Protection procedures should be followed, according to Section 47 of the Children Act.

Children Act 2004 (Section 53)

With Children in Need Assessments there is a duty to consider the wishes and feelings of the child regarding the provision of services. The Children Act Policy Guidance 'Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families' calls for schools to assist social care and health services in supporting young carers and their families. It also makes this statement about Adult Service's responsibilities:

"Young Carers should not be expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. It should not be assumed that children should take on similar levels of caring responsibilities as adults. Services should be provided to parents to enhance their ability to fulfil their parenting responsibilities"

Children and Families Act 2014

From April 2015, the right to an assessment of needs will be extended to all young carers under the age of 18 years, no matter who they care for, what they do or how often.

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995

If a carer is providing, or intending to provide, a regular and substantial amount of care, they are entitled to an assessment of their needs as carers, to be considered when making a decision on services to be provided to a care receiver. Carers under 16 years of age are only entitled to a young carer's assessment under the Carers Act 1995 *if* the person being cared for is also being assessed for services under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990.

Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000

Carers aged 16 years and over can obtain a carer's assessment and receive services in their own right, even if the care receiver is refusing to be assessed for their needs.

Young carers aged over 16 years can claim Carers' Direct Payments in their own right, to fund breaks, leisure activities, further education or equipment. They can also claim Carer Break Vouchers to help fund care provision whilst on short-term breaks. Adult family members can claim a one-off Carers' Direct Payment for young carers aged under 16 years.

Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

This act reinforces the duty to inform carers of all ages of their conditional right to an assessment, and provide them with an appropriate range of information, whether or not the offer of an assessment is taken up. It also promotes the right to a life beyond caring responsibilities.

Care Act 2014

From April 2015, the Care Act will replace its predecessors. Local authorities have a legal responsibility to inform carers of their right to an assessment, and to make that assessment, where support needs are apparent, regardless of the amount or frequency of the caring provided. It strengthens the responsibilities to support young carers as they reach 18 years of age and transition into adulthood. *The Care Act will work in tandem with the Children and Families Act, so that if any adults with care needs have children in the home, a whole family assessment will be automatically triggered, involving Adult Social Care and / or Children's Services in making a young carers' assessment.*

Appendix 2: Your local Adult Social Care teams

Please refer to the information provided on the assessment of young carers on page 8.

Each locality team for Adult Social Care Services have Practitioners (Social Workers) and Assistant Practitioners (Carers' Champions).

The Carers' Champions are a point of contact for other agencies – including schools – and can answer enquiries regarding the support of parents with disabilities and of young carers.

General enquiries

Adult Social Care Helpline:

Tel: 0300 200 1005 / Text: 07527 182861

Email: contactcentre.adults@surreycc.gov.uk

Elmbridge Locality Team

Tel: 01372 832695 Email: elmbridgelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Epsom and Ewell Locality Team

Tel: 01372 832360 Email: epsom.ewelllocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Guildford Locality Team

Tel: 01483 517262 Email: guildfordlocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Mole Valley Locality Team

Tel: 01372 833456 Email: molevalleylocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Reigate and Banstead Locality Team

Tel: 01737 737179 Email: reigate.bansteadlocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Runnymede Locality Team

Tel: 01932 794800 Email: runnymedelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Spelthorne Locality Team

Tel: 01932 795292 Email: spelthornelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Surrey Heath Locality Team

Tel: 01276 800205 Email: surreyheathlocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Tandridge Locality Team

Tel: 01737 737500 Email: tandridgelocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Waverley Locality Team

Tel: 01483 518990 Email: waverleylocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Woking Locality Team

Tel: 01483 518859 Email: wokinglocalityteam@surreycc.gov.uk

Appendix 3: Surrey Young Carers

Our service to schools

Our Education Advisers have a wide experience of working with families and young people, and can assist schools in supporting their pupils by providing:

- Information and advice to school leaders, staff and pupils
- Consultations and briefings within INSET days and staff meetings
- Assembly talks
- Primary and secondary level PSHE materials

To contact your local Education Adviser directly:

- for Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Woking, Guildford and Waverley, call 01483 457008, or email Patrick.Buckingham@actionforcarers.org.uk.
- for Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Mole Valley, call 01737 245576, or email Elin.Tommervik@actionforcarers.org.uk.
- for Epsom and Ewell, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge, call 01737 245576, or email Nicky.Marshall@actionforcarers.org.uk.

Our membership services to young people

Schools can refer young people to SYC's membership with parental consent. Dependent upon our assessment of the young carer's needs, our support can include:

- Advocacy, information and advice for the family in gaining the services they require
- Listening support, advocacy and information for the young carer
- Local group support sessions
- Activity days and carers' workshops
- Residential trips
- Funding for breaks and hobbies

For further information on Surrey Young Carer or to make a referral please call 01483 568269, email syc@actionforcarers.org.uk or visit www.surrey-youngcarers.org.uk.

Surrey Young Carers provides its service across the whole county; for details of services in other areas, please visit www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer

Appendix 4: A testimonial from a teacher

In the Spring Term of 2008, Surrey Young Carers came to Blenheim High School in Epsom to do a twilight training session for all Year 8 form tutors. Whilst my teacher training had given me lots of advice and guidance on how to identify and help pupils with SEN and EBD, I had never heard of 'young carers'. The training session was certainly eye opening and gave an insight into the difficulties and responsibilities this often 'quiet' group of children have to face on a day-to-day basis. As there is little awareness about this group of children, it means that they often go unnoticed at school by teachers and support staff, and if they do display any attention-seeking / unusual behaviour, it may be misunderstood or not dealt with appropriately. The training session I received from SYC equipped me with the skills to be able to identify and understand the issues that young carers have, but also the confidence and knowledge to deal with the situation in an empathetic way.

Once we had received the training, we were asked to teach a series of PSHE lessons, designed by SYC. The teaching pack was well resourced (using a DVD) and was easy to teach and follow. Although the focus was obviously on young carers, the whole form group really enjoyed the lessons and it linked in well with a lot of other PSHE topics we had worked on previously.

During the course of the PSHE lessons, 'C', a young girl in my form group confided in me and told me about her family situation and experiences with Surrey Young Carers. Having the subject talked about in school and having the opportunity to talk about her responsibilities and experiences of being a young carer enabled her to feel proud of what she did and it also enabled me to understand a lot more about her; suddenly her 'dishevelled' looking uniform, frequent lateness and tiredness made a lot more sense. When we finished the young carers PSHE package, I found that 'C' wanted to continue to confide in me, and she would often come to see me at break times just to have a chat. Without the input of Surrey Young Carers, it is quite possible that I wouldn't have 'picked up' on this struggling pupil, as on the surface there did not appear (to my untrained eye) to be any major concerns as her behaviour and achievement in school had been consistently good.

I hope Surrey Young Carers continue to raise awareness in schools about the work they do and are able to continue to provide support, as it really does seem to make a difference to these children's lives.

Stephanie Anderson
English Teacher and Year 8 Form Tutor
Blenheim High School (2006-2008)

Appendix 5: Additional resources

National resources:

National Young Carers Websites

Provide information and advice for young carers, and details of projects around the UK.

- **The Carers Trust**
www.youngcarers.net (includes a discussion board, chat room and Agony Aunt page)
- **The Children's Society – Include Programme**
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer
- **Barnardos**
www.barnardos.org.uk/young_carers

School Staff E-Learning tools

An e-learning module for school staff on young carers can be found at:

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/Young-Carers-Web-Pub-v13/player.html

OFSTED

Recommendations on the identification and support of young carers

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-young-carers

Young Minds

Provides information to young people on mental health problems, and provides a helpline to the parents and professionals supporting them.

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.youngmindsinschools.org.uk

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

A website and helpline to provide information, advice and support for children of alcoholics and people concerned for their welfare.

www.nacoa.org.uk

0800 358 3456

Children of Addicted Parents

A website providing a supportive online community of young people living with an addicted family member

www.coap.org.uk

Contact a Family

Providing advice, information and support to parents of disabled children. Website contains a directory of specific conditions, including rare disorders.

www.cafamily.org.uk

National Autistic Society

Support for people with autism and their families.

0845 070 4004

www.nas.org.uk

Sibs

Support for siblings of disabled children and adults

www.sibs.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

Information, support and resources for young people affected by cancer, including carers.

0808 808 0800

www.macmillan.org.uk

Multiple Sclerosis Society

Information, support and resources available for young carers of people with MS

0808 800 8000

www.mssociety.org.uk

www.youngms.org.uk

Winston's Wish

Help for bereaved children and their families.

0845 20 30 40 5

www.winstonswish.org.uk

ChildLine

24 hour helpline offering support for young people on any problem.

0800 1111

Bullying

Information and advice on dealing with bullying.

www.bullying.co.uk

Local resources on next page

Local resources:

Surrey Young Carers

Support for young carers, their families, schools and other professionals

01483 568269

syc@actionforcarers.org.uk

www.surrey-youngcarers.org.uk

Surrey Family Information Service

Services for families in Surrey.

www.surreycc.gov.uk/fis

Surrey Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service

Offers information, advice and support to people with alcohol and drug related concerns.

Counsellors at venues throughout Surrey. The website has details of support services in the county.

01483 590150

www.sadas.org.uk

Jigsaw South East / Macmillan Family Support Service

Support across Surrey for children with a family member with a life limiting condition

01342 313895

info@jigsawsoutheast.org.uk

www.jigsaw4u.org.uk

Surrey Healthy Schools

A local scheme for developing the physical and emotional health of school communities.

Specific guidance for young carers can be found at: www.surreyhealthyschools.co.uk.

A young carer support project can contribute towards 'Enhanced Healthy School' status

Teaching resources on next page

PSHE resources:

Surrey Young Carers PSHE Packs

PSHE resources available from SYC for primary and secondary years.

Email: syc@actionforcarers.org.uk, or contact your local Education Adviser directly (details in Appendix 3)

Young Minds In Schools

www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/young_minds_in_schools/resources

Woking Mind

www.mentalhealtheducation.org.uk

Samaritans (Developing Emotional Awareness and Learning)

www.samaritans.org (type DEAL in search box)

References

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- ²Children's Society and ITV, *Too Much Too Young*, 2010/11
- ³Gould, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Mental Health and Child Poverty*, 2006
- ⁴Journal of Public Health 2009 & Turning Point: *Bottling It Up*, 2011
- ⁵North West Public Health Observatory, Liverpool John Moores University, Local Alcohol Profiles for England
- ⁶The Children's Society, *Hidden from View*, 2013
- ⁷Becker, S & F, *Young Adult Carers in the UK*, 2008
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- ⁹The Carers' Trust and The Children's Society, survey of 700 young carers, 2010
- ¹⁰Dept. for Children, Schools & Families, *Advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on dealing with groups at particular risk when managing pupil behaviour and attendance*, 2008
- ¹¹Carers UK, 2010
- ¹²Mental Health Foundation & Office for National Statistics Psychiatric Morbidity report, 2001



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