

Pupil Premium: Support for Young Carers

Targeting your Pupil Premium to support young carers in secondary schools

Identifying and supporting Young carers is a low cost and effective way of improving the attainment of this often low achieving pupil group; many of whom are in receipt of free school meals.

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

The case for supporting young carers

- A survey by the BBC (2010) estimated that 8% of secondary school children had moderate or high levels of caring responsibilities.²
- 27% of young carers of secondary school age experience educational difficulties or miss school, and where pupils are caring for someone who misuses drugs or alcohol, 40% have educational difficulties.³
- Young adult carers aged between 16 and 18 years are twice as likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET).⁴
- 68% of young carers experience bullying at school and 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.⁵

¹ Dearden, C and Becker, S (2004), *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* (Carers UK).

² BBC (2010) “Hidden Army” of young carers could be four times as high as official figures (BBC).

³ Dearden, C and Becker, S (2004), *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* (Carers UK).

⁴ Audit Commission (2010), *Against the Odds* (Audit Commission).

⁵ The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010), ‘*Supporting Young Carers - A Schools Resource Survey*’ (The Princess Royal Trust for Carers).

Carers Trust

Many young carers encounter barriers to their learning. The impacts of these can include low attainment, social isolation, school absence and behavioural issues. Such impacts can seriously affect a pupil's future wellbeing and life chances; many young carers do not achieve their full potential.

Ofsted: Minimising barriers to learning and achieving

Ofsted's report 'The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending funding successfully to maximise achievement'⁶ detailed a range of successful interventions in recognition that more schools were using the pupil premium effectively. Importantly, Ofsted devoted a chapter to minimising the barriers to learning and achievement where pupils were supported in the context of their circumstances outside of school.

- Young carers must be supported with an understanding that they have unique experiences and demands that impact on their capacity to engage with their learning.
- Schools must acknowledge and respond to this for interventions to be successful and in order to raise the attainment of this key target group for the Pupil Premium.

Addressing young carers' needs in school – working in partnership

Addressing young carers' needs can be low cost and straight forward, provided support is put in place before a young carers caring role begins to have a negative impact.

Examples of what Young Carers have told us they want:

- Understanding about their roles and responsibilities
- Someone to talk to who will listen
- Flexibility with deadlines
- Opportunities to phone home and check on a parent
- Peer support

⁶Ofsted (2013), *The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending funding successfully to maximise achievement* (Ofsted).

Carers Trust

Pupil Premium support to young carers: Good practice examples

The following are low cost solutions which can be implemented by schools, using the Pupil Premium, to support young carers' needs in a preventative way.

Research suggests there could be up to 80 young carers in a secondary school of 1,000 pupils.⁷ For the funding made available to just 6 students through the Pupil Premium you could achieve all of the following and improve the educational outcomes for this vulnerable group in your school.

1. A school Lead with responsibility for young carers

Schools should designate a School Lead with responsibility for young carers, to champion their needs and coordinate policy and support for young carers across the school.

Areas of responsibility could include:

- Leadership, management and strategic development of support for young carers, for example development and monitoring of a young carers policy.
- Identification and support for pupils who are young carers.
- Staff training and professional development in relation to young carers.
- Ensuring disabled parents are supported to fully engage with their child's education.

Classroom teachers who take on extra responsibility could be awarded a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment.

Cost: TLR payment for additional responsibilities⁷ = £2,535 (minimum).⁸

⁷ BBC (2010) "*Hidden Army*" of young carers could be four times as high as official figures (BBC).

⁸ Department of Education (2012) *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2012 and Guidance on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions* (Department for Education).

Carers Trust

2. Staff and governor training

All staff and school governors need to understand the issues young carers face. To achieve this, training should be embedded within the school's programme for professional development.

Cost:

- a. Training by the school lead could be included as part of their role = no additional cost.
- b. Some young carers' services can offer training free to schools in the local area. Others may need to charge to cover costs. If this is the case, half day training = £100–£300.

3. Development of school literature and website

Schools should ensure that printed and online information is up to date, and transparent about how the school communicates with, and supports, its pupils who are young carers, and their families. This good practice engenders a healthy school environment where young carers and families feel supported and better identification of pupils who are carers can take place. The development of this information could be coordinated and managed by the school lead for young carers.

Cost: £200 (nominal administration costs / IT costs).

4. Coordinating a weekly support group for young carers

A weekly peer support group for young carers can be invaluable. Groups can meet after school, or during lunch times to enable more young carers to attend. Young carers can socialise with and gain support from others and have access to a support worker who can provide additional advice and guidance. Groups have also been used to provide additional homework support or to learn life skills.

Carers Trust

Cost:

- a. Coordinated by the school lead = no additional cost.
- b. Some young carers' services can offer this service free to schools in the local area. Others may need to charge to cover staff costs. If this is the case, £50 per session for 40 weeks = £2,000 per annum, approx.
- c. Refreshments = £10 per week x 40 weeks = £400.

5. Counselling for young carers and peer mentoring

Many schools have established peer mentoring schemes. These can be enhanced by training existing peer mentors specifically on the issues facing young carers.

Alternatively, schemes for younger pupils could be developed and coordinated by older pupils who are young carers. One-to-one counselling in schools can also be helpful for young carers experiencing difficulties at school and/or at home.

Cost: variable

Total cost for all good practice listed above = £5,235 min.

Schools can benefit from involving a range of local agencies to provide support.

Many schools have benefitted from collaborative work with a local young carers' service. Young carers' services can provide, for example:

- School drop in or weekly peer support groups.
- Delivery of personal, social, health and economics education lessons and assemblies.
- Staff training and awareness raising.
- Supporting schools with the development and implementation of a school policy for young carers.
- One-to-one support.
- Young carers peer mentoring or buddying scheme.
- Referral pathway to wider young carers service

Carers Trust

Schools can also consider how they use School Nurses to support young carers. In April 2013 the Government announced that England's 1,200 school nurses and their teams would lead a newly strengthened and tailored school nursing service meaning better care and support for children, including young carers.

School Nurses are ideally positioned to play a pivotal role in the lives of young people. School nurses can help reduce the negative impact of caring on the health and wellbeing of young carers by ensuring that young carers are identified early and receive timely, age-appropriate information, by spotting and addressing any emerging health needs and by ensuring that young carers are accessing appropriate health services and other support.

Supporting resources

- Carers Trust: Supporting Young Carers in School: An Introduction for Primary and Secondary school Staff (2013)
- Supporting Young Carers and their Families: Examples of Practice. <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/supporting-young-carers-andtheir-families-examples-of-practice,7139,PR.html>
- Supporting young carers: A resource for schools. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society (2010). <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/schools-resource-pack,6282,PR.html>
- Young Carers e-learning module: <http://static.carers.org/e-learning>

For more information:

Contact Anna Morris, Senior Policy Manager for Young and Young Adult Carers at Carers Trust, at policy@carers.org.