

# STEP 6

## Step 6: Setting up Systems to Identify, Assess and Support Young Carers



## Key information

To help ensure no young carer slips through the net, schools need to take a proactive approach to identifying and supporting young carers. All schools should ensure they have agreed procedures in place to identify, assess, and support young carers and their families.

Having these procedures agreed before schools proactively raise the awareness of staff, pupils and families about young carer issues will help ensure:

- Staff roles in relation to young carers are clear.
- Processes are in place to ensure the needs of young carers are met effectively once identified.

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**“It’s difficult to talk to teachers. It’s not easy to explain ... It’s always in the corridor or class. I just don’t tell them.”**

Young carer

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## What is the role of the Young Carers School Operational Lead in implementing the school’s procedures for young carers?

The Young Carers School Operational Lead will take a leading role in ensuring the procedures are agreed and implemented. To do so, they will need to engage other staff members, ask them to take specific actions forward and keep track of progress.

The specific staff that the Young Carers School Operational Lead will need to work with will vary according to the size and structure of the school but to give Leads an idea about who these staff may be, broad suggestions are provided in the guidance below.

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**“The [peer support] group allowed me to talk in a safe place without being laughed at.”**

Young carer

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## What procedures should schools have in place?

Young Carers School Operational Leads should have identified which procedures they intend to prioritise for implementation when reviewing their school's provision (see Step 2: Reviewing your school's provision for young carers).

### The basics

In summary, if your school is just beginning to develop its young carers' provision, you may wish to focus initially on implementing the basics by:

- Ensuring there is a confidential setting where young carers or pupils who think they may be young carers will be able to access and talk to a member of staff.
- Making sure any targeted interventions, which are already being delivered in the school, are accessible to young carers (see Step 6, Tool 1: Checklist of support young carers may need).

 Don't forget!

A key barrier experienced by young carers is accessing support provided after the end of the school day. To overcome this barrier, the Lead should look to secure Pupil Premium funding for respite care. Alternatively, interventions could be run at school lunchtime or during the school day. There will inevitably be a tension here as running interventions at lunch or in lesson time will mean pupils miss out on spending time with their peers and/or curriculum time and a balanced approach will need to be found.

- Support the implementation of a flexible approach across the school so that, where appropriate, young carers are able to use a telephone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes to reduce any worry they may have about a family member. This will involve finding somewhere confidential where young carers can talk on the phone.
- Consider setting up a peer support group for young carers (see Step 6, Tool 2: Running a peer support group for young carers).
- Ensure some detentions are run at lunchtime as young carers may not be able to attend after school.
- Consider implementing a school message box so that pupils can self-identify. Remember: Young carers tell us that pupils must be reassured that their privacy will be maintained. Message boxes need to be secure so that other pupils are unable to access any private material (see Step 6, Tool 3: Exemplar handout for pupils to complete and post into a message box).



Implementing these actions will help schools achieve the Bronze level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.

## Moving beyond the basics

To develop your systems further and meet young carers' needs more effectively, the Young Carers School Operational Lead should:

- Engage staff who are responsible for pupil enrolment processes and the school's annual process for checking pupil information to ensure the following questions are asked:
  - Does the pupil have parents or other family members who have an illness or disability, or who are affected by mental ill health or alcohol or substance misuse issues?
  - Would they like more information about the types of support the school provides to young carers?



Not all pupils with parents or other family members who are disabled or ill or have alcohol or substance misuse issues will be a young carer. You will need to agree with the staff responsible for collating the returned information that they notify you where families have responded positively to the questions. You should then have a follow-up conversation with pupils and/or their family to establish the extent of a pupil's caring role and whether they require any support from school.

- Engage staff responsible for the school's internal management system to arrange for known young carers to be flagged so that the attendance, attainment and progress of young carers can be understood.
- Establish a working group of school staff to support the needs of young carers. Young Carers School Operational Leads could explore existing working groups in the school that could be used for this purpose, for example, a group of staff who regularly meet to review the progress of vulnerable pupil groups.
- Check existing protocols for sharing information internally, and with external agencies to ensure that the young carer does not have to repeat their story multiple times.
- Consider establishing a young carers forum so that there are regular opportunities for young carers to influence and support the development of provision for young carers (see Step 6, Tool 4: How to run a young carers forum).
- Establish links with external agencies including the school nurse (see Step 6, Tool 5: Working with school nurses to support young carers and their families and local young carers service (see Step 6, Tool 6: Working in partnership with young carers services). Find out what support is available to young carers within and outside of school and what details you should include on noticeboards and the school website to signpost pupils and their families appropriately.



Implementing these actions will help schools achieve the Silver level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.

## Best practice

To achieve best practice for young carers, your school should also:

- Implement a fully proactive approach to identifying young carers. This will involve:
  - Engaging staff responsible for monitoring and tackling poor attendance to ensure that where changes in trends are identified, staff consider whether these may be due to a potential caring role and know to inform the Young Carers School Operational Lead of any concerns.
  - Agreeing that pupil progress meetings will be used to identify changes in trends and consider whether these may be due to a potential caring role.
  - Engaging the Safeguarding Officer to ensure existing (and newly acquired) lists of children on Child protection and Looked-after children plans are reviewed to identify pupils who are living with adults experiencing mental ill health and alcohol or substance misuse issues.
  - Asking the staff member responsible for school census data to check data on pupils with disabilities at the beginning of each school year, to identify sibling carers on roll.
  - Agreeing with feeder schools/early years providers a process for how they will tell you if a pupil has already been identified as a young carer.
  - Engaging staff responsible for registering new pupils so that where a pupil transfers to your school from another, staff check whether any young carer status has been recorded on the Common Transfer File (sent to the new school via the Department for Education). Make sure you include this information when transferring a pupil.
  - Establishing information sharing protocols with your school nurse, young carers services and health and social care services to ensure that, with appropriate consent, they tell you when they identify young carers attending, or about to start your school.
- Agree what assessment mechanisms will be used to assess pupils' needs when they are identified as a young carer. These assessments could be carried out by a relevant staff member within the school – perhaps using the assessment tools provided as part of Step 9: Identifying, assessing and supporting young carers and their families. The assessments could be carried out by other agencies if deemed more appropriate.

- Agree that individual pupil plans and/or provision maps will be used to record how the school plans to meet the needs of the pupil (exemplar pupil plans/provision maps are not provided within the Step-by-step Guide as schools will have existing and varying pupil plans/provision map templates in place).
- Agree processes for inter-agency working, including with the local young carers service (see Step 6, Tool 7: Checklist for effective partnership working between schools and young carers services). Develop formal joint working together agreements where appropriate (see Step 6, Tool 8: Exemplar working together agreement for use with young carers services).
- Make sure systems are in place, where appropriate, to support young carers to participate post-16 (see Step 6, Tool 9: Supporting young carers to participate post-16) and transition to adulthood at 18 (see Step 6, Tool 10: Supporting young carers to transition into adulthood). This will include working with colleges, training providers and universities to plan and implement support for young carers and their families through transitions, and agreeing how information will be shared between the operational leads, with the appropriate consent.
- Ensure the school and its communications are accessible to families of young carers (see Step 6, Tool 11: Checklist of support that families of young carers may need).
- Engage internal staff, such as the SENCO, Pastoral Lead, or Inclusion Manager and/or external agencies, including the local young carers service, to find out how to signpost and/or undertake whole family work that aims to support parents/siblings in order to prevent or reduce a caring role.



Implementing these actions will help schools achieve the Gold level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.



Carers Trust  
32–36 Loman Street  
London SE1 0EH  
Tel: 0300 772 9600  
Email: [info@carers.org](mailto:info@carers.org)

Carers.org  
[babble.carers.org](http://babble.carers.org)  
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The Children's Society  
Unit 4, Calford House  
Wessex Business Park  
Wessex Way  
Colden Common SO21 1WP  
Tel: 01962 711 511. Fax: 01962 711 512  
Email: [include@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:include@childrenssociety.org.uk)

[childrenssociety.org.uk](http://childrenssociety.org.uk)  
[youngcarer.com](http://youngcarer.com) [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif)  
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