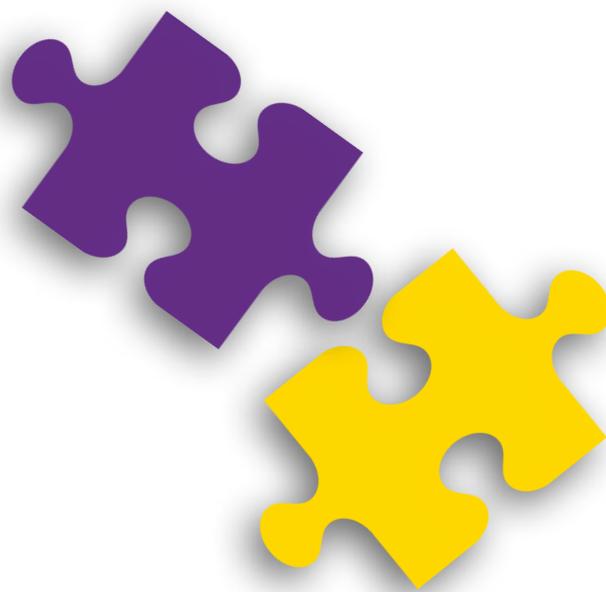




The
Children's
Society

Your Young Carers' Forum

A guide



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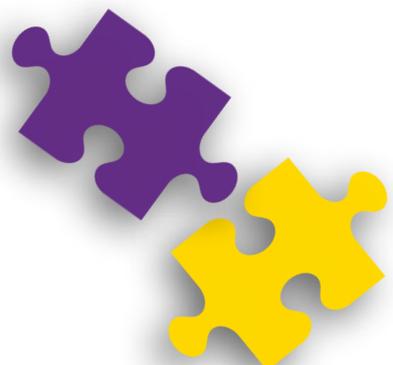
'Our voices are stronger together!'

The National Young Carers' Forum (NYCF) was set up and facilitated by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society, It is composed of young carers from all over the country to represent the voices of all young carers.

This short guide complements the poster 'We are the _____ Young Carers' Forum' which has been developed by the Forum to encourage and support young carers' services in setting up local young carers' forum of their own.

The free poster can be downloaded at www.youngcarer.com

'We want to do something positive because we care. We want to change things. To make young carers' and their families' lives better – at home, at school and everywhere! Young carers should have the same opportunities as everyone else!'



Raising awareness

'The more people who know about young carers, the more young carers will get the support they need. Making people understand what we do and why we do what we do is important.'

- Use the media (e.g. local television, radio or newspaper). See 'A message to media': <http://www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Media%20Postcard.pdf>
- Think about having open days and invite local policy makers
- Talk to: schools, social workers, GPs, local MP, local councillors
- Tell your school or college about our schools resource: <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/schools-resource-pack,6282,PR.html> and the e-learning tool: <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/resources/school-resources/supporting-young-carers>
- Find and contact your local MP: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/> Perhaps ask your MP to arrange a meeting with further MPs. The national forum shared the issues young carers face to very important people. They visited the Houses of Parliament and even met the Prime Minister!
- Write to your local councillors or MPs: www.writetothem.com/
- See Lobbying guides: www.byc.org.uk/How-To-Guides-1#
- Use social media, your young carers' service website and newsletters. Gloucestershire Young Carers' produce a newsletter (their first issue went into local papers as a supplement!)

'The Forum helps us get our voices and opinions heard by professionals who work for us and our families.'

Getting involved with consultations

'The Forum helps us get our voices and opinions heard by people who can change things for us.'

- See the British Youth Council resource centre: www.byc.org.uk/resource-centre (See particularly their Training materials and 'How 2' guides)
- Feed into your local young carers' steering group. See *Recommendations for a Multi-Agency Steering Group for Young Carers and their Families*
- Feed into your local strategic plan for young carers. See *Checklist for a young carers' strategy* (www.youngcarer.com)
- Feed into other local strategies to ensure the needs of young carers and their families are included, such as strategies for carers, young people and/or families
- Feed into other young people's forums and participation events (Such as UK Youth Parliament: <http://www.ukyp.org.uk/>)



'A forum helps us feel we have some control. We don't always have this at home.'

Useful tips from NYCF

'The Forum gives us a chance to see and do new things like attending conferences and residential trips.'

- Be confident and believe you can change things - you are the experts!
- Meet regularly - maybe every month
- Be well organised and have clear goals and targets. Perhaps map these on a year planner
- Have ground rules/group contract to make sure everyone is safe and feels welcome
- Share news with the whole group, perhaps in newsletter, e-bulletin, local events or website
- Make sure people know who the forum is and what it does. Put your forum's name on the poster that this guide supports, and display it where people can see it
- Collect and show off achievements and changes you've made on a blog, Facebook, or scrapbook (collect newspaper articles)
- Collect evaluation or feedback forms from talks you've made
- Use questionnaires to collect evidence
- Be run by committed and understanding staff!



- Work with local champions who can make change happen, perhaps a local MP, councillor or local celebrity. See *British Youth Council Activity ideas - Develop relationships with key people* www.byc.org.uk/
- Develop skills of your members e.g. training on public speaking, teambuilding, working with media. See *How 2 guide - how 2 be a media spokesperson* www.byc.org.uk/How-To-Guides-1
- Build on the strengths of forum members and use their different skills and talents
- Recognise young people's time and effort with accreditation, certificates, letters of thanks. See for example www.asdan.org.uk/Award_Programmes/Youth_Achievement_Award
- Have biscuits and tea and have fun!!!



'Being in a forum builds confidence, friendships and we learn new life skills.'

Leave a legacy

The NYCF learned about how the London 2012 Olympics would leave a legacy for London... what legacy will your forum leave?

WHY ...

We as one
Make change together
Improving young carers'
Lives forever and ever

Radio, money and awareness too
Young carers' forum will help you
We make people aware, people care
The media like it too

Different stories
Means stronger change
Touching hearts
Along the way

We share who we are
Work hard too
We grow in confidence
Me and you

It gives us control
Which is not always so
Having a forum
Will help me and the world grow.

How to contact us

The Children's Society Include Programme

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Colden Common
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SO21 1WP

Telephone: 01962 711511

Fax: 01962 711512

Email: include@childrenssociety.org.uk

Website: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer



The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Unit 14, Bourne Court
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Woodford Green
Essex
IG8 8HD

Telephone: 0844 800 4361

Fax: 0844 800 4362

Email: info@carers.org

Websites: www.carers.org/professionals
www.youngcarers.net
www.carers.org

The Children's Society's Include Programme supports children and young people who care for parents or siblings who suffer from chronic illness or disability. We campaign for change and promote best practice with central and local government and work in partnership with social workers, teachers and health care professionals to deliver solutions that consider the needs of the whole family.

The Children's Society's Include Programme offers information, training and support to both statutory and voluntary sectors who work with young carers and their families. More information and a range of resources, including a Good Practice Guide for Practitioners are available at www.youngcarer.com

Call us to find out if we can meet any of your training and support requirements.