

# SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS IN SCHOOL

A MANUAL FOR SCHOOL LEADERS & STAFF



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## What is a young carer?

'...A young person up to the age of 18 whose life is affected by caring where the person being cared for has a disability, a long-term illness, is frail or is affected by substance misuse. The person being cared for may be a parent, sibling, or other family member or friend and may not be living in the same house as a young carer.'

Surrey County Council Children's Service's definition

This definition includes young people caring for someone with a mental illness.

Some young carers are the primary 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). Normal tasks, but the *amount* may exceed normal expectations for a child
- **Supervision and management** (e.g. watching over someone; acting as 'guardian'; dealing with money issues)
- **Communication support** (e.g. interpreting; answering phone or door)
- **Personal care** (e.g. helping with lifting, moving, washing, dressing, giving medicine)
- **Emotional support** (e.g. providing company and a 'listening ear')
- **Sibling care** for a disabled or a non-disabled sibling, where the parent is unable to provide this care because of their own impairment.
- **Self-care** Looking after themselves, where the parent is unable to provide this care because of their own impairment.

For the purposes of identification and support, it is often more helpful to consider the impact upon a young person living with a relative with the conditions above, rather than assume that they are not providing some form of care. Caring can take subtle (yet significant) forms that may even be unacknowledged by the carer and care receivers themselves. Identifying carers amongst a school population can be challenging because a caring role at home is not visible to school staff, and it may even be denied upon enquiry. However, the home situation may still have an impact upon the young person's wellbeing and their education – and this impact *is* visible to staff; we use these signs to help identification and assessment, and to develop appropriate support within school.

Difficulties with relationships, roles, routine and income are more likely to occur when a family member has a disability or long-term illness. For some young people, these problems can have significant effects upon their own health and their opportunities.

With support, being a young carer brings benefits. 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 is an indication that the young person is doing too much and that their parents need care provision from the statutory services.

Young carers who may be 'children in need' must be referred to Children's Services, but this is not as an alternative to providing appropriate services to the family from Adult Services, Children with

Disabilities Services, and Health Services (please refer to page 18). Making a referral to the local young carers service should also be considered.

Carers that undertake regular and substantial care are entitled to an assessment to provide support for their needs. Carers under 16 years of age can receive a Young Carer's Assessment from Social Care teams, if the cared-for person has received an assessment for their needs. Carers over 16 years of age can request an assessment in their own right. The support that follows on from such assessments can include Carers Direct Payments that can be used to fund respite and leisure activities, as well as other uses.

### **How many?**

There are only estimates as to the numbers of young carers in the UK. Accurate surveying is a challenge as many families do not come forward to access help. Many may be coping on their own, but many more may be unaware that support exists, they may fear involvement with services, or they may feel embarrassed about the situation.

The 2001 Census figures indicated that there were 2 million children living in households where another person has a disability\*, though these are not likely to be the true figures, as a further study by the Joseph Rowntree foundation (Gould 2006) reported that 2 million children in the UK live with at least one parent experiencing mental illness – which is one specific form of disability alone.

The 2001 Census stated that there were 175,000 young carers living in the UK, though significantly, this figure did not include children living with parents who misuse substances (which is outside the disability definition). Subsequent studies have reported that 2.6 million children in the UK live with parents who are 'hazardous drinkers' (Surrey parents topped the poll for this group); 705,000 children in the UK live with parents who are 'harmful' or dependent drinkers; 1 million children in the UK live with a parent who misuses drugs. (Source: Journal of Public Health 2009 & Turning Point: Bottling It Up report 2011)

In 2010, the University of Nottingham conducted research on behalf of the BBC that extrapolated on the 2001 Census figures for young carer numbers, and indicated that there are at least 700,000 of these young people in the UK (12,000 of whom live in Surrey).

**This means that we can currently estimate that a minimum of 1 in 12 schoolchildren have caring responsibilities.**

#### \*The Definition of Disability under the Equality Act 2010

A disabled person (child or adult) is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Such impairments include mental illnesses, progressive illnesses and long-term conditions. Dependence on alcohol or drugs is not defined as a disability; however, an impairment resulting from a dependency is defined as one. Substantial means more than minor or trivial. Long-term means an impairment that has lasted at least 12 months, or is likely to last at least 12 months. Normal day-to-day activities include things like eating, washing, walking and lifting objects.

## How is education affected?

Being a carer is a learning experience in itself, providing opportunities to learn skills and develop resilience. However, in terms of formal education, caring responsibilities can also bring a number of barriers to learning. These barriers can manifest whilst a student is in infant school, and if not attended to, they can persist into adulthood, restricting opportunities to access further and higher education, and employment. For this reason, consistent tracking and support of young carers is required throughout their education – ensuring that information on their needs and support is shared at every point of transition within and between schools and colleges.

Young carers are a specific group of vulnerable pupils, with their own specific needs. Advice from OFSTED on best practice in supporting young carers can be found at:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-young-carers>

Around a fifth of all young carers have problems with their education (13% of carers aged 5-10 and 27% of carers aged 11-15). The proportion is 40% for children caring for a relative with a drug or alcohol dependency (Source: Dearden & Becker, Young Carers in the UK, 2004).

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 their *spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*, which they have a duty to promote.

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

**Attendance** Many young carers turn up for school late or miss whole days as a result of their caring responsibilities, transportation difficulties\*, or because there is an established pattern of problems at school. Some also miss out on school trips and clubs.

**School work** Problems with achievement 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.

**Behaviour** Some young carers have problems interacting with school staff and their fellow students. 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.

\*For parents with disabilities and other health problems, there can be great challenges in getting their children to and from school. Many young carers of secondary school-age are responsible for escorting younger siblings to primary school when a parent is unable to – this can cause problems for the older child's attendance, particularly if the two schools are far apart. Surrey County Council, as the local education authority, can take such circumstances into account when considering making exceptions to policy for a school admission or a free transport application, if it assists a pupil's attendance. Parents who are receiving maximum Working Tax Credit and children who are receiving free school meals qualify under the policy as standard.

## How to Identify Young Carers

Some support for young carers, such as supplying information on resources, and education through PSHE lessons, does not require identification of individuals. However, up to a half of young carers experience barriers to learning that require individualised support in order to succeed, and so both they and their needs must be identified. Due to the sensitive nature of the situations, schools can encourage openness to their enquiries by promoting to families a policy of support for young carers. This can reassure pupils and families of the school's intent. Many families, of course, will want their situations to remain private, which should be respected. However, even these families may benefit from the promotion of useful information about local and national support.

A multipronged approach is the most effective way of identifying and gathering information on young carers, and the approaches can be divided into two stages. The first stage is **promotion** of support; the second stage is an **enquiry** into the home circumstances of pupils and students:

- Promote your school's support for young carers with:
  - letters and ParentMail
  - regular newsletter articles
  - the Home-School Agreement
  - the school website
  - posters and leaflets for services
- Run staff briefings on young carer issues in annual INSET and ask teaching and reception staff for their insights on pupils  
*Surrey Young Carers can provide briefings, and the Healthy Schools E-Learning Module (see Appendix 4) is a valuable tool for INSET*
- Include a statement of support and questions about home issues on the school's Enrolment Form
- Include a young carer category in regular pastoral care meetings
- Include a young carer category in primary-secondary transition meetings
- Send out a pupil questionnaire Key Stages 3 & 4 to identify carers and the support that they need (after an assembly talk or PSHE lesson is best)
- Record details on pupil files, SIMS, Individual Education Plans, the Inclusion Register and Common Transfer Files
- Share minimal information on affected pupils with teachers and teaching assistants

Sharing information with teachers and teaching assistants is essential to supporting young carers. These pupils require flexibility and extra support, but this cannot be offered or given if information on home issues is kept within the pastoral team or SEN team, or is simply a note on a file. Ask for consent to share information, and where given, please keep teachers and teaching assistants updated with *minimal* details on a pupil's circumstances – it makes a real difference to how problems are handled.

It is important that all the promotion and enquiry strategies above are embedded into the school's regular procedures, so that they are consistently followed, even with a change of leadership and staff.

The Healthy Schools programme includes young carers as a group whose support can contribute towards Enhanced Healthy Schools status. Links for the Healthy Schools Young Carer manual and E-Learning Module can be found in Appendix 4.

## Signs to Assist Identification

Please work through the questions below to help you draw up a list of pupils who are providing care, or are affected by a relative's condition. Some of the information that you require will be recorded on pupil files, and some of it will be unrecorded. Some of it will have already been used for the annual School Census. So - some cross-referencing will be required. It is worthwhile to consult with 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.

- Do you have any parents with the conditions listed overleaf, including mental health problems?
  - Are you aware of what the parent's care needs are, and who meets these needs?
- Do you have any pupils with the conditions listed overleaf, including mental health problems? (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 or affected by their sibling's condition?
- Do you have any parents with drug or alcohol problems?
  - Do you have any pupils where there are concerns of neglect or abuse, pupils listed as Child in Need, subject to a Child Protection plan, or Looked After Children where substance misuse issues are involved?

Whilst many young carers thrive within the school structure, between a quarter and a half of them have problems in their education because of their home situation. The following issues are common signs pointing towards difficulties at home – *some* of which will be related to disability and illness within the family.

Which of your pupils:

- Regularly arrive late for school?
- Regularly miss days of school, marked as authorised or unauthorised absence?  
*Some young carers miss school to stay close to the cared-for person*
- Appear physically neglected – missing breakfast, lacking clean uniform, etc?
- Appear to be regularly tired?
- Regularly complain of aches and pains?
- Regularly appear withdrawn or anxious?
- Regularly challenge adult authority?  
*Some young carers struggle with switching between being the adult at home and the child at school*
- Appear more emotionally mature than their peers?
- Have regular problems in concentrating upon their work?
- Regularly fail to complete homework on time?

Which of your parents:

- Regularly do not respond to school correspondence?  
*This may be because of a communication problem*
- Regularly do not attend parent's evening?  
*This may be because of an inability to attend*
- Are 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*

## **How to Support Young Carers**

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

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-young-carers>

The following is taken from the recommendations made by the Government in 2008:

### **"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.

Again, outside agencies such as youth services, voluntary sector young carers services and if appropriate, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services can assist. There is a voluntary sector database of young carers' services at [www.youngcarer.com](http://www.youngcarer.com). Any referrals to, or discussions with, outside agencies must be undertaken sensitively, confidentially, and with the pupil's knowledge, recognising that both the child and their family have a right to privacy and self-determination. Some children may fear being "put into care" if their parents are seen as unable to cope. It is important to be clear that Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, through the provision of services, and where possible, to promote the upbringing of children within their families.

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."

*Source: Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on dealing with groups at particular risk when managing pupil behaviour and attendance. DCSF, 2008*

The 'flexible and sensitive support' mentioned above can also include these elements:

- Providing flexibility on work deadlines and additional tuition for young carers when necessary
- Providing people such as counsellors, youth workers or support staff to listen to pupils who need to talk
- Providing young carers with unique 'identity cards', the display of which allows them to leave class when necessary, without lengthy explanation to staff

- Providing access to a telephone so that young carers can contact home to alleviate worry
- Assisting parents with disabilities in attending meetings at school, or communicating with them in other ways, according to their needs
- Encouraging and enabling young carers' access to school trips and extra-curricular activities
- Establishing an in-school support group for vulnerable pupils
- Including topics on disability, ill-health and caring within assembly talks and the PSHE curriculum, to increase pupils' understanding, and awareness of the forms of support that are available.

Like the identification methods, these support strategies should be embedded into regular procedure, along with INSET, and information sharing amongst staff, where possible.

Of course, flexibility needs to be balanced with structure, and the rules of school are a valid form of support, when communicated respectfully to the young person. Some young carers lack consistent boundaries in their home lives, and respond well to the structure that school provides.

Many young carers subconsciously take on an adult mentality at home that they retain when at 'childhood environment' of school – their perception of being spoken to "like a child" by staff is a source of confusion and frustration. These shifts in roles can be at the core of behavioural problems, so although school rules and sanctions may be applied, many young carers respond better if they are also "spoken to like adults", and this will help to encourage adult behaviour.

### **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 as well as the inherent emotional challenges, and all the changes that may entail.

School can be a consistent part of the student's life during bereavement and the following change. After consultation with the family, all staff should be made aware of the death and given any significant information, to enable both support and a normal routine for the student upon their return. Informing classmates of the situation will help with this. For younger classmates, also informing their parents may help with any anxieties that may arise. To begin with, flexibility for the returning student 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. Offer support and take the lead from the young person.

## Young Carer Support Plan – a checklist

### Liaison

- Designating a staff member as 'liaison' for young carers, linking with pupils, teaching and support staff and agencies. Promotion of this individual to families, pupils and staff.

### Raising Awareness

- Regular staff training on young carer welfare and education issues in team meetings and INSET  
*(Briefings and trainings are available from Surrey Young Carers. In addition, a weblink to the national E-Learning Module is provided in Appendix 4)*
- Assembly talks to pupils by staff or local young carer service
- Young carer issues embedded into peer mentor training

### Promotion of Support

- Home-School Agreement: includes statement of support for young carers and disabled parents \*
- Publishing of school young carer policy recognising young carers as a distinct group of vulnerable pupils and stating policy and practice on support \*
- Letters to parents, regular school newsletter articles and ParentMail notices: promoting plans for in-school support and requesting consultation with families \*
- Posters and leaflets promoting in-school support, and local and national services, posted on boards and in reception areas
- Links provided on school website for local services for parent carers and young carers

### Identification

- Inclusion of questions on school enrolment form (with statement of support) \*
- Common Transfer File (sent to new school from SIMS via DfE): inclusion of young carer status on form
- Routine enquiry to previous school, on young carers, at student transition meetings
- Checking of School Census data on pupils with disabilities, to identify sibling young carers on roll
- Identification of disabled parents via consultation with all parents for the school's Public Sector Equality Duty scheme
- Questionnaires to secondary school pupils, following assembly talks, inviting self-identification and choice of support options \*
- Drop-in sessions, following assemblies, to allow identification

### Consultation

- Disabled parents consulted on the support required to promote their inclusion and that of their children
- Young carers consulted on their preferred form of support in school and required improvements
- Young carers represented on school council

Continued on next page

## **In-School Support**

- Individual support plans created with family \*. Review meetings scheduled regularly
- Young carer status and needs recorded on *Pastoral Support Plans, Individual Education Plans* and the *Inclusion Register*
- Primary Schools: Use of Home-School diaries for parents and teachers to communicate pupil's progress and concerns
- Secondary Schools: Use of a Young Carer Card Scheme (identifying young carers to staff and summarising the support agreement)
- Making Parent's Evening accessible to parents with disabilities, or providing alternative means of communication
- Accessibility to school counsellor or school youth worker
- Formation of young carer support group or nurture group; enabling young carers' access to homework club and after-school clubs
- Accessibility to telephone for young carers needing to check-in with home

## **Education**

- PSHE lessons on young carer issues; embedded into curriculum (*resources available from Surrey Young Carers – contact details on last page*)
- PSHE lessons on mental / emotional health; embedded into curriculum (*resources available from Young Minds: <http://youngmindsinschools.org.uk/resources>*)

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Recording of young carers' attendance and progress on Inclusion Register or similar system \*

\*Templates included in this manual

- **Sample School Young Carers Policy**

Young carers look after someone who has a disability, long-term illness, mental health problem, or a problem with drugs or alcohol. Young carers may be taking care of a family member or a close friend. This may take the form of nursing tasks, domestic chores, supervision, emotional support or communication support. There are an estimated 12,000 young carers in Surrey.

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 liaison is \_\_\_\_\_.*  
They will introduce themselves to you to offer and co-ordinate support.
- Is sensitive towards young carers' needs, and aims to show discretion. We will respect your privacy and will only share information about you and your family with people who need to know, in order to help you, and to ensure your safety. We will consult with you before sharing information. We can put you in touch with our local Young Carers Service and other support 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.
- Expects you to attend registration and lessons on time, every school day, if able. We provide reasonable flexibility on attendance if absence is due to providing emergency care or a bereavement. 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.
- 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.
- Will consider alternatives if you are unable to attend after school activities (e.g. sports clubs) due to your caring role. Please speak to us if this is an issue.
- Will enforce detentions during the lunchbreaks if you have caring responsibilities after school.
- Runs sessions on young carers in the PSHE and Citizenship programme for each year group, to help all pupils understand the issues, carers' rights and the support available.

## Sample 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 disabilities, chronic health problems, 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 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 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 liaison)

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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 liaison, school address)

Or contact (young carer liaison) on (phone number / email address)

## Sample 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 disabilities, chronic health problems, 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 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 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 liaison)

## Sample Query and Statement of Support on Admissions / Enrolment form

### Family Circumstances

Please provide brief details below on any current or ongoing circumstances within the family that may have an impact upon your child's education (for example, a parent or sibling with physical or mental health problems or an impairment\*, or the recent separation of parents).

\_\_\_\_\_ School is committed to providing discrete and sensitive support to families, to meet pupils' needs and ensure their optimum attendance, learning and personal development. Following a discussion with you on your child's needs, the information you provide can be shared with staff 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 in the home, in-school and local support is available for young carers. Please ask for further details.

# 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. 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. We can talk to you about how we can support you in school.

**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.*

If you do need help, please circle your answer to these questions:

Would you like for some of your teachers to know a little about this, so that they can help make school a little easier for you when you need it? YES / NO

Would you like extra help with schoolwork / homework? YES / NO

Do you need to phone home sometimes, to check on the person you care for? YES / NO

Would you be interested in a school young carers club? YES / NO

Would you like more information about Surrey Young Carers and their support? YES / NO

Please put this form in the post box by my office.  
Thank you.

(Name of school's young carer liaison)

## Young Carer Interview Guidelines

When making enquiries to support young carers in school, these areas will help in forming questions. These may be used in conjunction with other assessment tools, such as the CAF. Safeguarding procedures will need to be followed if disclosures of risk of harm are made.

### **Attendance**

Problems may stem from caring role such as not wanting to be away from home; difficulties with transport to school; conflict at school

### **Achievement**

Problems may stem from inability to focus, due to worries about cared-for person or fatigue; work deadlines and revision missed because of caring role

*What extra support and flexibility can be put in place?*

### **Home and family**

The family may lack required support from the wider family or external sources, so placing tasks on the young carer. The care may take the form of lifting, washing, dressing, domestic duties, emotional support, communication support, or supervision. The amount, or the nature of the tasks may be inappropriate for their age.

*What support do the family already receive? Who can school contact to provide information, advice or services? (For young carers of disabled adults, Adult Services can assist; for young carers of disabled children, the Complex Needs Team of Children's Services can assist)*

Parents with disabilities or health problems may have difficulties accessing parents' evening, or in understanding standard letters

*What alternative communication methods can school provide?*

Young carers may lack suitable study space or computer access at home

*How can school assist?*

### **Social**

Young carers may be unable to join after-school activities due to caring role; difficulties with transport. Young carers may feel socially isolated from peers

*How can school assist?*

### **Emotional**

Young carers may lack someone to talk to, and feel the school do not understand the difficulties of their home life

*What listening support is available at school? How can the school raise awareness of issues amongst staff?*

### **Future plans**

Carers may need extra support to make choices and access further education, training and career, particularly if they have a key caring role at home

*What carer-specific information and advice can the school provide?*

## Students' Support Plan

Name:

Young Carers contact in school:

Year Group If new student, from which school?	Caring circumstances	Needs (social, emotional, environmental, educational)	Support Strategies	Other agencies involved
Year 7 From Anytown Junior School	Tommy cares for his mother, who has mobility problems and depression	<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>For transfer from junior school, Tommy will visit once with whole class; once with his parents.</p> <p>Meeting to be scheduled between Tommy, parents and the school's young carer liaison, to discuss support plan.</p> <p>Head of Year, Form Tutor and Subject Tutors to be given relevant details of circumstances and support plan. Special note on homework support.</p> <p>Identify interests, encourage joining school club. Invite to young carer drop-in 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:



**Sample 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: Young Carers and the Law**

The following acts state responsibilities to children and to carers, and how they can access support.

### **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”*

### **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 carers assessment if the person being cared for is being assessed for services.

### **Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000**

Carers over 16 years of age 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 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.

## **Appendix 2: What services can Surrey Young Carers provide?**

### **Our Education Advisory Service**

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

- Information and advice to school leaders, staff and students
- 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.syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:Patrick.syc@actionforcarers.org.uk).
- for Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Mole Valley, call 01737 245576, or email [Elin.syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:Elin.syc@actionforcarers.org.uk).
- for Epsom and Ewell, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge, call 01737 245576, or email [Nicky.syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:Nicky.syc@actionforcarers.org.uk).

### **Services for Young People**

Schools can refer young people to SYC's full service 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

**For further information on Surrey Young Carer or to make a referral please call 01483 568269, email [syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:syc@actionforcarers.org.uk) or visit [www.surrey-youngcarers.org.uk](http://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](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer)

### **Appendix 3: 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 4: National and Local 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](http://www.youngcarers.net) (includes a discussion board, chat room and Agony Aunt page)
- **The Children's Society – Include Programme**  
[www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarer)
- **Barnardos**  
[www.barnardos.org.uk/young\\_carers](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/young_carers)

#### **OFSTED**

Recommendations on the identification and support of young carers

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-young-carers](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/supporting-young-carers)

#### **Young Minds**

Gives advice to help young people, parents and professionals understand mental health problems. and where to find help

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.youngmindsinschools.org.uk](http://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](http://www.nacoa.org.uk)

0800 358 3456

#### **Children of Addicted Parents and People**

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

[www.coap.org.uk](http://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](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

#### **National Autistic Society**

Support for people with autism and their families.

0845 070 4004

[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

#### **Macmillan Cancer Support**

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

0808 808 0800

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://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](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)  
[www.youngms.org.uk](http://www.youngms.org.uk)

**Winston's Wish**

Help for bereaved children and their families.  
0845 20 30 40 5  
[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://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](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

**Local resources:****Surrey Young Carers**

Support for young carers, their families, schools and other professionals  
01483 568269  
[syc@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:syc@actionforcarers.org.uk)  
[www.surrey-youngcarers.org.uk](http://www.surrey-youngcarers.org.uk)

**Surrey Family Information Service**

Services for families in Surrey.  
[www.surreycc.gov.uk/fis](http://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](http://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  
[www.jigsaw4u.org.uk](http://www.jigsaw4u.org.uk)

**Surrey Healthy Schools**

Local schemes for developing the physical and emotional health of school communities.  
Specific guidance for young carers can be found at: [www.surreyhealthyschools.co.uk](http://www.surreyhealthyschools.co.uk)  
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](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/Young-Carers-Web-Pub-v13/player.html)

