

Staff Training and Awareness

*"It is also important that all your teachers know, without you having to keep telling new people all about being a carer whenever you don't make a school work deadline. It feels like I've got to explain myself so many times."*¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school and team
- outside agencies such as a local young carers' service
- Other professionals working with the school

This chapter will support schools to:

- inform teaching and non teaching staff of the issues affecting young carers in your school.
- develop staff induction training on young carers' issues.
- incorporate issues affecting young carers into ongoing professional development.
- ensure that all staff are aware of how to initiate both internal and external support.

Synopsis

It is important that all staff within your school are trained in and understand the needs of young carers, the issues they and their families face and the barriers they experience to learning. It is recommended that staff be familiar with possible indicators, the importance of early identification and how to initiate timely support.

Who should be trained and what to include

Young carers consistently say that they want someone in their school with whom they can talk and share any worries and concerns. It is often a member of non teaching staff who first becomes aware of a young carer's situation, which is why it is imperative that it is not solely teaching staff who benefit from training. Issues often arise when supply teachers encounter pupils who are young carers and they are unaware of the issues so it is wise to include them in training and awareness-raising as much as possible.

Training and awareness-raising should be embedded into ongoing professional development so that young carers remain at the forefront. Reminders on staff notice boards along with other prompts are also useful and a strong link with your local young carers' service will elevate young carers on the 'radar'.



In addition to an understanding and awareness of the issues faced by carers, staff should be aware of the importance of a whole-school approach as well as the procedures for bringing in support from within and from outside the school. It is also useful to understand the implications of SEAL and how these lessons can help promote an understanding and awareness of young carers and their families' needs.

It may be beneficial to utilise outside agencies, such as a local young carers' service to provide support with staff training. Your school might want to consider inviting other professionals working within your school to join training sessions, and even share training with other schools in the same cluster group. A model of "twilight training sessions" developed in Hampshire and promoted by The Children's Society and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, for example, has proven particularly successful at developing staff knowledge in an interactive way.

Staff training should cover:

- the barriers, issues and needs faced by young carers.
- the impacts of being a young carer.
- why young carers are often hidden and the possible indicators of a young carer.
- the importance of whole family support and of multi-agency working and what support is available both within and outside of the school.

It is worth noting, however, that issues may arise during training sessions for staff who have also been carers or who are currently carers. It may be useful to make information available for adult carers, such as the NHS Carers Direct Support line as well as information about carers' support organisations.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 14** Staff training and awareness
- 18** Identification of young carers
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work



Key resources

As well as the tool found at the end of this chapter and those found in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Healthy School e-learning module

A Healthy Schools young carers e-learning module is available to help school staff who work with young carers. The aim of the module is to increase understanding in schools of particular issues and challenges facing young carers and their families.

<http://static.carers.org/e-learning/>

→ Poster for school staff (included in this resource)

As developed by The Princess Royal trust for Carers and The Children's Society.

→ Supporting pupils who are young carers.

Information for teachers and school staff.

www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/nateducation07.pdf

→ Teachers TV: Supporting young carers

A look at the support that teachers can give to young carers.

www.tes.co.uk

→ Teachers TV: Young carers

Young carers discuss the hardships at home.

www.tes.co.uk

→ SCIE Film: Parental mental health and child welfare – a young person's story

This film is about 18-year-old Cait who has been caring for her mum since she was seven.

www.scie.org.uk

→ Listening to young carers: A tool for those working with young carers and their families

Young carers discuss the issues they face and solutions to help them improve their lives.

DVD available at www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/DVD%20Order%20Form0805.pdf

→ Information for staff who may be carers

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers at www.carers.org

Crossroads Care at www.crossroads.org.uk

Carers UK at www.carersuk.org

Carers Direct at www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect



14.1 Young carers' top ten tips for schools

The Children's Society, in partnership with YMCA Fairthorne Manor, organises an annual festival for young carers to have the opportunity to have fun, relax and forget about their daily worries. The young carers are consulted on a range of issues, including education, health and young carers' projects to find out what services they want. Below is some feedback from them on how you can help make their school day easier.

You may also find postcards containing messages for education professionals from young carers useful at www.youngcarer.com.

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

1Being a young carer. Views from a young carers workshop. (2006). Commission for Social care Inspection: www.csci.org.uk/publications/childrens_rights_director_reports/young_carers.pdf