Introduction

“Each school will have young carers and just one individual teacher or support worker can make all the difference.”

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, in partnership with The Children’s Society, has produced this resource to help schools to develop a deeper understanding of the issues faced by young carers across the UK.

There are 175,000 young carers in the UK, although the actual figure is widely believed to be much higher. Trying to balance caring responsibilities whilst growing up can have significant impacts on a young person’s health and wellbeing. At school, attendance, behaviour and achievement can all be affected. Ofsted recommends that councils and partners should ensure that professionals within universal services are aware of the needs of young carers so that they can be identified and supported.

It is believed that there are 30 young carers in any one secondary school. Of these, 68% are bullied and 27% are experiencing education difficulties, and where young pupils are caring for someone who misuses drugs or alcohol, this rises to 40%. Research suggests that of the young carers in your school, only 39% will be known by staff. Supporting young carers: a resource for schools will help your school to remove the barriers to learning experienced by this vulnerable group of pupils.

We recognise that the key to supporting pupils who are young carers is through early preventative work and supporting families in ways that prevent inappropriate caring.

Supporting young carers: a resource for schools will:

• inform your school about the impacts of caring on a young carers’ education and their needs.

• highlight good practice approaches.

• encourage the development of a framework of support using a whole-school approach.

• support your school to achieve outcomes for the National Healthy Schools Enhancement Model in relation to young carers.

To support young carers effectively, it is vital that your school establishes mechanisms for identification and puts into place appropriate support. This resource promotes a multi-agency approach and highlights guidance and legislation on young carers and brings together the good practice already seen in some schools. It contains case studies, awareness-raising materials and time-saving tools, which you can print or photocopy at your own convenience, to help you identify, assess and support young carers. It also directs you to further relevant information and resources should you wish to develop specific areas in depth.

We aim for Supporting young carers: a resource for schools to be utilised by all staff, senior management teams and governing bodies. The content, whilst aimed at secondary schools within the UK, can also be transferred to primary schools and further education colleges.