

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 develop a deeper understanding of the issues faced by young carers across the UK and to help schools develop support for this pupil group.

The 2001 census identified 175,000 young carers in the UK, with 13,000 caring for more than 50 hours per week. It is believed that these figures are a vast underestimation of the scale of the problem and indeed, more recent research by the BBC (2010) points to the more realistic number of 700,000 young carers in the UK.

This research found approximately 8% of the secondary school pupils surveyed had caring responsibilities; that is one in 12 pupils. Previous research has found that 68% of young carers were bullied and 27% experienced educational difficulties or missed school because of their caring responsibilities. This rose to 40% where there was parental mental ill-health or substance misuse. Research also suggests that of the young carers in your school, only 39% will be known by staff.

Trying to balance caring responsibilities while growing up can have a significant impact 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.

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 promotes a **multi-agency approach**. It will help your school to remove the **barriers to learning** experienced by this vulnerable group of pupils and will:

- Inform your school about the impact of caring on a young carers’ education and their needs.
- Highlight guidance and legislation and good practice approaches already seen in some schools.
- Help you identify and assess young carers in your school.
- Help you develop a framework of support using a whole-school approach.

The resource contains case studies, awareness-raising materials and **time-saving tools**, which you can download and print. It also directs you to further relevant information and resources should you wish to develop specific areas in more depth.

We aim for *Supporting Young Carers: a Resource for Schools* to be used by all staff, senior management teams and governing bodies. The content, while aimed at secondary schools within the UK, can also be transferred to primary schools and further education colleges.

