

A Resource Pack for people working with

Young Carers



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers



Acknowledgements

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www.tacade.com



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers
www.carers.org



www.youngcarers.net

Everyday more and more people in the UK face the demands of caring for a family member or friend. Caring can cause isolation and financial, emotional and health problems. We exist to help unpaid carers of all ages by providing access to information, advice and support services. We also campaign to bring about change in both policy and attitudes towards carer's issues.

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Introduction

Who will use this pack?

Young Carer Workers who go into primary or secondary schools to work with pupils and staff to raise awareness and develop understanding about:

- How young carers are defined.
- The particular needs of young carers and how these may be met.
- Increasing acceptance (and consequently decreasing the stigma) in schools of the need to care for people with mental health, substance misuse and disability issues.

Young Carer Workers who work especially with young carers in educational settings.

Do I need to be a teacher myself to get the most out of this resource?

Whilst experience of teaching or caring may be helpful it is not essential for anyone using these materials – they rely on you being able to communicate in an easy-going, interesting and informative manner; in being open and responding with honesty. Part of your role is to act as a 'facilitator' – to make it easy for children and young people to talk and ask questions about things that are sensitive and important to them. You do need to be able to deal with confidential issues when they arise which is why preparing well before going into a school is essential. A suggested code of practice and visitor form is included in the pack to help you with this. You should always have a teacher present and you need to talk through what you want to achieve and how you will do it before you get into a school for your input. A teacher should always be with the class to support you and be responsible for discipline.

Who are Young Carers?

There are several definitions of a young carer, one of which is that:

Young carers are children and young people who help to look after someone in their family by taking on physical or emotional caring responsibilities that are inappropriate to their age because someone in their family has a disability, illness, mental health problem or substance misuse problem. Not every child with a sick or disabled family member will be a young carer and young carers have varying support needs depending on the impact of their caring responsibilities.

Whilst many, probably most, children and young people will do jobs around the home, appropriate to their age and ability, young carers do things and take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate for their age.

Caring can be broken down into three types:

- **Physical** caring – e.g. pushing a wheelchair, helping someone get dressed, helping someone in the bathroom, doing household jobs such as cleaning or preparing meals, shopping, running errands etc.

- **Emotional** – e.g. just being there for someone, listening to them, talking with them, helping them to feel better etc.
- **Taking responsibility** – e.g. for ensuring someone is safe, administering medicines, for ensuring a person keeps appointments at the doctors or elsewhere, ensuring a property is secure, for knowing when and how to get additional help, especially in the case of an emergency.

There are around 175,000 young carers in the United Kingdom according to the 2001 census. This could mean that there are around 30 pupils in any school in the UK that may be young carers. School staff are unlikely to know about all of these pupils although some may come to the notice of teachers because of their behaviour.

How can schools identify young carers?

Some young carers may tell their teacher about their additional responsibilities or a teacher may be alerted to the possibility by the nature of conversations between themselves and the pupil, by conversations between pupils or by direct information from parents or guardians. However, where young carers have not been identified to staff it's more likely that teachers will begin to notice signs such as pupils/students that:

- Are often late or miss days or weeks off school for no apparent reason
- May often be tired or withdrawn
- Have difficulty in joining in extra curricular activity
- Are isolated or a victim of bullying – either because of the situation in the family or because they lack social skills when with their peers. In contrast they may be confident with adults
- Under achieve and may either not hand in homework or course work on time or complete it late or to a poor standard
- Are anxious or concerned over ill/disabled relative
- Have behavioural problems – there can be a big difference between the young person who seems 'mature beyond their years' in the home environment where they are very protective of a disabled relative, and the young person who takes out their pent-up frustration or stress at school
- Have physical problems such as back pain from lifting an adult.

How can schools help young carers?

Schools can develop, publish and work to a policy for young carers.

Schools can help by designating a member of staff to act as a co-ordinator for young carers, a first point of contact for individuals, families and agencies and the prime mover of raising awareness about young carers amongst the school community. This action is recommended

by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in **Advice to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk** (DfES, 2006).

Schools can find out where the nearest local Young Carers Project is situated and publicise this information (go to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers at www.youngcarers.net or The Children's Society at www.youngcarer.com) Armed with this information schools will find it helpful to establish and nurture links with local projects.

The same sites also offer ideas and activities to bring together young carers and to promote their self-esteem and give them a break from caring.

Young Carer Workers can be invited into school to take an assembly and/or contribute to PSHE lessons to make pupils more aware about caring and the support available to young carers and their families.

Schools can consider flexible and innovative ways in which contact can be made and sustained with young carers and their families where it is known that there are substantial barriers to parents getting into school to discuss matters relating to their child.

Schools may also find further helpful information and guidance from the following sources:

The 2004 Young Carers Report
www.carersuk.org/Policyandpractice/PolicyResources/Research click on to Young carers to download **Young Carers in the UK: the 2004 Report**.

Advice to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk (DfES, 2006) provides advice to schools on young carers and can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/y/youngcarers/ and at www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/library/youngcarersandschools/ which includes case studies from teachers themselves

There is research on schools by Chris Dearden at www.carersuk.org/policyandpractice/

How can teachers help young carers?

Speak to known or possible young carers in private, not in front of their peers, to establish what the young carer's needs are and how these may be met.

Teachers should be sensitive to cultural issues. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, www.jrf.org.uk has information about young carers in black families.

Teachers should tell only those staff that need to know, and only with the young person's permission. Three quarters of young carers do not tell their school because they are afraid of people finding out or interfering. Most young carers say they want their teachers to know, but they would not want to be treated any differently.

Teachers should allow young carers to telephone home at break or lunchtime if necessary particularly as not to do so may increase the possibility that a young person would otherwise stay off school at difficult times. Teachers need

to be sensitive and flexible if young carers arrive late or are not always immediately focussed on school work – they may have had to get a parent up, wash, dress and feed them as well as any brothers or sisters before getting themselves to school.

Teachers can help by creating additional opportunities for homework to be completed at lunchtimes. Detentions, should they be given, could also be completed at lunchtime. Teachers should always emphasise the importance of education to young carers and the importance of young carers to schools.

Teachers need to be good listeners, able to listen to the young carer's perspective, and be sensitive to their needs.

Young Carer Workers – going into schools - tips and checks

Make contact with the school you intend to visit well ahead of your intended input. Take with you a copy of the **Introductory** section of this pack to help your initial discussion, especially if the school is not familiar with Young Carers Projects. Explain how you can help and the nature and duration of your contribution to the school. Make it clear how your project can help in the longer term and that a sustainable mutually beneficial relationship is what you are seeking, not a 'quick fix'. Discuss the help you can offer by being available at breaks or lunchtimes so that potential young carers can contact you. Explain why and how the questionnaire for pupils can be used and the importance of teachers being sensitive to the confidential nature of answers.

Establish if the school has a policy on young carers and if so, what it is and also if there is a designated member of staff with responsibility for young carers. Also take a copy of the **Young Carers Partners in Education Support Agreement Form**. Use this to help plan and agree your work in more detail. You will also need copies of a **sample letter for parents** (or the actual letter you have devised) and the **questionnaire for pupils**.

If possible see the physical environment in which you may be working and note availability of such things as power sockets, LCD projector (and check if it will be available for you to use plus anyone who can operate it if there are problems!), places to stick up pieces of flip chart paper etc.

Agree on the handout materials you will use and agree who is going to copy these and make them available at the required times. Don't forget the evaluation form!

Make sure you have contact details before you leave and reconfirm the arrangements at least two working school days (remember holidays!) before going into the school. Make a brief check list the day before you go to school and ensure you have everything to hand that you will need to avoid chaos, confusion and stress on the day! Then all you have to do is enjoy the experience!

Introduction continued

Sample Code of Practice for Working with Schools

Initial contact with a school will take the form of a visit, discussion about our services and operational procedures and, on agreement in principle of work, completion of the **Young Carers Partners in Education Support Agreement Form** to detail the service to be delivered.

Our usual procedure is:

- To inform parents of our work via a school newsletter, or a mail out either by hand via pupils/students or by post.
- Start by delivering an assembly about young carers to a year group or groups.
- Every pupil/student entitled to be at the assembly is asked to complete a questionnaire in their PSHCE lesson. There is detailed **Guidance for Tutors** to assist with this work. Completed questionnaires are treated as confidential and individual forms are placed in an envelope for sealing, in the presence of pupils/students, by the tutor who will then ensure that the collected forms are returned to the Young Carer Project.
- Staff at the Young Carers Project will invite pupils/students identifying themselves as young carers to an informal 5-minute assessment meeting, which is usually held in the school over lunchtime (the school will need to provide a suitable environment in which privacy can be assured). The young person can bring a friend with them if they wish. Teachers are not normally present at this initial meeting but we do ask for a youth worker, school nurse, school counsellor or other non-teacher to be present. Usually, only a small number of self-identifiers will be eligible for our services, which is why we contact parents after the initial assessment.

One of our aims is to facilitate better communication between young carers, their families and teaching staff. We believe that young carers and their families are best supported through effective communication between the family and all agencies involved. We encourage young carers to give us permission to pass appropriate information on to teaching staff.

Sometimes young carers request that their parents are not told that they have contacted us. In these cases, and with the school's permission, we are able to initially meet with young people at school, informally, without telling their parents. However we would aim to build up trust with such a person to encourage them to let us have contact with their parents.

In exceptional cases we are able to communicate with young carers by post or telephone outside of school hours without parental consent. However, we are unable to provide trips, activities or club membership without parental consent.

We will explain to all young people who contact us that whilst we will always treat information given to us as confidential, we will always inform the appropriate authorities or services if:

- We become aware of a Child Protection issue such as the risk of significant harm to a child
- We become aware of an unlawful or potentially unlawful activity.

We can usually adapt these procedures for work with an individual school if necessary. We ask that if you do feel this is necessary that this is requested and resolved **before** we start work in school.

The support we offer young carers varies according to individual choice and need. It includes one-to-one support, mentoring, day trips, weekends away, advice, information, advocacy and, where available, clubs.

We are a resource for schools and teaching staff. We can contribute towards Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) lessons, assemblies, staff support and training (INSET days). We do want teachers and support staff to be closely involved with assemblies and work in lessons.

Young Carers Partners in Education Support Agreement Form

Please read all sections carefully before completing. Patterned shaded areas are for completion by the Young Carer Worker. Solid shaded areas on the right contain words to act as prompts for completing the relevant section.

School Contact person

(name and post): _____

School: _____

Address: _____ tel: _____

_____ fax: _____

_____ mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Young Carers Contact person

(name and post): _____

Address: _____ tel: _____

_____ fax: _____

_____ mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Target group	Numbers	Key stage	Date(s) of sessions	Time(s)	Location e.g. Hall
Pupils/students					
Teachers					
Governors					
Other staff					
Parents					

Learning environment details:

e.g. Space required, floor level – important if carrying equipment or for mobility access, visual amenities etc

Layout of room _____

Equipment needed

Provided by
School / Young carer
service

- Lecture style
- Theatre style
- Formal seating
- Circle
- No seating
- Classroom
- Outdoor space
- Sports Hall
- Power sockets
- Extn cable
- Screen
- Tables
- OHP
- TV/Video
- Computer
- PowerPoint
- Projector
- Flip Chart

How have the following been addressed?	Comment /action (by whom)	
How does input relate to existing work?		Context Policies Guidance Sex and Relationship Education Guidance Confidentiality Behaviour Teacher role Where next?
Relevance and application of school policies		
Relevance and application of national/ LEA guidance		
Appropriateness of materials especially for SRE (See DfEE Circular 0116/2000)		
Ground rules/boundaries		
Confidentiality level		
Role of the teacher/support staff Note: Teacher should always be present		
Follow-up work		
Travel, map, parking, refreshments etc		

Contingency arrangements in the event of late alteration of plans:

Brief evaluation of strengths and weaknesses when work completed:

Comment by Young Carer Worker:

Comment by school/college representative:

Sign and copy the document for each party to keep on record

Signed by Young Carer Worker:

Signed by school/college representative:

Date:

Some key points

- Use the Partners in Education Support Agreement Form as a basis for agreeing your input.



- Note that pupil/student handouts are marked with the following logo:



- Handouts for teachers/schools are similar but with a letter S on:
- Evaluation forms for use after lessons or the whole visit can be copied using the template in this pack.
- Questionnaires for students and a sample letter for parents can be found in this pack. Also a sample of Young Carers Policy for schools.
- A sample Charter for Young Carers is included together with helplines.

Assembly and lessons (overview)

KEY STAGE 2

Assembly (Key Stage 2) In other people's shoes

- The aim is to get pupils to see how other people might live by using shoes as a starting point. You can produce a two-sided document showing all 12 slides in handout fashion to help you remember what's on the CD! Alternatively you could take in items of footwear and use these instead.

Lesson 1 (Key Stage 2) Special people

- This lesson aims to help pupils explore and understand the concept of caring and to help them respect differences between people.
- Read the lesson aims and notes and ensure you have the required resources.

Lesson 2 (Key Stage 2) Special people

- This lesson builds on the previous one and expands the detail of caring.

KEY STAGE 3

Assembly (Key Stage 3) One of a team

- The assembly consists of a PowerPoint presentation that outlines what young carers are and do and how a young carers organisation can help. The examples of two young people in the presentation lead into the first lesson.

Lesson 1 (Key stage 3) Problems at home

- Problems at home use a case study approach to help students explore and empathise with people different to oneself.

Lesson 2 (Key stage 3) What's the answer?

- This is a very interactive session, sharing opinions and acquiring some facts about caring and carers. Needs strong direction to keep everyone on task!

KEY STAGE 4

Assembly (Key stage 4) Who are we? What are our needs?

- This assembly is a PowerPoint presentation defining what a young carer is and highlighting the fact that young carers have the same rights and needs as any young person. It provides the basis and links with the handout on a charter for young carers.

Lesson 1 (Key stage 4)

- This is a Research task that requires students to use the Internet to answer questions and discover more about caring and young carers. You will need to ensure that access to equipment and the Internet is possible before embarking on this lesson.

Lesson 2 (Key stage 4)

- These are case studies to consider the roles and responsibilities that young carers take on.

Aim:

- To help pupils explore and understand the concept of caring

Lessons 1 and 2 relate to the following aspects of the PSHCE curriculum Key Stage 2:

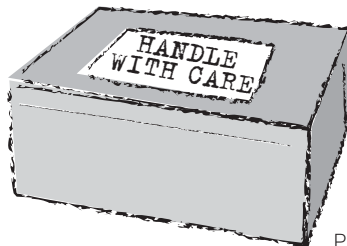
To help pupils develop good relationships and respect differences between people and in part to:

- Understand that differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors, including cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, gender and disability
- Understand about the role of parents and carers and the value of family life
- Begin to care about other people's feelings and see things from their point of view
- Understand where individuals and families can get help and support.

Resources and the learning environment

Class group can be divided into smaller groups of up to five pupils. Groups can be formed by the facilitator naming pupils in rotation as apple, orange, plum, pear and satsuma, then asking pupils of the same fruit name to sit together in the same group.

Each group will need a piece of flip chart paper and a water-based felt tip pen of a dark colour. (Don't use yellow or pink, as this cannot be seen from distance!) You can either put the paper and a pen in the group bases before arranging groups or you can make the first task of the group, once settled, to appoint a) a chairperson, b) a time-keeper, c) a recorder to write down the ideas, d) a spokesperson to report back and e) a 'gofer' – someone to go for the paper and pen which you will have ready for them to collect!



As the facilitator you may find it helpful to have a space or a board/easel to which you can fix the completed pieces of flip chart paper. Decorator's masking tape is useful for sticking flip chart paper to a wall and it doesn't leave a mark or pull paint off, unlike some other solid adhesives sometimes can!

Prepare a parcel – a shoebox wrapped in plain paper will do. Buy or prepare (photocopy the example) and stick on a Handle with care label as shown:

The learning process

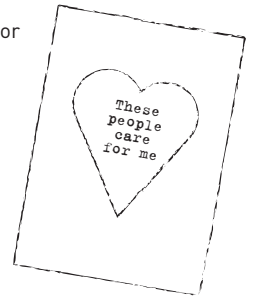
Facilitator to introduce self and remind pupils that they have met before during an assembly. Ask if they recall what organisation you represent and if they remember what the organisation does? Confirm your details by writing them on the flip chart.

Tell the pupils that today you are going to help them think about what caring is, who cares for whom and how they show they care.

Ask pupils if they have seen a label like this before and if so where? What does such a label tell us about the contents of a box that it might be on? How should we treat the contents of such a box? Look for responses that indicate fragility of contents, the need for gentle handling, the need to protect contents etc. Ask who would read the label and be expected to act on it? – Postal workers, delivery people, family members receiving the parcel etc. Finish by indicating that

the label helps us to understand the need to treat the box and its contents with care to avoid damage and to help it get to its destination unharmed.

Now suggest that if each person in every group had a Handle with care label on them, who would read it? Who cares for them? Take a few answers then ask them to draw a heart shape in the centre of their flip chart paper and write inside: These people care for me



Now ask them, in their group, to write, around the heart shape, descriptions (not personal names), of the types of people that care for them now or have cared for them in the past. Remind them that families are different and therefore not all lists will be the same.

The lists may include parents, carers, grandparents, stepparents, boy/girl friends of mum or dad, aunts, uncles, baby sitters, health and education staff, social worker etc.

Ask each group to feed back two responses from their list. Facilitator to build up a composite list on the flip chart commenting on the wide variety of types of people named from those with immediate and close family connections to those with a professional interest in our well-being.

Repeat the process this time asking pupils to draw another heart on another piece of paper and put inside it **This is how people show they care** (demonstrate on the flip chart). Ask pupils to think of all the ways that the people they first listed show that they care.

Take feedback as before; responses may include the following:

- Love me, wash my clothes, feed me, buy me nice things, protect me, help me with school work, teach me, help me get stronger and better, listen to me, cuddle me, play with me, be nice to me if I am poorly, watch me play football/netball/sports, take me out, make me nice meals etc.

Review the responses and reflect that lots of people can care about someone in a personal or even a professional way and that they show they care in many different ways, some more personal than others.

Remind pupils that you represent a young carers organisation. Ask them to think what a young carer might be? Whom might a young carer care for and how? Ask them to discuss this in their groups and try to come up with a definition of a young carer.

Lots of children are helpful. They help their Mum or Dad with things like making tea, washing up or gardening. But some families need their children to do a lot to help them because someone in the family is disabled or ill for a long time. Young carers help relatives with things like getting up, getting washed, taking medication or staying safe.

End by saying that in the next lesson you will be looking at examples of what young carers do. In the meantime tell them (and give them) contact details about your project.

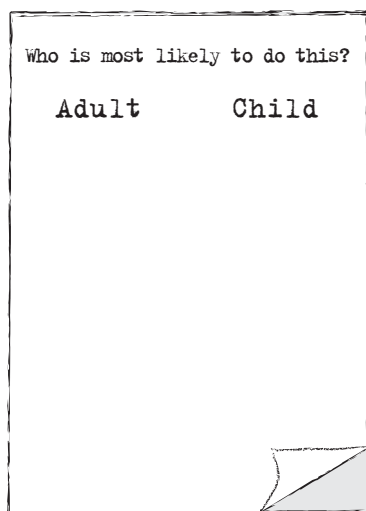
Aim:

- To help pupils explore and understand the concept of caring by considering what tasks, general and personal, may be undertaken and by whom and comparing these to a scenario involving a young carer.

Resources and the learning environment

Facilitator will need to prepare a set of cards using card (preferably but not necessarily) of two different colours with a task written on each one. The first set of tasks can include: washing up, drying pots, dusting, vacuuming, polishing, washing clothes, ironing, cooking, shopping, washing car, feeding a pet, mowing a lawn, gardening, changing a light bulb. The second set of cards on different coloured card can include, feeding someone, giving someone medicine, getting someone out of bed, helping someone into a bath, listening to someone who is unhappy, helping someone get dressed, pushing someone in a wheelchair etc. One card between two pupils would be ideal.

You will also need to prepare a piece of flip chart paper headed like this:



and you will need some masking tape or other adhesive to be able to stick the cards to the flip chart paper. Have some spare sheets of paper and water-based marker pens, enough for groups of four to work with.

The learning process

Facilitator to re-introduce him/herself. Ask if they recall what organisation you represent and if they remember what the organisation does? Ask if anyone can remember the definition or description of a young carer. Show them the definition again.

Tell the pupils that today you are going to help them think about what caring could include, who cares for whom and how they show they care.

Say that you want them to work in pairs and that you are going to give them a card with a task written on it (make sure you have enough cards for the total number of pupils). Say that you will be putting a card face down in front of them and they should only look at it when told and keep the information to themselves. When they look at the information they have to decide

how to role-play what is written on the card. You may need to explain that it's a bit like 'charades' where they demonstrate the task without speaking. The rest of the class has to guess what the task is – hands up, no shouting out! Some tasks will require two people to role-play, some only one. Anyone who does not want to role-play does not have to although they can still take part in deciding how it could be done.

Once they have had chance to look at the cards and decide what to do, invite a pair or a person to start. Position them where they can be seen and encourage them to start. Ask for answers. Ask the role-player(s) if a selected answer is correct. If so stick some tape or other adhesive to the back of the card and invite the pupils, by show of hands, to decide which of the two columns on the flip chart the card should go into. Repeat the process until you have gone through the cards.

At the end look at the flip chart and ask for comments about the balance of tasks – mainly by adults, by children or equally shared? If you used different coloured cards for general tasks and for personal tasks the location of these should be clearly visible and can be commented on.

Now tell the class that you are going to consider a home where the mum has a long-term illness and is in a wheelchair. She has a child, the same age as they are. Now go through the cards on the flip chart again and decide if any need to be positioned in a different location. If need be you can help by giving examples that you know of, of the types of activities young carers carry out. Point out the responsible nature of some of the tasks that a child (young carer) in the scenario carries out and of the personal nature of some of the tasks. Explain that a young carer is someone who takes on more responsibility and more tasks, more frequently than other people of their age.

Now ask each pair to join with another pair next to them and give them a piece of flip chart paper and a water-based marker pen in their foursomes. Ask them to draw a stick type person in the centre of the page and to write around the figure words to describe how a young carer might feel having such responsibilities and tasks (alternatively if time is short you can put up a sheet of flip chart paper yourself, draw the image and ask for responses from the group for you to write up).

Discuss the responses pointing out both negative and positive feelings. End by explaining that the young carers are special people themselves and that they may also want help and care, which is where your organisation can help. Remind them of your contact details and thank them for their participation.

Aim:

To help students develop good relationships and respect differences between people (PSHCE Curriculum KS3) and in particular to:

- Empathise with people different to themselves
- Understand the changing nature of, and pressure on, relationships with friends and family and when and how to seek help
- Understand about the role of parents and carers and the value of family life.

The lesson content

Group work discussion and reporting based on information provided about **Andrew** and **Bloggsy**.

Resources and the learning environment

Four working groups of six to eight students per group will be required. They can either sit, each group in a circle of chairs, or sit on the floor in their group. Either way space will be required so a clear space such as a hall will be best or else, if in a classroom, desks will need to be moved and space created for the four groups to sit down. A quick and easy way to get them into groups is to go round the group naming each individual as either an apple, a pear, an orange or a banana and then asking the apples to work together, the pears to work together etc.

Each group will need a piece of flip chart paper and a (preferably water-based) felt tip pen of a dark colour (don't use yellow or pink, as this cannot be seen from distance!) You can either put the paper and a pen in the group bases before arranging groups or you can make the first task of the group, once settled, to appoint a) a chairperson, b) a time-keeper, c) a recorder to write down the ideas, d) a spokesperson to report back and e) a 'gofer' – someone to go for the paper and pen which you will have ready for them to collect!

As the facilitator you may find it helpful to have a space or a board/easel to which you can fix the completed pieces of flip chart paper. Decorator's masking tape is useful for sticking flip chart paper to a wall and it doesn't leave a mark or pull paint off, unlike some other solid adhesives sometimes can!

The learning process

Give two groups Case Study 1, **Andrew** and the other two groups, Case Study 2, **Bloggsy**. Explain that two groups have Case Study 1 and the other two groups have Case Study 2. Tell them that **Andrew** is a 15 year old carer looking after his mum and his sister. **Bloggsy** is also 15 years old and has problems at school with behaviour and

learning. There is additional information and tasks for the group to do listed on each Case Study.

They should read the information and respond to the questions by discussing and agreeing what to write on the flip chart paper. Tell them they have around 10 minutes to do this.

Once the task has been completed invite each group reporter in turn to present their findings – get them to come to stand in a position where they can be seen by all; if necessary get another student from the reporter's own group to hold up the flip chart paper if it can't be stuck up anywhere. As the reporter feeds back the group response the facilitator, other students or teacher can ask for clarification of any points.

Once all groups have reported and results have been displayed you can tell them that **Andrew** and **Bloggsy** are in fact one and the same person, **Andrew Bloggs**.

The task now is for the class to discuss how **Andrew Bloggs'** problems at home affected his life both at school and home and how he could best get help. This can be done by question and answer or by giving out the sheet with the relevant questions on, one to each group. Again they can use another piece of flip chart paper to record their answers, which can then be reported back. The facilitator may choose which method to use depending on the available time and the dynamics of the groups.

End with a definition of a young carer, e.g.

Young carers are children who help to look after someone in their family who is disabled, very poorly, or who has a problem with drugs or alcohol. Some young carers look after a brother or sister, some look after their Mum or Dad and some look after a grandparent or someone else close to them. Most young people help out in their family, but young carers have to do so much to help out that it can make things like seeing friends or doing school work difficult for them.

Case study 2 Bloggsy

P

'Bloggsy' is 15. He used to do all right at school, but for the last couple of years he has been absent once or twice a week. He always gets low marks and never hands his homework in on time. He gets angry very quickly and hits people if he feels they are getting at him. He has been in trouble with the police.

- Make a list of things that may be going on in Bloggsy's life at the moment that may be influencing the way he is behaving

- Make a list of the things that Bloggsy might be feeling at the moment

- What should the school do about Bloggsy?

Aim:
To help students to:

- Develop knowledge, skills and understanding through meeting and working with people, e.g. Young Care Workers, who can give them reliable information about health and safety issues.
- Consider social and moral dilemmas.
- Find information and advice about a range of health issues and to prepare for change, for example by anticipating problems caused by changing family relationships.

The lesson content

Small group work questions and answers with whole group discussion to follow.

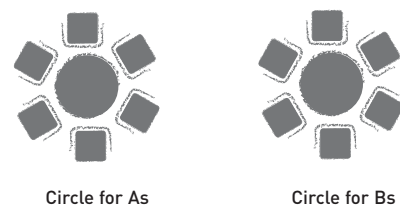
Resources and the learning environment

Preparation – you will need to have already prepared two questions for each seated person per group – see question sheet for examples. The first set of seated people will require a question – the set of questions can be the same for each group. The second set of seated people, created by those who are seated initially changing places with those standing at first, will then require a question each. Flip chart paper and a pen is an optional extra.

You will also need to prepare the learning environment. You will need space to have two circles of chairs facing outwards with enough chairs for half the group, i.e. probably more than are shown here! (Fig 1).

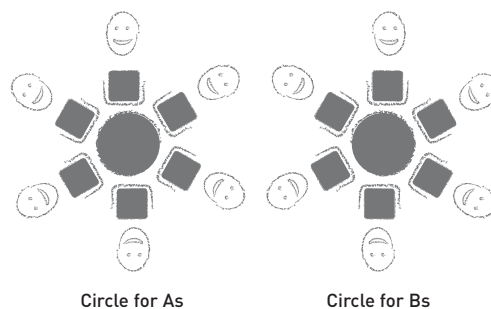
Divide the group into half and half again; do this by assigning a number one or a number two to each person – i.e. one, two, one, two. Ask all the ones to get together and all the twos to get together. Ask the group numbered one to line up in single file facing the seats. Go along the line identifying each person as A or B. Ask As to sit on the chairs in one circle and Bs to sit on the chairs in the other circle.

Fig 1. Two circles of chairs facing outwards



With the remaining half of the group, repeat the dividing process only this time the As and Bs stand opposite and facing a seated person. (Fig 2)

Fig 2.



The learning process

Explain that what is going to happen is that each seated person will be given a question, which they will put to the person standing opposite them. However, the person standing opposite them will change every two or three minutes. The seated person has to try to remember the answers the different standing partners have given them to the one question they have put. When the questions have been answered a discussion will follow.

Give each seated person a question (see list; make some more up of your own if you want). The task is for the seated person to ask the person opposite, standing, a question and for the standing person to provide an answer. Although it is okay for someone to say they genuinely do not know they should be encouraged to think about the question and try to work out an answer. Give them either two or three minutes, but no longer, to do this. Stop the groups after the allotted time – timekeeping could be a job for the odd person out if there's an uneven number! The standing people should then move one place clockwise to their left and be prepared for their seated partner to ask their question (which will be of course the same one they have asked previously and will continue to ask for the duration of this round).

Once the standing people have moved round the circle ask the seated person to keep hold of their question and put it in their pocket if possible. Get them to change places with the standing person opposite. Give each newly seated person a new question. Repeat the carousel process.

Once all questions have been answered bring the smaller groups together into one large group. First of all ask the class how they think they should behave when others are talking out loud in response to questions? Use these comments as a basis for ground rules. If you like you can write them on a piece of flip chart paper or a board.

In turn ask students to read out their question and ask them to recall some of the answers. As it is likely that someone in the other group will have had the same or similar question, check their answers at the same time. See if they can spot different answers to the same questions; challenge them to think why the responses might have been different. Suggest that as sometimes friends or peers don't always know the right answers, asking an adult who might know or who could find out is no bad idea. Check out the confidentiality rules that teachers abide by and the different ones that school nurses can abide by when dealing with individuals in a 'Drop in' facility but not in a classroom setting. Discussion might centre on how hard it can be to talk about personal issues; how difficult it might be for some people to trust others with sensitive information and

how this might be resolved with careful and considered responses by friends and caring adults.

There are some suggested answers included in this section.

End the session by giving out evaluation forms for the students to complete and return immediately. Then give out a 'Helplines' handout. Remind students of where to access help through your Young Carers' Project.

Don't forget to put the seats/room back to normal before you leave unless otherwise advised!

Previous lessons of this type have shown that:

- Young people are quite likely to keep any problem at home to themselves
- If they did tell anyone it would most likely be a friend or a brother or sister
- They find asking help from adults scary, embarrassing and disempowering
- Most friends, when asked, would like to help with the problem mentioned
- Most students do not understand the rules of confidentiality; that teachers cannot give blanket assurances of confidentiality but school nurses in a clinical setting, not in a general classroom discussion, usually can
- They were not aware that Childline does not inform police about child abuse
- They did think that teachers would always circulate information about a student's home circumstances and problems
- Many students did not appreciate the difference between a school nurse and a First Aider
- Having teachers on board and part of the lesson helped to allay some of the students' fears especially where teachers were able to clarify the school's confidentiality policy

What's the question?

Questions for the carousel exercise

P

Copy these sheets and cut up the questions so that you have one question for every person in the class.

- 1 How old should you be to help your mum or dad take their medication?
- 2 If someone gets into a fight at school because they have problems at home, should school treat them the same as anyone else who fights?
- 3 Is it true that most young people don't want other people to know about their problems at home?
- 4 Is it ever OK to tell other people something that your friend wanted you to keep secret?
- 5 Is it easier for girls to talk about problems at home than it is for boys?
- 6 Are people who have a disability as good at being parents as people who do not have a disability?
- 7 Do disabled parents need help with being parents? In what ways?
- 8 How do you think it feels to have a parent who drinks a lot?
- 9 What is a mental health problem?
- 10 How can you tell when someone has a drink problem?
- 11 What should be done for a child if both their parents have a mental health problem?
- 12 How might it feel for someone who has a brother or sister who has difficulties in learning?
- 13 How might it feel to have a parent who uses drugs?

What's the question?

Questions for the carousel exercise continued

P

- 14 Should older brothers or sisters look after the youngest brothers or sisters when the parents are ill?
- 15 Are young carers more likely to be girls or boys? Give some reasons
- 16 Are people who have a mental health problem as good parents as people who don't?
- 17 Are people who have a drink problem as good parents as those who haven't got a drink problem?
- 18 Should a young person lift his/her mum if she is a wheelchair user?
- 19 What should a young person do if an adult in the family has a problem with drugs?
- 20 Do young carers want to stop caring? Explain your answer
- 21 Do young carers get bullied more than other young people? Explain your answer
- 22 Do schools know when someone is a young carer? Explain your answer
- 23 How old does someone have to be to be able to do the cooking safely?
- 24 If someone is having problems at home, how might you be able to tell?
- 25 What is more important, getting an education or helping someone in your family who has a serious illness?
- 26 What should you do for your friend if you know they are having problems at home?
- 27 What help might a young carer need?
- 28 Who can help a young carer?

What's the question?

Questions for the carousel exercise continued

P

- 29 Is it OK for someone to miss school to look after a disabled parent?
- 30 How can you tell if your friend is depressed?
- 31 What details will Childline want to know from someone who calls them?
- 32 If someone told a teacher that their stepfather had a drink problem, who would the teacher have to tell, if anyone?
- 33 Who can call the Samaritans?
- 34 If Social Services find out that a child is being hit by his/her parents what will they do?
- 35 Can a school nurse in a Drop in Centre keep things that pupils tell them private and confidential?
- 36 What might stop young people from asking for help with problems they are having?
- 37 Who can get help from a Young Carers' Project?
- 38 If a 14-year-old girl is pregnant, will her doctor tell her parents?
- 39 If a child tells Childline that they are being abused, will Childline tell the police?
- 40 Will teachers always pass on anything you tell them to other people, especially the head teacher?

What's the question? (Answers)

Questions and guidance for answers to the carousel exercise

- 1 How old should you be to help your mum or dad take their medication?**
A. No legal age exists. Does the class think it's safe for children to do this task?
- 2 If someone gets into a fight at school because they have problems at home, should school treat them the same as anyone else who fights?**
A. It depends on the school policy but every incident should be dealt with on its merits and schools should be alert to victims of bullying, prejudice, discrimination etc.
- 3 Is it true that most young people don't want other people to know about their problems at home?**
A. Often people are unsure about how others might react and are afraid of being made fun of. But lots of young people say that they would like to help their friends if they could.
- 4 Is it ever OK to tell other people something that your friend wanted you to keep secret?**
A. Your friend might be very upset with you and never trust you again. But if they have told you something that makes you very worried about them, you might need to get an adult's help to keep them safe. What does the class think about this?
- 5 Is it easier for girls to talk about problems at home than it is for boys?**
A. Many young people will say that it is easier for girls to admit to feelings like fear or sadness, whereas boys will feel they have to pretend to be 'hard' or 'strong'. Is this true? Why should it be like this? Is a stronger person one who can admit and confront their feelings and share them?
- 6 Are people who have a disability as good at being parents as people who do not have a disability?**
A. Disabled people are all different, like anyone else. Many young carers tell us that their parents are brilliant, even though their disability may prevent them from being as actively involved in some things compared to able-bodied parents.
- 7 Do disabled parents need help with being parents? In what ways?**
A. Some do, some don't. They may need more help to get to places where parents meet, such as Parents' Evenings at school, particularly if they have a mobility problem.
- 8 How do you think it feels to have a parent who drinks a lot?**
A. Children may often be frightened and worried about the health of the person who is drinking and about the safety of everyone in the family especially if the person who is drinking becomes violent and abusive. They may feel like they have to keep it a secret – should they?
- 9 What is a mental health problem?**
A. A problem or illness which affects the way someone feels or thinks. About one in four people will have a mental health problem at some time in their lives. This includes eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia nervosa, depression, anxiety, obsessions and phobias.
- 10 How can you tell when someone has a drink problem?**
A. They may be drinking every day and at all times of the day. Drinking is more important than most other things in their life and they neglect to eat properly or to look after their appearance, for example. Some people hide drink problems very effectively – why?
- 11 What should be done for a child if both their parents have a mental health problem?**
A. There are very good support services that can help the child – and the family – understand and cope with whatever mental issues exist.
- 12 How might it feel for someone who has a brother or sister who has difficulties in learning?**
A. Some young carers tell us that they are very proud of their disabled siblings and have lots of fun with them. Lots of siblings have a love-hate relationship and this is true of siblings who are disabled too. Some feel embarrassed that others might know if they think their own friends will be unsympathetic to them. This is why good friends who don't judge and are accepting of situations are helpful.
- 13 How might it feel to have a parent who uses drugs?**
A. Children in these circumstances may feel frightened, concerned about their health and well-being, worried about them breaking the law. They may be concerned that if anyone in authority gets to know the family might be broken up (although this is the very last resort for helping agencies).
- 14 Should older brothers or sisters look after the youngest brothers or sisters when the parents are ill?**
A. There is no given reason why they should, although it may just appear to be the easiest option if no other adult member of the family can help. However if this results in difficulties at school it's better for helping agencies to be approached to see what support can be given to allow the young carer to get on with their education with less disruption.

What's the question? (Answers)

Questions and guidance for answers to the carousel exercise

- 15 **Are young carers more likely to be girls or boys? Give some reasons.**
A. Girls are slightly more likely to be young carers than boys (56% to 44%). Why might this be? Is it fair?
- 16 **Are people who have a mental health problem as good parents as people who don't?**
A. They may be, it depends on the level of mental health problem and how much support the individual is getting as to how able they are to cope with the demands of parenting.
- 17 **Are people who have a drink problem as good parents as those who haven't got a drink problem?**
A. They may be but again it depends on the behaviour of the parent when drinking; they may behave like anyone else, or their behaviour may be unsafe when they are drinking.
- 18 **Should a young person lift his/her mum if she is a wheelchair user?**
A. They may feel they have to because no one else is around to help, however there is a real risk of a young person developing a back problem and injuring themselves which is why additional support should be investigated.
- 19 **What should a young person do if an adult in their family has a problem with drugs?**
A. Learn about the drugs and the possible effects they may have. Talk about concerns one has if it is possible. Have an emergency telephone contact to hand in the event of need. Talk to someone either first hand or via the telephone – e.g. a drugs helpline, Samaritans, Childline or Talk to Frank. It's never the young person's fault and it's not up to them to stop their family member taking drugs.
- 20 **Do young carers want to stop caring? Explain your answer.**
A. Not usually as a lot of young carers tell us they feel proud about the help they give. But they do want to have fun, relax and have a childhood like anyone else so supporting them in achieving this without harming the level of care provided is a way forward.
- 21 **Do young carers get bullied more than other young people? Explain your answer.**
A. Young carers often get bullied, sometimes more than other people. It may be because their peers see them or their families as different, or because they have to spend time caring rather than playing.
- 22 **Do schools know when someone is a young carer? Explain your answer.**
A. Not always. Sometimes they may be told but often they will only find out in response to signs, often negative, that draw attention to an individual. This is why it's a good idea for a school to ask any pupils new to the school if they have a family member who needs care and for schools to have a member of staff who can be the first point of call for any young carer issue.
- 23 **How old does someone have to be to be able to do the cooking safely?**
A. There is no legal age but obviously only if someone is mature enough and capable of using utensils and equipment safely would such activity be appropriate.
- 24 **If someone is having problems at home, how might you be able to tell?**
A. They may be late for school quite often and once there be anxious, worried about home, unusually quiet, angry or moody (like Andrew Bloggs). Some people hide their concerns however.
- 25 **What is more important, getting an education or helping someone in your family who has a serious illness?**
A. Both are important but getting an education is very important to someone growing up. That's why it's important to get all the help you can when something is getting in the way of school.
- 26 **What should you do for your friend if you know they are having problems at home?**
A. Be there for them. Tell them they can talk to you if they want to. Treat them as normally as possible.
- 27 **What help might a young carer need?**
A. Lots, from a listening ear, practical support such as a negotiated and reasonable time for homework, (or detention!), friends, etc.
- 28 **Who can help a young carer?**
A. Friends, teachers, professional support services.
- 29 **Is it OK for someone to miss school to look after a disabled parent?**
A. Whilst it may be unavoidable on odd occasions it is not a good solution for long periods, so the family needs to get help from a Young Carers Service.

What's the question? (Answers)

Questions and guidance for answers to the carousel exercise

- 30 How can you tell if your friend is depressed?**
A. They might be unusually quiet, angry or moody, (like Andrew Bloggs). They might not show any signs at all – some people are very good at hiding their worries even from people who know them well (you may want to ask whoever has the other “How can you tell if...?” questions to read those out next).
- 31 What details will Childline want to know from someone who calls them?**
A. Childline will ask if you want to give them a first name or to make one up. If you don't want to give a first name, that's fine. What you tell them is entirely up to you. You may want to ask whoever has the other 'Childline question' to read that out next.
- 32 If someone told a teacher that their stepfather had a drink problem, who would the teacher have to tell, if anyone?**
A. Refer to your own school policy. Teachers will think about how best to help you and will only tell members of staff that need to know – that might mean your form tutor or Head of Year. Unless you had said that your step dad hurts or threatens to hurt you when he drinks, teachers would not have to take action to keep you safe. Teachers will usually keep you informed of who they have to share information about you and your circumstances with and why.
- 33 Who can call the Samaritans?**
A. Anyone, and anyone calling Samaritans can talk about any problem they have.
- 34 If Social Services find out that a child is being hit by his/her parents what will they do?**
A. This depends on the individual situation – ‘hitting’ can mean anything from a smack that might not harm a child to a punch that causes a bruise or a cut. Social Services will talk to the child and the parents and will try to find a way in which the child can stay at home safely – this might mean that they visit the home from time to time. If there is no way that the child can stay at home safely, Social Services might have to find somewhere safe for that child to live until it is safe for them to return home.
- 35 Can a school nurse in a Drop in Centre keep things that pupils tell them private and confidential?**
A. Ask the class who their school nurse is? It may be that they confuse a school First Aider/matron with a school nurse. The First Aider follows the same school policies and rules that teachers do. The school nurse, when operating a ‘drop in session’ follows the rules that doctors have, which means that they can keep things that a child tells them confidential (unless it appears that the child is in imminent danger say, of abuse). If a school nurse is working in the classroom with a class of pupils he or she is then bound by the school rules.
- 36 What might stop young people from asking for help with problems they are having?**
A. Embarrassment, fear of teasing, fear of people interfering, not being sure what rules adults in different jobs have to stick to when young people tell them things – hopefully it will be easier to ask for help now that/after we have discussed the different rules for teachers, youth workers, doctors and school nurses.
- 37 Who can get help from a Young Carers' Project?**
A. Refer to local info. Anyone who is looking after someone at home can get in touch with their local Young Carers Service to find out what is available.
- 38 If a 14-year-old girl is pregnant, will her doctor tell her parents?**
A. The law says that the doctor must not tell her parents – everything you tell a doctor is private whatever age you are. If the girl was being abused or in danger the doctor would have to inform social services, but not her parents. You may want to ask whoever has the ‘school nurse question’ to read that one out next
- 39 If a child tells Childline that they are being abused, will Childline tell the police?**
A. No, Childline has a rule of absolute confidentiality, unless a caller's life is in immediate danger. You may want to ask whoever has the other 'Childline question' to read that out next.
- 40 Will teachers always pass on anything you tell them to the head teacher?**
A. Not always. A teacher would have to judge if it was in a child's best interest to pass information on and would only normally do so having discussed the ‘what and why’ with the child first. Sometimes school policies do require teachers to pass information on to someone like a Head of Year or Head Teacher.

Aim:

To help students, in part:

- To identify the causes, symptoms and treatments for stress and depression and ... to identify strategies for prevention and management
- To seek professional advice confidently and find information about health
- To know about the statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships in crisis.

The lesson content

Lesson 1 is a research task using the young carers' website to find answers to questions raised by 5 tasks (see separate sheets).

Website address for the lesson:
www.youngcarers.net

Resources and the learning environment

Students will need access to a computer and the Internet and each will require a photocopied set of the Research tasks 1-5. You will need to also have copied for each student, the single page with answers on to Task 5 (Who's who? How did you do?)

The learning process

Students to work in pairs; each individual needs a set of research task papers. Allocate each pair a different starting point, e.g. Pair 1 to start with Task 1, Pair 2 with Task 2, Pair 3 with Task 3 and so on to ensure that all tasks will be completed during the lesson.

Explain that the tasks relate to finding out about some problems, disabilities or conditions that impair some adult's lives and how these may impact upon a young person who might be caring for a parent who is affected by any of these. Encourage students to explore the site to find answers to their tasks and also to look at the support mechanisms in place to help a young carer.

Take feedback from pairs taking care to cover all scenarios; give out the answers sheet to Task 5. Remind everyone of your organisation and contact point and of the young carers' website, www.youngcarers.net

End with a definition of a young carer:

A young carer is a young person who helps to look after someone in their family who has a disability, physical or mental health problem, or a problem with drugs or alcohol. Young carers look after parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents or someone else close to them. Most young people help out in their family, but young carers have responsibilities like helping someone who uses a wheelchair, giving someone their medication or staying in to keep someone safe.

Task 1

P

Scenario: A parent uses drugs or drinks too much alcohol so that there's little money in the home, life is pretty chaotic, meals might or might not be prepared and there might not even be enough food to go round sometimes.

Imagine a young person of your age being a child of this family. Using the website www.youngcarers.net look for information about drugs and alcohol to think about what a young person in this situation might feel and to identify three organisations/people that may be able to help.

Mum/dad ... I want you to know that it's OK if you...

Mum/dad ... I want you to know that it's **NOT** OK if you...

List three organisations/people that could help either parent(s) or child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Task 2

P

Scenario: A parent suffers from depression. Using the website www.youngcarers.net look for information about mental illness and clarify, in the boxes below, the differences between depression, anxiety and obsessions:

Depression is ...

Anxiety is ...

An obsession is ...

Schizophrenia is ...

List three organisations/people that could help either parent(s) or child:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Extra! You could look at www.changeourminds.com and try the Stress Test!

Scenario: Using the website www.youngcarers.net look for information about the following illnesses, any of which may be present in situations where a young person has to help care for their parent.

Cancer

What is it?

How might it be treated?

What is RipRap?

MS

What is it?

How can MS affect people?

List three types of people who may be able to help someone with MS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Task 4 Disabilities

P

Disabilities. Using the website www.youngcarers.net look for information about learning disabilities and clarify, in the boxes below, the differences between the following:

A learning disability is ...

Autism is ...

Down's syndrome is ...

List three organisations/people that could help someone who had one of these conditions or a person caring for them:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Task 5 Who's who?

P

Who's who? There are lots of people and organisations that can help carers and their families. See if you can find out what the following people or organisations offer:

- NHS Direct 0845 46 47

- District Nurse

- Health Visitor

- Community Psychiatric Nurse or CPN

- Social Worker or Care Manager

- Occupational Therapist

- Physiotherapist

- Home care (Home Help or Home Carer)

- Chiropodist / Podiatrist

Anyone who calls at a house saying they are from any of these organisations must carry an identity card. The person answering the door can ask to see it and if in doubt should keep them out and ring their office to check if they are genuine.

Task 5 Who's who? How did you do?

P

Who's who? How did you do?

■ NHS Direct 0845 46 47

NHS Direct is a round the clock telephone helpline for medical matters. Specially trained nurses answer the telephone lines, ask questions to help identify the problem and then suggest a solution, including getting an ambulance if necessary.

■ District Nurse

District Nurses cover a local patch, visiting people in their own homes to change dressings, give medication, offer advice and support and even arrange for special equipment to be made available.

■ Health Visitor

Health Visitors specialise in the care and well-being of babies in parent's own homes. They usually work out of a local doctor's surgery.

■ Community Psychiatric Nurse or CPN

CPNs specialise in working with people who have a mental illness. They can give medicines, including injections, and can offer counselling to the person who is ill. They tend to work with people in their own homes.

■ Social Worker or Care Manager

Social workers help individuals and families to get the care and support they may need. They provide advice and practical help on a range of matters from benefits eligibility to how to get hold of specialist equipment. They can speak with people, including young carers, in confidence about matters that are bothering them.

■ Occupational Therapist

OTs can make home visits or they may work within a hospital department. They can help people to learn how to do things safely and easier, for example, lifting heavy things, using a bath or stairs. They can also advise people on exercises and activities to help their condition and may be able to provide specialist equipment.

■ Physiotherapist

Physiotherapists can visit disabled or ill people at home and help them with exercises to either stop their condition worsening or to improve it.

■ Home care (Home Help or Home Carer)

A Home Carer is someone employed to visit the home of a disabled or ill person to help with specific things such as getting up, bathing, washing, toileting or other practical things. Their help enables the recipient of their service to stay in their own home for longer rather than go into hospital or residential care.

■ Chiropodist / Podiatrist

Both these terms refer to someone who looks after feet. Often older people suffer with 'bad feet' and can no longer bend to cut their toenails, for example. They may also suffer from corns and bunions and other problems, which these specialist workers can help with.

This is not an exhaustive list – there are doctors, Care Attendants, Specialist Social Workers for the deaf and hard of hearing and for the visually impaired as well as Benefits Agency staff, any of whom may be able to help. Any local Citizen's Advice Bureau can provide details.

Aim:

To help students to:

- Explore in detail what a young carer does
- Understand better the problems and concerns that a young carer may be experiencing
- Identify ways in which they may be able to help someone who is a young carer.

The lesson content

Lesson 2 uses a Case Study approach to identify the roles and responsibilities some young carers take on and to reflect on how these might impact on the young carers' lifestyle, health and well being.

Resources and the learning environment

Each group (suggested group size, no more than four) will need a Case Study and a Case Study response sheet.

The learning process

Put students in groups of four. You can do this by dividing the total number of students by four then go around the group numbering individuals, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7, assuming there were 28 in the group; get all the number 1s to work together, the number 2s etc.

Explain that you will give each group a Case Study that relates to a young person having to care for someone in their family. They need to read the Case Study, discuss what is happening and agree answers to the questions on the Case Study response sheet. If one group finishes ahead of others you can give them another Case Study.

After the responses have been completed, take feedback. In particular draw out the real responsibilities that young carers in the Case Studies actually have and how their own opportunities for friendship, leisure, extra curricular and even ordinary schoolwork may be restricted by the tasks they do. Ask how they could help and support a person of their age who is a young carer.

End with a definition of a young carer (see Lesson 1 KS4 page 26) and a reminder of your organisation and how it can help. Thank them for participating.

■ Case Study 1

Joanne (14)

Joanne has cared alone for her father who has had severe mental health problems for several years. Her father's condition is controlled by medication; however he is often reluctant to take it. When he takes his medication, he is a great dad, but when he does not take it he can become irrational and unpredictable. It is difficult for Joanne to always check that her father takes all of his medication at the correct times. Joanne's father has tried to commit suicide in the past and she has a constant fear that he may do so again. She finds it hard to cope with the effects of his depression and unpredictable behaviour. Sometimes Joanne has missed school in an effort to ensure her father is safe.

■ Case Study 2

Jimmy (16)

Jimmy lives with his mother and 11-year-old sister. Jimmy's mother has MS which means that some days she cannot walk. Jimmy carries out some caring responsibilities for his mother but he gets fed up and wants his younger sister to do more. Jimmy's caring duties include some household jobs like cleaning but also personal tasks such as helping his mum to get up, get dressed and use the toilet. His mum says she feels very guilty about the help that Jimmy has to give her but Social Services will only give her 2 hours of help a day. Jimmy takes out some of his frustration with the situation on his teachers and he has been warned he might get excluded.

■ Case Study 3

Gary (12)

Gary cares for his brother (7) who has a learning disability called Cerebral Palsy. It makes it hard for him to understand some things and it affects his speaking and walking. Gary's parents both go out to work so he has to do some household jobs on a regular daily basis, such as cleaning and washing up, sorting out the dustbins and recycling bottles and cans etc. Mainly he spends his time playing with his brother and sometimes dressing and bathing him or helping him use the toilet. Gary attends school full-time although not always as regularly as he should. He doesn't feel able to stay behind for any clubs/activities.

Tell us what you think!

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Lesson evaluation

Brilliant or rubbish? We want to know!



Please tick Male or Female

Thanks for taking part in the lesson. We would like to know what you thought of it. Please answer the questions and hand this sheet back to your teacher.

When you have answered all the questions fold the sheet in half to keep your answers private. We will treat everything you tell us as private.

1. What did you think of the lesson?

2. What did you learn?

3. What was the best bit? (and why?)

4. What was the worst bit? (and why?)

5. Do you help to look after someone at home? If 'yes' can you tell us a little more about your relationship with that person, e.g. mother, and what you do to help?

6. Do you want us to send you information about Young Carers?

7. Do you want us to get in touch?

OPTIONAL QUESTION

My name is:

My Form is:

If you want us to ring you at home please give a telephone number including the area code:

Young Carers' Project

Student questionnaires: Guidance for tutors

The questionnaires are to be completed by every pupil/student in the year group regardless of whether or not they are seen as or see themselves as young carers. Prior to them being completed it will be helpful if tutors:

Remind students about the assembly on young carers, particularly that young carers are:

- Children and young people who look after someone at home
- They may look after a parent, grandparent, brother or sister
- The person they look after may have a disability, an illness, a mental health problem or difficulties with alcohol or other drugs
- Young carers may help someone to get up, get washed, dressed, fed and make sure that medicine is taken properly
- Young carers may also shop, do housework or just be there for someone
- Young carers often face isolation, stress and may have difficulties in learning and achieving at school
- Young carers may want to keep quiet about their situation because they fear separation, disruption, interference or just want to fit in with their peers
- A Young Carers' Project can help young carers and their families in getting assistance with household tasks or finding people to help care for someone. A Young Carers' Project can help young carers to have a break, to meet other people of their own age or just to have someone to talk to. Young Carers' Projects will do as much or as little as the young carer wants.

The Young Carers' Project wants young people to feel safe in giving information about any caring duties they have at home. To this end it will be helpful if you can ensure as much personal privacy as possible whilst the forms are being filled in – for example ensuring no discussion takes place, that the forms are filled in individually not in pairs or groups.

Once everyone has finished, please allow students to place their own form in a sealed envelope (one per class), with the form number, the date and the number of absentees written on the envelope. Please return the envelope to the collection point/person. We would like all forms even if a student has not identified themselves as carers.

Thank you for your help. If you have any further queries please contact

or

on

Young Carers' Project

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Student questionnaire

Oi!
Read me!

Thanks for listening to us at assembly. Please answer these questions, which are about looking after someone at home. It's not a test, and we will keep your answers private!

My name is

My form is..... My age is.....

Answer
only if you
want to!

Please tell us about anyone in your family who has a disability, illness, or drug/alcohol problem.

Tick as
many
boxes as
you like!

Are you helping to look after someone at home? Yes No

Mum Dad My brother(s)

My sister(s) A grandparent

Someone else.....

Do you ever want any help? Often Sometimes Never

Please tick the boxes next to any jobs you do at home. If you do something that is not on the list, please write it in the space below.

I help someone to get around. I help someone to wash, bath or shower.

I do lots of jobs around the house like washing up, cooking, cleaning or washing clothes. I stay in a lot to be there for someone.

I do something else to help:.....

We will be in school on ____day lunchtime. If you have told us about looking after someone at home, we will invite you to drop in to see us. We would like to tell you about the help (and fun activities!) we offer.

If you want to call us, you can ringon or you can write your phone number here if you want us to ring you:

My telephone code and number is:

Young Carers' Project

Dear Parent

XYZ Young Carers' Project is an independent, local charity that provides free activities, help and advice to children and young people who:

Help to look after someone at home or:

Have a family member who is affected by disability, illness, alcohol or drugs.

We recently visited school to talk about our project and again to meet with individual pupils and students. After talking with your son / daughter it seems likely that they may be eligible for some of our free activities, if you would like them to take part. We can usually offer:

Trips out, activities and a club that meets regularly

Advice for the whole family on things like benefits and getting help

Information about local support groups and on particular health issues

Someone who listens!

It's up to you!

We will:

Ring you Write to you Wait for you to contact us

If you wish we can visit you and tell you more about what the Young Carers' Project does. After we have visited, you may decide that you do not want our services at this time – that's fine, we will respect your decision.

In the meantime if you want to get in touch please ring the following number and ask for _____ or _____

Tel:

Yours sincerely

We are children and young people who are also carers.

We believe we should have the same rights as other children and young people, including the rights to:

Be children as well as carers

Schools and colleges that give us the help we need

Fun, friends and time off from caring

Family life with well-supported parents

Practical help and support so that we don't have to do all of the caring in our homes

A safe environment and protection from harm, including any harm that caring activities could cause us

Services that value our different backgrounds, cultures, religions, races and sexualities

Be listened to and supported by people who support our parents and brothers and sisters

An assessment of what we need as individuals, without any assumptions being made about us

Be listened to and involved when people make decisions which affect our lives

Information about the health problems that we see our family members experiencing

Advocacy and complaints procedures which we can understand and which work

Stop taking on caring roles when we wish to move on and become independent adults

School ethos Statement for pupils and families

At we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education, regardless of what is happening at home. When a young person looks after someone in their family who has a serious illness, disability or substance misuse problem, he or she may need a little extra support to help him or her get the most out of school. This Young Carers' Policy says how we will help any pupil who helps to look after someone at home.

Our school:

- Has a member of staff* with special responsibility for young carers and lets all new pupils know who they are and what they can do to help.
- Runs a session on the challenges faced by young carers in PSHCE in Year ____.
- Can put young carers in touch with the local Young Carers' Service. We can also put families in touch with other support services.
- Is accessible to parents who have mobility and communication problems.
- Respects your right to privacy and will only share information about you and your family with people who need to know to help you.
- Will consider alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities e.g. detention, sports coaching, concerts, due to their caring role.
- Allows young carers to telephone home during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Can give parents advice about how to get their children into school where transport is a problem.

* see School Prospectus

Defining a young carer

A young carer is under 18 years of age and helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well being. The level of responsibility assumed by a young carer is often inappropriate to their age and at a level beyond simply helping out with jobs at home, which is a normal part of growing up.

Identifying a young carer

Unless the school is advised about a pupil's home circumstances, young carers risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Some young carers worry about bullying or interference in their family life and may seek to conceal their role from their peers and from teachers.

Some of the warning signs that might indicate that a pupil has unrecognised responsibilities are:

- Regular lateness or unauthorised absence, possibly increasing
- Tiredness in school
- Erratic response to homework with incomplete, late or non-compliance to set tasks
- Lack of concentration, anxiety or worry
- Under-achievement for potential capability
- Behavioural problems, especially inappropriate responses possibly resulting from anger or frustration
- Few or no peer friendships but possibly with a good relationship with adults and presenting as very mature for their age
- Victim of bullying, perhaps linked to a family member's disability or state of health, e.g. substance misuse problem or due to young carer not being perceived by peers as dressing in the latest fashion
- Lack of interest in extra curricular activities, especially after school
- Apparent parental disinterest due to non-attendance at parent's meetings.

Example of a Young Carer's Policy for Schools

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The above may be indicators of a range of problems, some not associated with caring, however in dealing with any pupil exhibiting any of the signs staff should consider asking the pupil if they are helping to look after someone at home. Staff should also enquire from colleagues with pastoral responsibilities for the pupil. Education Welfare Officers and Education Social Workers together with pastoral support staff investigating pupils causing concern should also countenance the possibility of caring roles, especially when working directly with family members. Any concerns about a pupil who may be considered an as yet unidentified young carer should be reported to the member of staff with responsibility for young carers as should new information about already identified young carers. The member of staff responsible for co-ordinating young carer support is the key person in school through which relevant matters need to be passed.

It is much better to start from a positive base so our enrolment process will seek to establish if:

- The pupil has parents/relatives with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health problems
- The pupil has a responsibility for looking after that person over and beyond normal inter-personal relationships within a caring family setting
- The family is in contact with a support service that could help reduce their reliance on the pupil.

Some families will choose not to disclose this information. Any information gained as a result of this process will be held on the pupil's personal file, kept securely and made available in the first instance to the young carers' co-ordinator. We will respect the right to privacy and will only share information about young carers and their families with people who need to know in order to be able to help. Before sharing information with anyone else, we will seek consent from the young carer or, if they are not able to understand, from a parent.

Children Act 1989

Most young carers will meet the definition of a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989 and may be entitled to an assessment from Children's Services. In the event of any young carers being considered to be at risk of significant harm the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

School support for identified young carers

- A member of staff will lead on our young carers support work. They will be the point of contact for young carers and their families and will liaise with young carers' services. Their name and contact details can be found in the school prospectus or by telephone from reception.
- Wherever possible, staff will talk to young carers in private and not in front of their friends unless the carer asks for a friend to be present.
- Young carers will be given a card to identify themselves so that they may have access to a telephone to telephone home if they are worried about a relative without having to explain their need.
- Where possible, we will negotiate deadlines for homework, coursework etc in advance of these being set (we cannot change deadlines for some things, such as course work which is part of an externally moderated module).
- When an identified young carer is given a detention, we will consider allowing this to take place at break and lunchtimes rather than after school.
- We will liaise with support services to ensure that we can signpost families to additional help.
- If a parent is unable to travel to parent's sessions due to family circumstances, we will try to make alternative arrangements. The young carer or parent may request this.
- We will provide advice about how children can get into school where transport is a problem.

We welcome any young person, parent or family member who wishes to discuss their family circumstances so that we can help their child in achieving their potential.

Policy dated:

Review and renewal due:

Young Carers' Action Checklist for teachers

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Do I know a pupil/student who is ...

- Struggling academically for no apparent reason or is often absent without reason or is withdrawn, quiet, unusually mature?

Could they be looking after someone at home?

- Young carers take on adult responsibilities, because a family member has a **disability, illness, mental health difficulty** or a problem with **alcohol or other drugs**.

Age is no barrier – carers can be very young, even as young as 7 years. They may:

- Do most or all of the household tasks including shopping
- Look after younger brothers or sisters
- Stay in a lot to be there for someone.

Up to 75% of young carers may not be known to their school

- Young carers and their families may keep their situation secret. Some young carers act out their frustration and anger at school, although most try to blend in.

Many young carers are:

- Isolated
- Bullied
- Stressed and / or tired.

Young Carers' Workers can:

- Provide clear, age appropriate information suitable for young people
- Contribute towards assemblies and PSHCE lessons
- Work with individual young carers you refer but only after you have sought agreement with the young carer/parent.



One telephone call.
No extra paperwork!

Our support is led by the individual's needs and choices:

- 1 to 1 support / mentoring
- Day trips and respite breaks
- Young Carers' Clubs
- Support for parents and families.

You can help young carers to have opportunities. They deserve to be children as well as carers.

Contact your local Young Carers' Project on:

Helplines!

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Line	Number	Free?	What is it for?
Childline	0800 111 Ring anytime, day or night	Yes, even for mobiles	Anyone aged 18 or under who wants to talk about any problem. You can make up a name, they keep everything private and it doesn't show up on BT 'telephone bills'.
Samaritans	0345 909090 Ring anytime, day or night	No, but calls are at cheap rate	Anyone in distress or suicidal. They will listen and keep everything private.
Talk to Frank (replaces National Drugs Helpline)	0800 776600 e-mail: frank@talktofrank website: www.talktofrank.com	Yes	Confidential advice or information about drugs for anyone with a drug problem, their own or someone in the family or a friend.
Drinkline	0800 917828 9am-11pm Tuesdays to Thursdays and 9am Friday to 11pm on Monday	Yes	For anyone concerned about his or her own or someone else's drinking.
National Association for Children of Alcoholics	0800 358 3456 website: www.nacoa.org.uk	Yes	Free information, advice and support for children of alcoholics.

The Children Act 1989

The Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, which gives guidance on S.17 of the Act, has a section on young carers which states that effective support will require "Good quality joint work between adult and children's social services as well as the co-operation from schools and health workers... Young carers can receive help from both local and health authorities." (Paras.3.61-3.63)

DFES Circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support

This has now been replaced by **Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk** which tells schools in England:

- "Young carers should not be expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. However, there are children and young people who undertake caring roles. Young carers of a sick or disabled relative at home may be late or absent from school because of their responsibilities. A study in one authority suggested there may be up to 30 young carers in a secondary school."
- "In a genuine crisis, a school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made..."
- "Schools should consider designating a member of staff to have responsibility for young carers. They can also contribute to schemes that support them, working with local authorities and voluntary agencies."

Also, **Effective Attendance Practice in Schools: An Overview** of attendance guidance states that schools should have "support systems in place for vulnerable groups which provide, among other things, signposting and access to external support for parents and pupils" and "training for staff on specific needs of pupils e.g. young carers".

The National Carers Strategy (1999)

Chapter 8 of this Government strategy states that "schools need to be sensitive to the individual problems faced by young carers" and that "The government will draw schools' attention to effective practice in meeting the needs of pupils who are young carers, for example through link arrangements with young carers services. Schools might find it helpful to have one member of staff to act as a link between young carers, the education welfare service, social services and young carers' services." It suggests that there may be 30 young carers in every school.

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995; Carers and Disabled Children Act 2001; Carers (Equal Opportunities Act) 2004

Between them these Acts give young carers varying rights to an assessment of their needs, which must take into account their right to an education. See the SCIE practice guide to the Carers (Equal Opportunities Act) 2004: www.scie.org.uk commissioned by the Department of Health.

The Children Act 2004

This Act provides the legal underpinning for **Every Child Matters: Change for Children** - the programme aimed at transforming children's services.

Parents, carers and families are the most important influence on children and young people's outcomes. The Change for Children programme aims to ensure that support for parents becomes routine, particularly at key points in a child or young person's life. This includes information, advice and support provided through universal services, as well as targeted and more specialist support for parents of children who need them.

The Government, in partnership with local areas, is working to make sure parents and families have access to the support that they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive and resilient parenting, from birth right through to the teenage years. The steps being taken will help to ensure:

- Good quality universal support, in the form of information, advice and signposting to other services, is available to all parents both mothers and fathers. It is important that access to support can be found in places where, and ways in which, parents and carers feel comfortable such as: early years settings, schools, primary healthcare services; and through childcare information services, telephone helplines and web based information.
- More specialised targeted support is available at the local level to meet the needs of families and

Further reading

communities facing additional difficulties. Types of support offered could include structured parenting education groups, couple support, home visiting and employment or training advice.

- All schools actively seek to engage parents in children and young people's education helping parents to understand what they can do at home to work with the school.
- Children's centres and extended schools develop a coherent set of services both to support parents and to involve them properly at all stages of a child's learning and development.

Support through multi-agency services

Through the Change for Children programme there will be an increase in the range of multi-agency services available to children and families, from integrated working within children's centres and extended schools through to multi-agency teams and panels supporting clusters of schools. These will be important vehicles for delivering better information and support for parents and carers. If these services are designed with the needs of parents and carers in mind, they are more likely to be accessed and used.

Every Child Matters; Change for Children places a duty on specific, hitherto separate agencies to cooperate for the benefit of children. Section 10 of the Act provides the underpinning framework for children's trusts. Well-being is the term used in the act to define the five Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

"Pupil performance and well-being go hand in hand. Pupils can't learn if they don't feel safe or if health problems are allowed to create barriers. And doing well in education is the most effective route for young people out of poverty and disaffection." – **Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools DFES/1089/2004**

Further Information

- DfES 2006 guidance on young carers in **Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: groups of pupils at particular risk**
www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance
- Teachernet guidance at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/y/youngcarers/ and at www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/library/youngcarersandschools/ which includes case studies from teachers themselves.
- The section for education professionals at www.youngcarers.net/professionals
- Young Carers Research Group Reports: **Young carers in the UK 2004** and **Young carers in schools**.
www.carersuk.org/Policyandpractice/Research

Further reading

Users in Scotland may find the references below to be appropriate to their work

Strategy for Carers in Scotland 1999

Other Actions - Young Carers

'Schools have a vital role to play. Through the guidance system they are aware of the needs and burdens of young people who care for family members. They also offer pastoral care.'

'We have asked Teacher Education Institutions to include training of the needs of young carers in the initial training of teachers'

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Children in need (sections 22, 23 and 24)

Section 22 of the Act requires local authorities:

- to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need in their area
- so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of children by their families
- by providing a range and level of services appropriate to the childrens' needs.

'Services may be provided to a child or members of his or her family, and may be in kind, or in exceptional circumstances, in cash. Children in need in an area are likely to include children of parents who have problems associated with their use of either drugs or alcohol or both, and young people who provide care or support for parents who misuse drugs or alcohol, often termed 'young carers'.

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

This Act introduces a new framework for supporting children and young people in their school education and their families. Young carers are identified in the Code of Practice for the Act as an example of some of the children who may require additional support. The Act promotes an approach which includes other appropriate agencies and also families in supporting and resolving issues which children and young people may encounter in trying to achieve their potential.

In its Guidance for **Integrated Children's Services Plans**, the Scottish Executive puts forward the following vision statement:

Children and Young People in Scotland should be valued by ensuring that they are:

- **Safe:** Children and young people should be protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community.
- **Nurtured:** Children and young people should live within a supportive family setting, with additional assistance if required, or, where this is not possible, within another caring setting, ensuring a positive and rewarding childhood experience.
- **Healthy:** Children and young people should enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, with access to suitable healthcare and support for safe and healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Achieving:** Children and young people should have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self esteem to the fullest potential.
- **Active:** Children and young people should be active with opportunities and encouragement to participate in play and recreation, including sport.
- **Respected & Responsible:** Children, young people and their carers should be involved in decisions that affect them, should have their voices heard and should be encouraged to play an active and responsible role in their communities.

Both of the following give strong messages about the importance of joint working across agencies being a key factor in successfully supporting children and young people who may be at risk through their caring role:

- **Getting our Priorities Right: Good Practice:** Guidance for working with Children and Families affected by Substance Misuse (2003)
- **It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright:** Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review (2002).



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