



Pupil Premium: Support for Young Carers

This paper highlights how investing some of the Pupil Premium to support young carers is low cost, cost effective and targeted at an appropriate pupil group.

By using a small proportion of the Pupil Premium to support young carers, schools can mitigate some of the inequalities and barriers that young carers face, raise pupil attainment and improve the life chances for this significant and vulnerable group.

Young carers and education

The 2001 census identified 175,000 young carers aged 5-18 in the UK although a recent survey by the BBC indicated as many as 700,000 young carers - four times the official figure. This research estimated that 8% of secondary school children had moderate or high levels of care responsibilities.

For some young carers, school can be a haven, a place of safety and normality. For others, school can be a miserable place: where they are misunderstood, and where the pressures of work compound their already difficult lives. Research highlights that 27% of young carers of secondary school age experience educational difficulties or miss school, and where pupils are caring for someone who misuses drugs or alcohol, 40% have educational difficulties¹. A recent survey by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers found that 68% of young carers experience bullying at school and 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role².

Many young carers can often encounter barriers to their learning. The impacts of these can include low attainment, social isolation, school absence and behavioural issues. Such impacts can seriously affect a pupil's future wellbeing and life chances; many young carers do not achieve their full potential.

Ofsted³ highlighted that young carers are one group who are more likely to fall into the category of not being in education, employment or training (NEET). The Audit Commission found young people who were carers to be more than twice as likely as their peers to be NEET⁴.

¹ Dearden, C. and Becker, S. (2004), *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report*, London: Carers UK

² The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010), *Supporting Young Carers- A Schools Resource Survey*

³ Ofsted (2010), *'Reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training: what works and why'*

⁴ Audit Commission (2010), *'Against the Odds'*



Addressing young carers' needs in school – working in partnership

Addressing young carers' needs can be low cost and straightforward, provided support is put in place before a young carers' caring role begins to have a negative impact.

Young carers don't want special treatment but repeatedly ask that people (staff and pupils) are more understanding about their roles and responsibilities. Some flexibility at school is also regarded as especially helpful; flexibility with deadlines and opportunities to phone home throughout the day to check on a parent are two examples which can be implemented with little or no cost. Young carers also explain that peer support is important to them: knowing others who are in similar situations to themselves is of great emotional and social benefit, and can be very important in preventing emotional problems and countering bullying.

A school's understanding and flexibility towards pupils is predicated on its understanding of their caring responsibilities and family situations as well as having flexible policies in place for young carers.

Schools can benefit from involving a range of local agencies to provide support. Many schools have benefitted from collaborative work with a local young carers' service. Young carers' services can provide, for example:

- School drop in or weekly peer support groups
- Delivery of PSHCE lessons and assemblies
- Staff training and awareness raising
- Supporting schools with the development and implementation of a school policy for young carers
- 1:1 support
- Young carers peer mentoring or buddying scheme

The Pupil Premium and young carers

The new Pupil Premium is intended to raise achievement among disadvantaged children and is to be allocated to children who are eligible for free school meals and children who have been looked after for more than six months. The level of this premium in 2011-12 will be £430 per pupil per annum. A premium will also be introduced for children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces – this will be set at £200 in 2011-12.

It will be left for schools to decide how the Pupil Premium is spent, since they are best placed to assess what additional provision should be made for their pupils.

New measures will be included in the performance tables that will capture the achievement of deprived pupils covered by the Pupil Premium.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers proposes that schools should consider using a proportion of the Pupil Premium to improve the life chances of pupils



who are young carers and who are likely to constitute a significant number of those pupils identified through the proposed free school meals indicator.

There is currently no data available for the percentage of young carers who are on free school meals. This would be difficult to arrive at since many young carers are not known to schools in the first place. However, although not all young carers come from low-income families, the links between poverty and disability strongly suggest that many young carers will be picked up by the free school meal indicator and so would benefit from the Pupil Premium. In research⁵ into the circumstances of over 1000 young carers, only 4% of the adult family members looked after by young carers were in employment, indicating that many are likely to be on low incomes.

Pupil Premium support to young carers: Good practice examples

The following are low cost solutions which can be implemented by schools, using the Pupil Premium, to support young carers' needs in a preventative way.

1. A school lead with responsibility for young carers

Schools should designate a school lead with responsibility for young carers, to champion their needs and coordinate policy and support for young carers across the school.

Areas of responsibility could include:

- Leadership, management and strategic development of support for young carers
E.g. Development and monitoring of a young carers policy
- Identification and support for pupils who are young carers
- Staff training and professional development in relation to young carers
- Ensuring disabled parents are supported to fully engage with their child's education

Classroom teachers who take on extra responsibility could be awarded a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment.

Cost: Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment for additional responsibilities⁶ = **£2535** (minimum)

2. Staff and governor training

All staff and school governors need to understand the issues young carers face. To achieve this, training should be embedded within the school's programme for professional development.

Cost:

⁵ Dearden, C. and Becker, S. (2004), Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report, London: Carers UK

⁶ Training and Development Agency (TDA) for Schools; Teaching Salary Scales: Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments (TLR 2 = £2,535 as of September 2010)
<http://www.tda.gov.uk/teacher/salary-benefits/teaching-salary-scales.aspx>



- a. Training by the school lead could be included as part of their role = **no additional cost**
- b. Some young carers' services can offer training free to schools in the local area. Others may need to charge to cover costs. If this is the case, half day training = **£100 - £300**

3. Development of school literature and website

Schools should ensure that literature - printed and web-based – should be both up-to-date and transparent in how the school communicates with, and supports, its pupils who are young carers, and their families. This good practice engenders both a healthy school environment where young carers and families feel supported and better identification of pupils who are carers can take place. The development of this information could be coordinated and managed by the school lead for young carers.

Cost: £200 (nominal administration costs / IT costs)

4. Coordinating a weekly support group for young carers

A weekly peer support group for young carers can be invaluable. Groups can meet after school, or during lunch times to enable more young carers to attend. Young carers can socialise with and gain support from others and have access to a support worker who can provide additional advice and guidance. Groups have also been used to provide additional homework support or to learn life skills.

Cost:

- a. Coordinated by the school lead = **no additional cost**
- b. Some young carers' services can offer this service free to schools in the local area. Others may need to charge to cover staff costs. If this is the case, £50 per session for 40 weeks = **£2000** per annum, approx.
- c. Refreshments = £10 per week x 40 weeks = **£400**

5. Counselling for young carers and peer mentoring

Many schools have established peer mentoring schemes. These can be enhanced by training existing peer mentors specifically on the issues facing young carers. Alternatively, schemes for younger pupils could be developed and coordinated by older pupils who are young carers. One to one counselling in schools can also be helpful for young carers experiencing difficulties at school and/or at home.

Cost: variable

Total cost for all good practice listed above = £5235 min.

If the Pupil Premium for only 13 pupils was used to support young carers, this would cover the implementation of all the good practice costed above in that school (£430 X 13 pupils = £5590). However, in a school of 1000 pupils, this would provide support to an estimated 80 young carers (8% of the school population), proving to be an efficient and extremely cost effective use of resources.



Supporting resources

- *Supporting young carers: A resource for schools*. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society (2010) <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/schools-resource-pack,6282,PR.html>
- Young Carers e-learning module: <http://static.carers.org/e-learning>
- School Lead for Young Carers and their Families (An Exemplar for a Job Description). The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children's Society (2010) <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers/articles/the-include-partnership-and-resources,4601,PR.html>

For more information, contact:

Danni Manzi, Policy and Development Manager (Young carers);
dmanzi@carers.org; 020 8498 7936; 07896 291 822

Daniel Phelps, Policy and Development Officer (Young carers);
dphelps@carers.org; 07896 291 824