



Student Wellbeing Resource

Young Carers

Overview

The term 'young carer' refers to a child or young person who provides substantial unpaid care for relatives who have long term physical or mental illnesses, disabilities, and/or substance misuse issues.

1 in 12 children are young carers but many remain hidden until a crisis hits. This may be due to a number of factors:

- The young person may not realise that they are a carer or that their life differs from that of their peers.
- They don't want to be perceived as different from their peers and therefore are afraid of drawing attention to their caring role .
- They're worried about bullying.
- They want to keep their identity at school separate from their identity as a carer.
- They're worried the school will show no interest in their situation.
- They're worried about their family being split up.
- They're worried about letting their family down by admitting they need support.

Due to the prevalence and hidden nature of the issue, it is vital that schools take an active role in the identification and support of young carers within their school community. The key to doing this effectively is through raising awareness and being proactive in their support: allowing these children the chance to recognise their caring role and feel safe enough to discuss it and seek help.

Best Practice

Guidelines taken from page 3-5 of 'Gaining an understanding of young carers' found at: https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/step_1_gaining_an_understanding_about_young_carers.pdf

- All staff need to be aware of the identifying signs of a young carer.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities may in fact self-identify and present themselves to a teacher or member of staff with whom they feel comfortable.
- All staff should be aware of the schools process of sharing information about the carer- in order to ensure proper confidentiality and privacy, and to prevent the carer having to explain themselves several times. They should also know not to discuss a pupil's caring role in front of their peers.

Key Facts*

- 1 in 12 children provide mid-to-high level care for someone in their family. This means there are at least 7000 young carers in Sheffield alone.
- According to a 2010 study, 39% of six to 18-year-olds questioned said that not a single teacher at their school was aware of their caring role .
- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
- Young carers miss or cut short many school days every year. The average was 48 school days missed or cut short because of their caring role.
- 68% of young carers are bullied in schools, often for the disabilities or appearances of their parents, and 38% had mental health problems .
- Young adult carers aged between 16 and 18 years are twice as likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET) .
- Young adult carers appear to be four times more likely to have to drop out of their college or university course than other students.

Ofsted

Young carers are a named group in the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (pg 6).

Resources

Sheffield Young Carers: www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk. Website which includes information on:

Films made by young carers sharing their experiences:
<https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/watch-our-films>

An extensive resource library for professionals:
<https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/resources-for-professionals/>

How to apply for £300 grants for young carers:
<https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/young-carers-activity-fund/>

How to access SYC support for young carers and their families:
<https://www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk/join-syc/>

Young Carers in Schools:
<https://carers.org/young-carers-schools>

The Children's Society including a link to 'Molly's Story' from:
<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/helping-young-carers>

Legislation

Under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014, young carers are now entitled to an assessment. In Sheffield, this is a booklet which schools or other workers can complete with young carers to explore ways to reduce their caring or the impacts of caring. For more information, see: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/social-care/young-carers-assessment>.

Sheffield School Improvement Strategy

Under the Inclusion priority, we will **“identify all young carers and provide them, and their families, with appropriate support”**.

References

* Information from the BBC, The Carers Trust, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and The Children’s Society. For local information, see reports from the Sheffield Every Child Matters survey.

Local Offers and Providers

Provider	What they offer	Cost	Contact details
Sheffield Young Carers (SYC)	<p>Support for young carers and families:</p> <p>SYC offer one year of support to young carers aged 8-25 from Sheffield to offer respite and build resilience.</p> <p>This includes four x one-to-one sessions (in schools where possible), a term of after-school groups, and holiday activities all year. Family support is also available for adults with mental health issues and/or substance misuse issues being cared for by their child.</p> <p>Waiting lists apply.</p> <p>Support for schools:</p> <p>SYC coordinate a Young Carers Schools Network and offer member schools a menu of activities and support to identify young carers and develop school practice to support their emotional wellbeing. They can provide free template assemblies, staff training, lesson plans, and identification tools, plus group work and one to one materials for identifying and supporting young carers in your school.</p>	Free services - funded until March 2019 and we will seek to secure further funding to continue our service after this.	<p>sara.gowen@sycp.org.uk</p> <p>laura.selby@sycp.org.uk</p> <p>0114 258 4595</p>