

Attendance

Child employment and entertainment

Elective home education and children missing education

Young people who are responsible for caring for others at home

Information and advice to school staff
and governors on supporting pupils

Who are young carers?

Children and young people who provide primary care for a sick or disabled relative at home. This person is often a parent, but can be a grandparent or sibling (brother or sister).

Why is there a problem now?

Numbers of young carers are increasing because of policies such as care in the community, an ageing population and a further decline in the extended family.

What do young carers have to do?

Some provide total care for relatives – bathing, feeding, administering medicines, etc.

Some run the home, and do the cleaning and shopping.

They may have to look after relatives who are physically or mentally disabled, partially or totally dependent.

What has this to do with school?

The average age of young carers was 12 in one survey, although pupils as young as 5 have been so identified.

Surveys indicate that almost every school, both primary and secondary, will have pupils on roll who are young carers.

One in four young carers of compulsory school age is estimated to be missing school.

Even if they attend well, the immense pressure they are under may cause them to show behaviour difficulties or suffer from depression, anxiety or isolation.

How can school staff identify young carers?

- By gathering accurate information at admission
- By liaising with involved professionals
- By ongoing open communication with both pupils and parents or carers
- By being alert to possible changes in pupils' circumstances

What can school staff do to support young carers?

- Be sensitive to the problems facing them: these can include embarrassment, shame and pride, so respect confidentiality.
- Train in and develop awareness of the problems faced by young carers.
- Introduce awareness of disability and illness into personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions.
- Refer to Family Support Localities Service, Psychology in Education, School Nurse and Social Care.
- Compile and keep information on support groups and make it available to all pupils.
- Designate a teacher to coordinate services and offer advice and support when young carers are identified.
- Provide identified young carers with access to a telephone at school for them to use to check on their relatives' wellbeing during the day.

People you can contact for help

- **Family Support Service**
020 8753 6600
- **The Children's Society**
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarers
- **Family Information Service**
0845 313 3933

