

# Supporting Young Carers in Secondary Schools





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*Dear Colleagues*

Young Carers play a very important role in our society helping and supporting members of their family who are in need in some way. Often they are hidden, unaware they are Young Carers and in their view simply caring for a loved one.

Through work carried out by Carers Lewisham over the past ten years, it is believed that 10% of our young people are Young Carers and this Secondary Resource Pack aims to help schools raise awareness, not only of Young Carers' issues but also the issues their loved ones face; whether it is physical disability, mental ill health, long term sickness or substance misuse. However, the most important reason for this resource is to help identify the Young Carers in your school.

Many Young Carers find their lives challenging because of their caring responsibility and school can seem to be the least of their problems. Yet we know that education is the best way forward for them and support in school can make the difference for a Young Carer to succeed.

I hope you will integrate this resource pack into the work you carry out with your students to identify and support young carers in your school, to more widely raise their profile amongst your pupils, and to ensure that they are fully supported, valued and acknowledged in their role.

*Yours ever*  
*Frankie Sulke*

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## **DEFINITION OF A YOUNG CARER**

**A YOUNG CARER IS A YOUNG PERSON AGED 18 OR UNDER  
WHO LOOKS AFTER A MUM, DAD, BROTHER, SISTER OR OTHER RELATIVE  
WHO IS DISABLED, ILL, HAS MENTAL ILL HEALTH OR A DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEM,  
PROVIDING HELP WITH TASKS USUALLY DONE BY AN ADULT.**

Supporting Young Carers in School ♥ A Secondary Resource Pack

Written by

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## FOREWORD

Carers Lewisham has been working with Young Carers for more than 15 years and year by year are finding more and more Young Carers. Recently from work we have done in Lewisham schools we discovered that 10% of children living in the borough are Young Carers, caring and supporting a family member in some way. Research shows that having caring responsibilities affects young people's lives in some way, whether it is at school, socially or emotionally and that when supported, their lives improve (1). For this reason Carers Lewisham believes the more support that is available, the better. As children spend the majority of their time in school they are more likely to accept and value help from teachers and school staff and so a Secondary School Resource Pack was produced.

This is the second edition of the Pack to keep up with new findings: for example the known number of Young Carers has at least trebled since the 2001 census. Radio 1 recently did some research in schools and from their findings estimate approximately 700,000 young people are Young Carers (2). The Princess Royal Trust for Carers which is a network of Carers Centres estimates 1,000,000 Young Carers in the UK. That is One Million! This is a staggering number of young people and must be taken seriously.

In November 2010 the Government updated the 2008 Carers Strategy which includes Young Carers, for recommendations see Appendix 1. Carers are now being recognised as playing a very important role in society by all major political parties and their health and wellbeing is of key importance not least our Young Carers. However, there are a number of barriers Young Carers specifically face in achieving their Every Child Matters outcomes see Appendix 2. For this reason we believe that schools will be directed to support their Young Carers within the next few years. Carers Lewisham and the London Borough of Lewisham have been working together for the past 10 years or so and, because of this, know that schools in Lewisham have a better understanding of Young Carers and will begin this support before any directives from Government. In fact many are already carrying out this work and have signed up to the Lewisham Schools Young Carers Charter, see Appendix 3 for more details and to sign your school up.

This Pack is designed to bring awareness of Young Carers, their issues and an understanding of their cared-for to both students and teachers alike. For too long Young Carers have been hidden and struggling with the trials of their lives and although there is more awareness now, until we can say the words Young Carers to everyone and they know who we are talking about, we have to keep this work going.

The lessons are designed to make teaching easy, whether you know about Young Carers or not. It will also be an opportunity to learn more about the young people you see every day and will possibly give you more insight into their lives and their emotional understanding of life and others.

Young Carers do an incredible job out of love for their cared-for and although this can sometimes be very difficult they do not want people to feel sorry for them, they want understanding, empathy and recognition that they are valued for the great help they give.

Take a moment and imagine being in the shoes of a Young Carer and then ask yourself: *What would I want from others and for myself?*

Now find the Young Carers in your school and make a difference for them.

**Marilyn Hodsdon**  
**Senior Young Carers Schools Officer**  
**Carers Lewisham**

**LESSON 1      FAMILIES AND YOUNG CARERS**

This lesson can be taught as one for PSHCE or broken down for Tutor time.

**AIM:** For students to explore their relationships with their family and to gain insight into what life may be like for Young Carers.

**WHO CARES FOR ME?**

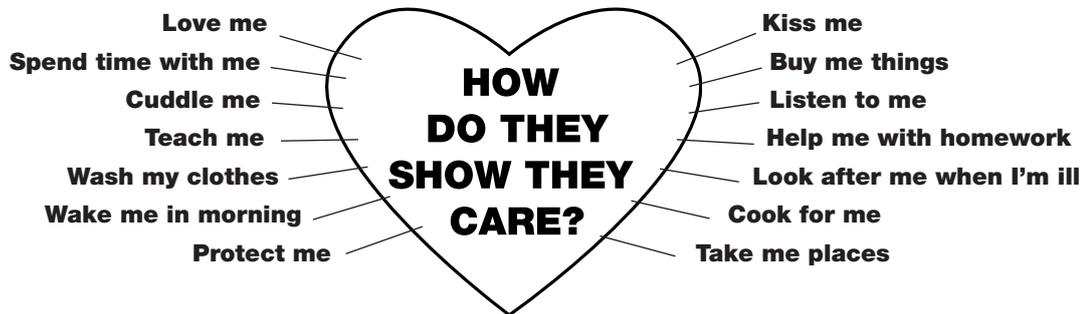


Discuss in pairs the structure of their family and friends then share with the class.

**PUT ON BOARD WITH A HEART AS DRAWN HERE**

**Note:** Remind students that families can be different, adopted, fostered and step families. Some fostered and adopted children may have come from a family where they were Young Carers.

**HOW DO THEY SHOW THEY CARE?**



Discuss in pairs how family members and friends show they care, encourage them to think about emotional care rather than financial rewards.

**PUT ON BOARD WITH A HEART AS DRAWN HERE**

Look at the definition of a Young Carer

**DEFINITION OF A YOUNG CARER**

**A YOUNG CARER IS A PERSON AGED 18 OR UNDER WHO LOOKS AFTER A MUM, DAD, BROTHER, SISTER OR OTHER RELATIVE WHO IS DISABLED, ILL, HAS MENTAL ILL HEALTH OR A DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEM, PROVIDING HELP WITH TASKS USUALLY DONE BY AN ADULT**

**HOW MAY A YOUNG CARER'S FAMILY BE DIFFERENT?**

Discuss in pairs then share with the class.

**EXAMPLES**

- ♥ A high number of Young Carers in single parent families have no other relatives living close by.
- ♥ Cared-for sibling getting more attention
- ♥ Cared-for person unable to carry out general domestic tasks
- ♥ Particularly in cases of mental ill health or substance misuse the role of parental responsibility can fall on the Young Carer.
- ♥ Because of the issues of the cared-for they can lack in emotional care for the Young Carer
- ♥ The cared-for doesn't understand the pressure on the Young Carer
- ♥ There's no one to take care of them when they are ill, in fact they will probably still have to care for their loved one

At the end of the lesson **INVITE ANY YOUNG CARERS TO MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN TO YOU OR THE NAMED TEACHER IN THE SCHOOL.**

**LESSON 2 CASE STUDIES**

This lesson can be taught as one for PSHCE or broken down for Tutor time.

**AIM:** To raise awareness of the challenges a Young Carer may face

**QUOTE**

*“No one in school knows I’m a Young Carer. The teachers don’t understand and the people in my class point their fingers at me and laugh. They wouldn’t find it funny if it was happening to them”*

What do you think it is like to be this Young Carer? Discuss in pairs what you think the Young Carer may experience because of their caring role then share with the class.

What problems do you think the Young Carer may experience?

- ♥ At school?
- ♥ At home?
- ♥ With their friends?
- ♥ With finding leisure time?
- ♥ In the future?

Note: When some people learn about Young Carers they sometimes feel sympathy for them which can cloud their view. What Young Carers want is understanding and to be respected for their situation and the help and support they give to a loved one.

**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A YOUNG CARER**

- 7:00am Davina gets up and gets ready for school
- 7:15am She gets her sisters up and helps them to get ready for school
- 7:30am She helps her mum get up and helps her to get ready
- 7:45am She gets breakfast ready
- 8:00am She washes up the breakfast things and puts the washing on (if there’s time)
- 8:15am They leave for school
- 8:40am Davina drops her sisters off at school
- 8:50am Davina arrives at school - late again

- 12:15pm Lunch time. Davina runs home to check on mum, is there time for lunch?
- 3:45pm Davina leaves school and collects her sisters before going home
- 4:30pm They arrive home and Davina prepares a snack for the family and spends time with her mum
- 6:00pm While dinner cooks Davina hangs up the washing she put on in the morning
- 7:00pm Davina helps get her sisters get ready for bed
- 8:00pm Time for homework
- 9:00pm Helps mum to bed, then gets everything ready for tomorrow
- 10:00pm Bedtime

**Consider the following**

- ♥ How does Davina feel when she arrives at school?
- ♥ What is she feeling during her lessons?
- ♥ What do her friends think/feel when she rushes home at lunchtime?
- ♥ What's it like to be Davina?
- ♥ What do you think would be the most difficult part for you?

Discuss in pairs and share with the class.

**Note:** Some Young Carers are born into a family where someone has a condition that automatically makes them a Young Carer. For some it can happen overnight if a loved one is in an accident or becomes ill.

At the end of the lesson **INVITE ANY YOUNG CARERS TO MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN TO YOU OR THE NAMED TEACHER IN THE SCHOOL.**

### LESSON 3 ILLNESS AND ISSUES

What many Young Carers find difficult is that there is no understanding of their loved one's condition.

**AIM:** To bring some knowledge and understanding of physical disability, learning disability, mental ill health and substance misuse.

#### PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Ask the follow true or false statements using hands up for the response, firstly stating the definition of physical disability.

##### Definition of Physical Disability

**Able-bodied is how we describe someone who can physically do everything their body should be able to do. So Physical Disability describes somebody with a condition that makes it difficult to perform some or all of the basic tasks of daily life when a person's body is restricted – *English Encarta dictionary***

#### True and False Statements – Physical Disability

**Question 1** If you have Dyslexia [i.e. you find reading and writing difficult], then you will struggle to get any job when you leave school?

**Answer** False - most people with dyslexia are brilliant, at sport, the creative arts or pure geniuses – Kenny Logan (rugby), Muhammad Ali, Orlando Bloom, Richard Branson, Walt Disney, Bill Gates, Jodie Kidd, Britney Spears, Keira Knightley, Tom Cruise and Albert Einstein are Dyslexic

**Question 2** People who are blind or deaf have a better sense of touch, smell and taste, than those who are not?

**Answer** True - when a person's sight or hearing is lost, their body compensates for this by making other senses more acute.

**Question 3** A young person with a disability has to be taught at a Special School?

**Answer** False - Many people with disabilities go to mainstream schools. Just because a person is disabled doesn't mean they are not as clever as those who are not

**Question 4** If you are disabled then you are not allowed to work?

**Answer** False - There are laws which say that employers must hire people who are disabled, they are just as able to work as anyone else

**Question 5** There is only one type of disability and that is a physical disability?

**Answer** False - A person can also have a learning disability, which means they learn in a different manner or are slower to learn certain things.

### **Positive Aspects of Disability**

**When people think about physical and learning disabilities it is often in the context of what a person is unable to do, but it can often be useful to look at how people with disabilities can positively adapt to their condition, to help give others a better perspective on disability issues.**

**Some of the facts used below could be mentioned in support of the lesson on disability:**

People who are deaf often have very acute eye-sight, sense of touch, smell and taste. They can “feel” the vibration of music, lip-read and communicate through sign-language. Beethoven was deaf, yet he was still able to compose music.

People who have limbs missing often adapt to their environment - it is known that someone who has no hands or arms can often use their feet to write or draw, pick-up things and bathe. You may have seen Christmas cards that have been painted by the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists <http://www.mfpa.co.uk/>

Some physically disabled people take up sports and become champions, taking part in events like the Paralympics.

A person with Down Syndrome can usually read, write, play sport and go to mainstream school. The main impact of their disability is that they often take longer to learn.

A person with Autism may struggle to communicate and interact with others, but may be a brilliant mathematician and have incredible recall for detail.

### **Effects of caring for someone with a physical disability**

Although not everyone with a disability requires care from a member of their family, if they are unable to perform certain essential tasks, physical input is required on the part of the carer. Such input can often be tiring and consequently impact on the carer’s own physical health. Rarely will a person’s disability improve and, with this in mind, a carer is often mindful that they may be caring for many years. Caring for someone with a physical disability can often lead the carer to suffer from physical ailments themselves, for example a bad back. There is also the worry they may have for their loved one when they leave them alone to go to school, shopping or out with friends. Young Carers can be anxious about getting home as soon as possible after an activity when for many young people they want to stay out as long as they possibly can!

## LEARNING DISABILITY

There are many forms and reasons for learning disabilities and many young people who have a learning disability go to mainstream schools. Here is a quote from a Young Carer about her brother:

*"I am a Young Carer and I care for my younger brother who has Autism. When people hear the word Autism they automatically assume that every single person with Autism is exactly the same, but they're not. For example my brother is very good at maths; however he hasn't got an imagination and has terrible people skills. Every person who has Autism is completely different, not one person is exactly the same.*

*There is also another learning disability which is on the same spectrum as Autism called Asperger's Syndrome. When someone has Asperger's, they repeat the same pattern every day, have difficulty with social interactions and are very good at one thing and can be very bad at another.*

*People with Autism or Asperger's do go to mainstream schools. Some people with Autism or Asperger's look just like you or me; you might never know that they have a learning disability".*

## MENTAL ILL HEALTH

### Definition of Mental Ill Health

**There is no official definition of Mental illness but generally it is when person experiences problems in the way they think, feel or behave. This can significantly affect their relationships, their work, and their quality of life. Having a mental illness is difficult, not only for the person concerned, but also for their family and friends.**

## True and False Statements - Mental Health

**Question 1** One in 10 people have a mental health problem at some point in their lives?

**Answer** False - Around one in four people will be affected by mental health issues like anxiety, stress and depression at some point in their life.

**Question 2** Men commit suicide more than women?

**Answer** True -This is often made worse because men often 'hold' their negative feelings while women share their feelings more.

**Question 3** Bullying can sometimes cause mental health problems?

**Answer** True - A person can become depressed because they are always being bullied, and may find themselves struggling to cope with everyday life.

**Question 4** People who suffer with a mental illness can say and do things they don't really mean?

**Answer** True - Sometimes the illness can affect how a person thinks, communicates and responds to others or they can be affected by their medication

**Question 5** Exercise can help to stop people feeling depressed?

**Answer** True - During exercise the body produces Endorphins which make a person feel relaxed and helps them to feel less stressed. Some doctors have prescribed exercise classes for depression instead of medication!

**For the effect of caring for someone with mental ill health, including the effect of caring for someone with substance misuse, see page 12**

## DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

### True and False Statements – Drugs and Alcohol

**Question 1** Helpful drugs are those that are legal, while harmful drugs are illegal?

**Answer** False - It does not matter whether a drug is legal or illegal: all drugs can be abused. Even if a regulated drug is considered "safe", misuse and abuse of this drug can still have harmful effects. At times, legal drugs have been so harmful that treatment for drug abuse is needed.

**Question 2** Cannabis is not bad for you.

**Answer** False - Cannabis is in fact bad for you. This powerful drug can cause numerous health complications putting the user at risk of disease. Anyone who uses this drug is at risk of dependence. Other negative effects of this drug include lack of coordination, memory problems and poor concentration and mental health issues.

**Question 3** Addicts cannot recover?

**Answer** False - Individuals have successfully recovered from addiction at drug treatment facilities and/or with help from professionals and specialist agencies.

**Question 4** Alcohol can kill you?

**Answer** True - alcohol can kill you. Most of us who drink aren't going to die from liver disease, or lose our job, home or family because of alcoholism. But drinking too much has some important short-term effects. Either on its own or in conjunction with other factors, alcohol is estimated to be responsible for at least 33,000 deaths in the UK each year. Many young people die choking on their own vomit.

**Question 5** Alcohol is a stimulant?

**Answer** False - Alcohol is a depressant. That's why drinking too much often leads to impaired judgement, slurring of speech, a tendency to violent behaviour and loss of short-term memory. As alcohol also irritates the stomach, heavy drinking can cause sickness and nausea, and sometimes diarrhoea. Alcohol also has a dehydrating effect, which is the main reason why excessive drinking can lead to a hangover.

### **Effects of caring for someone with Mental Ill Health or substance misuse issues**

Young Carers can be affected by a lack of personal and emotional development due to the absence of the parent even though they are physically present. This can mean the lack of ability to build and maintain relationships, lack of individuality due to missing out on the important experimental stage of adolescence, and the lack of education and study to build a career. Economic deprivation can also occur due to all funds going on alcohol or drugs (selling possessions, etc) or the failure to manage the home budget (unpaid bills) due to mental ill health.

Through education and support Young Carers can build personal and emotional resources which in turn can give them coping strategies so they can lead healthy lives.

### **LONG TERM ILLNESS**

Finally, Young Carers may be caring for a loved one with a long term illness like Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus or Cancer. When caring for a loved one with a long term illness the effect on the Young Carer can be similar to those with any of the above issues.

#### **Discuss in pairs**

Bearing in mind the true and false statements and what you have heard today what do you think it would be like to be a Young Carer? Decide on an issue from physical disability, learning disability, mental ill health, substance misuse or long term illness and put yourself in the Young Carer's shoes.

From the perspective of a Young Carer

- ♥ How do you feel?
- ♥ What is the most challenging aspect for you?

Ask students to look at each other in the class would they know if a class mate was a Young Carer?

**Even if you don't realise it, you will know a Young Carer: how might you support them?**

At the end of the lesson **INVITE ANY YOUNG CARERS TO MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN TO YOU OR THE NAMED TEACHER IN THE SCHOOL.**

## APPENDIX 1

### Excerpts from: *Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own – updated 2010*

#### 1. Identification and recognition

- 1.2** Many carers do not identify themselves as such until they have been caring for a number of years. This is understandable when the caring role develops gradually, for example with the onset of dementia. And when a family member or friend is suddenly in need of support, such as after a stroke, it can be difficult to find the time and energy to think through what the future may hold in terms of a caring role.

#### 2. Realising and releasing potential

##### Enabling young and adult carers to fulfil their educational potential

- 2.1** Inappropriate caring roles or long hours of caring are likely to have a detrimental impact on Young Carers' lives, including their health and educational achievement. Young Carers should be supported to achieve their potential and to have the same opportunities that other young people enjoy. Adult carers should also be supported to pursue education, training, work or leisure activities if they wish and these aspirations should be taken into account when assessing a carer's need for support.
- 2.2** Awareness about the needs of Young Carers has increased in the last few years and is welcomed. The Department for Education is supporting Young Carer Pathfinders to develop ways of supporting Young Carers. However, it is still the case that some health and adult social care services and schools are failing to recognise the impact on the child of parental disability, mental ill health or substance misuse. This can lead to services making assumptions about families' abilities to cope and to young people taking on inappropriate caring roles. Particularly, in relation to those young people caring for parents with a substance misuse or mental health problem, services should work closely with the family and children's services to identify any safeguarding concerns.

*"... children grow up in all sorts of families, many of whom have a parent with a health issue but this does not mean that those parents cannot be and are not good parents, but it does mean that we need to enable, empower and expect parents and families to take responsibility for being the best they can be."*

(quote from Bolton Barnardo's)

*"There are too many children picking up the pieces by caring for their parents, and this is a scandal. Children need extra support when they are living with a sick parent, and should not have to carry extra burdens on top of the stress of worrying about their parent's condition and not being able to do normal family things."*

(quote from person with multiple sclerosis)

- 2.3** Young Carers want their school and teachers and other school staff to be more supportive of their caring role, recognising that they are balancing a demanding home life with education. Young Carers can be bullied and/or socially isolated and this can have an adverse impact on their education and social development.

Young Carers are often strongly attached to their caring role and in some cases it is only with assertive support from teachers, personal tutors, Young Carers' services or family members that they can be encouraged to accept help to reduce the impact of their caring role.

- 2.4** To address these issues, last year the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Association of Directors of Children's Services published *Working Together to Support Young Carers*, a model local memorandum of understanding. It sets out a practical framework for effective partnership working between health and social services and the voluntary sector and is unequivocal in stating that no care package should rely on a young person taking on an inappropriate caring role that may damage their health or put their education at risk. Through this strategy, Government is promoting the memorandum and encouraging councils to consider its adoption.

- 2.5** There is a wealth of other activity under way:

- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the Children's Society have produced a pack to help schools develop Young Carer policies and an increasing numbers of schools have included Young Carers as a theme within their Healthy Schools programmes. Examples are included in the guide on emerging evidence, Carers and personalisation: improving outcomes.
- The Department for Education and Department of Health are working with the National Young Carers Coalition to develop an e-learning module to enable schools to identify and support Young Carers.
- Local Young Carer services are broadening the support they offer to meet the needs of young adult carers (between 16 and 24 years of age) including helping to develop CVs and complete application forms, and making them aware of entitlements and adult support services.

- 2.8** The Government has announced that part-time students starting their higher education courses in 2012/13 will, for the first time, be able to apply for up-front loans towards their tuition charges. Further details of the student support package for part-time students will be released in due course.

## APPENDIX 2

The Barriers to delivering *Every Child Matters* for Young Carers

Outcomes	What the theme means for Young Carers	Potential barriers for young carers and their families	The challenges for services
<b>1</b> <b>Being Healthy</b>	Encouraging and supporting good physical, mental and emotional health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupted sleep due to night time caring.</li> <li>• Stress or constant worry about another's safety or health.</li> <li>• Back injuries due to lifting an adult</li> <li>• Bereavement.</li> <li>• Unhealthy lifestyles and diet.</li> <li>• High levels of self-harm.</li> <li>• Exposure to substance misuse.</li> <li>• Interpreting for family member in inappropriate circumstances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do health services assist in early identification?</li> <li>• Does CAMHS address the needs of Young Carers?</li> <li>• Do adult services support their clients with their parenting role?</li> <li>• Are support services for Young Carers funded sustainably?</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Staying Safe</b>	Identifying Young Carers who could become at risk of physical or emotional harm and offering early or preventative support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most Young Carers are hidden from children's and adults' services</li> <li>• Chaotic home life due to parental substance misuse</li> <li>• Parenting can be impaired by substance misuse/ mental health problems.</li> <li>• Young Carers can be relied on for adult tasks (child care, cooking, giving medicines) at an early age.</li> <li>• BME families can be particularly isolated from services.</li> <li>• Some families reject support services after negative or stigmatising experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do adults' services consider child protection issues and support parents to keep their children safe? Is joint working promoted?</li> <li>• Do children's services and adults' services link together to give whole- family support?</li> <li>• Are Young Carers treated as a low priority until there is a crisis?</li> <li>• Is there a lead worker for Young Carers within the Local Authority? Can funding disputes be settled quickly?</li> <li>• Are services flexible and family-led?</li> <li>• Can parents access direct payments/ individual budgets and use them to support their parenting?</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>Enjoying and Achieving</b>	Promoting educational attendance and attainment and providing opportunities for leisure, breaks and play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing school days to care for someone. Some Young Carers drop out of school.</li> <li>• Falling behind with homework, coursework and revision.</li> <li>• High levels of bullying and isolation.</li> <li>• Parents find it difficult to access parents' evenings, PTAs etc.</li> <li>• Lack of automatic free school transport provision for Young Carers.</li> <li>• Behavioural problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are school staff aware of Young Carers?</li> <li>• Do schools follow DfES guidance?</li> <li>• Are Young Carers services part of Health Schools, Extended Schools etc?</li> <li>• Does the school link with the family and children's and adults' services?</li> <li>• Is the school accessible to disabled parents?</li> <li>• Are Education Maintenance Allowance contracts flexible for Young Carers?</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> <b>Making a Positive Contribution</b>	Enabling choice and control for Young Carers. Offering opportunities beyond caring. Engaging Young Carers in decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of awareness of Young Carers services among young people.</li> <li>• Young Carers feel they are relied on to stay at home rather than taking part in opportunities.</li> <li>• Young Carers' views are often overlooked. The most vulnerable Young Carers are the hardest to engage.</li> <li>• Young Carers not encouraged to continue further/higher education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are providers of activities and volunteering opportunities responsive to Young Carers' needs?</li> <li>• Is there adequate transport and respite care provision to allow Young Carers to participate?</li> <li>• Does the LA work with the voluntary sector to engage Young Carers in decision making?</li> <li>• Is the Young Carers service adequately resourced and seen as part of youth service provision?</li> </ul>
<b>5</b> <b>Achieving Economic Well-being</b>	Tackling the poverty faced by Young Carers. Supporting Young Carers with the transition to adulthood, and helping them to access training and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Carers' families often lack a breadwinner.</li> <li>• Disability can be expensive.</li> <li>• Finances can be affected by substance misuse.</li> <li>• Young Carers leave school without qualifications.</li> <li>• Reliance on the young person can persist into adulthood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are Young Carers supported with the transition from children's to adults' services?</li> <li>• Does Connexions support Young Carers?</li> <li>• Do careers services and Job Centre Plus's identify Young Carers and link with Young Carers services?</li> <li>• Do FE and HE establishments identify and support Young Carers? Do they have flexible entrance requirements?</li> </ul>

**Appendix 3****Lewisham's Young Carers Schools Charter**

**If you want to sign your school up to the Charter simply print off the form below, sign and return to Carers Lewisham. Or for more information call 020 8699 8686 and speak to Marilyn.**

**YOUNG CARERS CHARTER AGREEMENT****Why is the following happening?****Not Seen and Heard**

Many Young Carers feel invisible. **Why?** It could be a coping mechanism; it could be that they are seen as different, either too old or too childish for their years and so unable to fit in with their peers. Young Carers can then withdraw into themselves and with the lack of friends their own age feel pushed into relationships with older people, relatives, neighbours, teachers, etc., which in turn will further ostracize them from their peers.

**Not Recognised**

Many Young Carers have an enormous responsibility to deal with, especially if they are not receiving services. This can often involve inappropriate care. When they arrive in school late or not in uniform they can be treated harshly with no recognition of the incredible job they are doing.

**Not Respected**

Many Young Carers do not feel respected because they have to go from being relied on at home, providing support to the cared-for, often carrying out tasks that are usually done by an adult, to arriving at school and being expected to behave like a child.

**Not Valued**

Many Young Carers feel they are not valued because they are stigmatised by the condition of the person they care for and are not seen as equal to their peers. Also the help and support they give is often not recognised by professionals supporting their cared-for.

**Not Supported**

Many Young Carers feel they are not supported in school because they have no one they can go to, especially when life gets too hard for them. Plus the lack of awareness or understanding of their cared-for's condition and/or the lack of awareness of the responsibility they have to deal with every day from the school staff and their peers.

**How can your school meet the Charter's conditions?**

1. Appointing a designated senior member of staff to support and oversee all aspects of Young Carers.
2. The senior staff member to be trained with LBL or Carers Lewisham in Young Carer Awareness.
3. Offering Young Carers one to one sessions (especially in times of crisis)
4. Having a Young Carers Group or drop-in at least once per half term, preferably weekly.
5. Having a separate register of Young Carers so patterns of behaviour can be monitored, days off, lateness, etc.
6. Participation in National Carers Week (2nd week of June) so it becomes part of the school calendar. (support to be given by LBL and Carers Lewisham)

**By agreeing to the above your school shows not only the Young Carers but the whole school community that Young Carers are Seen and Heard, Recognised, Respected, Valued and Supported**

NAME OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**References, information and further resources:-**

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- (1)** Young Carers Research Group – Loughborough University  
[http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/centres/YCRG/downloadable\\_publications.html](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/centres/YCRG/downloadable_publications.html)
  
- (2)** BBC Research highlights Britain's Young Carers  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/shropshire/hi/people\\_and\\_places/newsid\\_9192000/9192515.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/shropshire/hi/people_and_places/newsid_9192000/9192515.stm)

SCIE Research briefing 24: Experiences of children and young people caring for a parent with a mental health problem

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/briefings/briefing24/index.asp>

Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_085345](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085345)

Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy (2010)

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

For Young Carers <http://www.youngcarers.net/>

For Professionals <http://professionals.carers.org/young-carers>

The Children's Society <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/resources/school-resources/supporting-young-carers>

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