

Doing the Right Thing Well in Schools

A Good Practice Guide
for working with
young carers in schools

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Introduction

For many children with caring responsibilities, school is the one place that can offer them normality. They spend most of their time at home or at school so it is vital that schools recognise and understand what young carers are going through at home.

Young carers projects are well placed to work with teachers and other school staff because of the unique position of understanding the whole range of issues young carers face – in school and at home. If young carers are missing school, the project may be the main point of contact for them.

Ensuring that the issues concerning young carers are part of the mainstream agenda provides the most effective means of delivering real and lasting improvements.

The aim of this guide is to assist young carers services to work in partnership to evaluate and improve the quality of the work done with young carers and their families, and to encourage and enable schools to eventually be self sufficient in their support for young carers. Early recognition should mean early intervention and better outcomes for young carers.

Context

This guide assumes you have a background knowledge of the issues young carers face in schools. However, you need to make schools see that you have an understanding of the context in which they operate and the statutory duty they have in relation to young carers. This context provides you with the authority to be involved at both strategic and operational levels.

Universally, ‘A Curriculum for Excellence’ sets the standard for schools. The Scottish Executive’s vision for children and young people is “a Scotland in which every child matters, where every

child, regardless of his or her family background, has the best possible start in life”¹.

On an individual basis, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004², commonly referred to as the ASL, is the key.

The Getting it Right for Every Child approach is that every child who has needs has these needs met. Assessments remain an important gateway for young carers to access support. Peer support and respite breaks from caring routines are essential support components. Agreed protocols for referral and communication across the range of agencies can help to ensure that young carers receive appropriate, integrated support as soon as possible. Young people with caring responsibilities should not experience educational disadvantages or barriers to realising their fullest potential in education, employment or lifelong learning.³

Getting it Right for Every Child and Additional Support for Learning clearly emphasise not only the need to support young carers but for voluntary, private and statutory organisations to work collaboratively in providing that support.

Where do you start?

Some approaches are more effective than others, but the main thing is to get your foot in the door! Have a clear plan of what you want to achieve and how you intend to do that in partnership with the schools, then do all you can to get a champion at the strategic level to put your plans into action. You need clout. You need to be positive about your right to be at the table, and have confidence in your professional knowledge and abilities.

Here are some examples of how to do that:

- **Go through the local authority Head of Social Work with Children’s Services and the Director of Children’s Services or equivalent within your local authority**
- **Having an education link Support for Learning Officer appointed can help if you have difficulties getting schools to reply to you**
- **You must have a link person in the school – it can be a development opportunity for that person. In primary schools it is often the Head or Deputy Head. In secondary schools it is best to be a Principal Teacher.**
- **Having a named person for contact within schools is crucial and often more effective when that person is of authority within the local authority education department. However, don’t discount the possibility of getting an enthusiastic teacher willing to spread the positive effects of service support for young carers in schools.**
- **Try and get members of the joint committee for children and young people (or equivalent) into your network or onto your committee**
- **You need a selling point – the YC project is a resource that addresses issues a young carer has so hopefully this will allow them to settle down in school better.”**

Piloting an initiative can be helpful. Here is an example of what one project did:

Permission was sought from the head of Social Work in Children’s Services to access schools and run a pilot of the project. A pilot gives an opportunity to be wrong and make changes. You need to analyse and change your approach if need be. It also makes it easier for the school to accept it as well, and makes it easier to get into a new cluster of schools. The pilot was run in two secondary schools and one primary

school. Research and preparation of materials, leaflets, charter, presentation, and resource folder took 6 months. Before we started we undertook multi-agency networking and visited other Carers Centres offering a YC school service. We contacted the head teachers of the pilot schools first and met to discuss the project and gave them the resource folder and framed Charter.

We also made a link into the Education Department and we report quarterly to our link person there. It is really useful to be able to say to the school that we have a link person and who she is because they are sometimes answerable to her too. We can put our concerns to her and she will contact the school directly.

Another project took a similar approach:

Initial research for the post took place during a pilot scheme undertaken to identify current young carer needs. It was also the preliminary contact point with local secondary schools allowing opportunities for future joint working and awareness raising. A report was compiled as a draft young carer's strategy for the city and presented to the council for consultation and funding.

On commencement of the post, research into current knowledge of young carer's issues within primary and secondary schools took place via letter. A number of schools have requested further information and a couple of secondary schools have offered to partner the young carers project in providing localised support to young carers. We are still waiting on responses from some of the schools, however we anticipate this will occur shortly after the new term starts.

What else works?

- Ask the school to sign a charter (see Resources) and appoint a coordinator or link officer
- Set up multi-agency meetings with representatives from the school (teachers, guidance staff and educational psychologists), social work, health nurses, community police, and non-statutory services (including the young carers' project of course!)
- Follow up phone calls with letters or emails
- Create links with the Additional Support for Learning coordinator
- Go to Integrated Team meetings at the school
- Be creative! Use videos or drama groups to let teachers (and pupils) know about young carers and the important role they play in society
- Give talks to in-service days
- Try to speak to teachers in training so they become aware of the issues early – this applies to social work and guidance teacher students too
- Understand the language – it can be very helpful to be able to talk 'education speak', and know the language of your school. For example are they Guidance, Pastoral Support or Pupil Support teachers, Life Skills classes or PSE lessons?

There is no right or wrong way to access schools so long as you get the access and continued support when you do.

What hasn't worked so well?

- Writing out to all the schools in an area doesn't often get a very good response – it is better to get someone in the education department to champion your work

- **Not knowing what protocols there are in different areas, or assuming all the protocols will be the same – they aren't!**
- **Trying to get into a meeting of head teachers without the backing of the Head of Education**
- **Getting past teachers seeing young carer workers as outside speakers rather than someone working in partnership with them – teachers may feel your proposals are just another thing they need to take on, getting in the way of their 'real work' – ask the Head Teacher if they will sit in on your class presentations to emphasise this is supported throughout the school.**
- **When speaking to teachers it's a good idea to come from the angle of "young carers say..." or "this is what young carers want..." or "research tells us that...". Staff may become defensive if they think you are preaching or telling them things they already know. It could alienate teachers if they are being advised to be sensitive or respectful. Enthusiastic young carers' workers should be mindful of other professionals' extensive knowledge or working with children and young people. Ensure you are only adding in very specific information that is about young carers rather than general information about ways of working with children and young people.**

Most of the projects who successfully work in schools talk to all staff about their service. It is surprising who has the authority to refer sometimes. Within the school most start with the Head Teacher to explain how the project can help them achieve their needs and requirements for the Scottish Government structures and procedures for schools. This can mean meetings with Heads of Years and departments on an individual basis. Presentations to the children's department within Social Work and policy and strategy officers within the education department are also very useful.

It is important that people understand the aims and objectives of the young carers' service and what support you provide. One way of doing this is to send copies of newsletters to disseminate in schools. Many projects offer training to all school staff including guidance and support staff.

Identifying young carers in schools

"They need to recognise the signs that someone needs help and be there to listen." (Young carer)

Children often do not want or feel able to confide that they are caring and that they need extra help and consideration. They may not want to appear to be different or may not be aware that they can ask for help. They may be embarrassed about their home situation, particularly if they are caring for someone with alcohol dependency, substance misuse, mental ill health or a learning disability. They may wish to forget about responsibilities and see school as an escape. They may fear teasing or bullying and have a fear of interference or change that may result in the family being split up.

Equally, many children do not identify themselves as young carers or recognise the impact that caring is having upon them until a crisis is reached. This makes the task for schools a daunting one. But it is nevertheless extremely important.

Here are some ways of going about it:

- **Include a statement on the school's admissions form to help identify families where someone has a long-term illness or care needs**
- **Amend the home-school agreement to include a question asking if any extra support is needed or if there is any illness/disability in the family which may impact on the child/parents keeping to the agreement**

- **Stress the importance of schools identifying young carers as soon as possible – here are some signs teachers should look out for:**
 - **pupils who often miss school for one or two days at a time (they may have notes from parents who want them to stay at home when things are difficult)**
 - **pupils who fail to complete homework and provide unconvincing excuses**
 - **parents who are wary or defensive when you try to contact them because parents with care needs can often be scared of services taking their children away**
 - **behavioural difficulties – one fifth of young carers develop these**
- **“Are you helping to look after anyone at home?” can be a useful question for teachers to ask when they are supporting a pupil about whom they are concerned**

What about confidentiality?

This is something that is asked time and time again by teachers, young carers and parents. It's very difficult for anyone to identify young carers as many young carers may not want anyone to know.

Getting it Right for Every Child means information sharing has become the key to integrated children's services. You may need to amend your old confidentiality policy to include a “consent to share information” form instead – an example of which can be found in the Resources section.

The following are important tips to give to school staff when they are talking to young carers:

- **Young carers can be anxious that a teacher may discuss their situation in front of others – even if there is no stigma attached to their caring role they often try to keep it hidden from peers.**

- **Respect a child's views.**
- **Be aware that young carers may be embarrassed at the idea of sharing details of their home situation with their teacher.**
- **Some may have feelings of disloyalty and so be anxious about talking.**
- **Others will fear that the family may be split up or that they have failed if they need to ask for help.**

Most young carers say they want teachers to know, but they do not want to be treated any differently. Both projects and schools have different approaches, and some work better than others. In one school, teachers aren't privy to information on pupils – it's given on a need to know basis. A worst case scenario would be where the teacher notices there are issues but ignores them or actually doesn't notice as they become immune to things. Many pupils are under the 'vulnerable' umbrella. For example, if a child is hyperactive or acting out because of their caring role, they are sometimes labeled as ADHD.

Generally, it's good practice to only tell those staff who need to know, and only with the young person's permission. If you get a referral, let the school know so they can put their own systems in place, but get permission from the young person first.

An exemplar for a 'consent to share information' form can be accessed by contacting the Highland Young Carers Project

What should the Young Carers/School/Education worker be doing?

Once education links are established and you have support from the education department and head teacher, what can you do to help the school identify and support young carers?

"You can't go in and give a lecture – you need to approach it as if you are giving a lesson, working with

the pupils. It's best to be interactive, not just delivering a script." (young carers school worker)

Many projects target Primary 6 and 7 and first and second year secondary pupils. This might involve speaking to assemblies or individual classes, often PSE classes. Here's an example:

During S1 PSE classes the young people were introduced to the workers who then went on to discuss who young carers are and the types of issues that they face in their day to day lives. The young people were then asked if they knew of any young carers, and asked to estimate how many young carers they thought there were in Scotland. All of these questions were designed to ascertain current levels of knowledge about young carers, their vulnerabilities and the issues they may face due to their caring roles. On evaluation it was surprising to find that both teachers and pupils had little or no knowledge about young carers but after the lesson they were all interested in learning more about how they can better support young carers and a few referrals were made shortly afterwards. Based on the success of the pilot it is my intention to begin these sessions within secondary schools eventually ensuring that ALL children in S1 will have more knowledge about young carers and a better understanding of their situations.

Here are some other ideas:

- **arrange with the school coordinator to give talks to the young people directly**
- **speak to class groups during PSE and to house assemblies and ask the Guidance teacher/Head of Year to do follow up**
- **class groups are best but you can miss some children who are off and they may be the young carers**

- **always wear an ID badge so pupils and staff know who you are and where you are from**
- **the school may have a notice board or ‘drop zone’, a room where information about bullying, young carers, sexual health, pregnancy, etc. is on display – use these to display leaflets and information about young carers and the young carers project**
- **put together an information folder for staff and teachers with contact information and links**
- **offer to staff the drop zone at lunchtimes so pupils can have a chat with you if they want to**
- **set up a base in the school library so you are available to pupils**
- **ask young carers you work with if they will come along to first year parents’ nights with staff from the project**
- **do joint home visits with educational professionals**
- **offer to work as a classroom assistant, perhaps not specifically for young carers but as a presence that would allow them to approach you if they felt they needed to**
- **leave referral forms around everywhere with everyone**
- **develop good working relationships with the health nurses because they are often aware of issues in families**
- **provide lesson plans for teachers/school staff to use (see Resources)**

Supporting young carers

The challenge is what to do once you have identified a young carer. The ultimate key to support is a good assessment but you may have to remind schools that this is part of Getting it Right for Every Child. Another tool is the Additional Support for Learning Guide:

“I give the Additional Support for Learning Guide to all parents to use as ammunition! This works really well

with parents because it tells them their rights to get additional support for their child in their role as a young carer.”

What about other ways to support identified young carers? Here are some of the things that projects do:

- **“Following my presentations to assemblies and classes I do drop-ins. I’ve asked to be placed in the library because kids go in there, but make sure that everyone knows where you are based”**
- **“When a young carer self identifies after talks we gave, we register them with the Carers Centre”**
- **“Project members have permission to come over to us at lunchtime (because we are nearby the school) to watch a video, read a book or maybe have a chat”**
- **“We can liaise with the school if a child is getting into difficulties due to their carer’s role or if, for instance, they need to accompany a parent who has a hospital appointment and will be absent from school”**
- **You don’t need to provide ‘support packages’ unless you have a young carer identified who needs that support. Sometimes you just need to highlight that a YC has extra responsibilities.**
- **Some schools will give young carers a pass to get access to computers at lunchtime so they can use www.youngcarers.net**
- **One worker in a project where there is a waiting list for their core group facilitates time for young carers to see their teacher, although this can be hard on the teacher. The worker also suggests the young carers emails her or phones her if they want support.**
- **Implement an agreed appointment system within the school which allows them to track the whereabouts of the pupil concerned.**

What about setting up a young carers' group in the school?

The advantages of a young carers' group include having the services all in one place, using existing and familiar premises, and it can be less stigmatising for the young carer.

On the other hand, it can be more stigmatising, as one project worker says:

*"I would **not** run a Young Carers group specifically in school, most of my Young Carers do not want to be identified or labeled in that way, they would not attend as they feel already isolated, bullied and ridiculed by their peer group because they are different, and this is what we found when trying to work on a one to one basis with as well, and so we do tend to remove them from the school, with the school's co-operation."*

Nevertheless, it may be the right thing to do in your particular circumstances. Here are some examples of what has been done:

- **Having drop-in sessions at lunch time or after school**
- **Having a lunch time group run by the teacher/staff coordinators**

The important thing is to consult with young people themselves. You could write to everyone who identified as a young carer and ask them to tell you what they'd like to do. If one young carer knows of others, they may get together and ask you to come along to talk to them.

Support in Transition

The Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project have developed a transfer plan to support young carers as they move from primary to secondary schools. They suggest that primary schools should:

- **Make available to secondary school and parent/guardian, an outline of the support currently being received by pupil (i.e. Children, Schools and Families worker, School Nurse, or other agency involvement, any additional support offered by primary school).**
- **Organise a visit to secondary school with parents/guardian.**
- **Introduce known young carers to young carer's link or named person in secondary school.**

Secondary schools should

- **Have a relevant member of staff to liaise with feeder primary schools to ascertain whether they have young carers in primary 7 transferring to secondary school**
- **Ensure Head of 1st year is aware of the caring circumstances and the support the young carer has received during their time at primary school.**
- **Ensure Head of 1st year meets with young carers while they are still at primary school to explain how they support young carers.**
- **Ensure Head of 1st year makes contact with the parent/guardian prior to the young carer starting secondary school**
- **Offer a home visit where this is appropriate, as in some cases parents are unable to attend open evenings and parents evenings.**

Exit Strategy

Remember, you will need an exit strategy because when you leave a school you should have systems in place to make them self sufficient. You want to maintain the momentum and awareness of the project when moving to another cluster of schools. This means you have to have coordinators and a link to

core services. You also need to develop a strategy for when the funding ends.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is likely that you will need to complete monitoring and evaluation forms as a condition of funding, especially if you have funding specifically for a school/education worker. However, even if it isn't a requirement it is very important to know that you are doing the right thing well. Make sure you have agreed on clear aims and objectives for the work you are doing in schools. The HMLe guide 'How good are our services for young carers and their families'⁴ is an essential tool in this process.

Self-evaluation helps to:

- **recognise the work you are doing which has a very positive impact on the lives of young carers and their families**
- **encourage staff, at all levels, to reflect upon practice and identify the strengths and areas for improvement**
- **identify levels of service you need to maintain or improve**
- **identify what you can do to make things better for young carers and their families**
- **inform stakeholders about the quality of services in your area**

The main questions you should be asking are how good are we now and how good can we be?

If you are doing the right thing well, you should be able to say that:

- **You have clear systems for identifying young carers and assessing their needs.**
- **Young carers and their families receive very good support from your service.**

- **You are committed to providing quality, and have robust systems in place for joint working.**
- **Records which you keep reflect the work of any other agencies involved for each young carer.**
- **Good local support is in place and this delivers the same positive outcomes for young carers as for children without caring responsibilities.**
- **Your service has a proactive approach to identifying young carers and their needs. Young carers have access to support to achieve this.**

And show that...

- **Services for young carers feature on your improvement plan.**
- **You have effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and planning on young carers.**
- **Your service has regular, structured communication and consultation with your partners and other services and agencies.**

Here are working examples of how you can do this in practice:

- **We set up a networking meeting of all the YC coordinators on the suggestion of the link officer. This gives recognition to those teachers who have taken on this work and helps with evaluating the service. The Director of Education comes to the meetings and by giving her support more people will come along. The meeting is held in a central location from 4–5:15pm. The meetings really raise the profile of the project.**
- **Our first task was to write a briefing paper which we distributed at the onset of the project. This set out our aims and objectives, roles and responsibilities. We go back to this on a regular basis to monitor and evaluate how everyone is doing – this means the schools as well as the YC project workers.**

- **We have a Pupil Advisory Group where young people come to say how they think the project is working in their school. Generally they are worried that what they say will be passed on, but this is part of the whole issue of consulting with young people. We get feedback through them as individuals and the teachers give feedback too.**
- **Young carers were informed of the post and asked to provide feedback regarding their needs and how I can best support them with their education. The feedback received was extremely positive, with over 90% of the young carers identifying their educational needs and requesting support. It is not positive that the young carer's education is so adversely affected by their caring role; however with the development of this post we are optimistic that these issues can be addressed and in future joint working may reduce the frequency of these issues.**
- **At the end of the six month pilot, we arranged meetings with the head teachers and the YC Education Worker for feedback on what had worked well and not so well during the pilot, and what we could do differently. We also discussed staff training needs, parent information and what the school would like us to do the following year. We also submitted a progress report to Children in Need.**

Funding

Identifying young carers doesn't necessarily mean lots of financial resources are needed all the time. You can over complicate things. Sometimes young carers just need a listening ear from someone other than the teacher, but don't underestimate how time consuming this can be.

However, there is no doubt that most projects devote a considerable time to working within schools whether they have a dedicated school/education worker or not.

This can put a considerable strain on resources particularly if you have few staff – as one project coordinator put it:

“We have two workers, both 18 hours per week so we have the equivalent of one full time worker. We cover the whole of the local authority area which is a large, mainly rural authority. We aren’t even making a dent in meeting the needs in schools and would love to be dedicated to one school.”

Another project agrees:

“We could easily dedicate more time as this allows to advocate, encourage and help educate our Young Carers. When we have time, one-to-one work allows us also to involve ourselves with emotional needs and anger management help.”

What funding do you need for a school/education worker?

Ideally, every project should have the equivalent of a full time school/education worker, but they would need support from the project’s other young carer workers, and good liaison with school and teaching staff.

Here is what some of the projects with school/education workers say:

- **An extensive amount of time we spend working within schools, I do at least 13 hours a week for the secondary school and 4 hours a week for two primary schools in the area. I also do a full day a month in the high school and**

we also attend a weekly multi-agency meet at the main high school.

- In terms of time spent we are looking at delivering to a school once a fortnight (but realistically probably monthly), but obviously there has to be preparation time included in this so about 2–3 hours for preparation and then 2 hours for delivery and getting there.
- Whilst I do not feel that a single WTE schools support worker is sufficient for the area, we certainly do not need one for every school. Our ideal would be 1.WTE for two Area School Groups and associated Primary Schools i.e. 4 WTE for the area with a population of 90,000.
- Our YC education worker is employed for 25 hours a week but this isn't enough and we have raised it with our parent agency

How do you get funding for a school/education worker?

Young carers projects have considerable experience in bidding for funding for core services and additional initiatives. Working in schools is considered a core activity by some local authorities with funding from Education, Culture and Lifelong Learning, and Additional Support for Learning strategy funding amongst others. Hopefully you will have been consulted on the Single Outcome Agreement that your local authority has signed with the Scottish Government, and hopefully your local authority has recognised the need to see voluntary sector agencies as partners.

However, many young carers projects receive no council funding. Some of the other sources include:

- **BBC Children in Need**
- **The Robertson Trust**
- **The Laidlaw Trust**
- **Cash for Kids**
- **Health Improvement Fund (via the school nurses)**
- **The Scottish Community Diet Project**

Whatever the source, your bid has to clearly state the aims of objectives of the school work, what you hope to achieve and how you will monitor and evaluation your work. As explained earlier, using self evaluation tools such as PQASSO and How good are our services for young carers and their families are essential.

What have projects done with additional funding?

Here are some examples:

- **Our main school worker contact has been working with the eight area school groups within the area concentrating her work with seven out of the eight secondary schools.**
- **The application also includes funding to appoint a further two P/T (15 hours/week per worker) school support workers who will target the 46 Primary Schools.**
- **Cash for Kids has donated funding to enable Young Carers' Projects in two local authority areas to identify young carers in schools. The Young Carers Projects in each area use the money to employ Schools Education Workers to identify young carers in schools so that they can be provided with the services and support which will enable them to rediscover what it is to be a child again.**
- **The new Schools Education Workers will target primary and secondary school staff and students, helping them to be aware of signs which indicate that a child may have caring responsibilities at home.**
- **The Scottish Community Diet Project provided funding to allow a lunch time group for young carers to meet weekly in school – the skills they learned provided them with the confidence to recognise which products to buy, to budget and improved their overall health and well being.**

Resources

A lot of work has been done by other carers projects both in Scotland and England. Don't reinvent the wheel! Often your best resource is to contact someone who is already doing what you hope to do, or to discuss an area that is problematic.

The projects in Scotland that have dedicated school/education workers are:

- **South Ayrshire**
- **Falkirk**
- **Pollok**
- **Highland (not a young carers project but they work closely with school staff with young carer responsibilities)**
- **NCH North Lanarkshire**
- **Renfrew**
- **Stirling**
- **Perth**
- **Dundee**

Other projects including Dundee, Perth, and West Lothian have developed school packs which include CDs and DVDs. West Lothian also has a questionnaire they use in schools for PSE classes.

Here is an example of good practice by Stirling Young Carers Schools Project. It works in partnership with Education Services, and the Education Officer provides each school with a resource pack as a framework for service delivery. Each school involved with the project agrees and signs a Young Carers Charter and appoints a Young Carers Coordinator(s) within the school.

Young Carers – A Charter for Action

Young Carers are children or teenagers who look after or help to look after someone in their family who has an illness, disability, mental health difficulties or problems with drugs or alcohol misuse.

Name of school

We are committed to supporting Young Carers to access education. This Charter aims to ensure Young Carers are identified and offered appropriate support to achieve their potential.

We will:

- ✓ Be sensitive towards Young Carers' needs.
- ✓ Appoint a Co-ordinator within our school who will have special responsibility for Young Carers.
- ✓ Make sure all the staff and pupils in our school are aware of who is the Young Carers Co-ordinator.
- ✓ Run regular information sessions on Young Carers for staff and pupils.
- ✓ Liaise with and refer to Stirling Carers Centre.
- ✓ Give information to the young person about Young Carers and the advice and support which is available.
- ✓ Help Young Carers to participate in all aspects of school life.

Signed by the Head teacher and Young Carers Co-ordinator

The following is an example of materials developed by PRTC Harrogate and Craven Carers Resource, used at a training workshop for young Carers workers.

Code of Practice for working in Secondary Schools

- ◆ Our usual procedure is:
 - We inform parents of our work via a school newsletter, or a mail out.
 - An assembly is delivered to a year group or groups.
 - Every pupil present is asked to complete our questionnaire in tutorial/ PSHE.
 - Completed questionnaires are treated as confidential and returned to The Young Carers Project for collating.
 - Those identifying themselves are invited to attend an informal 5 minute assessment, usually at lunchtime. We suggest they bring a friend. Teachers are not normally present, but we ask non-teaching staff, often the school nurse, counsellor or on-site youth worker to be present. Usually, only a small proportion of self-identifiers will be eligible for our services, so parents are contacted immediately after the initial appointment.
- ◆ We aim 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 meet young people at school without initially informing parents. However, we would attempt to build up trust with that young person and to encourage them to let us contact their parents.
- ◆ In exceptional cases, we are able to communicate with young people by post or phone 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 the Project that while 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 actual or potential unlawful activity.
- ◆ *We can usually adapt these procedures for work with an individual school. We ask that this is requested before we begin our awareness-raising programme.*

Here are some useful links:

- Loughborough University Young Carers Research Group (<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/centres/YCRG>) particularly the publication Young Carers and Education
- The Children's Society (<http://www.youngcarer.com>), particularly the joint publication with PRTC 'Making it Work: Good practice with young carers and their families'
- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers young carers website, <http://www.youngcarers.net/>, particularly the comprehensive guidance on supporting young carers for schools and Education Departments, which includes how to spot the warning signs and a sample young carers policy and the schools resource pack for educational professionals working with young carers – this can also be accessed via http://www.tacade.com/publications_pse.php
- When you have opened www.youngcarers.net go to the Professionals section. There are many useful documents and links under each of the sections, Education, Health and Social Care professionals (although bear in mind a lot of it is directed towards people working in England not Scotland)

- If you work for a Princess Royal Trust for Carers young carers project you will have access to the best resource specifically for young carers in Scotland which is within TrustNet – contact Louise Morgan if you are a member of the Young Carers Alliance but do not have access to this
- Medway Carers Project has a very good young carers section (<http://www.medwaycarerscentre.org.uk/youngcarersinformation.htm>) – click on the Good Practice Guidelines
- A Young Carers resource pack for schools can be found at <http://www.carersnet.org.uk/pdf/ycresourcepack.pdf>. This has really useful background information and classroom materials for use by teachers and other school staff.
- Another resource pack for people working with young carers in schools can be downloaded free at
- An example of an evaluation of working in schools can be found at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/reports/youngcarersproject?lang=en>. This is a report of a pilot project undertaken by the NCH's Rhondda and Taff Ely Young Carers Project to develop a new partnership between the project and local schools. The project was funded by the Welsh Assembly Government under the Carers' Strategy for Wales. The project was successful in raising pupils' and teachers' awareness of young carers' issues, and also in providing individual advice and support to pupils who identified themselves as young carers.

Notes

- 1 A Curriculum for Excellence, Purposes and Principles for the Curriculum 3–18, Scottish Executive 2004
- 2 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004>
- 3 Improving: Services for Children – How good are our services for young carers and their families? How good can we be? HMLe, 2008
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