

Young Carers and the Schools Census

Briefing sheet for Governors - November 2022

Who are young carers?

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after someone who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol addiction. As well as those caring for parents, they may also look after brothers, sisters or elderly relatives.

Research suggests that 10% of all children are providing high or very high levels of care¹. This means there are likely to be at least 1 or 2 young carers in every class in every single school. And this isn't just an issue for secondary schools, the 2011 census found there were nearly 10,000 children aged 5-7 in England and Wales – with 1500 of them providing over 50 hours of care every week.

Caring responsibilities can have a significant impact on a child's education:

- More than half of young carers said they do 'not often' or 'never' get help from school, college or university to balance studying with caring
- 40% of young carers said they 'never' or 'not often' have someone at school to talk to about being a young carer
- 27% of young carers say that they struggle to balance caring with studying²
- Numerous studies have also found that a significant number of young carers report being bullied

Young Carers are identified in the 'Keeping children safe in education 2022' statutory guidance as a group of pupils that all school and college staff should be particularly alert to their potential need for additional support. The guidance goes on to state that the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training so as to ensure they are alert to the specific needs of young carers.

Young carers and the school census

From Spring 2023, young carers are for the first time going to be included on the school census return. This will provide a much better picture of the number of young carers in schools, but also presents opportunities to use this data to monitor attendance and attainment of young carers in order to identify any young carers who are in need of additional support.

¹ Young carers in England: Findings from the 2018 BBC survey on the prevalence and nature of caring among young people; Joseph, Stephen; Kendall, Claire; Toher, Deirdre; Sempik, Joe; Holland, Jen; Becker, Saul, 2018

² All from "It's harder than anyone understands", Carers Trust, 2022

What are we asking schools to do?

To help ensure that young carers are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity, schools will need to ensure they have processes to:

1. Raise awareness of young carers with staff and pupils
2. Record who the young carers in school are
3. Ensure that young carers who are identified are linked into available support, both within school and externally

What are we asking school governors to do?

Governors have got a key role in championing the need for a proactive, whole-school approach to identifying and supporting pupils who have caring responsibilities..

Some of the actions you can take are:

- Ensure that the school has a member of staff as young carers champion and that this person is given the necessary time to do the role³
- Make sure the school has a school-wide young carers policy, setting out what support is available to young carers within the school. This policy should ideally be designed with young carers in the school and should be regularly reviewed
- Appoint a member of the Governing body as a young carers champion
- Ask your school leadership team to provide regular updates on key metrics relating to young carers (e.g. attendance and attainment), alongside other groups of potentially vulnerable pupils.

What support is available for schools?

The Young Carers Alliance has produced a resource pack and accompanying resources around the school census. These resources are available at <https://www.caringtogether.org/professionals/media-research-and-policy/young-carers-alliance/resources/>.

The Alliance also has a recording of a webinar about the changes to the schools census available on

<https://www.caringtogether.org/professionals/media-research-and-policy/young-carers-alliance/resources/>

To find out more

Visit www.caringtogether.org/schoolcensus or e-mail youngcarersalliance@caringtogether.org

³ Many young carers will be eligible for pupil premium funding and so some schools use an element of this resource to ensure their young carers are supported within school