

# Supporting Young Carers in Schools: Webinar 1, supporting young carers at Bronze level



## Purpose

The Young Carers in Schools Award contains five standards:

- Understand
- Inform
- Identify
- Listen
- Support

This transcript from Webinar 1 focuses specifically on the Bronze level criteria of the **support** standard, which sets out the first things we recommend that schools do to implement effective support for young carers.

In doing so, it aims to:

- Put this criteria into context.
- Enable you to identify the extent to which your school may already meet the criteria.
- Provide key information to make it as easy as possible for you to fill any gaps.
- Ensure clarity about the evidence you need to include in your Young Carers in Schools Award application to make achieving a Young Carers Award as simple as possible.

## Guidance

This document has been designed to be used alongside the slides which were used during Webinar 1, supporting young carers.

## Putting the webinar into context; a whole school approach

Before delving into the detail, it is vital to explore the context for this webinar and to ensure we do not see it in isolation. Rather, it is part of a series of steps schools can take to adopt a whole school approach to identifying and supporting young carers.

Working towards and embedding this whole school approach is essential for raising outcomes for this vulnerable pupil group. There are multiple reasons for this:

- One of the main reasons young carers say they do not access support is stigma. A positive whole school ethos where young carers and their families are respected and valued by pupils, staff and the wider school community is crucial to ensuring young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support.
- Many young carers are hidden. BBC research suggests as many as 1 in 12 secondary aged pupils are young carers. In a recent survey conducted by Carers Trust, 35% of identified young carers said no one in their school knew they were a young carer. To help ensure no young carer slips through the net, schools need to take a multi-faceted approach to identifying and supporting this vulnerable pupil group.

Some of you may well be on the way to implementing this whole school approach, and are looking for clarification through this webinar about how best to demonstrate this to gain recognition through the Young Carers in Schools Award.

Others may just be starting out on the journey looking to build activities over a number of years.

The Young Carers in Schools programme aims to support you on this journey. The Award structure breaks down the development of a whole school approach into manageable, incremental steps to help you identify and prioritise what to do next. Each webinar will unpick one of these steps enabling discussion and clarification about how to achieve it in practice.

In doing so, we draw upon a wide range of research and extensive consultation with school staff, young carers and young carers services.

**Putting the webinar into context; a whole school approach**

**carerstrust**  
action · help · advice

**The Children's Society**

**Don't forget!** Building staff understanding and responsibility for meeting the needs of young carers does not mean creating additional functionality within staff's existing roles. Rather, by being aware of how to identify and support young carers, staff will be better equipped to fulfil their existing roles within the school.

Developing a whole-school commitment will help your school achieve the Bronze level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.

## Looking at Standard 5

During the session today we'll be looking at why young carers need support and the initial steps schools can take to support them.

As you can see on the screen now, the standard sets out the award criteria, essential and desirable suggested evidence as well as recommended tools from the Step-by-Step Guide which can help and assist you.

The overarching aim to this standard is that young carers are supported within the school and signposted to other resources and services outside the school.

There are two aspects to the Bronze criteria. In order to achieve the Bronze Award:

- The school needs to ensure that the support that is in place for all pupils is accessible and relevant to young carers.
- The school proactively promotes this support to pupils.

As we continue through this session we will explore both aspects of this.



### Standard 5 - Support: Young carers are supported within the school, and signposted to other resources and services outside the school

Criteria	Suggested evidence from the school	Relevant guidance tools from the Step-by-step Guide
BRONZE: Support is available for pupils, including young carers e.g. homework/coursework support, emotional support, health support, lunchtime detentions; peer mentoring or peer support groups	<p><b>Essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo of pupil notice board with info about support available within the school, including signposting to school nurses, homework support and peer mentoring.</li> </ul> <p><b>Desirable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from young people regarding the appropriateness of interventions for them to access</li> <li>• Evidence of peer mentoring and support being 'young carer aware' and being accessed by young carers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 8: Tool 1 &amp; 2: Exemplar noticeboard materials for primary schools &amp; secondary schools</li> <li>• Step 6: Setting up systems to identify, assess and support young carers: Key Information</li> <li>• Step 6: Tool 2: Running a peer support group for young carers</li> </ul>

## What do schools need in place at Bronze level?

The Bronze level criteria and examples of support we will be discussing are the fundamental things that UK research shows and what young carers have said they need from schools. Not all young carers will want to access all of the kinds of support you have available as each young carer is different. It is therefore important that you consult with young carers so that the support you offer is beneficial and relevant to those in your school.

At Bronze level it is about what you can do within your school, relatively independently, to support young carers. At Silver it is about starting to think about a more multi-agency way of working and Gold is focused on working with young carers and their families, using a whole family approach.

At Bronze level the types of support we are thinking about are:

- Homework/coursework support.
- Taking a flexible approach to meet the needs of young carers.
- Providing a time for young carers to talk.
- Signposting to the school nurse and local young carer service where possible.

Taking the first steps in supporting young carers is not necessarily about introducing new interventions but it is about looking at what your school already has in place and at the support that is available to all pupils and seeing whether it is accessible and relevant to young carers.

You may be a school that is already delivering interventions to pupils with caring responsibilities. In my experience, I have found that a large majority of young carers are also eligible for Pupil Premium, Free School Meals and are on the SEN register. But by recognising the role, schools can ensure the support they have in place is successful in terms of raising outcomes.

### What do schools need in place at Bronze level?



- Make support that is available to all pupils e.g. homework club, accessible to young carers
- Take a flexible approach to meet the needs of young carers
- Provide time for young carers to talk
- Where possible, signpost to the School Nurse and local young carer service

## Homework and coursework support

Young carers may struggle with and need support with homework and coursework.

A Barnardo's report found that 43% of young carers felt that their school work was 'adversely affected' by their caring role.

It is important for schools to be aware of these issues and to adopt an appropriate approach in supporting young carers.

Due to their caring responsibilities at home, young carers can find it difficult to keep to homework/coursework deadlines. Perhaps they don't have their own quiet space at home to complete homework or it could be that by the time they have finished helping out for the evening, they are too tired to do any school work.

It is therefore important that young carers are able to access the support which may already be in place for all pupils.

Think about the homework or coursework support that is available in your school. When is it held? Is it once a week, every day, fortnightly? What time does it take place? Break time, lunchtime, after school? Does it take place at times which are accessible to young carers?

Not all young carers are able to stay behind after school for homework/coursework support clubs and sessions. They may have to rush home to help or they might need to pick up siblings on their way home. It is important to look at the sessions which are available for the whole school and to make changes, if needed, so that this support is accessible and extended to young carers.

We aren't suggesting that a separate homework club for young carers is set up in addition, many young carers don't want to be seen as different from their peers. It is about making sure that the whole school support available is run at a time when young carers can attend.

If something happens at home and a young carer needs flexibility with homework/coursework deadlines, it is important that with the young carer's consent, appropriate and relevant information about their caring role is shared with other staff. As some young carers do not want all of their teachers to know that they are a young carer, it is important that the young carer lead explains the benefits of sharing appropriate information with other staff.

If a young carer is at the point in their education where they are writing coursework and having difficulties with completing and meeting deadlines, we suggest that you contact exam bodies who will be able to discuss possible options as this is dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

## Detentions

Likewise, when a young carer needs to attend a detention, where appropriate these should be held at a time when young carers can realistically attend.

To help with this, we have found that this can be eased by offering lunchtime detentions instead of afterschool ones. It is again about looking at what your school already has in place and how this can be flexible and extended for young carers.

### Homework & coursework support



Key actions:

- Whole school support available at a young carer friendly time
- Facilitate extensions where appropriate
- Contact exam/coursework bodies where appropriate

**“ It would help me if my school understood [the] pressures at home ... with extra help I could achieve better grades. ”**  
Young carer

## Taking a flexible approach

There are many things that young carers may struggle with and need support for which can affect their school life. It is important that schools are aware of these issues and can adopt an appropriate approach to support young carers.

Young carers may need support with issues relating to attendance and punctuality. They may struggle getting to school on time because of what they have to do in the morning; taking siblings to school, or helping someone with breakfast/medication for example. Or they may oversleep due to being up during the night. Some young carers can even struggle to make it into school at all.

Young carers may also need support with uniform. Some can struggle with having the appropriate clean uniform as they may only have one set and there might not be time to wash and dry it during the week. Or they might not know how to use the washing machine correctly.

Sometimes young carers may want to contact the person they are caring for while they are at school and so need access to a telephone. Or they may need to check their phone to see if the person they are caring for has texted them as something might have happened at home. They might need to call someone to remind them to take their medication, or check in with them to make sure they are okay.

It is important that schools are aware of these issues and adopt an appropriate approach to support them. At a Bronze Award level, schools will need to follow up with young carers on a case-by-case basis; making sure they provide flexibilities where appropriate rather than pupils getting automatically into trouble.

In relation to having access to a telephone, it is important that at break or lunchtime, young carers have somewhere they can talk confidentially or use their phone to contact home, if they need to. This could be in the young carer lead's office or room, in an empty classroom or in a quiet space in the school reception.

### Taking a flexible approach



#### Key actions:

- Having follow up conversations if there are issues
- Providing access to a telephone where appropriate

“When I found out about her family situation I suddenly understood when she was often late ... I was amazed at just how well she had done but frustrated that we as staff had not known.”  
Teacher

## Let's recap

So let's recap. At Bronze level, key actions for schools are:

- Ensuring young carers are able to access homework and coursework support.
- Following up with young carers if there are any issues.
- And being flexible in terms of support. For example, having access to a phone and/or with detentions.

It is vital that support is put in place to raise outcomes for young carers and demonstrating that you've completed these actions will help you to get the Bronze Award.

So let's recap:



At Bronze level, key actions for schools are:

- Homework and coursework support
- Following up with young carers if there are any issues
- Being flexible in terms of support



Implementing these actions will help schools achieve the Bronze level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.

## Peer support groups

In addition to those actions, we know that many young carers can grow in confidence by having space to hang out with other young carers. At Bronze level it is therefore **desirable** that schools run a support group or peer mentoring scheme for young carers.

Young carers' peer support groups enable pupils who have caring responsibilities to get together on a regular basis to:

- Socialise
- Have a break
- Have fun
- Share worries, concerns and achievements with each other
- Gain advice and support from their peers and the adults facilitating the group.

Young carer leads can easily set up a peer support group in their school by using the guidance and top tips in Step 6, Tool 2 of the Step-by-Step Guide.

The key things that you need to consider when setting up a peer support group are:

- **Where will the group meet? Finding a room:** This needs to be in a place where young carers can talk in confidence and privately if necessary.
- **How often will the group meet? Finding a time:** Peer support groups should meet frequently so that pupils get to know each other and establish relationships. It is important to remember that young carers may find it difficult to attend sessions after school.
- **What can the group do? Letting young carers decide what they want to do:** Whilst the group needs to be facilitated by a member of staff, young carers should be encouraged to take ownership and decide what they want to use the meetings for. This could involve playing games, doing activities such as arts and crafts or sports or talking about young carer issues.

Some young carers may not want their group to be called and known as the 'young carer group'; it is important to ask young carers what they would like their group to be called.

Not all young carers within your school will want to come along to a group, it is important to consult with young carers to see what they would like from your school. Some may like to have the group available and others may just want a room/space where they can have a break.

## Peer support groups

### Key actions:

- Find a suitable room
- Find a suitable time
- Let young carers decide what to do at the group



### STEP 6

Step 6, Tool 2:  
Running a peer support group for young carers



“The [peer support] group allowed me to talk in a safe place without being laughed at.”

Young carer

carerstrust  
action-help-advice

The Children's Society

## Health support

So far in the webinar we have covered some of the key things that you can be doing, relatively independently in your school to support young carers.

As mentioned, at Silver and Gold Award level, we start to look towards more multi-agency working. We are however going to talk about some of those links here, as no matter where you are in terms of implementing young carer support, you may be making referrals for pupils who may be young carers.

For example, evidence tells us that having a caring responsibility can have a big impact on a young carers' own physical health. Some of these impacts could be:

- **Tiredness:** From having to get up early to help at home, or getting to bed late. Or perhaps from having to do a lot of physical tasks such as shopping, cleaning and lifting.
- **Poor nutrition:** Some young carers may not know how to cook complete meals or may not have the time to eat properly
- **Stress:** Having to constantly balance and juggle responsibilities between home and school can put a lot of pressure on young carers.

Moreover, in a survey conducted by Carers Trust, 38% of young carers reported having a mental health problem.

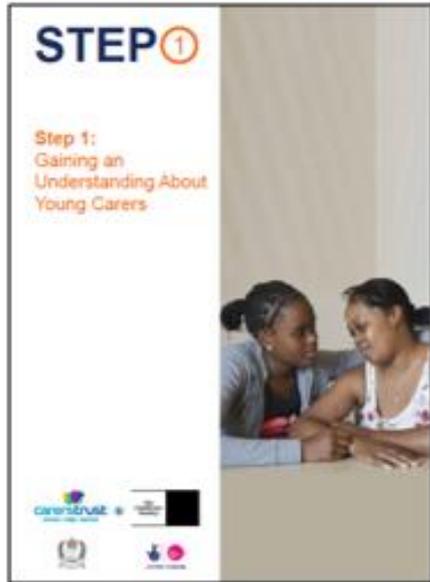
Not only is it important that young carers get support for their own health needs but they may want aged appropriate information about the health condition of the person they are caring for.

There are two key things that we recommend you start thinking about:

- Firstly, linking up with your school nurse and signposting young carers to them where possible. School nurses can help reduce the negative impact of caring, on the health and wellbeing of young carers by:
  - Enabling young carers to receive timely, age appropriate information.
  - Spotting and addressing any emerging health needs.
  - Ensuring that young carers are accessing appropriate health services and support.
- Secondly, when signposting or referring young carers to other professionals, such as an educational psychologist or CAMHS; that with the appropriate consent you share that the pupil is a young carer and ensure that the professionals are young carer aware.

This can easily be done by sharing Step 1 of the Step-by-Step Guide or signposting school nurses to the school nurse pathway which The Children's Society and Carers Trust have produced with the Department for Education and Department of Health; which provides clear guidance for school nurses about the key things they can do to support young carers.

## Health Support



## Other resources that can help

It is important that young carers are aware of any local young carer services or projects that they could become involved with as they can offer a variety of services and support. You can find out where your local service is by going onto our website.

Working with a young carers' service can greatly enhance school support for young carers and can often help facilitate the identification of young carers.

There is also various online support available for young carers; Babble and Matter created by Carers Trust and Makewaves created by Young Carers in Focus from The Children's Society. All three provide information, advice and support and young carers can share their experiences in a safe, fun and supportive environment.

Both Babble and Matter are supervised by a team of qualified youth, community and social workers, who are on hand to provide expert advice.

The image is a collage titled "Other resources that can help". It features the following elements:

- Logos:** Carers Trust (action-help-advice) and The Children's Society.
- Text:** A blue link that says "Find and contact your local young carers' service".
- Matter Website:** A screenshot of the Matter website, which is a platform for young carers to share experiences and get support. It has a green 'M' logo and buttons for "Sign in" and "Register".
- Makewaves Website:** A screenshot of the Makewaves website, which is a community for schools to share creativity and raise achievement with badges. It features various badge icons like "Make Stuff", "Well done Badges", and "S2R Inspiration".
- Babble Website:** A screenshot of the Babble website, which is an online support platform for young carers. It has a pink and blue interface with a "Babble" logo and various support resources.

## So let's recap again:

The essentials are:

- Homework/coursework support.
- Following up with young carers if there are any issues.
- Being flexible in terms of support.

The desirable are:

- Setting up a peer support group for young carers.
- Signposting and linking up with your school nurse and local young carer service.

The important thing is listening to your young carers and finding out what support they would benefit from most.

So let's recap again:

The essentials are:

- Homework/coursework support
- Following up with young carers if there are any issues
- Being flexible in terms of support

The desirable are:

- Setting up a peer support group for young carers
- Signposting and linking up with your school nurse and local young carer service



## How is support in your school advertised to young carers?

It is important to proactively advertise the fantastic support to young carers so that they know that it is available, how they can access it and to show pupils that their school recognises and values young carers.

A key way to advertise the support on offer is by using a pupil noticeboard, particularly in secondary schools. Noticeboards can be updated regularly, are seen by a large number of pupils and are an easy constant way of sharing information quickly.

Things that should be included on the noticeboard at a Bronze level are:

- How to access the young carer lead. We will be discussing this in more detail in our next webinar, listening to young carers.
- Times of homework/coursework support.
- Times of any peer support.
- And if possible signposting to the school nurse and local young carers' service.

You will want to deal with the flexibilities that we have mentioned such as homework/coursework extensions and access to a telephone, on a case-by-case basis.

The noticeboard should be in a prominent place in the school, where the majority of pupils will see it. This could be in the library, the canteen, the school reception or in a student support area.

In Step 8 of the Step-by-Step Guide, there are materials which you can personalise and use on your noticeboard to make creating one as easy as possible.

Noticeboards are a key way of raising awareness about young carers, which we will be discussing in more detail in Webinar 3.



## How do I evidence this for the Award?

At Bronze level, evidencing for this standard is really easy. The only essential piece of evidence you need to provide us with is a photo of your noticeboard. The photo needs to show clearly the types of support you are advertising and where the noticeboard is within the school. That's it!

To make us better informed of the support available at your school and for a quick and manageable way to gauge whether the support on offer is accessible and relevant to young carers; you could also provide us with feedback from young carers.

This will particularly let us see if there are flexibilities available at your school. It is desirable because we don't want to make the Award application complicated, as the focus is about you implementing support rather than gathering evidence. We will be covering this in Webinar 2 and as seen by the example, this doesn't need to be complicated.

You could also provide us with evidence of peer mentoring and that the support is 'young carer aware' and being accessed by young carers. Again this can be gathered easily and quickly by sharing with us photos of any activities or work they have produced during these sessions.

Both of these ways are a great way to showcase your school's effective practice and is also a good way to evaluate the support systems in place.

### How do I evidence this for the award?

**Standard 8 – Support:** Young carers are supported within the school, and signposted to other resources and services outside the school.

Criteria	Suggested evidence from the school	Relevant guidance tools from the Step-by-Step Guide
8A/8B/22: Support is available for pupils, including young carers e.g. homework/consentwork support, emotional support, health support, lunchtime detentions, peer mentoring or peer support groups	<p><b>Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photos of pupil notice board with info about support available within the school, including signposting to school nurses, homework support and peer mentoring.</li> </ul> <p><b>Desirable:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from young people regarding the appropriateness of interventions for them to access</li> <li>• Evidence of peer mentoring and support being 'young carer aware' and being accessed by young carers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 6: Tool 1 &amp; 2: Example information materials for primary schools &amp; secondary schools</li> <li>• Step 6: Setting up systems to identify, assess and support young carers. Key information</li> <li>• Step 6: Tool 2: Creating a peer support group for young carers</li> </ul>






Old Park Primary School



Churchill Community College

**Student Feedback:**

1. What is working well or great for you?
2. Is there anything we could do better, or more of for you?
3. If you had the wish, what would it be?

## A recap; what do schools need in place at Bronze level?

The Bronze level is about starting to develop a whole school approach to identifying and supporting young carers which you can do within your school, relatively independently.

At Bronze level, the support schools need to offer are:

- Homework/coursework support.
- Taking a flexible approach to meet the needs of young carers.
- Providing time for young carers to talk.
- And where possible, signposting to the school nurse and local young carer service.

So let's recap again:



The essentials are:

- Homework/coursework support
- Following up with young carers if there are any issues
- Being flexible in terms of support

The desirable are:

- Setting up a peer support group for young carers
- Signposting and linking up with your school nurse and local young carer service





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