Introduction to Supporting Young Carers in Schools: Webinar 3, raising awareness of young carers at Bronze level
Purpose

The Young Carers in Schools Award contains five standards:

- Understand
- Identify
- Listen
- Support
- Inform

This transcript from webinar 3 focuses specifically on the Bronze level criteria of the inform standard which sets out the first things we recommend that schools do to ensure that awareness is raise by sharing knowledge about disability, illness and young carers throughout the school.

In doing so, it aims to:

- Put this criteria into context.
- Explore what the criteria looks like in practice.
- 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 in Schools Award as simple as possible.

Guidance

This document has been designed to be used alongside the slides which were used during webinar 3, raising awareness of young carers.
Putting the webinar into context; a whole school approach

For those of you who joined me for the previous webinars, I explained how it is vital to explore the context for this webinar and to ensure we do not see it in isolation. Again, 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. One of the main reasons young carers say they do not access support is due to stigma. A positive whole school ethos where young carers and their families are respected and valued by pupils, staff and the wide school community, is crucial to ensuring young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support.

Again, some of you may be well 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. In doing so, we draw upon a wide range of research and extensive consultation with school staff, young carers and young carers’ services.
What do schools need in place at Bronze level?

During the session today we’ll be looking at why it is important that awareness is raised throughout school and the initial steps schools can take to put this in place.

At Bronze level the criteria aims to get schools to ensure that information highlighting disability, illness and young carer issues is available to all pupils, staff and school Governors.

At Bronze level, key actions schools need to have in place are:

- Information and support available to young carers is advertised and promoted via a school noticeboard and on the school website.
- To have a staff noticeboard which is endorsed by the school leadership team.
- To ensure school Governors are aware of young carers.

Schools should also have a whole-school commitment to young carers in place.
**Why is it important to raise awareness throughout school?**

As I’ve touched upon before in the previous webinars, one of the main reasons that young carers do not access support is because of stigma. Due to this many young carers can remain hidden at school as they do not feel confident in coming forward or identifying themselves as a young carer.

Young carers can also remain hidden for a number of other reasons. Some of which include:

- Because there has been no opportunity to share their story.
- Because they see no reason to tell their story and don’t believe that any positive action will occur as a result of doing so.
- Because they do not want to be seen different from their peers and are worried about bullying. 26% of young carers have said they have been bullied because of their caring role.

To counteract the reasons why many young carers are hidden, schools will need to proactively raise the awareness of pupils and their families about:

- What it means to be a young carer
- As well as disabilities, mental and physical ill-health and alcohol and substance misuse issues, with a focus on dispelling common stereotypes.

Raising awareness in these areas can help pupils and their families self-identify as young carers. It can also create more:

- Empathy towards pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Understanding as to why they may sometimes seem unsociable, stressed, worried or angry.
- Appreciated of the complicated responsibilities that young carers can have and why this can mean they can’t attend clubs or why they have to rush off after school.
It is important to make sure that all pupils and all young carers know that there are school staff who understand the issues they may be facing, that they are available to talk to and are made aware of the opportunities and support available.

Actively raising awareness and sharing information about the issues they may be facing throughout school will help to implement and build a whole school approach. This in turn will help to ensure that young carers and their families feel respected and valued by pupils, staff and the wider school community.

**Why is it important to raise awareness throughout school?**

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It can also create more:

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You might not think that there are many young carers at your school, but pupils with caring responsibilities are not always easy to identify.
Pupil noticeboard

An easy way to raise awareness and share information about young carers throughout the school is by using noticeboards. At Bronze level, schools should have a pupil noticeboard and a staff noticeboard in place.

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.

Noticeboards are effective because they can be updated regularly, are seen by a large number of pupils and are an easy constant way of sharing information quickly. It is important to keep in mind that a young person can become a young carer at any time so the information needs to be available all the time.

Key things that should be included on the pupil noticeboard at Bronze level are:

- Definition of a young carer and examples of some of the tasks they may do on a daily basis. The definition of a young carer is someone under 18 who helps to look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disable or misuses drugs or alcohol. Primary and secondary schools may want to use different wording for this definition; examples of wording you could use can be found on the exemplar noticeboard posters, which can be found on the slide and in Step 8 of the Step-by-Step Guide.

Some of the tasks that young carers do, which you could include on your noticeboard are: cooking, cleaning, pushing someone in a wheelchair, doing the shopping, helping someone get dressed or spending time with someone. It is important to remember that many people might not know who young carers are and what they do, so the pupil noticeboards need to be in child friendly language.

- How to access the young carer lead. This is especially important if they are office based or are regularly based in the same location within school.

- Times of any homework/coursework support.

- Times of any peer support groups.

- Information relating to the message boxes/email address in place.

- If possible signposting to the School Nurse and local young carers’ service.

- And if the school has a whole school commitment in place, this should also be included on the noticeboard.
As well as the posters in the Step-by-Step Guide, the local young carers’ service may have some posters which you could also include and share on your noticeboard, or you may like to create your own.

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

You may be a school that already has a noticeboard up and in place, this is great if this is the case, it is important just to check that all the information that we look for, for the Award, is included on it.
Website information

Another key and easy way to raise awareness of young carers and share information is via the school website.

This ensures that parents, pupils and staff all have access to this and similar to your pupil noticeboard, should include:

- A definition of a young carer.
- What tasks young carers may undertake.
- The names of designated staff responsible for young carers.
- Examples of support available, both as school and externally. For example, signposting to your local young carers’ service.
- What parents/carers can do if they think their child is a young carer.
- How to get in contact with the school.

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- What tasks young carers may undertake
- The names of designated staff responsible for young carers
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- What parents/carers can do if they think their child is a young carer
- How to get in contact with the school
Importance of raising staff awareness

To meet the needs of young carers in your school, it is vital that all school staff:

- Understand why young carers need support to enjoy and achieve at school.
- Sign up to the school’s whole commitment for young carers.
- Know the simple things they can do to identify, support and signpost young carers as part of their wider roles within the schools.

It is important that all staff members, both teaching and non-teaching, understand young carer issues because:

- Doing so will help deliver a whole school ethos where young carers and their families are respected and valued and feel safe and confident to access support.
- As we’ve touched upon, many young carers are hidden. To identify pupils with caring responsibilities effectively, all school staff should understand the possible signs that’s a pupil is a young carer and what to do when they identify such child/young person.
- A pupil with caring responsibilities may self-identify to any member of staff whom they feel they can talk to and share their worries and concerns. A school we met with recently, shared with us that it was their school receptionist who identified one young carer. He came in later on several occasions and the receptionist gathered the reasons why he was late, when having an informal conversation with him.
- All staff need to be aware of the school’s process for sharing information about a young carer. This will help ensure that information is only shared with the appropriate consent and with a view to guaranteeing a pupil does not need to repeat their story several times.
- All staff should know not to discuss a pupil’s caring role in front of their peers.
• Teachers and support staff delivering targeted interventions such as homework clubs, should know how to ensure these interventions meet young carers’ needs. So for example, holding the homework club at lunchtime rather than afterschool.

• Office staff should know why it may be important for pupils to have access to the phone at break and lunchtime to check on a family member and to ensure the appropriate handling of messages from home.

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**Staff noticeboard**

At Bronze level, schools can raise awareness by developing and maintaining young carer material on a staff noticeboard and the intranet/shared drive.

The material should contain:

- The name and contact information of the young carer school lead.
- The school’s whole school commitment to young carers.
- Awareness raising information regarding who young carers are, the likelihood that there will be many young carers at the school, the impact of caring on the young people and the types of support available for young carers.
- A checklist of possible signs that a pupil is a young carer and what to do if staff know a pupil who is, or could be, a young carer and/or is a pupil tells them they have a caring role. This can be found in Step 7, Tool 1 of the Step-by-Step Guide.

To secure proactive staff commitment, this material should be endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team. For example, a member of SLT could introduce the noticeboard material the shared drive information during a staff briefing. The information about young carers that is shared on the school intranet/shared drive also needs to be actively promoted by staff.

There is example noticeboard material that you can include on a staff noticeboard in Step 7, Tool 2 of the Step-by-Step Guide to help setting up this noticeboard as easy possible.

Just like the pupil noticeboard, the staff noticeboard can be updated regularly and is an easy and constant way to share vital, key information. Some schools may already have this staff noticeboard in place. Again, it is important to check that what you have on your noticeboard covers what we are looking for in an Award application.
Let’s recap; what do schools need in place at Bronze level?

At Bronze level, key actions schools need to have in place are:

- Information and support available to young carers is advertised and promoted via a school noticeboard and on the school website.
- To have a staff noticeboard in place which is endorsed by the school leadership team.
- To ensure School Governors are aware of young carers.

Schools should also have a whole-school commitment to young carers in place.
School Governors

As I have mentioned, effective identification and support of young carers in schools requires the development of a whole school approach where young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support. It is therefore vital that your senior leadership team and governing body understand young carer issues and are committed to meeting their needs.

This step is crucial not only to the development of provision that meets young carers’ need but also to ensuring that the SLT and Governing Body have the information and resources they need to fulfil their wider role.

The SLT and Governing Body are accountable for ensuring the school provides a highly cohesive learning environment which fosters equal opportunities and meets the diverse needs of the pupils at the school.

To fulfil this role effectively, the SLT and Governing Body should be aware that:

- Many pupils attending the school will have caring responsibilities.
- In the 2015 Ofsted Common Inspection Framework it states that; “In making judgements, inspectors will pay particular attention to the outcomes for young carers.”

Governors play a key role in ensuring continuity. It is great to have them on board so that they can ensure someone continues to carry out the young carer lead’s role if they leave the school or change position. In many schools good practice is sustained by the young carer lead being passionate about young carers but then things can begin to unravel really quickly if they leave the school.

In Step 2, Tool 2 of the Step-by-Step Guide, you will find an exemplar introductory letter which you can use to help make Governors aware of young carers.

You can adapt and personalise this letter to suit what your school may already have in place and it sets out clearly, specific resources, which can be found in the Step-by-Step Guide, that Governors will find beneficial. The letter also has a recommendation for what the Governing Body can do to take the first initial step to ensuring young carers are supported at your school.
School Governors

The Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body should be aware that:

- Many pupils attending the school will have caring responsibilities
- In the 2015 Ofsted Common Inspection Framework it also states that, “In making judgements, inspectors will pay particular attention to the outcomes for young carers.”

Introducing a Young Carers Senior Leadership Team Lead, and ensuring information is available to governors about young carers will help schools achieve the Bronze level of the Young Carers in Schools Award.

STEP 2

Step 2 Tool 2: Exemplar introductory letter to governors about young carers

Dear governors,

Meeting the needs of young carers at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]

As carers of minors we are aware that some of our young carers - particularly those in a caring role to a family member or friend aged 18 and under - often experience health or educational problems.

Young carers are often required to balance their caring responsibilities alongside their studies and this can prove challenging as we have many young carers who are balancing school and caring responsibilities. Ofsted evaluation inspection schedules and are often eligible for free school meals - particularly for secondary schools and are often eligible for free school meals - particularly for secondary schools and are often eligible for free school meals.

Working alongside young carers and their families is a vital part of supporting them and their education. Caring for someone can put a strain on a young person's mental health and well-being. It is important that schools support young carers in a way that meets their individual needs.

As part of the Young Carers in Schools programme, schools will be able to assess the needs of young carers and their families. The programme offers a range of support for young carers and their families, including:

- Information and guidance for young carers
- Support for schools to develop policies and procedures to support young carers
- Training for staff to help them understand the challenges faced by young carers

The need to consider the needs of young carers is part of the wider Ofsted inspection framework.

The Young Carers in Schools programme will support young carers and their families in a variety of ways, such as:

- Fostering the development of supportive networks and connections
- Providing information and guidance to schools about supporting young carers
- Developing partnerships with other agencies to ensure young carers receive the support they need

Yours faithfully,
A whole-school commitment for young carers

To further raise awareness of young carers, it is important that schools acknowledge young carers in their principal school documents and pro-actively communicate these to pupils, families and staff. Doing so will support the creation of a whole school ethos where young carers and their families are respected and valued. It will also provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of school staff in relation to young carers and the types of support available to pupils and their families.

At Bronze level, schools should have a whole-school commitment for young carers and their families in place. It is included in the Bronze criteria as it is the foundation stone to building a school policy for young carers, which is included at Silver level.

This whole-school commitment should be clear, engaging and succinct so that it can be:

- Displayed on the school website, prospectus, staff intranet and staff and pupil noticeboards.
- Referred to in school assemblies, Governor meetings and annual reports.

When pro-actively communicated in these ways it will ensure that prospective pupils and their families are aware that the school recognises the needs of young carers and actively responds to meet their needs. It helps young carers and/or their families feel safe and confident to access support.
At Bronze level, recommended points to include in your whole-school commitment are:

- That the whole school is committed to meeting the needs of young carers so that they can attend and enjoy school in the same way as other pupils and achieve their potential.

- Explaining that the school has a designated young carers’ school lead with responsibility for young carers and their families and that pupils and families will be made aware of who the lead is and how to contact them to access support.

- And clarifying that the school only shares information with professionals and agencies on a need to know basis in order to support pupils and their families.

If you want to go back and look at these points again, they are included as a checklist in Step 5, Tool 1 of the Step-by-Step Guide.
How do I evidence this for the Award?

At Bronze level, evidencing for this standard is really easy. The essential pieces of evidence you need to provide us with are:

- A photo of your pupil noticeboard and/or a copy of the school webpage containing a commitment to whole school working.

- A photo of your staff noticeboard, showing that it has been endorsed by the school leadership team. For both of the noticeboards it is really important to ensure that we can see your noticeboard clearly from the photos that you submit. The photo should enable us to see the specific posters and information that you have included.

- And a copy of the letter or email you have sent to Governors to raise awareness of young carers.

If you have a whole-school commitment in place, you can easily share this with us by sending in a copy of the commitment and evidencing where this commitment can be found. For example, a screen shot of it being accessible on the school website or staff intranet area.
In summary

At Bronze level, key actions schools need to have in place are:

- Information and support available to young carers is advertised and promoted via a school noticeboard and on the school website.
- To have a staff noticeboard which is endorsed by the school leadership team.
- To ensure that School Governors are aware of young carers.
- Schools should also have a whole-school commitment for young carers in place.

The criteria and steps that we have gone through and discussed today can be found in Step 8 of the Step-by-Step Guide.

I briefly mentioned in the last webinar but in case you haven’t seen it, we have updated our website: www.youngcarersinschools.com. One of the updates includes 5 key steps that schools can take to get involved, with the first step being completing the baseline review.

The baseline review enables you to quickly and easily identify what you may already have in place, to celebrate this and to prioritise what to do next. If you’re thinking of applying for the Bronze Award, we encourage you to get your baseline review into us first. Young Carers in Schools is funded until March 2017 and we want as many schools as possible to be successful in achieving a Bronze Award. Completing and returning your baseline review will make this process quicker and easier.

I hope you have enjoyed our series of Bronze webinars and feel confident in submitting a Bronze Award application.
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Supporting Young Carers in Schools