IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING

YOUNG CARERS

Guidance and Documentation for schools 2014
Information for Headteachers, Young Carers School Leads of Primary, Secondary & PRUs

This information booklet provides guidance and documentation for schools following the outcome of the Scrutiny Review in 2010 that looked at the identification and support of Young Carers in Stockport.

Schools play a pivotal role in identifying and supporting Young Carers and a recommendation from the Scrutiny Review is that a programme of training be offered to all schools.

Young Carers are children and young people under the age of 18 who provide care, assistance or other support to another family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks, taking on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age or development.

Using Government figures it is estimated that there are over 2000 young carers in Stockport. Signpost for Young Carers is the main supporting organisation for this vulnerable group.

The following guidance includes;

- Recommendations from Scrutiny 2010.
- Young Carers Charter.
- School Young Carers Policy.
- School lead for Young Carers.
- Role Description – School Lead for Young Carers.
- Framework of Support for Young Carers.
- Checklist for School Leadership Team.
- Checklist for School Governors.
- Ways to Support Young Carers in School.

For further information please contact Katy Frankland on 947 4690 or katy@signpostforcarers.org.uk
Scrutiny Review of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, Young Carers in Stockport

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Following a report which went to the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee in January 2009 on the support offered to Young Carers, the Committee was keen to investigate this issue in more detail. Following this report and a debate over Scrutiny Review topics it was decided that ‘Young Carers’ be adopted for in-depth study and be the Committee’s first Review of the 2009/10 municipal year.

1.2 The Committee was keen to investigate further the support offered to Young Carers in Stockport, the challenges associated to providing this support and ways of improving what is currently in place. The Review would focus on both operational challenges and on long term strategic needs.

1.3 It was agreed by the Review Panel that representatives from Signpost Young Carers and MOSAIC act as ‘critical friends’ throughout the Review process in providing information and support. It was also decided that Young Carers and their Parents be given an opportunity to contribute and be consulted on their views and experiences.

1.4 As a result of the work undertaken by the Panel and by listening to national, regional, and local expert witnesses this Review makes 12 Recommendations which the Panel believes will benefit both the identification and support offered to Young Carers in Stockport. These Recommendations contain a mix of high level strategic changes and operational process improvements to ensure both short and long term success in Young Carer provision. These Recommendations are presented below:

**Recommendation 1**
That the Executive work closely with partner agencies to design and implement a dedicated Young Carers Strategy to address the long-term support offered to Young Carers and to ensure a partnership approach is adopted.

**Recommendation 2**
That the Executive agrees that an urgent investigation is required in to the funding opportunities available to those who support Young Carers and takes consideration of the following options:

- The alignment of Local Authority and PCT funding for Signpost Young Carers to allow forward planning.

- The use of a proportion of the ‘Dedicated Schools Grant’ to fund the support offered to Young Carers in schools.
**Recommendation 3**
That the Executive addresses concerns regarding the awareness of Young Carers and their required support by introducing a series of borough wide campaigns to increase knowledge and understanding. That the Executive also utilises learning from the *Who Cares?* Pilot in raising the profile of Young Carers across the borough as a whole.

**Recommendation 4**
That the Executive be requested to support the delivery of a series of training events in conjunction with Signpost Young Carers and other supporting agencies to raise Young Carers as an issue and to inform professionals of the importance in understanding and communicating relevant information. That the training events aim to inform the following groups:
- Council based supporting agencies, for example Adult Services
- PCT based supporting agencies, for example Stockport Drug and Alcohol Team
- CAMHS
- School Teaching and Support Staff (e.g. Learning Mentors / Education Welfare Officers).
- School Governors
- School Pupils (though PSHE lessons)
- Probationary Services

**Recommendation 5**
That the Executive, in consultation with all supporting partners, agree a consistent approach for all officers and professionals who enter the home with an objective to assess and support vulnerable families and to recognise actual and potential Young Carers and signpost them to the relevant supporting agencies.

**Recommendation 6**
That the concerns of the Panel regarding the way information is shared between supporting agencies relating to Young Carers be addressed through further investigation and the Executive be recommended to develop a more effective and manageable protocol.

**Recommendation 7**
That the Executive consider the creation of a ‘Pathway Plan’ for Young Carer support services similar to the model already designed for teenage pregnancies to assist with identifying the correct support.
**Recommendation 8**
That the Executive work closely with partner agencies and Schools to install ‘Young Carer Contacts’ who will act as a first point of call for Young Carers, other supporting agencies, and for parents. That the Executive and partner agencies support the ‘Young Carer Contacts’ in building a professional network to develop communications and learning. That the Executive also encourage schools to elect a school governor with a special responsibility to monitor Young Carer provisions and that Young Carer issues are included as a standing item on Board of Governors termly agenda.

**Recommendation 9**
That the Executive work closely with schools to ensure that Signpost Young Carers and MOSAIC have an opportunity to access schools and offer support to those Young Carers who require it. That the Executive liaise with schools regarding their responsibility to safeguard vulnerable groups and agree how best to support Young Carers in the individual schools.

**Recommendation 10**
That the Executive work closely with Signpost Young Carers in establishing a town centre base for Young Carers to access support and advice. That the Executive explore opportunities with partner organisations to allow Signpost Young Carers to share accommodation and / or utilise available space in the Town Centre.

**Recommendation 11**
That the Executive investigate further a ‘Young Carer’s Identity Card Scheme’ which appears to have proved very successful in Sunderland and assess the potential of such a scheme in Stockport.

**Recommendation 12**
That the Executive request that DCSF acknowledge that, although Local Authorities utilise their own funding to support Young Carers, this is a national problem. Therefore national resources are an important part of tackling this issue. DCSF are requested to expand the current Carers’ Grant to provide ‘pump prime’ funding to support Young Carers’ on an ‘invest to save’ basis with a possibility of a five year pilot for all schools.
The Young Carers Charter

Everybody has rights and responsibilities. The Young Carers Charter was drawn up by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers. It sets out the rights to which young carers are entitled. Stockport Children’s Trust would like all schools and services in the Borough to sign up to the Charter and commit to identifying and supporting our young carers.

The Charter

‘We are children and young people who are also carers. We want people to recognise this. We believe we should have the same rights as other children and young people’ including the rights:

• To be children and young people as well as carers
• To attend schools and colleges that give us the help we need to get an education
• To have fun, friends and time off from caring
• To have a well supported family life
• To have practical help and support
• To a safe environment and protection from harm, including any harm that our caring roles could cause us
• To services that value our different backgrounds, culture, religion, race, gender and sexuality
• To be listened to
• To an assessment of what we need as individuals
• To be involved when people make decisions which affect our lives
• To have a wide range of information that would help us
• To someone who will help us have a voice (advocacy)
• To understand how things work and how to complain if we want to
• To choose how much caring we do, and
• To become independent adults.

We are a school that recognises supports and ensures young carers enjoy these rights.

Signed ___________________ Headteacher.

Signed ___________________ Chair of Governors.
School Young Carers Policy

School (PRU or Service) is committed to enabling young carers to access education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at this school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education and other services to which they are entitled.

Definition

Young carers are children and young people who provide care to another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

The person they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

Caring Tasks

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

**Nursing care** giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.

**Personal intimate care** washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements.

**Emotional care** being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up. In cases where a young carer is supporting an adult with drug/alcohol misuse problem, they will often take a leading role in trying to keep that person safe.
Domestic care: doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc.

Financial care: running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc.

Child care: taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to heir other caring responsibilities.

Communication & Interpreting: communicating on behalf of the adult or family with agencies/services and interpreting for a language or sensory impairment.

Possible effect on education

School (PRU or Service) acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its pupils, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person’s access to education and attainment.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might:

- Have erratic or poor school attendance
- Arrive late at school
- Decline in academic achievement
- Not complete homework
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips
- Lack motivation
- Have back problems, aches and pains patterns of being generally unwell
- Appear withdrawn, isolated from peers, have difficulties socialising
- Show, anxiety, depression, anger, self harming behaviour
- Have poor concentration (due to worrying about the person who is cared for)
- Have poor home/school relationship
- Have parents who do not attend parents evening or lack of overall contact with school
- Have false signs of maturity, assuming an adult role in social situations or have difficulty enjoying childhood activities

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). School may need to make alternative arrangements for communication about attainment.

Support Offered

School acknowledges that young carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered through the life of a school. Through this policy, school is giving the message that young carers’ education and school experience is important.
The designated school lead for young carers is ……………………………….., who will liaise with relevant colleagues, Stockport Young Carers and other relevant agencies with the consent of the young carer. All pupils will be made aware of the designated link.

……………………………….. School will ensure that appropriate information is shared with school staff in order that there is an awareness of the young carer’s situation.

……………………………….. School will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.

……………………………….. School appreciates that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person’s caring role will be acknowledged and respected.

……………………………….. School will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.

……………………………….. School will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and other appropriate services/agencies.

……………………………….. School will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.

……………………………….. School will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.

……………………………….. School recognises that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers. Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

• Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
• Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
• Access to homework clubs (where these are available)
• Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible)
• Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (where there is a genuine crisis).
• Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited (DfES 2006)
• Access for parents with impaired mobility
• Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
• Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school

For further information please contact Katy Frankland, Young Carers on Tel: 0161 947 4690. Email: katy@signpostforcarers.org.uk, or ………………………………….. Designated School Lead.
School Lead for Young Carers

Background to the role

A young carer is a child or young person who provides care for another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development.

The person or persons that they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problems
- Chronic illness
- Drug or alcohol misuse problems

They may also be taking on a caring role if they are:

- growing up with disabled siblings,
- in a family where there has been recent serious or terminal illness diagnosed,
- coping with illness in wider family.

Key findings from ‘Hidden from view’ report from the Children’s Society, 2013.

1. Latest census statistics 2013 reveal there are 166,363 young carers in England, compared to around 139,000 in 2001. This is likely to be an underrepresentation of the true picture as many remain under the radar of professionals.

2. One in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours per week. Around one in 20 misses school because of their caring responsibilities.

3. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to be from black, Asian or minority ethnic communities, and are twice as likely to not speak English as their first language.

4. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have a special educational need or a disability.

5. The average annual income for families with a young carer is £5000 less than families who do not have a young carer.

6. There is no strong evidence that young carers are more likely than their peers to come into contact with support agencies, despite government recognition that this needs to happen.

7. Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B’s and nine C’s.

8. Young carers are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19.
Around 21% of young carers identified in Stockport miss school because of their caring responsibilities. Many will be late to school and unable to complete their homework on time. When at school young carers may have difficulty concentrating due to anxiety about the person they care for. In addition to academic problems, many young carers have difficulty integrating socially within the school environment, with some being teased or bullied by their peers.

In spite of these problems the majority of young carers will not be identified as such by staff in schools, partly because young carers and their families often remain silent about their caring responsibilities due to fears of the reactions of statutory agencies and peers and the stigma surrounding some health conditions, addictions and disabilities or they are unaware that help may be available.

Principle 4 from the *Key Principles of Practice* (The Children’s Society 2008) recommends that:

“*Schools and colleges take responsibility to identify young carers at an early stage and have a named staff member with lead responsibility for young carers to ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers; and to be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating the support they need in school and liaising with other agencies as appropriate.*”

Stockport CYPD Scrutiny Committee Review (February 2010) recommends that schools identify a school lead with responsibility to monitor young carer provision and support
Identifying a Young Carer in school

Signs which may indicate that a child is caring for someone at home may include:

• Arriving late at school
• Missing days at school
• Tiredness
• Hunger
• Clothing or appearance may not be clean or tidy
• Underachievement
• Unable to complete home work on time
• Withdrawn, over sensitive, low self esteem
• Behavioural problems
• Difficulties with peer group, limited social skills
• Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
• Not attending after school activities or activities in local area
• Non attendance on school trips, particularly residential
• Being bullied
• Financial difficulties
• Physical problems, such as back pain from lifting
• False signs of maturity, from assuming adult roles

Parents may have little or no contact with school, be unable to attend parents evenings, review days, or social activities.
Role Description - School Lead for Young Carers

This is a senior role and is an integral part of the responsibilities shared by the leadership team in the school. The School Lead for Young Carers role is to oversee the policy and provision for young carers in the school. The person undertaking the role should have sufficient influence in the school to advocate for young carers and their families.

This description is presented as a role rather than a job description as a leadership team could share these tasks to manage identification, provision and support for young carers and their families.

However, whether the role is shared or not, one person should hold the title, take the lead and network with other agencies so that the school benefits fully from local and national support and guidance available.

Key tasks and responsibilities

• As a member of the school leadership team, ensure appropriate strategies, policies and procedures are in place to proactively identify young carers, ensuring that their needs are recognised and met.

• To ensure that those young people who have caring responsibilities are supported effectively and enabled to meet Every Child Matters outcomes and that they have the same access to educational and career choices as their peers.

• To lead on establishing staff induction, training and information to enable staff to:
  - recognise the signs that a child or young person has caring responsibilities
  - increase their understanding of the impact of such responsibilities,
  - ensuring that they are aware of the identified school lead with responsibility for young carers, and
  - help young carers and their families understand how this support can be accessed

• To ensure that the curriculum promotes a full understanding and acceptance of, and respect for, the issues and needs of young carers and their families, promoting positive images and challenging stereotypes around disability and impairment.

• Monitor relevance of existing school policies e.g. attendance, anti bullying, procedures and practice on the well being and specific needs of young carers. Report strengths, weaknesses and recommendations to school leadership team and governors for inclusion in school development plan.

• Use and evaluate existing data effectively to monitor the welfare and progress made by young carers. Highlight barriers to achievement such as poor attendance and punctuality, failure to complete homework, non engagement with extended school or extra-curricular activities and work with appropriate colleagues to remove / reduce these barriers enabling young carer to achieve their full potential.

• To establish a first point of contact for young carers and their families within the school, encouraging young carers and their families to self identify and to discuss any barriers they face and additional help they may need. The designated lead may choose to have Key Contacts in each year group or key stage in larger schools.

• Ensure that young carers and their families receive coordinated support by communicating effectively and working in partnership with internal and external support agencies using Common Assessment Framework.
## Checklist for school leadership team

Use this checklist to ascertain what steps your school has taken so far.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Policy and Planning</strong></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>A nominated school lead is in place and a team has been identified to support this role.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A regular programme of training and awareness raising for all staff about the identification, needs and support of Young Carers is in place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL etc. The needs of young carers (and their families, where appropriate) are reflected in all policies and practice.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Management</strong></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>There are secured pastoral arrangements supporting the needs of young carers and these are linked with available support out of school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate communication systems are in place for the parents of young carers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is reference to young carers in appropriate sections of the Self Evaluation Form (SEF)/school profile/school development plan.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Monitoring, evaluation and review</strong></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>There are opportunities to develop all pupils' awareness of the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils, such as young carers in, for example, PSHCE, SEAL and RRR work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steps have been taken to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully included in school life and activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems have been established to monitor the wellbeing and academic progress of young carers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a robust and regular programme of self-review to monitor and revise provision for young carers.</td>
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Checklist for school governors

This checklist helps you evaluate where you feel your school is now in terms of supporting carers and demonstrates what needs to be achieved in order to provide further support. The following questions assume that evidence is available to support the responses.

**Management**

Has your school established procedures to support young carers and, if so, how effective are they?

Has any budget allocation been made to support the particular needs of young carers?

What funding streams is the school accessing to support young carers in school?

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<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>The school has begun to identify young carers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A school lead has been identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school has adequate and funded provision for care, personal development, SEAL, etc.</td>
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**Policy**

Is there a whole-school policy on young carers? Is appropriate reference made to young carers in other school policies and is this effective?

Are the needs of and provision for young carers expressed clearly in the Ofsted Self-Evaluation Forms sections, such as:
- A2.8, 2.9 and 2.11
- A3.3 and 3.4
- A8.1
- B1.26 (Extended Services)

Are the needs of and provision for young carers expressed in other major school documents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All school policies reference the needs of particular groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All relevant documents (Self Evaluation Form (SEF), Prospectus, School Profile, etc.) show reference to groups of vulnerable pupils, including young carers.</td>
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Is the school taking steps to ensure that young carers are given every opportunity to be fully involved in school life and activities?

How effectively does the school link with outside agencies and support young carers to access them? Does the school signpost children and young people to them?

How does the school communicate with the parents of the young carers and how effective is this?

Has there been a rigorous review of the curriculum and assessment that takes account of vulnerable pupils, including young carers?

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<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>The school is making provision for groups of vulnerable pupils in the school, including young carers, enabling them to make appropriate progress throughout the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school is supporting the particular and identified needs of young carers with a whole-school approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school uses appropriate curriculum opportunities, such as Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE), Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (RRR) and Health and Safety within the curriculum, to address the needs of all pupils including young carers.</td>
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Ways to support Young Carers in School

The suggestions below illustrate some ways in which schools may support young carers.

• Use a child centred approach – listen to young carers, respect and be open to believing what they say.

• Respond to young carers’ needs sympathetically and sensitively and be sensitive to the needs of all family members – do not discuss young carers’ situations in front of other pupils or parents.

• Communicate information about young carers and their families only on a ‘need to know basis’ and inform young carers of your intentions regarding the information provided.

• Make information regarding health issues and local community services available and accessible to all young people, including who and what is available locally to meet young carers’ needs.

• Provide flexible and sensitive support for young carers when their caring role is particularly stressful and may be affecting attendance, punctuality, engagement or completion of work. However a balance does need to be struck that ensures these young carers do receive a full education and are not distinguished as being different from the rest of their class.

• Challenge bullying or isolation of young carers and where necessary help them to integrate into existing school groups.

• Establish a confidentiality statement in case of the need to share information with others (particularly in relation to safeguarding issues), and explain this clearly to young carers.

• Offer young carers the use of a telephone, in private. (This allows them to ‘phone the person they care for during the day to check on their welfare, thus reducing anxiety and improving attendance and concentration.)

• Allow young carers the opportunity to talk to someone they trust – again this may reduce anxiety and relieve tension.

• Be aware that frequent absences may indicate difficulties with levels of support from community care/adult services and family may be willing for advocacy on their behalf, if not, this must be respected. The school should still address the pupil’s welfare using their assessment procedures.

• Support parents with mobility problems in visiting the school and attending school events, for example by ensuring that the premises are wheelchair accessible. Maintain regular contact with parents who are unable to come into school.
Useful Links

**Signpost Young Carers:**
- An overview of Stockport’s Young Carer Project and the services it provides.
  - [http://www.signpostforcarers.org.uk/](http://www.signpostforcarers.org.uk/)

**Carers Trust:**
- The Trust gives information to young carers and their families about where to go for help and Do You Care? A resource for schools
  - [http://www.carers.org/](http://www.carers.org/)

**Young carers.net:**
- Online resource for practitioners
  - [http://www.youngcarers.net/](http://www.youngcarers.net/)

**The Children's Society:**
- has two major initiatives for young carers as part of their Include Project, the National Young Carers Initiative and the Family Inclusion Project

**NHS:**
- Advice from the NHS for young carers to help them get help, understand their rights and to deal with their feelings. Includes Teen life check.
  - [http://www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/young/Pages/Youngcarershome.aspx/](http://www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/young/Pages/Youngcarershome.aspx/)

**ADASS:**
- Working Together to Support Young Carers: A Model Local Memorandum of understanding between Statutory Directors for Children’s Services and Adult Social Services
  - [http://www.adass.org.uk/](http://www.adass.org.uk/)