

The Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project



Model of good practice for supporting young carers in school

“Every school will have young carers...and just one individual teacher or support worker being involved can make a huge difference”.

(Northamptonshire Young Carers Service, PRTC 2001)

“One student has improved attendance from 67% to 99% He has since gone up a set in both English and Maths and now has the chance to achieve at least 4 GCSEs. Prior to this he was failing”



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A Foreword

Marriotts School

YOUNG CARERS

In Marriotts there are now a growing number of students who have been identified, self-referred or referred as having additional responsibilities, as Young Carers. These are young people under 18, who give support to family members (or someone in their home) as part of their everyday routine, due to an illness, a disability or even drug or alcohol- related ill health.

Impressively, the work in Marriotts over the last 2 years has been highly successful, in an area of need which was probably overlooked. Growing from strength to strength and becoming embedded within the school ethos, the Young Carers support work is recognised as vital, both within school and countywide.

This is a model of meeting the core offer through Extended Schools, for a group of students, the young carers, who are identified as underachievers Countywide.

The support network that the whole of Marriotts School and related partners are involved with, the extension activities that are specifically organised for Young Carers and the shared sense of support, a voice and belonging; will prove valuable now and into the students' future lives.

The growth of the group from 3 identified Young Carers to approximately 41 (changing daily) shows that the self-refer and self-support sustainable model is a wonderful reflection on the organisation, commitment and credibility of the team, who make it happen.

This is a commendable example of Every Child Matters in action.

Ian Dougall
Deputy Head Teacher
Marriotts School
1st December 2006

Introduction

In Hertfordshire there are approximately 8,000 young people who have caring responsibilities.

Young carers are children under the age of 18 who help to care for someone in their own home who is ill, has a physical or mental disability, or drug or alcohol problems.

The young carers project is pleased to have worked in partnership with many Primary and Secondary schools across the county. The work involved raising awareness about young carers issues and setting up support systems for young carers.

This model of good practice will provide a useful tool for professionals wishing to develop a sustainable support system for young carers in school.

“We spend most of our time at home or in school, so it’s vital that schools recognise and understand our needs, wants and aspirations”

(The Children’s Society, 2001)

During 2005 to 2007 The Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project worked in partnership with Marriotts secondary school in Stevenage. The work involved setting up a sustainable identification and support system for young carers in school.

In January 2005 Marriott’s school were aware of 3 young carers in the school. There are now 41 young carers being regularly supported through lunch time activities, weekly drop in sessions, and termly young carers support meetings.

Marriotts school is a Trust school **‘bringing together all services for children and young people in an area’**.

This model of good practice is based around the work carried out over the past year with Marriotts Secondary School. The model fits well within the Every Child Matters framework (ECM) and contributes to each of the five key outcomes, and is a prime example of preventative work effecting ***“Change for Children”***

- BEING HEALTHY
- STAYING SAFE
- ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING
- MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION
- ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Delivering Every Child Matters for Young Carers

An example of good practice taken from Westfield Community Technical College

Outcomes	What the theme means for young carers	Evidence of outcome
1. Being Healthy	Encouraging and supporting good physical, mental and emotional health	<p>Young carers coming together will meet others in similar circumstances, realise that they are not the only ones and provide emotional support for one another.</p> <p>Before identification and recognition one of the young carers commented that she felt “kind of a bit lonely and isolated” After coming to the support group she said ”but now I feel confident”</p>
2. Staying Safe	Identifying young carers who could become at risk or physical or emotional harm and offering early preventative support	<p>Early recognition in year 7 can prevent young carers slipping through the net which can result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour problems • Lack of confidence and low self esteem • Lack of attendance and attainment • Bullying <p>Assemblies were undertaken to years 7,8,9,10 and 12. After the assemblies the young carers are given the opportunity to self identify using feedback forms.</p>

Outcomes	What the theme means for young carers	Evidence of outcome
3. Enjoying and Achieving	Promoting educational attendance and attainment and providing opportunities for leisure, breaks and play.	<p>“One student has improved attendance from 67% to 99% He has since gone up a set in both English and Maths and now has the chance to achieve at least 4 GCSEs. Prior to this he was failing”(Marriotts School – Stevenage 2006)</p> <p>Other benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raised self esteem • becoming more confident in talking about there caring circumstances • access to regular support which can improve attainment and attendance <p>At the end of the summer term 9 young carers enjoyed an ice skating trip. This was a first experience for some of the young carers.</p>
4. Making a Positive Contribution	Enabling choice and control for young carers. Offering opportunities beyond caring. Engaging young carers in decision making	<p>The young carers were consulted on how they would like to be supported in school. As a result the support groups were set up. 24 young carers are receiving regular access and support through these groups.</p> <p>The young carers are consulted on issues that affect them in school.</p> <p>The young carers inform the development of the identification and support system at Westfield CTC</p>
5. Achieving Economic Well - being	Tackling the poverty faced by young carers. Supporting young carers with the transition to adulthood, and helping them to access training and employment.	<p>The young carers have the opportunity to access other relevant members of staff i.e. school Health Advisors on Health issues and Connexions Advisors on Further Education, Training or Work or other issues.</p>

(Adapted from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers 2006)

Partnership Working

An initial meeting took place with the Young Carers Project school liaison worker to discuss a plan of action and identify a young carers **Link Person**. It is important that the young carers link person has allocated time to develop and implement an identification and support system in the school.

A plan of action with realistic time scales was developed outlining the following;

- Tasks/Objectives
- what was already in place
- further action
- Outcomes

The plan can be a useful tool for informing and communicating to other members of staff what is being developed for young carers in the school and how they can be involved. Please see example action plan and school support net work

Below is a table listing tasks that could be incorporated into the action plan. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, you may wish to add other tasks/objectives.

Tasks/Objectives	How are we doing?
Raising awareness	Initial meeting with Young Carers Project to discuss setting up the identification and support system in school
	School Assemblies – With feedback forms - giving young carers the opportunity to self identify
	PHSE /Citizenship lessons to incorporate young carers issues
	Raising awareness at staff team meetings
	INSET days to include young carers
	Leaflets/Young Carers information packs available to young carers and relevant members of staff
Identification of young carers	Link /Named person in school for young carers
	Questionnaires/feedback forms distributed and analysed after assemblies or during PHSE lessons so that young carers can self identify
	Young Cares notice board – for information
	Set up register of young carers for tracking young carers and monitoring progress and outcomes

Tasks/Objectives	How are we doing?
	Draw up staff support network for young carers to liaise with link worker
	Promotion (photograph) of young carers link person around the school – posters, assemblies notice boards
Support for young carers	Email address made available to all young carers for identification and support
	Peer mentoring or buddy system for young carers
	Young carers support group in school
	Drop in sessions for young carers
	Activities for young carers
	Home tutoring to be available where appropriate
	Homework/class sheets available as of right
	Access to a telephone/mobile
	Named person for young carer if specific support is needed i.e. learning support, CSF worker.
	Information available to young carers: Leaflets, information packs, Fact file etc
	Signposting and referring young carers to other agencies; The Young Carers Project, Children Schools & Families, Connexions, Youth Inclusion and Support Panels, School health advisor
Having a voice	Young carers on the school council
	Termly meetings with a set agenda to enable young carers to have a voice and influence support in school.
	Articles in the school newsletter
	Young Carers taking school assemblies
Curriculum development	School resource packs (Primary and Secondary school packs)
	PHSE/Citizenship lessons to include young carers issues
	School prospectus to mention support available to young carers
	A young carers school policy (see appendix)

Supporting young carers in school

Young carers are identified in school and consulted on how the school can best support them and meet their needs. This can be achieved by working with a young carers link person raising awareness through school assemblies or PHSE/Citizenship lessons. After the assemblies or lessons the young people are given a feedback form providing the opportunity to self identify as young carers. At this point it is important to ascertain caring circumstances by offering an interview. (Please see interview sheet) and set up a register. The register will provide a useful monitoring tool.

All schools are different; it will depend on the resources available, the link person, and the young carers, as to how a support system will operate. A number of schools have set up support groups.

“The best thing about the group is that people understand and help you if you’re feeling down. Knowing that other people are in the same situation helps me”

Stacie (Age 13 years)

The following lists illustrate the benefits of a young carers support group for the young carers and the school

The benefits of a support group for Young Carers
Young Carers coming together as a group can be very empowering
Young carers become more confident in talking about their caring roles and responsibilities.
Building trusting relationships with members of staff or peers who are supervising/co-coordinating the support group
Building trusting relationships and sharing experiences with each other
Young Carers have a voice
The young carers have regular access to support and relevant information.

The benefits of a support group for the school
Increased support for a vulnerable and often marginalised group of young people.
Improved school awareness of young carers issues
Improved attendance results/ figures
Meeting outcomes for the Every Child Matters agenda Help the school to meet OfSTED and Healthy Schools Initiative targets,
Better partnership working with other agencies and professionals
Young people can become more active members of the school community

Setting up and running a young carer's support group in school

Once the young carers have decided that they would like a support group in school, those concerned will need to consult with the young carers as to how often they would like to meet and how the group will operate, for suggestions and ideas to consider, please see appendix 1

Young carers will not be used to meeting as a group and will probably need reminding about the dates for meetings. One school has produced a reminder card.

Another school has produced an identification/membership card. The card identifies the young person as a young carer to staff and shows they are a member of the support group and will have regular meetings to attend.

Ideas to consider for the first few meetings

At the first meeting young carers could be coming together for the first time and are often unaware of young carers in other years or indeed their own year and form groups. Having a set agenda for the first meeting provides a focus for the meeting for example:

- Who will chair the meetings
- Who will supervise the group
- Information for young carers: their rights, looking after yourself, informative facts etc. (please see appendix 2)
- How can the school support young carers

At the second meeting the young carers could work on producing a poster for the promotion of the group.

During the third meeting the young carers could look at putting together a programme of what they would like to be doing for future meetings. i.e. cooking, arts/crafts etc. The programme itself will provide a focus for the group, as well as another useful tool to promote and encourage other young carers to come forward and join the group.

By the fourth meeting the young carers should be coming together and following their programme so that they know what to expect, what activities they will be doing and, where they will be meeting.

Involving other professionals

Once the group is established the young carers will develop trusting relationships with each other and those responsible for running/supervising the group. Through these relationships other needs may be identified providing the opportunity to involve other professionals for example:

- Extended Schools Co-ordinator
- Connexions PA's
- School Health Advisor
- School Counsellor
- The young carer's project

Funding

Funding is always an issue for many schools. Here are some possible funding streams;

- Extended schools coordinator – they may be able to locate funding for young carers
- The school Parent Teacher Associations
- Round Table
- Rotary Clubs

Further Guidance:

Children Schools & Families – Young Carers – A Guide to Practice
Young Carers in Need. This is available on request from Herts
County Council – Contact: Children Schools & Families, Child Care
Policy and Practice

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

www.youngcarers.net

This web site has up to date research findings, information and
statistics about young carers issues nationally.

**The Carers in Hertfordshire Young Project can offer support
,information and resources :**

- Kool Carers DVD – young carers explaining who they care for
and having fun!
- Video's – exploring young carers issues
- School Resource packs for use in PHSE and Citizenship
lessons
- Model of Good Practice for the Young Carers Secondary
School Transfer and Support Plan

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www.koolcarers.org.uk

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Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project.

Running a Young Carers' Support Group – ideas to consider;

- Liaise with senior member of staff and request that a room be allocated for these groups to take place.
- Hold the group meeting during the school lunch hour and ensure the designated room is in a quiet place in the school.
- Advertise the support group by distributing posters in the school (on a regular basis).
- The support group must take place on the same day/time each week/fortnight/month.
- Design support group Cards to the young carers' membership to the club, to verify the reason why they are in the school building during the lunch hour. Also consider setting up a system whereby the pupils can show their club card to gain access to a school phone and get into lunch early.
- Set boundaries for all those coming to the club; no swearing fighting talking about other pupils caring situation without their consent, etc.
- Consider setting up a guest system some pupils may want to join the group, but will not immediately identify themselves as a young carer until such time as they feel safe enough to disclose they are caring.
- Have a series of planned games and activities, or ask the young carers to plan how they would like to use the time when they attend the group.
- Be prepared for disruptive behaviour and arguments between group members.
- Be prepared to deal with young carers who may be experiencing considerable distress. Therapeutic individual and group skills are essential.
- Keep a register of young carers attending the group, and at some at stage ask them to give written feedback on how they access and feel supported by the group for monitoring purposes.

Taken from; ***Unseen and Unheard***, The Invisible Young Carers, Recommendations for change, running a young carers club, page 28, by Geraldine Baker, Carers Lewisham.

Young Carers: the facts

Around 3 million children in the UK have a family member with an illness or disability. Not all take on a caring role that is appropriate to their age. Few parents want their children to be carers but it can happen for many reasons, such as families being isolated, afraid of outside interference or unsupported.

The Census estimated there is 175,000 carers under 18 in the UK today, including over 13,000 caring over 50 hours per week. However a poll commissioned by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in September 2004 indicated that the number of young carers is much higher than the Census 2001 indicates, and is probably nearer one million young carers.

Look after yourself too!

It can feel good to look after someone you care about. But it can be stressful. There are lots of things you can do to look after yourself!

- ⇒ Don't ignore feeling stressed, worried or angry. Stress is your brain's way of telling you that you need a break.
- ⇒ Talk to people when you have something on your mind.

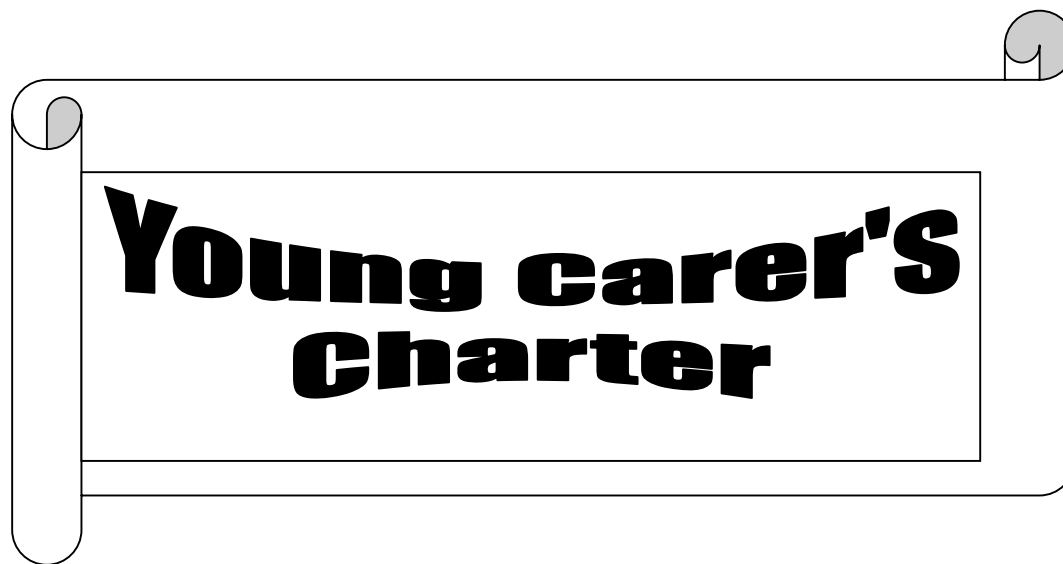
WHO CAN HELP ME?

- ⇒ Write a diary or a poem, or draw a picture that says how you feel.
- ⇒ Put aside some time each day that is just for doing something you enjoy like playing computer games, phoning friends, playing a sport, listening to music or just watching your favourite TV programme.

Join a young carer's club.

BE ASSERTIVE! This means:

- ⇒ Knowing it's "OK" to say "NO" sometimes.
- ⇒ Knowing it's "OK" to want things for yourself as well as looking after other people.
- ⇒ Knowing exactly what you want and telling people clearly and calmly – use your brain, not your muscles!



Young carer's Charter

We are children and young people who are also carers. We believe we should have the same rights as other children and young people, including the rights to:

- Be children as well as Carers.
- Schools and colleges that give us the help we need to get an education.
- Fun, friends and time off for caring.
- Family life with well supported parents.
- Practical help and support so that we don't have to do all of the caring in our homes.
- A safe environment and protection from harm, including any harm that caring activities could cause us.
- Services that values our different backgrounds, cultures, religions, races and sexualities.
- Be listened to and supported by the people who support our parents and siblings.
- An assessment of what we need as individuals, without any assumptions being made about us.
- Be listened to and involved when people make decisions which affect our lives.
- Information about the health problems that we see our family members experiencing.
- Advocacy and complaints procedures which we can understand and which work.
- Stop taking on caring roles when we wish to.
- Move on and become independent adults.

*Ref: Young Carers Research Group in association with Crossroads (1994)
"Getting it right for young carers – a training pack for professionals"
in "Young Carers Strategy 2000-2003" – Wiltshire Young Carers p.8.*

S C H O O L P R O B L E M S ?

How can teachers help me?

You could ask them to:

- Give extra time to hand work in when the person you are looking after is ill. ✓
- Let you use the school phone or your mobile to call the person you are looking after without having to explain why each time. ✓
- Go into lunch early if you need to get home at lunchtime. ✓
- Do detentions inside school time so that you can get home to look after someone. ✓
- Help your parents get to parents' evenings if they have trouble leaving the house. ✓
- Not ask you about your home life when other people are listening. ✓
- Give people lessons about disability, mental health problems or drug/alcohol problems but don't let other people in the Class know about your home life. ✓
- Help if you are getting bullied. ✓



Young Carers Interview Sheet

Name of student	Form
Relationship to cared for person	Resides with YC
Reasons student is a young carer	Criteria met for young project
Responsibilities	Specialised support
Siblings	Ages
Other people living at home	Ages if relevant
Interested in: Drop in Club <input type="checkbox"/>	
Meetings <input type="checkbox"/>	
Young Cares Project <input type="checkbox"/>	
Referred to young carers project	Date
Referred by	Date
Completed by	Date
Notified: Named person <input type="checkbox"/>	
Head of learning <input type="checkbox"/>	
Form tutor <input type="checkbox"/>	

(Marriotts School 2007)



CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE



YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

ASSEMBLY FEEDBACK

There is 8,000 Young Carers in Hertfordshire, who spend a lot of their spare time looking after someone in their family who is ill or has a disability, mental illness or drug or alcohol problem. The Young Carers Project offers them help, support and free trips and activities.

About you– Please circle YES or NO

Do **you** care for someone at home who is ill, disabled, frail, has a mental illness or a drug or alcohol problem? YES / NO

If you have answered YES would you like to talk to someone at school about your caring situation? YES / NO

Would you like more details about the Young Carers Project and the help, support and free trips we offer? YES / NO

Would you be interested in a young carers group/club in or out of school, for example during one lunchtime or evening? YES / NO

Name _____ Form _____

Thanks for filling out the form. This information will not be shared with out your knowledge



Sample letter to parents

Re Young Carers in name of school.....

In (name of school).....we have young carers who now benefit by meeting on a regular basis, organising activities and informing the support available in school.

I am the main contact person for young carers in the school. We are in regular contact with The *Carers in Hertfordshire* Young Carers Project. The aim is to inform young carers and their families of the support available.

Your son/daughter has made us aware of their caring role and the impact it may upon them at school. Regular liaison on takes place to ensure your son/daughter feels supported at school.

If you would like further information or would like to talk to me please contact the school Telephone..... or email.....

Yours sincerely

Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project.

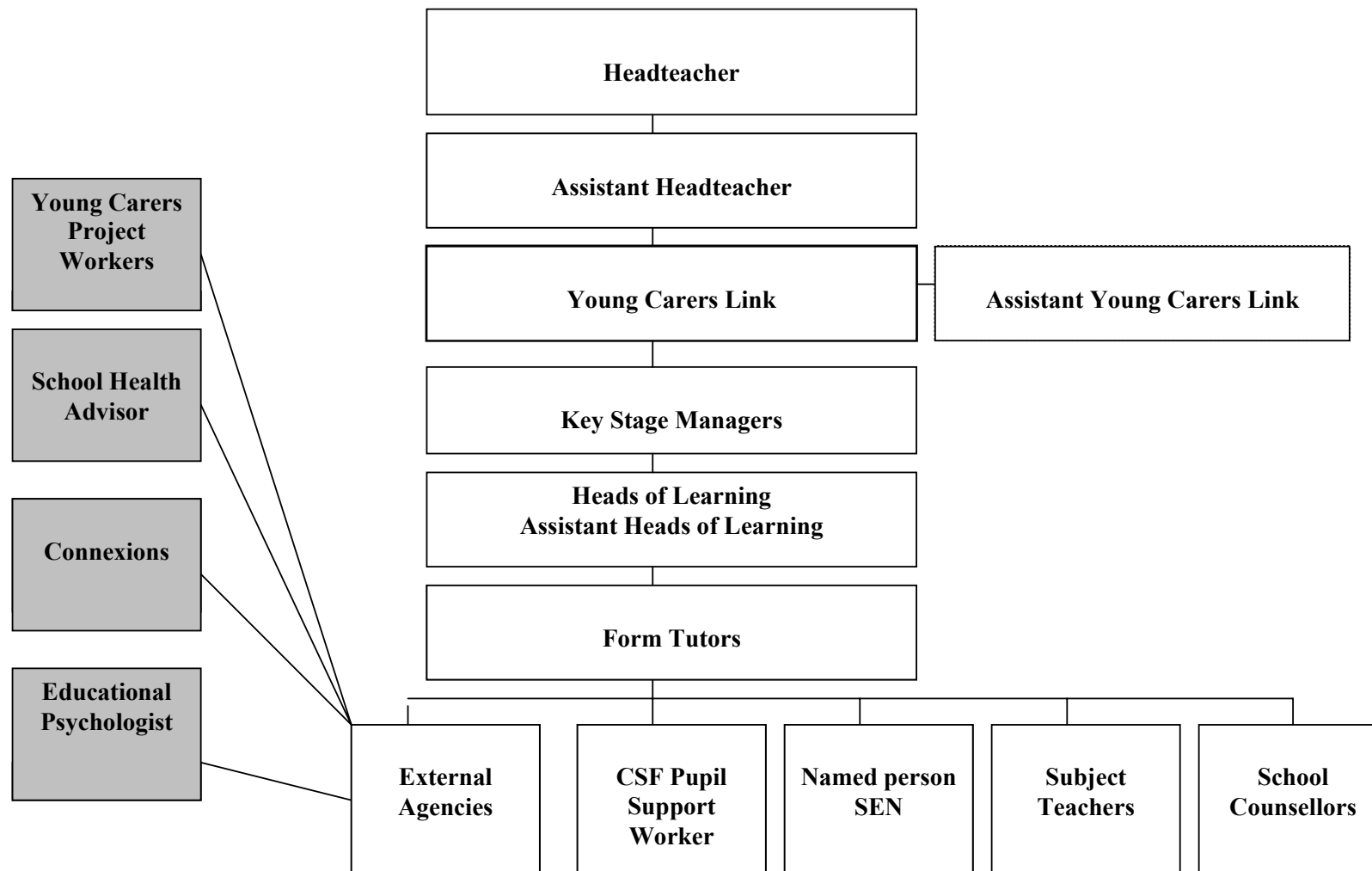
Action Plan for schoolwork – Example

This plan outlines suggested first steps to take when developing a sustainable support system in school for young carers.

Tasks/Objectives	How are we doing	Done	Date	Actions	To do	Outcomes
Raising awareness	Informing staff – of young carers support work in school		Sept 00	Liaise with heads of year and form tutors	Send out memos requesting a meeting to discuss the young carers support work	Heads of year and form tutors are now aware of their individual roles within the support network and of young carers issues.
	Article in school Newsletter about young carers this will inform parents about the support available for young carers in school		Sept 00	When is the next News Letter due to be printed Liaise with the editor	Write an article for the Newsletter	Parents, pupils and staff informed about the young carers support in school (please see example letter)
	Have information about young carers for staff and young carers		Oct 00	Make up information packs for staff and have leaflets available for young carers	Disseminate information via leaflets, posters and newsletters	Staff and pupils are informed of young carers issues
Identifying young carers	Talk to pupils in school assemblies –allowing young carers to self identify (through feedback forms)		Oct 00	Liaise with relevant members of staff re dates for assemblies	Ensure staff are informed about the assemblies and their role i.e. distribute the feedback forms and analyse them	pupils across year group assemblies informed about young carers issues and young carers self identifying through the feedback forms.

Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project

Young Carers - Support Network at (Name of school)



Example of monitoring and recording sheet for young carers

Young Carers

Year	Surname	Foremane	Notes	Relation in school	Member of The YC Project	School support group	Attendance % before identified as a YC	Attendance % After identified as a YC	Attainment
Year 8	Finn	Sarah	Mum has MS Brother has ADHD	Sister of Ian Finn	yes	yes	84%	90%	Has potential to achieve 4 GCSE's

Sample Young Carers Policy for Schools

At(school Name) we believe that all children and young people have the right to an education, regardless of their circumstances.

That is why we have adopted our young carer's policy so that we will be able to relieve some of the worries which young carers may have about home and their school work.

Our school will:

Designate a member of staff to have special responsibility for young carers.

Make sure all the pupils in our school are aware of who is the designated teacher for young carers

Run a session on the challenges faced by young carers in PSHE lesson in year.....

Be sensitive towards young carers' needs – they don't always want their peers to know.

Give information to the young person about young carers and what advice and support is available

Pass information on to relevant colleagues i.e. form tutor/year head with the consent of the young carer

Liaise with the appropriate agencies i.e. The Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project.

Look at alternatives if a young carer is unable to attend out of school activities e.g. detention, sports coaching, concerts, due to their caring roles (this will be discussed sensitively with the pupil and their parents).

(Taken from Brent Young Carers Project's Schools Policy)