

Carers in Hertfordshire – Young Carers Project

Primary Schools Resource Pack

INTRODUCTION

This pack is designed for use by school staff and anyone responsible for delivering Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship Education in Hertfordshire Primary schools.

The main aim of the pack is to provide a tool kit for identifying and supporting young carers in school.

The pack contents will enable school staff to:

- a) Help young carers to find support, social links and advice
- b) Refer young carers to the Hertfordshire Young Carers Project

The pack provides

- lesson plans for presenting the issue of young carers and the relative invisibility and social isolation of their role;
- practical ideas and information for use in the classroom and school assemblies;
- information about *Carers in Hertfordshire* and the Young Carers Project and the support offered to schools and to young carers.

Acknowledgements

The Young Carers Project gratefully acknowledges Carers Lewisham and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, for making available much of the source material we have used, written and devised by Geraldine Baker, Young Carers School Development Worker with Carers Lewisham, who compiled the original lesson material, users' information and guidelines, in '**Supporting Young Carers in School – a secondary resource pack**', based on work she has done with two secondary schools in Lewisham.

Carers Together in Hampshire & The British Red Cross

We further acknowledge with thanks those young carers who allowed their personal accounts to be used as case studies.

Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project also acknowledges the Children's Fund for its funding and support for the school liaison work.

Who is a Young Carer?

'Children and young people (under 18) who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis'

(DoH 1996, p2 quoted in 'Unseen and Unheard, The Invisible Young Carers' p8, by Geraldine Baker, Carers Lewisham)

The 'young carer' may provide some or most of this care, which is likely to be at the cost of her or his own needs. She or he often has no idea what help and support is available or how to access that help.

Objectives of the Young Carers Project

- To support young carers, both individually and through young carers' support groups
- To provide free weekend breaks, holidays, outings and workshops
- To hold an annual Young Carers Conference

Strategies for Young Carers

- a) **A National Strategy** for young carers - In 1999, the Government launched the National Carers Strategy, which recommended that all schools raise awareness of young carers and implement basic strategies to support young carers in their school.

The latest census statistics reveal that there are now more than 175,000 young carers in the UK. Projects are developing across the UK to make the role of young carers more widely recognised and supported, particularly by teachers and other professionals in Education, as well as in Health and Social Services.

- b) **A Strategy for Hertfordshire** – In 1999 a county strategy was developed and was renewed under the leadership of the Children, Schools and Families service, in 2002. The Young Carers Project is a key partner in the implementation of the Young Carers' Strategy for Hertfordshire.

Research carried out in 1996-97 throughout Hertfordshire indicated that 12½ % or 8,500 young people aged 11-16 years self-identified as "looking after someone" at home. Their caring roles appear along a spectrum of care from simple domestic tasks to heavy caring responsibilities, including personal care. Based on the national context, a smaller proportion of these children and young people will have substantial caring responsibilities.

A multi-agency group oversees the implementation of the strategy throughout Hertfordshire.

Guidelines for Schools

Supporting Young Carers

'Increased awareness in schools about the role of young carers will help staff and pupils understand the pressures these young people have and how they can help by offering support and encouragement.'

[J. Aldridge, S. Becker, C. Dearden; *Partners In Caring*, Carers National Association, 1994]

Ongoing support at school will lower the stress often surrounding the curriculum, examinations, homework and relationships.

In line with working with other agencies, schools would benefit by establishing links within the local community, as well as addressing the overall need of their pupils. Schools are in daily contact with pupils who have caring responsibilities at home and can be assisted to recognise a young carer who may require support.

The School Development Plan: This could include:

- consideration by governing bodies of what provision they will make or support in their school, both for the children and to raise awareness of this issue to ensure young carers issues are recognised and addressed within schools
- promotion of positive images of illness and disabilities to encourage understanding amongst staff members and other pupils and reduce embarrassment experienced by young carers;
- discussion in the personal/social skills part of the curriculum about issues surrounding disabilities and caring, which may help to bring such situations more into the open and facilitate their acceptance;
- the offer of access to information or training to enable staff to recognise signs that may indicate that a child performs a caring role within the family, and to ensure the sensitive handling of the situation when a young carer is known to the school;
- procedures in place to ensure that the Young Carer continues to access and receive support when they transfer to secondary school
- extra provision to help young carers achieve their full potential, including assessment of any special educational needs they may have themselves;
- full use of internal and external support services available e.g. educational welfare service, child guidance service, social services, youth services and the voluntary sector.

Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project

Background

The Young Carers' Project was set up in 1996 by Carers in Hertfordshire, with funding from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and has progressed from initial research to the development of support services and a Young Carers' Council.

The Project is currently funded by H.C.C.- Children, Schools and Families, the NHS Primary Care Trusts in Hertfordshire and the Children's Fund.

The Young Carers Project comprises of three members at present and covers the whole of the county

Project Workers;

- Cindy Honour – Project Manager
- Marie Freeman – School Liaison/Development Worker
- Cheyll Jones – Activities and Trips Co – Coordinator

In January 2000 the young carer's project was supporting 50 young carers. At present the project is supporting 365 young carers and this does not include those who have move on or ceased being supported.

Project achievements:

- **The introduction of home visits**
- **Setting up a Young Carers Support Group in North Herts**
- **Annual programme of free breaks activities and workshops for young carers**
- **Organisation of the first Young Carers Conference**
- **The forming of the Young Carers Council**
- **Young Carers News Letter**
- **Development and launch of the Young Carers Web site**
- **Partnership work with Primary and Secondary Schools across the county**

Information and resources:

- **Project leaflets, information packs and reports**
- **Videos and DVD – looking at young carers issues**
- **Primary and Secondary school resource packs**
- **Presentations and talks to professionals**

Models of Good Practice for:

- **Supporting young carers in school**
- **The young carers secondary school transfer and support plan**
- **Setting up a young carers support group in school**

Project Aims:

- To raise awareness about young carers' issues and develop early recognition and identification
- To ensure that all young carers have access to information, advice and support
- To enable young carers to have a voice on issues that affect their lives
- To provide free breaks and activities for young carers
- To create links with secondary and primary schools across Hertfordshire, and support for young carers within schools.
- To liaise and undertake joint work with all relevant agencies on Young Carer issues.



School Assembly – suggestions

Introduction – Who are young carers?

- See definition page 10

The effects of the caring role on a young person:

- Being late for school/poor attendance
- Being tired
- Angry
- Frustrated
- Difficulty concentrating
- Embarrassed

What it means to be a young carer – the extra responsibilities:

- Providing extra support
- Help with practical tasks; cooking, cleaning, washing ,shopping
- Looking after younger siblings

How many are there?

The latest census shows that there are 175,000 young carers in the UK. Approximately 8,000 young carers in Hertfordshire.

What young carers need:

- Recognition, respect, and support
- Someone to talk too, a named person in the school

The Young Carers Project – what the project provides:

- Advice – about grants and benefits
- A Young Carers Web Site
- Information – sign posting to other agencies
- Support – one-to-one
- Breaks, Trips, and Activities
- The most valuable thing about belonging to the project is the opportunity to meet others in similar situations

A video is available from the Young Carers Project “I care do you?” depicting a young carer at school and a young carer going to the doctors. Case studies can also be used – please see lesson 3

Important note to teaching staff

Confidentiality

Young carers are often reluctant to talk about their caring responsibilities and may not wish other students to know about it. It is important that their confidentiality is respected in the classroom.

If the opportunity is there, some carers may wish to identify themselves in front of classmates, or they may choose to complete the **confidential Questionnaire**, however, others may not. Both of these situations will need sensitive handling by staff.

The questionnaire can be completed as part of a PSHE session, or during a quiet moment set aside for the purpose, so as to respect the privacy of the individual child/young person. There are various well-recognised ways of protecting confidentiality in the classroom:

- You may decide to use the ground rules which establish, for example, that it is **not OK** to talk about people personally in these lessons.
- Use distancing methods like Case Studies so that there is no discussion or disclosure about individual students in the classroom. Talk about the people in the case studies, not about “you” or “I”.
- Refer to sources of help and how to access it, but avoid asking young people directly if they need help.

If a young person completes a questionnaire or wishes to be referred to another agency or to the Young Carers Project for further help/information, check the school’s position on confidentiality and the passing on of personal details and information.

Lesson 1

Teachers Notes

Structuring the Lesson

1. Setting the scene – people who care for us in the community – whole class discussion
2. What is a Young Carer – what does it mean?
Use Young Carers definition (see page11)
3. What responsibilities do young people aged 9-13 years have?

Whole class think about the question and write down ideas

Which of these are at home?
at school?
elsewhere?

Do all young people have the same responsibilities?
What about the responsibilities of young people who care for a relative?

The cloud sheet (page 12) could be used – and completed in pairs or groups.

Or pupils could look at specific caring situations using handouts on pages 15-18

Also see information sheet in lesson 3

4. What do we know about Young Carers?
Use the Young Carers statistics sheet to give information

Lesson 1: Young Carers and their responsibilities

This lesson will look at the following; the definition of a young carer, people who care for us in the community and young carers and their responsibilities.

<i>Expected learning outcomes</i>	<i>An understanding of the concept of a Young Carer</i> <i>Awareness of the range of responsibilities of Young Carers</i> <i>An understanding of the impact of caring on a young person</i> <i>Knowledge of the reasons why caring sometimes becomes the responsibility of younger family members</i>
<i>Resources</i>	<i>Recognised definition of a young carer</i> <i>Work sheet – what do young carers do</i> <i>List of the tasks a young carer may do</i> <i>Statistics sheet</i> <i>People who care for us</i>
<i>Suggested lesson format and activities</i>	<i>Reflect on student's current responsibilities</i> <i>Focus on the definition of a Young Carer</i> <i>What does being a young carer mean</i> <i>What do we know about young carers</i>

Lesson 1: Young Carers and their Responsibilities

Definition of a Young Carer



‘Children and young people (under 18) who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis’

(DoH 1996, p2, quoted in ‘Unseen and Unheard, The Invisible Young Carers’ p8, by Geraldine Baker, Carers Lewisham)

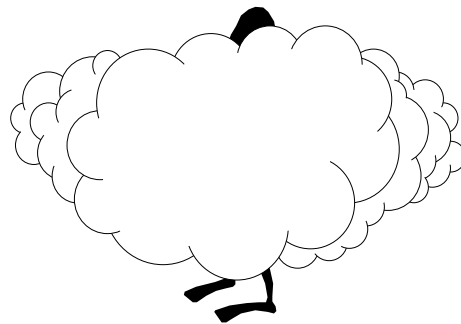
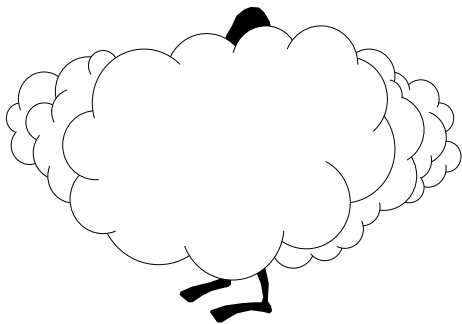
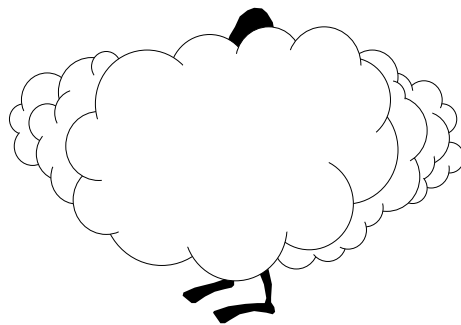
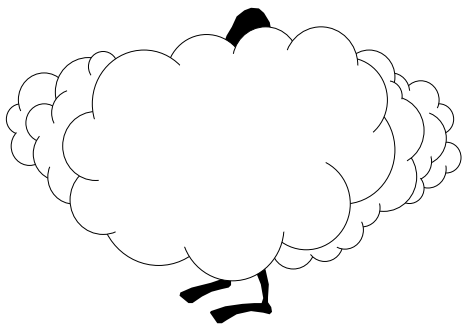
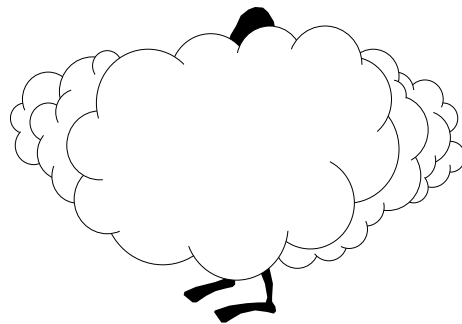
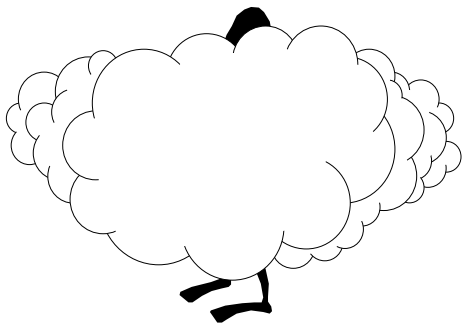
Young carers are children and young people who care for someone in their own home who is ill, has a physical or mental disability or drug or alcohol problems.

A Young Carer is telling a friend all the things that she has done for her mum today.

Can you write down the tasks that the Young Carer might have to do.

You might want to work with a friend.

Draw extra clouds if you want to.



Lesson 1: Young Carers and their Responsibilities

Information Sheet

Young Carers Statistics Sheet

There are an estimated 175,000 young carers in the UK.

The average age of a Young Carer in 1997 was 12

86% are of compulsory school age

57% are girls, 43% boys.

86% are white European. The largest ethnic minority groups of young carers are black African and black Caribbean.

54% of young carers live in lone parent families.

One in three young carers regularly miss school or have educational difficulties because of their caring role.

71% of young carers have been bullied.

One in four young carers do not tell anyone they are looking after someone at home.

12% are caring for more than one person.

Young carers in lone parent families are caring predominantly for a parent

63% of Young Carers look after someone with physical health problems and

29% are caring for someone with mental health difficulties.

72% perform domestic tasks, yet one in five young carers are providing intimate care.

Young carers need both practical and emotional support whether caring for someone with physical or mental health problems, though the type and extent of support required may vary depending on the needs of the person cared for.

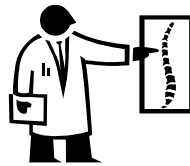
*Ref: 'Known facts about Young Carers', Dearden C. S.; 'Young Carers in the UK' 1998 Young Carers Research Group, Loughborough University in Carers Lewisham's 'Young Carers School Development Project Report' Oct 1998 - July 2000
Census figures 2001*

People who care for us in the community

1. Nurse



2. Doctor



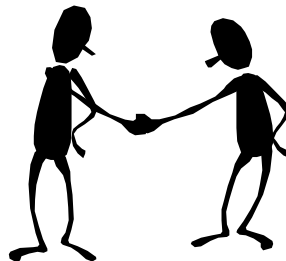
3. Dentist



4. Parents



5. Young Carers



**What might a young carer do for
a member of the family who is:**

physically disabled - finds it difficult to
walk, use hands etc.



**What might a young carer do for
a member of the family who:**

may be in a wheelchair



**What might a young carer do
for a member of the family
who has:**

difficulty hearing – deaf



**What might a young carer do
for a member of the family who has:**

difficulty seeing – blind



**What might a young carer do
for a member of the family
who has:**

A mental illness – unable to
cope with everyday living.



**What might a young carer do
for a member of the family who:**

may not speak or understand English.



**What might a young carer do
for a family member who has:**

a learning disability, from birth
or caused by a head injury



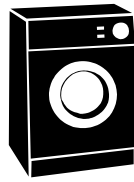
**What might a young carer do
for a member of the family who has:**

a problem with drugs or alcohol



The different things Young Carers may do to help

Washing



Cooking



Cleaning



Shopping



Gardening



Giving tablets



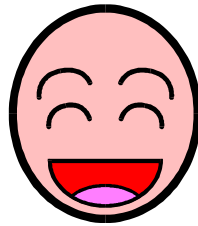
Helping to look after brothers or sisters



Provide emotional support - listening to someone's worries and concerns



Cheering someone up when they are unhappy



Lesson 2

Teachers Notes

Structuring the Lesson: Part 1

Part 1: Exploring our feelings.

1. Hand out the list of feelings – Happy and Sad

Pupils fill in the cloud pictures

The case studies in lesson 3 could also be used as a resource

Whole class discussion on the different feelings

- About the cared for
- About the tasks they may carry out
- About themselves and their future

The information sheet on page 29 could also be used for this session

Pupils reflect on how they or someone else might be feeling – see activity – Balloon Sheet – and information sheet 4 in lesson 3

Lesson Plan 2: Part 1 - Expressing Feelings

This lesson will look at the following; What it feels like to be a young carer and how they might be feeling. The pupils will also learn why young carers feel the way they do.

<p><i>Expected learning outcomes</i></p>	<p><i>A knowledge of understanding as to why a young carer may be feeling the way they do</i></p> <p><i>An awareness of the feelings a young carer may be experiencing</i></p> <p><i>Reflection on how they themselves might be feeling</i></p>
<p><i>Resources</i></p>	<p><i>List of Happy and Sad feelings</i></p> <p><i>Balloons – and Balloon Activity</i></p> <p><i>Cards with :</i> <i>I know someone is feeling</i> <i>I think someone is feeling</i></p> <p><i>Case studies</i></p>
<p><i>Suggested lesson format and activities</i></p>	<p><i>Whole class discussion on the different feelings</i></p> <p><i>looking at:</i> <i>The cared for</i> <i>About the tasks they may do</i> <i>About their future</i></p> <p><i>Balloons activity – see sheet (page 24)</i></p>



FEELINGS

Happy

Sad

Special

Tired

Important

Worried

Grown up

Scared

Helpful

Angry

Happy

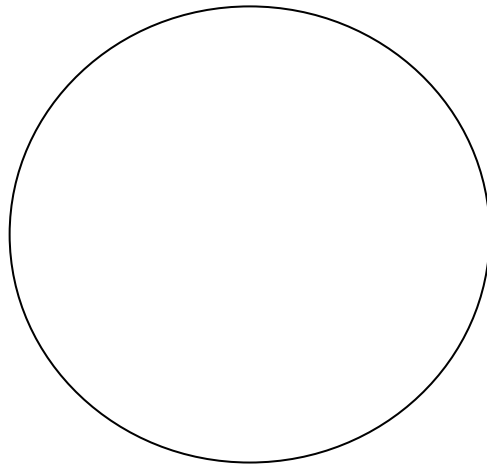
Lonely

Loved

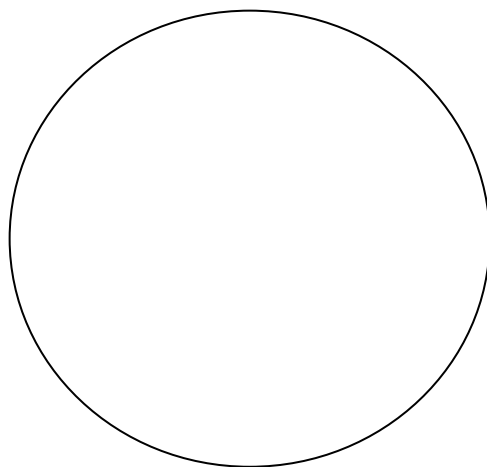
Fed up

Feelings – work sheet

Write some feelings in the circles below that we might feel when we are happy



Write some feelings in the circles below that we might feel when we are sad



Balloon Activity

This exercise allows pupils to “wind down” and think and reflect on the issues that have been raised, focussing on feelings and emotions.

The criteria/ground rules set out by the pupils before this session must then be followed.

Each pupil is given a balloon and two pieces of different coloured card. Each of the pieces of coloured card is labelled :

“ I know someone is feeling.....”

the other piece of card is labelled

“I think someone is feeling”

Pupils add whatever feeling or emotion they wish to, perhaps something they have observed during the session, or they may choose to use their own feeling or emotion.

The pieces of card are then rolled up and put into the balloon . The balloon is then blown up. When all the balloons are blown up they can be passed (or hit!) round the room (until time is called).

Pupils then get back into groups, with the balloon they now have. The balloons may then be burst open and the feelings and emotions written down can be shared within the group.

Pupils are given the opportunity to express in a confidential manner what they have seen or learnt from the case studies, or how they feel themselves.

Pupils are then encouraged to reflect in a sensitive and responsible manner on some of these feelings and emotions that have been shared. The activity should be fully explained to pupils and they should be allowed to set their own ground rules as to what happens with the pieces of card once the balloons have been blown up, passed around, burst and shared within their working group.

Ideas put forward could include;

Choosing one or a number of the cards, and share this by reading it/them out to the class.

Keeping the cards within the group, only read them within the group and not discuss them outside of the group.

Placing the cards on the “flip chart” as they leave the class, and either – have these typed out and made for the class to keep, or pass round a box to put all the bits of card in for the facilitator to take away, so that they are not seen by anyone outside the group/class.

(Taken from: Together in Hampshire & British Red Cross)

Lesson 2

Teachers Notes

Structuring the Lesson: Part 2

Support Systems

1. Mapping your support network
Introduce and demonstrate example given – Page 30
Ask pupils to complete their own network diagram
2. The help we get from different people
Hand out work sheet (people who can help me – Page 29)
Pupils fill in the sheet individually
Whole class discussion around how people can help us – referring to those who can help us in the community
3. Inform pupils of other support agencies who may be able to help them and how the school can help – see list of resources and web site list

Lesson Plan – Part 2

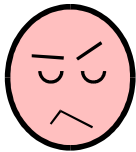



Lesson 2 Young Carers – Where would you gain support?

This lesson addresses where pupils access support and the extent that ‘trust’ and ‘confidence’ influence their decision. Pupils are invited to reflect on how support networks may change over time, and how and why they may differ for Young Carers.

<i>Expected learning outcomes</i>	<i>Increased awareness of the factors that shape personal support networks, and their importance.</i> <i>Knowledge of why Young Carers may need different support networks to other young people.</i> <i>An understanding of how personal circumstances may influence the support a person requires.</i>
<i>Resources</i>	<i>My support system</i> <i>Someone to talk too</i>
<i>Suggested lesson format and activities</i>	<i>Ask pupils to work through the sheet entitled – My support system</i> <i>Discuss what influences a pupil’s decision to gain support from some people and not others.</i> <i>Discuss the role of those who care in the community – see page 13</i> <i>List, then discuss the reasons why Young Carers may require different types of support, depending on their caring role.</i>

Someone to talk to

Sometimes we may need someone to talk to. Different people can help us in different ways

People who can help me	In school	Out of school
Someone I can talk to if I am worried 		
Someone who makes me laugh 		
Someone who does not mind if I am feeling angry 		
Someone I can talk to if I am feeling sad 		

Lesson 2: Young Carers and their Responsibilities

INFORMATION SHEET

Frequent Effects for Children and Young People Providing Care

Because of their caring role, they face problems at school, with completing homework, revising for exams and getting qualifications.

Young carers may often:

- Be late
- Be tired
- Miss school
- Underachieve
- Have difficulty completing homework
- Need extra time to complete homework tasks at GCSE level (if at secondary school)

Young carers may feel:

- Isolated from other children of the same age, and from other family members.
- That they are different from other children and are unable to be part of a group. A common issue for many young carers is the lack of understanding of their peers about disability and illness.
- A conflict between the needs of the person they are helping and their own needs, leading to feelings of guilt and resentment.
- That nobody is there for them, that professionals do not listen to them and are working only with the adult.
- A lack of recognition, of praise and respect for their contribution.

As a result, they may have:

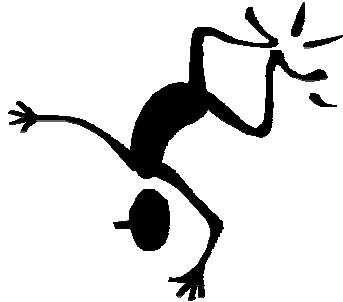
- A lack of career opportunities
- Special needs, possibly including behavioural difficulties.
- Problems with moving into adulthood, especially with finding work, their own home, and establishing relationships
- Problems from bullying by children who do not understand their situation.
- Lack of time for play, sport or other interests and leisure activities.

Lesson 2: My Support System

Family

Pets

ME



Friends

Teachers

They should draw themselves in the middle and then draw around themselves all the people/things (e.g. music), which give them support. Ask them to think about where their main support comes from and whether they give more support than they get or vice versa?

Ask them to share these in pairs, choosing someone they feel comfortable working with. In talking about it, ask them to consider whether there are people who are not in their drawings who do not give them support, but who they feel they themselves give a lot to.

They could draw a line with an arrow from the person/thing to themselves, varying the thickness according to the extent of support received. They could draw another line, with the arrow in the opposite direction, according to the extent of support they think they give.

Possible questions to ask:

- As you talk with your partner, can you think of other things, which you have missed out?
- How do you feel about your support network? Are there things you would like to improve? What could you do about it?

Lesson 3: Mental ill health and disability

Living with disabilities and mental ill health in the family

Part 1

1. Recognising a disability or mental ill health problem
2. Towards a definition of disability and mental ill health
3. Classroom exercises
4. Our rights as children who care
5. Case studies

Part 2: Group work

What do we know about

- a. Disability?
- b. Mental ill health?

Task 1

Disability “True” or “False” Exercise

Each group has a list of 10 statements with three columns

TRUE FALSE DON'T KNOW

The sheet is passed around the groups and in turn each student reads out one statement and ticks either TRUE FALSE DON'T KNOW

Note: there is no discussion at this point.

The group members discuss the DON'T KNOWS and replace them in a TRUE or FALSE column

Whole class now led by teacher

Using the OHP the teacher reads each statement in turn asking a spokesperson from each group to read out the group's agreed answer.

Brief class discussion on each

Give out copies of the 10 statements and ask them to fill them in individually.

Teacher then shows the class the answers on OHP

Emphasis should be on the positive rather than the negative aspects of disability – (referring to helping with a disability sheet) allowing a few minutes for questions and discussion.

Task 2

Mental ill health – TRUE or FALSE exercise

Repeat as for task 1

What sort of help might be needed by people with a disability?

Refer to sheets – ‘What might a young carer do for a member of the family who is’ see pages 15-18

Lesson 3: What do you know about Mental Health and Disability?

Structuring the Lesson

Recognising when a person has a disability or mental ill health

Part 1

Whole class with teacher discuss:

- Can we always tell?
- Is it easy to recognise?

Physical Disability – What we can see:

- unable to stand or walk
- maybe in a wheelchair

Those we cannot see:

- learning disability
- loss of hearing
- blindness
- diabetes
- heart Disease

Mental illness – You no longer feel in control of your actions, this could be:

- depression
- tearful
- unable to cope with every day life
- phobias

We all vary in our ability to different things:

- running
- swimming
- writing
- drawing

What does disability mean?

Whole class brainstorm the word disability as a way in:

- draw a picture of a disabled person
- draw some objects or symbols which represent disability

Presenting a positive image

Introduce achievements of some well known people with disabilities – for example:

Blind	David Blunkett – Politician
Paraplegic	Christopher Reeve – Actor – Superman
Epilepsy	Julius Cesar – Roman Ruler
Dyslexic	Walt Disney - Film Maker
Learning Disability	Jamie Oliver – Celebrity Cook
Speech Stutter	Gareth Gates – Pop Idol

What sort of help might be needed by people with a disability –see pages 15-16 in Lesson 1.

Lesson Plan 3: What do you know about Mental Health and Disability?

This lesson is designed to encourage pupils to consider their views of mental ill health and disability, by inviting them to compare and reflect on their perception, and social attitudes towards people with disabilities and mental ill health. These views will then be used to examine the wide-ranging impact on young people who have responsibility to care for someone with a disability or mental ill health.

<p><i>Expected learning outcomes</i></p>	<p><i>An understanding of the difference between mental and physical health</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge of the factors that contribute to mental ill health and disability</i></p> <p><i>Being aware that we are all different</i></p> <p><i>Awareness of social taboos and perceptions of mental health and disability</i></p> <p><i>An understanding of how a young person may be affected by caring for someone with a disability or mental illness</i></p>
<p><i>Resources</i></p>	<p><i>Rights of Young Carers</i></p> <p><i>Definitions of mental ill health and disability</i></p> <p><i>What do we know about mental ill health and disability?</i></p> <p><i>Answer sheets for teachers</i></p> <p><i>Information sheets</i></p> <p><i>Case studies – with suggested question</i></p>
<p><i>Suggested lesson format And activities</i></p>	<p><i>Raise awareness of mental ill health and disability</i></p> <p><i>Explore student's perceptions of mental ill health and disability</i></p> <p><i>Tasks: What do we know about mental ill health?</i></p> <p><i>What do we know about disability?</i></p> <p><i>Presenting a positive image</i></p>

Definition of Mental ill Health

Mental ill health is when a person has feelings and emotions that are unacceptable to them or others, and that makes it difficult for them to cope with everyday life

Definition of disability

Disability is when a person is restricted in movement or understanding; or lacks the physical or mental ability to perform an activity

(Carers Lewisham, Supporting Young Carers in School)

What do we know about mental ill health?

Place a tick in one of the columns	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
1. Only adults suffer from mental illness			
2. More men commit suicide than women			
3. 6 million people in the UK suffer from mental ill health			
4. Alcohol and drug abuse are the main causes of mental ill health			
5. Epilepsy is a mental illness			
6. Bullying can sometimes cause mental health problems			
7. Depression is a mental illness			
8. People with a mental illness sometimes say and do things they don't really mean			
9. Exercise can help to stop people feeling depressed			
10. One in four people will have a mental health problem at some time in their life.			

These sheets can be used for teachers' information or they can be adapted for group/whole class discussion.

Teachers note: please see answer sheet on page 37

Lesson 3: Young Carers – What do you know about Mental Health and Disability

What do we know about mental ill health?

1. Only adults suffer from mental illness

FALSE: surveys vary: but show between 5% and 10% of children and adolescents suffering from some form of mental ill health problem. One study gives a figure of 4% of children requiring specialist services.

2. More men commit suicide than women

TRUE: one reason is thought to be because women are encouraged to share their feelings more than men, so men 'hold' their negative feelings.

3. 6 million people in the UK suffer from mental illness

TRUE: so mental illness is far from uncommon

4. Alcohol and drug abuse are main causes of mental ill health

FALSE: pressure, stress, suppression of feelings and a difficult family background are the main causes of mental ill health, although alcohol and drug abuse can often have a negative effect on a person's mental health.

5. Epilepsy is a mental illness

FALSE: it is a health problem caused by electrical activity in the cells of the brain. It is because of how the body responds when a person has an epileptic fit/seizure that some people make the mistake of thinking that epilepsy has something to do with mental health.

6. Bullying can sometimes cause mental health problems

TRUE: a person can become depressed because they are being bullied, and may find themselves struggling to cope with everyday life.

7. Depression is a mental illness

TRUE: over 4 million people suffer with depression in the UK. Everyone at some point in their life may feel depressed, but it is when such feelings leave a person struggling to cope with their everyday life that depressed feelings can lead to depression.

8. People with a mental illness sometimes say and do things they don't really mean

TRUE: sometimes the illness can affect how a person thinks, speaks and behaves to others.

9. Exercise can help to stop people feeling depressed

TRUE: during exercise the body produces endorphins, which make a person feel relaxed, and help them feel less stressed.

10. One in four people will have a mental health problem at some time in their life

TRUE: so most people will probably know someone who is suffering from mental ill health.

Lesson 3: Young Carers: What do you know about Mental Health and Disability

What do we know about disability?

Place a tick in one of the columns	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
1. most people with a disability are born with it			
2. If a person is disabled it means they are ill			
3. Someone with a disability can't be cured			
4. Most people with a disability are elderly			
5. A young person with a disability has to go to a special school			
6. You can always tell if someone has a disability			
7. People with disabilities are not allowed to work			
8. People who are blind can read books			
9. There are many different sorts of disabilities- not just physical ones			
10. People with disabilities want other people to do everything for them			

These sheets can be used for teachers' information or can be adapted for class group/discussion work

Teachers note: please see answer sheet on page 39

Lesson 3: Young Carers – Living with someone with a disability

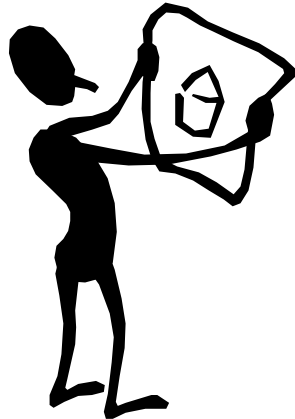
ANSWER SHEET

What do we know about disability?

- 1. Most people with a disability are born with it**
FALSE: Only 17% of people with disabilities were born with it. Most people who are disabled become so because of accidents or disease at some stage in their lives.
- 2. If a person is disabled it means they are ill**
FALSE: it just means they are unable to carry out certain tasks, or find difficulty doing so.
- 3. Someone with a disability can't be cured**
FALSE: it depends on the reason for the disability. Many disabilities can be improved with treatment or drugs or with technological support.
- 4. Most people with a disability are elderly**
FALSE: people with a disability are found in all age groups eg. 3% of all children under the age of 16 have a disability
- 5. A young person with a disability has to go to a special school**
FALSE: many young people with disabilities go to mainstream schools. Just because a person is disabled doesn't mean that they are not as clever as those who are able bodied.
- 6. You can always tell if someone has a disability**
FALSE: some disabilities are not obvious. For instance, it's not possible to see if someone is deaf; and someone who has difficulty in walking may appear perfectly fit when sitting down.
- 7. People with disabilities are not allowed to work.**
FALSE: there are laws, which say that employers must hire people with disabilities. Many people who are disabled are just as able to work as anyone else.
- 8. People who are blind can read books**
TRUE: they can read using Braille
- 9. There are many different sorts of disabilities – not just physical ones**
TRUE: some people have a learning disability which means they learn more slowly than others
- 10. People with disabilities want other people to do everything for them.**
FALSE: people with disabilities want to be as independent as possible. The best way to help someone who is disabled is to let them do as much as possible for themselves.

Lesson 3: Young Carers living with someone with a Disability

INFORMATION SHEET (1a)



Helping people with a disability

When people think about physical and other disabilities it is often in the context of what a person is unable to do. Although help may be needed if a person is unable to perform certain physical tasks, not everyone with a disability requires care from a member of their family.

Not all disabilities are permanent, and most of those which are can be treated or ameliorated with treatment (eg drugs, physiotherapy) or technical aids (motorised equipment, computers etc) used to increase mobility and physical functions. A specially designed computer can help someone to speak, for example, and hearing aids are used by large numbers of people to overcome their hearing loss.

Most people who have a disability are keen to be as independent as possible, and to do whatever they can for themselves. When we first meet a person with a disability it's useful to remember not to help unless they ask us to. It's also a good idea not to make assumptions about what people with disabilities can or cannot do. Many people with disabilities are in employment, and others take part in sports, for example the Para-Olympics.

Optional exercise – disability awareness

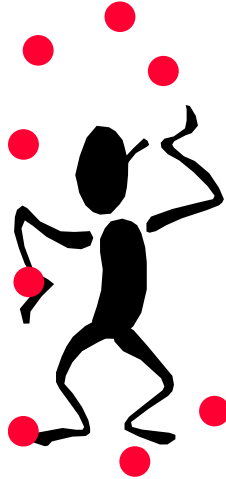
Can you think of any things a person with a particular disability might still be able to do?

Discuss in pairs/small groups and make a list of the ideas that come up

Lesson 3: Teachers' Notes

INFORMATION SHEET (1b)

Looking after someone with Physical Disability/Long Term Illness and what it means for a young carer



A high proportion of young carers are looking after someone with a physical disability or long term illness; this also includes those caring for someone with a sensory impairment. Young carers in this situation often assume greater responsibility for practical, physical tasks, as well as coping with the associated emotional stress and responsibility.

Young carers in this situation are involved in general tasks such as assisting with mobility, giving medication and so on. Often they also bear sole responsibility for domestic chores and the day to day running of the household.

Providing personal, intimate care is the most difficult for both children and parents, because of the embarrassment it can cause to both. In addition many young carers are also drawn into childcare responsibilities and the need to care for younger siblings because of the parent's inability to manage because of their illness.

Even in situations where a care package may appear to be meeting individual care needs, the range of tasks and the periods of time when paid carers are not present means that the young carer still assumes a high level of responsibility. This reinforces the need for a separate young carer's assessment to ensure that professionals see the full picture.

Lesson 3: Living with someone with mental ill health

INFORMATION SHEET (2)

What is mental ill health?

Everyone has different levels of physical and mental ill health- most people know when they are physically unwell, but awareness of what constitutes good mental health can sometimes leave people struggling to recognise when they are suffering from mental illness.

Mental illness covers a wide range of problems. All of us get depressed or anxious, especially after a distressing or traumatic event, like the death of a relative or a friend. But with mental illness, these feelings carry on for along time and make it difficult to cope with everyday life. Because everyone is different, people have their own ways of reacting. So mental illness can cover anything from depression to hearing voices.

Common Problems:

Anxiety and phobias

It's normal to feel anxious about taking exams or starting new school. Almost everyone is scared of something, whether it's looking down from a high building or going into crowded places. However, it's possible to suffer from anxiety or phobias so much that you no longer feel in control of your actions.

Depression

Most of us get depressed from time to time, but usually our feelings are related to a specific event and we find ways to get over it in time. But some people get depressed that their whole life seems bleak and hopeless.

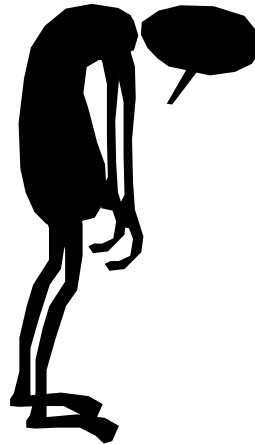
Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is caused by adverse chemical reactions in the brain, which affect the way a person thinks about him/herself. They often feel as if they are being controlled or followed by someone else, and may be very afraid at times.

Lesson 3: Young Carers – Living with someone with mental ill health

INFORMATION SHEET (2a)

Causes and effects of mental ill health



Common Causes:

The most common causes of mental ill health are:

- Suppression of feelings
- Stressful life events
- A difficult family background
- Bio-chemistry: genes

People who suffer with mental illness can sometimes get better, in the same way that someone can when suffering with a physical illness. However, as with physical illness, if a person is unable to deal with or avoid the cause of mental illness, they can often become more ill.

Positive mental health can be encouraged by a person learning to relax, learning to deal with difficult situations, setting goals, expressing their feelings, facing up to their problems or finding someone to talk to.

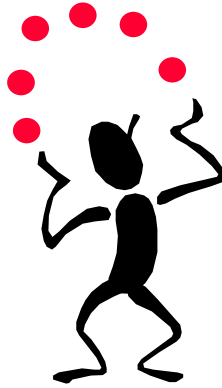
Effects of Caring for someone with a Mental Health Problem

It is because mental illness is often regarded a 'taboo' subject that many carers, especially Young Carers, may find themselves being bullied if it is known that a relative of theirs has a mental illness. The person for whom they care may be suicidal or violent, or their moods may quickly change, and this can be particularly stressful and frightening. The impact of caring for someone with a mental illness can also give way to emotional exhaustion.

Lesson 3: Sibling Carers

INFORMATION SHEET (3)

Looking after brothers or sisters with Special Needs



Many young carers are caring for a brother or sister with a disability or illness. Often these young carers will be playing a supportive role to their parents, but the impact on siblings and their needs should not be overlooked or undervalued. Many children with disabilities need intensive care, seven days a week, and sometimes at night as well. This level of care impacts on the whole family and many siblings take on caring tasks in order to share the work with other family members.

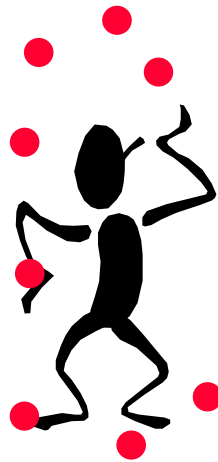
Young carers in these situations may be bullied and teased at school. It is sometimes difficult to do home work or to bring friends to the house because of the behaviour of their brother or sister, which may also cause embarrassment in public and reduce choices in terms of family outings. Young carers felt it was difficult to tell friends about their brother or sister and often did not know whom to trust.

Many young carers feel confused by their conflicting emotions. On the one hand they openly acknowledge their love for their brother or sister. However, on the other hand they feel frustrated and resent the time their parents spend with the child with the disability. They may also resent services and activities always being provided to the child with the disabilities, when they feel they are stuck at home. Some young carers said they prefer to stay at home because of the special arrangements that need to be made to go on day trips and/or holiday e.g. equipment, sorting out medication etc..

Young carers suffer embarrassment and feelings of anger at other people's reactions; some young carers have got into trouble defending their brother or sister. They find it difficult to relax and enjoy themselves. At home young carers experience a lack of privacy. They feel sad that they cannot communicate properly with their brother or sister. Many young people assume that they will always have to be their brother or sister's carer and plan their lives out accordingly.

Lesson 3: Young Carers – The effects of caring role can have on a young person

INFORMATION SHEET (4)



Growing up coping with the disability or illness of a family member will, inevitably, affect a young person. The nature and extent of such effects will be dependent on a number of factors:

- ❑ The structure of and relationships within the family
- ❑ The range of help offered by family and/or friends
- ❑ The nature of the disability or illness
- ❑ Financial circumstances of the family
- ❑ Support and services provided by outside agencies
- ❑ The personality of the child

However, many young carers find that their lives are significantly affected. Many young carers have problems attending school regularly or on time, they have difficulty completing homework and struggle to concentrate in class. Some young carers find it difficult to mix with their peers; either because they need to get home after school or because they are more mature than peers. Many young carers are bullied. As a result, their academic and pastoral welfare can be adversely affected.

Many young carers may feel emotional anxiety, stress, guilt, self-blame and an obligation to care. They feel a sense of embarrassment and stigma and often feel ostracised by their peer group and/or their local community. Nearly all young carers express an overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness stemming from their belief that they are the only one in this situation.

Some young carers are keen to highlight the positive aspects of caring. They feel that they have gained many important skills and so will be better equipped for their adult lives. Their caring role also allows them greater empathy and understanding of other peoples situations.

Case studies

Case study 1

Kirsty Age 12

Kirsty lives with her Mum and younger brother David, age 7. Her mum and dad separated two years ago, during which time Kirsty's mum had started to suffer from severe arthritis and asthma.

On bad days, Kirsty's mum is so ill she finds it difficult to walk short distances from one room in the house to another, and climbing the stairs can be impossible.

Kirsty often has to call out an ambulance for her mum, especially at times when she has fallen or has had a severe asthma attack.

Case Study 2

Claire Age 9

I look after my Mum. She has a disease called Myasthenia Gravis. She can go into hospital any time when her muscles are too weak. It effects her muscles, breathing, walking, and speech etc. When my Mum's ill I ring the ambulance. She tells me not to, but I know its for her own good. When my Mum's ill I go in a home with my sister. When my mum comes out of hospital you can tell the difference but not for long. I help tidy up, undress her, help in the bath, hoover etc. After I've helped my mum there's a feeling inside of me, which makes me happy.

My Mum sees a lot of social workers and helpers. I get on fine with them, except one lady who takes me to school. At school most people understand especially my old year 3 teacher. If I get problems she helps me.

Case Study 3

John Age 10

John lives at home with his mum, dad, and three brothers aged 14,12 and 9. Three months ago John's mum had an accident and broke her leg very badly, and she has only just come home. Her leg is still in plaster and she can only walk around using crutches. She can't get upstairs and so she is now having to sleep in the living room.

John's mum goes to hospital three times a week for physiotherapy , but the hospital send a car to fetch her and bring her home. John's dad had two weeks off work after the accident, but has now had to go back to work. John and his brothers are finding these sudden changes to their routine difficult.

Case Study 4

Simon Age 9

Simon lives with his mum and dad and has no brothers or sisters. Simon's mum suffers form depression and her moods can swing up and down. Sometimes the depression is really bad and when it happens she may stay in bed all day, not bother about the shopping, cooking, housework etc. At times she may not even want to look after herself properly. Sometimes she can seem OK, and will be up and about and able to cope with things much better.

Simon's dad is an alcoholic , which means his behaviour can be very unpredictable. When things are going well and does not have a drink he can be really good fun, very responsible and "just like any other dad". However, when things are bad and he had a drink he can be aggressive, unable to go to work, and unable to fulfil duties and responsibilities at home. Simon's parents are often arguing and this upsets him. His friends have told him his dad has a problem, and he knows his mum is unwell because she sees the doctor.

Questions that could be used when discussing or using the case studies;

- How do you think this effects the relationships within the family?
- What difficulties may face at home, at school and with her friends?
- Is learning any skills from her experiences? What are they?
- How would you feel if you were in position

Assessments

Assessments of users and carers can be made through such legislation as the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, the Children Act 1989, The Carers Recognition and Services Act 1995 and the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000. It is essential, however, that any assessment that is undertaken should focus on:-

- The whole family
- How the assessment can support the parent and also
- Recognising the need of any young carer

Services for the family can be provided under either children's or adult's legislation. It is for local authorities – through the assessment – to identify clear links between community care and children's provision.

Social Services Departments should ensure that they have procedures in place so that, whatever route is taken to gain access to social services provision, an assessment of the whole family is offered which identifies those adults with parental responsibility and young carers' needs. Undoubtedly, this may involve inter-agency collaboration and in turn cross-referencing between plans.

Children in Need

The government's Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) – para 3.62 – 3.63 says that, "Young carers should not be expected to carry out inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances", and that "Services should be provided to promote the health and development of young carers while not undermining the parent"

Under current legislation – the Children Act 1989, the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 – young carers can receive support from local health authorities. Using Section 17 of the Children Act social services departments can help young carers, by considering whether their welfare or development might suffer if support is not provided.

(Central Government. National Carers Strategy 1999)

Carers and Disabled Children Act 2001

All carers Aged 16+ can request (and should be offered) a Carers Assessment at any time and can receive services and benefits to support them as carers in their own right.

Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004

Made Local Authorities responsible for letting carers of all ages know of their right to an Assessment and stated that it should take account of their work, leisure and education needs.

(Central Government - National Carers Strategy 1999)

Making a referral

If a professional is unsure as to whether to make a referral they can undertake a 'what if' conversation with a member of the social work teams in the Quadrants. This can also be done through the Call Centre, making it clear that a 'What if' conversation is required. Advice will be given as to whether a referral should be made. The responsibility for making the referral rests with the referrer. The young carer need not be identified within a 'What if' conversation.

For further guidance please see- **Young Carers A Guide to Practice Young Carers in Need** – published by Hertfordshire Children Schools & Families – Feb 2006

Below are some suggested steps to follow

<p style="text-align: center;">YOUNG CARERS ON THE PATHWAY TO RECOGNITION</p>
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1. Definition: Young people who care for someone in their own home who is ill, has physical or mental disability or drug or alcohol problems
2. Identification in school by; School assemblies, The questionnaire, PHSE lessons
3. Identify young carers link in the school
4. Support for young carers in school by; drop in sessions, a lunch time support group.
5. Assessing young carers needs i.e. CSF, The young carers project
6. Referral to; CSF, or you could do a "what if call"
7. Referral to the young carers project , inform the parents, Parents contact school or the project direct.
8. Not sure! , You can contact the project for help and guidance
9. How to contact us 01992 586969 Cindy Honour, or Marie Freeman.

HELP! I'M STUCK FOR WHERE TO GET MORE INFO!



LET THE WEB BE YOUR GUIDE!

Here are some interesting Websites - Go on! Have a look!

www.Koolcarers.org.uk - Carers in Hertfordshire - information for adult carers and the young carers project web site for young carers – information about what the project provides and the latest news on breaks and activities on offer.

www.carersinherts.org.uk 'Carers in Hertfordshire'. Information for adult carers and The *Young Carers Project* with support, short breaks and holidays.

www.youthclubs.org.uk - where *you* can meet other young people and take up new interests or activities, or maybe refresh some old favourites.

www.hertswired.co.uk – For young people in Hertfordshire - a virtual youth club with 'Agony Angel' to answer questions, and information on local events and competitions

www.bubblycrew.org.uk - it's a London based young carers project.

www.youngcarers.net – To chat, for advice, information and support

www.hertswired.co.uk – For young people in Hertfordshire - a virtual youth club with 'Agony Angel' to answer questions, and information on local events and competitions

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/youngcarers - Set up by the Children's Society, it's for young carers, their families and all who support them.

www.bullying.co.uk/children - a nation-wide charity to help children affected by bullying. Offers legal advice and tips to such children and their parents.

www.successunlimited.co.uk - website on bullying at school and in the workplace, and its effects on the health of all concerned. Offers support.

www.youngcarers.hants.org.uk - lots of useful stuff about a Young Carers Project. A mine of information and useful ideas! Look in **Links**, which has **lots of web sites of real interest to young people** - (incl. Young Carers' Voice).

www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/social_services/centres/YCRG/ycrg.htm –Young Carers Research Group at Loughborough University -provides information and case studies about the experiences of some young carers and available help.

<http://www.hertsdirect.org> - look in Young Peoples Channel; click on Health; also Youth Services etc.

www.kidscape.org.uk - site for school, students and parents. Excellent problem page giving detailed answers. E-mail facility for further help and information.

www.sibspace.org - for any young person who is a sibling (i.e. brother or sister) and may be looking after another sibling in some way. Gives helpful advice/info.

Young carers please note – Make sure you are protected from any dangers that using the Web could bring your way! You are in contact with strangers. So heed the advice below!

~ Click on 'Net safety tips' in www.youngcarers.hants.org.uk/links.html ~

Resources available from Carers in Hertfordshire



Videos – and supporting material
'Make sure they're alright'
And 'I care, do you?'
DVD 'koolcarers'

Young Carers Newsletter for Young Carers

Young Carers Information Pack for Young Carers in Hertfordshire

Suggested reading list

Leaflets

Posters

Resource Packs

To obtain these resources or for further information please contact

Carers in Hertfordshire

Young Carers Project
The Red House
119 Fore Street
Hertford
Hertfordshire
SG14 1AX

Tel: 01992 586969

Email contact@carersinherts.org.uk
www.carersinherts.org.uk
www.koolcarers.org.uk