

Step 2

Tool 3: How to gather young carers' views about your schools provision

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Purpose

This how to guide aims to support schools to gather the views of young carers and to use these to develop and implement provision that meets their needs.

It sets out key points to consider to encourage young carers to participate and potential methods of consultation.

How to encourage young carers to participate

- Offer a variety of methods of participation so there is something for every young carer in the school.
- Explain how important their opinions and views are – without them issues for young carers will not be resolved in the best way possible.
- Follow through with ideas from young carers so that they can see that their views are being taken on board.
- Ensure opportunities for young carers to provide their views are organised at a suitable time. Young carers can find it difficult to participate in activities organised at the end of the school day due to caring responsibilities at home.
- Provide young carers with feedback so they can see how their ideas have been taken on board and that they are being listened to. Feedback should also be delivered to the whole school community, for example in assemblies and the school newsletter, to further promote the whole-school ethos.

Potential methods of consultation

Questionnaires or surveys. This method is best used to quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of your school's provision and the issues young carers still feel needs to be addressed. These can work well when measuring the impact the school has had but are not always the best methods when trying to address new issues.

One-off session or a focus group. These sessions are best used when there is a particular issue which needs to be addressed and young carer involvement is needed. Through these sessions a group discussion/debate can be facilitated

and different ideas can be suggested, potentially ones that would not have been thought of if pupils were writing them down on paper, and the positives and negatives can be debated. Also if you know that pupils are attending this one-off session it is more reliable than waiting on questionnaires or surveys to be returned.

Appointing a young carer representative to the school council.

This would help young carers throughout the school feel more confident that their needs will be heard by their fellow pupils and awareness will be raised of young carer issues. However, many young carers do not like speaking out about their caring role and some do not want other pupils to know, so this method should only be used if the young carer is happy to talk about their issues.

Setting up a young carers forum in your school. This can bring together all or a representative sample of the young carers identified in your school on a regular basis to influence and develop the school's provision for pupils with caring responsibilities, ensuring young carer input. You could, for example, maximise the impact of a pupil noticeboard for young carers (see **Step 8: Raising awareness of pupils and families about young carers**) by gaining young carers' input on how to make the noticeboard engaging – or the forum could design the materials for you! For further information see **Step 6 Tool 4 How to run a young carers forum.**

One-to-one sessions. These sessions are a chance for young carers to talk to teachers individually, away from other pupils and young carers, about any personal issues or things they might not feel comfortable talking about in front of others. These sessions do not need to be frequent but all young carers in the school should know that they are available should they need them.

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