# Young Carers in Schools (YCiS) Award

**Adem Ruggiero-Cakir**
Programme Manager (Education), Carers Trust

**Michelle Gregory**
Young Carers in Schools Co-Ordinator, The Children's Society

youngcarers@carers.org
YCiS@childrensociety.org.uk
youngcarersinschools.com

# Young carers

- **The Children and Families Act 2014** definition says a young carer is ‘A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person’.
- This can include caring for parents, grandparents and/or siblings.
- The person they care for may live with a physical condition or something more hidden, such as a mental health problem, an addiction, or neurodiversity.
- They might help with shopping, cooking and cleaning; managing medicines or money; providing personal care and/or emotional support; and may need to look after other siblings.

**Will there be young carers in every school?**

- It is likely there will be many young carers in every school in England, although the total figure of young carers in England is not known which means many remain hidden and unsupported.
- The 2021 Census identified 127,176 young carers and 229,690 young adult carers across England and Wales.
- First year of school census data relating to young carers: nationally 38,983 pupils were recorded as young carers, representing 0.5% of the pupil population. 78% of schools recorded zero young carers in their census return.
- Research from BBC News and the University of Nottingham suggest that 22% of secondary school pupils in England are young carers, with 9% providing a high level of care.
- The COVID-19 Social Mobility and Opportunities study, which reported that 13% of all pupils surveyed in England had caring responsibilities

# Why do young carers need support in school?

- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent of nine grades lower overall than their peers – the difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (The Children's Society, 2013).
- 36% of young carers reported being bullied about their caring role (Hanson et al., 2022).
- 40% of young carers and young adult carers say they either 'never' or 'not often' get support in their school, college or university (Carers Trust 2023).
- Research by MYTIME Young Carers (2023) based on a pilot found that young carers in the local schools missed an average of 27 school days per academic year.

- Young people with a caring responsibility have a higher prevalence of self-harm (25%) than non-carers (17%). Of those who self-harm, young carers were more than twice as likely to do so in attempt to take their own life compared to their peers without a caring role (17% compared to 7%) (Sutton Trust 2023).
- 33% of young people with caring responsibilities surveyed were currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 5% who were not carers (Youth Employment UK 2023).
- Young adult carers are substantially (38%) less likely to achieve a university degree than their peers without a caring role. Those caring for 35 hours or more a week are 86% less likely to have a degree qualification (Xue et al. 2023).

> "I often wonder, had I got support earlier, would my grades have suffered as much as they did?"
>
> Young carer

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# Overview of YCiS

A free initiative that makes it as easy as possible for schools to support young carers, and awards good practice.

Young carers attend and enjoy school and reach their full potential.

Improve young carers' wellbeing and ensure they are better prepared for independent lives

Young carers to have the same life opportunities as other children.

Parents and carers are supported to enable their children to attend school

Enable schools to identify and support young carers.

A school culture is created which is fully accessible, and understands and respects disability and caring.

94% of schools said staff were more likely to know what to do if they identified a young carer

83% of young carers demonstrated increased confidence and happiness

63% of schools reported improvements in young carers' achievements

> "We went from knowing three or four young carers in the school to now have identified 70."
>
> Headteacher

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# The Young Carers in Schools Award

## The Five Pillars

### 1. UNDERSTAND

There are assigned members of staff with responsibility for understanding and addressing young carers needs

### 2. INFORM

Raising awareness of young carers and disabilities through both staff, governors and students to reduce stigma

### 3. IDENTIFY

All school staff know how to identify and signpost young carers within the school

### 4. LISTEN

They are listened to, consulted with and given time and space to talk

### 5. SUPPORT

Young carers are supported within the school, and signposted to whole family resources and services outside the school

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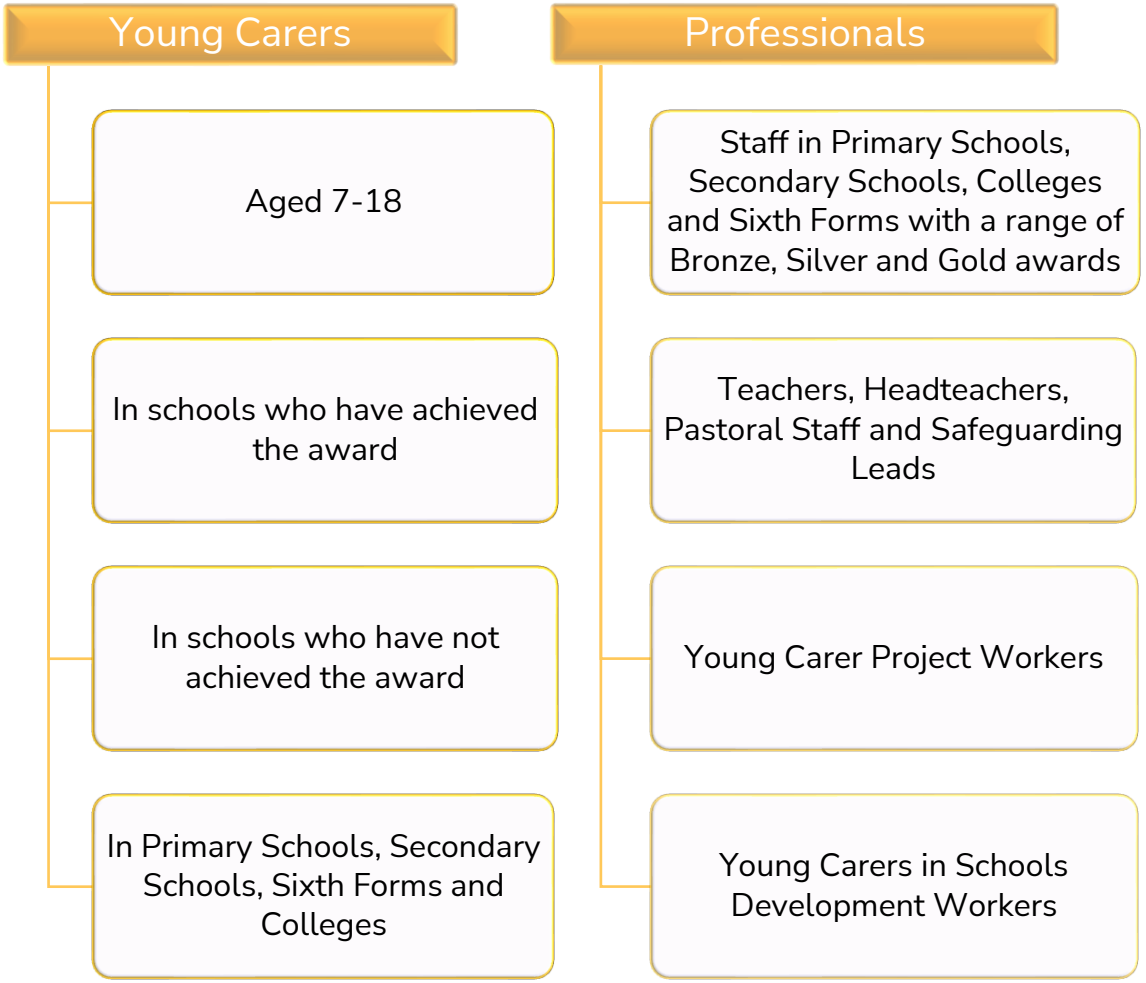
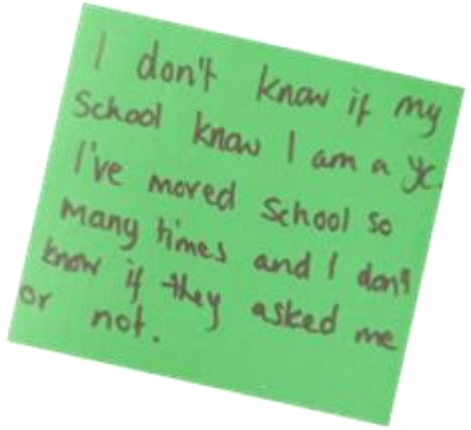
# Consultation Process

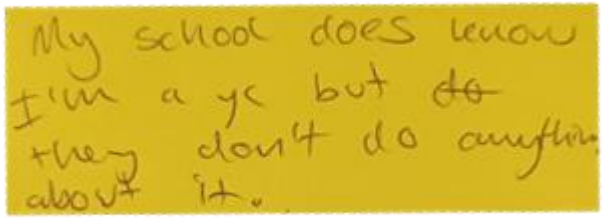



- During our consultation process we spoke to 42 young carers and 40 professionals.
- We asked questions about the award's structure, evidencing, what young carers felt was helpful and necessary for them in school and how the award could be more appealing and achievable for schools.

# Consultation Findings




- Designated Schools Workers told us that it was difficult to encourage schools to progress to the Silver and Gold.
- Would be easier to have an online submission system.
- Currently no time limit for holding the award
- A mixture of online and physical resources seemed popular with most school staff.
- **Young carers told us that they gain information from noticeboards, their teachers, lessons and assemblies.**
- All young carers told us they benefited from having a Young Carers Group at school and having drop-in sessions.
- All teachers we spoke to told us how beneficial teacher training had been in effectively identifying and supporting young carers.
- Young carers told us that schools should communicate with each other when young carers are transferring schools.
- Most young carers we spoke to were only identified when they were in secondary school.
- Monitoring young carers is now a necessary part of providing support, being required for the school census.

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# Award Expiry

There will be a 3-year expiry from the date achieved at which point schools will be asked to reapply.

For schools that currently hold the Award it will expire depending when you achieved the Award and you will be asked to reapply.

For example:

- Schools that achieved either the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award in 2023, will be asked to reapply at the end of 2026
- Schools that achieved either the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award in 2022, will be asked to reapply at the end of 2025
- Schools that achieved either the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award in 2021 will be asked to reapply at the end of 2024

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# What does the Award look like?

**Young Carers Champion/ Lead**

- Day-to-day operational Young Carers Champion/Lead
- SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead

**School Policy & Processes**

- Young Carers Policy
- Flagging young carers on internal monitoring systems & monitoring attendance and attainment
- Enrolment process includes questions about young carers; transition plans share information of identified young carers

**Raising Awareness ...**

- **With pupils** through a noticeboard and assembly/PSHE Lessons
- **With family** through the website and a letter
- **With staff** through a noticeboard/shared drive and training
- **With Governors** by discussing young carers at a meeting

**Support for young carers**

- Drop-in sessions or groups for young carers
- Communication system

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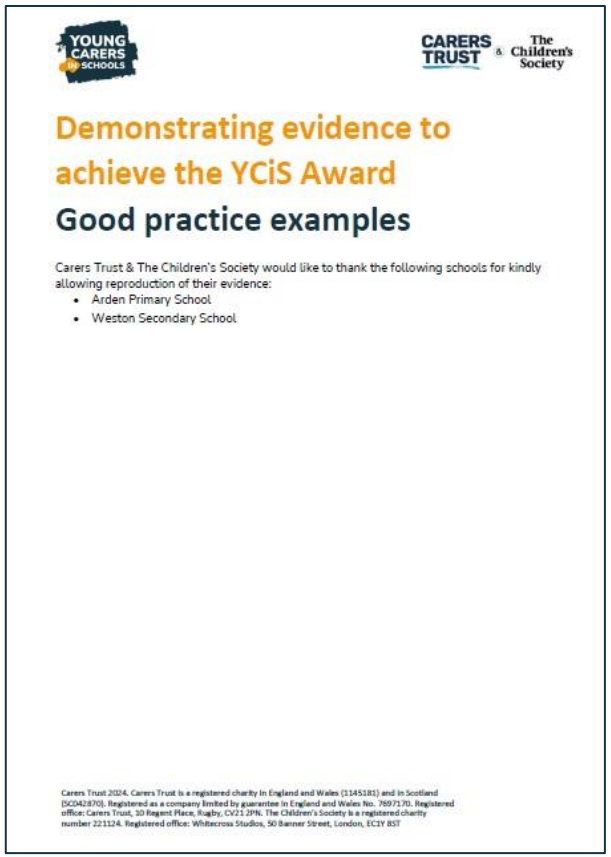
# The Award Pack & resources



Demonstrating evidence to achieve the YCiS Award

Good practice examples

Carers Trust & The Children's Society would like to thank the following schools for kindly allowing reproduction of their evidence:

- Arden Primary School
- Weston Secondary School

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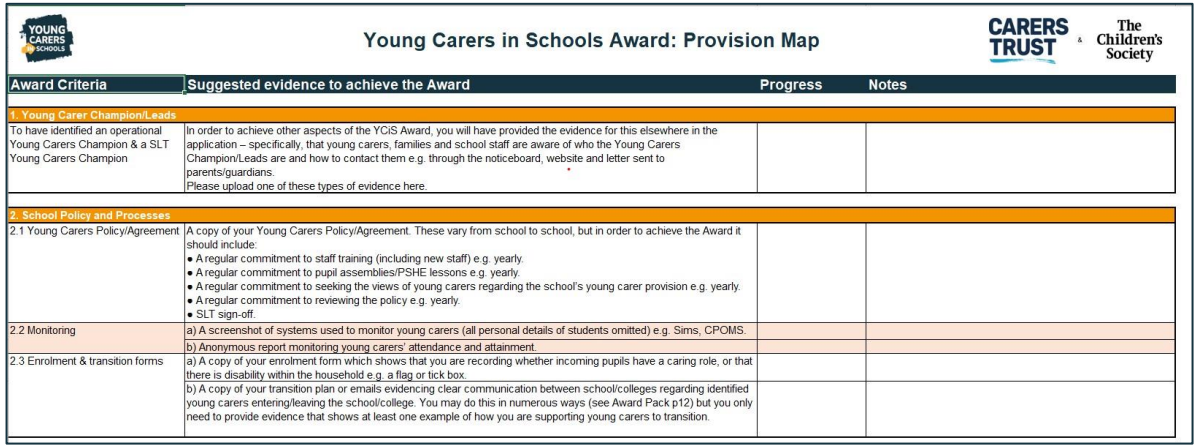

Young Carers in Schools Award: Provision Map

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| Award Criteria | Suggested evidence to achieve the Award | Progress | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Young Carer Champion/Leads** | | | |
| To have identified an operational Young Carers Champion & a SLT Young Carers Champion | In order to achieve other aspects of the YCiS Award, you will have provided the evidence for this elsewhere in the application – specifically, that young carers, families and school staff are aware of who the Young Carers Champion/Leads are and how to contact them e.g. through the noticeboard, website and letter sent to parents/guardians.<br>Please upload one of these types of evidence here. | | |
| **2. School Policy and Processes** | | | |
| 2.1 Young Carers Policy/Agreement | A copy of your Young Carers Policy/Agreement. These vary from school to school, but in order to achieve the Award it should include:<br>● A regular commitment to staff training (including new staff) e.g. yearly.<br>● A regular commitment to pupil assemblies/PSHE lessons e.g. yearly.<br>● A regular commitment to seeking the views of young carers regarding the school's young carer provision e.g. yearly.<br>● A regular commitment to reviewing the policy e.g. yearly.<br>● SLT sign-off. | | |
| 2.2 Monitoring | a) A screenshot of systems used to monitor young carers (all personal details of students omitted) e.g. Sims, CPOMS. | | |
| | b) Anonymous report monitoring young carers' attendance and attainment. | | |
| 2.3 Enrolment & transition forms | a) A copy of your enrolment form which shows that you are recording whether incoming pupils have a caring role, or that there is disability within the household e.g. a flag or tick box. | | |
| | b) A copy of your transition plan or emails evidencing clear communication between school/colleges regarding identified young carers entering/leaving the school/college. You may do this in numerous ways (see Award Pack p12) but you only need to provide evidence that shows at least one example of how you are supporting young carers to transition. | | |

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# The Award

## 1. Young Carers Champion/Leads

> “I want someone to speak to and feel comfortable talking about my situation.”
>
> Young carer

To ensure the effective management of the school’s provision for young carers, it is crucial that each school identifies a member of staff who will act as a Young Carers Champion/Lead in the school on a day-to-day basis as well as the SLT level. The day-to-day member of staff should have responsibility for understanding and addressing young carers’ needs and be clearly identifiable to pupils, families and staff.

Further information about the day-to-day Young Carers Champion/Lead and SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead can be found as follows:

- Step 3 Tool 1: Young Carers SLT Lead duties checklist
- Step 4 Tool 1: Young Carers School Operational Lead duties checklist
- Webinar covering the role of a Young Carers Champion

In order to achieve other aspects of the YCiS Award, you will have provided the evidence for this elsewhere in the application – specifically, that young carers, families and school staff are aware of who the Young Carers Champion/Leads are and how to contact them e.g. through the noticeboard, website and letter sent to parents/guardians.

Please upload one of these types of evidence here.

# The Award

## 2. School Policy and Processes

It is important that schools have a written policy or agreement that outlines their commitment to supporting young carers, and that they know who in their school has caring responsibilities and are tracking their progress.

- 2.1 Young Carers Policy/Agreement
- 2.2 Monitoring
- 2.3 Enrolment and Transition Forms

> **“I don’t know if my school know I am a young carer. I’ve moved school so many times and I don’t know if they asked me or not.”**
>
> Young carer

# 2.1 Young Carers Policy/Agreement

Your school should have a written policy or agreement that outlines how it will identify and address young carers' needs. This will vary from school to school and depend on the extent of the school's wider provision for young carers.

## To evidence this, please provide:

A copy of your Young Carers Policy/Agreement. These vary from school to school, but in order to achieve the Award it should include:

- A regular commitment to staff training (including new staff) e.g. yearly.
- A regular commitment to pupil assemblies/PSHE lessons e.g. yearly.
- A regular commitment to seeking the views of young carers regarding the school's young carer provision e.g. yearly.
- A regular commitment to reviewing the policy e.g. yearly.
- SLT sign-off.

# 2.2 Monitoring

Your school should have systems in place to flag young carers on internal monitoring systems as well as tracking young carers' attendance and attainment. This is vital as we know that young carers are under-identified, and that their attendance and attainment is generally lower than their non-caring peers.

One of the easiest ways to produce this type of report is to set up 'young carers' as a user-defined group on your internal management system. You can then produce reports on both attendance and attainment.

**To evidence this, please provide:**

a) A screenshot of systems used to monitor young carers **(all personal details of students omitted)** e.g. Sims, CPOMS.

b) **Anonymous** report monitoring young carers' attendance and attainment.

# 2.3 Enrolment and Transition Forms

Your school should ensure that for new pupils, you are made aware of any disability and illness in the family, and young carer status. You should also share this information for pupils leaving and moving onto another school, if applicable. How you evidence your transition plans will depend on whether you are a primary or secondary school.

## To evidence this, please provide:

**a)** A copy of your enrolment form which shows that you are recording whether incoming pupils have a caring role, or that there is disability within the household e.g. a flag or tick box.

**b)** A copy of your transition plan or emails evidencing clear communication between school/colleges regarding identified young carers entering/ leaving the school/college. You may do this in numerous ways (see bullet points above) but you only need to provide evidence that shows at least one example of how you are supporting young carers to transition.

# The Award

## 3. Identification and Raising Awareness

We continue to hear from young carers that their most important priorities centre around early identification and receiving the appropriate support in school. In order to ensure a whole-school approach where young carers can be identified as early as possible, it is vital that schools raise awareness of young carers regularly.

- 3.1 Pupils are aware of who young carers are, the tasks a young carer may do, who in school to speak to about young carers, and the support available to them
- 3.2 Families are aware of young carers, tasks a young carer may do and how to identify a young carer, who in school they can speak to about young carers, and the support available
- 3.3 Staff are aware of young carers, how to identify young carers, the issues they may face in education, who in school is the Lead contact, and the support available
- 3.4 The governing body are aware of young carers

> “Schools need to listen to me more.”
>
> Young carer

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# 3.1 Pupils are aware of who young carers are, the tasks a young carer may do, who in school to speak to about young carers, and the support available to them

We continue to hear from young carers that their most important priorities centre around early identification and receiving the appropriate support in school. In order to ensure a whole-school approach where young carers can be identified as early as possible, it is vital that schools raise awareness of young carers regularly.

## To evidence this, please provide:

**a)** A photo of a pupil noticeboard which contains:

- Name and contact details of the Young Carers Champion/Lead and SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead.
- Information about who young carers are.
- Information about internal and external support available for young carers including young carer-specific support.

**b)** A copy of an assembly or PSHE lesson plan which includes who young carers are, who to speak to (the young carer champion) and available support.

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# 3.2 Families are aware of young carers, tasks a young carer may do and how to identify a young carer, who in school they can speak to about young carers, and the support available

Your school should communicate information with families about who young carers are, the tasks a young carer may do and how to identify a young carer. You should also identify who in school they can speak to and the support available internally and externally. This information should be shared on the school website and in a letter to parents/guardians.

**To evidence this, please provide:**

a) A copy of the letter sent to parents/guardians that contains:

- Name and contact details of the Young Carers Champion/Lead and SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead.
- Information about who young carers are and how to identify a young carer.
- Information about internal and external support available for young carers including young carer-specific support.

b) A screenshot/link to your school website that contains:

- Name and contact details of the Young Carers Champion/Lead and SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead.
- Information about who young carers are and how to identify a young carer.
- Information about internal and external support available for young carers including young carer-specific support.

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# 3.3. Staff are aware of young carers, how to identify young carers, the issues they may face in education, who in school is the Lead contact, and the support available

Your school should raise awareness of young carers with all staff. This should include the definition of a young carer, the tasks they may do, how to identify young carers and the challenges they may face in education. You should also let staff know who is the day-to-day and SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead as well as the support available internally and externally.

## To evidence this, please provide:

**a)** The presentation you have delivered which includes the information above. If you are yet to deliver this, please provide a school training plan (or equivalent) which makes it clear when the young carer training will occur.

**b)** A photo of the noticeboard or the intranet/shared drive which contains:

- Name and contact details of the Young Carers Champion/Lead and SLT Young Carers Champion/Lead.
- Information for staff about identification of young carers, the impact of caring and signposting to available support.
- If intranet, how staff are signposted to it e.g. an email to all staff.

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# 3.4. The governing body are aware of young carers

Your school should raise awareness of young carers with the governing body. This should include the definition of a young carer, the tasks a young carer may do and the challenges they may face in education. This can be achieved by a letter sent to governors and a copy of minutes (or an extract) of one of their meetings where they discuss young carers. If your school is unable to do this (e.g. your school is part of a Multi Academy Trust and the governing situation is different), please contact us or explain this in your application. If it is not possible to speak at a governor meeting, an alternative is to provide the information to SLT and speak at one of their meetings.

**To evidence this, please provide:**

A copy/screenshot of minutes (or an extract of minutes) of a governing body (or your school's equivalent) meeting that shows they discussed young carers.

# The Award

## 4. Support for Young Carers

Your school needs to provide young carer-specific support. The support your school has in place should be shaped by the young carers in your school, so the Award is not prescriptive about this. As a standard, it is important that all pupils are aware that there are drop-in sessions/groups and a clear communication method with the Young Carers Champion/Lead.

- **4.1. Drop-in sessions or groups for young carers**
- **4.2. Systems for young carers to communicate with the day-to-day Young Carers Champion/Lead**

> **"I had mental and emotional 'check ups' with the pastoral lead in my school – it really helped me and made me feel understood."**
>
> Young carer

# 4.1. Drop-in sessions or groups for young carers

Your school should provide and promote drop-in sessions or groups for young carers where they can meet with other young carers. The frequency should be decided by the young carers in your school.

**To evidence this, please provide:**

An in-situ photo which shows how it is visible to pupils e.g. a poster to highlight drop-in sessions or groups on a pupil noticeboard, emails to pupils, or tutor notices.

# 4.2. Systems for young carers to communicate with the day-to-day Young Carers Champion/Lead

Your school should provide the option for pupils to speak to the Young Carers Champion/Lead confidentially. This looks different in each school e.g. a specific young carers email address, a young carer message or worry box (or a general one), or asking pupils to contact the Young Carers Champion/ Lead directly on their school email.

**To evidence this, please provide:**

An in-situ photo which shows how the communication system is visible to pupils e.g. the pupil noticeboard has the contact details or makes reference to where a worry box is.

# Submission dates

Deadlines for submission are quarterly:

- 28th March,
- 28th June,
- 28th September,
- 28th December.

Reviewing applications and feedback:

- Within 7 days — we will confirm receipt of your application.
- Within 4-6 weeks of the submission deadline — applications will be reviewed by two independent verifiers and a multi-agency panel is held to discuss each application.
- Within 2 weeks of the panel — schools will be contacted with the outcome of their application.

# What's next?

- Access the Award Pack and resources
  - https://youngcarersinschools.com/what-is-the-award/
- Online application portal is now open
  - http://s.alchemer.eu/s3/YCIS-award-application
- Training in using the online portal – date tbc
- Award Plus launch in Spring
- Contact us with queries
  - youngcarers@carers.org
  - YCiS@childrenssociety.org.uk
- Find your local carers service
  - https://youngcarersinschools.com/find-your-local-young-carers-service/
- Survey
  - https://forms.office.com/e/nWTH1wjRyg

# Thank you

**Adem Ruggiero-Cakir**
Programme Manager (Education), Carers Trust

**Michelle Gregory**
Young Carers in Schools Co-Ordinator, The Children's Society

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