



**Response to the Estyn thematic report on
provision for young carers in secondary schools, further
education colleges and pupil referral units across Wales**

<p>Report title: Provision for young carers in secondary schools, further education colleges and pupil referral units across Wales</p>
<p>Report details The report was commissioned by the Welsh Government's Education Directorate as part of its annual remit to consider the quality of provision made for young carers in secondary schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and colleges in Wales.</p>
<p>Summary of Main Findings There is a lack of reliable data to identify how many young carers there are in schools, PRUs and colleges across Wales. Many providers do not know which of their pupils and learners have a caring role. A consequence of this is that the provision for young carers at secondary schools, colleges and PRUs varies widely.</p> <p>Secondary schools, colleges and PRUs that are most effective in meeting the needs of young carers have robust systems to identify these learners. They track their wellbeing needs regularly and adapt their provision carefully to meet the individual needs of each young carer. However, only a minority of the schools, colleges and PRUs surveyed use an information management system to track and report on the progress young carers make compared with their peers.</p> <p>Secondary schools, colleges and PRUs that have a named lead member of staff for young carers generally provide a high level of care, support and guidance for this group of learners. In these providers, young carers are confident to raise concerns, assured that the lead member of staff will champion their rights and liaise sensitively with parents and other professionals.</p> <p>Following the implementation of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010, the Local Health Boards (LHBs) and local authorities within their regions have developed valuable strategic partnerships to share information, promote interagency co-operation and complete appropriate assessments of the needs of young carers. The requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act Wales 2014 (National Assembly for Wales, 2014) further strengthen partnership working through establishing Regional Partnership Boards. These regional boards include representation from young carers and ensure that services and resources are used in the most effective way to improve outcomes for people within their area, including young carers. This partnership working is starting to include education providers.</p> <p>Young carers benefit considerably where local authorities have a clear strategic plan for carers and a named person to drive forward the strategy in educational settings. In these local authorities, providers share information effectively when pupils transfer between primary schools, secondary schools</p>

and colleges. They have a consistent approach to identifying young carers and signposting them to appropriate support.

There are a small range of awards schemes that provide secondary schools, colleges and PRUs with useful resources and toolkits to shape their provision to meet the needs of young carers. However, too many providers have not accessed them.

Specialist agencies provide high quality resources and support to raise awareness and meet the needs of young carers. But many secondary schools, colleges and PRUs do not engage well enough with these agencies and have not accessed this valuable support.

The Welsh Government sponsored training on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is starting to have a positive impact on the work of schools. Generally, schools that provide well for young carers understand how the caring role might adversely affect a child's experiences and life chances.

The use of one-page profiles to record what is important to and for children is helping to give young carers a voice and enables schools, colleges and PRUs to target support to meet their individual needs.

There is a range of useful training courses available to raise staff awareness of the needs of young carers. However, too many staff in schools, colleges and PRUs have not received this training.

Only a very few schools visited have a clear understanding of the enhanced rights of carers under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Most schools are unaware of the requirement for young carers to have their needs assessed and the role of education in contributing to this assessment.

There are six recommendations within the report for secondary schools, colleges and PRUs:

Recommendation 1: Ensure that they have sound procedures to identify which of their pupils/learners have a caring role

Recommendation 2: Have a named member of staff with lead responsibility for young carers who acts as a point of contact for young carers and champions their needs

Recommendation 3: Raise staff awareness of young carers' needs

Recommendation 4: Engage with specialist services to review and improve their provision to meet the needs of young carers

Recommendation 5: Track and monitor the progress and outcomes for young carers as they currently do for other groups of vulnerable learners

Recommendation 6: Evaluate their provision for young carers with reference to the checklist in Appendix 1 or available toolkits.

There is one recommendation within the report for local authorities:

Recommendation 7: The local authority should focus carer strategies on increasing the capacity of schools, colleges and PRUs to identify and meet the needs of young carers

Officials in the Education Directorate will write to local authorities to draw their attention to the recommendations placed on them and on education settings in by this report.

There is one recommendation within the report for the Welsh Government:

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government should produce reliable, nationally-collected data to help identify young carers.

Welsh Government response:

Accept: The Welsh Government is considering how to collect national education data for young carers. It is likely this will require changes to the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) and, therefore, will take time.

Publication details.

The report will be published on 22 May and can be found on Estyn's website: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales>



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