

## **Supporting Young Carers in Education**

**27 September 2017**

The Health and Social Care Board and Education Authority are delighted to jointly launch the 'Supporting Young Carers in Schools' Booklet, an important resource for primary and secondary schools.

At least 10% of 16 year olds could be helping to care for a family member, providing up to 30 hours of care a week and 29% of these young carers have never told anyone outside their family about their caring responsibilities. These young people usually feel stressed, tired and isolated.

To better support young carers in school and to raise awareness of their needs especially among educators and teachers, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Young Carers Group comprising the Health and Social Care Board in partnership with the Education Authority, Action for Children NI, Barnardo's NI, Gingerbread NI and Carers Trust NI have produced a resource pack for primary and secondary school staff.

This booklet will make young carers more visible and help teachers to better meet their needs. The booklet is a success story of working together between education and health & social care; between the agencies helping young carers; and between the various organisations and young carers themselves.

Speaking at the event, Education Authority Chief Executive, Gavin Boyd said; "The Education Authority is proud to be a partner in this initiative to help schools understand the needs of young carers and to enhance the support provided to children and young people who have caring responsibilities. The young carers who were involved in the development of this resource are undoubtedly helping to make things a little easier for others who find themselves in similar circumstances to theirs. They have shown great courage in using their own personal experiences to inform the development of this resource. As young carers themselves, they know what to look out for to identify those with caring responsibilities and they know what support

is needed. This booklet has captured that and will be an invaluable resource for teachers and other staff working with young people in education settings who can provide support for young carers. I wish to thank all the partners involved in the production of this booklet and most importantly, the young people here today who contributed their time and allowed us to tap into their experiences. I look forward to schools across Northern Ireland receiving this resource.”

Young Carers are defined as children and young people aged up to 18 years who have a substantive caring role for a member of their family or those whose health or development are affected due to that caring role. A Young Carer’s personal and physical development, physical and emotional health, education and social opportunities can all be affected by their family situation and their caring role. Many of these young people have raised concerns about whether schools are aware of their caring role and how much support they provide to their families.

Although some schools and teachers are aware of the pupil’s caring role, they sometimes fail to understand the extent this affects the young person’s daily life. One young carer who has been receiving support from the Regional Young Carers Service has said “Finally admitting to my teacher what was going on at home was the bravest thing I’d ever done, after that, things finally changed for me”.

The Health and Social Care Board have been funding the Regional Young Carers Service since 2007. The preparation of this guidance through the interagency Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Young Carers Group is a continued tradition of collaborative work and has been developed with the help of Young Carers who attend the Regional Young Carers Service. The booklet is intended to help staff in schools increase their awareness of the caring role of a Young Carer and how best they can be understood and supported in school.

The guidance document is available on the Regional Young Carers section of the CYPSP website [www.cypsp.org](http://www.cypsp.org). Hard copies of the document and for further information contact Maurice Leeson, CYPSP in the Health and Social Care Board by email at [Maurice.leeson@hscni.net](mailto:Maurice.leeson@hscni.net) or telephone 02895 363261.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), led by the Health and Social Care Board, is a multi-agency partnership that includes the leadership of key statutory agencies and community and voluntary organisations that have a responsibility for improving the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

### **Photograph Captions**

Photography 29 - Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Commissioner, NICCY, Gavin Boyd, Chief Executive, Education Authority and Fionnuala McAndrew, Director for Social Care and Children, Health and Social Care Board

Photograph 33 - Young Carers from the Regional Young Carers Service with Action for Children and Barnardo's NI