

Supporting young carers in schools

Case study two

Talbot Combined School, Poole

School type: Combined Primary and Junior Mixed

Age range: 4-12

Date: June 2010

The challenges

Talbot Combined School is located in Poole, an area with a population of 138,288 as identified by the 2001 census.

The school has a number of children in challenging circumstances including several identified young carers. The identified young carers have requested support with a range of issues including emotional difficulties.

Poole has an exceptional record in supporting its young carers through its Social Care Services. Maggie, a social worker in Poole is the main point of contact for over 200 young carers between the ages of 5-18 who have been assessed by the local authority as having a parent with either a physical or mental disability resulting in the child performing a caring role within the household.



The solutions

Children, young people and parents/carers are encouraged to highlight any issues or concerns through a variety of mechanisms including a post box which is located in the reception of the school. The notes posted here are

followed up by the schools' Pastoral Care Worker, Tracy who is a full-time member of staff. Tracy has an open door policy so that any pupil, parent or guardian can talk to her at any time. She will also make contact with parents/carers if she is particularly concerned for a child.

In autumn 2009, the school set up a group for young carers which the children and young people called 'Fab Food Friends'. The children wanted to take part in fun activities that would also be useful to develop for their caring role, as many young carers have to cook for their families. This group is led by two teachers who received additional training through a 'Food for Life' initiative named the 'Cooking Bus' which aims to provide new ideas, recipes and enthusiasm for cooking. The school also accessed a supermarket voucher scheme to help purchase equipment for the group.

The outcomes

Talbot Combined School has invested time, resources and shown great enthusiasm for supporting young carers. Young carers have confidence in the network established for them and are assured that all efforts will be made to meet their needs. The cookery club, for example, now attracts ten young carers out of a school cohort of eighteen. Those that attend report they are using the skills and knowledge gained to help them prepare more healthy meals for both themselves and those that they care for at home.

The school is planning an evaluation a year on from setting up the group

Whole school approach

- Schools Culture and environment;
- Giving children and young people a voice;
- Provision for support service for children and young people

to ensure that they are continuing to meet the needs of their young carers.

Good ideas for supporting young carers in school

- A young carers group could be established to enable the children and young people to attend and share experiences with others who may have similar circumstances; this group could be called upon to help advise Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on what more they can do to support this group of children and young people.
- A member of the SLT should establish strong working relationships with local services (social services, young carers' projects, Think Family pathfinder etc); this will help with the sharing of information and support the family as well as the young carers, to get the support they need.
- Young men who are carers may require additional support to an older age as they do not build relationships the same way girls do and find it harder to discuss their situation.