

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2011

SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT:

This report brings to the attention of committee members a draft policy statement in relation to support for young carers. The statement will be included as a key section of the revised Support for Learners Policy ('Meeting Needs: Getting It Right For Every Child in Angus')

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) note and approve the terms of the draft policy statement provided in the Appendix
- (ii) note the clear expectation that all schools will endeavour to identify and support young carers in an effort to better meet their learning and development needs.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Reference is made to the meetings of the Education Committee of 20 January 2011 (Article 8 refers) and the Social Work and Health Committee of 17 February 2011 (Article 9 refers) when members were advised about the publication of 'Getting it Right for Young Carers - The Young Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010-2015'.
- 2.2 This new national strategy acknowledges the benefits which young carers can derive from caring. However, there is an equal recognition that the demands of caring can be onerous and may have an adverse impact on young carers' health and wellbeing in ways which can compromise their rights as young persons and their safety. In keeping with the essential messages of the GIRFEC approach, the strategy recognizes that early intervention on the part of children and young people's agencies and practitioners can relieve young carers of inappropriate caring roles and thereby enhance their capacity to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens, in accordance with the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Staff across schools in Angus are increasingly aware of the need to support all young people who face barriers to learning. It is, therefore, important that there is clear guidance for staff in identifying the needs of and supporting all young people who have significant barriers to overcome in their personal lives.
- 3.2 The Angus Support for Learning Policy is currently under review. It is anticipated that the title of the revised policy will be, 'Meeting Needs: Getting It Right For Every Child in Angus'. A key section of the new policy focuses attention on young carers.
- 3.3 The Young Carer statement has been produced in collaboration with a group of Angus Young Carers. Education Service officers have greatly appreciated the enthusiastic participation of young carers in the development of the attached statement. Their views have been of immense benefit in carrying out this task.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The finalised policy statement outlining the role of schools in identifying and supporting young carers will be distributed to all schools and included within 'Meeting Needs: Getting It Right For Every Child in Angus'; in due course, the policy statement will be available on the Internet.
- 4.2 The Education Service's Pupil Care and Support Steering Group comprises promoted staff with pupil care responsibilities from each of the eight Angus secondary schools. This group will continue to play a key role in identifying staff support and training needs and in delivering, in partnership with other agencies, training activities designed to enhance staff confidence and competence in providing effective support to young carers.
- 4.3 The attainment and achievement of young carers will feature prominently in school approaches to monitoring pupil progress.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

8. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Single Outcome Agreement:
- young people and adults in Angus maximise their potential through learning opportunities (National Outcome 3)
 - children and young people in Angus will have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem to the fullest potential (National Outcome 4)
 - children and young people in Angus and their carers will have access to high quality services and be assisted to overcome the social, educational, physical environmental; and economic barriers that create inequality (National Outcome 7)

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This report outlines the key role of schools in identifying and supporting Young Carers.

**NEIL LOGUE
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

ED/NL/SRD

Angus Council – Education Department

Meeting Needs: Getting It Right For Every Child in Angus Policy

Young Carers: Draft Policy Statement

- 1.0 What is a young carer?
- 2.0 Identifying a young carer
- 3.0 Supporting Identified young carers
- 4.0 Awareness-raising
- 5.0 Partnership working
- 6.0 Useful websites
- 7.0 Useful contacts

Young Carers

1.0 What is a young carer?

- 1.1 “A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 whose life is in some way restricted because of the need to take responsibility for the care of a person who is ill, has a disability, is experiencing mental distress, or is affected by substance misuse.” (Carers National Association, 1998)
- 1.2 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 identifies young carers as a specific group that may need additional support for learning to overcome barriers to learning caused by their caring responsibilities.

2.0 Identifying Young Carers

- 2.1 Unless the school is advised about a child or young person’s home circumstances, young carers risk first being identified by negative aspects of their behaviour or work. Potential warning signs which may indicate that a young person may have unrecognised caring responsibilities, include:

- regular lateness
- increasing rates of unauthorised absences
- tiredness in school
- lack of concentration, anxiety
- incomplete or late-return of homework
- behavioural problems
- few peer friendships
- being bullied
- lack of interest in extra-curricular activities, especially after school
- parental non-attendance at parent meetings

[NB – It should be noted that the above indicators may point to issues or problems with a young person having a caring role at home]

3.0 Supporting Young Carers

- 3.1 Wherever possible, staff should talk to young carers about their caring responsibilities in private and not in front of their friends unless the young carer asks for a friend to be present. Sensitivity to the needs of the young carer will include being careful not to ask even well-intentioned questions about how the family members are when the young carer is in the presence of their peers.
- 3.2 When young carer is given a detention, schools should consider allowing this to take place at break and lunchtimes rather than after school.
- 3.3 Where possible, deadlines for the submission of homework will be negotiated with the young carer in advance of them being set. (It is recognised that deadlines for some key tasks cannot be changed, such as the presentation of coursework as part of an externally moderated module.)
- 3.4 If a parent is unable to travel to parents’ sessions due to family circumstances, schools should make alternative arrangements. The young carer or the parent may request such support.

4.0 Identification and Awareness-Raising

- 4.1 Schools should take an active role in seeking to identify and provide support to hidden young carers.
- 4.2 Schools should include Young Carer Awareness as part of their PSE curriculum, and should invite staff from Angus Young Carers Service to contribute to assemblies or PSE lessons to make pupils more aware of Young Carers and the support available to them and their families.
- 4.3 Schools should maintain a notice board(s) where information regarding young carers, and the support which may be available to them, along with the contact details of Angus Young Carers Service can be clearly displayed. Quarterly newsletters will be distributed by Angus Young Carers Service, and these should be displayed, or otherwise made available for pupils and staff.

5.0 Partnership Working

- 5.1 School staff should make every effort to assist in the identification and, where appropriate, the referral of young carers who may benefit from the support available from Angus Young Carers Service.
- 5.2 Where possible, and on request, staff should endeavour to provide a private area to allow Young Carers Workers to provide planned support for young carers during their lunch break or immediately after school without interruption.
- 5.3 Where appropriate, consideration should be given to facilitating “drop-in” sessions for young carers to meet with Young Carers Workers during lunch breaks. Such sessions could be open to all young carers, including those not already registered with the Young Carers Service.

6.0 Useful Websites:

www.youngcarer.com

www.youngcarers.net

www.barnardos.org.uk/young_carers.html

7.0 Useful Contacts:

Angus Carers Centre
3 Fisheracre
Arbroath
DD11 1LE
Telephone: 01241 439157
Fax: 01241 876903
E-mail: enquiries@anguscarers.org.uk