

Young Carers Awareness Raising Pilot in Southern Outcomes Group Area

As part of the work of the Regional Sub Group of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership for Young Carers, a pilot course for raising awareness in schools about young carers has been developed by staff from the regional young carers service with support from senior colleagues in Education and Welfare. The group has worked with young carers to learn about their school experiences and has heard directly about the difficulties which they often face in balancing responsibilities at home and at school.

It is evident from young carer's stories that while they are attending school they are usually worried about things at home and this can impact on their attention span and learning. For many their situation would be easier if there was more flexibility and understanding in schools - little things like being allowed to text or phone home could make a huge difference. For others, they struggle with the same issues but are reluctant to be identified in schools not wanting to be embarrassed or labelled because of family circumstances. Some are fearful of the impact on their families if they are not able to cope.

In order to help address these issues and break down some of the barriers which might be preventing young carers from getting all the help and support from which they could benefit, in a way which is sensitive and responsive to their needs, the pilot programme will work with education staff in the Southern Education and Library Board Area initially to road test the initiative and help gain a better understanding of how to best work with these issues in school settings. The programme will use the information provided by young carers along with resources developed elsewhere to raise the debate with education staff about identifying young carers, understanding their needs and the issues they are facing in schools, and seeking their input about what can be done in schools to help them. It is the groups aim to roll the programme out into all other Education and Library Board areas in due course.

This is a huge achievement for the Young Carers Sub Group and with the pilot due to begin in 2014, it will help ensure that young carers to realise better educational outcomes.

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| <p>Rolling Programme of Awareness</p> |  |
| <p>Develop a rolling programme of raising awareness within school</p> | |

