

CASE STUDY 1 | Nationwide | Social care

# Schools identify and aid young

Young Carers in Schools programme helps pupils improve their attendance and punctuality, engage better

**PROJECT**

Young Carers in Schools

**PURPOSE**

To help schools identify and support young carers, and recognise and share good practice

**FUNDING**

From a four-year £1.5m Big Lottery Fund grant to the Children’s Society’s Young Carers in Focus programme and a £377,512 Queen’s Trust grant to the Carers Trust. The trust is putting £49,200 towards the programme this year from a Thomas Cook Children’s Charity grant

**BACKGROUND**

The Children’s Society and the Carers Trust have long been concerned about young carers’ low levels of self-confidence, mental wellbeing and GCSE attainment.

“For years, carers told us schools were a key place where they needed support, but often felt they couldn’t ask for it,” says Children’s Society national young carers’ lead, Helen Leadbitter. “Schools needed to identify them and support them better. There was some really good practice, but we needed a way of sharing that more effectively and helping them build on it.”

Young carers’ views about the changes needed in schools formed the basis of the Young Carers in Schools programme, run by the Children’s Society and Carers Trust from April 2015. More than 750 education settings have since participated, including schools, colleges and pupil referral units.

**ACTION**

The programme’s award scheme is built on five standards: understand, inform, identify, listen and support. Schools start by submitting a baseline review of



MONKEY BUSINESS/ADOBE STOCK

More than 750 education settings have taken part in the programme to help to improve wellbeing among young carers

their work with young carers to the Children’s Society, before working towards the required criteria for each standard at bronze, silver or gold level.

Schools have to work towards bronze first, meeting criteria including appointing a lead member of staff responsible for

understanding and addressing young carers’ needs. Bronze applicants also have to raise awareness across school about carers and let them know who to approach for support through a notice board or online information. They have to provide information for staff on identifying and

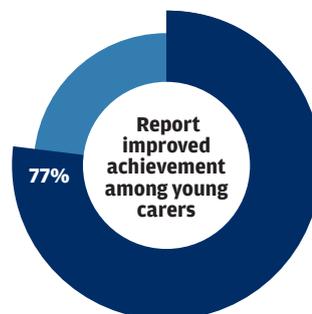
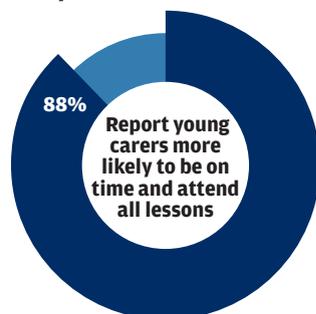
signposting young carers, providing these pupils with a listening ear and support through initiatives such as drop-in sessions, homework assistance or peer mentoring.

To gain silver, schools have to show more multi-agency working to help young carers access support in and out of school, go further with their awareness-raising through assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education, and train staff to recognise, support and signpost young carers. Those going for gold have to show how they are helping reduce young carers’ burden through multi-agency family support work, as well as incorporating their needs in plans and policies, spreading good practice to other schools and compiling individual support plans.

Schools collate evidence and their portfolios are assessed by a termly panel of Children’s Society and Carers Trust staff, helped by a

**IMPROVED ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT**

Survey of 58 schools from Young Carers in Schools



Source: Young Carers in Schools

# carers

in class and achieve more

quality assurance panel of young people. To help them work towards awards, they get a Carers Trust guide that comes with tools and resources, including lesson plans.

Further support comes from webinars, a newsletter highlighting good practice and other jointly-produced resources. The Children's Society runs regional meetings each term for young carers services, helping them support local schools through the programme. "Seeing the journey schools have gone through, implementing the guide, achieving awards and coming out the other side saying they've identified so many more young carers, has been really moving to see," says Leadbitter. "There are many others we need to work with."

## OUTCOME

Across England, 114 schools have achieved awards: 82 getting bronze, 22 silver and 10 gold. A survey of 72 schools earlier this year showed them collectively identifying 2,192 young carers, an average of 31 per school. Of these, 58 schools stated how many carers had been identified as a result of the programme. They numbered 1,180 – an average of 20 per school.

Of the 58 schools, 98 per cent said the young carers they had identified were now less likely to have high absence rates and 88 per cent were more likely to arrive on time and attend all lessons. Improved wellbeing among young carers was reported by 94 per cent of schools, 89 per cent said they engaged better in class, and 88 per cent reported increased motivation. Meanwhile, 79 per cent said they were more likely to complete classwork and homework and 77 per cent reported improved achievements.



Snow-Camp helps young people boost their confidence as well as becoming more determined and motivated

CASE STUDY 2 | Nationwide | Youth work

## Sport empowers young people

### PROJECT

Snow-Camp

### PURPOSE

To empower disadvantaged young people through snowsports

### FUNDING

Between £80 and £99 per person for First Tracks, £300 for Graduate, £500 for Excel and £560 for Snow-Camp's week-long Alps residential. Funded through grants, corporate funders, fundraising and means-tested contributions from referring youth organisations

### BACKGROUND

When youth worker Dan Charlish asked two teenagers playing a skiing computer game at a youth centre in Stockwell, London, if they would ever do it for real, he was taken aback by their incredulous response. He became determined to make snowsports accessible to young people from inner city areas and in 2003, together with colleagues, fundraised to take 13 10- to 19-year-olds to the French Alps. He remembers the "magic moment" they got to grips with skiing and glimpsing "amazing youth work gems in snowsports".

The trip became an annual event, expanding to 330 young

people by 2007, when a Lottery grant enabled the development of a year-round scheme. Snow-Camp's current programme was up and running by 2010.

### ACTION

Participants must be aged 13 to 21 and attend Snow-Camp with their youth workers, who are crucial in supporting them, says Charlish. They must also never have skied or snowboarded before.

All three Snow-Camp stages run at UK artificial and indoor snowsport centres, starting with the two-day First Tracks programme in the summer. Each session includes an hour's skiing and snowboarding instruction and an hour-long session, where participants discuss how skills such as perseverance and overcoming fear can be applied to everyday life.

It culminates in a snowsports award, enabling progression to the Graduate stage – six consecutive Saturdays or Sundays from late autumn. Participants continue receiving two hours of snowsports instruction, alongside more vocational life skills sessions, featuring industry representatives.

Snow-Camp's final stage is

Excel, 10 consecutive Saturdays or Sundays starting early the following year. Participants work towards a basic instructor qualification, ending with a one-week residential in the Italian Alps where they shadow instructors, before returning home for external assessment.

They can then apply for Snow-Camp's year-long apprenticeship programme, currently accepting five young people annually. Apprentices instruct peers through Snow-Camp, gain further activity leadership and instructor qualifications, and undertake vocational placements with industry partners.

Snow-Camp has engaged 7,500 young people across 21 London boroughs, Glasgow, the Midlands, Bristol and Cardiff. It is expanding to Manchester this summer.

### OUTCOME

Of 552 young people participating in 2015/16, 88 per cent had increased confidence, 95 per cent became more determined, 92 per cent more motivated and all achieved their goals. Of the 38 young people completing the full Snow-Camp scheme last year, 32 progressed to further education, employment or training.