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**Sidmouth College wins award for young carer support**

Devon school, Sidmouth College has been given a Silver and Bronze award for their work to make sure students don’t miss out on an education because they are young carers.

The Young Carers in Schools programme helps primary and secondary schools improve outcomes for young carers and celebrates good practice through the Young Carers in Schools Award.

Young carers are responsible for emotional, practical or physical care for a parent, sibling or other family member who has a physical disability, mental health issue or substance misuse issue. The 2011 Census statistics revealed that there are just over 166,000 young carers in England, but research reveals that this is just the tip of the iceberg. The true figure could be closer to 700,000 young carers in England, equivalent to one in 12 school children many of whom are unrecognised and unsupported.

Recent research carried out by Carers Trust and The Children's Society shows that, on average, young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year and often have lower levels of self-confidence, mental wellbeing and significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, because of their caring role. Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework states that inspectors will look at how well schools support young carers. While some schools are doing this really well, others struggle and this causes real problems for young carers.

To help schools support young carers, the programme offers a step-by-step guide for leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff, with practical tools designed to make it as easy as possible for schools. Staff can also receive training through webinars and events and the programme also features a newsletter each term highlighting relevant policy developments, spotlighting good practice and giving updates on the programme’s successes.

“To achieve their Bronze Award [insert name of school] has demonstrated that it supports young carers in many ways, including homework clubs and drop-in sessions with a member of staff who is responsible for this vulnerable group of pupils.  Vital information about how to identify young carers is made available to all school staff, and noticeboards and the school webpage let students and their families know where to go for help”.

The programme is open to all schools in England and to sign up schools just need to visit [www.youngcarersinschools.com](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Ctms%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C8NZR1LAY%5Cwww.youngcarersinschools.com)

Gail Scott-Spicer, Chief Executive of Carers Trust, says: “Schools play a vital role in a young carer’s life, but many care for relatives without their teachers even knowing what they do. On average young carers will miss half a day of school each fortnight as a result of their caring role, so the steps schools take to identify and support them can have a huge impact on their learning, wellbeing and life chances.”

Jenny Frank, young carer programme director at The Children’s Society, is confident that the Young Carers in Schools Programme will bring about national change. “This is a giant leap forward in the way schools can make sure no child misses out on an education because they are a carer. Importantly, we are not just telling schools to improve, we are giving them a clear set of steps to help them improve their support systems, and then recognising the work they do with young carers.”

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors**

**Further information, case studies and high resolution images**

[school contact details for journalists]

**Carers Trust** is the UK’s largest charity providing services to unpaid carers, young carers and young adult carers. We work to make sure that carers of all ages are not overlooked or deprived of services they need, and this is underpinned in our vision – a world where the role and contribution of unpaid carers is recognised, and where they have access to the quality support services they need to live their own lives. We support over 465,000 carers across the UK, including over 30,000 young

carers.

Through its network of carers services, Carers Trust supports thousands of young and young adult carers. It also hosts two websites – [Babble](https://babble.carers.org/) and [Matter](https://matter.carers.org/) which provide online services for young and young adult carers.

We do this with a UK wide network of quality assured independent partners, through our unique online services and through the provision of grants to help carers get the extra help they need to live their own lives.

There are seven million carers in the UK. Please visit our website [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org) for further information about your nearest service.

[The Children’s Society](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/) has helped change children’s stories for over a century. We expose injustice and address hard truths, tackling child poverty and neglect head-on. We fight for change based on the experiences of every child we work with and the solid evidence we gather. Through our campaigning, commitment and care, we are determined to give every child in this country the greatest possible chance in life. [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk).

**The Young Carers in Focus (YCiF**, led by The Children’s Society, brings partners together from YMCA Fairthorne Manor, DigitalMe, Rethink Mental Illness and The Fatherhood Institute. The four-year programme, running until 2016, is funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

**YCiF** aims to give young carers a voice so they can share their experiences and improve public understanding about the issues they face. More than 200 children are being recruited as “champions” to help raise awareness. Messages from YCiF will reach 450,000 young people in over 9,000 schools over four years, through the [www.makewav.es/ycif](http://www.makewav.es/ycif) site**.**

**The Fatherhood Institute i**s the UK's fatherhood ‘think-and-do’ tank (charity reg. no. 1075104). Our vision is for a society that gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their father and any father-figures; supports both mothers and fathers as earners and carers; and prepares boys and girls for a future shared role in caring for children.

**Rethink Mental Illness** is a charity that believes a better life is possible for millions of people affected by mental illness. For 40 years we have brought people together to support each other. We run services and support groups that change people’s lives and challenge attitudes about mental illness. We directly support almost 60,000 people every year across England to get through crises, to live independently and to realise they are not alone. We give information and advice to 500,000 more and we change policy for millions.

**YMCA Fairthorne Group** is committed to ‘championing and adding value to young lives by providing experiences that challenge, enable and develop the individual'. In 2000 the Young carers Festival (YCF) was created by YMCA Fairthorne Group in partnership with The Children’s Society. The annual event brings together up to 1,500young carers from across the UK for a weekend of fun, relaxation and consultation.

**DigitalMe**runs a series of projects and programmes that put the power of social media in the hands of young people; the impact on the young people involved can be life-changing. Many participants, and the people who support them, have demonstrated enormous improvements in confidence, aspiration, and attitude to learning and life skills that will last them a lifetime. Messages from YCiF will reach 450,000 young people in over 9,000 schools over four years, through the [www.makewav.es](http://www.makewav.es)site**.**

**The Big Lottery Fund**

The Big Lottery Fund supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. It is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by the National Lottery and invests over £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes.

Since June 2004 it has have awarded over £6.5billion to projects that make a difference to people and communities in need, from early years intervention to commemorative travel funding for World War Two veterans.

Since the National Lottery began in 1994, £33 billion has been raised and more than 450,000 grants awarded.

**The Queen's Trust**

Formed on the occasion of The Queen's Silver Jubilee, The Queen's Trust supports disadvantaged young people, with a focus on the United Kingdom. It funds a small group of charities that help young people overcome major obstacles to long-term success and has a particular interest in education, personal development, volunteering and supporting vulnerable families. It will spend out and close by 2019.