

13 Information and contacts for parents: a template

This has been developed with the view that schools will tailor the information to fit their own school and the support put into place for young carers and their families.

This model text can be used by your school to inform parents where they can find additional support. You may find it useful to include this text as part of school communications to parents or on your intranet.

Parents of young carers

Some children help look after someone in their family by:

- helping to lift someone to help them get around or helping them wash, go to the toilet or get dressed.
- staying in the house to look after someone, be there for them and make sure they are safe.
- providing emotional support or a shoulder to cry on.
- helping to care for someone by doing the cooking or housework or other jobs in the home.
- interpreting for someone or helping them communicate.

For many families, relying on your child to provide care in the home may seem like the only option, however, your children should not be expected to carry in-appropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. It should not be assumed that children should take on similar levels of caring responsibilities to adults.

How you might feel

If your children are providing care in the home, you may feel guilty, stressed, helpless or angry and find it hard to talk. You may be worried about your child's school attendance and education and worried about the future.

Step 1

If you are ill, disabled, have mental ill-health or are affected by substance misuse and need someone to help look after you, or if you need support to look after your own children, you should contact your GP or ring your local social services department and ask for someone to give you an assessment.

Or, you may have a child who is disabled or has a long-term illness and needs lot of extra care and attention from you. You can also ask for an assessment to help support them and you.

Any assessment should be able to identify what services you need for yourself and to help you look after your children.

Step 2

The Orkney Carers Centre offers support, advice and information about the kind of help your family might be able to get and can also refer you on to other professionals who can help. You can contact the centre on 01856 870500 or by email at orkneycarers@tiscali.co.uk.

The Orkney Young Carers Service also offers support (group and one to one), advice, and information. In addition it offers your child the opportunity to meet other young people who have caring responsibilities and who may be in a similar situation and fun activities. The young carers support worker can be contacted at the Orkney Carers Centre. The website can be found at www.orkneyyoungcarers.org.

If you can, be open with your child and tell them what is going on. Keeping them in the picture can allay their fears. Involve them in discussions with professionals if appropriate so that they can understand and ask questions themselves.

Talk to your child's school in confidence about the situation and ask what support they can offer.

Further sources of information and advice for you

- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website for young carers contains information for parents at www.youngcarers.net/parents.
- The Disabled Parents Network provides information, advice and peer support to disabled parents, their families and supporters at www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk/.
- If you are also a carer, visit the The Princess Royal Trust for Carers website to chat, for advice, info and support at www.carers.org.

Further sources of information and advice for your child

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers' website dedicated solely to young carers for chat, for advice, info and support at www.youngcarers.net.