Best friend letter of support

This activity is generally more effective if classes are separated into smaller groups to allow for group discussion but if time is short the activity can be done with everyone in the class working together.

Each group should be given one of the case studies of a young person having to care for someone in their family and a piece of flip chart paper and a pen.

Pupils should read the case study, discuss what is happening and agree on what support they feel they should offer from the perspective of a best friend. They should write the young carer a letter of support that shows respect for what they do and how they cope. Pupils should think about any thoughts, responsibilities, worries, problems and feelings that their young carer may have and how they could help.

The letters could include some of the following:

- If you need someone to talk I will listen.
- I could help you with your homework.
- I think you are doing really well.
- I will try to understand.
- Try not to worry about your dad/mum/brother/sister etc.
- You are a good friend.
- I could make sure I know about any work you might have missed at school.
- I can go with you if want to speak with a teacher.
- I will try my best to cheer you up.
- I will stick up for you at school if anyone gives you a hard time.
- Your dad/mum/brother/sister etc is very lucky to have you.
- I could help you with some of the things you do at home.
- I have a lot of respect for what you do.
- I think you are a very capable person.
- If you want me to I could tell other people how difficult things are for you.
- Let me help you. All you need to do is ask.
- I could visit you at home if its too difficult for you to leave the house.
- I think you are amazing.

The class should discuss each groups responses. Emphasis should be given to the responsibilities that young carers in the case studies actually have and how their own opportunities for friendship, leisure, extra curricular and even ordinary school work may be restricted by the tasks they do.