

Young Carer Coordinator Case Study- Jennifer Goodall, Niddrie Mill Primary School. Young Carer Coordinator

How did your school develop the role of the young carer coordinator?

This has been a real passion project since I attended some awareness-raising sessions for several years. So much of what I learned resonated and I could see that this was a role so many of our pupils were fulfilling and I wanted to support them.

I began by developing a policy (thanks to Liberton High School for their original) that was then shared with staff and tied in with awareness-raising workshops in each class. From this, we were able to begin the process of identifying young carers in school.



Since then, the role has evolved as my confidence has grown, and I am much more proactive about approaching families in Child Planning Meetings to have that conversation. Awareness-raising sessions happen regularly so pupils are used to the term *Young Carer* and this session, we have had several self-referrals from pupils. Each year, the 'offer' to our Young Carers changes depending on their age and stage. I have run lunchtime get-togethers previously, but it has to come from the group of young people.

In this session, I have introduced the Young Carer noticeboard to help raise awareness to all pupils in school throughout the year.

How do you think your role benefits the young carers in your school?

Having one named person as the contact for Young Carers means pupils know they can approach me. I have also been at the school for 20 years, so I have a long-standing connection with many families.

What does your role involve on a daily basis?

One of my roles as Principal Teacher of Wellbeing is to monitor all pupils' attendance and punctuality, not just Young Carers. Early interventions are always best, and if we see a slip, we can put supports into place sooner rather than later. I am the point of contact for any workers from Edinburgh Young Carers so I may have some emails to answer or visits to arrange. All staff also know that any queries about Young Carers should come to me or any referrals to be made to me.

What do you most enjoy about the role?

I love that small things can make a big difference. For some of our pupils, just recognising that they are a Young Carer is all the support they need. It's the security of knowing there is a person to support them and acknowledge their home life is 'different' to their peers.

Which changes have you made which have made a significant impact to identifying and supporting young carers?

As the role has evolved, there is now a culture in the school where we openly talk about Young Carers, and as pupils sometimes meet their workers during the school day, it is seen the same as any other intervention group we run. There is no 'stigma' about the term Young Carer.

The role of Young Carer Coordinator dovetails nicely into my other pastoral work so it is not like having to do anything 'above and beyond'



What are your top tips for a successful approach to a whole school approach for young carers.

You will think you are saying the same things repeatedly when you start awareness-raising, but it pays off in the long run. You may also get loads of referrals at the start, which are not actually for young carers.

- Remember you won't get everyone on board at the start
- Be persistent
- Be a bit of a Miss Marple or Hercule Poirot when you have a 'gut feeling' about a young person. Take time to explore their home situation with them to help you build a picture for a referral
- Self-referrals after awareness-raising sessions can give hidden young carers the opportunity to come forward. Never dismiss a name without digging deeper.
- Be prepared to have some tricky conversations with families, but it's worth it to get support for the young person!

