



National Children's
Bureau

Literature Search

Bullying and Young Carers

Dr Stephanie Smith / March 2018

1. Prevalence of bullying among young carers and comparisons with the general population

TABLE 1 - Summary table of prevalence evidence for bullying and young carers

AUTHORS & YEAR OF PUBLICATION	LOCATION	EVIDENCE
Aldridge et al. (2017)	England	Qualitative interviews were conducted with young carers and their families (n=22) and comparison interviews were completed with parents of young people who were not young carers. Differences were found in the prevalence of bullying reported by young carers and those who were not young carers. 16% of young carers aged 11-17 years reported being bullied compared with 3% of 11-17 year olds who were not young carers.
Katz et al. (2014)	Suffolk, England	Young carers reported the highest rates of cyberbullying– more extreme than any other vulnerable group (total sample n= 2988, aged 11-15 years). More than half of young carers (58%) report being cyberbullied compared with 25% of those without caring responsibilities.
Lloyd (2013)	Belfast, Northern Ireland	In a random sample of 4192 10-11 years olds who completed the Kids' Life and Times (KLT) online survey in 2011, 12% of the participants reported having caregiving responsibilities for someone in their household who was sick, elderly or disabled. One-third of young carers reported being physically bullied in the last two months compared with 16% of those without caring responsibilities. 49% of young carers had also been bullied in other ways (name calling, getting left out of games, or having nasty stories spread about them on purpose) compared with 31% of those who did not look after someone at home.
National Centre for Social Research (2010)	England	Data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) survey (total sample n=15,500) (aged 14 at the beginning of the study) showed that young people who had caring responsibilities in their household were more likely to be victims of bullying. Young carers aged 14 years were 1.33 times more likely to be bullied than those without caring responsibilities, 1.23 times more likely to be bullied at age 15 and 1.4 times more likely to be bullied at age 16.
Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010a)	England	A survey of 700 young carers found that 68% young carers had been bullied at school.

2. Experiences of bullying among young carers

TABLE 2 - Summary table of evidence in relation to bullying experiences in young carers

AUTHORS & YEAR OF PUBLICATION	LOCATION	EVIDENCE
DfE (2016) 'The lives of young carers in England Qualitative report to DfE'	England	<p>Young carers who had been bullied partly attributed this to their caring role and family situation. The experience of bullying made it more challenging to engage and succeed in school, and to develop and maintain friendships with peers.</p> <p><i>"I am always working on my own... I am like the odd one in my class... Because of caring I feel I am unusual... I ask if I am allowed to join [their groups] they say no."</i></p> <p>(Young carer aged 12)</p>
National Centre for Social Research (2010)	England	<p>As well as being more likely to be victims of bullying, young carers were also more likely to be 'new' victims as they grew older. "As young people grow older their social lives become important and these young people may increasingly become isolated from their peers due to having more responsibilities at home."</p>
Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010b)	England	<p>Young carers are often the victims of bullying at school. Some young carers are bullied because of the condition or illness of the person they care for, whilst others can be bullied because they appear to lack social skills or seem more mature than young people of the same age.</p>
Warren (2006)	England	<p>"Young carers are more likely than non-caring children and young people to report that other children make fun of them or bully them because of the help that they give at home. This bullying can be directly related to other children's knowledge of young carers' domestic and caring roles, their parents' illness or disability or the fact that young carers are perceived as being different and so may not be accepted by their peers. As Crabtree and Warner (1999) have stressed, young carers may have fewer social skills as a result of their minimal social life experience and may find it harder to make and sustain relationships."</p>

3. Evidence of particular bullying interventions for young carers

TABLE 3 - Summary table of evidence in relation to bullying interventions for young carers

NAME OF INTERVENTION / AUTHORS, LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS
Adaptation of the Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP-A) / Cunningham et al. (2017), Australia	Three-day resilience-building camp aimed at promoting coping.	<p>A qualitative analysis of 12 attendees (young carers aged 12-14 years) indicated that the intervention could help individuals to better cope with bullying in the school context:</p> <p><i>"My temper isn't as bad and I can ignore the bullies and stuff".</i></p> <p><i>"During school there were boys picking on me. I used 'oh well' and ignore," (a technique covered in the program).</i></p> <p><i>"I was being bullied at school a couple of weeks ago and I used my keep calm book and a couple of other ones, thought court brick," (a thought challenging technique covered in the program).</i></p>
Young Carer Pathfinders / Ronicle & Kendall (2010), England	Family focused support from LAs.	Qualitative interviews with 16 young carer families found that although bullying was identified as an issue for a relatively small number of children and young people on entry to the programme (9%), practitioners indicated that on exit this concern had been addressed for nearly three-quarters of the children and young people affected.

4. Research Articles / Other Sources

Aldridge et al. (2016) (Research report of the DfE young carers qualitative study)

Reference: Aldridge, J., Cheesbrough, S., Harding, C., Webster, H. and Taylor, L., 2016. The lives of young carers in England omnibus survey report.

Weblink: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/bitstream/2134/24037/1/Lives_of_young_carers_in_England_Omnibus_research_report.pdf

Carers Trust (2016)

Title: Protecting Young Carers from Bullying a Guide for Schools, Community Groups and Policy Makers

Weblink: https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/protecting_young_from_bullying_final.pdf

Cunningham et al. (2017)

Reference: Cunningham, L.C., Shochet, I.M., Smith, C.L. and Wurfl, A., 2017. A qualitative evaluation of an innovative resilience-building camp for young carers. *Child & Family Social Work*, 22(2), pp.700-710.

Weblink: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cfs.12286/full>

Abstract: Young carers are at increased risk of developing mental health and social problems. The objective was to pilot a camp-based resilience-building programme for young carers. Twelve young carers (12 to 14 years) recruited from Carers Queensland attended a 3-day resilience-building camp adapted from the Resourceful Adolescent Program. One month after the camp, carers participated in a semi-structured telephone interview. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Two key themes emerged. The first, coping self-efficacy, included subthemes of affect regulation, interpersonal skills, and recognition of strengths and coping ability. The second key theme, social benefits, included opportunities for respite and social engagement. Overall, participants reported enjoying the camp and would recommend it to other young carers, yet they were able to provide some suggestions to improve future camps. Implementing an integrative resilience-building program such as the Resourceful Adolescent Program in a camp format shows promise as a way of both engaging and benefiting young carers, as well as selective populations more generally.

Department for Education (2016) Young Carers in England Report

Title: The lives of young carers in England: Qualitative report to DfE

Weblink: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498115/DFE-RR499_The_lives_of_young_carers_in_England.pdf

Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership website

Weblink:

http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_bullying.html#young_care

Summary of relevant text:

"Some children will become vulnerable to bullying because they provide care to someone in their family who has a disability, an illness, a substance misuse problem or a mental health problem.

Research has revealed the difficulties that young carers face alongside physical tiredness, emotional stress and ill-health.

Staff in schools can help by:

- Being alert to signs that someone may be a young carer;
- Knowing what support structures and services are available;
- Listening to young carers and being sensitive to their needs, whilst respecting any desire on the part of the young carer to keep their family situation as private as possible;
- Providing opportunities in school time to complete homework;
- Providing agreed access to a telephone;
- Understanding that each individual has their own differing needs and requirements."

Katz et al. (2014)

Title: The Suffolk Cybersurvey 2014

Weblink: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/community-and-safety/staying-safe-online/Suffolk-Cybersurvey-2014-FINAL.pdf>

Lloyd (2013)

Reference: Lloyd, K., 2013. Happiness and well-being of young carers: Extent, nature and correlates of caring among 10 and 11 year old school children. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14(1), pp.67-80.

Weblink: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-011-9316-0>

Abstract: Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. For many of these children and young people, caring has been shown to have a detrimental effect on their lives. For example, caring at a young age appears to be associated with poor health and well-being, bullying and poorer educational outcomes. However, previous research has tended to be retrospective, carried out using small surveys of secondary school-aged children or to use qualitative methods with young people associated with caring projects. In contrast, little is known about the extent and nature of caring undertaken by younger children. This paper reports findings from a random sample survey of 10 and 11 year old children in the final year of their primary school education. 4,192 children completed the Kids' Life and Times (KLT) online survey in 2011. Twelve percent of respondents to KLT said they helped look after someone in their household who was sick, elderly or disabled. Supporting previous qualitative research, this survey showed that children who were carers had poorer health and well-being, reported less happiness with their lives, were more likely to be bullied at school and had poorer

educational aspirations and outcomes than their peers who were not carers. These findings suggest that teachers need to discuss the issue of caring with children in the classroom in a general and supportive way so that young carers feel able to confide in them and seek support if they need it.

National Centre for Social Research (2010)

Title: Characteristics of bullying victims in schools

Weblink: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/121/1/DFE-RR001.pdf>

Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010a)

Title: Supporting young carers – a schools' resource survey

Weblink: <http://static.carers.org/files/final-survey-results-2010-5078.pdf>

Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2010b)

Title: Supporting young carers: a resource for schools

Weblink:

https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/the_complete_supporting_young_carers_resource_as_one_pdf.pdf

Ronicle & Kendall (2010)

Title: Improving support for young carers – family focused approaches

Weblink:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182291/DFE-RR084.pdf

Warren (2006)

Reference: Warren, J., 2007. Young Carers: Conventional or exaggerated levels of involvement in domestic and caring tasks? *Children & Society*, 21(2), pp.136-146.

Weblink: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2006.00038.x/pdf>

Abstract: Historically, research about young carers has focused on defining the tasks and responsibilities undertaken by children caring for ill or disabled family members and the impacts of such care, without reference to the domestic and caring work undertaken by children and young people in families where there are only non-disabled or well members. This study presents new evidence of what children and young people generally do to assist in the home and examines how the lives of young carers differ from children and young people who are not carers. It concludes by examining the implications of these research findings for evidence-informed policy and practice.