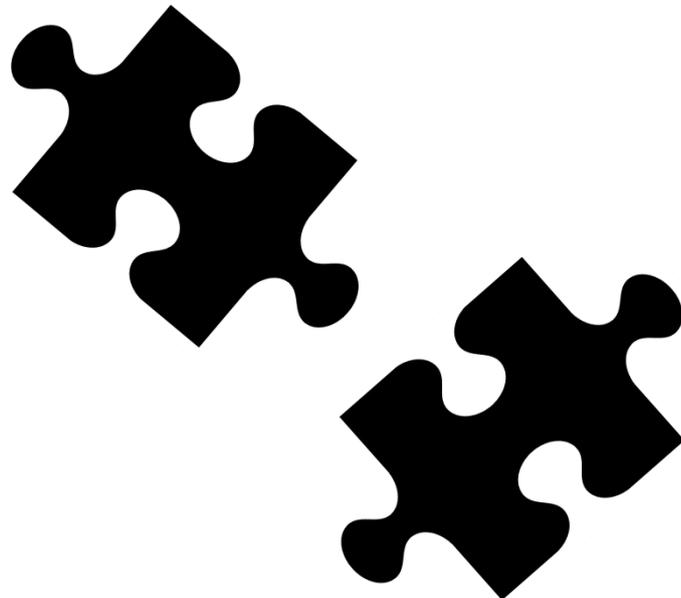


# Your Young Carers' Forum: A guide



# Your Young Carers' Forum: A guide

**'Our voices are stronger together!'**

Between 2007 and 2011, the National Young Carers' Forum (NYCF) was set up and facilitated by The Children's Society and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (now Carers Trust). It was composed of young carers from across the country to represent the voices of all young carers.

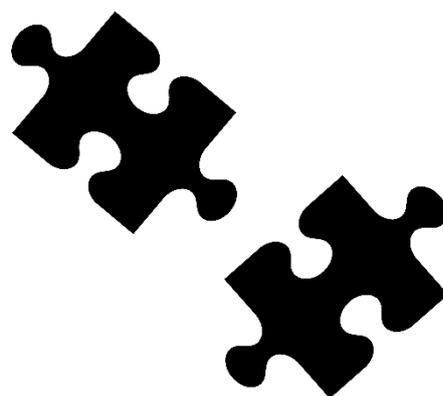
This short guide complements the poster

'We are the (Insert Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Young Carers' Forum' which has been developed by the Forum to encourage and support young carers' services in setting up local young carers' forum of their own.

The free poster can be downloaded at [www.youngcarer.com](http://www.youngcarer.com)

**'We want to do something positive because we care. We want to change things. To make young carers' and their families' lives better – at home, at school and everywhere! Young carers should have the same opportunities as everyone else!'**



# How to raise awareness

‘The more people who know about young carers, the more young carers will get the support they need. Making people understand what we do and why we do what we do is important.’

- Use the media (e.g. local television, radio or newspaper) to help raise wider awareness of young carers. See ‘A message to media’:  
[http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce\\_user\\_files/Resources/Professional/Webcards/media\\_postcard\\_lw.pdf](http://www.youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/imce_user_files/Resources/Professional/Webcards/media_postcard_lw.pdf)
- Think about having open days and invite local policy makers.
- Talk to schools, social workers, GPs, local MP, and local councilors.
- Tell your school or college about our schools resources:  
[www.youngcarersinschools.com](http://www.youngcarersinschools.com)
- Contact your local MP: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk>  
You could ask your MP to arrange a meeting with further MPs. In December 2007, the National Young Carers Forum shared the issues faced by young carers with very important people, including the Prime Minister, at the Houses of Parliament.
- Write to your local councilors or MPs: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)
- Use social media, your young carers’ service website and newsletters.  
Gloucestershire Young Carers’ produce a newsletter (their first issue went into local papers as a supplement!)  
<http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/our-news/we-care-we-count-young-carers-newsletter/>

‘The Forum helps us get our voices and opinions heard by professionals who work for us and our families.’

# Getting involved with consultations

The Forum helps us get our voices and opinions heard by people who can change things for us.'

- See the British Youth Council resource centre: [www.byc.org.uk/resource-centre](http://www.byc.org.uk/resource-centre) See particularly their 'Training materials' and 'How to' guides.
- Feed into your local young carers' steering group.
- Feed into your local strategic plan for young carers.
- Feed into other local strategies to ensure the needs of young carers and their families are included, such as strategies for carers, young people and/or families.



- Feed into other young people's forums and participation events, such as UK Youth Parliament:  
<http://www.ukyp.org.uk>

'A forum helps us feel we have some control. We don't always have this at home.'

# Useful tips from the NYCF

‘The Forum gives us a chance to see and do new things like attending conferences and residential trips.’”

- Be confident and believe you can change things – you are the experts!
- Meet regularly – maybe once a month.
- Be well organised and have clear goals and targets. Perhaps map these on a year planner.
- Have ground rules or a group contract to make sure everyone is safe and feels welcome.
- Share news with the whole group, perhaps in a newsletter, an e-bulletin, at local events or on a website.
- Make sure people know who the forum is and what it does. Put your forum’s name on the poster that this guide supports, and display it in your community where people can see it.
- Collect and show off achievements (such as newspaper articles) and changes you’ve made on a blog, a Facebook page, or in a scrapbook.
- Use safe social media to communicate, such as: Babble <https://babble.carers.org/> and Matter <https://matter.carers.org/> and Makewaves (<http://www.makewav.es/ycif>).
- Collect evaluation or feedback forms from talks you’ve made.
- Use questionnaires to collect evidence.
- Be run by committed and understanding staff!



- Work with local champions who can make change happen, perhaps a local MP, Councillor or local celebrity.
- Develop the skills of your members e.g. training on public speaking, teambuilding, working with media.  
See the 'How to guide' – How 2 be a media spokesperson under Role Guides:  
<http://www.byc.org.uk/resources/how-to-guides.aspx>
- Build on the strengths of forum members and use their different skills and talents.
- Recognise young people's time and effort with accreditation, certificates, letters of thanks.
- Have biscuits and tea and have fun!!!



‘Being in a forum builds confidence, friendships and we learn new life skills.’

# Leave a legacy

The Young Carers in Focus (YCiF) partnership has put together the Influencing Change Toolkit. The toolkit includes a video and the Influencing Change Map along with information, templates, activities and quizzes designed to help young people start an influencing change project safely and within the law in their local area.

Leave a legacy by influencing change in your area.

Download the toolkit at <http://www.youngcarer.com/influencingchange>

## WHY ...

We as one  
Make change together  
Improving young carers'  
Lives forever and ever

Radio, money and awareness too  
Young carers' forum will help you  
We make people aware, people care  
The media like it too

Different stories  
Means stronger change  
Touching hearts  
Along the way

We share who we are  
Work hard too  
We grow in confidence Me  
and you

It gives us control  
Which is not always so  
Having a forum  
Will help me and the world grow.



## How to contact us

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Website: [www.youngcarer.com](http://www.youngcarer.com)

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[www.carers.org/professionals](http://www.carers.org/professionals)

This resource is a refreshed version of an original publication developed by The Children's Society and Carers Trust (formally The Princess Royal Trust for Carers) for the Include partnership project (2007-2010).