

CANCER IS IN OUR LIVES... TALK TO US!

A RESOURCE FOR SCHOOL STAFF SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IMPACTED BY CANCER



We are a group of young people who form the Youth Engagement Group within Cancer Fund for Children.

Through discussions as a group, we recognised that within our differing schools the support available to us when we were impacted by cancer varied greatly – we recognised that each of us had different ideas of what would be supportive, and that this also varied depended on what was going on for us and the person who was diagnosed at the time, and what support was offered.

We met with a wider group of young people aged between 8-17, and confirmed that within the wider group there was a vast difference between supports offered to young people in school and that this was something we wanted to change.

We created surveys for young people, parents/guardians and school staff to gain further insight into what supports had been offered, what supports would be useful, and what the barriers were to supports being provided.

After reviewing all of the information gathered, it was clear that young people and their families had ideas of what they felt was supportive, and that school staff were keen to receive information and suggestions of how they could support those in their schools impacted by cancer.

We felt that providing schools with a resource that could be accessed online would be the most successful in reaching as many schools as possible across Northern Ireland.

We would encourage you to watch and engage with these resources, and to share them with staff within your school and beyond.

If you would like any further information, if you have any questions or feedback, please contact:



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Why did we create this resource?



Who is impacted by Cancer?



Co-ordinate, Connect, Consider



Signposting to other supports



QR codes



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Coordinate - At any time!

- ☐ Regularly check in with the child or young person – in person, via phone call, via online classroom app.
 - ☐ Have one identified staff member for communication between home and school – involve the young person in agreeing who this will be this person should then coordinate with other necessary school staff.
 - ☐ Offer time off school – some young people feel under pressure to ‘continue as normal’ - offering time off can be a permission they need to take time to process the impact of cancer on them.
 - ☐ Share information about therapeutic services available – do not assume that families are aware of services, or that another professional has shared or referred.
 - ☐ Key staff should consider talking to/ seeking advice from the relevant Cancer Nurse Specialist/ Social Worker/ Cancer Support Specialist (as well as the child or young person and their parent or guardian).
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Connect - If child or young person is not attending school.

- ☐ Organise or offer outdoor play or social sessions that the child or young person can join in.
- ☐ Send videos from school peers and staff that the child or young person has a relationship with.

- ☐ Send cards, photographs, letters, drawings – this helps keep a connection between life before being impacted by cancer, and the current situation.
 - ☐ Send voice notes and video messages – messages can be easier than calls as there is less pressure on the child or young person to respond immediately.
 - ☐ Acknowledge special occasions for example their birthday or Christmas.
 - ☐ Ensure the child or young person has access to technology e.g. Online learning/ Video classroom/ Robot device/required software programmes.
 - ☐ Offer provision of missed classwork – without expectation of completion.
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Consider - If the child or young person is attending school, or has returned to school .

- ☐ Identify a 'safe space' for the child or young person to have access to throughout the school day – and the option of them discreetly communicating that this is where they are going – ensure all staff who work with the young person are made aware of this.
- ☐ Identify a specific adult(s) that the child or young person can talk to, ensuring they know when that person is available and how to contact them and in addition outside of that time/ who else they could go to. It is important that children and young people know *which staff know what information* about their lives.
- ☐ Create space and permission for the child or young person to be with and talk to their friends – recognising this as a significant source of emotional support.
- ☐ Offer flexibility around timings for example - later starts, early finishes – hospital stays and appointments (for themselves or family members) create a domino effect on transport and living arrangements – the young person may be living with friends or relatives.

- ☐ Offer flexibility around bookings e.g. trips/school dinners/ breakfast club/ after-schools clubs - recognising unpredictable nature of cancer and the impact this may have on attendance, living arrangements and finances.
 - ☐ Consider flexibility within timetables – it may be more beneficial for young people to miss certain classes to allow time to catch up on core subjects/classwork/ coursework.
 - ☐ Consider homework on an individual basis – help the young person to prioritise what will be most beneficial to them.
 - ☐ Consider the curriculum – particularly within Sciences, Religious Studies, Home Economics, Child development - topics may include Cancer, Human development, illness and other emotive themes and discussions - if you are unsure check in with the child or young person prior to beginning the lesson, offering them available options – for example to review the topic prior to class, to opt out of that topic, to contribute their own experience.
 - ☐ Consider options regarding ‘over age retention’ / repeating specific classes or subjects.
 - ☐ Report to home regarding contagious illness and sickness within the classroom and school setting – and understand this may impact attendance. When someone is going through cancer treatment they lose their immunity, this may mean they are more vulnerable to illness and the impact of the illness will be much more significant.
 - ☐ Provide a lift pass or the option to avoid the use of stairs, the option to skip queues at break and lunch time, and a car parking space/ pick up space close to school – the impact of treatment is long lasting, and tiredness and fatigue is not always visible to others, and young people do not always wish to draw attention to this.
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Resources:

These are resources that are available to download – as a group of young people we looked at them and considered different elements of the resources:

Cancer and School Life – Young lives Vs Cancer

<https://publications.younglivesvscancer.org.uk/products/cancer-and-school-life>

- A training pack designed to help school staff talk to pupils about childhood cancer.



“It is important to consider if the young person impacted or diagnosed has come to terms with what is happening to them or in their family before sharing it with the wider school and it should only be shared with permission of the young person and who they wish to share it with. Staff should consider who they are sharing the information with and why they are sharing it – even when the intention is good.” *Diagnosed Young Person*

Supporting Your Pupil – Childhood Cancer and Leukaemia Group

<https://www.cclg.org.uk/publications/after-treatment-finishes/supporting-a-pupil-with-cancer/suppupil>

- A written resource created for school staff where they have a diagnosed young person in school



“Staff should not feel like they must know everything about cancer and treatment before having a talk with the diagnosed Young Person. The Young Person can give some information and guide the staff member.” *Diagnosed Young Person*

I'm still me – Brain Tumour Charity

<https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/get-support/support-professionals/resources-teachers/im-still-me-guide-teachers/>

- A work book to support young people with sharing information.

When an adult has cancer – Macmillan

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/stories-and-media/booklets/talking-to-children-and-teenagers-when-an-adult-has-cancer>

- A resource written to support anyone talking about cancer to children and teens, explores reactions and responses of children and young people.

Bereavement support resources – Cancer Fund For Children <https://cancerfundforchildren.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BSP-School-Staff-Resource.pdf>

<https://cancerfundforchildren.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Bereavement-Support-Plan.pdf>

- A resource exploring how grief can impact young people with suggestions for supporting bereaved young people in schools
- A support plan template for young people who have been bereaved

Supporting Young Carers in School – EANI

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/education-welfare-service/supporting-young-carers> -



“Young people don’t always think of themselves as young carers, they just do what they have to do, and it becomes their normal” *Sibling of a diagnosed young person.*

The C Tea – Cancer Fund for Children and Young Lives Vs Cancer

<https://open.spotify.com/show/6dC4vYt06eNsdszCTU2zfN?si=c4b7fd213f22464d>

- A podcast about what it is like to have cancer as a young person in Northern Ireland. Hosted by staff from Young Lives Vs Cancer and Cancer Fund for Children they talk about cancer services in NI and share the stories of the young people and families they support.



“This is good. If a young person is diagnosed, they might relate to some of the stories told on this podcast. Hearing from other young people can help you know you are not the only one going through this” *Diagnosed Young Person*.

Signposting support

Name of Organisation	What they offer	Contact details
Action Cancer	Counselling and Aromatherapies.	<p>Tel: 028 9080 3344</p> <p>Email: info@actioncancer.org</p>
Barretstown	Camps for children with a life limiting illness and bereaved family camps.	<p>Tel: +353 45 864 115</p> <p>Fax: +353 45 864 197</p> <p>Email: info@barretstown.org</p>
Brain Injury Matters	Counselling and youth services.	<p>Tel: 028 90 705 125</p> <p>Email: info@braininjurymatters.org.uk</p>
Cancer Focus	Art therapy and counselling therapies.	<p>Tel: 028 9066 3281</p> <p>Fax: 028 9066 8715</p> <p>Email: hello@cancerfocusni.org</p>
Child Brain Injury Trust		

	Counselling support and family support.	https://childbraininjurytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CBIT_Family_Support_Handbook_N.Ireland.pdf Tel: (office enquiries) 01869 341075 Tel: (brain injury support) 0303 303 2248
Dreams Come True	Highest areas of deprivation with life limiting condition including cancer- wish granted for UK only aged 5-18years. Child must not have received a wish from another organisation.	Tel: +44 (0) 1428 726330 Office Hours: 9am-5pm Email: info@dreamscometrue.uk.com
<u>Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust</u>	The trust takes young people aged between 8-24 sailing, to help them regain their confidence on their way to recovery from cancer.	https://www.ellenmacarthurcancertrust.org/ Tel: +44 (0)1983 297 750 Email: info@emcancertrust.org
JTV Cancer support for Teenager and Young Adults	Online media platform of videos to support young	https://jtvancersupport.com/

	people diagnosed with Cancer.	
Kid's Cancer Charity (UK)	Play therapy for diagnosed child.	<p>Tel: 01792 480500</p> <p>Email: enquiries@kidscancercharity.org</p>
Little Princess Trust	Provides wigs for children and young people going through cancer treatment.	<p>Tel: 01432 760 060</p> <p>Email: wigs@littleprincesses.org.uk</p>
Make a Wish	Wish for 3-17 year olds with life threatening condition. Can only be used once and cannot be used if another organisation wish has been granted.	<p>https://www.make-a-wish.org.uk/wishes/wish-eligibility/</p> <p>Tel: 01276 40 50 60</p>
Over the Wall	Camps in UK for children that have been diagnosed with a life changing illness or disability.	<p>https://www.otw.org.uk/who-we-are/</p> <p>Tel: +44 (0)2392 477 110</p> <p>Email: info@otw.org.uk</p>

Starlight	<p>Health Play boxes services and family support hub for children with life limiting conditions.</p>	<p>Tel : 020 7262 2881</p> <p>Email: talktous@starlight.org.uk</p>
Teenage Cancer Trust	<p>Supports young people over 12 years of age diagnosed with Cancer. Nurses linked to hospital and concert to Royal Albert Hall (currently organised through hospital Teenage Cancer Trust nurse).</p>	<p>https://www.teenagecancertrust.org/</p> <p>Tel:020 7612 0370</p> <p>Email: hello@teenagecancertrust.org</p>
Young Lives Vs Cancer	<p>Ongoing social work support in hospital. Cross fit MOVE Forward sessions.</p>	<p>https://www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk/</p>
Youth Cancer Trust	<p>Free holidays for Young people living with and beyond cancer.</p>	<p>Tel: 01305584064</p> <p>Email: admin@yct.org.uk</p>

<p>Chris Aked Foundation</p>	<p>Provide support to children of families dealing with cancer. Help offered through physical and sporting activities, counselling and memory making days.</p>	<p>www.chrisakedfoundation.co.uk</p>
<p>Cancer Focus</p>	<p><u>Group work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group support groups ● Residentials / retreats for bespoke patient groups <p><u>Bra Fitting Service</u></p> <p><u>Counselling service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Patients can be referred by professional staff and we also welcome self-referral, we ask that contact details are included in referral. ● Referrals can now be received electronically via our website on the patient contact form. 	<p>https://cancerfocusni.org/</p>

- We currently have 3 counsellors within the SET (1 in Lisburn & 2 in Ards).

Family Support

Including:

- A Dads support group
- Family support groups
- family bereavement nights
- family days out.

Art Therapy

Including:

- 1- sessions, art journaling and art support groups
- referred by professionals or can self-refer.

Nurse Line

Driving Service

- A driving service support to patients attending appointments
Service, supporting patients to attend appointments in all regional hospitals.
- No self referrals can be accepted and

	<p>must come from a health professional.</p> <p><u>Mole Mapping.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Referral only from Dermatology 	
The children's cancer unit		<p>Number: 02896013744</p> <p>Gmail: Info@childrenscancerunit.com</p> <p>website: Children's cancer unit</p>

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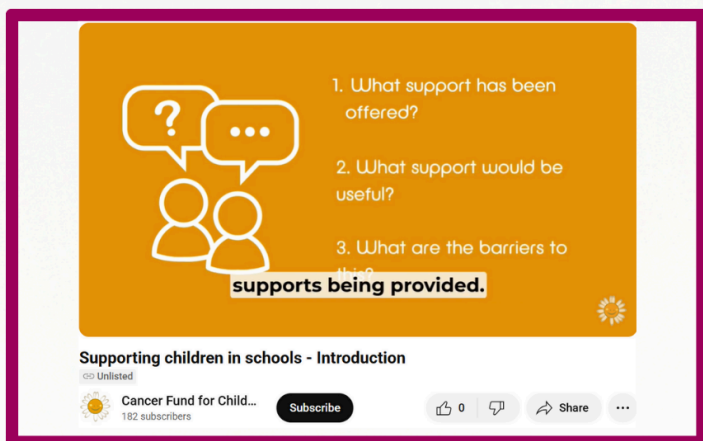
Why did we
create this
resource?



SCAN ME



TO WATCH



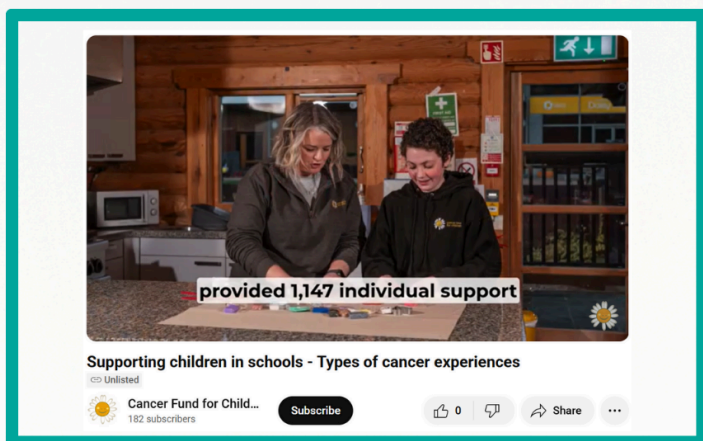
Who is
impacted
by Cancer?



SCAN ME



TO WATCH



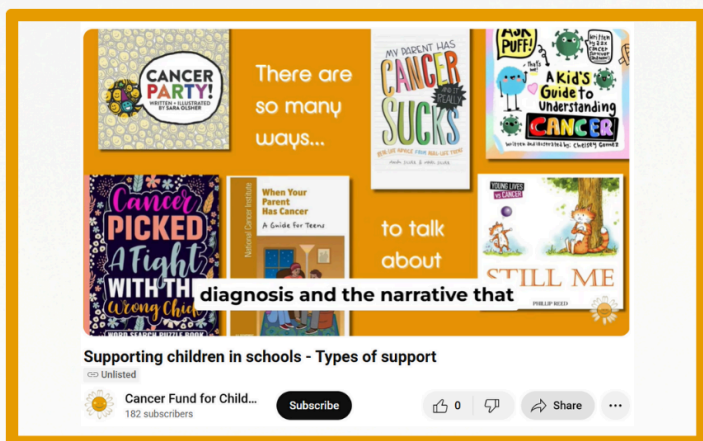
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Connect,
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SCAN ME



TO WATCH



Resources



SCAN ME



TO WATCH



