

**Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Agenda
Item No.**

11th March 2019

9.

Young Carers

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr T Wilson – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Public Health

Executive Summary:

This report provides a national and local introductory overview of young carers. It details current arrangements for identifying and supporting the young carers and sets out the planned improvements intended to achieve positive outcomes and opportunities for young carers in Walsall.

Reason for scrutiny:

The report was requested by the Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to provide an overview of issues relating to care leavers for members of Scrutiny Panel

Recommendations:

That:

- Scrutiny note the contents of the report and comments on the improvements proposed
- Scrutiny receive a follow on report in 6 months updating on progress

Resource and legal considerations:

The resources required to strengthen arrangements for young carers, set out in this report will be met from within existing resources.

The local authority has a responsibility to identify and support young carers. These responsibilities are set out in the Children's Act 1989 (as amended by the Children & Families Act 2014) and under the Care Act 2014. The latter introduced new rights for young carers to ensure young carers and their families are identified and their needs for support are assessed.

Since April 2015 young carers have been entitled to an assessment of their needs from the local authority. This provision works alongside measures in the care act

2014 for transition assessments for young carers as they approach adulthood, to enable a 'whole family' approach to providing assessment and support.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

Strategic priority 2018-2021

- Children have the best start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- Commitment to People having increased independence, improved health so they can positively contribute to their communities.

Citizen impact:

The strengthened approach set out in the report will positively impact upon the support, opportunities, health, wellbeing and welfare of young carers and their families. It will also help promoting opportunities to support young carers to engage, aspire and secure education, employment and leisure outcomes outside their caring roles.

Environmental impact:

None arising from this report.

Performance management:

The exercise and scrutiny of this work will ensure that Key Directorates and Statutory partners work collaboratively to improve the Walsall offer to young carers, their families and wider networks of support.

By improving the offer and identification of young carers, there will be improved outcomes for young people in relation to education, employment and improved health and wellbeing

Reducing inequalities:

Some young carers can experience physical, emotional or social problems and encounter difficulties in school and elsewhere. The strengthened approach detailed in the report is intended to mitigate the impact.

Consultation:

This report has been prepared collaboratively with Adults Social Care

Contact Officer's:

Rita Homer
Group Manager
Safeguarding and Family Support
Service/Children With Disabilities
Service.

 . 01922 655547

Rita.Homer@walsall.gov.uk

Julie Jones
Group Manager
Early Help

 . 01922 655412

Julie.Jones@walsall.gov.uk

1. Introduction - What is a Young Carer

Definition

“Young Carers are children and young people under the age 18 who provide **regular** and **ongoing** care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally disabled or misuses substances”

The Care Act 2014 outlines the requirements that the LA is to deliver to support young carers and their families.

2. What do Young Carers do

Young carers carry out a range of practical home tasks such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, washing, overseeing medication, personal care such as helping with bathing, dressing and often look after younger siblings.

The Children’s Society report (Hidden from View 2013¹) that 1 in 12 young carers spends more than 15 hours a week looking after a parent or sibling.

3. What’s the impact of being a Young Carer

Being a young carer can have a big impact on the things that are important to growing up. It can, according to research:

- Affect a young person’s physical and emotional health, social life and self-confidence
- Have an impact on their ability to attain and achieve with education or training, many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring which can cause pressure and stress.
- The Carers Trust carried out a survey (2017)² with young carers, findings reported
 - 39% of young people who took part in a survey reported that their school were not aware of their caring role and
 - 1 in 20 said they missed school because of their caring responsibilities
 - 26% said they have been bullied at school because of their caring role

Young carers overall development can be significantly and negatively impaired, irrespective of the type of care or frequency of care provided.

Many young carers report feelings of isolation and are rarely ‘stress free’ from the pressures of home tasks, taking on adult ‘responsibilities’ both practically and

¹ https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/hidden_from_view_final.pdf

² <https://carers.org/press-release/new-figures-reveal-life-chances-uks-young-carers-are-under-threat>

emotionally and miss out on opportunities that other children have and take for granted such as seeing friends, playing, having hobbies, having opportunities to learn.

There are also some good things about being a carer and again as reported by the Carers Trust during the survey undertaken young carers said

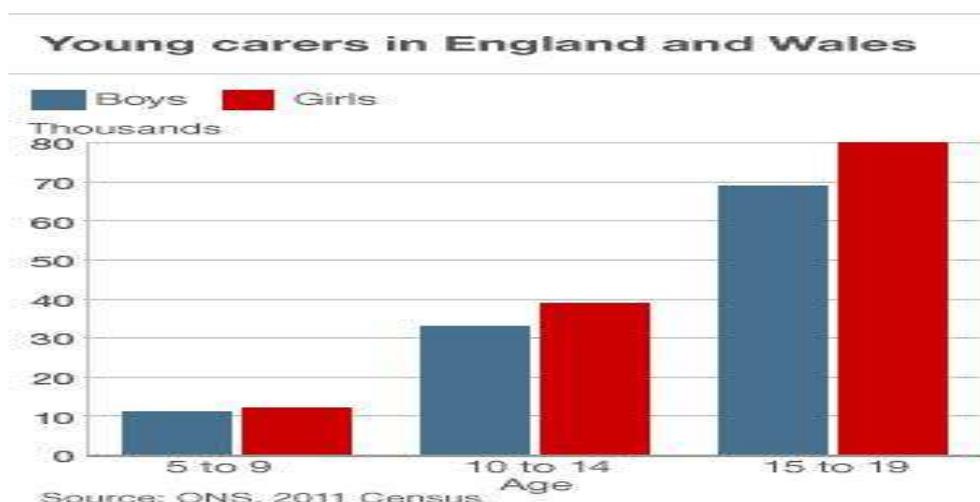
- They had a sense of accomplishment
- Being independent - a quote from a young carer “As I was a Young Carer, I had to grow up fast. I was left to do everything by myself, but as a result, I am more mature for it. I knew how to pay bills and run the house by the time I was 8 years old. I was doing the weekly shopping and cooking everyone’s meals (every night) by the age of 10, (I had been doing much of it since I was about 5 but full blown, just me on my own from about 10 years old).
- Ability to handle different situations, having the confidence to cope and take ‘charge’

4. How many Young Carers are there

National Context – The Carers Strategy

Figures from the 2011 census suggest there are:

- 244,000 people under 19 years of age are young carers, with about 23,000 under the age of nine
- 149,000 young carers aged between 15 and 19, about twice as many as in the 10-to-14 age range
- Girls are slightly more likely to be carers than boys.



The Childrens Commissioner issued a report in December 2016 ‘Support Provided to Young Carers’³. The data gathered from this review suggested that

³ <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Young-Carers-report-December-2016.pdf>

only a small proportion of young carers in England are identified and supported by their Local Authority.

4.1 Local Context

We are currently supporting 158 young carers within the Young Carers Group and over the past 12 months, children's services have received 44 new referrals for young people identified as being young carers via the MASH and Early Help Hub. The outcome for the referrals were:

- 36 young carers and their families went onto have a Child and Family Assessment
- 5 became subject of Child in Need Plan and were provided with support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- 8 became subject of child protection plans
- 6 became looked after.
- 33 supported by Early Help

5. How is a Young Carer identified

It is 'everyone's' responsibility to identify young carers including, health services, schools, youth services, voluntary sector. When a young person is identified as being or possibly being a Young Carer a referral is sent into MASH and the Early Help Hub where a Young Carers assessment/screening tool is completed and appropriate advice and support is the provided.

The screening tool, designed to identify how much caring activity is undertaken by the young carer, to understand and explore the level of support required, the potential risks and vulnerabilities.

There is a challenge for us in that partners data systems do not currently enable collection of information on young carers on a routine basis. We are therefore very much reliant on referrals into Early Help and MASH for knowing our cohort of Young Carers. Whilst awareness raising has taken place this does mean there may be more Young Carers in Walsall than the above figures suggest as this just reflects those that we have been made aware of via formal referrals.

6. What support is available for Young Carers

There is a range of support available including a 'Young Carers Group' for those aged between 9 and 19.

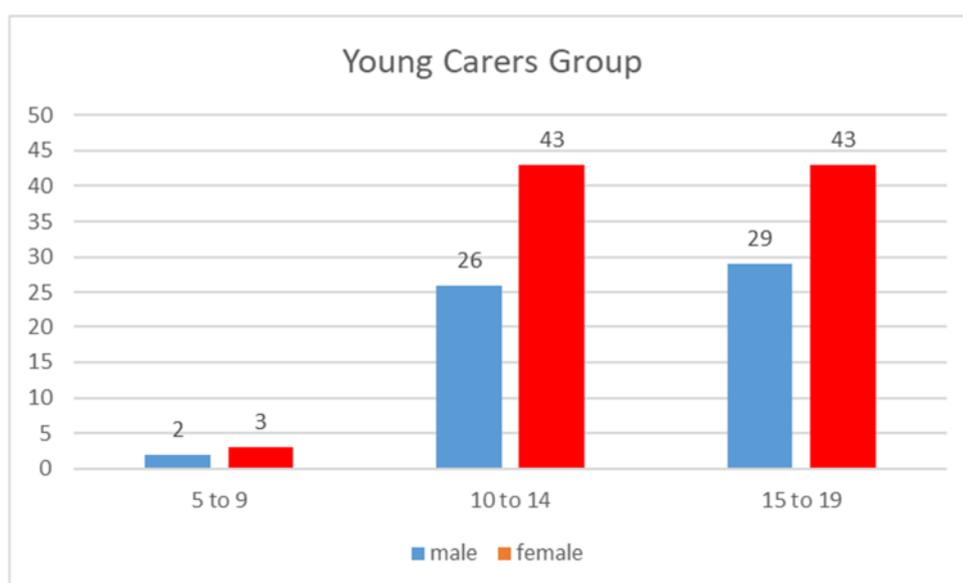
The group is held on a weekly basis at My Place and managed and support by the Early Help Youth Support Service.

There are currently 62 young carers attending the sessions, which are split into two age groups 9 to 12 and 13 to 19 years of age.

The group is a place where 'young carers' can become 'young people' and where they can have fun including music evenings, trips, outdoor pursuits and where they can:

- Be themselves
- Make friends
- Talk to someone
- Build their self-esteem and confidence
- Receive information and advice

The Youth Workers also carry out 1 to 1 support with the young carers at home and work closely with schools in raising awareness of young carers and the support offered to them.



7. What needs to happen next

The offer to young carer's and their families is to be revised and a joint protocol to be introduced that seeks to better address their needs including transition arrangements for young carers approaching 18 years of age.

A cross directorate 'Young Carers Task Group' is to be set up with representatives from Adults Social Care, Children's Social Care, Public Health and NHS CCG to ensure an integrated 'whole partnership' approach as well as a 'Whole Family Approach' is taken.

The aim of the group is to :

- Consult with young carers and involve them and their families in planning and designing services
- Develop a Young Carers Strategy & Protocol

- Gain a better knowledge and understanding locally regarding identification and needs of young carers up to and including age 18
- Improve transition processes from young carer to adult cares post 18 years of age
- Strengthen our 'local offer' identifying services available to young carers, ensure the services offered enable those young carers to lead fulfilling lives
- Develop and implement a 'Whole Family Assessment' which identifies support for all family members, such as parenting support and the provision of practical and emotional support
- Raise the awareness and profile of young carers across services and partners.
- Consult and work with young carers in designing information to raise awareness and promoting supporting available
- Improve the collaboration and commissioning between Adults & Childrens Social Care, Health & Education
- Provide training and awareness around young carers, including wider partners, including housing professionals, police, teachers and governors
- Develop the role of the Young Carers' Champion
- Develop reporting systems and analyses of data to inform further service improvement, joint commissioning opportunities around the 'Local Offer'