

**EDUCATION AND CHILDRENS SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item
No. 8**

DATE: 6 SEPTEMBER 2016

CHILDREN'S SERVICES – YOUNG CARERS

Ward(s)

All

Portfolio: Councillor Burley – Children and Young People

Summary of report

This report summarises the current position in regard to Young Carers in the borough of Walsall, covering the definition of a young carer, the impact on the young person and the responsibility of the Local Authority.

Reason for scrutiny

To inform the Panel of the current activity

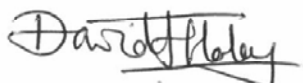
Recommendation

That the report be received

Background papers

None other than an appendix outlining the 'day in the life of a young carer'.

Signed:



David Haley – Executive Director: Children's Services ☎ 652081

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Resource and legal considerations

No additional resources are required at this time and there are no specific legal considerations

Citizen impact

There is none specific to this report. However, the services it concerns play a key role in the quality of life of – and outcomes for some of the children and young people of Walsall.

Environmental impact

None

Performance management

There is a developing data set in respect of this cohort of children and young people.

Equality Implications

This report has no specific equalities implications

Consultation

This report describes the impact of a range of services, many of which are delivered through partnership arrangements and are subject to consultative processes. However there has been no need for specific consultation about this report.

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1.0 Definition of Young Carers

Children and young people under the age of 18, whose lives are restricted by the need to take responsibility for a person who is either: chronically ill, experiencing a mental illness has alcohol and substance abuse related difficulties, has a physical disability, is elderly or infirm or is experiencing HIV/AIDS. The person being cared for is usually a parent, but may be a sibling, grandparent, neighbour etc. The child/young person will usually be involved in the provision of care, either as a primary or secondary carer. It is recognised that the child/young person may be in need of: Personal Support, additional play/youth facility or specialist help. The young carers may be performing any of the caring responsibilities associated with adult carers. These responsibilities include:-

- Domestic duties, e.g. shopping, cleaning, washing, changing beds, cooking
- Household management e.g. paying bills
- Nursing tasks e.g. giving medication
- strenuous physical activity such as lifting
- Personal Care e.g. bathing, dressing, toileting, feeding
- Provisional emotional support
- Responding to demanding behaviour
- Communication e.g. translating, sign language.

2.0 Impact on young people of being a young carer

The consequences of these duties on the young carer may lead to some of the following effects:-

- Educational effects, e.g. attendance, concentration, completion of school/ homework
- Friendships and social activities e.g. isolation, difficulty in establishing and maintaining friendships and pursuing recreational activities
- Emotional concerns (often the emotional upset is related to their feelings of responsibilities at a young age and fears about the future)
- Health (physical and mental), e.g. inappropriate demands of heavy domestic duties, such as lifting; anxiety, stress as a result of experiences.

3.0 What are the obligations of the Local Authority towards a young carer?

- Local Authorities must have “a protocol, shared between Adult and Children’s Services, for identifying and assessing young carers”. Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. The local authority must be proactive in identifying young carers in its area.
- Undertake an assessment to determine whether a young carer needs support Section 17 Children Act 1989 and to identify what those needs are. This is when:
 - It appears to the Local Authority that a young carer may have need for support
 - The Local Authority receive a request from a young carer or a parent of a young carer to assess the young carer’s need for support
 - An assessment has been carried out but the circumstances of the young person or person being cared for have changed.
 - The assessment must the young carer, their parents and any person that the young carer or their parents request be involved.

There is a current Young Carer's Strategy which is driven by the Children & Young People's Partnership with key priorities

- **Ensuring early identification of children and young people who are young carers through** the Children's Workforce Development Strategy. We will develop awareness of the young carers agenda via the Workforce Development programme which supports professionals working with adults and children to; identify young carers, understand their needs and raise awareness of the resources and support available to recognise young carers/caring role.
- **Targeted support for children and young people at risk of taking on inappropriate caring roles.** We will work with key agencies to improve early identification of children and young people who are at risk of not reaching their full potential because of their caring role.
- **Support young carers to enable them to identify their own needs and reach their potential.** We will seek to provide information to empower the young carers to make informed decisions/choices. We will work with Adult Social Care and other professionals working with children and young people to support the transition to adult services.

Due to recent changes in Senior Management the key priority is to refocus the partnership group under new leadership.

5.0 Issues/Challenges

Ensuring accurate collection of data from across the partnerships, with recording systems capturing this data.

Data does not accurately reflect the current position of young carers. The change of electronic case file management system from Paris to Mosaic will allow us to provide a full detailed report on this area of work. Much was previously dependent on how staff recorded this information.

Ensuring working agreements are implemented between Children's and Adult Services to ensure the transition arrangements for young carers are embedded.

6.0 Update on current activity

Referrals come through MASH and social care undertakes a Young Carers Assessment and appropriate advice and support is provided. There is a range of support provided including group activity and / or 1-1 support.

There are currently 76 Young Carers identified with an average weekly attendance of 18 at the Young Carer's group activities. These activities include:

Outdoor pursuits, cooking , First Aid , Trips. (First Aid was a result of young carers reporting they arrive home/ or fear they would, the find the person they care for unconscious). The group are designing a toolkit to be used by professionals to support the completion of the young carer's assessment. This will eventually be available on Mosaic.

Of the 76 children and young people identified 38% are 9-12, 38% are 13 -15 and 24% are 15-19.

Youth Workers have designed an awareness session for school staff as a result of the issues raised by Young Carers. This session highlights the difficulties faced by Young Carers when they are carrying out a caring role and trying to keep on top of their school work. They have produced a social story comic page 'A Day in the Life of a Young Carer'. This session has been piloted and helped raise awareness with school. Young Carers involved in this pilot have reported that their school life has improved as a result. Targeted Youth Work will be offering this session to schools in the coming academic year. Staff also provide support to the whole family, an example of this is involving the commissioned 'Safer Families' programme which provides befriending , family support and some short breaks provision.

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