



Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

From : John Gregg, Director of Children's Services

Subject: Support to Young Carers

Date: 13 July 2017

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 Following a discussion at Corporate Parenting Board, the Chair requested that an item be added to the work programme of Scrutiny Board 2 in relation to young carers as there was concern about children becoming looked after as a consequence of having carer responsibilities at home.
- 1.2 The purpose of this note is to update the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) about work undertaken to raise awareness of young carers and promote best practice in providing appropriate support.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board:
 - Note the report
 - Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Young carers are children and young people under 25 who provide regular and on-going care and emotional support to a family member or friend who is physically or mentally ill, disabled, frail and have a behavioural disorder or misuses substances. This could include a parent or sibling.
- 3.2 Young carers may take on practical or emotional caring tasks that an adult would normally do. Instead of seeing friends, enjoying hobbies and doing homework, children as young as 10 are cooking, cleaning, managing medication, shopping, looking after brothers and sisters.
- 3.3 The impact for a young carer can be significant, regardless of the type of care they provide or how often they provide it. It can take a toll on their physical and mental wellbeing as well as impact on their own development and opportunities.
- 3.4 Young carers do not always identify themselves as a carer because they see it as part of their everyday life and something they have always done. Often young carers may be reluctant to tell anyone about their caring responsibilities

for a variety of reasons including family loyalty, stigma, bullying or simply knowing where to go for support. There is broad recognition that young carers who support parents with mental ill-health or problems with drugs or alcohol are particularly at risk of remaining hidden from view because of concerns about being taken into care, or at least believe this is the case.

4 The National Context - The Carers' Strategy

- 4.1 Carers' Strategy: the second national implementation plan 2014 to 2016, published in October 2014, sets out the Government plans for supporting carers. It describes in detail how different pieces of legislation, such as the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014, contribute towards significant improvements for assessing and supporting carers of all ages. The underlying implementation plan for the strategy includes NHS England's Commitment to Carers and the 'Making a Step' change programme for young carers and their families.
- 4.2 The Children's Commissioner issued her report in December 2016 – [Support Provided to Young Carers](#). The data gathered from this review suggests that only a small proportion of young carers in England are identified and supported by their local authority. Analysis from the survey issued to all local authorities in England found:
- Approximately 4 out of 5 (20%) young carers may not be receiving support from their local authority. According to the 2011 census there are 166,363 children and young people providing 'unpaid care'.
 - Just over a quarter of young carers have additional care needs of their own.
 - There are young carers under the age of 5 years.
 - Not all local authorities are taking steps to identify children who may be providing care in their area.
 - 94% of children referred to the local authority as a potential young carer, who were not deemed not to require support, had not received an assessment.
 - The emphasis on identification and assessment in legislation may lead to support for young carers being overlooked.
 - Young carers want to enjoy their childhood and for services to listen to them and respect their views.
- 4.3 Most local authorities are taking steps to meet their statutory responsibilities with 90% of 130 local authorities taking steps to identify children who may be providing care in their area. 50% of local authorities have a Memorandum of Understanding between children and adult services. 65% of local authorities taking a 'whole family' approach to support offered to young carers. The review does highlight a substantial unmet need and poses questions for local authorities on their pathways for identifying, assessing and supporting young carers.

5 Coventry Children's social care

- 5.1 The children's internal service is currently situated at the Logan Centre as part of the Children's Disabilities Team (CDT) and are co-located with the Short Breaks Team.
- 5.2 The internal service offers a targeted service for young carers who are 'children in need or above'. In January 2017 151 young carers were receiving a service from mainstream children's social care provision. When closed to social care, these children were referred to the universal young carers group at the Carers Centre. There are currently 95 young carers open to the internal services who are predominately carers for their parents and are supported under CAF level 3 or as a 'Child in Need' under the Children Act 1989.
- 5.3 The service receives referrals and completes assessments, undertakes home visits and one to one support for young carers, offers drop-in support within schools, including awareness raising and offers a range of group activities for young carers from across the city to attend; enabling opportunities for young carers to have a break from their caring role.
- 5.4 The following table sets out the ages of young carers open to children's social care or assessed in the 12 months to June 2017.

	Aged 5-9	Aged 10-14	Aged 15-18	Total
Young carers currently open to internal services	32	58	5	95
Young carers with new assessments completed in the last 12 months	30	37	8	75
Children scored very high level of caring	14	10	4	28

- 5.5 In addition, the following statistics illustrate recent activity aimed at supporting young carers in Coventry.
- 75 children have had a new assessment completed within the last 12 months
 - Individual work has been completed with 25 of these children (for a minimum of 6 weeks) in the last 12 months
 - 80 children attended last summer's holiday activity programme
 - 55 children accessed the service over the 4 days activity during Easter
 - 28 children scored very high (level of caring) on their assessment and additional support was offered via their social worker
 - The summer holiday programme this year will mean that all 95 children will be seen
 - The internal service is averaging 3-4 new referrals per week predominately from the neighbourhood social care teams.

6 “No Wrong Doors” – Memorandum of Understanding

- 6.1 “No Wrong Doors” – working together to support young carers. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement between Children’s and Adult Social Care to ensure young carers are supported effectively and lines of responsibility are clear. The template has been developed nationally between the Children’s Society, Carers Trust, the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) and the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS). This template has been adapted for Coventry and is being considered for signing.
- 6.2 Conversations are currently taking place at regional and national level with young carers’ leads, ADASS, ADCS and the Children’s Society about improving data collection and reporting for young carers reporting to accurately reflect the number of young carers receiving support from local authorities and young carer organisations. Developments and recommendations will be picked through attendance at the ADASS Carers Regional Network.

7 The Local Context – Coventry Carers’ Strategy

- 7.1 Although the 2011 census recorded around 3,100 young carers aged 25 and under living in Coventry, research conducted by the BBC in 2010¹ suggested census figures were an underestimate and it is more likely that there are around 5,000 children and young people under the age of 25 with caring responsibilities in Coventry of whom around 1400 are aged under 16.
- 7.2 Responsibilities for identifying and supporting young carers are placed on the Local Authority as a whole. These responsibilities are set out in the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) and under the Care Act 2014. Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 introduces new rights for young carers to ensure young carers and their families are identified and their needs for support are assessed.
- 7.3 From April 2015 all young carers are entitled to an assessment of their needs from the Local Authority. Consideration must be given to whether a young carer is a ‘child in need’ under the Children Act 1989. This new provision works alongside measures in the Care Act 2014 for transition assessments for young carers as they approach adulthood and for assessing adults to enable a ‘whole family approach’ to provide assessment and support. It is also intended that a consistent and co-ordinated approach is taken to identify and support young adult carers aged 18 to 24.
- 7.4 The Care Act 2014 placed additional duties on local authorities for young adult carers. It also covers young adult carers in “transition” before they are 18 who may be entitled to support with their caring role after they become 18. Adult Social Care has a duty to include any carers in the needs assessment of an adult and this includes any young carers and young adult carers. We do know that 23 needs assessments of adults carried out in 2016/17 by Adult Social Care included a young person under the age of 25. Five of these young people were under the age of 18, the youngest was age 12.
- 7.5 Admissions to care are robustly overseen by the Children Services Leadership Team and as a result of this it is clear that no children have been brought into

¹ BBC/University of Nottingham November 2010

care because they were young carers. Instead support is identified following an assessment to ensure that children are maintained within their family with assistance from relevant agencies.

8 The Carers Trust Heart of England

8.1 Coventry does not commission an external service for young carers but works in close partnership with Carers Trust Heart of England, who are a local voluntary organisation who work with all young carers regardless of level of need and provide the Council with monitoring data on a quarterly basis. They are currently in touch with 1,385 young carers aged 5 to 18 years.

8.2 They provide a range of support services for young carers including:

- Big Lottery Funded Project with two work strands.
 - Support for young carers and their families to ensure that the potential adverse effects are reduced / avoided, reducing the need for high level intervention plus independent support through the statutory processes.
 - Collaboration with schools to offer emotional support to young carers through the Young Carers' Family Information, Advice and Support Worker, help for schools to better identify and support young carers, and enabling primary schools to attain the Young Carers in School Award Accreditation. In the last project year (year 1 of 5) 241 'hidden' young carers were identified and 351 one-to-one support contact with 275 young carers were undertaken, of which nearly half were still in school; 35 primary and 19 secondary schools. To date 3 schools gained accreditation in 2016-17 with the aim of working with 5 primary schools each year thereafter for a further 4 years.
- Children in Need Funded Project.
 - The project provides age appropriate activities based in a dedicated facility 'owned' by young carers in which they can feel safe, can relax away from their caring situation and can develop friendships and peer support with others in the same situation. Being centrally based it is easily accessible to all young carers over the city. 283 young carers have benefitted from the project over years 1 and 2.
- In addition:
 - Young carers Facebook with 365 young carers registered
 - Facebook fan page with 892 subscribers
 - Quarterly e-newsletter live for all young carers
 - Participation in a number of policy initiatives including the Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Provider Networks and the Safeguarding Children's Young Carers Sub Group.

More information about the support they provide can be found on their website www.carerstrusthofe.org.uk/young-carers/

9 Coventry Safeguarding Children Board

9.1 During the process to ratify the new Carers Strategy some issues were raised by Safeguarding Children's Board. They asked for assurances that the Council is meeting its duties in relation to statutory assessments, and that there is joint

working between Schools, Social Care and Carers' Trust Heart of England. In November 2016 a small task and finish group was convened to address these issues raised and the following actions have now been achieved:

- [Coventry Carers Bulletin](#) is circulated monthly to all schools improve communication, share latest news and celebrate success. Schools are invited to contribute
- [Good Practice Guides for supporting young cares](#) have been developed for Schools, Social Care and Health Professionals – this clarifies statutory duties and the support available to young carers from Carers Trust Heart of England and from the Council.
- A [Carers Homepage](#) has been developed on Beacon which brings guidance and information into one place for Council Employees and Schools
- [Young Carer Aware](#) e-learning course is being promoted through the bulletin, in the Good Practice Guides and on the Carers Homepage
- Presentation to Designated Safeguarding Leads meeting to brief leads on the above developments and to promote the Young Carers in Schools Programme provided by Carers Trust Heart of England – see item 8.2 above.
- A reference to young carers has been added to the Section 175 Safeguarding Compliance Audit to explore how schools identify and support young people who are carers and help identify future actions.

9.2 All of the above documents can be accessed through the Carers Homepage on Beacon or by visiting the Council website - www.coventry.gov.uk/carers

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