

Young Carers Update

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Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee on progress of the Young Carers Strategic Steering Group following the committee's recommendations in April 2017.
- 1.2. The work of the Young Carers Project contributes to the Somerset Children and Young People's Plan priority 1. "Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient" and 7. "Embedding a 'think family' approach across the workforce".

2. Issues for consideration

2.1. Action Plan

Members are asked to consider the progress Young Carers Strategic Action Plan (Appendix A) and actively support its work; in particular supporting recruitment of a Councillor to be the Young Carers Champion.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Task and Finish Group reviewed arrangements for young carers in Somerset in April 2017 and provided a number of recommendations to improve identification and support to our young carers.
- 3.2. 190 young carers have been identified; all have a Young Carers Assessment.
 - 14 have an allocated Social Worker as a result of being assessed as a Child In Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) case.
 - Over the last 18 months, 34 young carers have been in one or other of these categories on CIN or CP.
 - 42 Young Carers' parent(s) have a mental health issue and 5 Young Carers' parent(s) have a substance misuse issue.
- 3.3. A Young Carers Strategic Action Plan has been formed to take forward those recommendations, as detailed in Appendix A. Key achievements to date, grouped as per original recommendations, include:
 - 3.3.1. **Schools**
 - We have identified and are writing to all school Safeguarding Leads asking them to nominate a lead person to act as Young Carers Champion.
 - We are working closely with Alison Boulton, of the "School Information Management System" Team, regarding the collection and analysis of school data centrally. A draft report in a test school system has been developed. Schools will be formally informed about collection of the information. Some

multi-academy trusts such as Diocesan MATS do not use SIMS, which will restrict our ability to collect this information systematically.

- Five pilot projects have taken place in schools in each district to raise awareness of the service and the needs of Young Carers. These schools are Whitstone, King Arthurs, Robert Blakes and Kingsmead. We are continuing to identify and target schools in each area of the County to roll out these pilots.
- A school survey will take place in March 2018 commissioned by Public Health; there will be a specific question on caring by young carers. This will give a more accurate picture of who is caring and how much caring is being provided.

3.3.2. **Adult Services**

- The Young Carers' Forum has produced a job description to recruit a Councillor to be a Young Carers Champion.
- A Choices for Life Strategy has been developed and Choices for Life Panels have been set up. Young Carers who require a Joint Transition Assessment will be discussed at these Panels. We have worked to develop the Pathway for Young Carers and aim for this to increase the number of assessments completed, as none have been created in 2017.
- A new service provider for Carers has been commissioned. This is the 'Carers Agent Service'. Referral pathways have been agreed.
- Restrictions in budgets within front line Adult Health and Social Services mean that adults generally have to meet a higher threshold of need to access services, which results in some Young Carers being left to undertake inappropriate levels of care

3.3.3. **Health**

- Public Health has planned a training event for Senior Leads in schools with places for 100 delegates.
- We are unaware of work planned to encourage GPs to identify and refer Young Carers. A lead for this work needs to be identified.
- We have received a grant of £5k to provide Mental Health resource bags for young people.

3.3.4. **The Council**

- An extensive programme of holiday activities has been delivered to provide respite opportunities funded by the Friends Charity and staffed by Young Carers staff. The 6 events gave 314 individual breaks to the Young Carers that attended, and 70% of Young Carers open to the Service attended at least one event. The respite activities included:
 - Bristol - Cinema and Air hop with 75 young carers.
 - A 3 day residential at Skern in Devon with 37 young people aged 10-17. Many of the younger carers had not attended a school camp or been away from home before.
 - Go Ape, Kilve Court and Greenbank swimming pool which was attended and supported by the Rotary Club
- The summer programme cost of £15,888.00 for transport and activities

which was funded entirely by the Friends of Young Carers Charity and from an external grant.

- The Young Carers Forum has agreed a 'Job description' for a Councillor Champion; we would welcome assistance in identifying a member to take on this role
- Year 11 Young Carers are offered specialist careers advice by Targeted Youth Support Specialist Advisors to support transitions to college or university.
- The budget for transport to groups is supported by funding from Targeted Youth Support.
- The Young Carers' Facebook page and website is now operational and is used to maintain contact with Young Carers.
- In March 2017, a pilot project to increase transition assessments ended. This pilot involved adult services providing a worker to undertake transition assessments and develop pathways for young carers into adulthood.

4. Consultations undertaken and Fact finding

- 4.1. The initial Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had met with Young Carers, Young Carer Professionals, Young Adult Carers, Public Health and Somerset Parent Carer Forum to identify its recommendations in April 2017.
- 4.2. The Young Carers Strategic Steering Group was not successful in set-up and so the work has been driven by key staff in the Youth Service, frequently in communication and partnership with stakeholders.
- 4.3. The Young Carers Forum have developed the job description for the Young Carers Champion to ensure the role can meet their needs.

5. Background papers

- 5.1. Young Carers Strategic Steering Group Action Plan (Appendix A);
Young Carers Task & Finish Group Report to 7 April 2017 committee meeting;
Children's Commissioner (December 2016) [The support provided to Young Carers in England](#).

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.