

Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee
18 May 2018

Young Carers Update

Lead Member: Cllr Leigh Redman, Task and Finish Group Chairman

Author(s): Wendy Jenner, Targeted Youth Support and Gemma Pickford Waugh,
Children's Commissioning

Contact Details: 01458 449117 / 01823 359109

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 and review in November 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. Members are asked to consider and comment on the progress made against the Young Carers Strategic Action Plan (Appendix A);
Members are invited to consider and comment on the support provided to Young Carers.

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. During Quarter 3 (January - March 2018) 175 young carers are open to Somerset Young Carers Project; all but 10 have a Young Carers Assessment.
 - 16 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, over 40 young carers have been in one or other of these categories on CIN or CP and this is rising.
 - 50 Young Carers' parent(s) have a mental health 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**
 - Report on 5 pilot projects taking place in schools in each district to raise awareness of the service and the needs of Young Carers has been completed. New schools have been identified and work commenced.
 - A school survey took place in March 2018 commissioned by Public Health; with a specific question on caring by young carers. Data is currently being

analysed. This will give a more accurate picture of who is caring and how much caring is being provided.

3.3.2. **Adult Services**

- Councillors Tessa Munt and Mike Pullen are leading as Young Carers Champions. They have met the Young Carers Forum.
- Choices for Life Panels now have an agenda item for Young Carers 3 times a year. This includes representatives from Adult Social Care and the new Care Agents (Somerset Carers Service).
- Young Adult Carers Pathway to adult services has been developed and a service agreement for young carers' transition to the Somerset Carers Service agreed.
- Young Carers Safeguarding Policy has been drafted to set out clear responsibilities to identify and address the needs of young carers.

3.3.3. **Health**

- Training is planned to take place for schools in June 2018 to develop a whole school approach to raise awareness and remove stigma. Young Carers will be delivering some of the training.
- Content is being developed for an e-learning module, due to be launched December 2018.
- Discussions are taking place with the CCG to enable identifying young carers from GP records. We are unaware of work planned to encourage GPs to identify and refer Young Carers. A lead for this work needs to be identified.

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 events gave 228 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 pantomime with 70 young carers.
 - Bowling and cinema with 65 young carers.
 - Local theatre production with 17 young carers.
 - Well Being Days with 76 young carers.
- All Young Carers have a completed and reviewed Young Carers Assessment and regular contact. Cases are closed more effectively, because of the reviews, when there is no longer a need for the service.
- 6 young people were referred to the Counselling Service to support Young carers.
- The Young Carers' Facebook page and website is active and is used to maintain contact with Young Carers.

3.4. Areas for concerns include

- The lack of referrals from services such as GPs and adult social care. All referrals require an EHA or a parent can self-refer by ringing Somerset Direct.
- 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.
- Progress on collecting data directly from schools is slow. SASH and SAPHTO are supporting communications with schools.

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 developed the job description for the Young Carers Champion to ensure the role can meet their needs and have met with the new Champions.

5. Background papers

- 5.1. Young Carers Strategic Steering Group Action Plan (Appendix A);
Young Carers Update Report to 17 November 2017 committee meeting;
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.