

## **Young Carers**

### **Executive summary**

This paper provides an update to Children's Select Committee on the current position regarding young people in Wiltshire who are providing unpaid care. The main considerations, and areas for development in meeting the local authority's statutory duties, are:

- The assessment young carers get from the Support and Safeguarding Service is thorough and robust in identifying need; we think we can streamline the way that assessments are allocated within and across teams and are doing this carefully to avoid the need for future changes where they can be avoided. Part of this streamlining will bring triage into the Integrated Front Door.
- Determining whether outcomes for young carers are being met remains a key area of focus. This is being addressed in the development of a clear pathway for young carers and an enhanced reporting mechanism from both the Support and Safeguarding Service (once Liquid Logic is fully optimised), and via contract management with the support provider. Currently, in assessing whether the impact of the caring role on the young person would be mitigated by support from Carer Support Wiltshire, personalised outcomes are agreed with the young person and included in a 'referral form' to Carer Support Wiltshire. There is currently a challenge in monitoring these outcomes due to the assessment and support being carried out in different places; a mechanism for extrapolating reliable data is being co-produced with the provider and monitored via an action plan, agreed with the provider in December 2019.
- Regionally and nationally there is no comparative data regarding identifying, assessing and supporting our young carers. We will request that the Association of Directors of Children's Services (South West) considers young carers within its portfolio of work and completes some work to compare investment, activity and outcomes.
- The pathway for young carers in Wiltshire is unclear for some partners and families. Carer Support Wiltshire (the provider) are working to address this within its communication and marketing plans and, internally, we are clarifying the pathway from the front door.

In 2020 we will:

- Implement a new model of triage and assessment within Support and Safeguarding, including referral pathways;
- Continue to explore ways to promote the identification of carers with the commissioned provider, including through working with our schools, general practices, providers and partners;
- Develop more sophisticated reporting and data analysis with the provider and internally within Liquid Logic to better understand demand and outcomes;

- Ask our 'Youth Consultants' to undertake a piece of work to gain the voice of young carers in Wiltshire;
- Liaise with our statistical neighbours and other Councils to gain a better understanding of how well we are meeting the needs of young carers in comparison to other local authorities.

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**1 Purpose of the report**

To provide an update to Children's Select Committee on the current position regarding young people in Wiltshire who are providing unpaid care - young carers.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Section 96 of the Children and Families Act (2014) defines a young carer as "...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work). This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances".
- 2.2 Under the Act, the needs of young people should also be considered if, during the assessment of an adult with care needs, or of an adult carer, it appears that a child is providing, or intends to provide, care. Local Authorities are required to work harder to identify, assess and support carers and their families and require child and adult services to take a more collaborative approach in assessing and supporting a family's needs. The Act strengthened the rights of young carers to be identified, have an assessment of need, and receive appropriate support.
- 2.3 For the purposes of transition, a young carer is defined as 'a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for an adult' (Care Act 2014, section 63(6)). The Care Act places a duty on local authorities to conduct transition assessments for children, children's carers and young carers where there is a likely need for care and support after the child in question turns 18 and a transition assessment would be of 'significant benefit'.
- 2.4 Nationally, there is a lack of comparator data to understand how well Wiltshire is performing in its duties towards young carers.
- 2.5 In April 2018, Wiltshire Council made changes to the way in which it takes referrals and supports young carers. Prior to that time, the charity Spurgeon's was commissioned by the Council to provide assessment and support for young carers aged 5-18. The contract value was £160k per annum. Children's services contributed £43k to this contract. The remainder was funded from the Better Care Fund. The service provided the following, accessed by submission of a Single Agency Referral Form (SARF) which came into the Council and was forwarded on to Spurgeons:
- An assessment of the level of care being provided, the frequency and its impact on the young person;

- Groups, activities and events (including training workshops e.g. cooking, first aid and help to build self-esteem and confidence;
- Help to access other services including some transition support for those requiring adult services;
- Information and advice;
- A young carers newsletter twice a year;
- Funding for transport for activities such as school trips, hospital appointments, job interviews and university open days.

All young people referred had an assessment of their caring needs, but in isolation of other information that may have been held by the Council in most cases. This had the potential to lessen the impact of services offered, create duplication, and miss opportunities for multi-agency working.

2.6 Because of the legislative amendments to young carers rights, the increased duties placed upon Local Authorities in the Children and Families Act (2014) and the co-production of the *Carers in Wiltshire Joint Strategy (2017-22)*, a new service model was designed with the objectives of:

- **Joining up triage, assessment, and support** - providing a more seamless and coordinated assessment and response to young carers, to include improving information sharing between multi-agency professionals.
- **Raising awareness** - of young carers to improve identification.
- **Upskilling professionals** - giving all adults who work with children and young people the knowledge, information, advice and training they need to identify and support young carers in community settings, particularly schools.
- **Providing a whole family approach** - developing stronger partnership working between children and adult services to ensure the provision of a whole family approach and to stop children and young people carrying out inappropriate caring roles.
- **Improving transition** - for those young carers who require ongoing support, to include a transition assessment.
- **Offering direct support** – improving access for young carers to the direct support they need and value including opportunities to meet with other young carers and have a break from their caring role.

### **3 The current service for Wiltshire’s young carers 0-18 years**

3.1 A new service model became effective on 1 April 2018. There are four core strands to the support offered to young carers in Wiltshire, organised in the following way:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Delivery mechanism</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Advice and guidance</b>	All-age, delivered by Carer Support Wiltshire. This includes a digital offer, school/college outreach and promotion, GP awareness-raising activities and links with Wiltshire Healthy Schools.	To maximise economies of scale and expertise as Carer Support Wiltshire are experts in the delivery of carer support services.
<b>Assessment 0-18 years</b>	Support and Safeguarding Service, Wiltshire Council.	To bring closer alignment with Families and Children’s Services, and more robust oversight, of young carers and the cared-for person. Young carer assessments can be incorporated into support assessments and

		their needs considered more holistically.
<b>Carer support, including breaks, activities, 1:1 support, mentoring, 5-18 years</b>	All-age, delivered by Carer Support Wiltshire, by referral from the Support and Safeguarding Service. Most of this offer is subcontracted to Youth Action Wiltshire Young Carer Service (Community First).	To bring added value by commissioning activities via the third sector where there are existing youth work skills and networks to support young carers, as well as the opportunity to access charitable funds to enhance the value of the contract.
<b>Transition assessments, 16-18 years (dependent upon presentation and need)</b>	Delivered by Carer Support Wiltshire	So that transitions (for those young people who need them because they will continue to have a caring role beyond their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday) are smoother.

3.2 The triage and assessment work delivered by the Support and Safeguarding Service is funded via the Better Care Fund at £120,000 per annum (to which the children's services contribution continues to be £43k per annum).

3.3 Guidance, awareness-raising and support are externally commissioned and delivered by Carer Support Wiltshire as part of an all-age carer support contract (contract length is three years with the option to extend for a further two). The value of the whole contract is £1,130,000 funded via the Better Care Fund. Carer Support Wiltshire sub-contracts the support element for young carers to Youth Action Wiltshire at an annual cost of £55,000 (this is within the contract envelope).

3.4 Outcomes for young carers, which are included within the service specification for Carer Support Wiltshire, are those described in the Carers in Wiltshire Joint Strategy (2017-22):

*Outcome 1:* Carers have improved physical health, mental health and wellbeing

*Outcome 2:* Carers are empowered to make choices about their caring role and to access appropriate support and services for themselves and the people they care for.

*Outcome 3:* Carers have the best financial situation possible, and are less worried about money

*Outcome 4:* Carers' needs, and the value of Carers, are better understood in Wiltshire

*Outcome 5:* Carers influence services.

3.5 In addition, when referring for support to Carer Support Wiltshire, social workers and key workers can specify more personalised objectives in the agreed referral form. These include:

**Emotional wellbeing, anxiety and resilience**

Be happier

Be less stressed

Be more able to take a break

Feel safer

Feel more informed about their rights and the support available to them

Feel more able to cope

Feel better about themselves

- Feel more in control
- Feel more confident
- Feel that the impact of the caring role on them has reduced
- Be less worried about money
- Feel more supported
- Feel more appreciated

**Social relationships, interaction or identity**

- Be less isolated
- Be more able to do the things they want
- Have improved social relationships with friends/family
- Be more able to access the same activities as their peers

**Carer health and wellbeing**

- Be more able to look after themselves and their own health/wellbeing
- Feel less tired
- Feel more informed about the support available to the person they care for

**Attainment and attendance issues**

- Have improved life satisfaction
- Feel that the impact of the caring role on their education/training has reduced
- Have improved life chances

**4 The current position**

- 4.1 The new service model was implemented at a time of transformation for the Families and Children’s Service (merger from Early Help and Safeguarding and Assessment to Support and Safeguarding) and therefore a ‘lift and shift’ approach was applied for the young carers staff and model, with the intention to review ways of working at a later point. The conclusion of this piece of work has taken longer than anticipated due to other priorities within the service, including preparation for the most recent Ofsted Inspection, however it has been useful to have the time to embed the main service components before deciding about how to best align the assessment of young carers.
- 4.2 Development has been completed in terms of the recording of this work within our case management system, which means all assessment work is now recorded within Liquid Logic. This will make reporting and performance more visible and provide the ability to be able to analyse the information and inform service development.
- 4.3 As part of the review, it has been agreed that young carer assessments will move to the Integrated Front Door (IFD), given at least 60% of the children assessed do not require the input from a Family Keyworker or Social Worker. Staff within the IFD will be best placed to triage referrals and determine who is best placed to undertake the assessment based on the level of need determined by this team. This assessment will either be undertaken within the IFD or be referred to one of the area teams for a more in-depth assessment within a Support or Single Assessment. This is to ensure the significance and impact of being a young carer is realised, and plans put in place accordingly.
- 4.4 Since the new arrangements came into place, Wiltshire Council has carried out the following activities:

Year	Referrals received	Completed	Referred to Carer Support
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		assessments	Wiltshire for support package
2018/19	216	216	189
2019/20 to date	187	153 (34 assessments in progress)	133

Of these assessments, we found that

- 37% of young people were already open to the Support and Safeguarding Service and could therefore already have an assessment undertaken by the current allocated Family Keyworker or Social Worker, of these;
- 13% have also been assessed as a Child in Need
- 3% have also been assessed as requiring a safeguarding intervention
- 59% have 'caring' as their only need.

4.5 Data from previous years (when the whole service was externally commissioned and delivered by Spurgeons) shows similar patterns of activity. Note: Spurgeons did not triage referrals; rather it carried out young carer assessments for all of those referred and would offer activities to young people according to need or, where there was capacity, to all young people with an assessment.

Year	Assessments carried out
2017/18	131
2016/17	218
2015/16	179

4.6 Assessing whether referral rates are as they should be is a national challenge; many young people do not consider themselves to be carers and do not wish to be referred for assessment and support. The 2011 population census reports that there are 2,723 carers aged 24 and under in Wiltshire. Nationally this is recognised as being a significant under-estimate. No prevalence data is available which reports under18s only. As at September 2019, 768 young carers aged 5-18 were known to Youth Action Wiltshire. Some of these young people were transferred from the Spurgeon's service, some were already known to Youth Action Wiltshire before the new contractual arrangements, and some new referrals are part of this contract.

4.7 162 young carers attended 689 activity sessions in the first half of 2019/20 - averaging between 4 and 5 sessions each. The activities offered included swimming, outdoor adventure sports, scrap store and musical opportunities. Feedback from young people includes:

*'I was so nervous about doing this, but I have made friends and had a really good time, thank you'*

*'I never thought I would be able to play an instrument or perform in front of people, this project has helped my confidence'*

*'I learnt all about how the people made bread and hunted, the round house is amazing'*

*'It is nice to know that our opinion is valued and listened to, regarding the support we receive from the staff at YAW'*

4.8 Comparative data/information on service provision is difficult to assess. There is no published information via the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) but the Association of Adults Social Services (ADASS) has, over the past year, started to include young carers in the work of the carers leads group so we are in the early stages of looking to understand comparisons across LAs.

## **5 Main considerations**

5.1 The assessment young carers get from the Support and Safeguarding Service is thorough and robust in identifying need; we think we can further streamline the way that assessments are allocated within and across teams and are doing this carefully to avoid the need for future changes where they can be avoided. Part of this streamlining will bring triage into the Integrated Front Door.

5.2 Determining whether outcomes for young carers are being met remains a key area of focus. This is being addressed in the development of a clear pathway for young carers and an enhanced reporting mechanism from both the Support and Safeguarding Service (once Liquid Logic is fully optimised), and via contract management with the support provider. Currently, in assessing that the impact of the caring role on the young person would be mitigated by support from Carer Support Wiltshire, personalised outcomes are agreed with the young person and included in a 'referral form' to Carer Support Wiltshire. Difficulty currently exists in then monitoring these outcomes. A mechanism for achieving reliable data is being co-produced with the provider and monitored via an action plan that has been agreed with the provider in December 2019.

5.3 We are unable to compare Wiltshire performance regarding identifying, assessing and supporting our young carers compared to our statistical neighbours as the data is not available. We will however request that the Association of Directors of Children's Services considers young carers within its portfolio of work and locally carry out some work with other authorities to compare investment, activity and outcomes.

5.4 We know that the pathway for young carers in Wiltshire is unclear for some partners and families. This is being addressed with the commissioned provider via contract management and analysis of key performance indicators.

In 2020 we will:

- Implement a new model of triage and assessment within Support and Safeguarding, including referral pathways;
- Continue to explore ways to promote the identification of carers with the provider, including through working with our schools, general practices, providers and partners;
- Develop more sophisticated reporting and data analysis with the provider and internally within Liquid Logic to better understand demand and outcomes;
- Ask our 'Youth Consultants' to undertake a piece of work to gain the voice of young carers in Wiltshire;
- Liaise with our statistical neighbours to gain a better understanding of how well we are meeting the needs of young carers in comparison to other local authorities.