

Young Carers Consultation:

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A special thankyou to all the young carers that contributed to this consultation

This consultation has been undertaken to look at the existing systems & provision for young carers in Wiltshire and to ascertain the service users' views on what is being offered in their own words. We created a survey that reached a total of 92 young carer respondents, we also attended 6 face to face young carers respite activity sessions that were being delivered by Youth Action Wiltshire, over the summer holiday period, to have quality conversations with the participants.

We also originally planned to extend the consultation to young adult carers, however, due to capacity issues it was decided to focus on the age group 5 - 18 years old. The report has highlighted certain recommendations to further add to the provision in Wiltshire. When/ if they are agreed by the relevant partners; Wiltshire Council, Carer Support Wiltshire, Youth Action Wiltshire & Schools, an action plan will be put in place that identifies how these can be taken forward.

Definition

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under whose life is affected by caring for at least one family member, over and above just 'helping out'. Young carers might look after:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Siblings
- Close relatives

Referral process:

Anyone who thinks a child could be a young carer can refer the child into Wiltshire Council for a young carers' assessment.

Professionals should complete a DART (Diagnostic Assessment and Referral Tool) or SARF (Single Agency Referral Form). SARFs can be sent directly to the Integrated Front Door by emailing mash@wiltshire.gov.uk

Children and parents can self-refer into The Integrated Front Door on 0300 456 0108 or mash@wiltshire.gov.uk

Once the referral is received, it is allocated to a practitioner from Wiltshire Council, who contacts the family and arranges a visit. The Assessment is holistic and looks at what support can be offered to the family. If the young person is deemed a young carer and their caring responsibilities are having an impact on their day to day lives, then a referral is made to Carer Support Wiltshire.

Carer Support Wiltshire holds the current Wiltshire Council tender to raise awareness of, and supports, carers of all ages in Wiltshire. Carer Support Wiltshire work with Youth Action Wiltshire (YAW) to provide specific support for Wiltshire young carers. Once an assessment has been completed for a young carer, they may be referred to Carer Support Wiltshire, who then make an onward referral to YAW. A Young Carers Support Worker from YAW then meets with & talks to the young carer about their caring role, its affects & their support needs & together with the young carer, they co-produce a support plan.

Current provision offered by YAW for Wiltshire young carers includes;

- *1:1 support; Mentoring, coaching or counselling*
- *Information, Advice & Guidance*
- *Support with education*
- *Specific training to ensure young carers are safe in their caring roles*
- *A young leaders, young listeners, peer mentor & ambassador scheme*
- *Remote group webinars*
- *Face to face respite activities*

Young carers moving towards the age of 18 may also request a 'transition assessment' from Carer Support Wiltshire. This assessment looks at what support they need now and may need when they turn 18 and beyond.

Wiltshire Council, information for young carers;

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1447/Young-carers>

Carer Support Wiltshire, information for young carers;

<https://carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/young-carers/>

Youth Action Wiltshire, information for young carers;

<https://www.communityfirst.org.uk/yaw/young-carers/>

Total referrals: January 21 – September 21

Referrer	Count
Children's Services	73
School	65
Self-Referral	24
WPCC	3
CAMHS	3
Community Children's Nurse	3
GP	3
Portage	2
LD Nurse	2
EIA	2
Children's Centre	1
CMHT	1
Early Intervention Advisor	1
Grand Total	183

Analysis

Currently the two main referrers for young carers are schools and Children's Social Care. There is a clear gap in referrals from Adult Social Care and Health Services. These two services have extensive links with people that have health problems and would be well placed to be able to refer a family for a young carers assessment.

Recommendation:

For Adult Social Care and health services to be supported to make young carers referrals

Assessment

The data from the survey indicates that children and young people's experiences of their young carer's assessments were mostly positive. Lots of young carers stated that they could not remember their assessments, and some had been accessing the service for a period of years, meaning their assessments had not been conducted in the most current way with Wiltshire Council.

Most young carers did not realise that they had an assessment and only after it was explained that someone from the council spoke to them or their families, they remembered the experience. Young carers prefer face to face assessments "YC said the assessment was done over the phone and this made them anxious". 35% of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'The

assessment covered every aspect of my life that is important to me' this may indicate that some assessments do not take into consideration what is important for the young carer.

Once young carers are accepted their assessment is passed over to YAW, via Carer Support Wiltshire. YAW staff then co-produce a support plan with the young carer, to assess support needs & agree relevant provision. The feedback is positive for the support plans, although these could also be sent to the families for their reference.

It is important to recognise that young carer' roles and responsibilities are always changing, for example, one young carer who we spoke with, said that their father had recently moved out of the family home, which meant that they had to help a lot more with caring for their loved one. Young carers currently only have one initial assessment from Wiltshire Council, that is not regularly reviewed. The current best practice is that young carers are reassessed annually to ensure that their roles are not negatively impacting other aspects of their lives.

Recommendations:

- For young carers assessments and YAW support plans to be written to the child, in line with the new ways of writing framework.
- For young carers assessments and YAW support plans to be sent to the family.
- For the children and young people to be aware of the assessment process and to be part of their assessments.
- For young carers to have a regular check in from a support worker that they know, if concerns are then raised, a reassessment should be able to be triggered.

Service provision

YAW provides a wide range of provision, both 1:1 & group for young carers in Wiltshire. YAW holds a service level agreement with Carer Support Wiltshire through which they receive funding from Carer Support Wiltshire derived from the current Wiltshire Council tender for carers, amounting to approximately 25% of the direct expenditure of their service's provision. With the rest of the money required to run their service (last year this fundraised amount was circa £170,000), sourced & dedicated to provision for Wiltshire young carers by YAW.

Respite Activities,

The survey shows that young carers strongly felt face-to-face respite activities were the most useful form of support that they are currently receiving 88% of respondents said that these activities were either useful or very useful. This was further highlighted when we spoke to the young people at the summer respite activity days, when all the young carers said that respite activities were their favourite form of support.

Many young carers said that they did not currently have enough opportunities to access respite activities, and those that are not considered vulnerable have sadly throughout the pandemic had fewer opportunities to attend.

YAW adhere to the National Youth Association (NYA) <https://nya.org.uk/> COVID-19 guidance & framework.

Despite maximising their available resources, which include an outdoor education centre where they have been able to ensure the raft of required COVID-19 safety measures were in place. The pandemic and restrictions in place due to COVID-19 have had a drastic impact on YAW's face to face respite sessions, which is reflected in the feedback received from young carers highlighted above. For comparison, from April 2019 to March 2020;

315 young carers attended a total of 1,775 day places on YAW respite & breaks programme, equating to an individual average of 42 hours of group work provision.

From April 2020 to March 2021;

221 vulnerable young carers accessed YAW face to face respite & support groups, with a total of 455 day places attended by young carers. At periods of the year, when these were a permitted youth work activity, a total of 79 face to face respite & support groups were delivered.

The variety of activity, number of young carers permitted to be transported on their charity vehicles & group maximum sizes, have all been severely restricted throughout the period of the pandemic.

In response to recognised needs, alongside the easing of the raft of restrictions on youth work delivery, which were in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. YAW have in addition to their 'targeted' evening, weekend & school/college holiday face to face respite activity programmes, launched a total of 8 young carer clubs, which operate throughout Wiltshire, offering monthly face to face group work sessions for primary & secondary school aged young carers.

As requested by young carers & their families YAW's Wiltshire Young Carers Service operates through an 'open door' support model for registered young carers, meaning that year on year the numbers are likely to increase by around 100 young carers (approximately 200 new referrals received with 100 cases closed due to the young person no longer having a caring role, moving out of county or transitioning into young adult carers support). YAW currently hold 983 open cases for Wiltshire young carers aged from 5 to 18 years. This means that there are increasing pressures on service provision.

The other support that is offered by YAW has positive reviews from the young carers.

A total of 458 registered young carers requested & received support from YAW from April 2020 to March 2021

- *150 young carers accessed webinars, with a total of 661 webinar places attended.*
- *During periods of Lockdown, a total of 1,075 welfare & follow up checks for young carers were completed.*
- *36 vulnerable young carers took part in intensive mentoring programmes.*
- *87 vulnerable young carers accessed coaching sessions.*
- *178 young carers requested & received Information, Advice & Guidance.*
- *73 young carers requested & received intensive help/support with education.*

Further thought needs to be given to ensure that there is wider support for young carers, from other services in their lives.

Recommendation:

For Wiltshire Council to consider offering free access to leisure facilities for young carers. Money is a worry for a lot of young carers and to be able to access the leisure facilities for free would support their social and emotional wellbeing.

Education

Without appropriate interventions, young carers are statistically less likely to achieve academically than their peers. This is because they must balance their caring commitments and their learning. Often young carers are late for school, do not have time or space to complete homework, and are distracted due to worrying about the health of a loved one. During the covid pandemic lockdowns, Wiltshire young carers told us that they were granted a school place as they were considered vulnerable. However, many did not accept the offer due to concerns of bringing covid back to relatives that are not well and are at more of an adverse risk.

During this period, 25 young carers were provided with ICT equipment by YAW to support remote learning & connectivity.

In a lot of cases the young carers have told us that their caring responsibilities have increased since the start of covid and this has impacted on their education.

When asked what support you get from your school, many of the young carers have said that there is no specific support at school for them as a group and others said that there was a lot in place. One young carer told us that “the older you get the less support you get, in primary school everyone knows you and your homelife and are sympathetic. When you go to secondary school no one knows.”

Recommendations

- Look at the current cohort of young carers grades across all Wiltshire schools to find out where our young carers are academically compared to the local and national averages. This data could be used to evidence how much 'levelling up' is needed for them as a group.
- For schools to be given best practice guidance on how to support young carers in their setting. We recommend that they take part in the Young Carers in Schools Award Scheme. [Young Carers In Schools Award | Young Carers | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)
- For young carers to have a carers passport they can take with them when they change schools, so they do not have to constantly retell their story to different teachers and get the support that they need.
- For young carers to be offered Personal Education Plans to help regularly identify their support needs.
- Where young carers are Electively Home Educated to make sure they are not being asked to provide care rather than learn.

Conclusion

The general overview of the provision from the young carer's point of view is good. Most of the young people said that they felt comfortable during their assessments which are carried out by Wiltshire Council. The services provided by YAW are gratefully received by the young carers, however, a lot of the young carers want to receive more respite activities & there is pressure on available resource. Moreover, there is an imbalance of young carers entering the service compared to the amount leaving each year, which indicates that additional resource will continue to be required to meet needs.

The experience that young carers have with education differs between school to school. The responses are very split with many saying that they are offered lots of young carers specific support and others saying they get none.

Summary of recommendations

- For Adult Social Care and health services to be supported to make young carers referrals
- For young carers assessments and YAW support plans to be written to the child, in line with the new ways of writing framework.
- For young carers assessments and YAW support plans to be sent to the family.
- For the children and young people to be aware of the assessment process and to be part of their assessments.
- For young carers to have a regular check in from a support worker that they know, if concerns are then raised, a reassessment should be able to be triggered.

- For Wiltshire Council to consider offering free leisure facilities access to young carers. Money is a worry for a lot of young carers and to be able to access the leisure facilities for free would support their social and emotional wellbeing.
- Look at the current cohort of young carers grades across all schools to find out where our young carers are academically compared to the local and national averages. This data could be used to evidence how much 'levelling up' is needed for them as a group.
- For schools to be given best practice guidance on how to support young carers in their setting. We recommend that they take part in the Young Carers in Schools Award Scheme. [Young Carers In Schools Award | Young Carers | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/young-carers-in-schools-award)
- For young carers to have a carers passport they can take with them when they change schools, so they do not have to constantly retell their story to different teachers and get the support that they need.
- For young carers to be offered Personal Education Plans to help regularly identify their support needs.
- Where young carers are Electively Home Educated to make sure they are not being asked to provide care rather than learn.
- For carers to have a champion high up at the council, the young people liked the idea of having a portfolio holder for carers.

