

Young Carers in Wiltshire

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Children's Select Committee on the current and intended future provision regarding young people in Wiltshire who are providing unpaid care - young carers. This report will include current outcomes and service position, information on the new draft all age carers strategy for Wiltshire, and the delivery plan. This will allow the committee to scrutinise the future plans and comment on the draft strategy.

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. During April 2022 to April 2023, 433 Young Carers assessments were completed by the Local Authority. Out of these 372 Young Carers were identified as needing further support and therefore referred on to the commissioned service, Carers Support Wiltshire (CSW) to access this support. Each of these 372 young people have had an individual support plan created by CSW to establish exactly what support is needed. CSW has 1158 young carers currently receiving support.

2.5. Over the last 18 months, as part of our scoping exercise to develop the new strategy Wiltshire Council have been working with carers of all ages in order to understand the issues that concern them most, and where we need to focus the delivery plan, using the carer voice to prioritise actions that we take. We have conducted commissioner led focus groups and partnered with our carers champions and carer support Wiltshire (CSW), and Community First, and recently engaged an arts VCS organisation for 4 months to ensure that we fully understand the needs and of young carers. Some of this work has been working directly with young carers and their families to understand their experiences...the photograph on the right was taken at an event where young carers and their families were able to share their experiences through art and photography (consent given to use).



2.6. Unfortunately, we do not have a national benchmark to measure ourselves against, but new measures will be implemented using our baseline data from the JSNA, as well as audits and data gathering across partner organisations to ensure all our services, Local Authority, NHS and commissioned are having a positive impact on young carers lives.

2.7. In February 2023, the relationship between CSW and their subcontractor for young carers ended. There was a 6 week transfer period, and CSW took over the support services to young carers. 20 young carers remained with the subcontractor due to support programmes in progress, and a new specification for this work was developed with Wiltshire Council, who now monitors both contracts closely. This was not a situation which Wiltshire Council was consulted on prior to the change.

2.8. The current contract expires 31 March 2024. Wiltshire Council is preparing to tender for its commissioned services and is redesigning it's in house service.

3. Main considerations for the committee

3.1. Our aim is to improve the identification of young carers and the support that we are able to offer to them and the cared for person, so that if the young carer is wanting to continue with this role, it is not to their detriment. We need to ensure information and support is easy to access and in age-appropriate formats.

3.2. Adult and children's commissioners, along with a children's social care and adult social care operational lead will monitor the effectiveness of the service against agreed deliverable measures to ensure positive outcomes are met and sustained. This will include clearly defined transition for young adult carers.

3.3. This crucial service delivery, described in the draft joint all age carers strategy and plan attached in Appendix 1 will be reported on a 6 monthly basis to

performance outcomes groups within the Council and to Childrens Health Select as directed.

3.4. The delivery plan for all age carers strategy 2023 -2028 sets out how we will support young carers and help to prevent them from carrying out caring activities that aren't appropriate for them as young people, sometimes called inappropriate caring.

3.5. It also sets in motion a governance structure and action plan for all organisations to work together to support carers and young carers within Wiltshire.

3.6. The main aims are to demonstrate a positive impact on young carers lives through:

- Equitable access to assessment and services
- Maintenance of health and wellbeing
- Support in their caring role
- Maintaining education and work opportunities
- Maintaining and enhancing social contact and psychosocial wellbeing
- Co production and continuous improvement of services
- Awareness raising across Wiltshire and advocating on the issues relevant to young carers.

3.7. The range of holistic support required to achieve our aims for young carers requires a community and multi-agency approach. Some of the Services are the responsibility of statutory organisations such as the NHS or the Local Authority, some elements are commissioned, and some support is available through national VCS initiatives. Many young carers are also supported by extended family and neighbours.

3.8. Access to support will be designed to be as easy and flexible as possible:

- Social media channels -the online provider offer
- A dedicated app for young carers
- Directly to the commissioned provider for young carers and young adult carers based in family hubs and schools.
- Through the Wiltshire Council Integrated Front Door

3.9. All agencies will work together within a framework, adhering to the following principles and actions.

- The priority is always to improve and add value to the lives of young carers and young adult carers.
- Mutual respect and partnership working is key.
- Data and information will be shared within the Framework providers to enable assessment of performance.

- All framework partners will engage with a quarterly young carer commissioning meeting and will update their part of the joint dashboard prior to the meeting.

4. Support directly from Families and Children's Services, Wiltshire Council

- 4.1. The Young Carers assessors will be moving into the Integrated Front Door (IFD) from the Support and Safeguarding East team, to allow for triage and multi-agency input. The Early Support Hub within the Integrated Front Door will work alongside these practitioners to ensure that additional support can be provided if required as per the usual process of any child referred in. Young Carers already known to children's social care or Support will be assessed by the allocated worker to ensure we are fully promoting Wiltshire's 'tell it once' approach. If the young carer is not already open to the service, an assessment visit will be undertaken.
- 4.2. To ensure that the young people get the right help at the right time, the Integrated Front Door will ensure audit in this area. This is a well embedded process and therefore business as usual as per the performance monitoring and governance within Families and Children's Services.
- 4.3. The quality of the assessments completed by the Young Carer assessors will form part of the Audit Reporting and Management System (ARMS), a centralised tool to analyse operational practices and ensure compliance. These audits will become a business-as-usual approach to providing further rigor and assurance which will be reported on and shared with performance outcome groups.

The following outcomes have identified actions for the commissioned provider for the new service delivery:

5. Improving identification of young carers and young adult carers

- Raise awareness of young carers, their rights and how to access support across a range of partner organisations, including health, education, primary care and social services, including Family Hubs
- Develop a suite of promotional/ communication materials, using appropriate methods, that are audience appropriate. For example, encouraging Schools in Wiltshire to join the Young Carers in Schools award which is a free initiative that makes it as easy as possible for schools to support young carers, and awards good practice. Run jointly by The Children's Society and Carers Trust, the Young Carers in Schools (YCiS) programme works with schools across England to share good practice, provide relevant tools and training, and celebrate the great outcomes many schools achieve for young carers.
- A regular programme of awareness raising activities across a wide range of audiences, including health, education, primary care, social care, and the public.
- Attend appropriate team meetings/ forums for partner organisations, including health, primary care and social services.

6. Young carers are aware of their rights and what support is available to them.

- Intelligent signposting where the needs of the individual are considered and offers them relevant, appropriate, and proportionate information on other sources of support which are relevant to their needs at that time and to other sources of information, advice and support which are relevant to their situation as it is likely to develop in future.
- Develop a suite of promotion/ communication materials, using suitable channels, that are age appropriate.
- Offer of a carer needs assessment to all young carers through Wiltshire Council
- Provide information, advice, support and signposting to all young carers, regardless of if they take up the offer of an assessment.
- Complete annual (or in times of significant change) reviews with young carers
- A clear and open referral process is developed to ensure all referrals are recorded, actioned and monitored.

7. Young carers have access to a range of opportunities that supports their health, well-being and progression.

- Where appropriate, a support plan will be developed following the young carer's needs assessment; this will demonstrate a clear pathway of support that enables the young carer to achieve the outcomes that they have identified and explore ways to develop their own natural sustainable support networks in the future.
- Make available, direct one to one support for young carers in taking forward their agreed support plan.
- Assist young carers in accessing a range of provision, including community based support and universal services.
- Signpost and/ or make referrals to other third sector organisations, health and social care services and other projects which can support young carers/ young people.
- Work with community and voluntary sector groups/ initiatives to make available a range of opportunities to young carers based on their desired outcome.
- Identify unmet or growing needs of young carers and share with the Commissioner.
- Advocacy support, and any other specialist support, is offered to the young carer where appropriate, and a referral is made following consent.
- The provider will work with Social Care, Primary care and health services to develop support pathways for young carers -e.g. how to access support in a crisis supporting the cared for person

8. Young carers have opportunities to do the things that they enjoy, giving them a break from their caring role.

- A range of age-appropriate activities, trips and short breaks will be offered to young carers regularly throughout the year, being considerate of educational commitments,
- Barriers for participating in respite for young carers to be considered and mitigated for each young carer, where possible
- A range of regular peer support/ social groups, will be held for young carers, on a monthly basis, in the form that best suits the children/ young people, i.e. drop-ins, social live chats (social media based)
- Create and run events, peer support groups and activities including creative arts for young carers with easy equitable access across the County. Organise events to bring wellbeing value during holiday times and seasonal celebrations to include all cultural backgrounds and faiths.
- Transport to and from respite and social opportunities will be provided, if there are no other ways for the young carer to attend.
- Work with community and voluntary sector groups/ initiatives to make available a range of opportunities to young carers based on their desired outcomes.
- New ways to support young carers in accessing respite and social opportunities will be delivered that are carer led.

9. Young carers have the right skills and confidence in undertaking their caring role.

- The Provider will work with other agencies to develop a skills building programme aimed at increasing young carers resilience and confidence; topics that would be expected to be covered include healthy lifestyles, relationships, mental health, wellbeing and relaxation, self-esteem, and confidence.
- The programme to be delivered in a fun and age-appropriate way using interactive activities, talks and media.
- Young carers and their families are made aware of the programme, and it is promoted to all as part of the service offer.
- Once young carers have completed the programme, they are signposted to universal and community services for further support, including the monthly young carer drop-ins.
- Work with community and voluntary sector groups/ initiatives to make available a range of opportunities to young carers based on their desired outcomes.

10. Young carers feel valued and involved in the things that matter to them.

- Young carers will be involved in service development and their views/ feedback will be used to shape new activity and development the service.
- Identify and encourage wider participation of young carers in local and national developments.
- Young Carers and young people with caring experience are able to be identified as young carer champions, creating peer support networks. The Provider will support this network with regular events and online resources.

11. The voice of the young carer

11.1. All service providers will be expected to, along with their other roles and responsibilities:

- Undertake engagement both on behalf of and in partnership with the officers from Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire ICB.
- Must ensure that engagement is accessible and suitable for the audience they wish to consult with.
- Include equality, diversity and inclusion and positive action to engage effectively.
- Keep up to date with the latest technology.
- Maintain a good working relationship with the other providers on this contract including the adult and online elements of this contract.

12. Environmental impact of the proposal

12.1. The proposal is compliant with relevant legislation and Wiltshire Council policy and providers will be requested to detail how risks can be mitigated.

13. Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

13.1. The purpose of reporting on the equality impact is to seek to improve the work of the authority by making sure it does not discriminate in providing services and employment.

13.2. An Equality impact assessment has been conducted for these services and is available on request. Consideration has been given on how the proposal aims to promote equality of opportunity and equal/fair access to services, eliminate any potential discrimination, encourage involvement/participation, and promote good community relations/cohesion.

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