

Step Change Young Carers

Report of the Head of Social Care Commissioning

Recommendations

- We would be interested in having representatives from DASH, DAPH, DAG or other educational provision on the steering group if this was felt of use.
- We would also be interested in suggestions as to how to further raise awareness and support educational settings in relation to improving the life-chances of these vulnerable young children as per the document Championing All Our Children (DCC)

Background

The Children and Families Act gave new rights to care and support for Young Carers under the age of 18. These include:

- Local Authorities must assess whether young carers in their area have support needs and if so what those needs are
- Local Authorities must take “reasonable steps” to identify young carers in their area who have support needs.
- All Young Carers have a right to an assessment of their need, no matter who they care for, what type of care they provide, or how often they provide it.

Data

According to the most recent census (Office for National Statistics, 2011), there are almost 166,000 young carers (aged 5-17) in England and of these there are around 4,700 carers aged 0-24 in Devon. Of those around 2,628 are aged 0-18. These figures are likely to be a significant under estimate of young carers within the County and we will be working in the coming year to identify the full numbers of young people with caring responsibilities.

As at Q4 2015/16 there were 3,160 young carers on the Devon Young Carers register.

The Step Change Project

- In July 2015 Devon became one of 6 trailblazers across the Country for a project named Step Change. The project, hosted by the Carers Trust and the Childrens Society, was in relation to the requirements of Local Authorities to identify, assess and support young carers. Within this work a Local Authority roadmap was designed for each trailblazer. The roadmap consists of sections including: Measuring impact, voice of young carers, strategic foundations, identification, assessment, support, transition, schools and health.
- The project ended in March 2016 and a report covering all trail blazers is due to be published in July 2016.

- One of the main recommendations for Devon was to improve the joint working between adult and childrens services to better identify and support young carers whose cared for have a learning disability, mental health issue, substance misuse issue or are physically unwell.
- The work around Young Carers comes within the Early Help remit and has a partnership steering group which includes representatives from Babcock, Education, Careers South West, Devon Partnership Trust, Public Health, Integrated Childrens Services, adult services (including drug and alcohol services) and provider organisations.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was designed for use by Local Authorities and this has been signed off in Devon. The MoU, alongside the Think Family Guidance, highlights ways in which adult services and childrens services work together to ensure that young carers are not undertaking inappropriate caring roles.

Schools and Colleges

- Devon Carers are part of a national pilot in relation to Young Carers in schools awards. We have been increasing our support to schools via our school support services. The Education Welfare Team have taken the responsibility for championing Young Carers in schools and encouraging schools to identify and record numbers of young carers. An event took place on the 23rd March in County Hall where the focus was on the Carers in Schools award. This was arranged between the Carers Trust, Babcock and Devon Young Carers. More information about the Young Carers in schools award can be found on www.youngcarersinschools.com/get-involved-schools.
- An additional Assessment resource tool is now being used by Devon Carers. The Devon Young Carers service is developing its role towards young carers to ensure that, through initial assessment, those who are most vulnerable are recognised and supported immediately.
- The assessment tool also ensures that consent is requested to share information about the young carer thus enabling better partnership working between different organisations eg schools and Careers south west.
- Young Carers have recently printed their Manifesto. Priorities in this are around educational support, rural and social isolation, health care services (for them and their cared for) and raising aspirations.
- Awareness raising around Young Carers in all organisations, including Education, is an ongoing part of our work. During the recent Carers Week useful information and posters were sent via the schools distribution list.

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