

YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG CARERS SUPPORT SERVICES

Report of the Head of Commissioning, Children's Services

1. Introduction and National Context

- 1.1 Young Carers are a vulnerable group of children often putting themselves and their childhood to one side to support the needs of a parent. Where this responsibility is impacting negatively on the young person, parents and all partners in childrens and adult services should work together to support them. Many parents with additional health needs seek appropriate support to prevent their child taking on too much of a caring role, or where their child's outcomes are impacted. However, there are many young carers where their role is hidden, particularly where there are substance misuse or mental health needs with the adults in the family.
- 1.2 Young Carers are reported nationally to have worse outcomes than their peers with their education, physical and mental wellbeing impacted by caring roles. It is estimated that up to one in five secondary school pupils provides some level of care for a parent or sibling. 1 in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours a week, 1 in 20 misses school because of their caring responsibilities, young carers are 1.5 times more likely to have a long-term illness, special educational needs or a disability (LGA report 2018, Census 2011 data, 1) 40% experiencing mental health problems, many of these are 'hidden', not disclosing their family circumstance and responsibilities to teachers, friends, GPs and other health care professionals. The Childrens Commissioner has also highlighted the increasing number of children that are not receiving the support they need. (Childrens Commissioner report 2019, 3)
- 1.3 As a result, the National Carers Action Plan was launched in 2018 (DHSC report, 4) and the NHS announced in June 2019 a 'care for young carers' offer in GP surgeries this includes a series of practical plans and actions designed to help young carers who may be 'hidden', unpaid and under the age of sixteen. (NHS E report, 2)

2. Local Strategic Context

- 2.1 A young carer is defined as someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. Services and support provided to young people who are Young Carers is underpinned by legislation. Locally a support service is commissioned, the provider is Devon Carers.
- 2.2 The Young Carers offer is overseen by Devon Children and Families Partnership, Early Help Improvement Board. The Young Carers Steering Group Membership consist of adult mental health providers, adult substance misuse providers, early help, adult and childrens social care, CAMHS, Public Health Nursing, Youth Services, Schools, education support services, employment and training support services.
- 2.3 In addition, we have a joint approach to meeting the needs of all carers and therefore young carers needs are also overseen by the Carers Board and included in Devon's Joint Carers Strategy 2014-2019.

- 2.4 A Young Carers Council supported by 'Devon Carers' meets monthly in each of the four localities in Devon and runs both activity sessions for young people as well as engaging with them to promote their views.
- 2.5 The priorities of the partnership action plan are in response to the priorities set by the Young Carers Council manifesto. A summary of the action plan is attached (Young Carers Steering Group Action Plan, Appendix A). Highlights include:
- over 90% of secondary schools in Devon have an identified Young Carer Champion with lower take up in Primary Schools, 9 schools have achieved and 8 working towards the 'Young Carer in Schools' award promoted by the Carers Trust and The Children Society.
 - The Young Carers Council recently worked with North Devon District Hospital and they are planning sessions and stands in RD&E and increasing reach to GP forums.
 - Devon Carers have signed up to be a part of the NHS England Young Carers Health Champions Programme linked to the Carers Action Plan 2018-2020. Work began in July 2019 and offers a further opportunity for Young Carers voice to be heard and to shape this work.

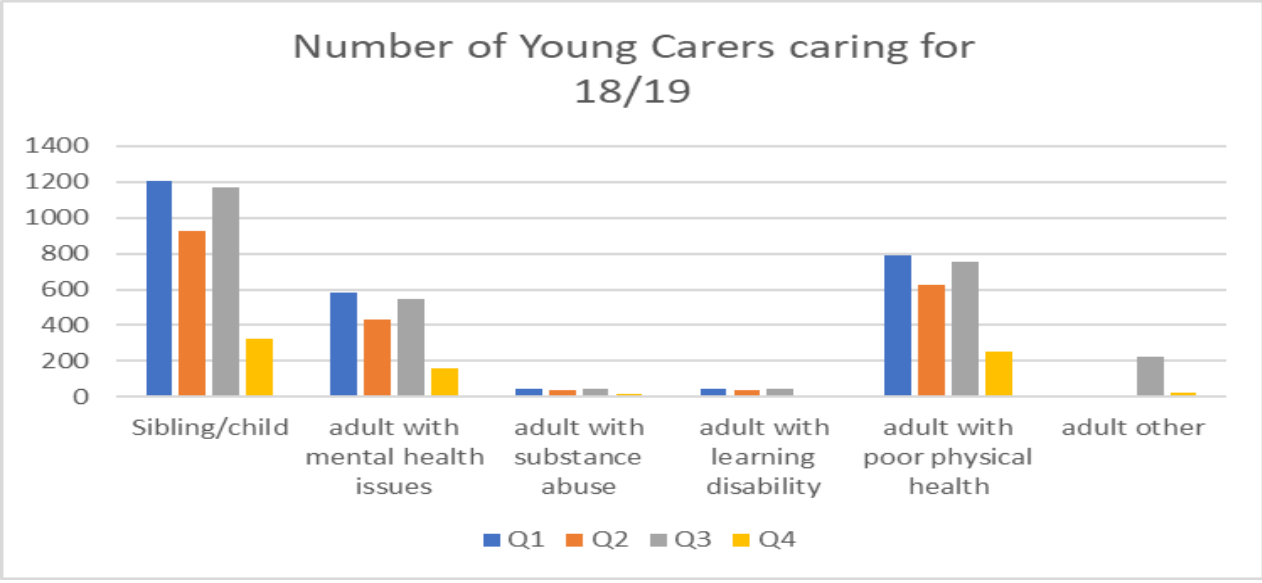
3. Young Carers Support Service

- 3.1. In re-commissioning the Young Carers Service in 2017 a review was undertaken on the impact of the previous contract. This led to a consultation with young carers and a re-design of the specification for the new contract.
- 3.2. The previous contract had focused on awareness raising, registering and assessing young carers. The previous service had reached many young carers but in the main these were young people supporting siblings with disabilities. The service offer was one of activities and trips with long term contact but limited one to one support. The service did not reach children where there was substance misuse or mental health needs with parents.
- 3.3. The new contract set the service offer in the context of the maturing early help system in Devon. With responsibilities to act as lead professional and offer targeted one to one support for the most vulnerable young carers. Also, to have a focus on reaching more of the most vulnerable young carers and bring together the multi-agency team to support them, transitioning to mainstream services when appropriate.
- 3.4. This was not to be at the expense of support for all young carers and the Young Carers Steering Group were to pick up the multi-agency responsibilities and ensure the whole system could respond to the needs of young carers in mainstream and inclusive activities.
- 3.5. The responsibility for expertise in the policy agenda for young carers remained with the provider however the responsibility for awareness raising moved to the steering group with a senior group of multi-agency staff promoting the needs of young carers and taking responsibility for the wider offer of support.
- 3.6. The new contract has been in place for 18 months and therefore had an annual review in June 2019. The provider is Westbank Community Health and Care (Devon Carers). The review has shown an increased reach from the service with good awareness raising in schools and an increasing number of young people receiving one to one support. Where support is offered young carers report feeling listened to and

supported. However, there is limited impact from engagement with adult mental health, learning disability, domestic violence and substance misuse providers.

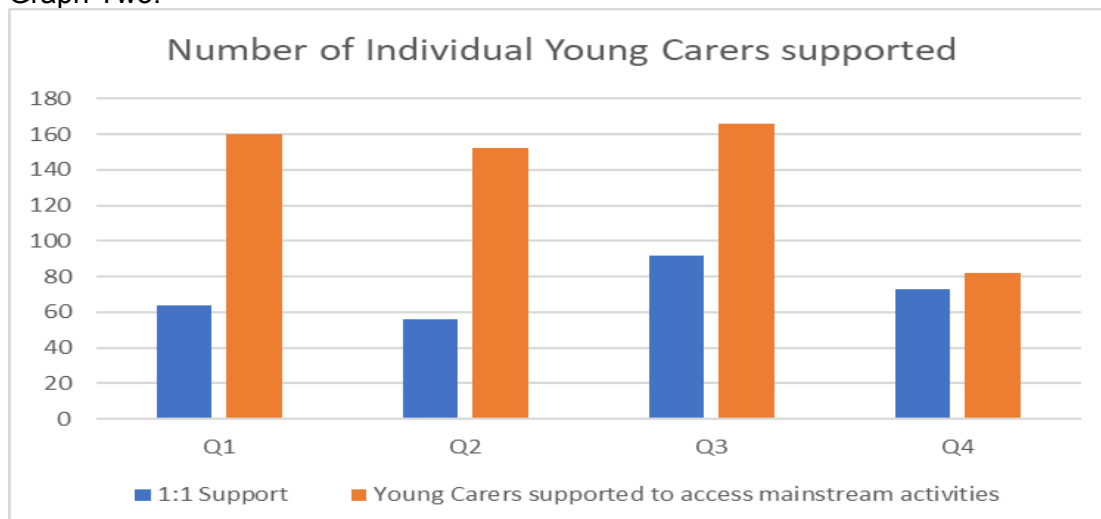
- 3.7. The service has seen a steady increase in referrals with a peak in quarter three at 156. With 426 referrals overall in the year. The team have averaged 86 first assessments each quarter. This is 26% below target expected. 4% of referrals were from family or young people, 51% from schools and colleges, 3% from adult mental health providers. With only one referral from GP's, youth services and CAMHS respectively. No referrals had been received from domestic abuse, adult substance misuse, young people's substance misuse or adult learning disability services.
- 3.8. Graph One shows the number of young carers by quarter registered with the service and the needs of those they care for. As can be seen the reach to young carers where the adult has substance misuse or mental health need has not been achieved. Where as the number of young carers supporting siblings has reduced.

Graph One:



- 3.9. Graph Two shows the number of young carers supported with one to one support and to access mainstream activities. There have been vacancies in the service in the last quarter and limited referrals from specialist services, which impacted on the ability of the service to provide the increasing level of one to one support.

Graph Two:



3.10. As a result of the issues arising from the annual review a development plan is in place and the steering group will review the impact of the action plan in September 2019.

4. Opportunities for Members to hear from young carers.

4.1. This paper is intended to be an overview of the offer for young carers. Members have expressed a wish to follow up on this and to meet with young carers and the support services for them. The service will be delighted to facilitate this.

Fiona Fleming
Head of Commissioning, Children's Services

References

1. **LGA Report: Meeting the Health and Wellbeing needs of young carers**
https://local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGA_Meeting%20the%20health%20and%20wellbeing%20of%20young%20carers_22%2019_January%202018.pdf
2. **NHS E Young Carers Offer**
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/06/nhs-sets-out-care-for-young-carers-offer-in-gp-surgeries/>
3. **Childrens Commissioner Report on Young Carers:**
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2019/01/31/ensuring-we-listen-to-the-needs-of-young-carers-and-give-them-the-support-they-need/>
4. **National Carers Action Plan 2018-2020**
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf

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Appendix A

Young Carers Steering Group Priority Plan 2017/ 18 and 2018/19

Overview

All partners working with young people will support this plan by embedding the 3 principles and 4 priorities below

Principles

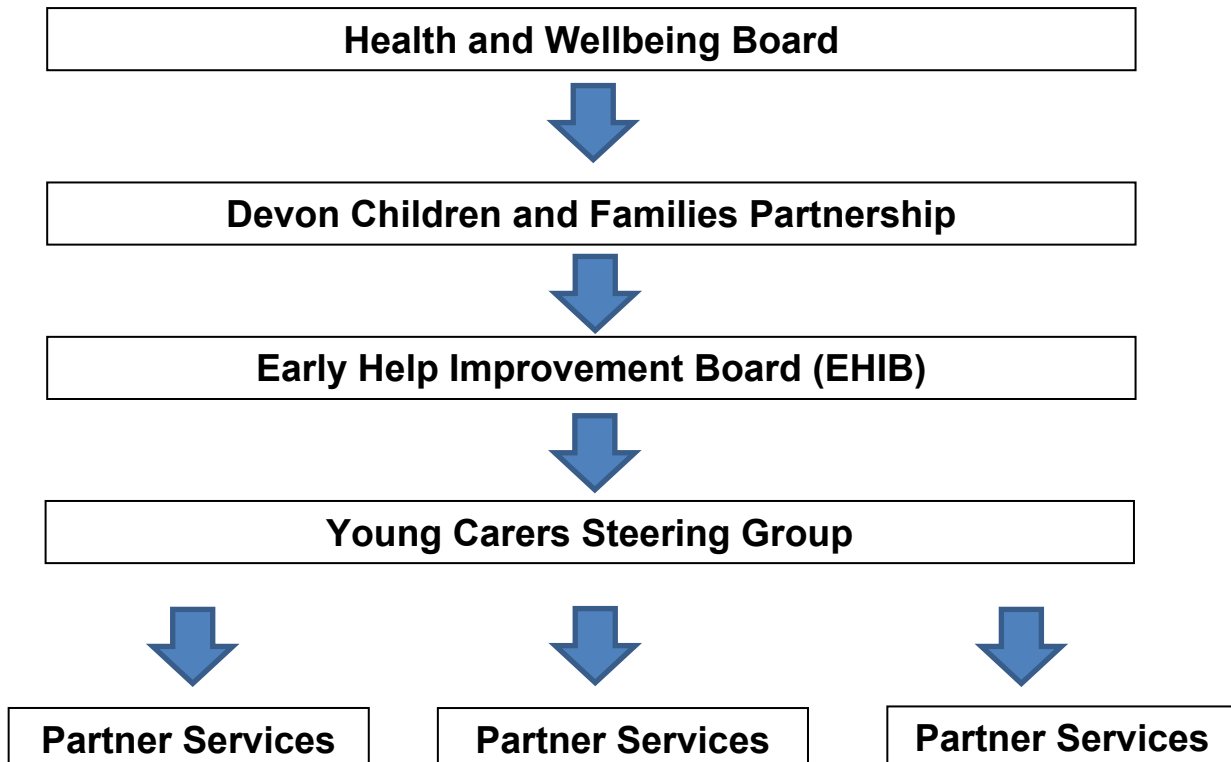
- 1. Consultation and engagement with young carers**
- 2. Integrated working**
- 3. Whole Family Working**

Priorities

- 1. Raising Awareness and developing a greater profile of the needs of Young Carers**
- 2. Support Schools and Colleges to better identify and support young carers**
- 3. Improve the wellbeing and health of Young Carers in Devon County Council**
- 4. Voice of the Young Carer**

The Young Carers Steering Group is a multi-agency partnership group that works collectively to improve outcomes for Young Carers in Devon. The work of the Steering Group is governed by the Early Help Improvement Board (previously the Multi-Agency Early Help Operations Group) and in turn feeds into the Devon Children and Families Partnership (previously the Children, Young People and Families Alliance). Previously the Steering group has been mandated by the Roadmap, which set out the key priority areas and was regularly updated by members. However, in line with the new Young Carers Council Manifesto, it was felt that a new Steering Group Plan was agreed, in order to streamline the priorities and give focus to the partnership work for 2017.

Young Carers Governance Structure



In order to achieve this, the Steering Group has spent time looking at the work the Young Carers Council has undertaken and the previous Roadmap, in line with the Young Carers Engagement Report and has subsequently created a set of new priorities. In order to fully understand this plan, it should be read in conjunction with the Young Carers Manifesto.

This document sets out key principles and priorities for the way in which ALL agencies should work with young carers, whether it's identifying and referring young people or offering direct support to the young carer and/or their family. We will be regularly reviewing and updating the plan, to ensure that young carers are at the forefront of everyone's thinking when working with young people and families

The Steering Group members felt that we need to bring together the voice of the child within the meeting and consideration should be given to how children and young people's voices are heard and that they receive appropriate feedback from the Steering Group and the wider work

Key Principles

In order to achieve the new priorities below, there are 3 key principles which underpin all work: -

- 1. Consultation and engagement with young carers:** - Engagement is the 'Golden Thread' that underpins all the work the partners do. Children and young people should be engaged in all areas and at all levels of service provision or development. This should include ensuring that all planning with children and young people is personalised and involves their voice and views, but also ensuring that children and young people are involved in service development wherever possible, including using their feedback to make improvements to service quality and change.

A future intention would be for the Steering Group to regularly meet with young carers to gain views and opinions first hand.

- 2. Integrated working:** – Young Carers need to feel that when accessing services there is 'No Wrong Door' and to achieve this **ALL** partners need to be working together. The shared priorities in this plan will be the first step in ensuring integrated working, however partners will also be expected to provide regular updates to the Steering Group meetings, which in turn will feed in the Early Help Improvement Board.
- 3. Whole Family Working:** – The work with young carers is embedded in Early Help and in turn adopts a whole family approach. This is based on the thinking that in order to fully support a young carer, we need to also support the family to create resilience and reduce inappropriate caring. By having this as a key principle means that all partners, including adult services, will need to be more mindful of young carers when working with either adult 'cared for' or sibling 'cared for'.

Key Priorities

As agreed by the Steering Group the key priorities for development over the next year will be;

1. **Raising Awareness and developing a greater profile of the needs of Young Carers**
2. **Support Schools and Colleges to better identify and support young carers**
3. **Improve the wellbeing and health of Young Carers in Devon County Council**
4. **Voice of the Young Carer**

Rag rated self-assessment of progress against milestone as at July 2019. To be reviewed September 2019

1. Raising Awareness and developing a greater profile of the needs of young carers - All agencies and organisations need to have an awareness of the needs of young carers, including how to identify young carers you may be working with. In order to achieve this we will:-			
Action	How we will achieve this	Milestones	Self-Assessment G-Progress made A-Partial progress made R-Limited progress made B-Yet to be actioned
<p>Ensure staff in partner agencies have an awareness of Young Carers</p> <p>If appropriate and required, training is offered to raise awareness of the needs of young carers</p> <p>Ensure key services have a Young Carer Champion (i.e. Schools/Colleges/Youth Service)</p>	<p>Partners will take responsibility of raising awareness in their own organisations, ensuring all front-line practitioners understand how to identify young carers and where to refer them for additional support</p> <p>Provide information to partner key partner agencies (Schools, GP's, Local Communities) to highlight the needs of young carers, this will include; Conversations, Leaflets, Signposting</p> <p>By having conversations with specific forums, groups and individuals i.e. GP Council, DAPH, DASH, SHAD</p> <p>Members of the Steering group to attend the local Early Help forums where appropriate. Partners to identify where staff in their individual organisation require specific young carer training</p> <p>Ensure there is awareness of young carers in key training already being delivered i.e. DCFP safeguarding training.</p> <p>Identify the Young Carer champions in Schools via Babcock.</p>	<p>Increase referrals from partners to the Young Carers Service</p> <p>Increased attendance at Early Help Forums</p>	
	<p>Identify Local champions via the Early Help Improvement Board.</p>	<p>Increase in the take-up of specific young carers training</p>	

		A list is developed of all key training programmes and it is identified who will ensure young carers are included as part of awareness raising	
		A distribution list is created of all young carers champions who will receive regular updates of relevant information	

2. Support Schools and Colleges to better support young people – Partners will work in their own organisations, direct with schools and colleges and with the Young Carers Service to ensure;

Action	How we will achieve this	Milestones	Self-Assessment G-Progress made A-Partial progress made R-Limited progress made B-Yet to be actioned
Partners will support children and young people to achieve their full potential, including receiving support through schools and colleges. This includes supporting educational establishments to better identify young carers and offer them support. We want to ensure young carers feel less isolated by their caring responsibilities and are able to achieve alongside their peers. Schools provide better support for young carers in order that they can identify their goals, aspirations and signpost where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every school has a place and a time where young carers can be safe together Work with education and social care to ensure the EHCP process and the RAS includes recognition of sibling young carers and that plans respond accordingly to their needs We collectively raise the aspirations of young carers and ensure that they gain transferable skills which can be taken forward into further education and employment; Develop a clear and effective young carers' transition protocol that is shared and utilised by schools and colleges. All partners have awareness of the Preparation for Adulthood Strategy and implement it where appropriate 	Increased identification and referral of young carers by schools and colleges	G
		All educational establishments have a young carer policy	A
		All education establishments will have a champion and offer support for young carers and a designated trained member of staff to support young carers/young adult carers.	G
		A reduction in the number of young carers not in education, employment and training	R
		Effective transitions for young carers into adult services or into independence.	A

<p>We also want to ensure all young carers reach 18 believing that they can achieve their full potential and that where appropriate the transition into adult services effectively.</p>			
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3. Improve the Health and wellbeing of Young Carers in Devon - All partners will work within their own service and in partnership with others to ensure;

Action	How we will achieve this	Milestones	Self-Assessment G-Progress made A-Partial progress made R-Limited progress made B-Yet to be actioned
<p>Ensure young carers are able to live healthy lives with a reduction in inappropriate caring responsibilities.</p> <p>They are given opportunities to have fun with their peers and/or with their families where appropriate.</p> <p>Young carers can access a wide range of health and wellbeing services to meet their needs.</p> <p>Young carers are respected as carers within Health services in order that they can appropriately support their 'cared for' person, reducing isolation and safeguarding issues in doing so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence demonstrates improved health outcomes for young carers Increased referrals to the young carers service from all health services 	<p>Development of a young carers champion within all health services (CAMHS, GP's, Hospitals) who have clear aims in line with strategic and local development plans</p>	
		<p>Bespoke letters are designed from CAMHS that signpost young carers and their families to other agencies and support networks if CAMHS threshold is not reached.</p>	
		<p>No medical appointment should take place where a young carer is stood outside the door and the Think Family protocol is embedded to ensure a whole family approach in health services</p>	
		<p>Promoting activities that young carers can get involved with in their local community, both as individuals and with their families where requested</p>	
		<p>Work with the voluntary sector to ensure they are aware of the needs of young carers and seek to include them in activities in a way which supports their young caring responsibilities</p>	

4. Voice of the Young Carer

Action	How we will achieve this	Milestones	Self-Assessment G-Progress made A-Partial progress made R-Limited progress made B-Yet to be actioned	
Ensure young carers are able to have their voices heard at every level of service provision. This includes through their own planning and planning for the people they care for, through to influencing how services are designed and developed to better meet their needs at a strategic level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young carers are more 'visible' and their voices are strengthened Service improvements are made in line with the things they have told us 	Map/measure where young carers already have a say, are engaged or involved?		
		Develop or agree to a set of standards for involvement/participation with young carers.		
		Create connections with other engagement mechanisms and groups e.g. Young Carers Council/Manifesto, Youth Parliament.		