



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 5 JUNE 2017

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES

YOUNG CARERS

Purpose of report

1. This report sets out the work taking place to identify, assess and support young carers across Leicestershire.

Background

Overview of Young Carers in Leicestershire

2. For the purposes of the County Council, a young carer is defined as:

‘a child or young person, aged 19 years or under, who provides regular and on-going care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances’.
3. This includes primary, secondary and sibling carers living in Leicestershire
4. The 2011 census data shows there are 166,363 young carers in England. However this figure is still likely to be an underrepresentation of the actual number. In May 2014, new figures from the 2011 census were released showing the extent of young carers in English counties. Young carers, age 15 or younger in Leicestershire and Rutland total 1,169. Data for 15-18yr age group is not yet available. It is therefore estimated that there are approximately 2000-2500 young carers in Leicestershire and Rutland at present.
5. In 2016-17 the County Council undertook 150 assessments for young carers, which exceeds the target of 130 for the year. There are three Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) Young Carers groups across the county and a fourth is about to be reopened. There are also groups in the county provided by voluntary sector partners Young Leicestershire and Barnardo’s Carefree.
6. A Memorandum of Understanding - No Wrong Doors (MOU) has furthered joint working practice between Children’s and Adult’s Social Care as well as with Public Health. The Directors of all three Departments have signed their commitment to the MOU. The NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are currently considering signing up too. This has helped embed transition arrangements with Adult and Health Services.

Contract Management – Assessment of Young Carers

7. 'Barnardo's Carefree' is commissioned to carry out the assessment of needs for support for all young carers under the age of 18 on request from them or their parent or on the appearance of need. This meets the local authority's statutory requirement in line with the Care Act (2014) to provide access to an assessment of need. This is available regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how Young carers, the person cared for and, if different, the parents Parents/Carers of the young carer are informed about the assessment process and we ensure they are able to participate in the process as effectively as possible. In addition the contract currently expects the provider to:
 - Proactively seek **the identification and referral** of young carers to the service
 - Adopt a **'whole family' approach to assessment** of young carers and their families
 - Provide individual **tailor –made support plans** for young carers
 - Act as a **conduit for young carers to access respite provision**
 - Facilitate the **'transitions' process for young carers reaching 18 years old**
 - Ensure the **Engagement of young carers** in the development of services

8. Contract Monitoring information for Quarter 4 of 2016-2017 informs of the following:
 - a. 53 young people have been referred to the Service, exceeding the target of 32 referrals per quarter. The target placed on the Contract to assess 166 young people during its 18 month period was exceeded at the 12 month point, with Barnados Carefree receiving 168 referrals.
 - b. No further action was taken for 10 of the 53 young people. The decision to decline involvement was made by family units.
 - c. Increase in referrals from secondary schools during the quarter. This is attributed to the development of school champions.
 - d. No safeguarding referrals were made over this quarter.

9. The current contract with Barnados Carefree contract was due to expire on 31st March 2016, however, it was agreed that this would be extended until 31st March 2018.

10. Strategic Overview for this area of work is provided for the Frail Older People/Dementia Better Care Together workstream which is managed by Adults and Communities.

Achievements - Leicestershire as a leading Authority

11. Leicestershire is a national first in having Public Health sign the MOU alongside Children's and Adult's Services. The Children's Commissioner Report advises that no Local Authority is recording the number of young carers. This is not the case in Leicestershire as evidenced above.

12. The work of the department and the Carers Trust led to UCAS agreeing to add a young carer tick box to the UCAS form within the next two years (by 2018-19 academic year).
13. The department has raised the awareness of Young Carers across education providers and has seen the introduction of Champions within schools, ensured that information about the number of young carers in Leicestershire is collected and worked with partners to deliver support to young carers across Leicestershire. A Carers Reference Group has been established which provides information to the strategic governance of the Young Carers work.

Opportunities, Challenges and Actions

14. The extension to the current commissioned contract provides an opportunity to develop a longer term strategy to meet the statutory responsibility for Young Carers. This opportunity will enable an outcome focused approach to commissioning.
15. An annual overview of the achievements and challenges of the commissioned service should be available by the end of May 2017.
16. The Carers Network Group, chaired by Adults and Communities, next meets this month and the focus is to develop a Carers Strategy for the County Council. Key stakeholders will be fully engaged in the development and that work will be completed by September. It will embrace multi-agency working and data sharing.
17. The identification of Young Carers remains problematic and as a consequence it is extremely difficult to obtain an accurate view of the demand of the work. One of the challenges is how young carers are identified within Children and Family Services and guide them to access assessment and support, particularly young people who are in households with mental health, substance misuse and physical health issues. An online learning package is available on the Learning Hub for staff to develop their awareness of the issue and to ensure that their assessments and interventions are framed around this dynamic.

Resource Implications

15. There are no significant resource issues associated with this contract and work. The money to support young carers is part of the Early Help Offer for the department.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

16. Young carers are a vulnerable group and as such remain one of the Early Help Offer priority groups. Any changes to provision would need to be carefully managed through an EHRIA.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

22. None.

Officers to Contact

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