

Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 November 2016

Update - Young Carers in County
Durham



Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director Transformation and Partnerships and Margaret Whellans, Interim Corporate Director Children & Young People's Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to introduce a presentation to members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee which gives an update on Young Carers in County Durham. The Presentation will be given by Julie Scurfield, Strategic Manager Children's Services Reform.

Background

2. The number of children and young people with caring responsibilities for grandparents, parents, siblings or other adults within the family is unknown to a great extent. In some cases a child or young person may be supporting a parent with caring responsibilities and therefore the young person is overlooked.
3. The Children's Society report Hidden From View indicates that according to census data released in May 2013 there are 166,363 young carers in England and as many young carers remain hidden from official sight making the figure above the 'tip of the iceberg.'
4. The Department for Education commissioned Loughborough University to investigate the lives of young carers aged 5–17 years in England and in February 2016 they published their report. The report highlights the importance of early intervention and the critical role all statutory services have in assessing and supporting families. The report goes on that social care, health and educational professionals have a crucial role in identifying and assessing the needs of young carers.
5. The key findings from the report highlight concerns which both parents and young carers have about the consequences of disclosing young caring responsibilities; they worry about involving statutory agencies and the possibility of their children being taken into care. This can lead to children and young people with caring responsibilities and their wider needs going unrecognised and unsupported. This adds to the ongoing challenge in identifying and engaging with 'hidden' young carers so that appropriate support can be provided to help young carers and their families moderate the impact of their caring responsibilities and to prepare for adulthood.

Background to Young Carers in County Durham:

6. In County Durham the number of known young carers is 4201 according to 2011 census information. Most young carers, (3029) commit 0-19 hours of unpaid care per week; 655 young carers provide 20-49 hours of unpaid care per week; 517 young carers provide 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week.
7. The Children and Families Act 2014 gives young carers rights to ask for help and requires local authorities to carry out a Young Carers Needs Assessment as soon as they are aware of the young carer. With agreement of both the young carer and the person being cared for the local authority can combine the assessment with that of the adult being cared for.
8. In carrying out the assessment the local authority must consider and decide if the young carer has support needs in delivering care and to identify how those needs can most effectively be met to ensure the child achieves good outcomes.

Update on Challenges and Priorities:

9. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee received and initial overview on Young Carers in County Durham at its meeting on 2 December 2015 and members requested a further update.
10. At this meeting Children's Services reported on the key challenges and priorities as follows:-
 - The identification of young carers and the need to work more closely with Adults Services
 - Supporting young carers as they make the transition to adulthood and continuing to work closely with the Horizon Programme – a voluntary sector service delivered by DISC
 - Awareness raising of the needs of Young Carers through the promotion and implementation of the Young Carer's Charter
11. The presentation will provide an update on the actions and progress made to tackle the priorities and provide an outline of the work programme for the forthcoming year.

Recommendations

12. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the information contained in the presentation and comment accordingly.

Background Papers

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The Equality Act 2010 prohibits less favourable treatment of individuals based on nine protected characteristics. Young carers are protected by this legislation, both by virtue of their age and their association with people with a disability.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None