

YOUNG CARERS UPDATE



Young Carers- Plymouth Context

Young carers was a hidden area of need within many schools. Although there were some who were successful at identifying young carers, many others across the city had little confidence with how to identify and support this vulnerable group. Nationally there are 800,000 young carers in England (BBC research) with six young carers in every classroom by the time they start at secondary school.

In 2017 work was developed on raising the profile of young carers within schools linked to Plymouth City Council's statutory responsibility to take reasonable steps to identify young carers in their area. Feeding into Plymouth's Carers Strategic Partnership Board's action plan, a model of understand, inform, identify, support and listen was taken.

Understand

Initial work was completed with schools who already had established a well-developed system for young carers. Working in collaboration with three schools in particular (Notre Dame, Stoke Damerel Community College and Tor Bridge Primary), gave the Young Carers' Lead for the Local Authority a better understanding of city wide issues. From here, the profile was raised across schools so that an established 'in school' young carers' lead could be identified. 95% of schools now have an identified named professional.

Centralised training and individual support was offered and delivered on three separate occasions across 2017-18 with 42 professionals trained and a further 18 individual schools supported to date.

Inform

Pledge - As part of the 100 pledges for Plymouth set by the Cabinet, Pledge 45 was dedicated specifically to young carers.

In November 2018 as part of the Pledge, the Young Carers' Lead for PCC was appointed the Young Carers' Champion and a conference was held to showcase good practice, attended by Young Carers' Leads from schools and young carers themselves. There were a range of professional speakers and an opportunity to hear some personal stories. The Lord Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation officially opened the event.

Currently schools are informed of any national, regional and local updates through news emails and a regular network meeting where they have the opportunity to come together and share experiences and expertise three times a year.

Identify

The Champion has been supporting schools in a variety of ways to ensure that each Young Carers' Lead feels confident with successfully identifying and supporting young carers within their school. This has resulted in nearly 700 young carers being identified in 2018 and over 900 in 2019 with 90% of schools engaging with this data return. Despite a rise in the number of young carers identified there are still many more that remain hidden for a number of reasons.

Support

Support for schools and young carers continues to grow. Schools have an opportunity to come together at least twice a year as part of Young Carers Awareness Day and Carers Week. Events in the past have included life skills work at Burrator Reservoir, pottery painting and bread making.

A range of community links have been established such as ongoing therapeutic work for young carers at the Donkey Sanctuary. This work has proved to have a positive impact on many young carers with one very young carer producing a quiz that has since been produced at all Sanctuaries nationally.

The Champion worked closely with the National Marine Aquarium who were successful with a grant application which has enabled young carers to become part of an 'Ocean Squad Club' where they are currently learning about marine life.

Earlier in the year, the Young Carer's Champion has spoken at a regional event in Taunton. This has led to Plymouth providing other Local Authorities with advice and support. Support for trainee teachers has also been delivered at a recent event at Marjon University.

Listen

Work has been completed in co-production with Young Carers' Leads and young carers to ensure that information is available on Plymouth's Local Offer. This information gives further details about what is a young carer, what their responsibilities could involve and how they could be supported in Plymouth. The revised transition framework for schools will also include detailed information around how to identify and support a young carer at key transition points.

What is next?

In September 2019 the Champion launched the Young Carers Education Support Team. This will initially consist of two schools who will work in collaboration with Plymouth City Council to offer a joined up approach of support to schools in a variety of ways. The plan is to develop the model over time so that the offer becomes an established part of support for what is available for professionals and young carers across the city. This is a unique model and is not currently mirrored in any other LA.

The Champion will continue to work closely alongside the Time4U Alliance, the PCC commissioned service for support for young carers, in order to develop a digital offer for young carers that will be accessed through the POD.

The Champion is also working alongside adult carers and young carers in order to support a bid proposal for the Carers Innovation Fund (DoHSC). If successful, this fund can establish an intergenerational young carers' forum who can develop a number of projects including a holistic transitional package for young carers 14 through to 25.

Other opportunities for young carers in the next academic year will involve a grant award by the National Foundation for Youth Music to Bath Philharmonia. The money will be used to develop a unique music project that aims to improve Young Carers' wellbeing through music and will culminate in 14 performances across the South West which will include Plymouth.

Other work includes a pilot with the Cities for Learning project, work with the Apple store, Plymouth Citybus and continuing work with the Donkey Sanctuary at Ivybridge.

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