

# Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	17 November 2021
Title of Report:	<b>Young Carers</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor David Downie (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, Children and Young People)
Lead Strategic Director:	Alison Botham (Director for Children's Services)
Author:	Michael House
Contact Email:	Michael.house.plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	AB.MZ.MH.20211117.1
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

The Education and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee have requested information regarding the current position in Plymouth regarding Young Carers. The purpose of the report is to provide information in order to facilitate Committee discussions around this line of enquiry.

## Recommendations and Reasons

To note the contents of the report.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

None as the report is for noting only.

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Caring for our communities' - to make sure children and young people benefit from a suitable education in order to achieve; develop the necessary skills to be productive citizens who can make a sustained contribution to both the society and economy of the city. As defined by Government, 'A young carer means a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person' and 'providing practical or emotional support' (Children and Families Act section 96 – 2014). Every young carer's situation is different. Some young carers will only be caring for a short time whilst others will be a young carer for all of their childhood; either may have an impact on the child's health, wellbeing and ability to engage with education.

The work reflects our values of co-operation between partners and the recognition that as a society, we are responsible for each other. Plymouth has a strong record of bringing together various organisations and individuals to meet the diverse needs of young carers. A wide range of activity delivered either through specific in-school nurturing provision, commissioned supporting services or intra-school workforce development is growing, however there is further work to do

**Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

None

**Financial Risks:**

None

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

None

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

**Appendices**

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Background papers:**

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Ming Zhang

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 29/10/2021

Cabinet Member approval: *[electronic signature (or typed name and statement of 'approved by*

*email/verbally']*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. [unclear]', written over a horizontal line.

Date approved: 05/11/2021

## **YOUNG CARERS UPDATE – EDUCATION SCRUTINY REPORT**

### **Michael House**

*Health and Wellbeing in Education Officer*

*Plymouth City Council*

### **Karlina Hall**

*Commissioning Officer*

*Plymouth City Council*

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*Strategic Commissioning Manager*

*Plymouth City Council*

## **INTRODUCTION AND PLYMOUTH CONTEXT**

As defined by Government, 'A young carer means a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person' and 'providing practical or emotional support' (*Children and Families Act section 96 – 2014*). Every young carer's situation is different. Some young carers will only be caring for a short time whilst others will be a young carer for all of their childhood; either may have an impact on the child's health, wellbeing and ability to engage with education.

Identification of young carers is the key to unlock support and develop understanding, ultimately improving life chances for young carers. Plymouth has a strong record of bringing together various organisations and individuals to meet the diverse needs of young carers. A wide range of activity delivered either through specific in-school nurturing provision, commissioned supporting services or intra-school workforce development is growing, however there is further work to do.

## **CURRENT NEEDS**

Following the most recent Plymouth Young Carers School Survey (November 2020), the Local Authority recorded the identification of 907 young carers within Plymouth's schools.

- 907 Young Carers in the city (431 Primary, 476 Secondary)
- F=19, Y1=28, Y2=45, Y3=56, Y4=70, Y5=103, Y6=110, Y7=46, Y8=87, Y9=84, Y10=96, Y11=96, Y12=40, Y13=27.
- YC with SEND = 224
- YC who are disadvantaged = 522
- YC from Service Families = 49
- YC who are BAME = 30
- YC with school attendance less than 90% due to caring responsibilities = 123

This number includes 92 children within Key Stage One (5 to 7 year olds). The 2011 National Census indicated a figure of 166,000 young carers between the age of 5 and 17 in England. This is widely believed to be an underrepresentation, with some estimates suggesting that as many as one in five schoolchildren are young carers (*University of Nottingham 2018*), with this number increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Children's Society 2013 report (which analysed the findings of the DfE's Longitudinal Study of Young People in England) found that approximately 1 in 20 young carers missed school because of their caring responsibilities. This is reflected within Plymouth with 13.5% of recorded young carers having a significant reduction on school attendance (less than 90% attendance).

The 2013 report also stated that young carers had significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers. The recent Carer's Trust Survey (*Measuring the Impact of COVID-19 on Young Carers – Carers Trust – 2020* - <https://carers.org/news-and-media/news/post/51-steep-decline-in-mental-health-of-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-following-coronavirus-outbreak>) found that 11% of young carers reported an increase of 30 hours or more in the amount of time they spend caring per week and that 56% of young carers say their education is suffering during the Covid 19 pandemic.

A range of complex factors hinder self-disclosure and the identification (be it from children and young people or their families) of young carers. These include, but are not limited to, stigma, fear of separation, lack of understanding and other influences. The Covid 19 pandemic has inevitably had a detrimental effect on young carers. Local partners had the top issues for young carers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to be financial, access to education, access to support and mental health.

## RECENT AND CURRENT ACTIVITY / HIGHLIGHTS

Within Plymouth the profile of young carers has been raised significantly between 2018 to 2021, with the introduction, development and maintenance of a wide range of activity including:

- **Young Carers Education Support Team (YCEST)** – sharing expertise and experience from three lead schools (Notre Dame School, Montpelier Primary School and Laira Green Primary School) and supporting Plymouth's network of Young Carer Leads.
- **Plymouth Online Directory (POD) Young Carers Support Hub** – this online information hub had been developed with young carers as a legacy of the Young Carers Support Hub which brought a range of partners together to identify and support young carers during the first lockdown and the transition back into school (March to September 2020). The hub provides information, advice and guidance for professional and non-professionals, families and young carers. Specific information is included regarding 'Young Carers Assessment', 'Health and wellbeing', 'Friendship and Socialising', 'Employment and Training', 'Growing up', 'How to get involved', 'Support' and 'Your Rights as a Carer'. This very informative hub of information also provides resources to help schools to identify young carers and, highlighting the challenges and potential supportive interventions that exist. Guidance is also provided regarding transition. This is a time of particular challenge as our young carers move into adulthood.
- **Young Carers Network / Newsletter** – A regular source of information, signposting and awareness raising for schools and settings. The monthly Young Carers Newsletter is circulated to the Young Carers Leads in schools, Plymouth Carers Strategic Partnership Board members and the Mind The Gap working group. The newsletters are all available on POD [here](#). A wider range of health and wellbeing related information and signposting is distributed to targeted school staff via the Health and Wellbeing in Education Briefings (also a monthly communication) and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Steering Group.

- **Young Carers Champion** - Promoting inclusive and equitable provision within Plymouth schools through best practice sharing, workforce development, awareness building and education scrutiny. This activity forms part of the Carers Strategic Partnership Board Action Plan. A new workshop ('Removing Barriers To Learning For Young Carers') has been created and delivered to Plymouth Marjon University (student teachers) and is now available for schools to benefit from. Direct support to schools has included telephone support, resource sharing, sign-posting and Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) advice.
- **Intelligence Gathering** – The 'Young Carers Annual School Survey', now an online facility, seeks to understand how many young carers have been identified in each school. Last year as a result of the Mind The Gap project additional fields were added to identify young carers from minority ethnic, refugee and asylum seeker communities. The recent 'Young Carers in Lockdown' survey compiled by Plymouth Hype, identified that young carers have received support from their schools throughout the Covid 19 Pandemic (e.g. access to school nurses, self-help information, access to outside agencies, access to counsellors/mentors and regular teacher check-ins, laptops, food vouchers, flexible expectations regarding completion of school work and links to networks of support). The new online Young Carers Assessment and Transition Assessment forms (launched in Sept 2021 on the Professional Portal) will allow for reporting on the number and needs of young carers to have a better understanding in the future. The Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) is also able to identify young carers which can be reported on against other fields in the form such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and age.
- **School Development and Scrutiny** - regarding support for young carers and additional needs has been developed to utilising the Healthy Child Quality Mark Programme, the Section 175/157 Audit, the SEND Audit and soon to be introduced, the Inclusion Charter Audit. These assisted self-review tools scrutinise various aspects of support, providing targeted developments in provision, procedure and policy and provide a broad source of intelligence to further target expertise and support.
- **Commissioned Services - Time 4 U** is Plymouth's young carer offer to children and young people; it is provided by Plymouth City Council Community Youth Services, Barnardo's and Hamoaze House:
  - **Hamoaze House** has been commissioned by Plymouth City Council to provide low level dedicated early intervention support to children and young people across Plymouth who may be experiencing Hidden Harm as a result of one or more of their parents or carers having alcohol and or substance misuse issues.
  - **Barnardo's Young Carers Service** has been commissioned to support those who look after an adult family member who has a serious illness or disability. They engage with educational services to reduce the risk of social exclusion or underachieving.
  - **Community Youth Services** work with young carers from the age of 8 upwards in their junior and senior weekly young carers group sessions. They have also supported a Plymouth young carer to become a Young Carers Health Champion as part of the NHSEI programme. The Health Champion participated in a national roundtable event with the Vaccine Minister to engage with young people about Covid 19 vaccine hesitancy.
- **Other Organisations or Departments** - that support young carers either directly or by addressing one or more of the diverse challenges faced by children and young people who provide care include: Kooth (online mental health support); Carers Emergency Response Service (CERS); Head Space Plymouth (drop-in service); Marbles Lost and Found (mental health support); Together For Devon; NHS England and more teams across the Local Authority.

- **Particular Therapeutic or Social Activities** - available include the Fun and Freedom Club (Friends and Families); Crossroads Fun and Friendship Centre; In-school Nurture Clubs/Activities and Equine therapeutic sessions at the Ivybridge Donkey Sanctuary (some of this activity is now beginning again, following a pause due to the Covid 19 Pandemic).
- **Procedural Developments** - include the refresh of the Early Help Assessment Tool to make it easier for young carers support to be identified/requested. The Young Carers Assessment Tool and Guidance is now on the Professional Portal. With requests for support for young carers and Young Carers Assessments now going directly to the new Time4U mailbox from September 2021.

## NEXT STEPS

Within the previous Education Scrutiny Report (September 2019), the next steps for development were expressed via the themes of Understand, Inform, Identify, Support and Listen. The profile of young carers within the City has improved, however inequalities remain a wider area of focus and inevitably young carers have been adversely impacted by the many challenges that the Covid 19 pandemic has presented. The NHSEI funded Mind The Gap project to engage with young carers and carers across the Plymouth and Torbay continues (with the inclusion of Devon) to aim to reduce inequalities for people from minority ethnic, asylum seeker and refugee communities. We will ensure that this work links into the wider work across the Devon CCG footprint and nationally.

Moving on there are three interconnected areas of activity that support and inform the many sources of support available within the City:

### 1. USE INTELLIGENCE AND THE VOICE OF THE CHILD TO RAISE AWARENESS

We have a range of data to call upon, including the voices of the young carers themselves. Utilising this intelligence to raise awareness, not only among the education workforce, but all children, young people and their families is key to removing barriers, stigma and improving school's responses to the challenges face by our young carers. Matching educational and wellbeing related theory to the real life challenges reported by children and young people we can improve understanding, drive the development of high quality support and ultimately improve educational outcomes and raise aspiration.

#### HOW:

- Analysis, Presentation and Dissemination of Intelligence (Workforce, Schools Communities, Partners)
- Delivery of Workforce Upskilling (Awareness Building) Targeted Workshops & CPD,
- Plymouth Online Directory Young Carer Hub,
- Monthly HWiE Briefings,
- Young Carers Network Communication/Newsletters (National, regional and local updates).
- Multi-agency meetings such as Carers Strategic Partnership Board, Mind The Gap working group, Devon Carers Leads Development Group and EHWP Steering Group.

### 2. IMPROVE IDENTIFICATION

Without timely and robust identification, support cannot be targeted effectively and assessments of need cannot be initiated. Raising the competency and confidence for education professionals regarding identification of young carers is not just an exercise in looking for signs or surveying parents/carers etc, but is grounded in creating an ethos of understanding and openness. Schools which deliver best practice

in pastoral and academic provision allow young carers to understand what their role is, what support is available and how the school can support their needs.

**HOW:**

- Delivery of Workforce Upskilling (Awareness Building) Targeted Workshops & CPD,
- Targeted Advice & Guidance for School Support Staff and Family Support Advisers
- Dissemination of Guidance – Regarding the EHAT Process.
- Launch of new online Young Carers Assessment & Transition Assessment templates (Professional Portal Process).

**3. SCRUTINISE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND SHARE BEST PRACTICE**

Interrogation of school provision, focusing on the development and maintenance of an inclusive, open and equitable place of learning can drive improvement and increase positive outcomes for young carers and all children and young people. Examples of best practice certainly do exist within the City thus can be promoted and shared, not only from young carer related support but care and nurturing practice for other areas of additional need, for example, armed forces families and children.

**HOW:**

- Delivery of supported self-review tools (Healthy Child Quality Mark, Inclusion Charter, SEND Audit and Section 175/157 Audit) and holistic cross analysis to inform targeted support and development.
- Intelligence and best practice sharing through the Health and Wellbeing in Education Professional Community (4 CPD and consultation events per year (formerly the PSHE Hub)– partnership activity with the Plymouth Teachers and School Alliance) and other groups such as Carers Strategic Partnership Board, Mind The Gap working group, Devon Carers Leads Development Group and EHWPB Steering Group.
- Creation of the Health and Wellbeing in Education Hub, housed within the Plymouth Online Directory, to contain information, advice and guidance, expanding and integrating the current Young Carers Support Hub section and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Directory.