

Young Carers in Oxfordshire – Update to Scrutiny Committee

May 2012

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to bring the committee up to date on the work happening in the county to identify and support children and young people who have caring responsibilities (Young Carers) and their families. The report will then go on to look at our outcomes for young carers and our anticipated challenges in the future.

Oxfordshire County Council have commissioned young carers services across the county for more than 10 years, with considerable investment since 2009, and in this time the provision and support for young carers has significantly changed and developed. The Oxfordshire Young Carers Strategy 2008 - 2013 continues to be our guiding document for service delivery.

OCC has employed dedicated young carers staff since 2004 and continues in its strong commitment to work, together with partner agencies, to identify and support this large (working estimate of between 8'000 and 16'000 children in Oxfordshire) vulnerable group of children and young people, and their families.

The PRTC (Princess Royal Trust for Carers; lead national charity for developing work with young carers) state that a good young carer's service needs to cover the following 6 elements to ensure the potential outcomes outlined below;

- **Activities**
 - Outcomes: young carers have a break from caring; are less isolated; have fun; and access peer support
- **Carers shaping development of policy and service (participation)**
 - Outcomes: young carers plan, shape and manage services and inform local/national policy
- **Changes and transitions**
 - Outcomes: Young adult carers receive specific advice and guidance; less young adult carers are NEET
- **Education**
 - Outcomes: Young carers attendance and attainment is increased; staff understanding of young carers' issues and needs is increased; all pupils understanding of young carers' and wider disability is increased
- **Emotional support and counselling**
 - Outcomes: Young carers have someone to talk to; emotional and mental health is improved
- **Whole family support**
 - Outcomes: Fewer young carers have inappropriate caring roles;

increased support in place for the whole family; parents and families supported to access other services

In Oxfordshire, our service model is based on the 6 elements outlined above and uses all the information, feedback and data collected and analysed over the previous four years and has been informed by current national research and pathfinder evaluations. Along with this, we regularly consult with groups of Oxfordshire's young carers and their parents; and their views and opinions form the foundations of service planning for young carers in the county.

The Young Carers Team from OCC are proud that the PRTC have recently commented that Oxfordshire has the **perfect model for delivering positive outcomes for young carers**. PRTC are looking to recommend our work nationally as examples of best practice.

Main Body of the Report

Oxfordshire's Model for Young Carers Service delivery

Since 2009 there has been an **Oxfordshire County Council's Young Carers Team** as part of the Children's Social Care Division under the Children, Education and Families Directorate (CEF). The strategic development, leadership and management work is part of the core work of children's services delivered by the Young Carers Manager and the Young Carers Team. The Young Carers Team includes a dedicated development worker and support workers to raise awareness with children's services and relevant adult services, (e.g. social care teams, health services, etc.), push forward the whole family and think family agenda, support schools in the delivery of our Core Education Offer (a support package to schools to enable a whole school approach in the identification and support for young carers with a view to addressing issues of poor attainment and attendance), to support staff to initiate CAF assessments with more vulnerable young carers and offer short term case work to vulnerable young carers.

As of September 2011, the County Council also provides for young carers via its **Early Intervention Service (EIS)**. Support to young carers and their families are part of the core offer of the EIS, providing:

- A dedicated tier-2 casework service in local areas delivered from the 7 EIS Hub bases, assessing and providing support to the individual child and family, acting as the lead professional and ensuring a team around the family comprised of appropriate adult and children's services.
- Identification and recording of young carers across agencies and settings.

The Early intervention Service has a manager with a lead responsibility for young carers and each of the seven Hubs has a young carers lead or champion within its staff team.

Our current **third sector young carer's service** contract has been held by

Spurgeons since 1st October 2011 providing countywide provision. Taking into account the demographic and geographic make up of Oxfordshire it aims to enable young carers to benefit from one of the following options:

- support within their local school or community
- support via their local hub
- support via the internet

The current commissioned contract for young carers' services is ending on the 31st May 2012. Re-procurement of this service for 2012 – 2015 has been completed and the awarded to Spurgeons. Our model of delivery for this contract remains largely the same.

The current young carers service provider also holds the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) contract for one full time county wide **Specialist NEET worker for young carers**. This contract ends in June 2012 and re-procurement is underway via OCC Early Intervention Service.

Since 2011 OCC have received additional funding from **NHS Oxfordshire** for young carers. Working in partnership, this funding is being used in two ways. A large proportion of the monies have been made available directly to young people. The Young Carers Support Fund (YCSF) aims to support the health and wellbeing of young carers in the county. The purpose of this fund is a) to relieve the impact of the caring/ improve health outcomes b) is a means by which we are able to promote identification and support of young carers amongst professionals in all services c) helps workers to gain consent from families and overcome unwillingness of parents to admit that caring is taking place in families. Additionally, part of the funding is being used to better understand the health needs of young carers in the county, improve young carer identification and referrals from NHS staff and develop a young carers health screening tool so we can then address health concerns and improve health outcomes to this group of vulnerable children and young people.

Since January 2009 we have been collecting and analysing **data on young carers** in the county. Our database of young carers currently shows that OCC and OCC funded services have identified and supported **over 1200 young carers** (April 2012). The findings of this data are now, and will continue to be, instrumental in guiding the focus of young carers' services across the county.

Young Carers Service - our vision for the future

The County Council's **vision** is for ***every single child to be successful and to reach their potential.***

For young carers this means that we need to ensure awareness and recognition of young carers as a vulnerable group within all universal and targeted services and provide appropriate support to children with caring responsibilities and their families.

The Oxfordshire Young Carers Strategy (2008 – 2013) tells us the outcomes we are trying to achieve for children with caring responsibilities and our service action plan

tells us how these outcomes will be delivered. Delivery of all young carers services are measured against the set of performance targets below.

Performance targets	Measures or Progress to date	Future Challenges
Increase in number of young carers identified and offered a service	2009 – approx. 350 young carers known of in county 2012 – data held on 1200 young carers who have received support or a service	Steady increase in number of young carers identified – currently approx. 30 - 40 new young carers identified per month Capacity issues
Increase in number of young carers identified and offered a service from: -black and minority ethnic groups, including travellers - other vulnerable groups, e.g. mental health, substance and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, etc - Rural areas	Data from Dec.2010 - Young carers services are representative of ethnicity figures for Oxfordshire. - Mental health is the commonest single cause of caring: 25.8%. Of these young carers, 83.2% are caring for parents - Using 'known to social care' as an indicator, between 1/3 and 1/2 of children and families across all types of young carers services are in high need	Work to be developed to ensure that vulnerable groups remain a targeted area Rural areas remain a challenge – this is being addressed in some ways by focusing work in schools communities Work during the last year with the Think Family Champion for mental health services has highlighted a number of barriers within adult services and the challenge is now to address these.
Increase in number of activities linked to emotional and physical health	Young Carers Support Fund Oct 2011 – March 2012 206 young carers received the grant	Funding for 12/13 is looking positive however with the changes in NHS commissioning there may be sustainability issues more long term
Increase in range of activities and groups	This has been addressed via the significant change in service model from Oct 2011- provision via hub's and schools The compass program via Oxford University	Targeting the most vulnerable young carers Continuing to look at mainstream opportunities for young carers
Evidence of young carers using the service who express overall satisfaction	In 2010 we ran a young reporters project – overall positive feedback from young people about their	We think we have a more work to do – Particularly around the young carers support fund and the EIS

with the service	young carers projects Core element of all work is to listen to young carers – asking for regular feedback	Hub groups.
Evidence that a positive impact is made on the lives of young carers in relation to education outcomes	Using the findings from the data concerning GCSE rates - we have set up a 2 year pilot project with 3 schools investing in specific staff who have responsibility for young carers within their school.	Measurements will be critical to demonstrating improved outcomes. A schools model and a more targeted approach are in development.
Evidence of young carers who feel they have been able to influence the delivery of young carers services	Consultation in Autumn 2011 to inform service plan and new YC contract service specification. Young carers CYPIN – Nov 2011 YC had 50% share of the final decision for the provider of the YC service 2012 – 15.	Include a more diverse group of young carers in consultation exercises – targeting hard to engage children and young people.
Percentage of primary school aged young carers who have a persistent absence rate: 20%+ absence Percentage of secondary school aged young carers who have a persistent absence rate: 20%+ absence	Young carers are much more likely to be persistently absent than county average – in 2009/2010 12.4% were persistently absent where the county absence rate for secondary school was 6.7% Young carers are no more likely than other children and young people to receive fixed term exclusions from school	This is an area for future focus - The data needs updating and we need to gain more understanding about this integrating it into the work we do with schools.
Percentage of young carers aged 16 & over who are NEET - not in education, employment or	% NEET figures for identified young carers over school age Jan 2011 – 26% Jan 2012 – 17.74%	The YC data base provides the identification of young carers which is then matched against profile – identification needs to improve from all children facing

training		staff
Percentage of young carers who gain 5+ GCSE A*-C including English and Maths	3 years of data 2009 YC 13.5% vs. county 52.9% 2010 YC 29.3% vs. county 57.3% 2011 YC 30.4% vs. county 57.4%	Collecting and analyzing data presents challenges and we are working to ensure that young carers data is integrated into all the OCC systems. We are told that we are the only county that holds data of this nature – so the challenge is to ensure that we use it in a meaningful way, locally and nationally.
Percentage of young carers who gain 5+ GCSE A*-G including English and Maths	3 years of data 2009 YC 86.5% vs. county 92.8% 2010 YC 81% vs. county 93.9% 2011 YC 75% vs. county 94.3%	We have used this data to revise the way we work with schools. We are hoping that our pilot project will help us uncover ways in which this gap might be narrowed in the future.

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