

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 19 June 2019  
**Subject:** Update on the Young Carers Strategy 2017-2019  
**Report of:** Director of Education

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**Summary**

To provide an overview of progress on work with Young Carers and to propose next steps in the refresh and implementation of the Young Carers Strategy.

**Recommendations**

Members to note the review of the strategy and to comment on partners commitment to improve the identification and support for young carers in Manchester.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Young Carers Strategy 2017-2019
- Report of the Children's Commissioner, 2016.
- Young Carers Group Transition Report, December 2018.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Young Carers Strategy 2017-2019 outlines an approach to the identification of and support for young carers in Manchester underpinned by partnership working and shared responsibility. The strategy reflects the voice of young carers ensuring that their views are recognised and reflected in services that support them.
- 1.2 There continues to be broad support for the approach outlined in the strategy however the implementation of this has been slower than expected. To ensure progress a new working group has been set up to deliver a robust action plan with clear deliverables and improved outcomes.
- 1.3 The voice and influence of Young Carers has been invaluable in the co design and production of the strategy and the 'Be Bothered Campaign'. Since the launch of the strategy the Manchester Young Carers Group have successfully led on increasing awareness of the barriers young carers face in their day to day lives.
- 1.4 The success of the Manchester Young Carers Group relied heavily on individuals. Due to members successfully moving into employment and higher education it has proved to be unsustainable. This has highlighted the need to develop an improved model of peer support which does not solely rely on commitment from individual young carers.
- 1.5 A sustainable models of peer support is part of the wider review of the strategy which will be delivered by the new working group. To support the group and ensure delivery of the action plan this there has been investment in a new full-time post. The Young Carers Coordinator will work across the partnership building on the work of the Young Carers group, ensuring the voice of young carers continues to be at the heart of its delivery.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 During 2018, the Youth Strategy team worked closely with young carers including supporting them to access a residential-time away from caring responsibilities and other leisure activities at Ghyll Head. As a result the Young Carers Group have been at the forefront of campaigning on behalf of young carers in Manchester. Bringing the voice and experiences of young carers and young adult carers to the discussion table at Manchester Carers Network and the young carer's operational board.
- 2.2 Young Carers have been included through the wider carer's network supported by the Gaddum Centre which has a number of current active young carer's projects. This network is well placed to support the future development of young carers groups.
- 2.3 The Youth Strategy Team, Carers Network and the Gaddum Centre supported the Young Carers Group to deliver a research project on young carer's experience of transition. The research explored the experiences of nine

young carers and the report was written by the young carers group. They also produced a music video about transition with the support of Music Stuff. [https://youtu.be/\\_kmDmnGZCnQ](https://youtu.be/_kmDmnGZCnQ). This work has informed a dedicated transition workstream lead by the Education post 16 lead.

This work has been presented to the Children & Young people's Board the Early Help Board and has also been shared with colleagues in Adult Social Care. (Appendix 1 – Young Carers Transition report)

### **3.0 Summary of key findings from Young Carers Group Research**

#### **3.1 Transition from Primary – Secondary School**

Young carers reported that there is a lack of awareness in primary schools and that schools should be doing more to identify and support young carers at an earlier stage. One young carer had been identified and supported in her primary school, unfortunately when she moved to High school she no longer felt supported.

*“It felt kind of weird that none of the teachers knew I was in a different situation than everyone else and that for stuff like homework, I might not have as much time as everyone else.”* Fiona, 14.

#### **3.2 Transition from Secondary School to Further Education**

For young carers Secondary school brings increasing pressure to balance school work and caring role and this can have a negative impact on both their physical and mental health. There was mixed experiences of support in High school; where support was in place which included transition planning young carers had a positive experience. However, the young carers report identifies a lack of consistency in transition planning and support. For some young carers the experience was very positive with more support than they have previously accessed. However, for those that didn't receive good transition planning the experience was more negative.

*“After I started receiving help in my last year of school, things got easier, but then having to explain everything to people in college was very stressful. At the start of the course I found things easy and could keep up to date but then as the year progressed, I fell further and further behind and started to struggle.”* Katie, 19

#### **3.3 Further Education to Higher Education and/or Employment**

The young carers report highlights the significance of the decisions young carers are faced with when they become 18, particularly if they want to move onto higher education. Young Carers emphasise the importance of support with decision making and ensuring they can access good information and advice to ensure that they can be confident the person they care for will continue to be cared for if they decide to further their education or move onto employment.

## **4.0 Progress**

- 4.1 Several schools in Manchester have now developed successful models of peer support with potential young leaders emerging. Manchester Communications Academy were involved in the development and launch of the strategy and now have a strong network of young carers. These young people have been supported to represent other young carers at a strategic level. To help develop this good practice Manchester Communications Academy staff and young carers are members of the refreshed Young Carers Working group and will continue to support the implementation and refresh of the strategy.
- 4.2 A Young Carers Operational Working Group has been established and will implement the refresh and delivery of the strategy with the aim to increase the identification and support for young carers and improve the offer and pathways. The group was established in February 2019 and is meeting monthly initially. An action plan has been agreed and work streams delivered by representatives from Young Carers, Schools, Manchester Health Care and Commissioning, Early Help, Children's Social Care, Adults Commissioning, Voluntary Sector Partners, Young Manchester, Youth Strategy Team, and School Nursing.
- 4.3 Until April 2019 the Targeted Youth Support Service contract included work with schools to promote and develop support for young carers including direct support for young carers aged 13-19 years. This contract ended in March 2019 and the decision was made to refocus the contract to work with young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and reinvest the resource into a dedicated Young Carers Coordinator Post.
- 4.4 The Young Carers Coordinator will strengthen work with schools and other key partners raising awareness and building capacity. They will act as a key point of contact for schools they will offer support with identification and assessment. The Young Carers Coordinator will also work closely with the Adult Carer's Network and link into the current development of a single point of contact for carers in Manchester. This post has been recruited to successfully and will commence on the 10th June, 2019.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 The newly established Young Carers Working Group will continue to oversee the implementation of the action plan and will meet monthly.
- 5.2 The Performance Research and Intelligence team have designed a survey for schools to establish a baseline of young carers and to help gain an understanding of how to gather a robust database to support service development and decision making. This survey is going out to schools with a circular letter during Carers Weeks 2019. The aim is for a Young Carers champion to be in place in every school by December 2019.

- 5.3 The health and wellbeing work stream is engaging with GP's and working with young carers on the development of tools to support their emotional wellbeing.
- 5.4 A briefing note has been circulated to school nurses and a follow up training session will take place in September 2019.
- 5.5 The Early Help team are currently mapping the pathways and offer to ensure consistency across the city and embedding young carers into the early help practitioner e-learning.

## **6.0 Young Carers Strategic Action Plan**

- 6.1 The Young Carers strategic action plan is a one-year plan encompassing seven areas of action:

1. To improve the pathways and offer to Young Carers.
2. Transition – To ensure effective transition pathways for young carers.
3. Voice of Young Carers - engagement and peer support / influencing strategic commissioning and decision making.
4. Identification and Data - Young Carers are identified, recorded and robust data informs strategic decision making.
5. Governance and Leadership - A strong strategic oversight and governance.
6. Health and Wellbeing - Services / Pathways / Activities / Pathways.
7. Communications and Engagement - Communications and engagement plan.

These seven areas of action will be monitored and reviewed at the Young Carers Working Group on a monthly basis.

## **7.0 Summary**

- 7.1 The Young Carers Strategy strongly reflects the voice of young carers ensuring that their views are key drivers for the services that impact them. The Strategy is being reviewed through a newly established Young Carers Working Group. The group is making good progress in overseeing the agreed multi-agency action plan. This action plan provides a good example of integrated commissioning through the drawing on resources across the partnership ensuring that Young Carers remain at the centre. The Young Carers Coordinator has been recruited and will work across the system to ensure that the voice of Young Carers continues to drive improved pathways and offer.