

**Report of:** The Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services

**Report to:** Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

**Date:** 17 January 2013

**Subject:** Chief Executive and Directors response to Scrutiny - Young Carers

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Summary of main issues

Following the re-commissioning of the young carers service earlier this year, the delegated decision report awarding the contract to the new service provider was called in to Scrutiny.

The call-in meeting of the Scrutiny Board was held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and it was agreed to form a working group to identify how the Council:

1. identifies and engages with young people who are carers;
2. promotes the support available to those who may not have identified themselves as a young carer; and
3. ensures young carers are given the support they need to succeed in school under difficult circumstances.

The working group met on the 5th of September and reported their views to the full Scrutiny Board on the 27th of September. At this meeting the Scrutiny Board agreed the recommendations made by the working group.

## 2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is requested to note the responses to the recommendations.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the desired outcomes and recommendations following the working group.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 It is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 young carers in Leeds and recent research has indicated that these numbers are significantly under-estimated.
- 2.2 One of the main priorities of the re-commissioning process was to provide a modern service for a greater number of young carers. The new service is intended to reach:
- Universal support – minimum of 250 young carers
  - Targeted support – minimum 70 to maximum 100 young carers
  - Targeted substance misuse – minimum 20 young carers
- 2.3 The service provided to young carers links closely with the three priority areas for improvement in Leeds:
- to support children to live in safe and supportive families so that the need for children and young people to become looked after is reduced;
  - to improve school and college attendance and behaviour in school so that more children can benefit from the opportunities provided; and
  - to enable more young people to be able to take up opportunities for education, training and employment by the age of 19.
- 2.4 The remit of the new service specification was widened to include young carers of substance misusers. There is a gap in service provision for children and young people who have caring responsibilities due to parental drug or alcohol use.
- 2.5 A project team was formed in January 2010 made up of representatives from adult social care, children's services, education, connexions, finance, CAMHS and substance misuse.
- 2.6 The project team developed a new service specification to ensure that young carers could receive the most appropriate levels of support for their need e.g. signposting to universal services or more targeted levels of support.
- 2.7 Following the PQQ evaluation process, 4 organisations were shortlisted to submit tenders:
- Action for Children
  - Barnardo's
  - DISC Ltd
  - Prospects Services
- 2.8 Tenders were evaluated on a 60% quality/40% price basis. Two bids were received from Barnardo's and DISC Limited with Barnardo's being the successful bidder.

### 3 Main issues

3.1 **Recommendation 1** – That the Director of Children’s Services bring the All Age Carers Strategy before the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) for consideration and input before the strategy is formally agreed.

3.1.1 The work around the new Carer’s Strategy has commenced. The consultation group has representation from Children’s Services and from Barnardo’s, the current service provider. The involvement of these key stakeholders will ensure that young carers’ needs are adequately reflected in the strategy. Children’s Services representatives will ensure that the Carers Strategy is considered at Children and Families Scrutiny Board before the strategy is formally agreed.

3.2 **Recommendation 2** – That the Director of Children’s Services ensures stronger communication and operational links are established between service areas both internal and external to the Council and efforts are made to understand where necessary the service entitlements for those in receipt of care.

3.2.1 The adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding by Children’s Services and Adult Social Care and other relevant partners strives to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of young carers and their families. The strategy will be developed in collaboration with key partners in health and local support projects for carers and families. This will enable the adoption of a consistent basis for improved collaborative working in response to feedback from young carers and parents.

It is widely recognised that in order to support young carers and their families most effectively, a whole family approach must be adopted, supporting both the individual needs within a family and the needs of the family as a whole. It is therefore vital for children’s services and adult services, health and the voluntary sector to work closer together to achieve this.

Adult Social Care partially funds the young carers’ service and through contract monitoring arrangements with Children’s Services can ensure that the outcomes of the service specification are being met.

3.3 **Recommendation 3** - That the Director of Children’s Services tracks and records educational outcomes for known Young Carers to ensure support can be targeted and that a proactive approach can be adopted to prevent young carers from becoming NEET.

To achieve this objective, a clear, formal framework to screen, identify, support and track young carers would have to be adopted by all schools, with endorsement at the highest levels within Children’s Services. Children’s Services will review the potential of using the evidence based screening tool <sup>1</sup>. This could potentially be incorporated into Year 6/7 transition screening. This, and a comprehensive resource to enable schools to develop support frameworks is being actively promoted by the current provider, but uptake has been slow and the strategic support is required to ensure a fully integrated approach.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://static.carers.org/files/2248-yc-outcomes-manual-sb-4047.pdf>

- 3.4 **Recommendation 4** – That the Director of Children’s Services ensures that the Governors and Head teachers of all state maintained schools are aware of the contracted service provided by Barnardo’s and that the school is engaging with Barnardo’s to utilise the resources available to them in order to support Young Carers.

Barnardo’s will deploy a ‘hub and spoke’ model by providing a named link worker with each of the city’s clusters. Planned, consistent and co-ordinated updates, bulletins, resources and other communication are disseminated to all schools via links with clusters and attendance at cluster meetings. Examples of schools work to progress the provider’s objectives include a whole cluster event to plan and implement a framework of support, emotional wellbeing briefings to all staff in another cluster, and the piloting of the screening tool (see above) with the whole Year 7 intake in another cluster’s High School. This pilot yielded interesting results, with 10% of children identifying themselves as having a caring role.

The focus on Barnardo’s work with schools will be on capacity building and enabling schools to embed their own sustainable support frameworks.

- 3.5 **Recommendation 5** – That the Chief Executive introduces an assessment process where the impact of decision making on children is a consideration in all formal decision making processes.

The Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies, such as, Leeds City Council to give ‘due regard’ to and to promote equality. Leeds City Council is, therefore, required to consider equality implications and their impact on those equality groups protected by legislation when developing and delivering services and in their role as employers.

This means that equality and diversity needs to be considered throughout the development, implementation and review or establishment of any key decisions, strategies, policies, services and functions. These considerations should be carried out before decisions are taken. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can show ‘due regard’.

To ensure that the council meets its legal duties under equality legislation they have developed an approach that means that we consider equality in our decision making processes. The council has developed and uses Equality Impact Assessment’s as a tool that helps to place equality as a key consideration in the decision making process. They are used to help the council understand where there may be positive or negative impact on different equality characteristics and take action where appropriate to address these.

The Equality Impact Assessment Process identifies a number of equality groups including age and carers. The definition of age that is used would include younger and older people.

If positive and negative impacts for any group are identified then an action plan must be developed that will outline how this impact can be minimised.

Due regard to equality sessions are delivered to staff across the council and provide specific advice on the equality impact assessment process that has been developed. These briefing sessions are now offered as part of the council's learning and development programme. Targeted briefing sessions have also been held with Children's Services Leadership team during 2012 as part of their Leadership Development programme to advise them of the process and which equality groups, including carers and age, should be considered in all decision making processes.

It is recommended that the council's existing Equality Impact Assessment process is used and a separate process is not introduced. The council's process ensures that the detrimental and negative impacts on different groups, including young people and carers, can be identified and appropriate action considered to address them in the decision making process. A review of the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration guidance, assessment and screening documents has subsequently been undertaken to ensure that the requirement to consider impact on children and young people is apparent and unambiguous.

- 3.6 **Recommendation 6** – That the Director of Children's Services ensures practitioners providing advice to young carers understand the criteria for adult respite care and can assist in facilitating this provision on behalf of young carers and their families.

This will be achieved by ensuring that children and young people with caring responsibilities are provided with opportunities for regular breaks. Practitioners in Children's Services, Adult Social Care, schools and health will be made clear about referral processes to Willow. They will also be made aware of any other relevant respite services e.g. family placement, home based respite. Staff should be aware of how and where to access information either in leaflet form or on Sharepoint.

- 3.7 **Recommendation 7** – That the Director of Children's Services explores how current facilities could be utilised to provide an environment where young carers can 'drop in', have a break or access help and advice.

Barnardo's is working in partnership with Leeds Youth Service and Extended Schools Services to develop and deliver targeted drop-in sessions specifically for young carers in 3 localities across the city (South Leeds Hub, Derek Fatchett Centre, Armley Lazer Centre), enabling young carers to access ongoing support following targeted interventions. Further drop-ins are planned but finite resources obviously limit capacity, making it even more crucial that support to young carers is promoted and integrated across universal and targeted providers.

- 3.8 **Recommendation 8** – The Director of Children's Services considers the myths, assumptions and preconceptions that young people and their parents may have which presents barriers to accessing social services and implements a plan for positive promotion of this service.

Barnardo's will raise awareness and ensure families know about the support services available through social care. Children's Services directorate is looking to develop different ways of working with families, brokering new relationships and empowering parents. This is the responsibility of all services within the directorate.

3.9 **Recommendation 9** – That the Director of Children’s Services facilitates promotional activities and literature via schools and places where young people meet which raises awareness about the support available for young carers. In addition, also ensures practitioners who come into contact with young carers are adequately trained to provide the support and information they may require.

3.9.1 This is a key aspect of the new service, please see below extract from the service specification:

“For the majority of young carers this service will provide a networking and advocacy role to ensure that this vulnerable group of children and young people are able to access and benefit from their entitlement to a wide range of universal and targeted support including:

- Providing access to existing recreational activities
- Engagement with schools to raise awareness of the service
- Working closely with schools in PSHE lessons and health fairs to raise awareness and develop resources for wider use. Promoting existing resources and materials, and supporting schools in developing their own systems. Closer working with youth services to ensure signposting to mainstream services for children and young people aged 11-19
- Working with services to ensure access to existing homework clubs to provide support with homework and revision particularly at exam time
- Support to evening and weekend group work sessions enabling youth service staff to proactively encourage attendees into mainstream provision in their local areas.
- Support the Local Authority to raise the profile of the needs of young carers
- Links to the new proposed cluster/locality arrangements for providing support for vulnerable children which would give access to potential additional support and ‘intervention’ funds e.g. Extended services money to enable young carers to access out of school activities
- Provide information to allow relevant services to be contacted to provide help and support with practical tasks
- Ensure young people requiring support to access appropriate education, employment and training (EET) opportunities are referred as appropriate.”

3.10 **Recommendation 10** –The Director of Children’s Services investigates access to the provision of ICT equipment which will facilitate flexible learning and home working.

Barnardo’s provide access to their ICT equipment for any young carers who require access but it is very rare that a young person would make this request. The Director of Children’s Services will investigate further requirements for ICT equipment.

3.11 **Recommendation 11** – That the Director of Children’s Services establishes a mechanism for ongoing consultation with young carers building on the event undertaken when devising the contract, which will enable the identification of further areas of improvement and facilitate feedback to those who have participated.

3.11.1 In addition to routine contract monitoring of the service, the service specification states that

“The service provider will seek opportunities to involve young carers and stakeholders, in contributing to service planning and evaluation of service.”

This particular cohort of young people are extremely vocal in their views and are actively encouraged by the service provider to share these views. Improvements and developments will be made using this feedback.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

The current specification has been shaped with detailed feedback from staff, clients and key stakeholders.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

The procurement equality assurance questions have been considered when compiling the specification for this service and an equality impact assessment undertaken.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The three priority areas for improvement in Leeds are:

- to support children to live in safe and supportive families so that the need for children and young people to become looked after is reduced;
- to improve school and college attendance and behaviour in school so that more children can benefit from the opportunities provided; and
- to enable more young people to be able to take up opportunities for education, training and employment by the age of 19.

4.3.2 The service will link with the Leeds Carers Strategy 2009/12 which makes reference to ‘young carers’ in terms of recognising and raising awareness of their particular needs. The strategy also contains commitments from both NHS Leeds and Adult Social Care to provide appropriate support to ‘young carers’.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 In re-commissioning this service efficiency savings of almost £41,000 per annum have been achieved.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 Not applicable.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 There are no specific risks involved.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Director of Children's Services accepts the recommendations from Scrutiny Board around support for young carers. The Chief Executive has removed ambiguity in the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration guidance, assessment and screening documents to ensure that the requirement to consider impact on children and young people is clear.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is requested to note the responses to the recommendations.

## **7. Background documents<sup>2</sup>**

None

---

<sup>2</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.