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Young Carers Strategy 2022 – 2024

Forward

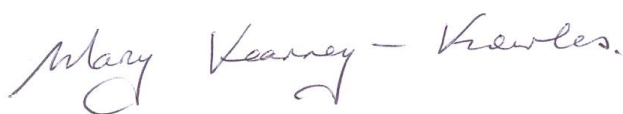
We know that being a young carer can benefit young people in a number of ways, including in developing their maturity, life skills and independence. However, without access to appropriate support, young carers can be very vulnerable and at risk of many challenges that can damage their development and ability to care for their families.

Young carers are entitled to a positive childhood that prepares them well for adult life. The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 has brought about significant advances in the rights of young carers to be recognised and to have their needs met.

A collaborative response between both statutory and voluntary sector services is vital. By working together, the difficult parts of caring can be minimised, and the benefits of caring can be brought forward. Young carers receiving appropriate support are inspiring, resilient, and caring children and young people.

Bath & North East Somerset Council values the contribution young carers make and is committed to ensuring that young carers in the area are identified and able to access appropriate and timely support. This joint Young Carers Strategy has been co-produced by Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Carers' Centre (commissioned by the council to support young carers), young carers and their families, and organisations that provide services for or have an interest in young carers.

This strategy aims to support young carers to be protected from inappropriate caring, to achieve their full potential, and to have access to the same opportunities as their peers. This strategy builds on the excellent work across Bath and North East Somerset. We will achieve this by ensuring that all partners who come into contact with young carers and their families are aware of their needs and the pathways to support. Progress will be monitored and reported, and the Strategy will be reviewed regularly during its lifetime.



Mary Kearney Knowles

Director of Children's Services & Education
(DSC)

Bath & North East Somerset Council

January 25th 2022

Our vision

The Young Carers Strategy is informed by the strategic outcomes and priorities outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2021-2022ⁱ.

The Children and Young People's Plan describes Bath & North East Somersets vision for young people as:

All children and young people will enjoy childhood and be well prepared for adult life.

For young carers this means:

- having access to the same opportunities as their peers
- being protected from inappropriate caring
- having access to any additional support they may need to ensure they are safe, healthy, aspiring and achieving.

This will be achieved through an integrated approach and the delivery of appropriate and timely services.

Covid19

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a huge impact on all our services and how they are delivered. The Young Carers Service has had to adapt to new ways of delivery during this period to ensure that young carers and their families continue to receive appropriate support.

Throughout the pandemic, and for the purpose of this strategy, the Young Carers Service has consulted young carers and their families. This has provided an insight into the impact of being a young person with caring responsibilities during a pandemic. While some young carers found positives, such as having more time for developing interests and hobbies, spending time with family, many more young carers experienced this as a challenging time and reported feeling anxious, isolated, unable to cope or have a break, and overwhelmed by the pressures of caring and online schooling.

This strategy will reflect the continued response to COVID 19, identifying the key areas of learning that partners will have to prioritise in their service delivery to recover from the pandemic.

Definition

A young carer under the Children and Families Act is defined as a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person. The concept of care includes practical or emotional supportⁱⁱ.

Caring role

The lives of young carers in England Omnibus survey 2017 reportⁱⁱⁱ, based on interviews with 420 parents who reported at least one young carer in the family identified:

- The majority of young carers were caring for someone in the home.
- Over half (55%) were caring for their mother.
- One in four (25%) were caring for a sibling.
- Younger carers (aged 5-11) were more likely to be assisting with the care of a sibling, whilst older carers (16-17) were most likely to be caring for their mother.

Type of care provided

Nearly eight out of ten (78%) were reported by their parents to be undertaking practical tasks as part of their caring responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, doing paperwork or helping with household chores.

Caring responsibility increased with age with over one in four (26%) providing nursing care and parents considered over half (57%) were providing emotional support.

Those caring outside the home were less likely to be undertaking nursing care (11%) but were providing almost similar levels of practical (68%) and emotional support (64%).

Time spent caring

Although the majority of parents of young carers (53%) reported that their child was providing up to an hour or so of care a day during the school or college week, around one in seven (14%) reported four or more hours caring each day rising to over one in four (26%) at the weekends.

Helping around the home

In both the young carer and 'comparison' surveys parents and young people were asked about the type and amount of help that the young person gave around the home. Compared to young people the same age, young carers were reported by their parents to be undertaking more tasks, more often and taking greater levels of responsibility for running the household.

Over half (52%) of 12 to 15year-old carers had helped cook a meal in the last month either 'some of the time' or a 'lot' compared to 32% of their peers in the comparison survey, and nearly one in four (24%) had looked after siblings without an adult present compared to 15% in the comparison survey.

Young carers were also often helping with physical tasks such as lifting or carrying heavy things, including one in four (25%) of 5 to 11year-olds helping in this way regularly compared to 15% of the comparison group.

Drivers for change

National context

The 2011 census (Office for National Statistics, 2011^{iv}) identified that 200,000 young carers (aged 5-17) in England and Wales. Recent research suggests that this figure is considered an underestimate. Research by the BBC and the University of Nottingham in 2018 estimated the figure to be 800,000 young carers. This represents 6 young carers in every secondary school classroom.

The Carers Trust survey found that 58 per cent of young carers spend an average of ten hours week on their caring responsibilities. Young carers carry with them a great deal of worry, worry that can make those they care for feel guilty. Being a young carer often limits life-chances. The Children's Society found that young carers were likely to have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level. Some 73 per cent report having to take time off school. Carers aged 16-18 are twice as likely not to be in education, employment or training and 45 percent of young carers report mental health problems^v.

Local Context

There are over 600 young carers registered with Bath & North East Somerset Carers Centre. It is estimated that there are more young carers in the area than have been identified, this is because young carers are a largely hidden group and may not be recognised within the family where they have caring responsibilities, or even identify themselves in that role.

In the 2017 Schools and Health Education Unit Report^{vi}

11 percent of pupils from Years 4 and 6 (primary school) completing the survey in Bath & North East Somerset, responded as a young carer. A significant number of these young carers reported that it was hard for them to concentrate at school because they often felt tired. A high rate of pupils who identified as young carers said they had a serious injury in the last year. This may be because young carers are often carrying out activities with less supervision and having greater responsibilities around the home.

Legislation

The Children and Families Act (2014^{vii})

The Act introduced changes in the way in which young carers are identified and supported. The changes include:

- The same right to assessment and support for young carers as adult carers who support a parent or sibling (sister or brother)
- giving parent carers the same right to assessment and support as adult carers
- a general duty on local authorities to improve the wellbeing of young carers who are ordinary residents of the area
- the identification of people who may be receiving care from a child or young person
- the provision of medical services to patients who are young carers
- within twelve months of the passing of the Act, schools must have a process in place for the identification of young carers
- schools must put in place a mechanism for the provision of appropriate support to promote the wellbeing and improve the educational attainment of young carers within their school.

The Care Act (2014^{viii})

The Act brings together previous legislation into one act.

- Young carers under the age of 18 who care for an adult will continue to be supported by Children's Services rather than Adult Social Care. At the age of 18 Adult Social Care will take over the responsibility, although they can be brought into the transition planning before the young carer's 18th birthday, but only at the young carer's request. There will be a new duty to continue with any services a young carer is receiving past the age of 18 if appropriate adult care and support is not in place.
- The act proposes a whole family approach: assessment must take the person in need of service. This must include ensuring that any child present in the family is not undertaking an inappropriate level of caring.

The voice of young carers in B&NES

A consultation process was carried out to ensure that young carers and their families in Bath & North East Somerset had their voices heard and were given the opportunity to shape the Young Carers Strategy. In April 2021 a postal and online survey was carried out and 27 families completed the survey. The low response rate highlighted that despite there being a large number of young carers registered with the Carers Centre in B&NES, families do not see the strategy as something that is relevant to them or something, that they can have a valuable input into.

In June 2021 the Carers Centre held a Participation workshop with the Speak Out Young Carers Group (SOYC). This was well attended, 12 members of the SOYC group took part in this event and provided a huge amount of valuable input, which has informed this strategy. The full report from the consultation can be found in Appendix A.

The priorities from the consultation were set as:

- Support for young carers in schools – recognition of their role, a delegated member of staff, support groups, help with schoolwork
- All services to recognise young carers and their specific needs when working with the family
- Professionals to provide young carers with clear information
- Not having to keep repeating their story – better communication and information sharing between services
- Opportunities to have a break from caring role and spend fun time with other young carers
- Involve young carers in decisions and plans that affect them

Young carers and their families recognise the importance of having an in-depth strategy for professionals and organisations working with young carers, but don't feel that this is applicable to them. They highlighted the need for a 'young person friendly' version, which clearly cites the priorities in a way that is meaningful to them and captures their experiences of being a young carer and what they would find helpful and supportive. In response to this, we have co-produced a 'young- person friendly' version which can be found in Appendix 2.

All young carers and their families will continue to be given opportunities to provide feedback about their experiences both formally and informally. The Young Carers participation group, SOYC will continue to be supported and developed by the Carers Centre to ensure that the voice of young carers is representative and that it influences the design and commissioning of support. The importance of all agencies to engage and listen to young carers will be reflected in communications and through work with the partners.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to be a living strategy, one that is lived by those working across Bath and North East Somerset. The vision is one that needs to be understood and then developed, refined, and renewed to achieve the aims that:

- all agencies know how to identify and refer a young carer for support.
- young carers receive a needs assessment which leads to a support plan to protect them from inappropriate caring roles and enables them to flourish.
- support is available for the whole family to make sure young carers meet the outcomes of the Bath and North East Somerset Children and young people's strategy to be safe, healthy and have equal life chances.

Each professional has a different role to play whether it is having a conversation with a child or young person to see if they have a caring role, to refer a young carer, to assess a young carer's needs or to provide them with support. By writing down the intentions we have for young carers in Bath and North East Somerset we are able to make a commitment to young carers that live here what they can expect. The strategy holds us all to account to meet the standards we set down. By creating a specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely plan we can all identify our part in making the vision a reality.

Our principles

There are no 'wrong doors': young carers are identified and assessed, and their families receive support to prevent inappropriate levels of caring regardless of which service comes into contact with them first^x.

Listening to young carers and their families through the use of person-centred approaches and holistic assessments is embedded into everyday practice.

Young carers and their families are identified and supported earlier to prevent inappropriate levels of caring, in line with an Early Help approach^x.

The voice of young carers and their families informs strategic developments and commissioning.

Young carers and their families have access to community resources through effective information, advice and support.

These principles embed the following behaviours:

- We listen
- We understand
- We connect.

Safeguarding

All agencies working with children and young people have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare. Agencies will ensure practitioners are aware of local safeguarding arrangements within B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership and accept a joint responsibility to work in partnership to identify and respond to any young carers who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm^{xi}.

Some young carers may try to avoid contact with agencies as they are worried about being taken into care and being separated from their parents/carers. The care they provide can cover emotional support to parents/carers as well as practical care of parents/carers and siblings, and this can impact on their development in various ways unless support is provided to ensure the child is able to balance their own needs against the needs of their family. It is important for all workers to be professionally curious so that we explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value. This is a key facet of safeguarding and child protection work, so that we can better work together to ask the right questions, at the right time, ensuring that the voice of the child and their experience, is at the centre of what we do.

Statutory Duties

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) is statutory guidance and applies to all professionals who work with children. The guidance sets out organisations responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Safeguarding responsibilities emphasised for all professionals working in voluntary, charity, social enterprise and faith-based organisations^{xii}

Local Safeguarding Arrangements

B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership came into existence in September 2019. It was developed in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Local Safeguarding Adult Board and RAG which it has now replaced.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership is committed to:

- The voice of children, adults, families and communities is strengthened
- Strengthening and improving the work on Think Family and Community
- Improving strategic decision making and leadership by having one cohesive conversation
- Focusing on shared strategic objectives to achieve the greatest impact and improve outcomes for children, adults, families and the community
- Reducing duplication and therefore enable us to use our resources more effectively across B&NES

Strategic Aims

This strategy sets out how partners will work together to raise awareness, plan, and deliver a range of support options for young carers in Bath and North East Somerset.

Our vision will be met through our strategic aims are to as follows:

Raise awareness of young carers

Key messages from research suggest that without early identification

- young people's disclosure tends to happen at crisis points
- young people appreciate professionals who give them space to build trust as well as the choice to talk, what to tell and at what pace
- young people's repeated experiences of disrupted relationships with professionals may result in resignation and lack of engagement

We will work in with our partners in Education, Health & Social Care and the voluntary sector to improve awareness about young carers by:

- providing support, training, and resources about identifying and supporting young carers at the earliest opportunity
- providing appropriate and accessible information for families about support services

Improve the identification of young carers and their families

This strategy will focus on improving early identification of young carers through partnership work with a wide range of organisations, across Bath and North East Somerset and create a culture of openness so that young carers and their families feel confident to identify themselves and request support. Partnership working will also explore perceived barriers to identifying young carers and how these can effectively be overcome.

- The Young Carers Service will strengthen and embed early identification and assessment through working with other services aimed at young people, including schools, colleges, health services and other youth organisations.
- A key place to identify young carers is in school. Information, and training will be provided to schools to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be able to recognise young carers. The Young Carers Service will run School Conferences and regular bulletins and good practice guidance about identifying and supporting young carers will be shared with all schools via the Schools Standards Board, ensuring that there is a commitment towards young carers from senior leadership.
- Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, in addition to assessing parent's needs, have a key role in identifying young carers, as they will often be the first point of contact. The Young Carers Service will deliver regular awareness raising workshops for all Social Care staff working, citing local data and case studies, to enable staff to develop their skills and knowledge on how to identify young carers within a family. This training will be comprised within the staff induction and performance development program.
- Health professionals are also likely to be among the people that a family turns to for help with an illness or disability. Whether they work in a hospital or community, with adults or children, they may be the only person who is able to ask the right questions to find out that a child is

taking on caring responsibilities. We will encourage GP surgeries to have registers identifying young carers and consider additional training resources

- The council and BSW CCG are working together to improve care pathways and access to provision for all carers. The Children's Services Commissioner will continue to ensure that young carers needs are highlighted at the BSW Care Forums, so that Health providers are aware of the health challenges faced by young carers.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health services should be used as appropriate to support the emotional wellbeing of young carers who are seriously troubled by their caring role.

Provide information and support at the earliest opportunity

Young carers and young adult carers may have reduced positive outcomes as they frequently miss out on regular childhood experiences. This can negatively impact their mental health, physical health, and emotional wellbeing.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify, assess and support young carers in their area. Bath & North East Somerset Council has commissioned the Carers Centre to deliver a Young Carers Service. The Young Carers Service has a dedicated Team to assess and support young carers locally. The Young Carers Service, in partnership with other services, will promote awareness of young carers and ensure that their needs are identified through Early Help assessments, with clear guidance for practitioners.

- The Young Carers Service will provide a timely, holistic, and family-centred Needs Assessment. The assessment will consider the impact of the caring role on the young carer's wellbeing, education, and personal and emotional development. Young Carers and their families will be offered a Support Plan, which will be based on the young carer's specific needs. Where there are any aspects of a situation that indicates there are concerns about children's and/or vulnerable adults' safety and they require protection from harm these will be responded to swiftly and in line with local safeguarding procedures. Typically, children's services will undertake the provision of services or support to children in need and adult social services will undertake services and support to the adult. These may be directly provided or commissioned from other providers.
- Through effective fundraising and partnership working, the Young Carers Service will continue to deliver a wide range of short breaks and youth activities for different age groups throughout the year, these will provide opportunities for

young carers to have a break from their caring role and spend time with their peers. The activities will be informed by young carers and their families.

- The Young Carers Service will continue to deliver Wellbeing Groups for young carers, providing emotional support and strategies for coping with the stresses that come with caring
- The Young Carers Service will deliver Family Events for young carers and their families, this will give them the opportunity to spend quality time as a family and meet and connect other families who may have similar needs.
- Occasionally, young carers may require additional 1-1 support. The Young Carers Service will either provide this in-house or refer/signpost to an appropriate agency.
- Where possible, the Young Carers Service will help with transport arrangements to enable young carers to access the provision.
- Young Carers will be offered information about on how they can access universal services in their community

- Schools will be encouraged to offer proactive support to Young Carers in their settings. Schools will be requested to run Young Carers Support Groups, identify a 'Delegated Lead' for young carers so that they know who the 'trusted adult/s' are that they can talk to, and ensure that there are processes in place for staff know who the young carers in their school and guidance on how they can be supported.

Young carers are engaged citizens within their own community

We know that service user engagement is key to the effective delivery of services. When young people and their families feel that they are truly involved in the planning and shaping of services, this can lead to them feeling empowered and valued. In Bath & North East Somerset we are committed to ensuring that young carers and their families can effectively influence the delivery and design of services throughout the assessment, planning and delivery stages as follows:

- Young Carers and their family will be involved in the Young Carers' Needs Assessment and it will be carried out in a way that is appropriate for the young carer's age, level of understanding and their family. Information, both prior to, and after the assessment will be provided in a format that is accessible to the young carer and their family. Individual support packages for young carers will reflect the needs identified by family
- Young Carers Service will continue to be 'service user led'. Young carers and their families will regularly be asked for their views on the service and activities offered, with mechanisms in place to enable young carers and their families to see difference their views are making. This will be reviewed and monitored through the commissioning process.
- The Speak Out Young Carers Group (SOYC), facilitated by the Young Carers Service, provides a coordinated approach to participation for young carers locally. The group will continue to meet regularly and ensure young carers have a voice in the Carers' Centre and on local services. Members of SOYC have taken part in webinars chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, discussing wider agendas affecting young people locally, and sharing their experience of being a young carer. Young Carers will continue to be supported to engage in participation activities.
- The quarterly Chill Magazine will be co-produced by the Young Carers Service and Young Carers, providing young person friendly information about services, activities, and news for young carers.

Smoother Transitions Across Services and into Adulthood

The Care Act places legal duties on local authorities to carry out transition assessments. The duty to carry out a transition assessment applies when someone is likely to have needs for care and support (or support as a carer) when they are 18. A transition assessment is to provide young people and their families with information so that they know what to expect in the future and can prepare for adulthood. There is no set age as to when the assessment should take place, but it should be at a point when the local authority can be reasonably confident about what the young person's needs for care and support will look like when they are 18^{xiii}.

Transition Assessments provides an opportunity for an early conversation about moving from Children's to Adult Services with young people and their families. All Transition Assessments are person centred and should reflect a young person's or carer's views, wishes and

aspirations. During a Transition Assessment, young carers will be given the opportunity to think about their strengths, needs and desired outcomes, and to use these to plan how they will achieve their goals

A Transition Assessment will look at:

- Young person or carer's current needs for care and support are and how these impacts on your wellbeing
- whether the young person or a carer for a disabled person is likely to have needs for care and support after they 18
- if so, what those needs are likely to be, and which are likely to be eligible needs
- the outcomes the young person or carer wishes to achieve in day-to-day life and how care and support (and other matters) can contribute to achieving them.

Transition assessments will consider the sustainability of a young carer's role and how their caring role could be impacting on their life aspirations. The assessment should include an indication of how any care and support plan for the person(s) they care for would change because of the young carer's change in circumstances. This would require a statutory assessment of need for the cared for person to be completed with that person's consent or in their best interest if they lack the capacity to consent to the assessment. For example, if a young carer has an opportunity to go to university away from home, the local authority should indicate how it would meet the eligible needs of any family members that were previously being met by the young carer.

There are two ways in which a young carer can transition into adult social care and are as follows

- a. If the young carer is known to the Young Carers service – The first transitions discussions for young carers takes place at Year 9 (age 13-14yrs) when young person starts making decisions about the future. A support plan is then put in place. This is to ensure that when young carers make decisions about their future i.e. taking their options at School they are aware of the support available to enable them to have the same future opportunities as their peers not in a caring role, such as the aspiration to attend university. At the age of 17 years young carers who are accessing the Young Carers service will be advised about adult services and that they are entitled to a transitional assessment. The young carer will need to complete a consent form giving permission for the Young Carers Service to refer them to adult social care services. On their 18th birthday a birthday card is sent to the young person detailing how young people can start an adult carers assessment.

When a young person who is reaching adulthood and is not known to the Young Carers Service wants an Adult assessment; they would be directed to Adult Services for a Statutory Assessment. The Carers Centre would be able to do a Support Plan for the young adult and this would cover a lot the information needed in the assessment, thereby reducing duplication

- b. Self-referral – From the age of 14 a young carer can self-refer themselves for a transition's assessment. If needed and with consent, a professional can fill out the transitions panel referral form for the young carer. (Please see appendix B for referral form)

Where a carer is not eligible for care and support needs for themselves or no longer wishes to care for a person when they become 18, local authorities must provide appropriate information and advice on where to access alternative support if they require it either now or in the future.

Through these strategic aims outlined here, our ambition is to prevent inappropriate caring roles and reduce the impact of caring on children and young people's wellbeing.

Appendix A



Young Carers
Strategy report.pdf

Footnotes

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- ⁱ <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/Children%20and%20young%20people%20plan%20refresh%202021-2022.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ section 96 (7) Children and Families Act 2014 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/96>
- ⁱⁱⁱ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582575/Lives_of_young_carers_in_England_Omnibus_research_report.pdf
- ^{iv} <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>
- ^v <https://carers.org/our-social-care-campaign/carers-trust-social-care-survey-2020>
- ^{vi} <https://thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/Page/11031>
- ^{vii} <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/96/enacted>
- ^{viii} <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/63/enacted>
- ^{ix} <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Young%20Carers%20needs%20assessment.pdf>
- ^x <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/get-early-help>
- ^{xi} <https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/>
- ^{xii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- ^{xiii} <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1/crossheading/transition-for-children-to-adult-care-and-support-etc/enacted>