

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 28 March 2022

**Report Title**

Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Support for Young Carers

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

This report summarises the findings and recommendations from the 22 October 2021 spotlight review in respect of support for young carers. These recommendations were agreed by Health Select Commission on 25 November 2021, and by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 19 January 2022.

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Cabinet are requested to respond formally to the recommendations and indicate agreement or otherwise and what action will be taken to implement the recommendations, together with details of timescales and accountabilities.

**Recommendations**

1. That the following recommendations from the review be received:
  - a) That action plans and performance matrix be supplied as part of the next update in 6 months' time.
  - b) That a plan be developed to address the current data gap in respect of young carers who mature into adult carers, with a view to providing the best preparation possible and making this transition as seamless as possible for young carers who may continue to have caring responsibilities into adulthood.

- c) That consideration be given to how best to provide additional support to young carers seeking to access employment skills, education and training.
- 2. That Cabinet formally consider its response to the above recommendations by June 2022, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

**List of Appendices Included**

None

**Background Papers**

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 19 January 2022

Minutes of Health Select Commission – 25 November 2021

Findings from Spotlight Review of Support for Young Carers – Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 19 January 2022

Findings from Spotlight Review of Support for Young Carers – Health Select Commission – 25 November 2021

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 19 January 2022

Health Select Commission – 25 November 2021

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Support for Young Carers**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 As part of the discussions of the Adult Carer's Strategy at the 8 July meeting of Health Select Commission, a spotlight review was undertaken in tandem with Improving Lives Select Commission to examine the support available for young carers both during the pandemic and entering the recovery phase. Members met with service leads from the Council's Early Help Service and partner organisation Barnardo's on 22 October 2021. The spotlight review was undertaken by Councillors Baum-Dixon, Pitchley, Thompson, and Yasseen.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 Members sought assurances that robust and proactive efforts are made to identify young carers in need of support. Members also expressed concerns around unmet needs in the Borough and expressed interest in the outcomes of the targeted engagement programme. The response from service leads in the Council and Barnardo's provided assurances that young carers are proactively sought out. The family support elements of Early Help are robustly assessed, and it was noted that not all young carers who are supported through Early Help and other partners are necessarily known to Barnardo's. It was also noted that Housing Officers, for example, can be important eyes and ears to identify a need early, which is everyone's shared responsibility. Members requested to be kept informed of high-level action plans and recommended that these as well as a framework by which the service will assess its effectiveness be included in the next scrutiny update.
- 2.2 Members also requested clarification around the allocation of moneys to help young carers. The Covid Outbreak Management Funds (COMF) grants are time-limited and have been made available for the delivery of a specific programme for young carers. For that reason, the impact of that piece of work will be assessed separately. All of the money allocated for this work goes directly to the service.
- 2.3 Assurances were sought around support in place for young carers who may not self-identify or make themselves known to the service. The service leads acknowledged that sometimes there might be a fear that the child will be removed from the home, so there can be hesitation to engage; therefore, the service does not take initial refusal at face value. Very skilled workers in the service persist and try different methods to engage, considering it the responsibility of the service to find the right way to engage the child and family. If the service identifies a need, but the child does not want to engage, the service must respect that decision but also make sure that the child's school and other professionals in their lives keep an eye out to monitor. Sometimes a child might not want to do specific "young carer" activities but might be happy to come to a youth event hosted by Early Help. Examples were cited in which young carers who did not engage at first began to show interest after their siblings became familiar with the service and the community. The young carers service at Barnardo's is often pulled into the wraparound Early Help plan for a family, where appropriate.

- 2.4 Members expressed hopes that training and good practice is available to contractors to help them recognise a young carer who may need help. The response from leads confirmed that trainings have been delivered to various Council contractors such as Mears, to spread the message that safeguarding is everyone's business. Following on from these trainings, several situations where concerns were flagged early resulted in significant positive outcomes.
- 2.5 Members also further inquired around the plan for young carers who age out of the service age group as they become adults. The response from leads acknowledged that the best time to help a young person prepare for what will happen when they turn 18 is when they are 16 or 17. Assurances were provided that a pathway exists for the most vulnerable young people as they turn 18, but there remains a gap in data around the journey of young carers who become young adults. Without a cohort of young people who have agreed to contribute to this research, this will continue to be an area of unknowns. Members therefore recommended that, insofar as data in respect of young carers transitioning to adulthood would be helpful in designing provision of support to ease this transition, this work should be undertaken.
- 2.6 Members sought assurances around support available to help young carers be able to access employment skills, training, and higher education. Whilst the response described positive liaison with local universities, particularly Rotherham and Sheffield Hallam campuses, which has offered focus group weekends available to the young people to familiarise them with the environment and introduce them to other carers who are university students and prospective students, Members recommended that more work be done in the area of access to education, skills and training, as limitations remain for young people who wish to pursue education but within only a short radius from home because of their caring responsibilities. For example, a young person wishing to pursue a particular career path may with support be able to pursue their desired vocation; whereas without support, they may feel that various pressures limit them from having an open future. Working to understand and reduce these limitations where possible, and to expand access to opportunities near home could help many young carers for whom options further afield would currently be out of reach.
- 2.7 Assurances were requested that teachers and other professionals such as GPs are trained and supported to identify a need. The response noted that the service liaises with link workers in schools according to each school's unique framework. This supports teachers and safeguarding leads in schools to be able to receive information. As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, professionals are spending more time with young people, and referrals are rising.
- 2.8 Assurances were sought around the provision of face-to-face support during COVID-19. The response noted the impact of restrictions on face-to-face activities, such as only one child being allowed to be transported per car journey. These precautions were especially important because many of the young people have a vulnerable family member. Home visits were conducted

during the pandemic, although some young carers chose to suspend these, and community events were held but not in the large numbers as in the past.

- 2.9 Clarification was requested around the process for getting support when a mental health need has been identified. The response indicated that Barnardo's does not attempt to tackle significant mental health problems themselves, but they do coordinate the referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to give the right support. On a day-to-day basis, mental health and wellbeing work focusses on issues like self-esteem, stress, anger, and relaxation. These activities are tailored to the needs of the individual child based on feedback from the young people on what works for them, and these sessions are not time limited.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Recommendations were generated by Members and derived from discussion during the Q&A session with service leads.
- 3.2 Recommendation 2 is that Cabinet consider the recommendations from the review. There is no alternative option as this is in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Members have regard to the expressed views of their constituents in their formulation of scrutiny priorities and lines of inquiry. Recommendations from scrutiny are produced as outcomes of consultation of officers and partners providing support for young carers with Members in their role as elected representatives of Rotherham residents.

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The accountability for implementing recommendations arising from this report will sit with Cabinet and relevant officers.
- 5.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules require Cabinet to consider and respond to recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Select Commissions in no more two months from the date that Cabinet receives this report.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 No financial implications arise directly from this report, although the response to the review will need to take account of any such implications arising from consideration of the scrutiny recommendations.

### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no human resources implications directly arising from this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 Implications for Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults are set out in the main sections of the report.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 Furthering equalities and human rights is an objective of scrutiny; therefore, Members give consideration to equalities in the development of scrutiny work programmes, lines of inquiry and in their derivation of recommendations designed to improve the delivery of council services for residents.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 There are no climate or emissions implications directly associated with this report.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 Implications for partners are set out in the main sections of the report. Cabinet will need to consider the implications for partners in its response to the recommendations from scrutiny.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 Members have regard to the risks and mitigation factors associated with the services under scrutiny and have made recommendations accordingly.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	14/03/22
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	07/03/22
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	07/03/22

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