We said, You said, We Did: Young Carers Consultation feedback – August 2016

The consultation ran from 9 May 2016 to 28 Jul 2016. Methods of engagement were:

- Online Survey – 54 respondents
- Focus group sessions young people (North, South, Young Healthwatch, Bristol City Youth Council, Young Carers Voice)
- Telephone calls to families
- Attending family fun day
- Focus group sessions adults (x3)
- Phone calls and home visit
- Feedback given from groups (BDP)
- Email feedback
- Use of feedback from the Bristol Emotional Health & Wellbeing Transformation Plan for Children & Young People Schools Survey and Survey from Safeguarding Schools, extract questions relevant to Young Carers.

Referral and identification

We said:

We propose that the best way for Young Carers and their families to receive the appropriate support is for there to be a clear referral route to that support so that any concerns, whether this be from a young carer, family member or professional, can be directed to the same place. In addition to this, once these concerns/needs have been identified the appropriate whole family support including a key worker will be allocated in a timely manner.

You said:

There was agreement that a “structured and coordinated approach is exactly what is required to support this vulnerable group of young people and their families”. In the survey 86.5% respondents agreed, 11.5% didn’t know and 1.9% disagreed.

Feedback suggested that the model needed to ensure there are links with other services, and that wider services have staff who are ‘Young Carers aware’. People agreed that a whole family approach would be the best way to support Young Carers, and that they should be seen as an individual and care should focus on them but within the context of the family.

Young Carers said they wanted to have long term support with a key person. Sometimes just going to a monthly (social) session, but having someone to
talk to when things got hard at home. Young Carers wanted adults who listened and understood, and who were able to provide more information about how to get support. The key person to talk to was someone who they trusted from school or college, or their Young Carers worker at a youth project. Some Young Carers said they had an anxiety involving/ not wanting new workers or over complicating their home life.

Concern was raised at not having a level of specialist work with Young Carers within the proposed service. The reasons were around Young Carers not wanting to access services via statutory routes for fear of stigmatisation, especially with mental health or substance caring.

Consultation feedback showed current difficulties with the current referral process. Feedback suggested First response, Early Help etc. are holding cases with more complex multiple needs, and the needs of Young Carers are potentially being lost.

Adults working with Young Carers and their families said they are more likely to identify with non-statutory agencies and ask for support through those agencies rather than statutory services. Young Carers said they would like the person supporting:

- To listen and not judge
- To provide experience from an adult point of view
- To respect privacy
- To be able to talk for longer periods of time
- To provide more information on how to get support
- To be a dedicated worker, someone specifically trained in supporting Young Carers, not necessarily a teacher.

They also said they would like:

- Options for different workers (some Young Carers expressed that while they wanted someone to talk to they felt that sometimes this was best served by different support workers over time).
- More information available via posters, teacher announcements and assemblies

Comments:

“Specialist carer’s services help Young Carers to step like a stepping stone into other services.”

“Young Carers do not want to tell their story lots of times and (I) feel a specialist service is needed.”
“Needs to be better linked with adult care, to reduce or prevent Young Carers, particularly those undertaking duties to the extent that this is affecting their, mental health, school achievement etc."

“The key worker should do a full assessment of Young Carer and family to get a full understanding of the needs of the young carer and what support will be needed in order for him/her to have an improve life experience.”

In addition to links with adult care, feedback suggested greater links with other service providers, special schools, and GPs.

Feedback around specific groups of Young Carers were highlighted:

- The problem is identifying some young people within families, where the family member will not admit that they need support. Especially if this is an adult with mental health problems or an adult dependent on illicit drugs. These are the types of families who would be reluctant to have a key worker monitoring their family life.
- Gypsy Roma Traveller young people are under-represented in this area of research as many are suspicious of and/or unable to access mainstream services. The life expectancy of GRTs for men and women is 50 years so for many young people being Young Carers of a dependent family member or parents is considered the norm. Also, GRT children are four times more likely to have SEN or other disabilities due to poor health outcomes, low uptake of health services, etc. which means that some children may also be caring for a sibling in addition to parents.
- For BME communities there are cultural issues rather than language barriers, caring can be kept secret to those outside the family in some cultures.

**We did:**

The work on the Young Carers pathway continues to be developed with the Birth to 25 Service, Adult and Children’s Services. Feedback from consultation has been taken into account for this work and as a result BCC have submitted a business case for additional funding for the commissioned service to undertake assessments as part of the pathway. The newly commissioned services will work within the pathway to support and complement support to Young Carers and their families. There was recognition that there should be an element of a specialist service within the new commissioned service, for young carers who do not want to access support via statutory services, and to help with pressures on Early Help services, where the needs of Young Carers could be lost. As a result of the consultation the service will provide assessments and support for Young Carers. Staff taking referrals will have an understanding of the needs of Young Carers and are trained to work with Young Carers. The service will then provide support to the Young Carer and their family as identified in the assessment. This may include direct 1-to-1 or group work as well as signposting to additional agencies to receive additional support. The service
will work closely with the Integrated Carers team to co-work on joint assessments, and as a link to BCC social care, to assist in service navigation.
Social Life

We said:
Evidence indicates that many Young Carers may encounter barriers to accessing positive social activities. To support Young Carers and break down some of these barriers we propose to fund three area-based (North, South and East-Central Bristol) Young Carers positive activity/support groups. We recognise that not all Young Carers will want to attend groups specifically designed for Young Carers and so we will also support carers to use Bristol City Council’s existing citywide youth services.

You said:
In our survey 68.8% agreed, 22.9% didn’t know, and 8.3% disagreed with the area based group idea.

For one group being consulted for the 50% looking after siblings the impact was massive due to the amount of time they had to devote to the caring role. Young people report this having an impact on them socially as they are unable to get out of the house. Some young people reported this impacting school work as they had no time to revise or do homework, one young person cited this as the sole reason they achieved poor GCSE results. One young person disclosed truanting to care for their mum.

One parent’s feedback “It’s important he’s got something else outside the house just for him. He can meet new people, sit and relate to each other and he’s gained confidence.”

Young Carers provided lots of comments about how they would like to access a social life. They talked about having:

- Local groups as travelling out of their own area could be a barrier – not able to get there, length of time away from home
- Linked to above, transport was important to help Young Carers access groups
- Age appropriate activities or groups – there are different things Younger Carers want to do to older Young Carers
- It’s not always about doing lots of activities – sometimes they just want a place to chill, but also like to do trips and different things
- Young Carers like young carer specific groups as they can share similar experiences with each other and also talk to a worker if they need to about what’s happening at home, and learning important skills for being a Young Carer
- Frequency doesn’t have to be often (weekly or monthly)
- It needs to be free – would be difficult if it costs
- 6-8pm on a weekday evening is a good time for the groups to take place (this time allows Young Carers to go home and help parent/pick up siblings from school).
• The groups should be advertised with posters in school and doctors surgeries.
• It helped to meet the worker one to one beforehand to make it easier to come along first time.

We did
The existing area groups will continue to run, and there will be emphasis on agencies working together to ensure the groups continue to be successful in meeting the needs of Young Carers. As the above additional specialist service requires resource, there will be no additional requirement for the new provider to have additional social groups. However the Participation group will be seen as an integral part of providing opportunities for Young Carers to get together socially from across the city as well as having the opportunity to have their voice heard. Part of the Schools work will involve helping schools to set up Young Carers groups in schools for those young carers who wish to identify as a young carer at school and gain support within their education setting.
School Support

We said
Evidence tells us that many Young Carers suffer significant educational disadvantage, including bullying, attendance problems or inability to complete homework/coursework. We propose to fund a service that will work in partnership with schools to support and highlight the needs Young Carers. This service should provide schools with information, advice, guidance and tailored training.

You said
Throughout consultation young people told us “Some schools are rubbish and some are more helpful” at supporting Young Carers. It was widely agreed that having good support in schools was a really important aspect for Young Carers to be able to cope with caring at home, and for them to succeed at school in exams. However there was some concern that schools do not have to engage with projects and that a consistent approach across all schools was needed.

In our survey 73.3% agreed, 22.2% didn’t know, and 4.4% disagreed with schools being best placed to support Young Carers.

One parent said “There is not enough awareness at school; they are not asking why the child is behaving that way”.

Adults working with Young Carers said “They should respect Young Carers decisions regarding how much information they want to share. “

Young People said support in school could come from:

- School staff identifying Young Carers without the Young Carer having to seek out help.
- Young Carers group in school
- Having more time for homework and assignments
- Understanding from teachers why we may be withdrawn or homework may be late
- Need to ask us (discreet) questions to understand (teachers/school) but treat it with confidentiality (for fear of bullying)
- Listening to us
- Drop in session once a month is helpful
- Having Assemblies in schools
- Important they understand why and if you are late
- 15-18 years, GCSE to A Level – making sure support is in place early to prevent crises in exams
- School being flexible around deadlines to take into account caring responsibilities
• Additional support is required during A-Levels/ exams. Schools and marking schemes need to understand that Young Carers are not able to dedicate as much time to revision as other young people.

The following was from a survey of Bristol Schools carried out April to June 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Carers:(please select all that apply to you)</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school has been proactive in identifying young carers within the school, e.g. through assemblies and surveys.</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant staff have undergone training on supporting young carers.</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about available support is publicised to learners, staff and parents.</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people identified as young carers have been asked if they would like to participate in a formal assessment, accessed via First Response, to identify their particular needs and the support they require.</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a designated person for young carers to talk to.</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has a good working partnership with the local young carers service.</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>answered question</strong></td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>skipped question</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
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In May 2016 The Bristol Emotional Health & Wellbeing Transformation Plan for Children & Young People Schools Survey was carried out. Relevant to Young Carers Services it found in Bristol schools, emotional and health wellbeing issues, such as sexuality, domestic violence and mental health in families, depression, being a young carer, eating disorders and body image, were highlighted as key issues impacting on children’s emotional health and well-being. However schools often felt ill equipped, or not very well equipped, to provide support in most of these areas.

**We did**

As a result of the consultation and information from the schools surveys the school support will be a focal point for the new service. It will be required to raise awareness and support agencies, in particular schools, which work with Young Carers. The Provider will support services to ensure they:

• understand the impact of caring on children and young people
• understand the challenges of identifying Young Carers
• understand the needs of Young Carers in transition
It will do so by supporting services to implement:

- Systems – policies, strategy, information systems
- Culture – the responsibility of all staff
Education and preparing for work and training

We said:
Evidence tells us that Young Carers are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET). In addition to the support currently provided by schools, Bristol City Council currently also funds a citywide service to support those who are or are at risk of becoming NEET. The new clear referral route and whole family working will help Bristol City Council and its partners identify Young Carers and their support needs, this includes supporting those Young Carers who might be at risk of becoming NEET. Bristol City Council’s NEET service will support those identified Young Carers to work and training opportunities.

You said
“The workers will have to be fully trained to support Young Carers. I have had many NEET workers say to me, ‘Let’s put you on a college course, let’s look for a job’ and I have felt uncomfortable to say, I can’t as I have to be home full time with my parents. Sometimes it is not possible to be a part of the community when you are needed 100% at home and the person you care for does not reach the Social Care services criteria. I believe the NEET workers would then have to train the staff the Young Carers are going to face as I found I struggled through or left courses and jobs because there was no understanding of my caring role.”

In our survey 69.6% agreed, 26.1% didn’t know, and 4.3% disagreed with the proposal to increase Young Carers access to work and training opportunities.

- Young Carers talked about (educational establishments) importance of finding Young Carers – identification and bring out of isolation could be done by tick box on (uni) application
- Transport (to be able to access college etc.)
- Being made aware you don’t have to go into a caring profession
- Support on how to tell school, college, uni etc. that you are carer (without telling everyone for fear of bullying)
- Be aware that things don’t often change at home (so may repeat)
- Consistency across all school and colleges
- Access to help with CV writing, job applications university, telling employers, while providing activity and fun
- Access to grants and other funding
- Help to transition to adult services
- Young Carers should be given support on how to evidence the skills they have developed through being a Young Carer on job and university applications.
- Young Carers may need help to attend university open days.
• Leaving home is often difficult for Young Carers (who do they pass on their caring responsibilities to? Who teaches them the skills needed to live independently (e.g. Bank accounts, bills)?

We did
Through the added specialist support to Young Carers, where there is a risk of NEET, the provider will be able to support Young Carers to get the best out of education, employment and training opportunities. The provider will also be able to signpost to EET support services.
Participation

We said

In recognition of the importance of the promotion of children’s rights we propose to fund an independent participation service. This will ensure that Young Carers have a voice and that their needs can be addressed at a personal, service and strategic level. This service will be supported by Bristol City Council so that its voice feeds directly into the appropriate decision making boards.

You said

In our survey 66.7% agreed, 28.9% didn’t know and 4.4% disagreed on the proposal to fund an independent participation service to be the best way to get Young Carers views heard and acted upon by Bristol City Council and its partners. Consultation feedback showed some Young Carers were aware there was a participation group, but others were not. Young Carers got to know about the group through a worker who was working with them as part of a group or 1:1, and recommended the group to them as they got to know each other. The group was about relationships with others as much as having a voice. They thought that a participation group wouldn’t be for everyone as not everyone would be interested, but that for those who did, or attended another forum the feedback given was around:

- Feed us Pizza!
- Good to meet up with other Young Carers and how we can upgrade our society
- Making friends (in the same situation)
- Provides support for peers and YC team
- Getting our voice heard and changing what needs to be changed
- We stay until we outgrow the group
- Gaining confidence and ability to talk to adult – as they may be scary
- Gaining experience to speak at big event
- No embarrassment – not being judged
- Everyone in the same situation
- Opportunity to speak to professionals about caring issues
- Creates opportunities
- Building confidence
- Learnt new skills
- Learnt how to communicate and be respectful
- Feel free to speak our minds
- Enjoy people that come back and share the change we have made
- The group needs to link with other (policy) bodies
- Anonymous way of suggesting ideas
- Advertisement – Rife, posters (schools and GPs)
- Led by young people
- Constant feedback: 2 way continuous processes of consulting people
Survey responses agreed that Young Carers should have a process to ensure their voice is heard. Some felt it was important that the participation service should also be providing support to Young Carers, but others said it could be the council who ran the service so it’s independent of organisations and can hold services to account with public money.

**We did**
The service will facilitate the collective voices of Young Carers in the design and delivery of services for Young Carers. The focus will be on relationship building with peers and workers but also being able to communicate the needs of Young Carers to others.

A summary of the core components of the participation service to be delivered by the Provider are as follows, to:

• work alongside partners in promoting young people’s active participation at a regional and national level;
• convene meetings of a Young Carers forum;
• share responsibility with Bristol City Youth Council to maintain and promote Young Carers activities;
• provide consultancy support to the continued development of participation amongst Young Carers;
• ensure that representative number of young people are supported to present the views of Young Carers to the Children and Families Partnership Board or relevant sub group and Carers Strategy Implementation group (CSIG) engaging with the wider group of elected members as requested;
• prepare and support Young Carers to contribute to interview panels, staff training, inspections and development of time-limited projects.