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**YOUNG CARERS**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide information about Young Carers in Darlington, their needs and the support available to them.

**Summary**

2. There are currently 117 young carers involved in the Darlington project. However, estimates based on BBC research suggest there may be 712 young carers aged up to 15 years.
3. Being a young carer can have a negative impact on a child or young person's life chances, both in the present and in the future.
4. A Young Carers' Action Plan 2013 -16 (**Appendix 1**) has been developed which sets out the actions to be taken by all partners in Darlington to improve the identification of and provision of support to young carers.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Members receive the information and note services for Young Carers in place within Darlington.

**Murray Rose**  
**Director of People**

**Background Papers**

'Recognised, valued and supported: Next Steps for the Carers Strategy' (HMSO, November 2010)

'Working Together to Support Young Carers – A Model Local Memorandum of Understanding between Statutory Directors for Children's Services and Adult Social Services' (December 2009, updated August 2012)

'Young Adult Carers in the UK' (Becker and Becker, 2009)

'Young Carers: Something to think about' (Department of Health, 1996)

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S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Well Being	Supporting young carers will help to maintain their health and wellbeing and that of the people they care for.
Carbon Impact	There are no implications arising from this report.
Diversity	Identifying and providing support for young carers will help to mitigate potential negative impacts from their caring role. It will also support the people they care for.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	Young carers up to the age of 25.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Support for young carers contributes to the 'One Darlington' priority by narrowing the gaps for vulnerable groups of people in the Borough. This applies particularly to the 'healthy and supported' and 'educated and skilled' outcomes.
Efficiency	Both the Council and the Health Service face potential increased costs to social care and health budgets if young carers are not supported to continue to care and to maintain their own health and wellbeing.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. Young carers are “children and young people under the age of 18 who provide regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuse substances. The term does not apply to the everyday and occasional help around the home that may be expected of or given by children in families. The key features are that the caring responsibilities persist over time and are important in maintaining the health, safety or day to day wellbeing of the person cared for and or the wider family. (‘Working Together to Support Young Carers’, 2009).
7. The person receiving the care is often a parent but can also be a brother or sister, grandparent or other relative who needs support because of a health problem or disability.
8. As young carers move into adulthood, their needs evolve, and research has identified a group aged 16 - 25 (known as young adult carers) who may continue to need support.
9. The 2001 census identified 178 young carers aged 15 and under in Darlington. Research published by the BBC in November 2010, estimates more than four times as many young people act as carers compared with the previous official estimate in the 2001 census. If applied to the 2001 Darlington census figures, this would suggest that there are likely to be at least 712 young carers aged 15 and under in Darlington.
10. In August 2012, 66 young carers were being supported by the YMCA Young Carers Project and 61 Young Adult Carers by the Young Adult Carers Service. ( snapshot)
11. A total of 117 young carers had been supported by the YMCA Young Carers Project during the period April 2011 – August 2012.
12. Caring for a parent or sibling can have detrimental effects on children both during their childhood and in later life. These include the following:-
  - (a) Problems at school, completing homework and getting qualifications
  - (b) Isolation from other children and other family members
  - (c) Lack of time for play, sport or other leisure activities
  - (d) Conflict between the needs of the person they are looking after and their own needs
  - (e) Feeling that there is no one there for them and that professionals do not listen to them
  - (f) Lack of recognition for their contribution
  - (g) Feeling that they are different from other children
  - (h) Feeling that no one understands their experience
  - (i) Problems moving into adulthood

13. Research undertaken by Becker and Becker on Young Adult Carers indicates a lack of support for young carers moving into adulthood (16yrs -25yrs), including financial and work issues.
14. Therefore the remit of Young Carers Support in Darlington will be to cover all young carers and young adult carers up to the age of 25, in order to improve the transition process for this group of young people. This is reflected in the new service specification for the Young Carers Support Service, (due to commence from 1 September 2013). The current Young Carers service is provided by the YMCA and includes individual and group support, activities and information.
15. Darlington's Young Carers' Action Plan 2013 -16 has been developed by members of the multi-agency Young Carers Development and Implementation Group, which includes representatives from Health. This sets out actions to be taken by partners to achieve the following aims:
  - (a) Raised awareness regarding young carers, their needs and the support available to them
  - (b) Early intervention and ongoing support for families where there is, or is likely to be, a young carer.
  - (c) Children and young people with caring responsibilities are able to access opportunities that are open to their peers.
  - (d) Effective consultation and participation with young carers and their families to identify their needs.
  - (e) Young carers will be safe and will have improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
  - (f) Improved transitions from young carers service to adult carers service.
16. The Young Carers Memo of Understanding , has been supported by Darlington Borough Council, 'to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of young carers and their families by preventing and protecting children and young people from undertaking excessive and inappropriate caring roles and responsibilities and preventing the continuation of inappropriate caring'. Some of the key aims and outcomes are as follows:-
  - (a) 'There are no 'wrong doors'...'.
  - (b) 'Risks to independence, safety and welfare are responded to in line with 'Think Family' concepts and guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
  - (c) 'Earlier, better integrated and effective responses to young carers and their families using 'whole family pathway approaches' and during transition to adulthood'.
  - (d) 'No care or support package for a parent or sibling relies on excessive or inappropriate caring being undertaken by a young carer to make it sustainable'.

- (e) 'Young carers are helped to achieve their potential and to have the same access to education, career opportunities and broader opportunities as their peers'.
- (f) 'There is better recognition and greater participation of young carers and their families in shaping what we do'.

17. Actions to support delivery of the Young Carers Memo of Understanding are included in the Young Carers' Action Plan.

18. The role of Young Carers and the individual issues that can arise are recognised by all agencies working with young people. It can impact on Education and Health particularly, and also create family issues. The commissioning of a specific service, in addition to increasing awareness of Young Carers, is vital in addressing issues and supporting carers.