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**YOUNG CARERS REVIEW GROUP –  
FINAL REPORT**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To present the outcome and findings of the Review Group established by this Scrutiny Committee to examine the Young Carers Action Plan and to monitor the progress made by the new service providers DISC.

**Summary**

1. At a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 22 April 2013 it was agreed to establish a Young Carers Review Group. Terms of Reference were developed and approved by Scrutiny Committee and all Members of that Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
2. The Review Group has met on two occasions and a wide number of issues have been discussed and considered at those meetings.
3. It was also agreed that this Review provided an ideal opportunity for joint working with Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee and two Councillors were nominated by the Adults and Housing Scrutiny to join the Review Group.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Members approve the recommendations in the final report.

**Catherine Whitehead**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**

**Background Papers**

Darlington Young Carers Action Plan 2013-2016.  
Darlington Young Carers Charter.  
Working in Partnership to Support Young Carers: Information Pack for Primary and Secondary Schools  
DISC Darlington Young Carers' Agency Referral Pack

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	Increased awareness of issues surrounding young carers could have a positive impact on health and well-being of young people
Carbon Impact	There is no carbon impact in relation to this report.
Diversity	There are no specific diversity issues in this report.
Wards Affected	There are no specific Wards which are affected by this report.
Groups Affected	Children and Young People.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report has no impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This report does not constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not considered an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Markets do have an impact on the place of Darlington contributing to the overall economy, environment and Perfectly Placed priority.
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda.

**MAIN REPORT**  
**YOUNG CARERS REVIEW GROUP**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Introduction**

1. This is the final report of the Young Carers Review Group, established by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to examine the Darlington Young Carers Action Plan and progress made towards the actions by the new service providers.

**Background Information**

2. At a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2013 it was agreed to establish a Review Group and the first meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. This allowed for the new service providers to have an introductory period prior to the commencement of the Review.
3. A number of issues have been considered and discussed at meetings of the Review Group and these are referred to in the notes attached (**Appendix 1**). This report describes the outcome of the Review Group, it summarises the findings and subsequent recommendations.
4. A draft Terms of Reference (**Appendix 2**) in relation to this piece of work was developed and approved by Children and Young People Scrutiny and all Members of the Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
5. It was also agreed that this Review provided an ideal opportunity for joint working with Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee and Councillors Kelley and S. Richmond were nominated by the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee to take part in the Review.

**Membership of the Review Group**

6. All Members of Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review and the following Members attended meetings :-

Councillor Crudass  
Councillor Lister  
Councillor EA Richmond  
Councillor S Richmond

Councillor C Taylor  
Councillor Wright

## **Acknowledgements**

7. The Review Group acknowledges the support and assistance provided in the course of their investigations and would like to place on record its thanks to the following :-

Lisa Holdsworth, Service Development Officer;  
Rachel McCormack, DISC Darlington Young Carers Service;  
Rita Lawson, DISC Darlington Young Carers Service;  
Sandra Holding, Project Manager DISC; and  
Allison Hill, Democratic Officer

## **Methods of Investigation**

8. The Review Group met on 4<sup>th</sup> June , 2014 and 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2015, and the notes containing the discussions held at those meetings are attached **(Appendix 1)**.
9. Members initially received a report from the Director of People at the Scrutiny Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2013 on Young Carers in Darlington, their needs and the support available to them and gave consideration to the Young Carers' Action Plan 2013-16 which had been developed and set out the actions to be taken by all partners in Darlington to improve the identification of and provision of support to young carers.
10. Members also heard the views of two young carers at the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2013.

## **Findings**

11. The initial findings of the Review Group indicates that :
- (a) Following a tendering process, DISC was identified as the new service provider for Young Carers aged under 16 years and Young Adult Carers between the age of 16-25 years and its contract commenced in September 2013.
  - (b) YMCA was the previous providers of the Young Carers' Service.
  - (c) The Darlington Young Carers' Action Plan includes general information about the needs of young carers, background information about the context in which support is provided and more detailed information about the demographics of Darlington's young carer population.

(d) The Action Plan identifies six outcomes :

to raise awareness around young carers, their needs and the support available to them for young carers, their families, professionals and the wider public;

early intervention and on going support to be provided to families where there is, or is likely to be a young carer;

children and young people with caring responsibilities are able to access opportunities that are open to their peers;

that there is effective consultation and participation with young carers and their families to identify their needs;

young carers are safe and have improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing; and

there are improved transitions from the young carers service to the adult carers service.

(e) Separate funding has been secured from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for a post to work with schools raising awareness of young carers and a schools worker was appointed for one year from June 2014.

(f) A Darlington Young Carers' Charter has been created and all schools have been actively encouraged to sign up to the Charter and four schools have already signed up. The process of engagement with the remaining schools is ongoing.

(g) It was noted that few faith schools had signed up to the charter although we acknowledged that these schools generally have good pastoral support.

(h) All primary and secondary schools have received an Information Pack of activities and worksheets which could be used as a useful toolkit for schools to undertake with students to establish if they have caring responsibilities prior to referral. A referral pack is also available for schools if any young carers are identified as part of this process to allow them to be referred directly to DISC.

(i) Schools have been recognised as having a key role in identifying young carers and noticing 'triggers' and DISC has also undertaken awareness raising at a recent team meeting for school nurses.

(j) Members of the Review Group also acknowledged that once a young carer has been identified, schools must be sympathetic towards the needs of that young person and made fully aware of the carer's home situation

which may have an effect on their school attendance/classwork and homework.

- (k) Awareness raising continues to be undertaken at GP Surgeries and DISC attended a Protected Learning Event for GP's in September, 2014. A GP has also attended a Young Carers Strategic Partnership Group Meetings.
- (l) Cross-agency working has also been recognised as a key role in identifying young carers and the Young Carers Strategic Partnership Group works well to bring all agencies together and make systems aware of all young carers.
- (m) The Group were satisfied that once a carer reaches the age of 18 years a link is made to the adult carers service and DISC help to manage and facilitate this transition.
- (n) Members were pleased to note that DISC had successfully sourced temporary funding to progress specific work in relation to Adult Mental Health/Substance Misuse and a member of staff will be starting at the end of February to undertake this work.
- (o) DISC hold a Young Carers forum on a quarterly basis which is an effective way to consult with young carers and their families to identify their needs.

## **Conclusion**

- 12. We have carefully examined the action plan and the outcomes in detail and questioned the service providers.
- 13. The Review Group Members are satisfied that effective work is being carried out to identify early young carers through the continued partnership working with schools; GP surgeries; the Darlington College and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form; Darlington Association on Disability ; Citizens Advice Bureau and Housing Services; the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS); and St. Teresa's Hospice.
- 14. The Review Group Members were also satisfied that good services are being provided for young carers and opportunities are offered for children and young people to attend activities and access vital respite and carers breaks, either individually or with their families.
- 15. There is evidence to show that the work with schools has been effective due to the number of referrals since March 2014 and that the target of 150 referrals will be surpassed.
- 16. We are confident that support is provided to young carers and that this support continues into their subsequent transition to adult caring.

## **Recommendations**

17. That it be recommended to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee that Cabinet be requested to note the following :-

(a) That the work of DISC since its commencement in September, 2013 as this Council's Young Carers Service be acknowledged.

(b) That the awareness raising with schools, and in particular with primary schools and faith schools and those schools with young people from the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BME) be encouraged to continue.

(c) That the 'drop in' centre at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College be actively advertised more widely.

(d) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee continue to monitor the Young Carers Action Plan.

### **Young Carers Review Group Members**

**YOUNG CARERS REVIEW GROUP**

**4 June 2014**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Cruddas, Lister (in the Chair), EA Richmond, S Richmond, C Taylor and Wright.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Hutchinson.

**OFFICERS** – Lisa Holdsworth, Service Development Officer and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**Also in attendance** – Ms R McCormack, Darlington Young Carers Service.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To give consideration to the Darlington Young Carers' Action Plan and note progress made by the new service providers DISC.

**Points Discussed and Considered -**

- The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and, following introductions and an explanation of the role of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, stated that the meeting had been convened in order for Members to receive an update on the work of the new service providers DISC who worked with under 25-s;
- Lisa Holdsworth explained that, following the tendering process, a new provider had been identified in September 2013 for Young Carers and that the service transfer from YMCA had gone well with new ideas being developed by DISC;
- It was also stated that separate funding from the CCG had been made available for a post to work with schools raising awareness of Young Carers. This funding will enable DISC to employ a School Worker to continue the strategic work of Sue Walker (YMCA);
- Ms McCormack stated that schools could identify young carers if awareness was raised and DISC had taken guidance from the Princess Royal Trust and Carers UK on best practice. It was essential to share information amongst agencies to ensure support is given to young carers. Head Teachers had been made aware of the Darlington Young Carers Charter and the information cascaded down to all staff;



- Two schools had already signed up to the Charter and 12 school assemblies had been attended promoting the Charter. St Aidan's Drop in sessions had also been held in Secondary Schools so that young people could access support services and DISC had been to Darlington College to ensure young adult carers could be identified;
- It was noted that few faith schools had signed up to the Charter although they tended to have good pastoral support;
- It was noted that agencies did refer any carers they were aware of but that schools were the best places to identify new carers, it was hoped that the correct support could be given to any young carer, possibly with help from another family member;
- It was stressed that it was the hope of the Young Carers Strategic Partnership Group to bring all agencies together and make systems aware of all young carers. For example, if a parent had a mental health need was the service aware of the needs of the child;
- Cross-agency working was to be improved but the child was not always thought of in a situation of caring and it was this unknown which needed to be improved, schools maybe knew but were unsure how to help the situation and in that regard a School Carers Leads Network had been established with a named person in a school allocated to support and refer young carers;
- Schools have a duty to explore 'triggers' such as a child sleeping in class and refer the matter to the relevant agency, the Memo of Understanding had a protocol to follow;
- Another sign of a young carer was poor attendance at school, this was almost certainly due to the young carer feeling too frightened to leave a parent, especially if that parent was dependent on drugs or had mental health issues and the child was unsure what the adult would do if left along;
- It was stated that in some cases the child was used as a crutch and that both parent and child needed the correct support, bridges needed to be built through adult and child services to ensure the correct agency was aware of any issues;
- It was stressed that it was also imperative that young carers were given the opportunities to continue their education as some did want a career, and the necessary funding sought if necessary, whilst also ensuring that the parent was looked after;
- The Review Group were advised that whilst the 2011 census identified 197 under 15 years old carers, previous research suggested that there was four times as many in that role. The 2011 census also identified, 16 to 24 year old

carers;

- It was also stated that since March there had been 50 referrals which indicated that work in schools had worked, with a target of 150 it was suspected that this would be surpassed as many more carers had to be identified;
- It was also stressed that although awareness and knowledge would be increased some families do not want support as they believed their own children were the best people to look after them;
- Following a question it was suggested that where there was poverty in a family more was put on a child, not necessarily a caring role, but this cross-cut across safe-guarding issues, less money and incorrect food could lead to poor diet and raise other issues;
- If a household income was reduced due to illness a family had to learn to adjust;
- Ms McCormack advised that they had links to the Citizens Advice Bureau and Housing Services to seek help and that there was a need to work with the new Customer Services Section within the Town Hall in order to establish a One Stop Shop;
- The Group were informed that once a carer reached the age of 18 years a link was made to the adult carers service and they were naturally moved to that service through natural transition and that DISC helped to manage and facilitate the transition;
- The group was aimed at 16yrs to 25 yrs old as needs were different to an under 16 year carer
- Lisa Holdsworth advised that the Council was doing appropriately what they could within the available resources, schools work was doing well but awareness still needed to be increased further;
- The separate CCG funding was also noted. Schools need-to be constantly reminded to undertake focussed work, although it was stressed that although school workers were doing an excellent job, they could only work within available resources;
- Young carers needed to know there was someone they could get support from and not get into trouble when homework or classwork was not completed;
- If a young carer was late for class and given a detention this would not help the situation, teachers needed to be made aware of a carers home situation

and have knowledge of the child;

- Ms McCormack advised the Group that there was a drop in facility at the 6th Form College which was currently being reviewed with staff and needed to be fully advertised;
- It was also noted that there had been a rise in self-harm cases which was a worrying trend, DISC were working with CAMHS in order to help alleviate the trend;
- The cause of the increase in self harm is unknown at present and research is sporadic. Ms McCormack speculated re possible causes, eg in response to musical influences or that young people felt that they were not being listened to. However, this is an area that needs additional research;
- It was noted that social services would not always be aware of young carers unless there was a safeguarding issue and that Health Visitors stopped visits once a child reached the age of six months;
- It was commented that if there was a health issue GP advice would be sought, a GP had attended a Young Carers Strategic Partnership Group meeting and the NHS was committed to carers therefore awareness raising was taking place;
- Tees Valley agencies work together to support young carers, it was in a teacher's interest to know what was getting in the way of a child's education;
- Group were informed that there was no longer an Education Welfare Officer, there was now a Family Outreach Worker who visited the home and saw any issues or problems, schools no longer suspended or expelled as they wanted to work with children, agencies got together to help provide the required support; and
- Teachers had to be accountable to Ofsted and it was in their best interest to know of any problems or issues;

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the Young Carers Review Group be given the opportunity to review the Action Plan.

(b) That a further meeting of the Group be held in six months' time to see what progress had been made

**YOUNG CARERS REVIEW GROUP**  
**14 January 2015**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Lister (in the Chair), EA Richmond and C Taylor.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Crudass, Hutchinson and S. Richmond.

**OFFICERS** – Lisa Holdsworth, Service Development Officer, Sandra Holding, Project Manager DISC and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – To update Members on progress of the Young Carers Action Plan 2013/16.

**Points Discussed and Considered -**

- Work continues to develop the Young Carers Action Plan to continue awareness raising in schools, GP surgeries; focus on the families and not just the young people; goal is to reach more carers and develop the service; improve multi agency training provision and review the work of the temporary Capacity Builder post to develop referral pathways for Adult Mental Health and Substance Misuse Teams.
- There is a high need of service in Darlington and this has been embraced.
- Four schools have now signed up to the Young Carer Charter and a pack for schools has been delivered to all schools which provides a resource pack of activities and worksheets that can be done with young people to establish if they have caring responsibilities.
- Appointments with all schools will be made in the next couple of months to encourage all schools to sign up to the Charter.
- Corporation Road school should be encouraged to sign up to the charter to help engagement with the Bangladeshi community and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community.
- Partner working is very strong in Darlington and attendance by all agencies is good at the Young Carers Strategic Partnership meetings.
- School nurses are key to identifying young cares and engagement with school nurses is important and DISC have completed awareness raising at a team meeting for school nurses.
- Awareness raising in GP surgeries is also important.
- A number of accredited training sessions have been proved by both DISC and the YMCA (the previous Young Carers Service provider) and DBC Workforce

Development are currently co-ordinating the development of a 'whole family' training course.

- Awareness raising work is on going and DISC have completed this with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form, a stall at the Carers Rights day in November, attendance at Darlington Partnerships Agreement Event; and work with St. Teresa's Hospice.
- Improved multi-agency working and DISC is currently working with police Community Support Officers to try and look how links can be established with the Darlington's Polish Community and working with CAMHS to organise an emotional well-being session for young carers in February half term.
- It has been recognised that referrals from Adult Mental Health/Substance Misuse are lacking and DISC has sourced other funding to progress this specific area of work.
- Work is on going to ensure that young carers are identified through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process and the Support Self Assessment Questionnaire (SSAQ) process in Adult social Care and that appropriate support is provided.
- The CAF database is able to record whether a child or young person is a young carer.
- A service review of DISC has been completed recently and the first +1 option to extend will be utilised from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015, with the service to run until 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016. There is a further +1 extension clause on the contract.
- Ensuring that children and young people with caring responsibilities are able to access opportunities that are open to their peers.
- Young Carers and Young Adult Carers are supported to attend school/college and to follow training and employment opportunities and not to become NEET (not in employment, education or training).
- the Young Carers Service will continue to be young carer led and DISC has a robust service user involvement policy and has policies consistent with Investing in Children status.
- DISC hold Young Carers forums on a quarterly basis.
- The Service aims for all young carers to be safe and have improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing and will continue to work with CAMHS and with St. Teresa's Hospice.

- Continue to improve the transition from the young carers service to the adult carers service and to raise awareness of 12-19 services for young people about young adult carers and their needs.

**IT WAS AGREED** –That the Young Carers Review Group formulate their final report and findings for submission to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Title:** Young Carers Action Plan 2013/16      **Start Date:** Jun 14  
**Scrutiny:** Children and Young People Scrutiny

**End Date:** Jan 15

<b>PURPOSE/AIM</b>	<b>RESOURCE</b>
<p>To request the Committee to consider and endorse the Young Carers Action Plan 2013/16.</p>	<p>Members  Relevant Portfolio Holder  Carers lead  Head of Strategic Commissioning and Health Partnerships (Elaine O'Brien)  Lisa Holdsworth  2 Members of the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scrutiny Members to review the draft Young Carers Action Plan 2013/16 and express their comments and views.</li> <li>2. Scrutiny Members to meet with representatives of Young Carers to understand their needs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the authority continue to recognise the ongoing need to identify and support young carers within the Health and Social Care economy.</li> <li>2. That the Scrutiny Committee provide comments on the Young Carers Action Plan 2013/16.</li> <li>3. That the Scrutiny Committee endorses the Young Carers Action Plan 2013/16</li> </ol>