

Young Carers Report



November 2019

Introduction

About Healthwatch Barnsley

There is a Healthwatch in every area of England. We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people say about services and what they think could be improved and share their views with those that can make change happen. We also share information with Healthwatch England, to help improve the quality of services across the country.

In summary - local Healthwatch is here to:

- help people find out about local health and social care services
- listen to what people think of services
- help improve the quality of services by letting those running services know what people want from health and social care

For further information, please see www.healthwatchbarnsley.co.uk

Healthwatch Barnsley is commissioned by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and hosted by Barnsley CVS. Healthwatch Barnsley is a community led, community driven organisation with a Strategic Advisory Board, who are responsible for determining the direction of the organisation.

We are assisted by volunteers, whose role is to help us gather information and raise awareness, ensuring engagement with all sections of the local population.

In some areas, Healthwatch provides advocacy for people making official complaints about health and social care services; in Barnsley this service is provided by DIAL, which run the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS).

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Background

This piece of work originated as a result of our Children and Young People's Engagement Officer attending training on young carers. This training was provided by Barnardo's and during the session, our officer asked the following question:

“Who takes the young carer to their own health appointments, and who supports them with any follow up appointments?”

Barnardo's did not provide this service and it was unclear if any support was available, and consequently what this support might look like.

This initial enquiry raised a number of unanswered questions about the general health and wellbeing of young carers. There is growing evidence to support the theory that a young person's health may be affected by their caring role, and it was unclear who provides the following support to young carers locally:

- attendance at their own appointments
- reminders about appointments
- helping young carers to prioritise their own appointments
- helping young carers to make sense of complex information

These unanswered questions, combined with additional information we found (including statistics from the 2011 census, which showed that young people providing between 20 and 49 hours of care per week are over 3 times more likely to report their health as not good, compared to other children without caring responsibilities¹) prompted us to take a closer look at young carers in Barnsley.

This priority was agreed by our Strategic Advisory Board in February 2019.

¹ <https://professionals.carers.org/protecting-health-and-wellbeing-young-carers>

Definition of a young carer

“A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 who looks after a relative with a disability or illness. Their responsibilities might include extra chores around the house or providing personal or physical care to their relative. They might have to book appointments, communicate with health professionals or pick up medication on behalf of their relative.

With so much added responsibility, it’s important that young carers know where to turn to for information and support.”²

Research from Barnardo’s and the Carers Trust³ highlighted a host of challenges young people face when juggling their caring role with their education and own health, with up to 40% experiencing mental health problems.

1.2 Approach

Following the training, our Children and Young People’s Engagement Officer arranged to meet with the Children’s Services Manager at Barnardo’s. It was agreed with Barnardo’s that we could engage with the Young Carers Council to support our research.⁴

In addition to this, we wanted to focus on young people within secondary school, to understand the following:

- if there was support within schools for young carers
- if teachers were aware of young carers attending their school
- if teachers were able to identify a young carer within school

Our engagement with young people, teachers and school workers to gather information

All data contained within the main body of this report is a summary of findings drawn from 5 schools and the Young Carers Council.

A breakdown of statistical information for each school will be provided separately and is not contained within this document.

² https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/how-can-we-improve-support-young-carers?mc_cid=1cde4bdf27&mc_eid=b7af5a46b6

³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/06/nhs-sets-out-care-for-young-carers-offer-in-gp-surgeries/>

⁴ <https://b.barnardos.org.uk/prioryfamilycentre.htm>

Young carers engagement

With the help of the Young Carers Council (hosted by Barnardo's), a survey was created asking young carers about their caring responsibilities and how this may affect their own health needs.

Barnardo's agreed to incorporate the survey into their sessions with young carers. This gave all young carers a chance to give valuable feedback on the accessibility of health and social care services in Barnsley and share the challenges that they face.

A total of 12 young carers completed the survey.

“Barnardo's Young Carers Service offers support to children and young people who have a caring role. We aim to give young carers the opportunity to have time out from their caring responsibilities and caring role, to help them develop strategies to aid resilience and build up self-confidence. We ensure that young carers know they are supported and can access this support through group or one-to-one sessions, which are tailored to meet their individual needs. The group gives young carers a chance to meet other young people in similar circumstances, helping them realise they are not alone. The service aims to provide fun and creative activities to help meet the emotional and practical needs of these remarkable young people” - Barnardo's Barnsley

Following on from our engagement in schools, we took our key findings back to the Young Carers Council and asked them for their comments/recommendations. This was in relation to some of the findings; their responses are contained in the appendix.

Secondary school young people engagement

Our Children and Young People's Engagement Officer attended 6 secondary schools during lunch times to engage with young people. She asked them to complete a short survey to find out what they knew about young carers. Darton College chose to withdraw from the research and therefore the data is based upon the evidence from the 5 remaining schools.

The main questions were:

- Are you aware what a young carer is?
- Do you believe you may be a young carer?
- As a young carer, if you or a friend needed support would you know where to go within school?

A total of 788 young people completed the short survey.

School/academy	Number of young people who completed a survey on young carers
Netherwood Academy	80
Penistone Grammar School	283
Dearne Advanced Learning Centre	109
Outwood Academy Shafton	141
Outwood Academy Carlton	175
Darton College	Withdrawn
Barnsley Academy	No response
Horizon Community College	No response
Kirk Balk Academy	No response
Holy Trinity Catholic and Church of England School	No response

Teacher and school worker engagement

Each school was asked to distribute the survey through the school's portal to reach as many teachers and school workers as we could.

The following questions were asked:

- Do you know how young carers are identified within school?
- Do you know how many young carers are currently identified within school?
- Do you know what support is available for young carers within school?
- Are you informed if a new young carer is identified within school?
- Have you ever received any training around identifying young carers?
- Do you know about a referral system leading to support for young carers outside of school?

A total of 95 teachers and school workers completed the short survey.

School	Number of teachers and school workers who completed a survey
Netherwood Academy	37
Penistone Grammar School	4
Dearne Advanced Learning Centre	15
Outwood Academy Shafton	22
Outwood Academy Carlton	17
Darton College	Withdrawn
Barnsley Academy	No response
Horizon Community College	No response
Kirk Balk Academy	No response
Holy Trinity Catholic and Church of England School	No response

1.3 Summary and key findings

- When young carers attended Barnardo's, all 12 expressed that they feel well supported and informed about the help that is available to them
- These young carers felt that they need more social activities to relieve them from their caring responsibilities
- The feedback we received shows that young carers already engaged with Barnardo's feel that their health needs are being met. None of the young carers missed any important health appointments within the last 12 months
- These young carers felt that family, Barnardo's, schools and colleges are the right people and places to turn to for advice and support
- 498 of the 788 young people surveyed in schools stated that they know what a young carer is. However when compared to the previously cited definition only 178 actually know what a young carer is.
- 107 of the 788 surveyed, believe that they are a young carer. However when the answers provided were compared to the previously cited definition, the survey showed that only 12 respondents fit the description of a young carer.
- 380 of the 788 young people stated that they would not know where to go to in school if they needed support for themselves or a friend within school
- 66 of the 95 teachers/school workers surveyed did not know how young carers were identified within their own school, with only 5 knowing how many carers were identified within school
- 73 of the 95 teachers/school workers surveyed did not know what support was available within school, and the majority of 79 did not know about a referral system leading to support outside of the school
- 76 of the 95 surveyed said they are not informed when a young carer is identified in school, and only 10 have received training on identification of young carers within school

2. Survey questions and responses

Young Carers Council engagement

Question: Who do you provide care for

Multiple answers provided by the 12 young people from our survey demonstrated the breadth of their caring responsibilities. 8 young people provide care for parents, of which 2 also provide care for siblings. 3 young people provide care specifically for siblings, with just 1 young person providing care for other family members.

Question: Are family members/friends aware you are a carer

All the young people stated that their family members were aware they are young carers.

Question: Is your doctor aware you are a carer

10 young people believed that their GP was aware that they are a young carer, and 2 of the young carers were unsure if their GP was aware of this.

Question: Is your school aware you are a carer

All of the young people stated that the school or college they attended were aware that they were young carers.

Question: Do you feel you have someone to talk to about your caring responsibilities

All of the young carers felt that they had someone they could talk to about this.

Question: Please give details on who you talk to, or would like to talk to, if you need to

The young people all stated that if they needed someone to talk to about their caring responsibilities they would talk to:

- Barnardo's
- School
- Family

Question: Do you know what to do if there is a problem, or if things go wrong

11 of the young people were confident that they would know what to do if a problem occurred, with 1 not knowing what to do if a problem occurred.

Question: Please give details on who you would turn to with a problem, or who you would like to talk to if a problem occurred

- Family
- Barnardo's
- School

Question: Have you been given information on what help you can get as a young carer

All 12 of the young carers believed that they have been given good information on what is available to them as young carers.

Question: Would you like more help and support

3 of the young carers said that they would like more support, 4 said no and 5 were unsure.

To those that answered yes, we asked “what help and support would you like to receive?”:

Comments (unedited)

“More time to meet up”
“For my mental health”
“Don’t know”
“Enjoy going to Barnardo’s”
“I am fine with everything”
“Going to young carers is good, I know I can ring my worker if needed”

Question: In the last 12 months have you missed any important health appointments

All 12 young carers do not believe that they have missed any important health appointments within the last 12 months.

Question: In the last 12 months have you visited the dentist

2 of the young people stated they had not visited the dentist in the past 12 months, with the remaining 10 being up to date with appointments.

Question: Do you think there should be more activities available for young carers

4 young carers were unsure or left no response, with 8 of them believing there should be more activities for young carers in Barnsley. When asked for details, the young carers said:

Comments (unedited)

“Places to be”
“Football”
“Things to do”
“Bowling - things like that”
“Things to do with friends”
“places to sit and chat”
“chances to meet up more”
“Bowling”
“Time to meet up”
“Things to do”
“we need places to go as a group!”
“Social things”

Secondary school young people engagement

Question: Are you aware what a young carer is

498 of the young people surveyed believed that they know what a young carer was, with 290 not knowing what a young carer was; in addition to this question, we asked them to describe what they think a young carer was (below are some of the comments):

(unedited)

“Designated workers for emotional support”
“someone who looks after a family member or other person with a medical condition”
“A young person who has someone at home who is dependent on them and needs them to look after them”
“Someone who has to care for and support members of their family potentially a parent with a illness for example”
“someone who has to look after a family member EG parent who aren’t able to look after themselves and have to help with cooking, cleaning”

Of the 498 young people surveyed it was clear, from some of the comments, that only 178 were actually aware what a young carer is. This was when based on the acknowledged definition of the role at the time. The following comments are examples that highlight this:

(unedited)

“Someone who babysits”
“Someone who is looked after”
“Finding what you want to be at a young age”
“A young person who has a baby”

Question: Do you believe you may be a young carer

Of 788 surveyed, 107 young people believed they were a young carer, with the remaining 681 not believing they were a young carer. When analysing the data and the comments on why the young person believed themselves to be a young carer, it showed us that 12 out of 107 young people may actually be a young carer (they cannot be identified through our piece of work due to the anonymity of each survey).

Question: As a young carer if you or a friend needed support would you know where to go within school

Just over half (408) of young people stated they would know where to go in school if they, or a friend, needed support. The remaining 380 stated they would not know where to go for support within school.

Teacher and school worker engagement

Question: Do you know how young carers are identified within school

66 of the 95 teachers/school workers surveyed stated they do not know how young carers are identified within schools, with 29 stating they do know how young carers are identified within school.

Question: Do you know how many young carers are currently identified within school

5 teachers/school workers stated that they knew how many young carers were identified within school, with 90 being unaware.

Question: Do you know what support is available for young carers within school

The majority of teachers/school workers (73) did not know what support was available for young carers within school, with 22 stating they did know what support was available.

15 of the 22 that stated they knew what support was available gave further details:

(unedited)⁵

“Support through Barnardo’s”
“Bridge, PLC, breakfast clubs, special considerations”
“Bridge and PLC support Breakfast Clubs Currently in the process of starting a support group which is being developed by a year 11 student 9~young carer themselves)”
“Other than support from teachers. I’ve heard of government schemes on the radio”
“Pastoral support from, form teacher, SM and PL Specific arrangements around consequences for lateness. Arrangements made for any time which should be spent after school”
“I know that one of the young carers I teach accesses mind space”
“Barnardo’s Poss child line”
“We are given information regarding local support groups in VMG to share with all pupils”
“LM Support Extra support through Literacy and numeracy Key workers”
“Inclusion team to support with intervention”
“I know that one of my students has a personalised timetable as she is a young carer”
“Outside agencies come into school that can support”
“Pastoral support system”
“DSL and DDSL meet with them, share information of where they can access support”
“Designated workers for emotional support”

⁵ The abbreviations in this section were not provided with explanatory notes

Question: Do you know about a referral system leading to support for young carers (outside of the school)

79 of the 95 teachers/school workers did not know about a referral system, with 16 being aware of this. Further comments were as follows:

(unedited)

“Yes, through inclusion”
“This would go through inclusion”
“Barnardo’s referral forms”
“MindSPACE and targeted support”
“As a VMG tutor I can refer to learning manager to support in getting support outside of school”
“Referral form completed by Learning Managers”
“We have booklet with details on all outside agencies available with contact details, how to refer etc”

Question: Are you informed if a new young carer is identified within school

76 of the teachers/school workers stated they are not informed when a young carer is identified within school, whilst 19 said they were informed.

Question: Have you ever received any training around identifying young carers

10 teachers/school workers have received some kind of training on identifying young carers within school, with the remaining 85 not having received any kind of training on the identification of young carers.

Comments on training:

(unedited)

“Had training on supporting young carers needs in prior Academy in prior post”
“not specific on identifying young carers, however it has been mentioned and discussed as part of other safeguarding training/meetings”
“but would welcome any training”
“in school training”

Question: Any other information we may find useful

(unedited)

“I would like to know who our young carers are in school”
“As a teacher, the more that we understand a child`s circumstance the better we are prepared to teach that child”
“Further information and training on carers”
“Information about these young carers on this topic”

“It is clear from the comment that teacher’s/school workers would like to gain more information on the young carers within the school that they teach in”

“I am sure there are quite a few young carers at [REDACTED] but this information is not shared with staff. It would be helpful if it was”

“As of Year we often only find out about Young carers when other concerns have been raised, often due to attendance. So, it would be useful to be made aware sooner”

“Support with identification would be helpful”



3. Key findings/recommendations

Key findings	Recommendations
<p>Just over half of young people stated that they would know where to go to in school if they needed support for themselves or a friend, therefore just under half would not know where to go</p>	<p>To support young carers within a school environment, we would recommend an awareness raising initiative supported by the provision of information. This could be prominently displayed on a notice board, identifying what a young carer is and where they should go for help in school</p>
<p>66 of the teachers/school workers did not know how young carers were identified within school, with only 5 knowing how many carers were identified within their own school</p>	<p>To support young carers within a school environment, it may be useful to include the identification of young carers as part of a wider policy development (as identified by the Young Carers Council, below)</p>
<p>The majority of teachers/school workers (73) did not know what support was available within school, and the majority (79) did not know about a referral system leading to support outside of school</p>	<p>We endorse the comments made here by the Young Carers Council:</p> <p>It was felt that all teachers/school workers should be given information on what support is available for young carers, both in and out of school. The Young Carers Council believes that each school should have a young carers policy in place. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the definition of a young carer • the difficulties that young carers may experience, particularly in relation to the school environment • the identification of support that is available both in and out of school • mandatory training for teachers should be identified within the policy • the policy should be part of a teacher's induction to a new school <p>We would also add to this list the need for clarity in relation to external referral processes, and the development of a consistent approach to the identification and support of young carers</p>

	<p>The Young Carers Council believes that they should be involved in the policy development process; this way they can give advice on what needs to be included to develop the best policy for the benefit of young carers</p>
<p>It is clear from The Young Carers Council that these young people feel supported and informed as a result of their involvement with Barnardo's. They also felt that their own health needs were met; 12 out of 12 had not missed any important health appointments, 10 out of 12 had attended a dentist within 12 months. However the young carers identified the need for more support in relation to leisure activities</p>	<p>To be given due consideration in the commissioning of services for young carers</p>



4. Acknowledgements:

Young Carers Council - Barnardo's Barnsley

Barnardo's Barnsley

The staff and students at:

Dearne Advanced Learning Centre

Outwood Academy Carlton School

Outwood Academy Shafton

Penistone Grammar School

Netherwood Academy

Appendix

Young Carers Session, 13/11/19

Our Children and Young People's Engagement Officer attended Barnardo's to speak to the Young Carers Council, in order to gain their views on some of the key findings in the report. The Young Carers were asked what they thought of the key findings and what should happen to implement change.

Key finding - The Young Carers felt that family, Barnardo's, schools and colleges are the ones to turn to for advice and support.

Question, who do you feel supports you well

The Young Carers' comments (unedited):

Well supported (through barnardo's) always here good to talk to every 2 weeks
Feel supported through Barnardos, Family

Question - How could more support be offered to young carers (unedited):

Allow funding for young carers council to be seen more frequently

Peer to peer support at schools

Emotional support, someone to turn to if I feel low

Gp's can't get to them

Awareness at college and schools

Posters in dentists

GP (DR's)

Schools to be more on board

My school isn't supportive

Hospitals

Make Barnardo's more regular

Doctors

Some schools do help, other don't

Council give more money to Barnardo's

Older ones, more regular sessions

Doctors - not been able to attend appointments

Work - being late

More Barnardo's sessions

Discussion comments

When we asked how GPs could support young carers more, it was felt that there should be a call back service to obtain advice, whether this be about themselves or who they may be caring for. This point was raised because the young carers feel the waiting times to see GPs are too long, and they cannot always get to appointments due to caring responsibilities, or not having anyone to take them to their appointment.

It was felt that schools could offer more support for young carers, as the majority of them said that their school offers them little to no support. It was felt that there should be somewhere for them to go within school to get support if everything is getting too much for them. It was also generally felt that sharing their problems or concerns sometimes

helps them, allowing young carers to return to class to get on with their day. It was stated that sometimes all they need is a chat for 10 minutes to make them feel better.

Key finding - It is also clear that young carers feel that they need more social activities to help alleviate the pressure of their caring responsibilities.

Question - what social activities would you like to have access to

The Young Carers' comments (unedited):

Creative time	
A place to chill out	paintballing
Cinema	Health and beauty
Swimming	Youth groups in the community
Baking	Going out for dinner (pizza)
Cooking	Football, netball, tennis, rugby
Trampoline park	Picnic
Group trips	Therapy mindfulness aromatherapy
Go bowling	Sport clubs having groups for young carers
Getting together - Saturdays	Abseiling
Picnic	Outdoor and residential trips with Barnardo's
Cooking	Seaside
Lack funding	camping
Christmas shopping	Healthy eating and baking sessions at Barnardo's
More opportunities	Going out for trips and days out
Bowling & food	Bowling, cinema
Nights on the seaside	More sessions at Barnardo's
Trampoline park	Creative drama workshops
Water park	Thorp park
We don't have enough funding	Find places to fund trips
KFC	Theme parks
Picnic	Concessions- to make things cheaper
Movie nights	Offers for young carers
Field trips out	Make people and businesses more aware to see what they can offer
Away days - Alton towers, flaming land, Yorkshire wildlife part	Go to meadowhall to allow the young carers to have chance to do xmas shopping

Discussion comments

When we were discussing the activities the Young Carers would like to do, the main issue for them was funding. They also felt that there are not enough recreational opportunities available for young carers, as they would like to participate in social activities more frequently. It was added that Barnardo's could be given more funding for social activities. The point was made that having someone to assist with things like Christmas shopping would be helpful, as without support, even simple tasks like this may not be achievable.

It was felt that social activities help with a young carer's health and wellbeing, as they do not always have the opportunity to participate in such activities. This can be for a number of reasons, e.g. caring responsibilities, lack of funds or not having anyone to go with them. The Young Carers stated that if funding was available they would have more opportunities to undertake activities with family or friends.

Key finding - The majority of teachers/school workers are not informed when a young carer is identified in school.

Question - How can teachers/school workers be made aware of young carers and how could they receive training on young carers

The Young Carers' comments (unedited):

Leaflets

Poster

Training

Little cards

Colour cards to mean different things

Each teacher in school needs training

Teachers need to be more reasonable or negotiate e.g.; child is late, uniform isn't perfect, homework isn't on time, thing about why?

Take time to check in a child confidentially

Don't punish

Ability to have 1 to 1

Accept they could be late

Send teachers on training

Learn who your young carers are

Pamphlets

Read emails

Train all teachers

Projected on to wall

Shows on SIMS

Reminders at staff meetings

Need to be trained

Put young carer on SIMS

Email them to let them know who is a YC

Put YC awareness on notices

Should come under safeguarding

Leaflets

Keep things confidential

Should be on register or something

EVERY teacher should have training

Punished for been late

Training needs to be given to each teacher

Actual YC's going into teacher training to make them listen

Each teacher in schools needs training on young carers and identifying it, such as first aid, safeguarding

Special considerations and notes on each young carer on the school system

Written into the policies about behavioural, punishments, lateness punishments, pop ups

Notice of young carers

Confidential opportunities for 1 to 1 meetings to share private information

Flyers and cards for teachers.

Discussion comments

The group believed that all teachers/school workers should be given some kind of training on young carers, whether this be more formal training or a leaflet/pamphlet which they can read. Training should outline what a young carer is and what caring responsibilities they may have. There is a need to be able to identify young carers more effectively.

It was felt that all teachers/school workers should be informed when a young carer is identified within their school. This will help school staff to understand why the young person:

Is late for school;

Is not perfect in their appearance, i.e. creased uniform because they didn't have time to iron it;

Has not had time to do their homework.

The group said that a greater understanding of these issues would mean that young carers should be less likely to be reprimanded for circumstances that are beyond their control. They also felt that a young carer should not get into trouble if they are late for school because there is likely to be an array of reasons for this, such as having to dress their parent or take their sibling to school.

A point was raised about the embarrassment and upset caused to a young carer if they walk into class late, and the teacher "gets on to them"; this point reinforces the need for teachers/school workers being informed if a young carer is identified within school.

Key finding - The majority of teachers/school workers did not know what support was available within school. There was also a general lack of awareness amongst them about a referral system leading to support for young carers outside of the school.

Question - What should be put in place so that teachers/school workers are aware of support available to young carers?

Young Carers' comments (unedited):

Council policy

Teachers should know how and who to refer the young carer to

Training policy - there should be one, but who knows about it and it needs to be highlighted and refreshed

Train teachers on basics of a young carers

Create a functioning policy that works and is up kept

Needs to be a policy

Teachers should know how to refer young carers

Links to the school websites

Teachers should know how to refer

They all need to know

Training

Leaflets that should be handed out to students and staff

Posters around

Board full of info

Training on referral system

Policy in each school

Refresh constant to new staff

Discussion comments

It was felt that all teachers/school workers should be given information on what support is available for young carers both in and out of school, and that each school should have a policy in place to acknowledge the difficulties of being a young carer. This should include:

Details/description of what a young carer is;

Support available both in and out of school;

References to mandatory young carer awareness training for teachers/school workers, including a more secure framework of support for young carers within school.

The group felt that the policy should be part of the induction process for any newly recruited teachers/school staff and that the Young Carers Council should be involved in the policy development process. In doing so, the Young Carers Council can give comments on what needs to be included to formulate the best possible policy for supporting young carers in a school environment.