

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

7TH MARCH 2011

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE - PERFORMANCE

BRIDGEND YOUNG CARERS

1. Purpose of Report.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about how the Authority is responding to issues relating to young carers in our communities and to introduce a presentation by Council officers and officers from Action for Children on the Young Carers project.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 Improving support for carers is identified within the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme. The Corporate Equality Scheme is a statutory scheme and a cross-cutting issue that impacts upon the work of the whole Council. It is linked to the Welsh Language Scheme and the Council's Customer Care Programme, and supports the community cohesion agenda.

2.2 The Young Carers project is sponsored by the Children and Young People's Partnership. It supports the strategic theme: young voices and the corporate objective to work with partners to provide children with the best start in life, and protect and support the most vulnerable children and young people.

3. Background.

3.1 The Children Act 1989 restates the principle of the welfare of the child being paramount and stresses the importance of family support services for children in need. The definition of children in need includes disabled children and children unlikely to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of development without provision of services or support. Children and young people with caring responsibilities would be considered as "in need", and therefore once assessed in the context of the whole family, should be eligible for a range of support services. The Children Act 2004 requires arrangements to be made to promote co-operation between agencies and the provision of services to improve the well-being of all children, including young carers.

3.2 A Carers' Strategy 2009-2012 for the County Borough was developed by Bridgend County Borough Carers Forum in partnership with the council, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), Third Sector organisations providing services to carers and through consultation with local carers.

Support Young Carers is priority 8 of the Carers Strategy. In 2004, Carers UK undertook the third national survey of more than 6000 young carers who were in contact with young carers projects across the UK. The survey found:

- The average age of young carers in the UK is 12 years old.
- 56% of young carers are living in lone parent families.
- Nearly one in five young carers provide intimate personal care.
- Almost one fifth of young carers are providing more than 20 hours of care each week.
- More than a quarter of young carers of secondary school age are having problems in school, both in terms of their school work and being bullied by their peers.

3.3 Bridgend Young Carers Project

The project was set up to address similar issues at a local level. It promotes awareness of the needs of young carers and provides direct support to young carers within their local communities.

Its principal aims are:

- To maximise the potential for collaborative and cost effective inter-agency working.
- To provide a range of practical support services to young carers that will reduce the impact of their caring role on their own childhood and adolescent development and opportunities.
- To raise awareness and recognition of the needs of young carers in Bridgend, across agency boundaries and with the general public.
- To ensure that the services reflect the cultural, race and linguistic characteristics of the young carers and their families.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 During this financial year 54, children and young people have accessed the service to date. Currently 40 young carers are accessing support from the project, which is the maximum the project can deliver within the resources available. There are 14 young people on the waiting list, and a further 5 cases are currently being assessed.
- 4.2 The presentation will provide Members with additional information on the work undertaken by the project and an opportunity to explore a range of issues associated with further delivery of support for young carers.
- 4.3 The project is managed by Action for Children and receives funding from a variety of sources but is primarily commissioned by the Bridgend Children & Young People's Partnership under the Cymorth Programme. The Young Carers Project is one of the service areas within its service level agreement. The Project plays a key role in improving the outcomes for vulnerable children and young people within Bridgend County.
- 4.4 Action for Children has been included within the Cymorth proposal for 2012-13 which is a transitional year to accommodate the move towards the new Families

First criteria. It is suggested that Members will want to explore the implications of this change.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

5.1 As this is an information report, there are no proposed changes to the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 As this is an information report, no equality impact assessment has been carried out.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 The Cabinet Committee - Equalities notes the content of this report and receives the presentation by officers from the Children's directorate and from Action for Children.

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Background documents:

Bridgend County Borough Council Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012.