

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

13 MARCH 2014

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE CARERS IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet Committee Equalities regarding:
- support to children who are carers in Bridgend County Borough
 - the requirements of the Carers Strategy (Wales) Measure 2010
 - progress concerning the Carers Information and Consultation Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2016.
2. This report also supports the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2013 – 2017:
- **Priority 3:** Working with children and families to tackle problems early
 - **Priority 5:** Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles
 - **Priority 6:** Working together to make the best use of our resources
- 2.2 Supporting carers is a priority in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill. A key feature of the Bill is to provide equal rights for carers, putting them on a similar legal footing as those they care for.

3. Background

- 3.1 A carer is defined in the Carers Strategy (Wales) Measure as an individual, whether an adult or a child, who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for:-
- a) A child who is disabled within the meaning of part 3 of the Children Act 1989, or
 - b) An individual aged 18 or over
- 3.2 There are currently over 350,000 unpaid Carers in Wales, 90,000 of whom provide over 50 hours of care per week. The NHS and Social Services rely on the willingness and ability of carers to provide support to people with health and social needs. The cost of replacing this care has been estimated at 7.72 billion each year (Carers UK, 2011).
- 3.3 Young Carers are children and young people who look after someone in their family who has an illness, a disability, or is affected by mental ill-health or substance misuse.

Young Carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care and the structure of the family as a whole.

Some Young Carers may undertake high levels of care, whereas for others it may be frequent low levels of care. Either can impact heavily on a child or young person.

3.4 Local Support for Carers / achievements to date include:

- A Carers Strategy for Bridgend County Borough has been developed by the Bridgend Carers Forum in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organisations and was presented to Cabinet in April 2010;
- Carers' champions have been identified in all social work teams in adult services;
- A carers' emergency card scheme has been established which triggers an emergency response for the cared-for person in the event of an emergency concerning the carer;
- The early identification of carers and their assessment is a priority in service plans with respect to adults and children;
- The Council works closely with the Bridgend Carers Centre to provide information and support to carers.

Carer Strategy (Wales) Measure 2010

3.5 The Carers Strategy (Wales) Measure enabled the National Assembly of Wales to introduce legal duties on the NHS (lead organisation) and Local Authorities in Wales to work together and, in consultation with Carers, to prepare, publish and implement a joint Carers Information and Consultation Strategy. The Measure is not targeted at specific age groups but encompasses Carers of all ages including Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.

3.6 The Guidance issued by Welsh Government in relation to the Information and Consultation Strategy, specifically seeks to ensure that:

- carers have the right information at the right time to support them;
- all health staff (including GP's) and Social Care organisations coming into contact with Carers can recognise their needs, provide them with appropriate information and signpost them to relevant services.
- statutory agencies properly engage with Carers as partners in the provision of care involving them at all levels in the assessment, delivery and evaluation of care arrangements.
- a partnership is established between each Local Health Board, Local Authority, and Carers Service, so that a commitment is made to the ongoing joint working to improve the lives of Carers in the Local Health Board area.
- To ensure that action plans set out specific actions for Young Carers and Black, Minority Ethnic Carers.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Senior managers in Childrens and Wellbeing work closely in relation to the Carers Strategy, a component part of which is young carers. Children's Directorate has responsibility for the identification and assessment of young carers. It also has responsibility for the assessment and disability services for disabled children and young people. There is a connection with the Carers Strategy given the caring responsibilities undertaken by parents of disabled children and the caring role siblings undertake.

The assessment of young carers is an issue currently being addressed by the Carers Development officer. This post has been funded for 12 months by the ABMU led Carers Strategy. Currently, whilst some Young Carers are being identified and signposted to support services, they are not being consistently assessed. There may be a number of Young Carers within the County Borough who have not been identified and are unaware of the support potentially available to them. This is being addressed as part of the ABMU Carers Strategy. The Carers Development Officer post will play a pivotal role in moving this forward.

4.2 The following is an overview of service provision for Young Carers and young adult carers within the county borough to date.

- The Young Carers' project based at Action for Children Family Centre in Brackla currently provides support to 21 Young Carers aged 8-13 and 12 Young Carers aged 14-18, with 14 Young Carers of varying ages currently on the waiting list.
- Support is provided bi weekly at different locations with the focus on providing Young Carers with a break through group sessions and activities.
- There are no formal Young Carers assessments being carried out in the county borough, although they may be assessed as Children in Need in their own right if they are open to the Safeguarding teams in relation to other issues. The Young Carers Assessments undertaken by Action for Children are to clarify if a Young Carer meets the eligibility criteria for the Young Carers' project.
- Funding for the Action for Children project was provided in a Service Level Agreement (SLA) via Cymorth funding and the Safeguarding and Family Support Core Budget. Cymorth funding has ended, however, funding has continued via Safeguarding and Family Support and the Families First Programme. In December 2013, following an evaluation of service provision, funding via the Safeguarding and Family Support core budget ceased as there was little evidence of a service being provided to Young Carers who would fall within the tier 3 or 4 level of need. 50% of this funding was re-directed to address the issue of Young Carers assessments (as detailed above). The Action for Children project will need to re-tender for funding as part of the Families First programme currently underway, and the funding allocation will be confirmed by the end of February 2014.
- The Young Carers practitioner at Action for Children is currently undertaking an awareness raising project by delivering presentations at local schools.
- The Bridgend Carers Centre also holds a monthly young adult carer support group
- The young adult carer Community Voice Project, also based at The Carers Centre, is Big Lottery funded resulting from a joint bid by The Carers Centre and Action for Children. The project supports Young Adult Carers between the ages of 16-25 and will provide training to Young Adult Carers in assertiveness and confidence building. Most Young Adult Carers attending this project have transferred from the Action for Children Young Carers project, with the aim being to provide continuity of support as they make the transition themselves into adulthood.
- The Zone community centre in Bridgend has a steering group for young people and the Young Carers and Young Adult Carer projects are encouraging Young Carers to access this forum as an additional means of support.

- A Carers Conference is being held in Bridgend in February 2014 to bring together carers and stakeholders in carers' support issues to consider progress in developing carers' support following the introduction of the Carers Measure (Wales) 2010. The first conference in 2012 included a Young Carers workshop, and a presentation by a group of Young Carers. A further workshop and presentation by Young Carers will be a component part of the 2014 conference.
- A Young Carers sub group reporting to the ABMU led Carers Strategy Steering group is planning a residential event for 10 young carers from each of the localities within the ABMU area on 27 February 2014 to be held at the URDD centre in Cardiff.
- An e-learning package has been developed to raise awareness of the role of carers which is being piloted in Human Resources, Libraries and Customer Services departments. It is intended that in 2014 a Young Carers e-learning Package will also be made available.

5. Effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 This is an information report and, as such, no EIA is required.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Following a Family First Programme retendering of funding, there will be an opportunity for the Action for Children project to secure additional funding.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Committee Equalities notes the information contained in this report.

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Background documents

None