
SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - CARER FRIENDLY SOUTHAMPTON
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2021

Present: Councillors Savage (Chair), Prior (Vice-Chair), Coombs, B Harris, McEwing, White and Windle

11. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 7th January 2021, be approved and signed as a correct record.

12. **CARER FRIENDLY SOUTHAMPTON - SUPPORT IN EDUCATION AND WORK**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Legal and Business Operations requesting that the Panel consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

- Summary of information provided:

A carer's perspective – Young carers Alex, Ellie-May, Leah, Zunayrah

- A vox pop outlining the views of young carers on support in education and transport was played to the Panel, and 3 young carers, Leah, Ellie-May and Zunayrah, supported by Emma Jones from No Limits, informed the Panel about their experiences.
- View that schools could do more to support young carers by ensuring that teachers are aware of their status as young carers; are more flexible in their approach to homework and lateness; are trained to know how to support young carers more effectively.
- No Limits presentation recommended the following to address the issues raised: Schools to include Young Carers awareness in PSHE lessons – raising awareness of support amongst hidden YC in school; Staff inset days to include Young Carers awareness training (No Limits currently run four SCC Wednesday workshop training sessions on Young Carers although teachers are not able to access these sessions due to being within the school day); Schools need more support setting up the school's programmes than is currently available within the young carers team. Add capacity into the current young carers team to enable the roll out of the Young Carers in Schools programmes.
- Transport was raised as an issue for young carers – the cost and lack of flexibility was identified. No Limits recommend free or subsidised public transport across Southampton City for Young Carers to access support groups and other respite activities (could be accessed with a Young Carers identity card).

A carer's perspective – Adult carers Vickey and Jon

- A vox pop outlining views of adult carers on carers support in education and work was played for the Panel. In addition, Linda Lawless, Service Manager at Carers in Southampton, interviewed Vickey and Jon. Vickey is a carer who has a 9-year-old son with a rare neuro-genetic condition and a 6-year-old daughter diagnosed with autism. Vickey is also Co-ordinator of Southampton's Parent Carer Forum. Jon cared for his mother until she died in 2019.
- Vickey had to leave her job as a physio to care for her son. She was unable to combine her caring responsibilities with work.
- Her employer was not very supportive. She was overlooked for opportunities, alienated by her team, left out of social activities.
- Annual leave used to be used for medical appointments. Time for yourself is very limited.
- As Co-ordinator of the Parent Carer Forum she has seen many parents having to take pay cuts, give up businesses to care for their children. The unpredictability of a child's health and behavioural challenges can make a parent who has to care for a child an unreliable employee.
- This is not just a local issue. A 2019 survey of parent carers identified that 53% of respondents had been forced to give up paid employment. SEND parent carers have a high percentage of single-parent families due to pressure and stresses.
- Some good employers have special leave arrangements that are helpful.
- School holiday schemes for SEND pupils are only 1 or 2 weeks in summer holiday. School transport is not flexible, only drop child off at home address so cannot get transport to childcare.
- Jon gave up work to care for his mum who had suffered a stroke and her health deteriorated over time.
- When employed, his manager was excellent and supported him in his caring role. They were flexible with him and it did not reduce his productivity. He was able to work and provide care until he had to focus on caring for his mum.
- Following her death Jon was able to return to employment with the same company in financial services, via an employment agency.

Young Carers' Education – Rebecca Rolfe, Service Manager for the Include Service at The Children's Society

- A presentation was provided by Rebecca Rolfe. The 2011 Census identified over 160k young carers in the UK. Latest research indicates that there may be up to 800k young carers now. That is 5 young carers in every classroom.

- Evidence shows that being a young carer can impact on attendance, attainment, personal development and welfare: Over 25% miss school regularly; Significantly lower education attainment at GCSE level an average one grade lower across all subjects; On average young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year; 62% said they were bullied; 42% say there is not a particular person at school who recognised them as a carer.
- Young carers develop additional skills and qualities through their caring roles.
- The Children's Society established a Young Carers in Schools Award (YCiS), created by young carers.
- Schools can apply to join the scheme – Criteria for schools is:
 - Understand – is there a young carer lead to approach?
 - Inform – raising awareness through both staff and students to reduce stigma
 - Identify – can staff recognise indicators and action next steps?
 - Listen – space to talk, or just rest
 - Support – practical intervention, space to call home, homework support during school day, signposting / referring to local Young Carers Service or EH or for assessments if necessary
- YCiS Award Impact – 73% of schools reported young carers' classroom engagement had improved; 63% reported improvements in young carers' achievements; 83% of young carers demonstrated increased happiness; 94% of schools reported to have a better understanding of the support required for young carers.
- No schools in Southampton are accredited with the Young Carers in Schools Award.

Good practice: Levelling the playing field for Young Carers – Krista Sharp, CEO, MYTime Young Carers, Dorset

- A presentation was delivered by Krista Sharp informing the Panel of the programmes being delivered by MYTime Young Carers to improve outcomes in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP).
- MYTime runs a school programme and an employability programme – Despite their skillset, emotional maturity and qualities, Carers Trust report that 49% of young adult carers end up NEET (not in employment, education or training).
- Employability programme commenced before March 2020 lockdown - 6 young adult carers went through pilot programme. Scheduled to use Barclay's Eagle Lab as base for support but had to operate via Zoom, led by a careers advisor. Mock interviews with business community, developed CVs.
- Successful programme – 1 young adult carer who was formerly NEET is now in employment, 3 in education, 2 are still working with MYTIME.

- Scheme is also educating business about the flexibility they can offer in their workplaces to support carers.
- Hard to recruit young adult carers to the pilot programme due to poor communications between BCPs young carer team, adult carer team, NEET team and social services. Working with BCP to set up a transitions service for carers that reach 17 - Transitions service will help young carers see what opportunities are out there for them.
- School Young Carer Programme -'Level Up'- 80% of school teachers have had no training on working with young carers. Working with Senior Leadership and staff in the first school they worked with resulted in 28 young carers being identified by the school (during lockdown).
- Planning to embed employability programme into the Level Up schools programme to ensure careers advice and focussed work experience for young carers.
- Schools encouraged to develop a young carers policy and to appoint a member of the senior leadership team to be accountable for the policy.
- Working with 35 schools across BCP, including academy chains. Sharing good practice. Positive feedback and increased identification of young carers.
- Get school system registers to identify young carers as they would those receiving pupil premium.
- Educating teachers what they need to look out for makes a huge difference.
- Currently measuring impact of the school programme with regards to attendance and attainment.
- Ofsted do not recognise young carers as a distinct disadvantaged group.
- Making Memories Initiative – Opportunity for young carers to experience things they would otherwise miss out on, such as days out.
- MYTime looking to increase the scale of the employability programme.

Summer Camp – Charlie Dormehl, Teacher of History with Hattie Wheeler & Anna Aksenova, 6th formers at King Edwards VI School, Southampton

- Working in partnership with No Limits, every year King Edwards VI School runs a summer camp for 16 young carers in the New Forest.
- The camp is the culmination of activities across a year to raise funds, and to build relationships between the 6th form students who organise the events and the young carers.
- The initiative is an example of good practice that benefits 6th formers and the young carers and could be emulated by other 6th forms in Southampton.

Supporting carers in the workplace – Carers UK

- Madeleine Starr MBE, Director of Business Development and Innovation and Katherine Wilson, Head of Employers for Carers at Carers UK provided a presentation for the Panel. In their absence Adrian Littlemore, Senior Commissioner at the Integrated Commissioning Unit raised the following points.
- 1 in 7 people in any workplace will be a carer, 1 in 5 in health and care.
- 2.8m more workers are juggling work and unpaid care since the Coronavirus outbreak. During the outbreak 11% of carers reported that they had reduced their hours; 9% had given up work; Services being closed/reduced was the biggest factor.
- Carers UK have set up Employers for Carers (EFC) - Carers UK's business forum. Over 220 members representing 3.5m employees.
- The forum seeks to support employers to develop carer friendly workplaces; promote the business benefits of supporting carers; influence employment policy and practice.
- EFC umbrella scheme - Umbrella membership is designed for local authorities to reach and support working carers in their own workforce; Through health partners in their locality, as employers and providers; Through SMEs.
- Local authorities sign up as the key subscriber and then make EFC's resources available free to health partners and SMEs, offering added value at no cost. Cost for a city membership is £5-6k.
- Managed by the EFC, the Carer Confident benchmarking scheme started in January 2020. There are three levels that any organisation, whether they are an EFC member or not, can achieve. Level one shows they are an active in addressing carer support, level 2 shows that they are accomplished in providing carer support, and level 3 shows they are an ambassador for carer support both internally and externally.
- Organisations are measured using the following 5 key criteria: Preparation; Policy and guidance; Practical support; Peer support; Promoting support.
- Recognised benefits to business in retaining skilled and experienced staff.
- No employer in Southampton has signed up to the Carer Confident scheme yet.

Carers in the workplace: SCC as an employer – Katie Cope, HR Advisory Manager, SCC

- A presentation was delivered by Katie Cope.
- Flexible working is followed in most areas of the Council and the right to request flexible work patterns is open to all staff.
- The Way We Work Project is designed to support employees work life balance. 1,000 staff are now on the flexible working scheme – work anytime between

6.30am – 9.30pm – allows up to 4 breaks in a day giving employees more control over their working day (operationally permitting).

- Looking to roll out the scheme across SCC but not suitable for all positions but options are being considered for other roles.
- Scheme has been positively received and gives employees more control over their working day which is beneficial to carers.
- Paid for leave for up to 6 days in an emergency for caring responsibilities. Extended leave - unpaid leave for up to 13 weeks – priority given to requests from carers.
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Provided by Health Assured - Guidance on website for Carers.
- Vulnerable young people, including young carers, are given priority for work experience and apprenticeships at the Council.
- To better understand the number of SCC employees who are unpaid carers, and to identify support and training required, SCC could include a question on caring responsibility in the employers' survey.
- Carer Confident Scheme accreditation would help SCC's reputation as an employer of choice.