

Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into practice

Key Briefing - Measuring the impact of a whole system approach

Introduction

Carers Trust and **The Children's Society** delivered a one year Department for Education funded programme between April 2015 and March 2016 to support local authorities develop collaborative, whole family models that effectively implement their duties toward young carers and their families as set out in the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014. This series of **Making a Step Change: Putting it into practice** briefings draws on practical examples in undertaking these duties to identify, assess and support young carers and their families within a whole family approach.

Summary

Being clear about what to measure is key in determining whether the systems in place within a local authority for identifying, assessing and supporting young carers are having a positive impact.

This briefing sets out the challenges for local authorities of measuring the impact of a 'collaborative, whole system, whole family approach' to supporting young carers and families. It suggests approaches, key measures and potential sources of data that could be useful in understanding whether support in a local authority is working effectively.

Legislation, Guidance & Strategy

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health, October 2014) states at 3.59:

As a minimum, the process of developing a local plan should include:

- building into the plan opportunities to record, measure and assess the impact of information and advice services rather than simply service outputs.

And at that 'Outcomes should be used as a principal measure for quality assurance of services.' (4.16)

And 4.63 states that:

In determining an approach to engagement, local authorities should consider methods that enable people to contribute meaningfully to:

- Setting measures of success and monitor on-going service delivery including through the experience of people who use services and carers

Key Issues and Principle Challenges

Measuring the impact of a whole family approach to **supporting** young carers across a local authority is challenging in many ways:

Challenges because of who young carers are:

Firstly, many young carers in a local authority may not have been identified or assessed and therefore benchmarking the outcomes of support is not possible.

Secondly, young carers are often negatively impacted by their caring role not in one, but often in several different domains, including health, education and their social life as well as impacts associated with transition to adulthood such as being NEET.

Thirdly, young carers will take on caring roles at different ages and roles and responsibilities vary between young carers and over time. The extent to which they impact upon a young carer will also depend on many factors, including their developmental stage and resilience factors

Lastly, effective support for young carers **should be preventative** and therefore as well as evaluating the reduction in negative outcomes for young carers who have support in place, a major aspect of evaluation should be how well **prevention** through a whole family approach is working.

Practical challenges:

The Making a step change project highlighted some practical challenges faced by local authorities including:

- Databases 'not talking to each other'
- Information sharing issues
- Lack of clarity about what to measure
- Lack of capacity to undertake assessment reviews and collect data to measure progress

Learning from the Making a step change: Putting it into practice Project

Taking these challenges together, it may therefore be useful to look at measuring the impact of a local authority ‘whole system, whole family approach’ in two distinct ways:

Firstly by using proxies to evaluate the processes that make up a systematic, collaborative and preventative, whole family approach. For example, whether young carers are being identified by a wide range of *different* services and in particular, what proportion of young carers are being identified through adult social care, health, or through schools for example?

Secondly by measuring the reduction in negative outcomes of young carers who have already been identified and who have support in place, for example by using tools such as the MACA and PANOC¹ to measure progress.

Approach 1: Using proxies to evaluate the processes that make up a systematic, collaborative and preventative whole family approach

Useful data to consider collating includes:

- Numbers of young carers being identified e.g. through adults or children’s services, health, schools, the voluntary sector or others.
- The relative proportions of young carers being identified from these different sources i.e. are only a small proportion coming from adult social services or health?
- The number of young carers receiving a statutory assessment under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014
- The number of young carers in receipt of support as a result of a statutory young carers needs assessment
- How many young carers have support packages going into their families?
- The proportions of young carers supporting people with different types of illness and disability

Analysis of this data should determine where there are gaps in identification within the system and where pathways are working effectively. This will need central coordination within a local authority using unique identification numbers to track individuals and ensure there is no double counting.

Approach 2: Measuring the reduction in negative outcomes of young carers

In order to do this, a good understanding of the impact of being a young carer in your local area is needed and therefore strong identification, assessment and data collection and sharing processes are vital.

A range of outcomes tools are being used within local authorities including:

- MACA and PANOC²
- Young People’s Star, Carers Star and Family Star³
- My Life Now⁴

¹ Tools from Joseph, S., Becker, F. and Becker, S. (2012) Manual for Measures of Caring Activities and outcomes for Children and Young People (2nd edition). London: Carers Trust.

² Tools from Joseph, S., Becker, F. and Becker, S. (2012) Manual for Measures of Caring Activities and outcomes for Children and Young People (2nd edition). London: Carers Trust.

³ <https://www.staronline.org.uk/>

- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMBWS)
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

Other measures being collected by local authorities include NEET data, GCSE and Key Stage 2 attainment and attendance data.

Data can be then compared against:

- National data of the impact on young carers,
- Other young people in the local authority without caring responsibilities⁵
- Young carers following interventions.

Benchmarking against national data

Data collected locally on young carers can be compared to national data for example:

- **Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's:** *Hidden from View: The experiences of young carers in England, The Children's Society 2013)*
- **Young adult carers aged between 16 and 18 years are twice as likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET):** *Audit Commission (2010), 'Against the Odds'. Audit Commission.*
- **The characteristics of children in need data** now captures whether children are young carers and could be an interesting benchmark for year on year comparison. In 2015 2.8% of assessments were young carers compared with 2.1% in 2014.⁶

Note: A fall in numbers of young carers who are children in need may indicate a system that is working well and in a preventative way. However, it may take some time for models of identification, assessment and support to mature sufficiently to show such a positive trend and an increase in relative numbers of young carers may in fact indicate improved identification and awareness.

Statutory Reporting

Local authorities need to reports to the Departments for Education and Department of Health. With respect to measuring the impact of a system however, the information required by the departments may be of only limited benefit for Commissioners.

What local authorities are required to report on include⁷:

1. Young carer: Concerns that services may be required or the child's health or development may be impaired due to their caring responsibilities.⁸ [This is on the Single Assessment (Social Care) Part C CAYA – to Ofsted]

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https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/trust_template_my_life_now_individual_assess_planing_ct.pdf

⁵ This will also include non-identified young carers

⁶ Characteristics of children in need: 2014 to 2015

⁷ At the time of publication some of these may be voluntary returns; please verify

⁸ Single Assessment (Social Care) Part C CAYA

2. Data on sequels to transition assessment for young carers who are undergoing transition between children's social services to adult social care. [A return for the DH under the Care Act]
3. A requirement to record the number of new carers in a 12 month period as a subset of the total carers dealt with (young carers would form part of the cohort). [A return for the DH under the Care Act]

Putting it into Practice

Local Authority Trailblazers from the *Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into practice* project have demonstrated innovative ways of measuring the impact of whole family, whole council, whole system approach to supporting young carers and their families.

Case Studies

In **Liverpool City Council**, the commissioned service, Barnardo's are required to report on the following performance measures every 6 months:

- Number of young carers and young adult carers where there has been an improvement in the impact of caring on their wellbeing;
- Number of young carers and young adult carers that have had a carers assessment
- Number of young carers and young adult carers that have had a reassessment;
- Number of young carers and young adult carers that have had a carers support plan;
- Number of young carers and young adult carers that have had a review;
- Profile of carer by:
 - Age; Gender; Ethnicity
 - Employment status
 - Carer disability
 - Relationship to the cared for person
 - Cared for person's primary condition
 - Cared for persons age
 - Referral source;
- Number of young carers and young adult carers that have achieved their outcomes;
- Number of young carers and young adult carers not achieving their outcomes;
- Number of young carers and young adult carers that are no longer actively caring and reason their caring role have ceased.

Number of carers supported and level of support needs that they have under the following headings:

- High Support Needs – 5 or more support actions
- Moderate Support Needs – 2 – 5 support actions
- Low Support Needs – information / signposting
- A summary of the individual issues raised by carers and outcomes achieved
- A summary of any collective issues under the following headings:
 - Health, Wellbeing and Home Life
 - Employment, Education and Finance
 - Other
- Evidence of, and reflection on service achievements

- Risks

Case studies

As a commissioned service they are required to input directly into the local authority client records system.

In **Oxfordshire County Council**, details of identified young carers are recorded on the children's social care database. Details include:

- who they care for (parent, sibling or other)
- that they are known to the county young carers service
- the referral form to the young carers service
- the young carers needs assessment documentation

This ensures that the situation, needs and vulnerabilities of the young carer are visible to all children's social staff.

Additionally in **Oxfordshire**, the local authority uses the **unique Pupil Identifier Numbers** to form comparison data for the attainment of young carers against 'non-caring' children, (including non-identified young carers) at GCSE and Key Stage 2, along with a profile of the identified young carers in relation to levels of free school meals; special education needs rates and ethnicity. This data has informed the local authorities work and highlighted this group to be as vulnerable learners. It has informed training and other education based work, including joint work with the Virtual School for Looked after Children.

Cost-benefit and Social Return on Investment

This briefing has focussed on the impact on young carers and their families – whether interventions are effective and whether the system as a whole is effective. Commissioners are also likely to wish to evaluate what they do from a financial perspective. Carers Trust have published two tools that can be used by services to determine the cost-benefit and social return on investment.⁹

Conclusion

There are many challenges to effectively measuring the impact of a whole family, whole system approach for young carers and their families. Separating out the measuring of **outcomes** for individual young carers and measuring the effectiveness of the **processes** that form a preventative whole family, collaborative approach may be a useful way forward. By making progress in this area, local authorities will continue to develop their rationale for supporting young carers and commissioners will develop their understanding about which parts of their system need to be modified.

Next Steps

- Consider using some of the suggested outcomes in the publication 'Commissioning Services for Young Carers and their Families'¹⁰
- Require commissioned services to **input directly into client records**

⁹ These tools are available from the Carers [Trust Professional website](#) and can be requested by emailing info@carers.org

¹⁰ Phelps, D (2012), Commissioning Services for Young Carers and their Families (Carers Trust)

- Ensure commissioned services have the capacity to collect the data required
- Ensure that young carers are visible and identified on 'everybody else's system'
- Carry out a **mapping exercise** to see where the information is held, where the gaps are and who else needs to be involved
- Ensure that case studies and narratives from young carers, as well as their parents, continue to play a key role in measuring the their impacts and outcomes

Tools & Resources

- List of tools for measuring outcomes: <https://professionals.carers.org/young-carer-assessment-tools>
- Cost-benefit and Social Return on Investment tools: <https://professionals.carers.org/>

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