



# **Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee**

## **Supporting Young Carers Task and Finish Review**

### **Report**

**February 2026**

**Councillors:**

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## **1. Introduction and Terms of Reference**

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Review on Support for Young Carers following the Annual Scrutiny Workshop where councillors expressed a desire to seek assurances regarding whether they were being supported effectively and to raise the profile of young carers.
- 1.2 The purpose of the review was to ensure the cohort of young carers is effectively identified and their needs are understood, and to consider whether the Council and Partners are providing sufficient support to young carers and their families. To ensure young carers have good education, and health and wellbeing outcomes. The Aims and Objectives of the review included:
- i. To examine the Council's understanding of the cohort (e.g. numbers, location, situation etc.) and how young carers are identified by service providers (e.g. social care, schools, health services)
  - ii. To understand the voice of young carers and the types of support they would like access to
  - iii. To understand what schools are doing to support young carers and where improvements might be possible
  - iv. To understand what health services are doing to support young carers (both health services their dependents are receiving and health services that can support young carers – e.g. mental health services)
  - v. To consider whether the Council's offer to young carers is comprehensive enough
  - vi. To examine the outcomes that young carers have
- 1.3 This report sets out the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Group based on its findings from the review. Members of the Task Group thank all those who have given time to contribute towards this review, in particular the young people from the "Chattin For Action" group (St Helens Young Carers consultation panel).

## **2. Method of Investigation**

- 2.1 The Task Group undertook a number of meetings with a range of stakeholders and shared a survey with schools in the Borough regarding their engagement with young carers. On 29 October 2025, the Task Group met with officers to review the Council's strategy for supporting young carers and the commissioning of young carer support services. 2 December 2025, Members met with the Young Carers Chatting For Action group through the Carers Centre to hear directly from young carers about their experiences, views of current provision, and ideas for improvement.
- 2.2 The Task Group held a face-to-face session on 12 January 2026, with school representatives responsible for support providing in schools to young carers to discussion good practice and barriers faced. A survey was also sent to all schools and colleges to collect a wider range of perspectives.

2.3 The following Members of the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee formed the Review Group:

- Councillor Jeanette Banks
- Councillor David Banks
- Councillor John Pinnington (Overview and Scrutiny Commission)
- Councillor Michelle Sweeney

2.4 The following representatives attended the meeting on behalf of their agencies:

- Elaine Hardie – Head of Contracts and Coproduction, St Helens Council
- Scott Jones – Head of Families First Service, St Helens Council
- Kayleigh Owen – Young Carers Team Manager, St Helens Carers Centre
- Tanya Butt – Carer Outreach & Engagement Officer, St Helens Carers Centre

12 January 2026 Attendees:

- Alison Melling, Carmel College
- Joanne O'Brien, Merton Bank Primary School
- Michelle Slingsby, Willow Tree Primary School
- Sarah Moran, De La Salle High School
- Kerris Brown, Outwood Academy Haydock High School
- Lisa Gardford, Eccleston Lane Ends Primary School
- Isabelle Aaron, Hope Academy High School
- Lee Winstanley, Broad Oak Primary School
- Lisa Dykes, Sutton Manor Primary School
- Gemma Lea, Allanson Street Primary School
- Michael Bate, St Augustine's High School

### **3. Background**

3.1 Children and young people are identified as young carers if they help to look after (unpaid) a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem.<sup>1</sup> Young carers look after a parent(s) and their siblings. This can include doing extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning or helping someone get dressed and move around. They may also give a lot of physical help to a parent, brother or sister who's disabled or ill as well as help taking medication and attending health appointments. This can include emotional support also.

3.2 Local authorities are required to arrange a young carer's assessment (under the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Care Act 2014, and the Health and Care Act 2022) if a young carer or family requests one. This assessment will determine the level of support the young carer and their family require. The assessment will include whether the role the young carer is performing is suitable to them and establish whether they wish to be performing a caring role and the impact of their role.

3.3 School census data released in June 2024 by the Department for Education reported that 53,976 pupils were recorded as young carers, representing 0.6% of the pupil population

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<sup>1</sup> [NHS Website – Being a young carer: your rights](#)

and an average of 337 young carers per local authority. The Carers Trust's analysis of the census suggested that young carers were significantly underreported based on estimated numbers of young carers known to local young carer services at the time.<sup>2</sup> The Carers Trust's breakdown of the census suggested that there were 214 young carers reported by St Helens schools.

## 4. Findings

- 4.1 The following section documents the findings from the Task Group's meetings and the survey of schools.

### ***Commissioning of the Young Carer Service***

- 4.2 Officers explained that the Young Carers Service forms part of the All-Age Carers Service delivered from a separate hub from adult carer services. The hub in St Helens Town Centre is designed to be completely separate and exclusively for supporting young carers. The current contract that the Council has with St Helens Carers Centre as the provider of the All-Age Carers Service commenced in 2024. The previous contract for services had been extraordinarily extended following the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- 4.3 An extensive commissioning process had been undertaken including consultation events with adult carers, parents carers and a dedicated session with young carers. The All-Age Carers Strategy and accompanying action plan were developed based on feedback from carers and the Strategy includes a specific section on support for young carers. One of the changes to support for young carers from the previous strategy was that young people could be classed as a young carer up to age 25 rather than the previous limit of 18. Three potential providers were identified during soft market testing however only the St Helens Carers Centre which is a network member of Carers Trust made a formal bid for the contract and were successfully awarded a 5-year contract with two optional 1-year extensions. The fulfilment of the contract is monitored via quarterly monitoring by Contract Monitoring Officers from the Council.
- 4.4 In 2025 St Helens Young Carers launched a Young Carers Toolkit to support stakeholders involved with supporting young carers (such as schools, social care and NHS services). The focus of the toolkit is on meeting the needs of young carers as they see them. It was suggested that young carers value opportunities to feel recognised as individuals and not just for their caring role. Children can be supported as young carers from 6 years old. The Strategy identifies thresholds that a child's caring duties must meet to qualify for support (e.g. complexity and frequency of caring tasks carried out). For children who do not meet the threshold for support for the Young Carers Centre they and their families will be signposted to other potential support they would be able to access (e.g. universal services such as Family Hubs).
- 4.5 Officers confirmed that being a young carer was not necessarily a cause for children's social services to become involved with a family as being a carer doesn't mean that harm is being caused. Families will however be supported and monitored to ensure the safety of

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<sup>2</sup> [Carers Trust web article](#)

young carers and their siblings is maintained. As previously mentioned, Family Hubs can support families without formal social care intervention and families known to the Council are referred for support, including young carers referred to the Young Carers Centre.

- 4.6 The Council understands the stigma that continues to prevent some families from coming forward for support. Current data regarding the actual number of young carers is limited as they can be hard to identify when families don't come forwards. Information available to the Young Carers Centre is provided at 4.12. Officers acknowledge the role schools play in identifying young carers but understands the difficulty spotting the signs as they can be different from those of children in need and SEN them. There is potential that some young people who are elective home educated (EHE) are doing so because of a caring role. When children are EHE public services have limited rights get involved. It was also suggested that there may be gaps in data regarding young carers who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- 4.7 As with adult carers, the Council recognises the important role that young carers play in supporting their family to maintain some independence from public services which is a benefit to those services. As such the Council is committed to supporting young carers to maintain their roles while retaining access to opportunities for their futures.

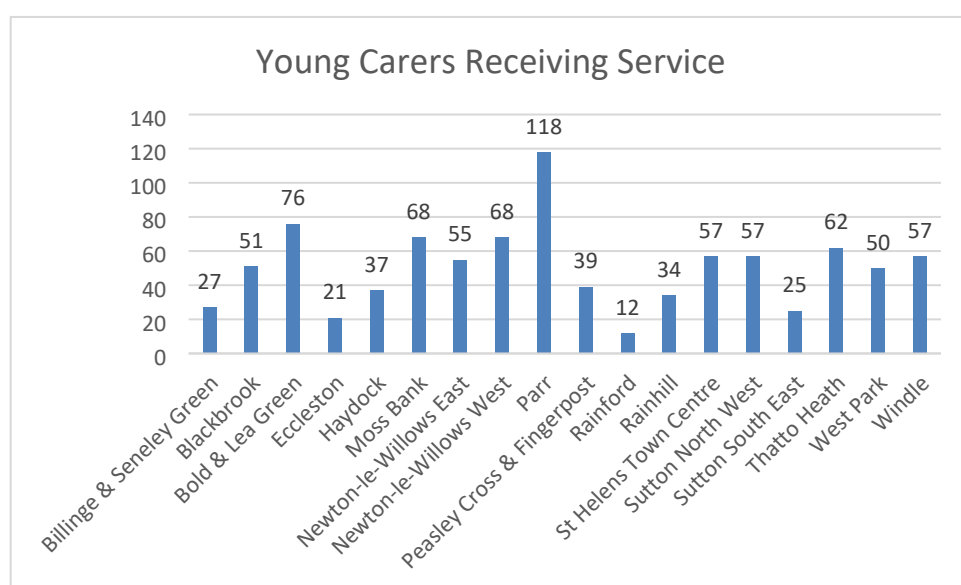
#### ***Young Carers Centre***

- 4.8 When the Task Group visited the Young Carers Chatting 4 Action group at the Young Carers Centre it received information about how the Young Carers Centre operated and what it offered to young carers and their families. The Young Carers Centre provides respite activities, listening services, family intervention work and support with assessments from 6 years old. The Centre also offers homework help and leisure activities. The Carers Centre also provided age-appropriate support groups for young carers transitioning to adulthood between 18 and 25. This cohort in addition to being offered services available for adult carers, are offered age appropriate Young Adult groups and support.
- 4.9 It was suggested that some parents were reluctant to consent to their children receiving support from the Young Carers Centre although staff did try to work with parents to explain the benefits to their child of being support by the centre. Some of those parents did consent eventually but the young carer did miss out on support in the meantime. There were also parents that did consent straight away once they were aware of the support available. Awareness of support, and what a young carer is, was an issue in some parts of the borough which suggested a need for more promotion. It was suggested by the staff that more national standardisation of the way support was provided to young carers would improve accessibility and awareness.
- 4.10 The Young Carers Centre conducted outreach with schools to raise awareness, encouraging schools to identify a named member of staff to become a Young Carer Champions, who would lead in school in supporting the needs of young carers and how to identify pupils who might be young carers to support identification at the earliest opportunity. It was suggested by the Centre staff that some schools engaged better than others. Identifying a named Young Carer Champion was not mandatory for schools like having a Special Educational Needs Coordinator was however many SENCOs were also

Young Carer Champions. It was acknowledged by the Centre that school staff are overstretched with limited resources (see more on schools below). The Centre had recently established a Young Carer Champions network aimed at raising awareness and providing key updates (such as recent changes from Ofsted and DfE to the status of young carers in inspections). The network enabled schools to share good practice and has reportedly been well received by schools so far.

4.11 It was noted that St Helens Carers Centre young carers had met with Director of Ofsted to bring about the changes in the Ofsted framework.

4.12 As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026, St Helens Carers Centre was actively supporting 914 Young Carers between the ages of 6 and 18, and a further 365 Young Adult Carers between the ages of 18-25.



4.13

### ***Young Carers Chatting For Action Group***

4.14 The Task Group met with young carers at the Young Carers Centre in St Helens Town Centre to discuss their experience with support services, schools and health services. Many of the young carers had been registered since early childhood (St Helens Carers Centre registers children from 6 years old but there is no national standards on age limits). Others had only recently become carers in their teens. All said that they highly valued the Young Carers Centre as a space to relax and meet peers who understand their situation.

4.15 Young carers reported forming friendships with other young carers that were more meaningful than those formed with friends at school or clubs due to their shared experiences. Some noted that joining other types of groups such as sports teams could be difficult because of their caring role so having a place like the Young Carers Centre was important for respite and support.

4.16 Other difficulties that young carers faced relating to their caring role was missing opportunities to take part in social activities like school trips, dance shows and friends' birthdays or other events. The Young Carers Centre provided trips, residential holidays

and regular respite groups and other events to help young carers experience things that they otherwise miss out on.

- 4.17 In relation to schools the Young Carers presented a mixed experience. It was suggested that some pastoral staff offer good support however many teachers or senior leaders often lack understanding of young carers' circumstances and how they can affect their education. Young Carers reported that teachers were often aware that they were a young carer however didn't make any adjustments to recognise the issues that being a young carer could have for their education. Some explained how they had been achieving high marks in school prior to becoming a young carer due to a parent becoming ill and teachers did not appreciate how taking on a caring role was the reason for reduced performance in school (i.e. there was an apparent expectation that the pupil should be able to maintain previous performance due to their capabilities).
- 4.18 Young carers reported that their caring roles could affect their attendance including being late for school often or missing school some days. Young Carers may also have to leave school early some days because of their caring role. For example, some young carers in high school needed to meet their young siblings at primary school to take them home.
- 4.19 Some of the older young carers were able to share experience regarding further education and employment. It was suggested that support during transition from secondary school to college was inconsistent however one young carer was working with their sixth form pastoral team to make improvements and raise awareness of young carers' needs. Support from employers also varied depending on the employer. For example, some provided flexibility to support a young carer's caring role while others were less supportive. Young carers felt that their opportunities in employment were restricted relative to young people without those responsibilities, this included apprenticeship schemes. It was noted that carers allowance could be claimed at 16 but not if the young person is in full-time education. It was suggested that Department of Work and Pensions and the Department for Education should be working together to support full time students with their caring roles. It was also noted that a family's benefits could be affected if a young carer was working.
- 4.20 The young carers informed the Task Group about work they had been doing with the Carers Centre to raise awareness of the needs of young carers and their families. For example, some young carers met with the Chief Ofsted Inspector in London to advocate for improved support for young carers. It was noted that Ofsted has updated its policies to better recognise young carers, integrating them more clearly into inspection frameworks, placing them on a closer footing to SEND and looked after pupils.
- 4.21 With regards to health services, young carers and their families experienced a number of issues. It was felt that there was a lot of focus on adult carers and the role they played supporting elderly patients within the NHS but not very much with regards to young carers. There was a general feeling that NHS services did not appreciate the role a young carer might play in the needs of the parent in relation to attendance at appointments on making booking on their behalf. For example, young carers have been told that they are unable to book their own appointments or book them on behalf of their parents. Being unable to



attend appointments due to parents being unable to transport them was also an issue. It was acknowledged that some health services had changed their DNA (Did Not Attend) rules and now classed some children's missed appointments as WNB (Was Not Brought). It was noted that sometimes remote appointments were offered to enable young carers to keep their caring roles but remote appointments weren't always appropriate.

- 4.22 The Task Group's meeting with Young Carers ended with each sharing their ideas for what could be improved to increase/improve the support they receive. Responses included:
- More flexibility and understanding from schools regarding commitments such as clubs and extracurricular activities,
  - Greater awareness of in all areas of what being a young carer means (including for children who don't realise they are a young carer),
  - Increases focus on young carers in school assemblies, PHSE lessons, and school communications (e.g. newsletters),
  - Clear, more accessible information for pupils/students and staff at schools and colleges,
  - Posters and campaigns co-designed by young carers to be displayed in schools,
  - Better understanding and support from health services to improve access.

### ***Meeting with Schools***

- 4.23 During the meeting with school representatives the Task Group asked questions about the effect that being a young carer can have on a young person's education, the current support offered by the schools, and the barriers to identifying and supporting young carers more. The meeting was well attended by representatives of a range of schools from primary, secondary and further education.
- 4.24 A common issue identified by schools in engaging with parents of young carers (or suspected young carers) was a lack of engagement from some parents due to stigma attached to needed children to perform a caring role or reluctance due to fears about social care involvement. It was suggested that some young people are unaware that they are young carers which highlighted the need for education/awareness raising through assemblies and PSHCE lessons. Examples were shared of some young carers self-identifying once they had learned what was classed as being a young carer. Secondary and further education settings noted that young carers often wish to stay anonymous or choose to withdraw from support once they reach 16.
- 4.25 A reluctance by families to engage with schools over their child being a young carer often meant schools struggled to obtain parental consent for referrals to the Young Carers Centre, even when children express a willingness to engage. Other families engaged with services but inconsistently either due to parental ill health, substance misuse, or mental health issues such as anxiety.
- 4.26 School representatives noted that being a young carer can often mean that those pupils miss out on extra-curricular activities such as after school clubs or school trips. Many young carers sometimes arrive to school late, have absences. When in school some young carers show signs of a lack of sleep which affects their concentration in lessons. Others suggested that young carers can struggle to find time to do homework. Conversely,

it was highlighted that a caring role has given some young carers a level of diligence and organisational skills that means they perform well in their studies and display more maturity than many of their peers.

- 4.27 It was suggested that primary schools generally offered a more nurturing and supporting environment for pupils like young carers due to being smaller with teachers who spend more time with them whereas secondary schools being larger with pupils moving between classes/teachers it makes it harder to identify young carers or offer support. As such, primary schools and secondary schools work together on identifying young carers in year 6 who will be transitioning to secondary school to ensure support is offered. In general, it was agreed that early identification of young carers is preferable to avoid potential negative consequences of their caring role affecting their education or relationships in school.
- 4.28 Young carers at the Carers Centre had designed discreet lapel badges which are given to School Young Carer Champions to distribute to young carers in secondary schools to help their teachers identify them as potentially vulnerable or needing more support however, some schools suggested that young carers generally don't like to wear them as they don't like to be singled out as different to their peers. It was suggested by the Carers Centre that some Young Carers have reported that they were not allowed to wear badges in some schools. Many secondary schools offer vulnerable groups such as young carers support groups or sessions to discuss their needs or issues but attendance is inconsistent. It was reported that most young people don't like to give up their break time to attend these sessions and would prefer to spend that time with their friends. Schools were reluctant to offer support sessions during lesson time as they did not like young carers to miss learning, particularly when their caring roles were impacting their overall attendance already. Other barriers to offering support sessions for some schools included a lack of space for interventions (i.e. there were no spare rooms in the school to offer sessions in private).
- 4.29 Within further education it was mentioned that additional flexibility of timetables enabled the college to adjust a young carer's timetable to support their caring needs (e.g. late starts and/or early finishes). It was suggested however that the number of young carers known to the colleges is low because many choose not to disclose their circumstances to staff. Those that do share their situations often voice concerns about university aspirations due to caring responsibilities. Secondary schools also reported concerns about young carers' aspirations for careers being impacted by anxieties about their caring roles.
- 4.30 During the meeting it was noted that the Young Carers had informed the Task Group that many school staff know that they are a young carer but don't necessarily understand what that means in practice (i.e. how it can affect their learning and/or behaviour). School representatives agreed that awareness of young carers and their needs could be increased within schools, particularly in secondary schools where teachers had a larger number of students and saw each of them less often than primary school teachers. It was noted that it could be challenging to ensure all secondary school staff knew who young carers were, particularly when new young carers are identified. It was noted that

understanding of trauma informed practice was increasing in schools however there was still a need to further strengthen practices to improve consistency.

- 4.31 When asked for suggestions for improvements they would like to see, school representatives suggested the following:
- Earlier identification of young carers and regular reviews of their circumstances (to know changes)
  - Ensuring young carers are considered alongside looked after children, SEND, and other vulnerable groups.
  - Removing the stigma for young carers and parents to increase engagement
  - Greater reassurances for parents regarding potential involvement of social care not being a negative
  - Greater engagement with Young Carers Centre to increase awareness among staff and pupils (particularly those that are young carers but don't realise)
  - Opportunities to celebrate the role of young carers to give them praise and present them in a positive light

#### ***Schools Survey Response***

- 4.32 The Task Group received 35 responses to the survey which was a high number relative to other surveys Scrutiny Committees have sent to schools during previously task and finish reviews. There was a good range of responses from primary, secondary and further education providers. The responses reinforce many of the points raised during the meeting with schools outlined above.
- 4.33 Of the 35 responses, only four suggested that their school did not currently have any young carers identified to them although this included an infant school. The survey did not ask the schools for data regarding actual numbers of young carers that they were aware of. Eight schools had identified pupils who were being looked after by a young sibling (including the previously mentioned infant school).
- 4.34 Only three of the schools that responded confirmed that they did not currently have a named 'Young Carer Champion'. Reasons for not having a named champion included the post recently being vacated, a lack of resources with the low number of staff already 'wearing many hats', and a lack of training specific to young carers to successfully perform the role. Some schools identified that they currently had two members of staff designated as young carer champion.
- 4.35 With regards to how schools engaged with the parents/carers of young carers the schools shared a range of methods and outcomes. Schools used a mixture of newsletters, school apps and text messaging, school websites and letters/leaflets about specific events/issues to communicate with parents/carers generally regarding information about young carers. Regarding specific pupils/families, schools generally preferred to use face to face engagement (often at drop off or pick up) or phone calls to raise concerns (such as issues with pupil's attendance, appearance or behaviour), have regular check-ins or provide updates. Some mentioned the need to use interpreters where required (including British Sign Language (BSL)). Schools also arranged more formal meetings with parents when

required. These would generally involve the pupil's teacher and pastoral leads (including young care champions) or either an ad hoc or regularly scheduled basis.

- 4.36 Several schools highlighted the need to build/strengthen relationships and trust with parents to maintain ongoing support. This included focusing on praise and recognition of the pupil's successes in school and the support that is available to families. Schools mentioned signposting families to services that may provide support where a need has been identified and offered to make referrals to the Young Carers Centre.
- 4.37 With regards to support from partners such as the Council and Carers Centre, schools provided a range of responses. Although a small minority noted minimal or no support beyond email updates most schools identified positive relationships and strong support from the Young Carers Centre. Some referred to the 1:1 emotional support, respite activities and breaks from home for young carers offered by the Carers Centre. Some also referenced the support Young Carers Centre provide on-site (i.e. in school) such as help carrying out assessments of young carers' needs, screenings and referrals to support services (such as Early Help). Reference was also made to delivery of assemblies to all pupils or targeted groups to raise awareness and reduce stigma.
- 4.38 Many schools had regular contact with the Young Carers Centre with support offered in relation to maintain school lists of young carers, applying for funding, and attendance at meetings with families. The Young Carers Centre has also supported some schools to achieve Bronze Award for Young Carers in Schools<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.39 Schools identified a wide range of barriers and challenges in identifying, supporting and engaging with young carers. Themes identified regarding barriers include:
- Parental reluctance and stigma
  - Difficulties identifying young carers
  - Funding and resource constraints
  - Time and capacity limitations
  - Impact of support activities on learning time
  - Practical barriers for pupils
  - Space and environment constraints
  - Staff training needs
- 4.40 Parental reluctance to acknowledge their child as a young carer was a major recurring barrier often resulting from a perceived stigma or fear of links to involving social services. Some parents also resisted labelling their child as a young carer even when they clearly have caring responsibilities. This reticence often led to delays or limited engagement with support services.
- 4.41 Schools reported a lack of awareness of some children's caring roles and were unsure how many young carers were actually enrolled at the school. Some young carers don't have outward signs of being young carers in their school experience so would be difficult to identify. Some suggested that some pupils conceal their caring roles to avoid stigma or

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<sup>3</sup> [Information about the Young Carers in Schools Award](#)

unwanted attention. For some children, caring roles emerge gradually as their increase and may take years to be recognised.

- 4.42 Many schools cite a lack of funding, reduced budgets over time, and limited resources for pastoral or young carer support. Some pupils have more complex needs, but funding streams to support them are unavailable. Partly as a result of the lack of funding, staff often struggle to balance young carer support with their other roles. Some Young Carers Champions hold multiple safeguarding, pastoral, and support positions, making scheduling difficult. Schools highlight lack of time, staffing capacity, and competing priorities as major barriers.
- 4.43 Support sessions for young carers provided by schools often take pupils out of lessons, and schools worry about the impact on education—particularly for older pupils preparing for assessments. Some pupils do not want to give up their free time at lunch or break time to attend groups, resulting in low attendance. Young carers may find it difficult to attend after-school support because of responsibilities such as caring for family members or collecting siblings. Schools attempt to accommodate but find this challenging.
- 4.44 Some smaller schools report limited physical space to hold young carer meetings or activities outside of classrooms or other spaces that would not provide necessary privacy. Staff in some settings feel they would benefit from additional training to confidently discuss caring roles and respond to challenges faced by young carers.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 Members of the Task Group are grateful for the engagement that they have had with service providers and schools during this review. The Task Group is particularly grateful to young carers for giving up their precious free time to share their experiences which was vital to this review. The Task Group would've liked to spend more time considering the health services' role in support for young carers given the feedback young carers provided however time and resources did not permit more in-depth work. The Task Group asks the Council's commissioners to work with the Integrated Care Board's commissioners and staff from the young carers centre to share the experiences of young carers and their families with health services to encourage some positive changes to their approach to patients with young carers and young carers as patients.
- 5.2 The Task Group wishes to highlight the vital role that young carers perform and the importance of the skills and experience they develop when performing their caring role. Whilst many may experience difficulties reaching their academic potential in school or college as a result of their caring role recognition should be given to the skills young carers have and how they can be applied in employment. Consideration should be given to some way of formalising the recognition of young carer's skills to support their employment and further education opportunities.
- 5.3 It is clear from the findings of the review that there is some inconsistencies with regards to support for young carers across public services. A lack of national standards and guidance to public services appears to have resulted in different approaches around the country.

While allowing different approaches enables best practice to emerge standardising guidance would improve the understanding of young carers as a cohort and increase the support they receive. It may also improve engagement from families with support services if the stigma of requiring a child to perform a caring role can be reduced through greater national recognition. The Task Group supports efforts made by young carers with the support of the Young Carers Centre to influence national policy. The Task Group is aware that a magazine has recently been developed for care experienced young people by care experienced young people. Consideration should be given to how young carers could be supported to have a similar magazine highlighting their experiences to increase awareness.

- 5.4 The Task Group supports the greater recognition given to young carers by Ofsted and hopes that this will encourage schools to do more to elevate the status of young carers and the support and understand they receive in their education. The Task Group appreciates the efforts that some schools have demonstrated in trying to support young carers and understands the barriers to increasing effectiveness. The Task Group supports young carers in choosing their own ways to cope with their caring role and understands how engaging with friends rather than school staff during free time may be preferable to them. The Task Group also understands schools' reluctance to take young carers out of lessons for support but believes consideration should be given to the best outcomes overall if wellbeing is affecting their ability to learn when in lessons anyway.
- 5.5 The Task Group is pleased that the majority of schools that responded to the survey had at least one named Young Care Champion however recognises the barriers and constraints on schools to doing more. With limited resources individual school staff often have multiple roles placed on them that makes it difficult to dedicate sufficient time to specific vulnerable groups. The Task Group would like to see the Young Carer Champion role made mandatory for all schools.
- 5.6 The Task Group is concerned about the apparent gaps in data relating to young carers but understands that this is linked in part to the stigma related to young carers and reluctance of families and young carers to identify themselves. Greater promotion of the ways in which families can be supported without the involvement of social care is needed to reduce stigma and encourage more families to come forward. In relation to health services, GPs should be encouraged to ensure young carers are identified on their records in the way that adult carers are.
- 5.7 The Task Group was impressed with St Helens Carers Centre Young Carer Hub during the visit and recognises the vital respite that the service provides and is glad that young carers value it so much. The Task Group is however disappointed that some young carers struggle to access the service regularly due to lack of transport if parents are unwell. The Task Group notes that the Liverpool City Region<sup>4</sup> recently provided free public transport to care leavers and asks that consideration be given to whether young carers could be extended the same privilege to support their transport needs and improve access to

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<sup>4</sup> [Article regarding free travel for care leavers](#)

support services and employment/further education opportunities.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 The Task and Finish Group recommends that:

- a) *The Council's commissioners for Carers Support liaise with commissioners from the Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board to improve awareness and understanding of young carers and support needs among health service providers.*
- b) *The Council give consideration to ways in which young carers' skills developed in their caring role can be formally recognised e.g. via some form of assessment and certification to support their employment and/or further education opportunities.*
- c) *The Council work with the Young Carers Centre and schools without a designated Young Carer Champion to consider how a champion could be identified.*
- d) *The Council work with colleges in the borough to review opportunities for young carers to access further education and how they can be supported to maintain placements while performing their caring role.*
- e) *The Council liaise with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority regarding options for awarding free public transport to recognised young carers as it has done for care leavers.*