



AGENDA ITEM 8

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

19 OCTOBER 2010

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS - SUMMARY OF THE CHILDREN & LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL'S FINAL REPORT

Why the Scrutiny Panel Examined This Subject:

1. Young carers are children, who can be as young as five, and young people under 18, who help to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill or has a substance misuse problem. Caring can involve physical or emotional care, or taking responsibility for someone's safety or well being. Many young carers spend a lot of time doing household chores or looking after younger siblings in addition to helping a sick or disabled parent with tasks such as administering medication, helping someone to get up and get dressed or helping someone to use the bathroom. Some young carers also help parents to look after a disabled sibling.
2. Helping out around the house is a normal part of growing up, but young carers can regularly carry out significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age. This can have a significant impact on the young person - from affecting their schooling and academic achievement, to having an adverse effect on their social lives and ability to go out, play or make friends.
3. The scrutiny panel was concerned to find out what support is available to young carers in Middlesbrough, particularly the Council's involvement in the subject.

What the Scrutiny Panel Found:

4. The panel found that, as young carers are a vulnerable group, the Council has a statutory duty to look after their interests. This responsibility is essentially undertaken by an external service provider (ie The Junction's Young Carer's Project) which is commissioned by Children, Families and Learning through external funding.
5. Although good support is available through The Junction, and other agencies such as Adult Social Care and NHS Middlesbrough, a key issue relates to actually identifying young carers so that help can be provided.

Summary of the Scrutiny Panel's Conclusions:

6. The scrutiny panel's conclusions are shown in full in the **attached final report** and highlight the following:
 - a) The vulnerability of young carers and why they need support.
 - b) The reasons why it can be difficult to identify young carers.
 - c) The involvement of schools in identifying and supporting young carers.
 - d) The need to ensure that there are strong links between children's services and adult social care in supporting young carers.
 - e) The positive impact which The Junction's Young Carers Project has had, while highlighting its uncertain future funding position.
 - f) Whether there may be an opportunity to enhance support for young carers by making provision to support them through the My Place development.
 - g) The need to clarify the position concerning National Health Service (NHS) funding for young carers in view of proposed changes to NHS structures.

Summary of the Panel's Recommendations:

7. The panel's recommendations are based on the conclusions outlined above. These are shown in full in the **attached final report** and relate to:
 1. Highlighting and publicising the issues surrounding young carers in schools in an effort to identify and support young carers.
 2. Strengthening links between Children, Families and Learning, Adult Social Care and The Junction Project.
 3. Urgent consideration being given to the uncertain future funding position of The Junction's Young Carers Project.
 4. Exploring the feasibility of incorporating some element of support for young carers at the My Place development.
 5. Incorporating the possible use of Fleet Services transport and/or Ayresome Community Transport, by The Junction's Young Carer's Project in Children, Families and Learning's forthcoming review of home to school transport.
 6. Contacting NHS Middlesbrough in respect of its earlier indication that support for young carers would be likely to benefit from additional resources in the future.

Councillor Javed Ismail

Chair of Children & Learning Scrutiny Panel