

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

Making a Step Change for Young Carers and their Families: Putting it into Practice Analysis of the Trailblazers – Introducing the Local Authorities



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Acknowledgements

This publication was commissioned by Carers Trust and The Children's Society as a result of the Making a step change programme. Making a step change is funded by the Department for Education 2015/16.

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Published by

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The Children's Society is a registered charity number 221124. Registered Office: Edward Rudolf House, Margery Street, London, WC1X 0JL

Contents

Introduction	2
1 Surrey	4
2 Liverpool	8
3 Oxfordshire	11
4 Stockton-on-Tees	15
5 Devon	18
Conclusion	21
References	22

Introduction

This is the first report from an evaluation undertaken by Ecorys and commissioned by Carers Trust and The Children's Society of the Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into practice project.¹ The Department for Education has funded this project for one year (2015/16) to support, in five local authority Trailblazer areas in England, implementation of the duties required under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 with regard to young carers and their families. A predecessor project, Making a step change: prevention, intervention and partnership², ran between 2013 and 2015.

Making a step change defines a young carer as someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol. They classify young adult carers as young people aged 16–25 who care, **unpaid**, for a family or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction. However, definitions of young adult carers vary between Trailblazer areas; therefore please note how young adult carers are defined in the separate chapters of this report.

The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 place a legal duty on local authorities from 1 April 2015 to identify young carers, and carry out young carers' assessments and young carers needs assessments respectively that consider the whole family. It is believed that the Acts will encourage a step change in how children's and adult services work together to identify and support young carers. The Making a step change project has identified the development of a local memorandum of understanding between children's and adult services as key to joint working in relation to young carers³, with this forming a central aspect of the project's approach.

This report provides an overview of the five Trailblazer areas based upon secondary data made available by local authorities, plus findings from questionnaires completed by local authorities at the outset of the project. Please note that the report relies on self-reported data provided by the Trailblazers, apart from estimates of the number of young carers within each area, which are based upon a study that found one in 12 young people aged 5–17 were young carers (BBC/University of Nottingham, 2010). The report discusses the five Trailblazers as follows:

- 1) Surrey
- 2) Liverpool
- 3) Oxfordshire
- 4) Stockton-on-Tees
- 5) Devon

The report ends with a conclusion that summarises the key opportunities and challenges identified across the Trailblazers.

¹ <http://makingastepchange.info/>.

² <https://makingastepchangeprevention.wordpress.com/>.

³ A template for a local memorandum of understanding, as well as other resources, are available at <http://makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources/>.

About Carers Trust

Carers Trust is a major new charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with a UK wide network of quality assured independent partners, through our unique online services and through the provision of grants to help carers get the extra help they need to live their own lives. With locally based Network Partners we are able to support carers in their homes through the provision of replacement care, and in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. We offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

Our vision is of a world where the role and contribution of **unpaid** carers is recognised and they have access to the trusted quality support and services they need to live their own lives.

About The Children's Society

The Children's Society is a leading children's charity committed to making childhood better for all children in England. Our national network of centres and programmes deliver specialist services for children who face disadvantage in their daily lives. Our schools work, children's centres and mentoring programmes help children develop the skills and confidence they need to make the most of their childhood and play a full part in their local communities. Our research and campaigning aims to influence the thinking of everyone – including politicians and decision makers, creating real change and making childhood better for all children.

The Children's Society Include Programme gives a voice to children and young people who care for parents or siblings who suffer from chronic illness or disability. We campaign for change and promote best practice with central and local government and work in partnership with social workers, teachers and health care professionals to deliver solutions that consider the needs of the whole family.

1.0 Surrey

1.1 Overview of support for young carers in Surrey

Surrey County Council has commissioned Surrey Young Carers, which is part of Action for Carers Surrey, to work with young carers and their families. In addition, Surrey's children's and adult services have signed a memorandum of understanding to support young carers and their families. The local authority is investing further in its provision for young carers in line with the increased responsibilities arising from legislative changes.

The local authority believes that children's and adult services' partnership with health services is important in identifying and supporting young carers. This partnership includes the following developments:

- There is joint commissioning between the local authority and 16 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). This includes the Carers Commissioning Group, which reports to the Children's Safeguarding Board.
- The local authority expects that the local mental health trust will sign up to the memorandum of understanding.
- A multi-agency young carers' strategy group supports the identification of young carers among organisations, including the NHS.
- Children's and adult services backed the development of two tools for practitioners to support work with young carers: About Me for young carers of primary school age and iCare for young carers of secondary school age and above. These tools are believed to help communication between children's and adult services.
- Adult social care is a particular focus for the local authority and training for adult social care practitioners has been made available.

The local authority believes that its Young Carers Forum⁴ has been instrumental in raising the profile of young carers on many levels. Young carers on the forum have led events, met the council Cabinet and lobbied ministers over young carers' rights.

1.2 Challenges in supporting young carers in Surrey

ICT and financial constraints remain challenges to further integration between children's and adult services, as does low uptake of training for Young Carer Champions within the services.

⁴ <http://www.surrey-youngcarers.org.uk/take-part/young-carers-forum/>.

1.3 Number of young carers in Surrey

The 2011 Census showed that there were 6,021 children and young people under 25 providing **unpaid** care in Surrey. However, the local authority reports that there may be around 14,600 young carers in Surrey, based upon a study by the BBC and University of Nottingham.⁵

Surrey Young Carers supports more than 2,000 young carers a year; a figure that has been rising since at least 2012, as illustrated in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1 Young carers supported by Surrey Young Carers

Year	Number of young carers	Increase on previous year (Number)	Increase on previous year (%)
2012/13	1,392	-	-
2013/14	1,650	258	19%
2014/15	1,849	199	12%

In addition:

- It is thought that a further 1,000 young carers have not been referred to Surrey Young Carers but are supported in school, with the assistance of Surrey Young Carers Education Advisors.
- Action for Carers young adult carers network supports 152 young adult carers between the ages of 16 and 24 (at August 2015).
- In 2013/14, 54 young carers were receiving support following an Early Help Assessment, which is similar to a Common Assessment Framework (CAF).⁶
- Just over 20,000 adult carers are registered with their GP and young carers have recently been added to this process. The number of young carers identified through this route has increased from 58 in February 2015 to 160 in September 2015. Given the infancy of this route of identifying young carers, this is seen as an area for development.

Therefore, it is believed that at least 3,367 young carers are supported across Surrey.

⁵ Calculation based on one in 12 children aged 5–17 being a young carer, based on 2011 Census data of children aged 5–17 (Source: Office for National Statistics).

⁶ For further information on the CAF, see for example:
<http://www.protectingchildren.org.uk/cp-system/child-in-need/caf>.

Schools' recognition of young carers varies – a 2014 survey by Surrey County Council's children's services found that 35% of schools had not identified any young carers, whereas two schools had identified 56 and 83 young carers respectively. The number of young carers identified by schools is expected to rise in future and it is hoped that this will influence those schools not identifying young carers to do so (currently estimated at 35% of schools in Surrey).

1.4 Referrals of young carers in Surrey

Table 1.2 shows that the number of referrals to Surrey Young Carers has been steadily increasing, representing a 90% growth from 356 referrals in 2011/12 to 678 in 2014/15.

Table 1.2 Referrals of young carers in Surrey

Year	Referrals	Increase on previous year (number)	Increase on previous year (%)
2011/12	356	-	-
2012/13	532	176	49%
2013/14	602	70	13%
2014/15	678	76	13%
2015/16 (five months up to 31 August 2015)	274	-	-

1.5 Young carer demographics in Surrey

56% of young carers supported by Surrey Young Carers are female. This is believed to be the same proportion of female young carers nationally (Dearden, C and Becker, S, 2004). Further information on young carers and young adult carers in Surrey can be found at

www.surreyi.gov.uk/ViewPage1.aspx?C=resource&ResourceID=659&cookieCheck=true.

Figure 1.1 illustrates that young carers are most likely to care for someone aged 18–64. Figure 1.2 suggests that learning disabilities is the most common reason for a young carer to care for someone. However, the reasons for caring are complex and there may be multiple reasons for caring.

Figure 1.1 Ages of people being cared for in Surrey

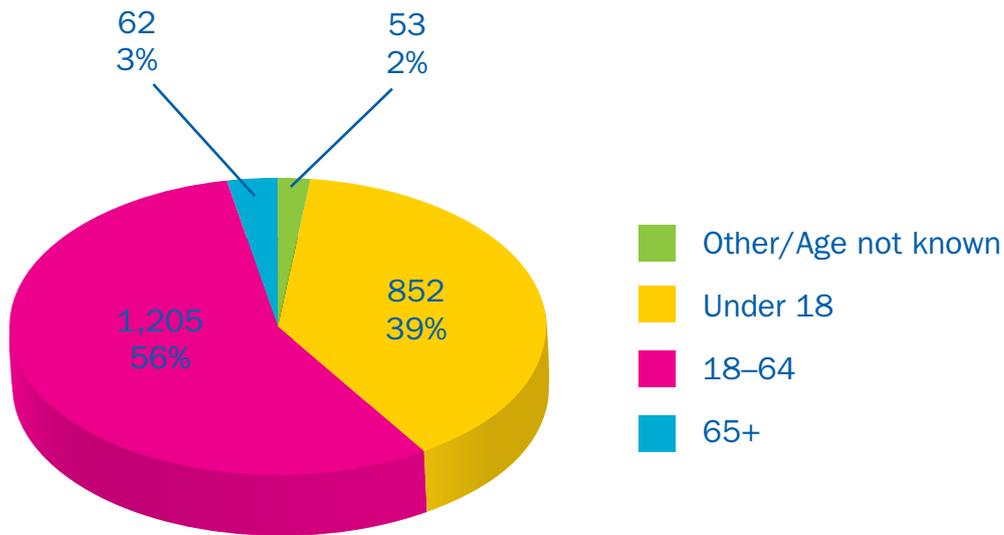
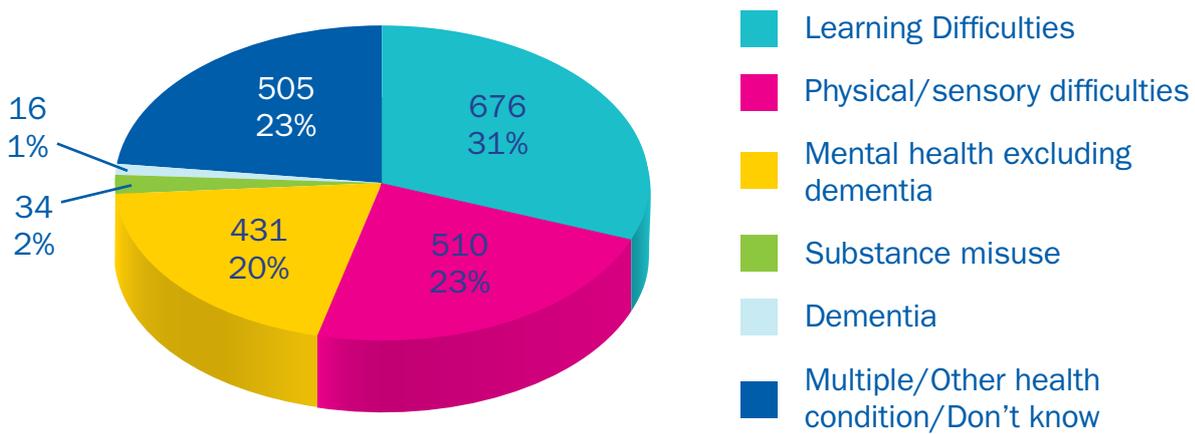


Figure 1.2 Reasons for people being cared for in Surrey



2.0 Liverpool

2.1 Overview of support for young carers in Liverpool

Barnardo's Action with Young Carers, in partnership with Liverpool City Council, leads support for young carers in the city. The partnership dates back to 1992 and specific work with young carers dates back to 2001 and the Keeping the Family in Mind project. More recently, Carers Trust provided funding from the Department for Education for a pilot service in Liverpool as part of its Integrated Interventions Programme. The local authority reports that work with young carers is now embedded within the Liverpool Families Programme, which is Liverpool City Council's response to the national Troubled Families programme.⁷

Action with Young Carers provides young carers needs assessments and direct service provision to young carers and their families. It is funded through a pooled budget from children's and adult services, the CCG and Mersey Care NHS Trust, and Barnardo's. The service provides:

- Individual and group work support.
- Activities to provide respite and social opportunities.
- Information and advocacy.
- Family support.
- Partnerships and meetings with, for example local colleges and universities and steering group.
- A training pack for professionals around young carers and the issues they face.

In addition, the service undertakes the following activities designed to influence the development and implementation of local and national policies relating to young carers:

- Training and education.
- Consultations with young people.
- Contributions to research and evaluation.

Action with Young Carers' work is embedded within a whole family approach and Early Help Assessment framework. The framework identifies young carers as a distinct group. The service supports up to 100 young carers at any one time and takes referrals from statutory, independent and voluntary sector agencies, as well as from young carers and their families themselves. Internal data suggests that self-referral is the most common referral source.

⁷ For further information see: <http://liverpool.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/children-and-families/liverpool-families-programme/> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/support-for-families>.

The local authority has developed a memorandum of understanding for young carers and their families. A priority for the partnership is identifying young carers across children's and adult services, the voluntary sector, schools and health services. A particular focus is given to children and young people impacted by parental mental ill-health, disabilities or substance misuse.

2.2 Challenges in supporting young carers in Liverpool

A key challenge concerns the quality of available data on identifying young carers, particularly among schools.

2.3 Number of young carers in Liverpool

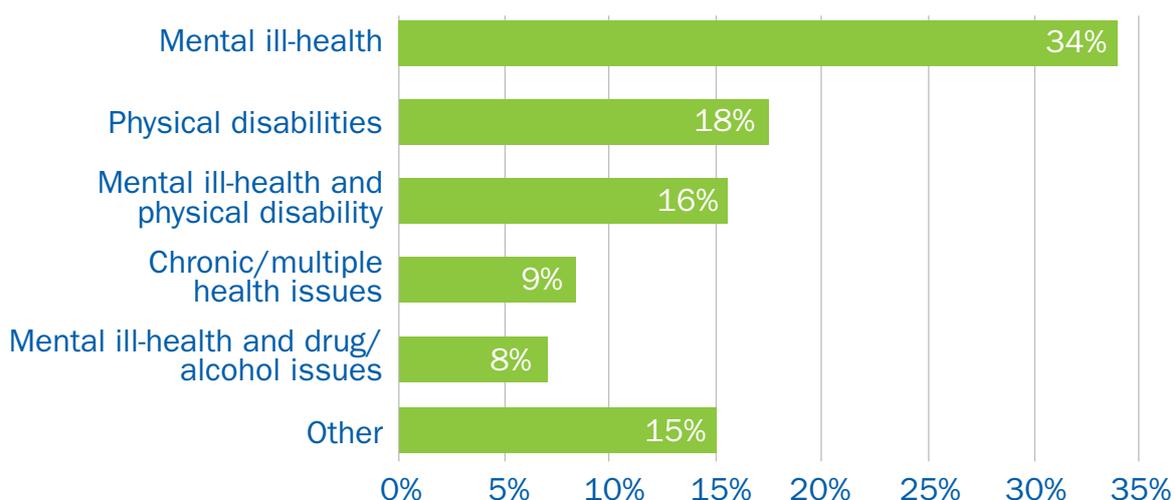
The local authority reports that the 2011 Census identified over 5,100 young people in Liverpool who are either young carers or young adult carers (3.5% of under-25s), although extrapolating the BBC/University of Nottingham findings suggests there may be as many as 11,000 young carers and young adult carers combined.⁸ Even so, it was understood that the level of caring based upon the Census was the highest among the eight core cities in England, and above national and regional levels. For example, the Census reported that, of those under 25 providing unpaid care, 30% did so for more than 20 hours each week, compared to 25% across England.

In 2012–13, Action with Young Carers supported 156 young carers. Around four in ten were aged 10–14, and a similar proportion were 15–18. There were 23 young carers (15%) under ten years old.

The overwhelming majority of young carers (90%) were caring for their mother. The primary illness or disability for the person being cared for was mental ill-health, accounting for over a third of young carers, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 (Ubido, J et al, 2012). Mental ill-health was also a factor identified in caring for people with drug and alcohol issues and physical disabilities. Furthermore, it was reported that children with a parent who has a mental health problem are more likely to experience low levels of mental and emotional health themselves.

⁸ Calculation based on one in 12 young people aged 5–24 being a young carer or young adult carer, based on 2011 Census data of young people aged 5–24 (Source: Office for National Statistics).

Figure 2.1 Illness or disability of people being cared for in Liverpool



2.4 Young adult carers in Liverpool

In December 2013, Liverpool City Council's adult services commissioned Barnardo's Young Adult Carers Service to provide direct service provision (including assessments, group work and peer support) for 16–25-year-old young adult carers. It also aims to influence strategic developments in Liverpool relating to the needs and rights of young adult carers. For example, interview panels for a new project worker and a social work course at a local university included a young adult carer. From the service's inception up to August 2014, 42 referrals were received. Of these referrals, 30 (71%) were newly identified young carers that were not known to Action with Young Carers. It was reported that there was a noticeable difference with young adult carers needing less support when they reached 24 and 25 than between the ages of 16 and 23.

3.0 Oxfordshire

3.1 Overview of support for young carers in Oxfordshire

In Oxfordshire, the young carers service sits within children's social care, as a part of corporate parenting. The local authority has commissioned Spurgeons and Carers Voice to deliver support to young carers.

The local authority has noted that methods to identify young carers need to be robust because identifying young carers is crucial to supporting them adequately. Spurgeons undertakes young carers needs assessments and the adult carers service (Carers Oxfordshire) undertakes online carers' assessments, which ask about young carers.⁹ Details on young carers and young adult carers aged 25 or under are sent to the young carers service team. Young adult carers between the ages of 18 and 25 are supported through adult services.

To incorporate the new legislation, the local authority in Oxfordshire is presently revising its memorandum of understanding between children's and adult services for young carers and their families. Specialist young carers workers undertake young carers needs assessments, which are entered in the social care database.

Oxfordshire recently held a second event for the council's Young Carers Standard scheme. Seven schools have received the Gold Award. Members of Oxfordshire's Young Carers Forum have interviewed staff and young carers to inspect to what extent schools have met the criteria for the award.

3.2 Challenges in supporting young carers in Oxfordshire

ICT remains a challenge to further integration between children's and adult services. There exists two different databases for children's and adult services and there is an agreement to share data about young carers but not people being cared for.

3.3 Number of young carers in Oxfordshire

There are an estimated 8,100 young carers in Oxfordshire based on the BBC/University of Nottingham study.¹⁰ Table 3.1 shows that the number of young carers on record in the county has increased every year since 2012. 397 new young carers were identified in 2014–15 and 239 between April 2015 and October 2015. The local authority estimates there are 14,000 young carers across Oxfordshire in total. In other words, on average there are two young carers in every classroom across the county.

⁹ <http://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk/cms/content/carers-assessments>.

¹⁰ Calculation based on one in 12 children aged 5–17 being a young carer, based on 2011 Census data of children aged 5–17 (Source: Office for National Statistics).

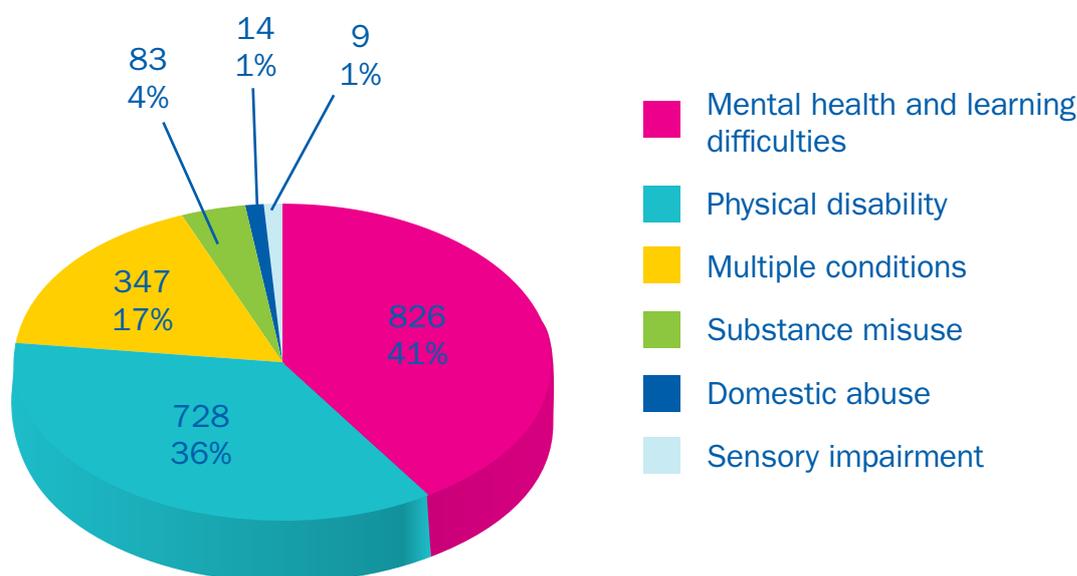
Table 3.1 Young carers on record in Oxfordshire

Year	Number of young carers	Increase on previous year (number)	Increase on previous year (%)
31 March 2012	850	-	-
31 March 2013	1,170	320	38%
31 March 2014	1,541	371	32%
31 March 2015	1,825	284 ¹¹	18%
November 2015	2,007 to date	182 to date	10% to date

The local authority has reported that referrals to the young carers service have increased by 126% since the change in legislation on 1 April 2015 – an additional three or four referrals per day on average.¹² 308 young carers were referred or assessed between April and October 2015. In October 2015, the service had 228 open young carer cases; this is in contrast to the over 2,000 young carers across the county reported in Table 3.1. Consequently, there is now a waiting list for support.

The local authority reported that the commonest cause for caring is parental mental health which was responsible for 22% of young carers in 2015. Figure 3.1 shows that, combined, mental health and learning difficulties accounted for 41% of people being cared for, with physical disability and illness accounting for 36%.

Figure 3.1 Reasons for people being cared for in Oxfordshire



¹¹ This is fewer than the 397 young carers identified because it is a net figure. That is, it includes young carers who have been removed from the record (because they are too old or have moved area, for example).

¹² Comparing April with September 2014 and April with September 2015.

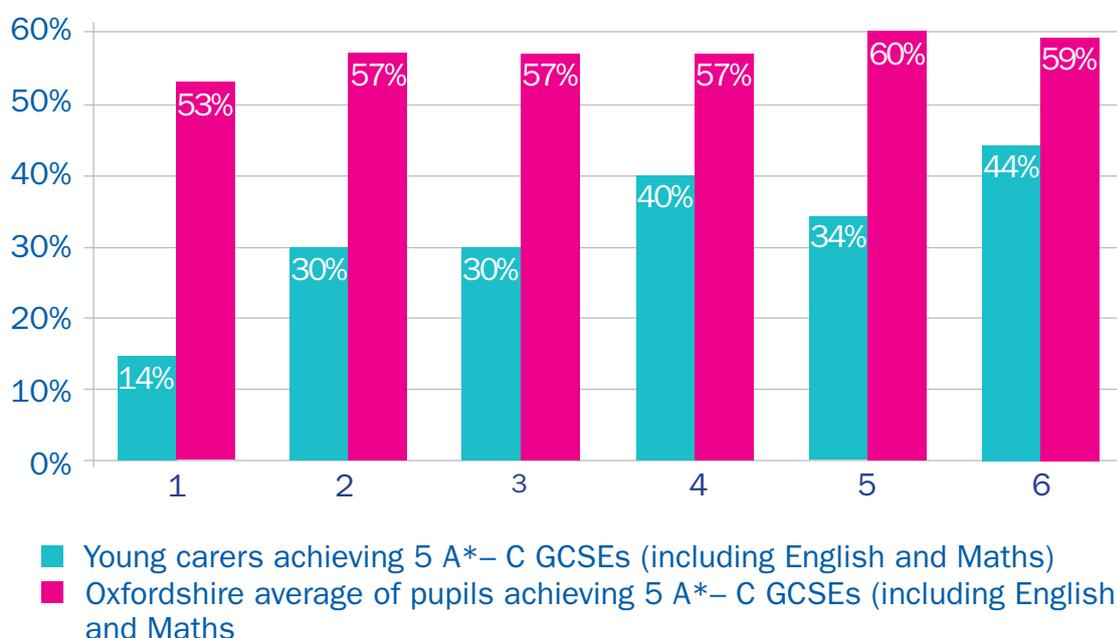
3.4 Young carer demographics in Oxfordshire

In 2013, it was reported that 56% of young carers were female. Around half of the young carers are in Year 10 or over. 33% of young carers had at least one term where their attendance fell below 85%, meeting the Department for Education's classification as being "persistently absent" for that term(s) (Department for Education, 2015).

A young carer in Oxfordshire between the ages of 16 and 18 is substantially more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) than young people between the ages of 16 and 18 across Oxfordshire as a whole.¹³ Just under 4% of young people between the ages of 16 and 18 across Oxfordshire as a whole were NEET, compared with 12% of young carers between the ages of 16 and 18.

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate that young carers have poorer Key Stage Four (GCSE) and Key Stage Two (primary school) attainment respectively compared to the average across Oxfordshire as a whole.¹⁴

Figure 3.2 Key Stage Four (GCSE) attainment in Oxfordshire



Of a sample¹⁵ of the 2013 Key Stage Four cohort:

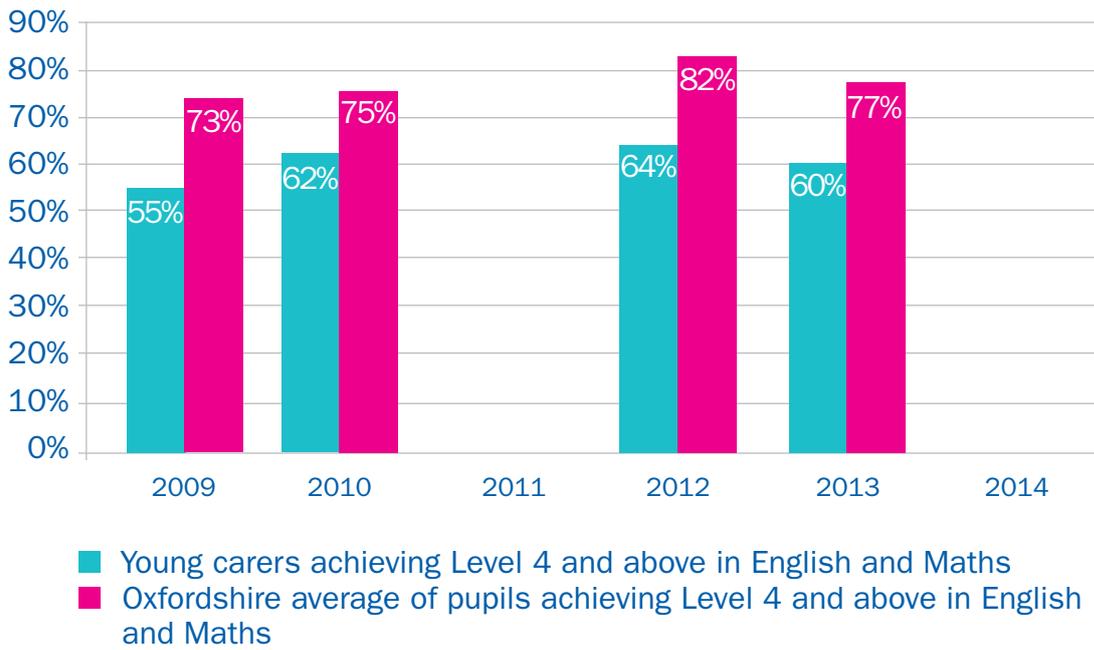
- 46% were eligible for free school meals, compared with 60% in 2012.
- 40% were identified as having special educational needs, compared with 47% in 2012.
- 10% were from ethnic minority communities, compared with 8% in 2012.

¹³ Including young carers. Source of national figure: 2014 local authority NEET figures, Department for Education.

¹⁴ Including young carers.

¹⁵ 101 young carers, for whom data could be matched.

Figure 3.3 Key Stage Two (primary school) attainment in Oxfordshire¹⁶



Of a sample¹⁷ of the 2013 Key Stage Two cohort:

- 53% were eligible for free school meals, compared with 44% in 2012.
- 46% were identified as having special educational needs, compared with 54% in 2012.
- 18% were from ethnic minority communities, compared with 19% in 2012.

¹⁶ Please note that 2011 and 2014 figures were unavailable.

¹⁷ 89 young carers, for whom data could be matched.

4.0 Stockton-on-Tees

4.1 Overview of support for young carers in Stockton-on-Tees

Eastern Ravens Trust is the commissioned young carers service in Stockton-on-Tees. The local authority launched a Young Carers Strategy and Action Plan in 2009, which reflected the objectives of the memorandum of understanding for young carers. The strategy was refreshed in 2012 following consultation with young carers and their families. A Young Carers Task and Finish Group has been proposed to implement the memorandum of understanding for young carers and their families within the local authority.

4.2 Challenges in supporting young carers in Stockton-on-Tees

The Young Carers Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees was last refreshed in 2012. It will be important that any new strategy incorporates the legislation changes and memorandum of understanding between children's and adult services once this can be implemented.

4.3 Number of young carers in Stockton-on-Tees

The latest available Census figures estimate the number of young carers in Stockton-on-Tees to be 600, based on 2010 population figures. However, extrapolating the BBC/University of Nottingham estimate of young carers nationally indicates that there may be around 2,500 young carers in Stockton-on-Tees.¹⁸

79 young carers were supported in the last quarter of 2014 (1 October to 31 December). 45 of the 79 young carers (57%) were between the ages of 11 and 16, 30 (38%) were 5–10 years old, four (5%) were 17 or 18 and none were 18 or over.

The local authority recorded that at least 32 of the young carers supported in the last quarter of 2014 (41%) received family-based work. Other activities included:

- Providing information and advice to young carers and their families.
- Signposting young carers and their parents/carers to other services such as counselling, community services and social activities.
- Working with the local authority's inclusion senior advisor to include young carers and school support within the local authority's inclusion quality mark.
- Supporting social enterprise sessions funded by the Royal Bank of Scotland. Young carers planned and created a range of resources, which they sold at a local event.

¹⁸ Calculation based on 1 in 12 children aged 5–17 being a young carer, based on 2011 Census data of children aged 5–17 (Source: Office for National Statistics).

The same study found that 45 young carers accessed peer support from others in similar situations, including taking part in art and craft sessions, a young carers showcase event, and a health and wellbeing event. Through these activities, it was reported that participants learnt new skills, had time out from their caring role and boosted their confidence. Support to maintain young carers' health and wellbeing was undertaken on an individual basis, as identified during young carers' assessments and their Outcomes Star (an evaluation tool for measuring change).¹⁹ Big Lottery funding ceased during the last quarter of 2014, but income was sustained within the existing elements of the contract.

The service also supported three Young Carer Champions to attend the National Young Carers in Focus Media Training weekend, where they learned new skills in media, editing, filming and interviewing, which increased their confidence. Young Carer Champions also took part in a consultation with NHS England, where they interviewed GPs and professionals about how they can better support young carers.

4.4 Referrals of young carers in Stockton-on-Tees

Of the 24 young carers referred in the last quarter of 2014, 16 were between the ages of five and ten and the remaining eight were 11–16 years old. Figure 4.1 shows that referral by a social worker working with an adult was the most common referral route, with referrals from school (or other education setting), self-referral, and 'other' referrals (from Eastern Ravens Trust or Rainbow Trust) also providing four or more referrals in the quarter.

Figure 4.1 Referrals of young carers in Stockton-on-Tees



¹⁹ www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Internal records show that over 600 young carers were reached during awareness-raising activities, events and engagement opportunities that occurred in the quarter. Most were reached at educational settings, including over 100 people at a CAF Information Sharing Event at North Shore Academy, 95 people at a conference at Bede College Billingham, and over 60 people at a student wellbeing event at Stockton Riverside College. Over 200 people accessed an information stand at a fun day at Kiora Hall, Roseworth.

5.0 Devon

5.1 Overview of support for young carers in Devon

Since 2011, Devon Carers has delivered support for carers and young carers across Devon. Devon Carers is a project of Carers+ – a consortium of East Devon Volunteer Support Agency, Exeter Council for Voluntary Service, South Devon Carers Consortium and Westbank, the lead agency. Torridge Council for Voluntary Service, Young Devon, and Hikmat also support delivery.

At the time of writing, Devon's memorandum of understanding for young carers and their families was awaiting sign off. An action plan, based on the memorandum of understanding, has also been developed. A Young Carers Task and Finish Group has also been set up to drive the young carers agenda within the local authority.

Five schools are already taking part in Making a step change (and the Young Carers in Schools programme run by Carers Trust and The Children's Society) and more are expected to follow. The Young Carers Task and Finish Group expects that, from the start of the next academic year, schools will identify young carers and share information about these cases with Devon Carers. Schools will also be expected to identify a lead member of staff responsible for young carers.

Devon Carers is commissioned by Devon County Council's children's services to undertake young carers needs assessments. In light of the legislation changes, Devon Carers is developing a new assessment in consultation with the commissioner within children's services. Currently, adult services typically refer young carers to children's services.

5.2 Challenges in supporting young carers in Devon

The local authority perceives an issue with identifying young carers is consent for information sharing, in terms of which information can be shared with who and how much information can be shared. It is believed that overcoming data sharing and consent issues would allow schools to further improve the data collection that already takes place. The programme partners believe this is a common issue across other local authorities.

5.3 Number of young carers in Devon

There are an estimated 8,600 young carers in Devon based on the BBC/University of Nottingham study.²⁰ Table 5.1 shows that the number of young carers known or supported in the county has increased every year since at least 2012.

²⁰ Calculation based on one in 12 children aged 5–17 being a young carer, based on 2011 Census data of children aged 5–17 (Source: Office for National Statistics).

Table 5.1 Young carers known/supported in Devon

Year	Number of young carers	Increase on previous year (number)	Increase on previous year (%)	Young carers from ethnic minority communities as % of total	Young carers receiving an episode of one-to-one support or intensive level of service
2011/12 ²¹	1,606	-	-	-	-
2012/13	2,159	-	-	-	-
2013/14	2,836	677	31%	3.4%*	316*
2014/15	3,527	691	24%	3.8%*	368*

* denotes average figures are averages

- denotes figure unavailable

Table 5.2 illustrates activity by Devon Carers between 2011/12 (half-year only) and 2014/5 where information is available. Key findings are:

- One-to-one support peaked at 1,033 hours in 2012/13, falling to 898 hours in 2013/14, before rising to 970 hours in 2014/15.
- The number of school-based drop-in sessions peaked also in 2012/13 at 322 sessions, falling to 185 sessions in 2013/14 and falling further, albeit more slightly, to 165 sessions in 2014/15.
- Conversely, the number of respite activities peaked in 2013/14 at 215 activities run. The 148 respite activities run in 2014/15 falls below the 178 activities run in 2012/13.

Table 5.2 Devon Carers activity measures

Measure	2011/12 ²²	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Overarching support				
One-to-one support offered (rounded to nearest hour)	512	1,033	898	970
Number of initial referrals (including via helpline)	-	-	-	698
Number with whom first contact made by Devon Carers practitioner	-	-	-	630

²¹ 2011/12 activity is half-year only.

²² 2011/12 activity is half-year only.

Measure	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number for whom Devon Carers assessment/visit done or where young carer is now accessing young carer services	-	-	-	561
Respite activities				
Number of separate respite activities run	71	178	215	148
Total young carer attendances at respite activities	-	-	-	539*
Individual young carers attending	-	-	-	354*
School-based activity				
Number of school-based drop-in sessions	186	322	185	165
Total young carer attendances at drop-in sessions	-	-	-	490*
Individual young carers attending drop-in sessions	-	-	-	217*
Number of awareness raising visits with partner organisations (excluding school assemblies)	-	-	-	110
Number of school assemblies undertaken	-	-	-	7
Number of schools visited (excluding for drop-in sessions)	-	-	-	143
Multi-agency work and safeguarding				
Number of CAF assessments completed by Devon Carers practitioner	-	-	-	241
Team Around the Child/Family meetings attended by Devon Carers practitioner	-	-	-	72
Occasions on which Devon Carers practitioner has acted as lead professional	-	-	-	15
Child in Need/Level 3 meetings attended by Devon Carers practitioner	-	-	-	73
Number of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals made	-	-	-	3

* denotes average figures are averages

- denotes figure unavailable

Conclusion

At the time of writing, it has been seven months since the duties in the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 came into force. It will take greater time to see a step change in how children's and adult services work together to identify and support young carers. However, it appears from the evidence presented by the Trailblazers that good initial progress has been made. In most Trailblazer areas, a memorandum of understanding was in development and efforts have been made to engage not only children's and adult services, but also the voluntary sector, schools and health services, and social care specifically. Trailblazers have employed a number of approaches to support this multi-agency working, including:

- Establishing groups (for example, Task and Finish Groups) that engage senior/strategic partners.
- Engaging practitioners through, for example, training.
- Embedding the young carers agenda in other strategies or initiatives, particularly those that support a whole family approach (for example, the local Troubled Families programme).
- Raising the profile of young carers through a Young Carers Forum, Young Carers Standard or Young Carers Champions programme.
- (In the case of Liverpool) promoting even closer integration through a pooled budget.

Data provided by Trailblazers highlighted the importance of the young carers agenda. Numbers of young carers being referred or supported was increasing in every local authority that provided such data. In addition it was reported that, up to the onset of the legislation, there remained a hidden group of young carers not referred to young carer services but supported by schools, for example. In our later reports, it will be interesting to see if there is any evidence to suggest that the legislation is starting to impact on this group. Data also highlighted the significance of learning disabilities and mental health problems in the lives of young carers and people being cared for.

Trailblazers reported that the following challenges to closer integration between services remain, and therefore remain as barriers to the effective and full implementation of the duties in the Acts:

- ICT (for example, different databases in children's and adult services).
- Consent for information sharing between services (for example, one Trailblazer had an agreement to share data about young carers but not people being cared for).
- Quality of data on young carers, particularly among schools.
- Low awareness or uptake of support for young carers.
- Financial constraints.

It was also apparent that a pre-requisite of effective support for young carers is a healthy relationship between the local authority and any commissioned services. In addition, outcomes monitoring will be important to demonstrate the impact of local authority and commissioned services in complying with the Acts.

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