

Equality Impact Assessment

Department Education		Section N/A		EQIA Team Jim Gibson Jim Broadfoot Elspeth Walker John Lannon				
Name of the Policy	Policy on Provision for Young Carers	Date of the Assessment	August 2009		New or Existing Policy	New		
Screening results Insert Low/Med/or High	Age L	Dependants L	Disabled L	Gender L	LGBT L	Offenders L	Race L	Religion L

Equality Indicators and Evidence (Data, research and consultation with expert groups)

EQIA shows that the policy on provision for Young Carers, if approved, will not have an adverse impact.

The equality indicators considered in preparing this EQIA were: 1. Meeting Needs; 2. Identifying barriers; 3. Promoting Social Inclusion; 4. Communicating Information on Services; 5. Consulting Service Users; 6. Ensuring Access to Services

This new policy is designed to meet the needs of young carers who are children and young people who look after a parent or a sibling with mental or physical health problems or who misuse alcohol and or other drugs. The needs of young carers are often hidden because of reluctance by the child or young person acting in a caring role to seek support lest their family difficulties become common knowledge. They also may not actually be aware that there is help available for them sometimes accepting their situation for the way it is and always has been. They are entitled to be supported to get the best they can from their educational and social opportunities. This policy has been designed to provide the support they need when they need it.

Dundee Young Carers Project (DYCP) supports young carers and their families and has done so in the city for a number of years. Hundreds of children and young people have benefited from this local resource.

1. Background

In session 2006-07, Department collaborated with the DYCP on the development of learning materials to be used in schools to help children and young people. These materials were piloted in a number of schools and this joint working resulted in the production of a resource pack for Dundee which was disseminated to all schools. Representatives of the DYCP addressed meetings of nursery, primary and secondary Head Teachers to explain how their organisation supports young carers and how schools can support young carers. The need to have a specific policy to promote the welfare of children and young people became apparent during this work and the new policy is the result of this collaborative process. We wish to ensure that young carers can achieve and enjoy life alongside their peer group, creating good transitions to fulfilled adult lives for young carers, developing and delivering more personalised support and better outcomes for an often 'silent minority' of young people.

2. Data/Research

Nationally, it is estimated there are around 300,000 young carers between the ages of 16 and 25 which represents some 5.5% of the population between those ages (i.e. just over 1 in 20). If that figure is reflected to Dundee's school-aged population, an estimated 860 children and young people could have a caring role in their families. Even if we take 50% of this as a possible figure, this is a sizable group of children and young people who may have significant additional support needs and whose circumstances merit special attention.

Census 2001 data show that there are 61,051 young carers aged 16-17 in the UK, with 11,341 of these (one fifth) caring for more than 20 hours each week and 4,406 caring for more than 50 hours per week – that is 7% of all carers in this age group. When one considers that a young carer of school age is expected to attend school for around 25 hours per week and may, additionally have to complete homework tasks lasting several hours per week, the pressures they are under are likely to impact adversely on their mental and physical health.

As stated above, however, there is no definitive number of young carers in Dundee. Young carers are often reluctant to share their family circumstances with others as they fear their family may be split up if they tell a professional about their caring responsibilities. They may fear chastisement by the parent for whom they are

caring. They may be embarrassed about a parent's drug or alcohol use. They can, therefore, often be isolated within their peer group because of social stigma or poverty and their perceived inability to share their concerns with others. It is, nevertheless, reasonable to assume that the adverse impact of deprivation on the lives of adults living in the city leads to high levels of chronic ill-health and substance use and that, for that reason, there is a not insignificant number of Dundee's children and young people who are placed in a caring role, often from a very early age, who would benefit from timely identification and assessment of needs and supportive intervention.

In 2008, a study found *'there was strong evidence that young carers had their needs as carers ignored by teachers and schools, and in the worst cases, had actually been punished for caring, intentionally or unintentionally, by being given after-school detentions for arriving late or failing to do homework on time (when these had been related to caring responsibilities).'* (Becker F., Becker S. *'Young Adult Carers in the UK: Experiences, Needs and Services for Young Carers aged 16 - 24'* November 2008: The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Ch5, P30). This policy addresses these issues and, if implemented and adhered to by schools in Dundee, will mean that our young carers will find a more sympathetic approach than that found in the above study. They are, therefore, more likely to experience a positive and supportive school environment within which to achieve their potential and leave school with positive outcomes despite the demand placed on them by their caring role.

3. Expert groups

The Department has worked in collaboration with the DYCP in the preparation of this new policy. Young Carers themselves contributed in the very early stages to the formulation of the policy and made a number of positive and helpful suggestions which were incorporated into the draft policy to be taken to Committee before it went to others for consultation. Others who have been involved in preparing the draft policy include trade unions, Head Teachers, Parent Councils and the Scottish Social Services Council.

4. Assessment of Impact

The Policy will have low impact in terms of contravening legislation on equality. If implemented effectively, this will have a positive impact on ethos within schools and the wider community. It will proactively include, protect and support this group of vulnerable children and young people whose needs may be otherwise misunderstood or inadequately recognised within our school communities.

5. Reducing Adverse Impact

Training on issues related to the needs of young carers and on the use of the bespoke learning resource mentioned above is available from staff of the DYCP on a regular basis to all relevant staff in the Department. Schools can arrange and deliver their own in-house training by contacting the DYCP directly.

6. Formal Consultation

Consultation and involvement opportunities have been made available for young carers, parents, school staff and their trade unions to be involved in drafting of this Policy.

7. Publication of Findings

This document summarises EQIA findings for the attached committee report and will be available on the council Equality and Diversity website. Alternative published formats are available on request.

8. Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years. Reports on progress within the action plan will be provided annually.

Signature of Lead

Jim Gibson, Head of Support for Learning, Education Department

ACTION REQUIRED

1. Review the policy on provision for Young Carers every 3 years.

Target date for completion of Action 1 is November 2012 by the named lead officer and at three-yearly intervals thereafter.