

Meeting of:	Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 13 January 2022
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Support for Young Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan
Purpose of Report:	To update Scrutiny Committee on support for young carers
Report Owner:	Paula Ham, Director of Learning and Skills
Responsible Officer:	Martine Coles, Vulnerable Groups Manager
Elected Member and Officer Consultation	<p>Clr Lis Burnett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration</p> <p>Morwen Hudson, Head of Standards and Provision</p>
Policy Framework:	The recommendations of the report are within existing policy framework and budget.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report is to provide an update on how the Vulnerable Groups Team continues to support the education of young carers. • The report outlines how the Vulnerable Groups Team collaborates with Social Services, schools and the third sector, to provide support for young carers in schools. • Since January 2020, there has been a sharp rise in the number of young carers. A potential factor is improved identification of young carers at a school level. 	

Recommendation

1. That Members note the support provided by the Local Authority and schools for young carers.

Reason for Recommendation

1. That Members consider further support required for young carers.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following a presentation to Committee by the Directorate in November 2020, an update was requested in relation to the activities and steps undertaken to assist young carers in schools across the Vale of Glamorgan.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Schools have received increased support and guidance in the identification of young carers from the Vulnerable Groups Team (VGT) and other stakeholders. In partnership with the Management of Information Service (MIS), the team have provided training for schools in the recording of young carers. Part of the training has been to ensure identified young carers can access support to match their needs.
- 2.2 The Vulnerable Groups Team (VGT) continues to collaborate with Young Carers Trust South East Wales (CTSEW) to support schools and provide training for operational and strategic leads. The VGT meets quarterly with the Young Carers Trust South East Wales and works within the existing action plan in order to:
 - Share updates on where the schools are in relation to the Young Carers in Schools Programme in terms of awareness training, progress and sharing good practice. There are currently 8 schools involved in the programme in the Vale. St Cyres took part in the sharing good practice with operational leads from schools in Cardiff and the Vale. St Cyres shared how the designated lead uses the One Page Profile with the young carers as part of the 1:1 session.
 - Update on changes to operational leads in schools and how COVID has impacted on visits.
 - CTSEW to arrange training on the Young Carers in Schools Programme, for governors and elected members to raise awareness on their responsibility for young carers.
 - Pilot Young Carers in Schools award with Victoria Primary School as this school has achieved the basics and are working at beyond the basics in 'Best Practice'.
- 2.3 A clear mechanism to support school staff is available through the Families First Advice Line (FFAL). This updated advice has been shared with all schools. Schools use this service to seek support for young carers with non-educational needs, such as transport available for families. The use of FFAL enables Social Services to

triage the pupils to the most appropriate service. The triage process identifies young carers who reach the threshold to require a young carers assessment which is carried out by Children’s Services. The FFAL can also signpost young carers to the Young Carers Project based at the YMCA in Barry. The VGT meets with the senior Family First Advice Line advisor on a quarterly basis to review those young carers triaged to Children’s Services for assessment and those referred to Young Carers Project. Since April 2021, FFAL received nine referrals for young carers; three pupils were triaged to Children’s Services for statutory assessment and six were triaged to the Young Carers Project.

- 2.4** The requirement to offer the assessment to young carers is a statutory responsibility of Social Services within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The identification of young carers can come from a range of places, with schools being a sector where identification is more predominant. The referral pathway is for young carers who may require support and/or assessment to contact FFAL. From this point, the pathway may involve signposting to support and then potentially stepping up into statutory services for assessment and support. Identification of a young carer does not always result in assessment and that decision is made on an individual level. Ultimately, partners have a responsibility for identification and referring for support where required. Social Services have the responsibility for assessing and safeguarding if necessary. Secondary schools are keen to identify, monitor the attainment, attendance and exclusions of young carers. Schools are recording this information on their internal systems. Once a school identifies a young carer, the VGT advises schools that they offer a young carer an assessment and if agreed, make a referral to FFAL. This ensures the identified young carer can access support to match their needs. It is positive that schools are identifying, so that whilst awaiting the outcomes of the referrals, those learners identified by schools as young carers are accessing school-based support. Schools are recording appropriately, regardless as to whether or not this results in a referral. This in line with the Vale of Glamorgan Young Carers Policy (2019).
- 2.5** The Vulnerable Groups Team, along with two Vale schools and representatives from the Vale, were part of the Young Carer’s Identity Card Task and Finish Group. The Cardiff and Vale Young Carers identity card was launched in the Summer Term 2021. The Young Carers ID coordinator, based at the YMCA, has requested the cards and they will be distributed to young people when they have been printed. In the meantime, each of the young carers has been provided with a letter of their caring status.
- 2.6** In April 2021, there were 60 young carers in 19 primary schools. There were 113 young carers in eight secondary schools. This data was compiled after a census with schools.

Secondary Schools	Numbers of young carers April 2021
Cowbridge Comprehensive School	9
Llantwit Major Comprehensive School	25
Pencoedtre High School	8
St Cyres Comprehensive School	33

St Richard Gwyn RC High School	2
Stanwell Comprehensive School	9
Whitmore High School	26
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	1

- 2.7** Schools have identified higher numbers of pupils as young carers. The factors behind the rise could be because of improved awareness-raising events for schools. Another factor is that, because of training on how to record young carers on the designated area on their school information and management systems (SIMS), schools are now able to record the pupils as young carers with an explanation of their context. Previously, schools were using different systems for recording this information. However, since January 2021 there is a common system for schools.
- 2.8** The way we populate the local authority register of young carers has changed with the introduction of the FFAL in the summer Term of 2021. There are currently nine young carers on the local authority register who have been referred through the FFAL. 173 young carers have been identified by schools and nine have been verified by the local authority using the FFAL and been offered the young carers' assessment. All schools ensure they provide school-based support for all learners identified as young carers, whether they are formally or informally identified, and with or without permissions from those who hold parental responsibility. Those learners who identify themselves as young carers can refuse to be referred for assessment as well as refuse support from YMCA Young Carers Project. When a young carer refuses an assessment and or a referral, the school continues to offer school-based academic or wellbeing support.
- 2.9** There is updated guidance for schools on the recording and now reporting of young carers. Schools now have a common system for referring and recording this information regarding young carers on SIMS. This information does not feed into the local authority's Capita ONE system; however, the data team can run a census capture from the primary schools SIMS. The VGT can also request a census report on young carers from the secondary schools. This information is then uploaded onto the Virtual School report for young carers in order to produce a local education authority list of young carers, generated by schools' own data. During the quarterly meeting between the Vulnerable Groups team and the senior Family First Advice Line adviser, this information is cross-referenced, to ensure learners recorded as young carers have been referred to FFAL for triage.
- 2.10** By examining the school-based data in relation to the attendance and attainment of young carers, there were greater opportunities to cross reference data from other stakeholders. Data cleansing has supported conversations between the VGT and designated leads about their young carers and the challenges experienced in relation to referral pathways. For example, St Cyres School and Cowbridge Comprehensive School have young carers who reside in neighbouring local authorities. This means that schools must use the referral pathways that are different to the pathway in the Vale.

- 2.11** All secondary schools and primary schools have a named member of staff with lead responsibility for young carers. The secondary schools have identified an operational and strategic lead for young carers. In primary schools, the operational and strategic lead are the same member of staff. The Vulnerable Groups Team updates the register of the school leads on a termly basis.
- 2.12** All secondary schools and primary schools with identified young carers are good at monitoring the attainment and attendance of young carers. This has become more apparent since March 2020, with schools carrying out enhanced 'check in' opportunities for young carers. Young carers were invited into school-based hub provision during the lockdowns. Schools also invited younger siblings into school hubs to provide respite for the young carers.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** There is a strong partnership which is committed to ensuring that young carers are recognised and included within our communities. The Vulnerable Groups Team meet quarterly with the Families First Advice Line to monitor the nature and quantity of referrals for young carers. The Vulnerable Groups Team meet monthly with Young Carers Trust Wales to monitor and evaluate school-based support.
- 3.2** Improving education provision is important to us and progress is shared by schools on a needs led basis. Monitoring is undertaken to make certain that learners are receiving value for money and that provision has a positive impact on young people's education and wellbeing.
- 3.3** We work collaboratively with internal and external partners including Social Services, Young Carers Trust Wales and schools to demonstrate achievements and identify risks to help meet the wellbeing objective.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The Vulnerable Groups Team is funded via the Welsh Government's "Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners grant" of £365,018 which forms part of the WG Local Authority Education Grant.

Employment

- 4.2** There are no employment implications to consider.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 introduced new rights and entitlements for carers in Wales. It introduced a broader definition of a carer and placed stronger duties on local authorities to identify, assess and support carers.
- 4.4** Included in the Act is the continuation of the requirement on the NHS and Local Authorities in Wales to co-operate in relation to the delivery of preventative services unless this is incompatible with their own duties. It also requires regional partnerships to ensure information, advice and assistance is offered across the region in a manner which is accessible and suits the needs of their population.
- 4.5** The United Nations Convention and the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have relevance to a child as young carer. Article 3 includes the provision that in all actions concerning children by public or private social welfare institutions, the best interests of the child should be of primary consideration. Article 12 makes provision for ensuring that the child's views are expressed freely and given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. There are other Articles which relate to the rights of the child.

5. Background Papers

None.