



Overview – March 2021

Signpost Stockport Young Carers is a registered Charity that works with children and young people from the ages of 6 to 25 years who provide care to another family member who has an illness or disability.

Young carers views are sought on a regular basis to help shape the delivery of the service and to raise awareness of their needs across Children and Adult Services.

Based on Carers Trust data (taken from the last census) it is estimated 1 in 12 pupils could be a young carer. In Stockport we estimate there could be over 3000 young carers aged 6 – 18 years.

Currently Signpost Young Carers active caseload is 324 individual young carers and their families. On average the service receives 240 new referrals per year, schools being the highest referrers, followed by Children's Social Care, of which on average 100 children will be offered a service, having met the criteria.

In the early stages of COVID, we saw a drop in referrals, however, since September 2020, they have increased to normal levels. The pandemic has had a huge impact on young carers;

- caring roles have increased, the majority of parents have been shielding and as a result young carers have been more responsible for practical tasks such as shopping, collecting prescriptions etc
- mental health has suffered, worries around their parent/siblings health, fears of bringing the virus home and feelings of isolation.
- access to respite has significantly reduced and for some young carers they are getting no respite at all.
- school work has suffered, for some access to appropriate technology was an issue and also having the space and time to complete it.
- responsibilities for looking after siblings has increased due to being at home for long periods of time and having to help them with their school work.

During the first lock down from March 2020 very few young carers took the offer of a place due to parents shielding and the initial lack of clarity from DfE regarding vulnerable children. Uptake remained low following the individual risk assessments. For the September 2020 start our school and transition workers contacted all schools/colleges, reminding them that young carers are covered as vulnerable children under the Department for Education guidelines. As a result, we have seen a rise in the number of young carers taking a school place.

Activities

- Groups are held every Wednesday/Thursday for young carers aged 6 – 25 years (run on a rotation basis) currently via Zoom, offering a wide variety of activities, both fun and therapeutic.
- Evaluations are completed with young carers every 6 months to evaluate impact of intervention and identify gaps in support.
- Peer mentoring scheme – training 6 young adult carers per year to support in volunteering opportunities and training to professionals.