

The  
Children's  
Society

# Young Carers in Armed Forces Families

*Evidencing the need*

**NHS**  
*England*

05 July 2017

# Who are young carers ?

- Under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person who has a long term illness, is disabled, has a mental health condition, or addiction problem.
- Young Adult Carers 16 – 25 –
- Caring for a parent ,sibling, grandparent or other family member.
- Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.
- Caring can affect a young person's physical health and emotional wellbeing ,education , life chances and socialisation
- Significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level.
- More likely not to be in education, employment or training between 16 and 19.
- The 2011 census statistics revealed that there are 166,363 young carers in England.

# What the law says

## *Two pieces of legislation*

### **Children and Families Act, 2014 and Care Act, 2014**

- Better, more consolidated rights for young carers, young adult carers, and their families
- The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to adopt a whole system, whole council, whole-family approach, coordinating services and support around the person and their family and considering the impact of the care needs of an adult on their family, including children.
- Children and Families Act Part 5, Section (s.) 96 details the rights for young carers including that Local Authorities (LAs) must assess whether young carers in their area have support needs and, if so, what those needs are.
- Both pieces of legislation require a Whole Family Approach to ascertain if any of the young carer's needs for support could be prevented by providing services to the person cared for.

# Young Carers in Armed Forces Families

## *Data*

- Despite these changes in legislation and entitlements and despite the growing evidence and recognition of young carers in armed forces families the scale of this issue remains unknown and the figures and statistics are piecemeal:
- In 2015 – 2016 there were 68,896 service children in England taking up service pupil premium (This does not take account of any families serving overseas many of who will be returning in next 12 -18months.)
- Veterans There are an estimated 1.4 million veteran/ ex-service dependent children and young people in the UK.
- No data is held on how many of these children are caring
- Young carers The 2011 Census recorded 200,000 young carers in the UK. This has increased since the previous census by 25,000. In England, 166,363 young carers were recorded

# Young Carers in Armed Forces Families

what we know so far-

- May be caring for a serving parent who has returned from combat and is injured physically or emotionally
- A parent remaining at home who is affected by illness or disability
- or sibling affected by illness or disability
- Young adult carers may be among serving personnel
- Young carers may find continuity of support for themselves or the person they care for is disrupted as they regularly move between barracks and they may feel isolated or find it harder to cope without the support from extended family or local community networks
- Difficulties in recognising the impact and need.

# Impacts

- Caring can affect a young person's physical health and emotional wellbeing, education, life chances and socialisation
- Many young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level and more likely not to be in education, employment or training between 16 and 19
- The 2011 census statistics revealed that there are 166,363 young carers in England
- Young carers may find continuity of support for themselves or the person they care for is disrupted as they regularly move on posting. They may feel isolated or find it harder to cope without support from extended family or local community networks
- Deployment of one parent will be an additional impact
- Service children can also be adaptable and resilient with a pride in their families' way of life

# The vision

Children and young people should be protected from inappropriate and excessive caring responsibilities to have the opportunity to enjoy their childhoods' thrive and reach their potential.

Effective support for young carers should aim to prevent them having to take on excessive care by offering the right kind of support to the people they care for.

Additionally, for the armed forces community, the armed forces covenant exists to remove disadvantage to ensure armed forces and their families get the same outcome as the civilian community

# Young carer's perspective

“To know you're a young carer”

“Advice on who to contact if caring makes me stressed”

“Tell young carers how to fit in [our] health between caring”

“To say what medication the person you care for needs [&] what time”

“What does my mum need the most and how can I help?”

“Sometimes I know more about the condition than they do, I can explain better...just listen to what I have to say.”

“We need to know from doctors what goes on with the person we care for as we don't always know what's going on.”



# Findings

## *Overview*

- Acknowledgement of need: amongst all agencies and across the armed forces tri-services there was underlying awareness and acknowledgment of need to identify and support young carers.
- Consultations and discussions with professionals revealed that many were already working with families who have children caring but had not fully recognised their role or how and where to access support for them.
- **At both strategic level and in welfare provision, young carers in armed forces families are a hidden group of children and young people**

# Findings

## *Policies and processes*

- There are comprehensive single and tri service welfare policies and processes in place but there was no evidence of structured policies or specific provision for identifying families where children may be caring or at risk of caring at levels which could impact on their own wellbeing.
- Although there are single service assessment processes in place for family members with additional needs, these did not include any processes for identifying young carers
- Apart from a section in the SSAFA FANDF handbook, there is no specific information for families or young people.

# Summary of Actions and Recommendations

- Family members' support needs should be considered alongside those of the person who needs care whether they are the Wounded Injured or Sick (WIS) service personnel or a dependent family member.
- Develop effective information materials for young carers and their families sharing rights and guidance to support. Ensure all relevant web portals can signpost families and young people
- Develop a common issue 'Infographic' for all relevant agencies
- Be mindful that mobility and deployment can have additional impacts for families where there are additional needs, illness or disability.
- Identify what is needed to promote a 'cultural shift' to change the image/mind set of the welfare issues to individuals and reduce stigma of asking for support
- Chain of Command, health agencies, schools and welfare services all need to be "young carer aware" and have a role to play in awareness raising, identification and support.

# Summary of Actions and Recommendations

- Ensure Unit Welfare Staff, Families Federations, Community Services and TriService HIVES have information on identification and support needs for young carers
- Identify any training and
- Ensure tri-service welfare assessments consider the needs of the whole family, including carers and young carers. Is a whole family approach being adopted?   
Develop effective information materials for young carers and their families
- Ensure all service children's schools are aware of the Young Carers in Schools programme (YCIS)<sup>9</sup> via the Service Children in State Schools (SCISS) networks and the Service Children Progression Alliance (SCIP)
- Make use of Pupil Information Profile (PIP) to identify any young carer
- Consider what additional assessment or support is needed during transition to new postings and to civilian life for any young carers
- Identify any further research or data collection that might be required.

# Building pathways to identification and support

## Ensure

- Tri service welfare assessments consider the needs of the whole family, including carers and young carers and whenever possible ensure a whole family approach being adopted.
- Young carers in armed forces families can access mainstream young carers projects if needed.
- All SCISS schools are offered training opportunities and chance to engage with the YCIS award
- Health services are young carer aware.
- Develop An awareness-raising programme and training for all welfare staff and community support staff via online training and webinars.
- information sharing protocols
- young carers resilience and wellbeing workshops

# Building pathways to identification and support

- Transitions - Consider what additional assessment or support is needed when planning for and taking up new postings (make use of PIP)
- consider what additional assessment or support is needed during transition to civilian life for any young carers
- Ensure Families Federations' and transitions officers are young carer aware
- Engagement and consultation
- Consider Engagement days with families and young carers linking with families' Federations, SSAFA & FANDF
- Engage with Foreign and commonwealth families and agencies that support them

# Questions to address

:

- Identification & Support -How can we work together to better identify and support Young Carers in Armed Forces Families?
- What is needed to enable young carers and their families to feel able to ask for help for themselves and for the person they are caring for ?
- Consider Resources – strengths and gaps
- Think about transitions and veterans
- Ask not just what are they doing but ask “Why? “and what needs to change to reduce the negative impacts upon the child.

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20 January 2017