

The
Children's
Society

Young Carers in Armed Forces Families

Evidencing the need

NHS
England

14 September 2017

Who are young carers ?

- Under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person who is 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.)
- 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

Data set 2011 Census

All dependent children aged 0-17 (at least one parent in armed forces

A total of 521 under age of 18

Total 428 Providing 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week

Age 0 -10 120; Age 11- 15 223; Age 16 -17 85

Total 45 Providing 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week

Age 0-10 7; Age 11-15 29; Age 16-17 9

Total 48 Providing 50 or more hours unpaid care a week

Age 0-10 19; Age 11-15 4; Age 16-17 5

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

Evidence shows that being a young carer can impact on attendance, attainment, personal development and welfare:

- Over ¼ miss school or experience difficulty
- Significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level
- On average young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year
- ¼ said they were bullied
- 42% say there not a particular person at school who recognised them as a carer

Young carer's perspective

“ Schools need to know you're a young carer and understand our situation”

“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

- 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.
- Discussions also highlighted the fact that some serving personnel aged 17 – 25 have been identified as young adult carers caring at a distance and during leave for parents or siblings at family home.

Young Carers in Armed Forces Families

Questions to address

- How can we all work together to better identify and support young carers in Armed Forces Families. (How and who ?)
- What is needed to enable young carers to feel able to ask for help for themselves and for the person they are caring for.
- Ask not just what are they doing but ask “**Why?** “and what needs to change to reduce the negative impacts upon the child.
- Consider how Joint and tri service assessment tools and data collection can capture the numbers and needs of young carers
- Consider how training and information materials can improve recognition, support and whole family delivery

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.
- **At both strategic level and in welfare and education provision, young carers in armed forces families are a hidden group of children and young people.**

So why are so many young carers hidden?

- Young carers often do not realise that they are a carer
- They don't want to be any different from their peers so they don't draw attention to their caring role.
- They want to keep their identity at school separate from their caring role.
- It's not the sort of thing they feel they can discuss with their friends.
- There has been no opportunity to share their story.
- They are worried about bullying.
- They worry that the family will be split up and that they will be taken into care.
- They want to keep caring a secret and/or are embarrassed.
- **Anxiety and stigma of asking for help**

Recommendations

Education –some first steps

Ensuring there is a member of staff available that young carers know how to access and can talk to in a confidential setting

Information posters on notice boards

Staff training and awareness

High-quality transfer documentation is an important part of the process of moving schools. This should include needs of any identified young carers.

Flexibility with deadlines for homework

Running a weekly peer support group for young carers at lunchtime

enabling young carers to use a time out card if they feel angry or upset.

Implementing a flexible approach across the school on mobile phone usage – so that where appropriate young carers are able to use a telephone to call home during breaks and lunchtimes to as to reduce any worry they may have about a family member

Recommendations

Education

- Ensure all service children's schools are aware of the Young Carers in Schools programme (YCIS)
- 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
Schools transition packs could also be used to supplement and add information on transfer.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/moving-school-pack>

Recommendations

Data collection

- The DfE now identifies schools which draw down the Service Pupils' Premium each year and this information is used to populate CEAS's database of SCISS schools:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/service-children-in-state-schools-handbook/service-children-in-state-schools-handbook-2013>
- Request to the DfE pupil census to correlate data for service pupils and those who are young carers.
- Schools to correlate data for service pupils and those who are young carers.
- **Recommendation:** All SCISS schools should be encouraged to collect this data so that a correlation of the two sets of data may help identify those young carers in armed forces families.

Building pathways to identification and support

Young carers in schools award

- Young Carers in Schools Award – enabling you to gain recognition from leading charities for your effective practice.
- Young Carers in Schools: A Step-by-step Guide for School Leaders, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff – making it as easy as possible for you to identify and support young carers, this resource helps you step by step and includes templates, tools and guidance
- Webinars – unpicking different criteria in the Young Carers in Schools Award, these free 30 minute sessions make raising outcomes and getting recognition as easy as possible for your school.
- A termly eNewsletter – spotlighting good practice, highlighting relevant policy developments and making sure you don't miss out on updates and key dates from the programme

Young carers in schools programme

Why take part

The Young Carers in Schools programme enables schools to:

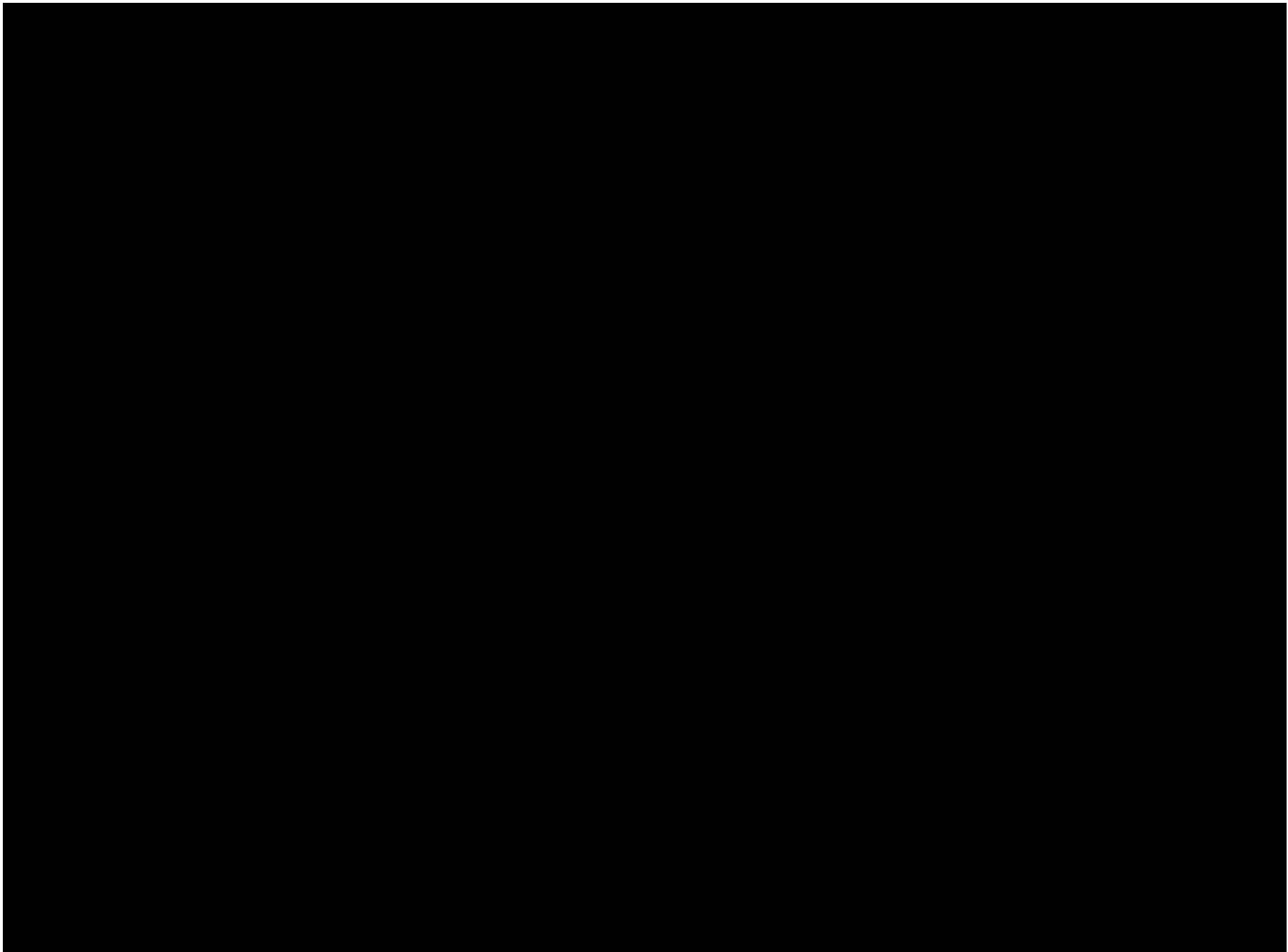
- Gain national recognition for raising outcomes for young carers through the Young Carers in Schools Award.
- Demonstrate to Ofsted that your school is meeting the needs of young carers, specifically mentioned in the Common Inspection Framework, 2015.
- Identify manageable steps to improve educational outcomes for this vulnerable pupil group – the programme breaks down the actions schools can take so that your school can prioritise what to do next.
- Access additional support including tools, templates and good practice examples, webinars and professional development events.

Further and higher education

- Research published by University of Winchester found significant disparity between the progression of service children and their peers that represents a considerable disadvantage. There is a complex interaction of known barriers that follow from the mobility and deployment experiences unique to service children, but it also masks great unknowns in relation to the motivations, choices and educational pathways of service children post-16, as well as their further and higher education and employment outcomes. *McCullough, J., Hall, M. (2016) Further and Higher Progression for Service Children for MoD*

SCIP

- The MOD-funded Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance is led by the University of Winchester. Research published by University of Winchester/SCiP identifies and answers key research questions to enable a demonstrable impact on the further and higher education access, success and progression of service children.



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