



Young Carers Awareness Day

January 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 About Healthwatch Greenwich

Healthwatch Greenwich is an independent, statutory organisation representing people who use health and adult social care services in the borough. We collect patient and public feedback and push for changes needed to improve services. Our vision is for Greenwich to have high-quality services, consistent levels of public engagement and an excellent service user experience that meets patient need and preference. To achieve our vision, we listen, we act, and we influence.

1.2 What is a young carer?

A young carer is a child or young person, under 18 years of age, who provides unpaid care to a family member or friend. In some cases, the looked-after person is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol. Responsibilities of a young carer may include:

- Practical care, such as housework and cooking
- Administering medication
- Physical care involving lifting
- Personal care including dressing and bathing
- Emotional care
- Attending and supporting at GP and hospital appointments
- Managing household finances, paying bills and collecting benefits
- Interpreting for family members with hearing or speech impediments or non-English speaking family members

In 2014, NHS England (NHSE) released the paper 'Commissioning for carers: Principles and resources to support effective commissioning for adult and young carers'¹. This paper states that many young carers 'remain out of sight', in part due to fear of bullying, social stigma, or simply not knowing where to turn for support. It also

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2014/12/comm-carers-princ-091214.pdf>.

describes how commissioners can effectively support carers and outlines ten fundamental principles to make sure this happens.²

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment estimates that there are 22,000 carers in Greenwich³. However, there is little information on the number of young carers. Young carers are particularly vulnerable as their caring role will impact on many aspects of their life, including their educational attainment and health^{4 5}.

2. What did we do?

On Young Carer's Awareness day (30th January 2020), we visited a secondary school in the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG), to speak to pupils who are also carers. Our workshop with 12 young carers discussed their health concerns, and how young people can influence the design and delivery of health and care services that affect them.

Disclaimer

Our report is an account and summary of information shared with us by young carers at the time. It is not intended to be representative of the experience of all young carers.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Wellbeing Practitioner, Alexandra Foulds, for their support in conducting this workshop. We would also like to thank Eltham Hill School for allowing us to visit and engage with their young people. Mainly, we would like to thank the Young Carers themselves, for their openness and honesty when speaking to us, and their willingness to help improve services for others.

² See Appendix I for a full list of these principles.

³ <http://www.greenwichjsna.org/app/uploads/2015/08/Carers.pdf>.

⁴ <https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers>.

⁵ For more information, please see the Carers Trust young carer's awareness poster in the appendix.

Case study: A day in the life of a young carer

“I am a young carer and I look after my mum. I wake up at 05:45, and then I get ready, put my uniform on, and brush my teeth. With the little extra time that I have, I pack my bag and finish a bit of homework that I haven’t been able to do the day before. Around 06:30, I wake up my brother, make sure he is getting ready, then I wake up my mum which usually takes a while. Then I go downstairs to make breakfast. When that’s all done, I make sure my mum takes all of her morning medication. It can be a struggle to get her to take it, and if she doesn’t, it can affect her over the next few days. Some days, she’s more willing to take it and some days she is not. It can be really stressful. The medication keeps her calm, levels her hormones, and keeps her blood pressure a healthy level. When my mum doesn’t take her medication, I will worry about her at school. Then I will drop my brother to school. If I am lucky and I have enough time, I will rush to school and arrive just in time. Now my school day begins... I like it, but I don’t like it at the same time. It’s an opportunity for me to spend time with my friends and leave everything at home behind. But, a lot of people ask questions like ‘why can’t you come out after school?’, ‘why do you have to pick up your brother?’, and ‘why are you always so late to school?’ And this makes me feel uncomfortable. So sometimes I will avoid social interactions and I will avoid telling them about my caring role. I feel that they won’t understand...”

NB: this is an extract from the video shown in the school assembly by the young carer’s group

3. What did we find out?

3.1 What health concerns do young carers have

Young carers are worried about their health, specifically mental health, and the emotional stress associated with problems getting to school on time, school absences and accessing other services, such as GP appointments. Others spoke about their concern for the health of the family member they cared for, as well as their own wellbeing and body image. Knife crime and the ability to feel safe in public spaces was also a concern.

Mental health

One of the biggest challenges for young carers is juggling their caring responsibilities with everything else in their life, such as schoolwork and social life. Difficulty in finding a balance creates stress and anxiety, with young carers reporting they are

unaware of the support available to them. For instance, when it came to addressing their mental health problems, the young carers we spoke to told us that they would like to have someone to talk to, and feel that their school counselling service needs to be improved:

“They don’t really tell you how to address the actual issues. If you have an exam, they just give you extra time”

Additionally, young carers feel they might be negatively judged by their peers regarding their caring duties, leading to being left out or ostracised. As a result, several of the young carers we spoke to have not shared their situation with classmates or friends⁶. The young carers told us that the school’s young carers group (we joined) is one of the few places they can open up and share concerns. This group allows them to share their worries with other young carers, get support from each other, and from the Wellbeing Practitioner facilitating the group. For most young carers, this is the only support mechanism they have access to outside of their home:

“I talk to my mum about my worries, but she worries about the same thing. So, it’s basically just us both worrying together”

Emotional stress

Young carers find it challenging to access healthcare and meet school commitments. Young carers are often responsible for taking loved ones for GP and hospital appointments which are always during the day, during school hours. Unavoidable healthcare appointments increased school absence, creating more anxiety for young carers:

“It’s difficult to explain why we’re late.”

The young carers told us that school attendance and trying to get to school on time is a root cause of their stress at school. Many felt that school personnel did not acknowledge that their caring responsibilities made it hard to be punctual and have full attendance. In one instance, a member of the school staff thought their

⁶. A survey reported by Carers Trust found that 39% of young carers said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.

explanation for being late was a joke and an attempt at being disruptive in class. These instances made the young carers we spoke to feel judged and isolated.

The young carers created and shared a video in their morning assembly to raise awareness of the difficulties they face. The video showed how their caring role impacted on their social life and mental health. The takeaway message of the video was to “*be empathetic, not sympathetic*”.

3.2 Solutions



Raising mental health awareness among young people in schools could reduce feelings of isolation for young carers. Offering additional support to pupils living with significant stress would enable them to manage both their caring roles and educational needs. Suggestions from young carers included regular assemblies on mental wellbeing, providing advice and information on how to get support. Additionally, a few of the young carers suggested a designated space within the school that during stressful times, (for example, during exams), pupils use to reflect and meditate.

Young carers want access to careers advice from a younger age (before year 11). As carers, their responsibilities have a direct impact on career choices. Being able to plan before year 11 is vital to young carers and would contribute to their sense of stability.

3.3 How can young carers influence the design and delivery of health and care services



Most young carers are keen to take part in activities to influence the design and delivery of health and care services they, and their loved ones, use. Most said they have never been offered the opportunity to do so.

We proposed several ways young people could get more involved in shaping health and care services that affect them:

Young People’s Parliament, (a group of young people in the borough, representing the interests of young people to decision-makers and senior stakeholders), was a popular idea. Young people want to lead and organise communication and engagement exercises for other young people. Young carers told us that the best

form of engagement needs to come from someone relatable, which for them, would be young people:

"It's easier to speak to someone of the same age."

"We're too young to vote so this would be a way to get our opinions across."

For young carers, flexibility is critical. They cannot commit to regular meetings and want to link-in on an as and when basis. Most want a face to face format, to reduce feelings of isolation and make new friends. Having an online forum or being able to access a webinar of meetings would also be useful.

Young People's Ambassadors (a group led by and focused on issues affecting young people) was also of interest. Young carers thought this could work if organised within schools, with the ambassadors voted in by teachers and pupils. Having a specific young carers ambassador would make certain issues affecting young carers are not forgotten.

Project or theme-based engagement: More information sessions would be welcome. Most young carers said they would like to attend sessions explaining what services are available to them and how to access support for themselves and their loved ones. Young carers are keen to hear from a wide range of healthcare professionals. However, it is essential for young carers that information sessions are fun, tailored to an audience of young people, with opportunities for discussion.

4. Summary

The young carers we spoke to had significant, additional pressures and more responsibilities than non-carers. They must make daily decisions on how to prioritise conflicting responsibilities, such as supervising their loved ones taking medication and caring for siblings, with their own need to attend school and maintain a supportive social life. Young carers told us they had had little guidance on how to do this, with most learning as they go along. Our young carers described the impact of this on their mental health, success in education and ability to form meaningful relationships with their peers.

Education, health and social care providers should explicitly consider the needs of young carers. Young carers are willing to contribute their views and experiences to

support this, and their involvement may contribute to improving their own experience. Our recommendations below outline suggestions to increase engagement with and improve services for young carers.

5. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Young carers ought to have clear and explicit means of feeding back on health and social care services in Greenwich. This may take the form of young carers' champions or a young people's parliament. NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich should work in partnership to identify suitable mechanisms and establish this, potentially via a commissioned community organisation. Whichever mechanism is adopted, it must engage with young carers in a way that is accessible, meaningful, and enjoyable for them.

Young carers must make difficult decisions daily. They show immense responsibility and resilience, prioritising and managing conflicting demands on their limited time. They have skills and knowledge which are invaluable. We recommend that commissioners and health and social care providers reflect the asset these young people are, as experts by experience. We recommend that commissioners and health and social care providers work with them to improve services. However, this should not add pressure nor obligation to the lives of young carers. It should, therefore, be flexible and enjoyable, and offer a meaningful activity for them in a way which feels productive, beneficial, and respectful. This could have the additional benefit of providing an outlet and space where they can speak openly and connect with others with similar experiences.

Recommendation 2: Health and social care providers ought to offer reasonable adjustments or flexibilities to young carers, considering the pressure on their time and commitments.

Young carers told us they face many barriers when it comes to health and social care services. Having to miss school to accompany loved ones to attend GP appointments is a regular occurrence. A register of young carers could facilitate offering more flexible arrangements (such as appointments after school hours). Other reasonable

adjustments include longer appointment times and additional emotional support. Services, such as sexual health clinics or counselling services, could visit young carers in schools. Providing services, or information sessions, in schools, would give access to young carers who do not have the time or the means to attend community appointments. Mental health services, including NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and community wellbeing services, should be particularly mindful of this, given the reports of anxiety and stress we heard from these young carers.

Publicising additional services or adjustments is particularly important, so that young carers are aware that their needs are being considered and can utilise these opportunities. A young person's parliament or young carers champion could be a useful way of spreading awareness of where this is available.

Recommendations 3: NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich should publicise how they have incorporated the experiences and needs of young carers within commissioning processes. They would encourage service providers in Greenwich to do the same.

NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) has a responsibility to show how they are meeting the needs of young carers. One way of doing this may be to publicise how they rate on NHSE's 10 commissioning for carers principles: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/comm-carers/principles/principle-10/>. For example, on their website, they could provide transparent answers to questions such as 'how have carers views helped to shape the development of service specifications?'. Other questions could include, 'are you assured there is a carers lead or champion in the services you commission?' This would allow young carers (and those who work with them) to have a platform through which they can hold NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) to account and learn more about what they can and should expect from services. A young carers' champion or parliament could use this information to make suggestions for improvements or spread awareness amongst young people.

Recommendation 4: Young carers have additional responsibilities which can impact all areas of their lives. NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) and the Royal Borough

of Greenwich must ensure professionals understand and respond to this empathically and supportively.

Young carers told us that the attitudes and lack of understanding from others made their lives harder and had a negative emotional impact. Training for professionals, who work with young carers, such as teachers, coaches or counsellors, to deepen understanding of young carers' issues would be helpful. Young carers themselves should be involved in the design, and where possible the delivery, of this training. This would ensure that adults around the children are as supportive as possible.

The social and emotional needs of young carers must be reflected in any training. For example, they told us they often could not socialise with friends outside of school. They also described mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns. If professionals are aware of this, they will be more likely to provide additional enrichment activities for children in school, or further mental health support.

Schools ought to be aware of their young carers and make reasonable allowances when their attendance or punctuality is affected by their responsibilities. This would reduce feelings of embarrassment or shame and allow schools an opportunity to offer support. In turn, this attitude might be adopted by other students in the school. Adults behaving more compassionately and demonstrating an ability to be flexible would decrease the stigma of being a young carer. By reducing stigma and judgement, young carers might then feel more confident and comfortable to ask for help or speak up when they are experiencing difficulties.

6. Provider Response

Commissioners, service providers and key stakeholders are given the opportunity to review our reports prior to publication, to check for factual accuracy and to provide a response if required.

Comments received from Alexandra Foulds, Wellbeing Practitioner, Eltham Hill School

Eltham Hill School is committed to raising awareness of Young Carers across the school community to both staff and students. We understand the variety of challenges that they face in education, whilst juggling their caring responsibilities at home. Eltham Hill School will continue to put academic and wellbeing support in place to foster our Young Carers' educational success and personal development.

Joint Response from SEL CCG (Greenwich), Oxleas, and the Royal Borough of Greenwich

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 1: Young carers ought to have clear and explicit means of feeding back on health and social care services in Greenwich. This may take the form of young carers' champions or a young people's parliament. NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich should work in partnership to identify suitable mechanisms and establish this, potentially via a commissioned community organisation. Whichever mechanism is adopted, it must engage with young carers in a way that is accessible, meaningful, and enjoyable for them.</p> <p>Young carers must make difficult decisions daily. They show immense responsibility and resilience, prioritising and managing conflicting demands on their limited time. They have skills and knowledge which are invaluable. We recommend that commissioners and health and social care providers reflect the asset these young people are, as experts by experience. We recommend that commissioners and health and social care providers work with them to improve services. However, this should not add pressure nor obligation to the lives of young carers. It should, therefore, be flexible and enjoyable, and offer a meaningful activity for them in a way which feels productive, beneficial, and respectful. This could have the additional benefit of providing an outlet and space where they can speak openly and connect with others with similar experiences.</p>	<p>Participation Groups</p> <p>The Participation Strategy sets out our vision for ensuring that children and young people can participate in decision making around services that affect them. The views of children and young people are regularly used to inform the development of local services.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out the importance of meaningful participation and involving children and young people in decision-making, reviewing and shaping services. As part of this all commissioned services are asked to identify whether Young carers access support and to evidence how children, young people and families have shaped their services.</p> <p>Although there isn't a specific 'Young carers Forum', there are several Youth Voice Forums across the borough including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenwich Young People's Council (GYPC) • ACE Board • Children in Care Council • Care Leaver Forums • Young Commissioners • You're Welcome Programme • Mental Health Ambassadors <p>These have been established as an additional layer to help ensure young people including Young Carers are able to influence decision making on health and social care services, particularly at a service and strategic level. The opportunities to join these forums are publicised as broadly as possible to ensure representation from a diverse group of young people but we are always looking at ways in which we can reach more children.</p> <p>Schools additionally have participation mechanisms through structures such as School Councils. In the case of Eltham Hill School where young</p>

	<p>people participated for this research, a total of 1,124 students voted in the 2019 GYPC election. Two Eltham Hill pupils now represent young people on the Borough Wide Young People’s Council.</p> <p>An action within the current Participation Strategy (20-23) and Action plan is to increase the involvement of young people from vulnerable groups, this includes Young carers. We will be identifying specific plans to ensure the number of young carers represented in these groups is clear and increases.</p> <p>Areas for Further Work</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We would welcome a discussion with Healthwatch on how we can ensure participants in this research are linked into their School’s Greenwich Young People’s Council representatives. 2) We will work with Healthwatch to review suggested avenues on how we can better publicise these groups to Young carers.
<p>Recommendation 2: Health and social care providers ought to offer reasonable adjustments or flexibilities to young carers, considering the pressure on their time and commitments.</p> <p>Young carers told us they face many barriers when it comes to health and social care services. Having to miss school to accompany loved ones to attend GP appointments is a regular occurrence. A register of young carers could facilitate offering more flexible arrangements (such as appointments after school hours). Other reasonable adjustments include longer appointment times and additional emotional support. Services, such as sexual health clinics or counselling services, could visit young carers in schools. Providing services, or information sessions, in schools, would give access to young carers who do not have the time or the means to attend community appointments. Mental health services, including NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and community wellbeing services, should be particularly mindful of this, given the reports of anxiety</p>	<p>Service Adjustments</p> <p>Ensuring that young people are supported at times that meet their needs, including the provision of reasonable adjustments and flexible appointments and hours is something providers seek to deliver within their existing services. Examples of adjustments made include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Greenwich (School) Nurses providing 1:1 check-in sessions outside of School time on Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays from 6-8pm for young people in need of further support. • The provision of online emotional health and wellbeing counselling from Kooth is available outside of School hours. • Extended hours of access from Greenwich CAMHS • Delivery of extended hours at GP Hubs, providing early morning, evening and weekend appointments. <p>In addition Oxleas children and young people services, CAMHS, and adult</p>

and stress we heard from these young carers.

Publicising additional services or adjustments is particularly important, so that young carers are aware that their needs are being considered and can utilise these opportunities. A young person's parliament or young carers champion could be a useful way of spreading awareness of where this is available.

community services are delivering support via digital platforms as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which will be embedded as an option permanently going forward. This enables our young people to access support remotely and particularly benefits young carers who might be shielding a vulnerable person at home.

Support Available to Young carers

There are a range of services available to support young people including Young carers within school, community and online. Some of these are set out below and have been reviewed in light of Coronavirus and updated:

Mental Health and Wellbeing Information

<https://livewellgreenwich.org.uk/youngpeoplec19/>

General Young Carer Information

https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200274/carers/769/young_carers

<http://www.oxleasyoungcarers.co.uk/>

Young Greenwich – offers a range of youth activities (term time and summer) as well as health services for children and young people (aged 5 to 19 or 25 with SEND) within school and in the Community. This includes access to advice/support on a range of topics including sleep, healthy lifestyle, healthy weight, sexual health and school.

To view the full Young Greenwich offer including youth activities available to young people please visit: <https://www.young-greenwich.org.uk/>

Start Well Greenwich Children's Centres – provides support to families with children under 5 -

<https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/childrenscentres>

Imago – Safe Programme – delivering wellbeing programme within RBG schools and training Safe Ambassadors within individual schools to provide peer support.

Oxleas ADHD Platform – online direct access with clinical practitioners for advice and appointment booking

Headscape – is a tool available to support young carers in providing an online route to assess their own emotional health and wellbeing. This will then signpost them to appropriate advice and support. For more information visit - <https://headscapegreenwich.co.uk/>

Greenwich CAMHS –

CAMHS sessions are delivered in the school environment or in the community when it is beneficial to the young person and where appropriate.

Mental Health Support Teams are working with 20 schools in Greenwich, providing additional access to early intervention mental health and wellbeing support.

As part of the Greenwich CAMHS initial assessment process for new patients, information is captured on any caring responsibilities a young person might have. The caring responsibilities of a young person are then taken into consideration as part of their ongoing care planning, with adjustments agreed in collaboration with the young person to ensure the support they are offered is accessible. Young carers who are identified this way are sign posted by the CAMHS team to various resources that can guide them in getting extra help with their caring responsibilities, such as <http://www.oxleasyoungcarers.co.uk/>.

Young carers Register

Greenwich's Families Information Service, based within the Council, oversee the Young Carer's register which professionals can refer young people onto, with their consent, or young people and/or families can self-refer. The Council is looking to do more work to improve the profile and use of the register. A review will be undertaken to look at how the register can be better used to promote engagement and uptake of services available in both health and social care.

	<p>Early Help and Young carers</p> <p>Over the past 2 years the Early Help Service through working with families has identified, referred and supported young carers onto the <i>CHICKS</i> programme (www.chicks.org.uk). <i>CHICKS</i> is a residential programme which takes place during the school holidays and offers young carers the opportunity to meet with other children in their situation and provide a period of respite to their day to day caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Areas for Further Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the Council seeks to improve the use of the register, we will work with services including Healthwatch to look at ways in which the register can be used to better support and tailor services to young people in Greenwich.
<p>Recommendations 3: NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich should publicise how they have incorporated the experiences and needs of young carers within commissioning processes. They would encourage service providers in Greenwich to do the same.</p> <p>NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) has a responsibility to show how they are meeting the needs of young carers. One way of doing this may be to publicise how they rate on NHSE's 10 commissioning for carers principles: https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/comm-carers/principles/principle-10/.</p> <p>For example, on their website, they could provide transparent answers to questions such as 'how have carers views helped to shape the development of service specifications?'. Other questions could include, 'are you assured there is a carers lead or champion in the services you commission?' This would allow young carers (and those who work with them) to have a platform through which they can hold NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) to account and learn more about what they can and should expect from services. A</p>	<p>Young People's Impact on Commissioning</p> <p>As set out in our response to recommendation 1, there are a number of youth groups open to young people in the borough, including Young carers, where they can help shape commissioning. The current cohort of GYPC (Greenwich Young People's Councillors), were elected in autumn 2019 and the 4th cohort of Young Commissioners in 2020. This is a diverse group of young people, who work with RBG (and receive appropriate training) to support and inform commissioning processes. The opportunity to join the young commissioner programme is promoted widely including in Greenwich Info, which is sent to all RBG households.</p> <p>Children and young people have been involved in commissioning processes such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation and interview panels for commissioned services including Young Greenwich and the Participation Service Leading consultation with approximately 1,500 young people across the borough to inform discussions around local mental health and wellbeing services.

<p>young carers' champion or parliament could use this information to make suggestions for improvements or spread awareness amongst young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shaping the development of our Children’s Rights Services - Involvement in regeneration projects such as the Plumstead Regeneration project. <p>The Young Mental Health Ambassadors are a group of young people who want to be involved in shaping local mental health services and supporting other young people. This group regularly promotes the opportunity for new members to join and have held two “Chill and Chat” events over the last six months – encouraging other young people who want to talk to their peers to join them. The Young Mental Health ambassadors run an online campaign (#YouMatterGreenwich) to promote support available locally.</p> <p>As part of working to increase the number of young carers involved in this work Greenwich will look at utilising the young carers Register to do more active promotion of these opportunities.</p> <p>Areas for Further Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are always looking for ways to better publicise the participation work undertaken and the impact of children on commissioning. We would therefore welcome further discussion with Healthwatch on how we might better publicise the work set out above and the impact young people have on commissioning in Greenwich.
<p>Recommendation 4: Young carers have additional responsibilities which can impact all areas of their lives. NHS SEL CCG (Greenwich) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich must ensure professionals understand and respond to this empathically and supportively.</p> <p>Young carers told us that the attitudes and lack of understanding from others made their lives harder and had a negative emotional impact. Training for professionals, who work with young carers, such as teachers, coaches or counsellors, to deepen understanding of young carers' issues would be helpful. Young carers themselves should be involved in the design,</p>	<p>Support for Professionals</p> <p>As part of training delivered by individual services and through the Greenwich Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, practitioners are trained to assess and support children’s individual needs. This includes responding in an understanding and emphatic way. Examples of this include training, which considers the wider family relationships and dynamics of the child such as their caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Training opportunities are supplemented with support through in-reach services such as CAMHS, which provide schools, children’s centres and</p>

and where possible the delivery, of this training. This would ensure that adults around the children are as supportive as possible.

The social and emotional needs of young carers must be reflected in any training. For example, they told us they often could not socialise with friends outside of school. They also described mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns. If professionals are aware of this, they will be more likely to provide additional enrichment activities for children in school, or further mental health support.

Schools ought to be aware of their young carers and make reasonable allowances when their attendance or punctuality is affected by their responsibilities. This would reduce feelings of embarrassment or shame and allow schools an opportunity to offer support. In turn, this attitude might be adopted by other students in the school. Adults behaving more compassionately and demonstrating an ability to be flexible would decrease the stigma of being a young carer. By reducing stigma and judgement, young carers might then feel more confident and comfortable to ask for help or speak up when they are experiencing difficulties.

children's services an opportunity to discuss supporting vulnerable children including young carers.

Staff working with children, are provided with regular supervision where they can discuss individual cases including the needs of young carers. A symptoms and services guide has been developed and provides professionals with details of services to support with emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. This has been shared with colleagues across schools, health and children's services.

https://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/MH_Symptoms_and_Services_Guide_Final-3.pdf

Support has also been provided through Greenwich's Social Emotional and Mental Health guidance which has been shared with schools and raises awareness of the importance of whole school approaches in promoting emotional wellbeing for staff and pupils and in fostering a sense of belonging and pupil engagement.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

In addition to support mentioned above, as part of expanding the delivery of emotional support, Greenwich is piloting the delivery of Mental Health in Schools Teams in 20 settings in September 2020. This will provide additional emotional and wellbeing support directly to children including young carers. Mental Health Support teams will also work with schools to develop relevant approaches to supporting emotional health and wellbeing. This includes involving children/young people and families in developing these approaches. Learning will be shared with other schools across the borough.

Areas for Further Work

- We would welcome further exploration with Healthwatch to learn more about some of the individual circumstances that were raised in the workshop. We can then have a discussion with providers on how we might adapt feedback processes so that these voices are

	heard and acted upon.
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7. Appendices

Appendix I. The Commissioning for Care Principles by NHS England (2014).

- Principle 1, Think Carer, Think Family; Make Every Contact Count
- Principle 2, Support what works for carers, share and learn from others
- Principle 3, Right care, right time, right place for carers
- Principle 4, Measure what matters to carers
- Principle 5, support for carers depends on partnership working
- Principle 6, Leadership for carers at all levels
- Principle 7, Train staff to identify and support carers
- Principle 8, Prioritise carers' health and wellbeing
- Principle 9, Invest in carers to sustain and save
- Principle 10, Support carers to access local resources

Appendix II. Carers Trust poster raising awareness about young carers

Young carers:

Who are they? What do they do?



A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.

Across the UK, as many as **1 in 5** children and young people are young carers.



young carers have been bullied in school

1 in 3

young carers say their caring role makes them feel stressed



What might a young carer do?

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework or shopping.
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed.
- Emotional support, such as talking to someone who is distressed.
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress.
- Managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions.
- Helping to give medicine.
- Helping someone communicate.
- Looking after brothers and sisters.

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the average number of school days missed or cut short as a result of a young person's caring role

Young carers should have:

- Time to have fun and do things that matter to them.
- The same opportunity as their friends to succeed in education and work.
- Support to make ambitious plans for the future and achieve them.
- Recognition of their legal rights to assessment and support.
- High quality support both for them and the person they care for.



23%

of young carers felt their caring role had stopped them making friends

Young Carers Awareness Day, on 30 January 2020, is an annual event, organised and led by Carers Trust, to raise awareness of the challenges faced by young carers and to campaign for greater support for them.

[Carers.org/YCAD2020](https://www.carers.org/YCAD2020)



@CarersTrust
@CarersTrustScot
@CarersTrustWal



@carers.trust

#YoungCarersAwarenessDay
#CountMeIn

7. Contact us

Address: Gunnery House, Gunnery Terrace, Woolwich, London SE18 6SW

Telephone: 020 8301 8340

Email: info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk Twitter: @HWGreenwich

If you require this report in an alternative format, please contact us at the address above.

We know that you want local services that work for you, your friends and family.

That's why we want you to share your experiences of using health and care services with us - both good and bad. We use your voice to encourage those who run services to act on what matters to you.

We are uniquely placed as a national network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

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