

Manchester Carers Network: understanding the health, wellbeing and support needs of young carers

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1. Executive Summary

The key messages emerging from this work with young carers and stakeholders are:

- The number of young carers in Manchester is not known, although the 2011 census showed of those providing unpaid care, there were 1,138 young people age 1 to 15 years old and 4,523 age 16 to 24 years old. Research for Manchester City Council has estimated there may be around 16,000 young carers in the city. TYSS have identified and/or worked with around 200 young carers. The City Council have started to identify young carers through the early help hubs.
- Young carers themselves have identified both the main issues that affect them and the kind of steps needed to help tackle those issues and to improve information and support for young carers – these are set out in detail in the ‘Be Bothered’ campaign from Manchester Young Carers Group and in the young carers in schools groups who took part in the survey. Some of the recurrent issues are:
 - Young carers face considerable stress, not only from the challenges which their caring role can generate, but also from juggling caring with education, from isolation from peers, and from worries about what might happen if ‘the authorities’ get involved
 - Just like adult carers, some young carers may value what they are doing in their caring role and may feel patronised if professionals dwell on the negative aspects of caring
 - Young carers value the support they receive through school as young carers - it can be a place where they get useful information, support, opportunities for a break, and more. While some young carers also value the support they get from family and/or friends, other young carers depend on the support in school as their main or only source of support
- Young carers say there are a range of things which would really help them – more trips (to get a break), more opportunities to meet other young carers and/or to do music, going out, etc., opportunities to talk with others (including adults), financial support for carers age under 16, and not least spreading the word about young carers and about the be Bothered campaign
- There are good examples of information and support for young carers, yet these are limited and indicate that the big majority of young carers are unlikely to have access to information and support. The young-carer led Young Carers Group is a small but dynamic group in which young carers set and actively pursue their agenda. Young carers groups exist in perhaps 3-5 high schools (out of 33) and none of the 142 primary schools. Where they do exist, they play a vital role in identifying young carers, providing them with information and support (including peer support) as well as young carers’ breaks (for example after-school activities and residential trips). Manchester College aims to identify young carers by including a question on the enrolment form. There is a pressing need for all Manchester schools and colleges to be proactive in identifying young carers and in providing them with information and support.

- Funded organisations providing support for young carers are Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS, run by Career Connect) and 4CT. TYSS has limited capacity and is funded to work with the 13-18 age group, with a focus on education, employment and training. Through 1.4 FTE staff they provide drop-in services, one-to-one support for young carers and also seek to engage schools around young carers. 4CT provides access to activities and opportunities for young carers in east/north Manchester. A range of other services working with young people also encounter young carers and often provide them with signposting or support but this may be limited as they have different operational priorities.
- There is also some provision for young adult carers. Manchester Carers Centre provides a Young Adult Carers monthly activity for carers age 16-25. Inspired Futures is run by the YMCA and seeks to engage young adult carers in a wide range of learning opportunities and support. Once again, these services operate as stand-alone projects. The transition from being a young carer is an issue many are aware of but for which there are no agreed pathways.
- Stakeholders, particularly those working with young carers, have highlighted the need to better coordinate young carers' information and support and also to increase the information and support available. While there may be challenges about getting young carers to recognise they are young carers, professionals working with them highlight the value of peer mentoring and support, and the need for a 'separate and holistic' young carers assessment.

2. Background and Project

In June 2017, Manchester Carers Network was asked by NHS Manchester CCG to undertake a project which would:

- engage with young carers across the age range, and with other key stakeholders such as schools, local authority, voluntary sector
- Identify what information and support is already in place for young carers, and whether there are any gaps in information and support
- find out from young carers about their health and wellbeing and whether it is affected by their caring role
- produce a report which sets out the findings and illustrates these, for example with case studies, and makes recommendations based on the findings

The project was delivered from July 2017 to January 2018, and involved:

- liaison with Manchester Young Carers Group
- gathering the views and experiences of young carers through a short questionnaire and through attending young carers groups in secondary schools
- meetings and conversations with a range of stakeholders
- desk research: collating and analysis of reports, strategies and a range of other information relating to young carers

In late 2017, Manchester City Council asked Manchester Carers Network to lead a review of the Carers' Strategy. This report has been compiled both to fulfil its original remit and to inform that wider review - and to ensure that young carers' support is integral to any revised Carers Strategy.

3. Listening to young carers

3.1 Manchester Young Carers Group

We had a number of meetings and conversations with the Young Carers Group. Their purpose is:

“Manchester Young Carers Group is an organisation set up by young carers, for young carers. We aim to get young carers’ voices heard in Manchester, and we aim to improve the lives for all young carers in Manchester. Manchester Young Carers Group is entirely young-carer led, as we believe this is the best possible way to ensure the youth have a voice and a direct say in how the group is ran, its plans and its organisational structure.”

The Group has been very active in pursuing these goals, including:

- Promoting their Be Bothered campaign on behalf of young carers in Manchester
- Designing and co-delivering the young carers conference and launch of Be Bothered in 2017
- Engaging widely with organisations, groups and networks to raise awareness of Be Bothered and of YCG
- Bringing the voice and experiences of young carers and young adult carers to the discussions underway around transition
- Active engagement with Manchester City Council and the Young Carers Partnership Board
- Liaison with young carers groups in schools
- Becoming members of Manchester Carers Network and encouraging the Network to support young carers

The Group is not formally constituted and has more than twenty members and meets regularly at locations around the city. They are working with several organisations to look at taking forward young carers support and also to look at the development and growth of the Group itself. They are part of Manchester Carers Network.

The Be Bothered campaign highlights the main issues which young carers face. Stress is a key issue, and is linked to:

- Financial challenges, both for the young carer and for the person they care for. They may struggle to pay for necessities at home and for school (eg bus passes or revision guides), and cannot afford to have things other young people have
- Support – or lack of it – at school or college. When education providers lack awareness or understanding of young carers, they may be penalised for things (such as being late) which are a result of their caring role. Young carers may struggle to stay focused during lesson time and may be bullied because of their caring role. All of these factors can mean young carers find it difficult to achieve the same levels of performance/achievement as their peers.
- Being able to have time alone or to relax, to meet friends or do the things they enjoy – and missing out on the fun things which other young people do. Being able to have a break - ‘Time and space’

**Manchester
Young Carers
Group**

**Be Bothered
Campaign (version II)**
Official Campaign Booklet and Strategy

BE BOTHERED.

- A lack of understanding of the role of young carers. Young carers themselves may not see themselves as young carers (thereby missing out on information, support and entitlements), and adults and other young people often lack awareness which can leave young carers feeling isolated, uncomfortable and again stressed.

The campaign also sets out what the consequences can be for young carers:

- impacts on the physical and or mental health of young carers, and even breakdowns
- loss of relationship with the person or people they care for
- problems of alcohol and/or substance abuse
- loss of confidence and self-esteem
- worries about what may happen, particularly if school or social services intervene, and the impact this can have on the young carer and their family

In order to reduce stress and lead better lives, Be Bothered sets out clearly and in detail how each of these groups and organisations can help, the changes which young carers want, and the benefits this would bring for young carers:

- Schools, colleges and universities
- Manchester City Council
- Local MPs
- Young carers workers
- Youth centres
- Families

3.2 Young carers in schools

Apart from Manchester Young Carers Group, the other groups of young carers exist within a small number of schools. In order to get their views, we:

- asked them to complete a short questionnaire
- attended their young carers groups in school (and one outside school, with 4CT)
- collected young carers feedback during carers week 2017

Young carers completed the questionnaire individually before or during the meetings with the school-based young carers groups. The groups were at:

- Manchester Communications Academy
- Wright Robinson High School
- Whalley Range High School
- 4CT / Gorton group

The sixteen young carers who completed the short questionnaire were aged between 11 and 14 years old. They were all from north/east central Manchester. The majority were caring for a parent, and some also for a sibling or other relative, often people with multiple health conditions.

Most felt they got the right information as a young carer, with school being the main source of information and support. Support in school was from a young carers group, and/or from one or more members of staff. For some young carers, school was their only source of support. For others, they also got support from friends and/or family.

One of the main things young carers felt helped them was being able to talk, either to other young carers or to an adult – to be able to talk about things helped them relieve stress which otherwise would build up. Other things that would help included more breaks, trips (short and residential), financial help and mental health support such as counselling (some young carers did access Kooth).

Many of these points were also reflected in the discussions with young carers. Informal discussions focused on what was working for them as young carers, whether there were any gaps and what would make a difference for them. Some young carers also shared how their caring role can affect them.

The common themes from all the discussions were:

- School for many young carers was the main or sole source of information and support – this was wide-ranging. For example:
 - “Having a Teaching Assistant I know I can talk to, to talk about what’s going on”*
 - “Lunchtime homework club”*
 - “Year office, where there is head/deputy head of year and mentor – non-teaching – staff who can talk 1:1 and help identify young carers”*
 - “Other young carers’ support through group in school (‘makes me feel a lot better because there are young carers in school and school support young carers’)”*
- Young carers highlighted that training could be very beneficial for them in their caring role – many felt that topics like first aid, mental health and wellbeing, managing stress could help them to manage their caring role better
- There may be a need among young carers in some BAME communities to meet other young carers in their community – *“support each other, activities – easy and relaxing”*
- The young carer groups were also a route to other opportunities which young carers might not otherwise have, for example: involvement in the Be Bothered campaign, Manchester Youth Council, trips to London and the Lake District, local activities/sports, a film & TV course and personal development events

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>There isn’t any support outside school</i>- <i>Friends are very supportive, I can talk to them</i>- <i>No sources of information outside school</i>- <i>Can be hard since starting high school – I want to do the best for my mum; there isn’t any time for me, I also cook and clean for siblings and there isn’t any time for me</i>- <i>Kids don’t have time for themselves – need support from schools to recognise that</i>- <i>Chance to talk to someone – know you are not ‘down’, there is someone to help you</i>- <i>Help and services for mum would help too (she gets support from her sisters/my aunts), so would be good to know about services/community support</i> |
|--|

Young carers said a range of things would really help them:

- time to chill out with others
- more clubs – access to talking to adults
- music – being able to play and listen
- residential trips with other young carers
- knowing about relaxation and how to relax / being able to relieve stress, including physical exercise
- knowing what to do/who to contact if something happens in the caring situation that is urgent/unexpected (eg how to cope if my younger sister became ill at the same time as my mum?)
- spreading the word – eg Be Bothered
- work in schools: Have someone go into schools to spread the word / programmes in schools for young carers / teacher training to include how to identify young carers/ network of school contacts
- if young carers below age 16 could get an assessment and £200
- having additional help to look after the cared-for person (although some young carers were anxious about someone else coming in the look after the cared-for)

4. Information and Support for Young Carers

We held a number of conversations with stakeholder organisations and carried out desk research which included:

- Be Bothered campaign booklet
- Young Carers Strategy (Manchester City Council)
- Young carers pages on the Manchester City Council website
- JSNA Children and Young People – young carers (2016)
- Young Carers in Focus (Children’s Society)
- Whole Family Pathway (Children’s Society)
- Report on Young Carers Event 4th July 2017
- Young Carers in Manchester working with TYSS (June 2017)
- Young Carers Toolkit (The Lowry and Salford Young Carers)
- Young Carers Report (The Children’s Commissioner, 2016)
- Range of literature and materials from Young Adult Carers services, Young Carers Awareness Day, Students Union

We had meetings and/or conversations with the following stakeholders:

- Manchester City Council (young carers leads, Early Help Hubs)
- Manchester Young Carers Group
- Manchester Carers Centre
- Targeted Youth Support Service
- 4CT
- Schools
- YMCA (Inspiring Futures)
- Manchester Young Lives
- MMU and University of Manchester

Information and support was examined for young carers in three main cohorts:

- a) Age 5-11 (primary school age)
- b) Age 11-18 (secondary education age)
- c) Age 18-25, or 16-25 (young adult carers)

Experience elsewhere shows there may be carers who are younger than 5 years old.

Overview of provision for young carers/young adult carers in Manchester

VCS	Statutory	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Youth Support Service • Manchester Carers Centre (Young Adult Carers) • 4CT • Manchester Young Lives • Inspired Futures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help - Manchester City Council • Secondary schools • Colleges and universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manchester Young Carers Group

Those VCS organisations highlighted bold are funded (from a range of sources) to work with young carers or young adult carers.

Agencies can refer young carers with support needs to the Early Help Hubs (three across the city) or the Contact Centre. Referrals are screened by a social worker before the response is decided. Early Help Assessments aim to identify the needs of young carers and their families, after which referrals may be made.

Young adult carers may be referred to a range of provision, and there are two projects specifically aimed at them:

- Young Adult Carers (run by Manchester Carers Centre) provides information, advice, support and social activities and events for young adult carers age 16-25
- Inspiring Futures (run by YMCA) is aimed at young adult carers age 16-24 and provides a range of tailored support, including personal development, accredited training/qualifications and one-to-one support



There is some information and support for young adult carers from colleges and universities. Colleges are asking new students at enrolment whether they are a young carer, both to identify young adult carers and to signpost them to information and support. MMU provides information, support and if necessary access to financial help for young adult carers.

Young carers age 13-18 may be referred to TYSS for information, advice and one-to-one support. The 1.5 full-time equivalent staff at TYSS also work with secondary schools to promote young carers awareness and to encourage schools to work towards the young carers' award.

Young carers in this age group might also be linked into other sources of support and/or activities, such as the local young carers group run by 4CT and/or generic youth activities via Factory Youth Zone, The Powerhouse, etc.

TYSS have worked with some young carers age 11 and 12, where they were the siblings of young carers in their target age group – but there is no specific provision for young carers under the age of 13.

Schools have started to identify and work with young carers, with particularly active groups in:

- Manchester Communication Academy
- Wright Robinson College
- Whalley Range High School

As well as proactively identifying who their young carers are, these schools provide a wide range of information, advice and support. This usually includes a weekly young carers' group meeting, held during and after schools hours. The groups are run on an informal basis by one or more members of staff and provide an opportunity for young carers to have a break, do different activities and be with/talk to other young carers as well as the staff. They may also access additional support with their studies. The staff also reach out to young carers in the school who do not come to the group, so they at least get access to opportunities, such as free tickets for trips. For some young carers, the school group has also been a route to wider opportunities – for example several young carers spoke at the Manchester conference and benefited from a huge boost in confidence as a result.

Other schools may also identify and support young carers, although a TYSS report in 2017 showed 39 out of 42 schools had identified fewer than 10 young carers with many recording 5 or less. National research shows that around 1 in 12 pupils is a young carer, so a school with 1,000 pupils/students could expect around 80 of them to have caring responsibilities.



Other providers of services to children and young people – such as Manchester Young Lives, funded by Big Lottery – are also young carer-aware and report that as many as two-thirds of the young people they work with are young carers.

More recently Young Manchester, the grant-making youth and play charity, has launched its two-year programme. They aim to reach 15,000 children and young people age 5-19 years old and up to 25 years old where there are additional needs. The programme will be delivered by a range of voluntary sector youth and play organisations, and Young Manchester anticipate clear emphasis on identifying and supporting or appropriately signposting young carers and young adult carers.

While there are real challenges around young people recognising that they are a young carer, there is also significant strain on those services trying to help. Mental health and wellbeing was again highlighted and, while there is a range of provision for young people in this area, it is felt that accessing help is not easy either because of long waiting times or limitations of the service.

Transition is on the agenda among key players, as no processes and/or pathways currently exist to ensure that young carers age 18 and upwards are linked in to appropriate information and support, or are offered an adult carers assessment.

JSNA Children and Young People – young carers¹

Age	Total Population in Manchester	Provides unpaid care:	% of population	Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	% of carers	Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	% of carer	Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	% of carers
All ages	503,127	42,640	8.5	23,109	54.2	7,568	17.7	11,963	28.1
0 to 15	97,418	1,138	1.2	859	75.5	152	13.4	127	11.2
16 to 24	99,697	4,523	4.5	3,178	70.3	768	17.0	577	12.8

Table 1. Demographics of the carer population in Manchester at the time of the 2011 census

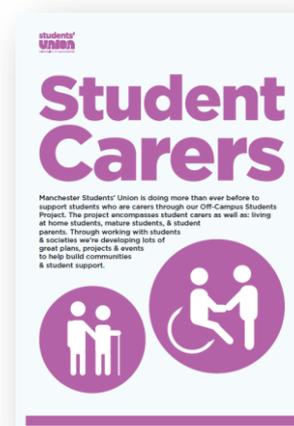
Data from the 2011 Census indicates that there were 1,138 children aged 0-16 years living in Manchester who identified themselves as providing some form of unpaid care. This is equivalent to just over 1% of the population in this age group which is similar to the national figure. Around 11% of these young carers were providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week. In research carried out in 2009-10, 16%-18% of young people reported that they had caring responsibilities for someone disabled or sick, suggesting that there may be a much larger hidden population young carers in Manchester.

However, local research commissioned by Manchester City Council (2010) indicates that the number of young carers in the City could be more than 16,000.

There may be issues facing specific groups of young carers in particular communities, at a level of detail which was not the remit of this report. Research from Carers Trust Scotland² shows, for example, that LGBT young adult carers are more likely to experience bullying, to have a mental health problem and to rate their own health as 'Ok' or 'Poor'.

Consultations with carers in some BAME communities have shown that there may be additional expectations and responsibilities placed on family members around caring, and that carers in some BAME communities experience added social isolation. It is possible some of these issues also face young carers in these communities.

Young carers of a parent or sibling with HIV have also spoken of the additional challenges they face in terms of isolation, stigma and emotional stress³.



¹http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6376/children_and_young_peoples_jsna_201516_-_young_carers

²https://carers.org/sites/files/carerstrust/media/young_people_caring_out_there.pdf

³<http://oro.open.ac.uk/11893/1/11893.pdf>

5. Next Steps

While there are strong examples (including good practice examples) of information and support for young carers, this is often fragmented and focused on specific age groups. Young carers in lower age groups (under 12/13 years old) have no specific provision and few drivers for identification. The city's independent young carers group is active, influential beyond its size and is a source of both expertise and great potential.

There is a considerable gap between the number of young carers known to services and/or schools (a few hundred) and the estimated number of young carers (16,000) and evidence shows that young carers not identified are unlikely to get information and support and therefore more likely to experience difficulties or even breakdown.

There are also emerging networks seeking to address at least some of these issues – the Young Carers Operational Partnership Board, Manchester Carers Network and others – and to take a partnership approach to meeting the needs of young and young adult carers.

Below we set out the kind of steps we feel are needed and would welcome a dialogue with all those interested in improving support for young carers and young adult carers:

- Increase identification of young carers and coordinate identification so that reliable data can be captured. Schools have a central role to play here, the evidence suggests not only that schools are ideally placed to identify young carers but also that schools are likely to be their most consistent source of information and/or support. Both secondary and primary schools have a role to play, with support from the range of carers organisations in the city and others. There is also a role in identifying and signposting young carers for colleges, GPs, pharmacies, hospitals and youth services.
- Better coordinate provision for young carers – the Our Manchester model based on 1 > 3 > 12 may have scope to integrate with existing providers and to look for ways to address gaps that exist across areas and neighbourhoods, groups of young carers and the specific challenges they face.
- Provide support to Young Carers Group so that it can develop its role as the independent voice of young carers in Manchester and can play a pivotal role, for example raising awareness, linking together young carers groups in schools, and continuing the drive to make Be Bothered a reality.
- Ensure that transition (which may be at 18 years of age and/or other ages) is addressed so that young adult carers can access a carers' assessment and relevant information and support.
- Establish the principle that there will be a 'joined-up' approach to all carer support in Manchester, so that any revised Carers Strategy will address the support needs of young carers as well as older carers.

APPENDIX A - Young carers questionnaire responses – summary

The sixteen young carers who completed the short questionnaire were aged between 11 and 14 years old. They were all from north/east central Manchester - Gorton, Clayton, Collyhurst, Miles Platting, Newton Heath, Cheetham Hill, Blackley and Droylsden

Q. Who are you a carer for?

13 - Mum or dad

3 - Sister or brother

3 – Other (nana who I live with / mum and nana / grandmother)

Q. Please tell us a bit about their illness or disability

My brother is disabled and has seizures
my dad has COPD
mum has depression and bipolar
epilepsy, osteoporosis, recovering from heart surgery
she can't do much for herself she has many medications
mum's got bipolar and depression
my mother has fibromyalgia (8 years), intense sciatica (2 years), and low self-esteem as a result. She has osteo-arthritis in her hips/knees (5 years)
my mum has arthritis
multiple hernias, this means she can't walk very far or go upstairs; asthma; back problems
mum has a bad back and nana is immobile (arthritis in every joint, needs 2 hips, back problems, asthma and severe COPD)
back pains
unable to walk or use her right arm properly & asthma
mum has fibromyalgia, grandmother has dementia, cancer, arthritis
one of my brothers has Prader-Willi Syndrome and my other brother has spina bifida
operations on both knees and bad back
aortic dissection (split of the aorta) and spinal cord infarction (bleed into the spinal cord)

Q. Do you get the right information as a young carer?

Yes	13	No	2
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If Yes, where do you get useful information?
in school (3)
the teachers who organise the young carers club (2)
Teachers
Most of the time school and extra services

If No, what kind of things do you need information about?
why different people get involved
why people get involved
I don't yet understand all that's out there for young carers

from the safeguarding team at school, the young carers group and an early help assessment
Kooth; school, they have info on young carers
4CT and YC group at school
yes because if I ever have something wrong then I can tell them and it just releases stress telling them/someone
I got information from my young carer group

Q. Do you get any support as a young carer?

Yes	16
No	-

If Yes, what support do you get...
School (6)
school/young carers
year office/young carers club/Mrs [x] named teacher
teachers talk to me about how young carers work
people from school and when extra events are available, they are useful
I can talk to nana; coming to YC monthly activities with 4CT
somewhat. I've had an early help assessment and I'm a member of the young carers group but I receive ????? Support as I don't understand what I can access. I have school counselling partly to being a young carer
emotional support so I'm not stressed out
my brother goes out on a Thursday for a couple of hours

Q. What kind of support would really make a difference for you as a young carer?

someone to talk to
speak about what's going on
telling someone your problems because it releases a lot of stress so it doesn't just keep building up inside and probably getting away from it for a couple of days will also relieve stress
a peer support group in school; more regular, local young carers groups
probably meeting others who are going through the same thing
mentally (2)
financial support for myself. I'm not yet 16 but I would benefit from an allowance to aid in enriching my personal and academic lives
health support
outside club
learn how to do first aid if it is needed
support from school as in teachers and support staff provided as year teams and mentors

Q. If you feel that being a young carer affects your physical health, mental health or wellbeing, please say how...

being a young carer affects me because it's hard to focus on exams and GCSEs and sometimes I don't have time to do homework
because I can't go out and do things, also a lot of pressure
being a young carer can be stressful
I sometimes get very stressed out as my mum constantly puts herself down for being "the cause of all my problems". The role itself is fine, just my mum's pain hurts me.
get stressed out; get angry sometimes; behind in school work
I sometimes have trouble sleeping
I think it makes me feel better that I'm helping my mum with her illness
I feel like being a young carer does affect my physical state of health because I can't go out when I want to go to the gym and my mental health has decreased ever since I became a carer and I feel like I have been more mature since.

APPENDIX B - Feedback from young carers in Carers Week (June 2017)

1. **Do you get any support as a young carer?** Yes (8) No (3)
If yes, please say what support you get...

School helps me (2)

From teachers

From teachers and peers from the young carers group.

We get everything we need or want and we are grateful for what they do for us. Thank you

We have daily meetings to express and interact. We enjoy this and we do events

We have daily meetings that allow us to interact fully. We enjoy planned events and activities.

Weekly meetings in the hub

2. **What kind of support would really make a difference for you as a young carer?**

Day Trips (3)

It would be nice to have a big event such as Ghyll Head. (3)

Getting space for my own self and go out with other people (3).

If people closest put in as much effort as the person who feels overwhelmed and stressed.

It would be nice if the people who are meant to support my brother and parents would actually do their job.

3. **If you feel that being a young carer affects your physical health, mental health or wellbeing, please say how...**

It's a lot of stress and sometimes you don't know how to deal with it.

Having a brother with autism can be hard to handle and needs care every second of the day which means I and family can't go out and do everyday things.

Yes I feel tired, lonely, sad, stressed, overwhelmed, guilty embarrassed.

I think it helps to release stress and communicate with others.

I feel stressed on certain occasions as I must split myself among responsibilities and jobs that need to be completed and worry about school stress.

APPENDIX C – Manchester Young Carers Group Be Bothered (excerpt)

Overall, our main issue for young carers is stress. In a young carer's day-to-day life, there are many situations that can be quite stressful. That is why we have broken down the main issue into factors. These include: finance, support in education, time and space, entertainment and understanding our role.

Finance:

A lot of young carers can experience stress from lack of finance. It is unlikely the person they care for can go to work, so they tend to rely heavily on government finances. This means they don't have money for luxuries and sometimes won't have enough money for the necessities. This means they struggle to live like many of their peers and do things that other people their age may and can get to do. On top of this, it can mean they struggle in education as they may not have money to buy things like bus passes or revision guides.

Support in Education:

As young carers, we have big responsibilities and sometimes our schools and colleges don't know about our caring role at home. This means that we may be sanctioned for things such as being late or not doing homework, even when it is because of our caring role. Furthermore, because of low attendance and punctuality, we don't have the opportunities to perform well in exams compared to our peers. Moreover, we can struggle to stay focused during lesson time because of our home circumstances. Depending on whether other young people know about our caring roles, we can also be bullied because of it.

Time and Space:

As young carers, we often don't get much alone time. We have no time to ourselves to relax, meet friends or do the things we enjoy. This often means we don't get to develop our talents or skills. Furthermore, as young carers, we often don't have any space to escape to in order to get work done or relax.

Entertainment:

As young carers, we often don't get to do fun things. This can mean we miss out on many childhood experiences. Our peers get to have experiences with their friends and family, that as young carers we could only dream of. We miss out on opportunities that other young people would consider normal.

Understanding our Role:

One of the biggest things that we as young carers face is that we feel nobody understands what we do in our caring roles or why we have to do it at all. This can put young carers into many uncomfortable situations. Other young people have not been educated on what a young carer is. This could mean not only that we face the ignorance of people that don't understand us, but that other young people with caring responsibilities might not even realise they are young carers and that they have entitlements.

Consequences of Stress for a Young Carer:

There are many consequences of stress for a Young Carer relating to the sub categories of: Finance, Support in Education, Time and Space, Entertainment and Understanding our Role. These can be problems for us or the person we care for; we have outlined a few main consequences of stress for young carers.

Breakdowns:

As a result of stress a young carer may have a breakdown; a breakdown is a sudden cease to function. This can affect both us as young carers and the people we care for. We may lose the ability to care for our loved ones, and if we don't care for them it is unlikely anyone else will. Furthermore, this may affect our studies and cause a dip in our grades. As young carers we have many responsibilities and if we lose the motivation to complete our duties then it affects more than just the young carer. As a result of a breakdown, our caring role could be affected or even diminished.

Loss of Relationship with the People We Care For:

As young carers, we are often caring for people in our families who are meant to care for us. This role reversal could mean a loss of relationship that other young people our age may get to have with their relatives. Moreover, as we must care for them, it is possible for young carers to feel like their caring role is more of an obligation than simply helping a relative.

Mental Health Problems:

As a result of having so much stress, a young carer is likely to experience mental health problems. Mental health problems are disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behaviour. This can affect a young carer's lifestyle, caring role or academic achievements. As young carers, we can struggle with anxiety regularly as the people we care for struggle with their condition or if they are hospitalised.

Drink and Drug Problems:

As young carers, sometimes it can feel like life is not worth living or that we are not fulfilling our potential, this means that some young carers may turn to substance abuse to try and 'numb' their feelings. This could also make it harder to fulfil their caring role or reduce their chances of success. Furthermore, if their drink and drug problems persist they may end up needing care themselves, defeating the idea of being a young carer. This would double the amount of carers needed within the household.

Loss of Confidence and Self-Esteem:

As young carers, we can sometimes lose confidence in ourselves as we are isolated from our peers and often don't want people to know about your caring role. Furthermore, if we don't have sufficient time or a place to improve our skills such as communication, then it is unlikely that we will feel confident in speaking to our peers, especially about our caring role. On top of this young carers can sometimes feel worthless or left out so begin to lose self-esteem.

Worries of Intervention:

One of the biggest causes of stress for identified young carers, and young carers who don't identify as a young carer is the worry of intervention. Intervention can come from anywhere, but the most likely sources are social services and schools. If someone finds out about a young carer, they worry that they will be taken away from their families or that their caring role will be affected. This leads to many young people with caring roles not accessing the support they are entitled to as they would rather struggle than have their caring role disturbed.

APPENDIX D – Who was engaged in the project

52 young carers

Members of Manchester Young Carers Partnership Board

Representatives of Manchester Young Carers Group

Staff from Manchester Communications Academy, Wright Robinson High School, Whalley Range High School

Targeted Youth Support Services (Career Connect)

4CT

Manchester Young Lives

Inspired Futures (YMCA)

Young Manchester

Young Adult Carers (Manchester Carers Centre)

Manchester Metropolitan University

Early Help, Manchester City Council



Manchester Carers Network

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