

# Full of Care

**Young Carers in Wales 2009**



**Powys Carers Service**  
*Incorporating Powys Young Carers*

# Full of Care

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**“What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?”**

W.H.Davies

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### Information on Powys Carers Service

Powys Young Carers is an integral part of Powys Carers Service. Powys Carers Service is an independent organisation providing information advice, advocacy and practical support to carers of all ages in every part of Powys. Working in partnership with both Social Services, the Local Health Board and other voluntary organisations, their aim is to identify carers in the community, to offer them support and to put them in touch with other local agencies and services that may be able to help.

The Powys Carers Service is a registered charity (Charity number 1103712) and a Company Registered by Guarantee (Company number 44779458)

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### Information about the Children's Commissioner for Wales

The Children's Commissioner for Wales was established by legislation. The Care Standards Act 2000 created the post and the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001 broadened the remit and set out the Commissioner's principal aim: To safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children in Wales.

Keith Towler became Wales' second Children's Commissioner on 1 March 2008.

**Children's Commissioner for Wales**  
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Swansea SA7 9FS

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### Policy Context in Wales

It is difficult to estimate the number of children and young people in Wales who have a significant role in caring for others. The *Children and Young People's Well-being Monitor for Wales*<sup>2</sup> said:

#### 3.7 Young carers

*According to the Welsh Assembly Government young carers are defined as children and young people who help look after a member of the family who is sick, disabled, has mental health problems or is affected by substance misuse. In Wales, the 2001 Census recorded that there were approximately 860 children under 18 years old providing more than 50 hours of care a week. Of these children, 240 were of primary school age.*

However, the figures quoted above refer only to those young carers who provide more than 50 hours of care a week. Children and young people who provide less than 50 hours of care a week are still regarded as young carers. Workers in young carers projects around Wales believe that the true number of young carers is much higher. Colleagues in Welsh Assembly Government have quoted a figure of 11,000 based on the 2001 census.

This is echoed by the *Princess Royal Trust for Carers*<sup>3</sup> who said:

*The 2001 census estimated that there are 175,000 young carers in the UK, including 13,000 caring for over 50 hours per week. But The Princess Royal Trust for Carers believes that the real number of young carers is much higher because the census makes no mention of alcohol or drug problems and many young carers are 'hidden' due to the stigma attached to these conditions. Some do not come forward because they and their families are frightened of outside interference and that they may be split up. Many do not even tell their teachers or friends. A lack of awareness amongst many professionals and areas, which lack services, are all contributory factors in the most vulnerable remaining 'hidden.'*

In the absence of Wales-specific research it is useful to look at research which covers the whole of the UK which gives estimates of the numbers of young carers in the UK and they vary widely between 15000 and 60000<sup>4</sup>. In our discussions with young carers, their parents and their project workers it is clear that many children and young people who live in families where their siblings require care may also have considerable caring responsibilities – even though their parents are considered the primary carers.

<sup>3</sup> Vulnerable and hidden Young Carers targeted with new £1million Fund. Princess Trust.  
<http://www.carers.org/news/vulnerable-and-hidden-young-carers-targeted-with-new-1million-fund,669,NW.html>

<sup>4</sup> Dearden, C and Becker, S *Young Carers in the UK*, Loughborough University Young Carers Research Group, 1998, page 9., 1997 page 43

The 2004 report *Young Carers in the UK*<sup>5</sup> collected information from 87 projects concerning a total of 6,178 young carers, some of the findings include:

- 56% of the sample are girls, 44% are boys. The average age is 12.
- Two thirds of the young carers provide domestic help in the home; 48% provide general and nursing-type care; 82% provide emotional support and supervision; 18% provide intimate personal care and 11% also provide child care. The recognised incidence of emotional support has increased dramatically since 1997.

In 2000, the Welsh Assembly Government launched its *Carers Strategy in Wales Implementation Plan*. This was followed in 2007 by the *Carers' Strategy for Wales Action Plan 2007*. Both adult carers and young carers are considered in both of these documents.

<sup>5</sup> Dearden, C. and Becker, S. (2004) *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* London: Carers UK.



### What is a young carer?

There is a considerable variation in accepted definitions of what a young carer is. A study funded by the Wales Office of Research and Development for Health and Social Care published several findings, one of which was that there was no standard definition of Young Carers and a wide range of definitions were in use throughout Wales.

Some Young Carers Projects recognise that a child or young person does not necessarily have to provide "hands on" care, such as domestic chores, laundry etc to be recognised as a young carer. Even when there are services or extended family in place to assist with the care of that person, the emotional impact and restrictions due to the disability are often felt, regardless of the issues at home.

Several definitions of a young carer exist in current legislation and guidance. In 1995, the Social Services Inspectorate defined a young carer as:

Powys Carers Service use the below definition for young carers:

"A child or young person (under 18) who is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would usually be taken by an adult."

"A young carer is a child or young person (aged from 5 to 25) whose life is affected by caring for at least one family member, over and above just "helping out".

The Carers' (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 uses the definition:

This could include caring for:  
Parent(s) and/or Grandparent(s) and/or Sibling(s) and/or Close Relative(s)

"Children and young people (under 18) who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis."

A family member may need the help of a young carer because of: A learning disability and/or a physical or sensory impairment and/or a long-term illness and/or Mental Health issues and/or Drug and Alcohol related difficulties."

In 1998, the Carers National Association (now Carers UK) defined a young carer as anyone under the age of 18 whose life is in some way restricted because of the need to take responsibility for the care of someone who is ill, has a disability, is experiencing mental distress, or is affected by substance misuse.

This last definition highlights the importance of taking into account not only the extent and nature of caring but also the actual potential impact it has on the young carer.

<sup>1</sup> [www.bangor.ac.uk/imscar/careresearch/youngcarers.php](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/imscar/careresearch/youngcarers.php)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health 1995 Chief Inspector letter C1 (95) 12

Jay

"As a young carer I have an understanding and immediate empathy with all other young carers and young people who are not given support within their caring role. For example, out of all the young carers we surveyed more than half know what it's like to miss out on hanging out with their mates due to their caring role, myself included. Even though I'm now 18, I'm still a young carer and I still need support. I feel I missed out on things in my childhood and had to grow up too quickly but I don't feel like an adult. All young carers services across Wales should support all young people until they feel comfortable with their responsibilities. I'm not saying that young carers should be treated as children I'm saying they should be given the opportunity to be a child instead of having adult responsibilities forced on them at a young age. It has become apparent to me through this research and travelling around Wales that some young carers have it better than others, as some young carers groups receive better support due to better funding. Now ask yourself, where is the fairness in that?"



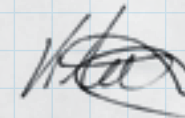
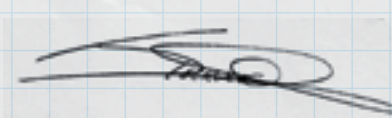
Both

It's easy to see the negative side of being a young carer but there are some positives as well. Feeling that you are relied upon can be a good thing, giving you a sense of who you are and developing your sense of responsibility. As well as all the negative comments you can receive positive feedback from people who understand your caring role. Meeting and talking to other young carers has been a very positive experience and our confidence has grown.

Both Katrina and I have been surprised at the variation in results of the survey from different areas within Wales. We hope that along with these results our personal experiences and the experiences of all other young carers across Wales will have an impact and help change legislation surrounding the Rights of young carers, both recognised and unrecognised, for the better. Funding and geographical location should never affect support for carers; nothing should get in the way of ensuring that these fantastic young people are healthy, happy and above all have the support they deserve.

Katrina

"While doing this consultation I found out a lot about young carers. I have been a registered young carer for about a year, before that I didn't know that young carers existed. Young carers are not always known in their schools, so young people are struggling to cope with caring for someone and being a kid at the same time. I went through a hard time with all the caring responsibilities and the fact I was doing my GCSEs at the same time. I only got into Young Carers when I was at breaking point and I was cracking. I think that young carer's services need to be publicised more, so that young people can know that if they are caring for someone there is someone always there for them. I believe that Young Carers have helped me a lot. I have done things that I wouldn't have thought I would do. I have been to all sorts of places in Wales, been on a 'survival' camping trip, the theatre, and parties and met amazing new people who are young carers as well. I don't feel as though I am on my own in looking after my family. Most young carers do not get the chance to be a kid but the young carers service give you the opportunity to be a child, to use your imagination and feel free from your responsibilities."



Jay and Katrina  
Powys Young Carers



**What is All Right Gov?**

All Right Gov? is a research project which included eight consultation events that was commissioned by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Its initial purpose was to highlight and review the obstacles that can affect a young carer in accessing his or her rights as set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC). These rights are set out in Children and Young People: Rights to Action and are known as the Seven Core Aims:

- ☺ Have a flying start in life;
- ☺ Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- ☺ Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- ☺ Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- ☺ Are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- ☺ Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional well;
- ☺ Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were to be obtained through a multi dimensional research process in order to provide an overview or 'snapshot' of the life experience of a young carer. The findings would be analysed in order to increase awareness and empathy as well as provide an insight into how and where provisions and services can be improved to operate on behalf of young carers. The methods of research would allow the young carers a collective voice alongside individual anonymity.

" THERE ARE NO THEMES OR VALUES OF WHICH ONE CANNOT SPEAK, NO AREAS IN WHICH ONE MUST BE SILENT. WE CAN TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING, AND WE CAN GIVE TESTIMONY ABOUT EVERYTHING. "  
PAULO FREIRE

**Stage 1 – Planning**

The preliminary stage was the planning of the consultation. This involved three young carers workers and four young adult carers (YACs). The Seven Core Aims were analysed and interpreted over the course of the day and a series of questions were formulated that were pertinent to ask young carers. During this initial stage it was decided that in order to obtain statistical results we would utilise Qwizdom® software and to provide softer outcomes we would gather video diaries and paper based responses. The title of the project was devised to encapsulate the aims of the project. All Right Gov? denotes the rights of a young carer and that the results would ultimately go some way to influencing the policies of the Welsh Assembly Government.

**Stage 2 – Implementation**

Eight consultations were held across Wales incorporating young carers from 19 of the 22 Young Carers Projects throughout Wales. All Young Carers Projects were invited to attend. One hundred and forty nine young carers were questioned overall. Each event lasted a minimum of two hours. Consultations were hosted by both Powys Carers workers and YACs. Having YACs at each event created a more relaxed atmosphere and a greater empathy with those attending. Those presenting the events wore specially designed All Right Gov? t-shirts to mark them out to others. Consultations were held in:

- ☺ Brecon
- ☺ Haverfordwest
- ☺ Abergavenny
- ☺ Neath
- ☺ Swansea
- ☺ Wrexham
- ☺ Mountain Ash
- ☺ Llandudno

**Breakdown of the Consultations**

The events were either run as an afternoon or evening event depending on the preferences of each Young Carers Project. They lasted no longer than three hours (including an hour for lunch depending on the time of day).

The events would begin with brief introduction about why the research was taking place – introducing who the Children's Commissioner is and what his aims are. For the majority of events, a representative of the Children's Commissioner was present to give an overview of the office's aims and duties.

Next was a Qwizdom® based interactive survey on remote answering pads. The survey asked questions devised by YACs based around the Seven Core Aims and on many occasions led to off-the-cuff discussion and dialogue in order to ascertain more qualitative information. The survey guaranteed anonymity and people would only know an individual's answers should that individual choose to disclose.

" TEN PEOPLE WHO SPEAK MAKE MORE NOISE THAN TEN THOUSAND WHO ARE QUIET. "  
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE



### What is Qwizdom®?

Qwizdom® Audience Response Systems or Electronic Voting Systems is a set of hardware much like the voting pads on shows such as 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' that gathers results from its users and feeds them into a computer programme. Qwizdom® uses radio frequency technology to gather results from the wireless handsets using a sensor attached to the PC.

The young carers were asked the question on a big projector screen, which also displayed the potential multiple choice answers. One of the presenters also read out the questions for the benefit of those that had any difficulties with their reading.

The handsets are really easy to use and have a backlit screen which assists you by displaying the multiple choices. When a question had been answered the presenter could, on request, bring up a graph displaying the results for everyone to see. This often led to off-the-cuff discussions and debates about the results and also physically demonstrated that their answers were being received.

Using the Qwizdom®, we hoped, would create a more fun and interactive experience for the young carers compared to a traditional paper-based survey. It would also allow for complete anonymity for the young carers in turn encouraging more honest answers. In order to make the Qwizdom® more manageable, questions were interspersed with video clips of Ali G talking about 'da issues'. Fun questions were also sandwiched between the more serious ones in order to keep a positive and relaxed environment. The full results of all 149 young carers surveyed can be found later on in this report.

### Other information gathering methods

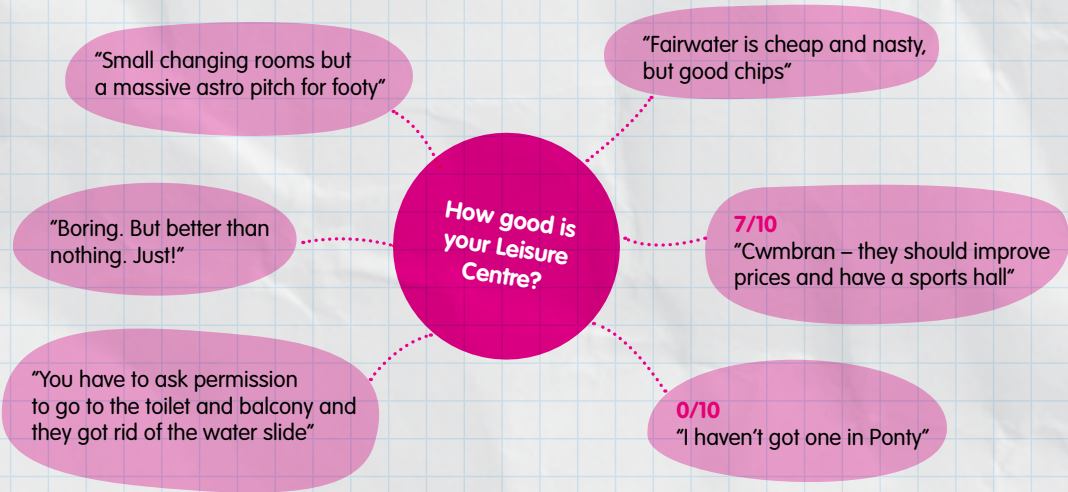
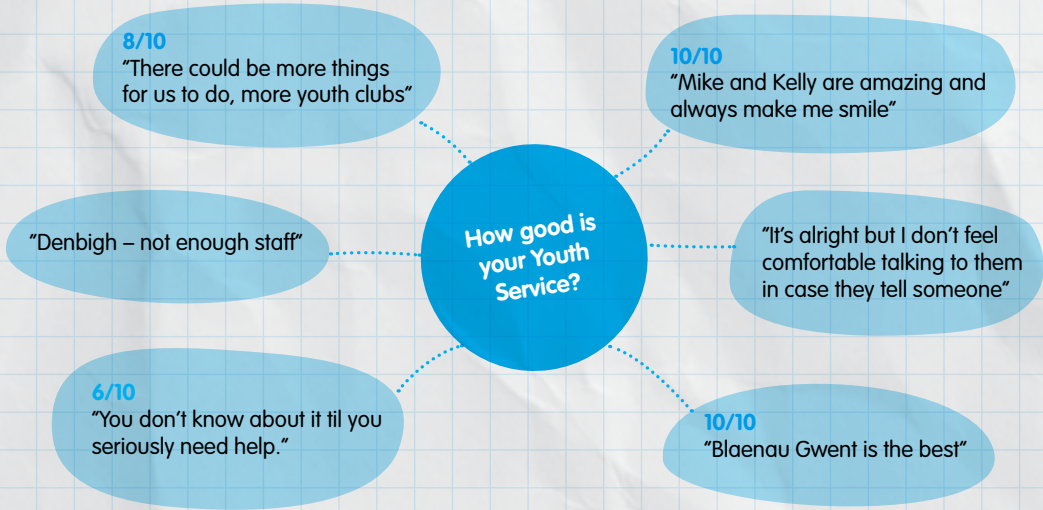
Alongside the Qwizdom® there were opportunities for the carers to comment upon different services and write their views on various posters around the room. Again, this did not require they disclosed who they were and was put in place to gain honest remarks and suggestions.

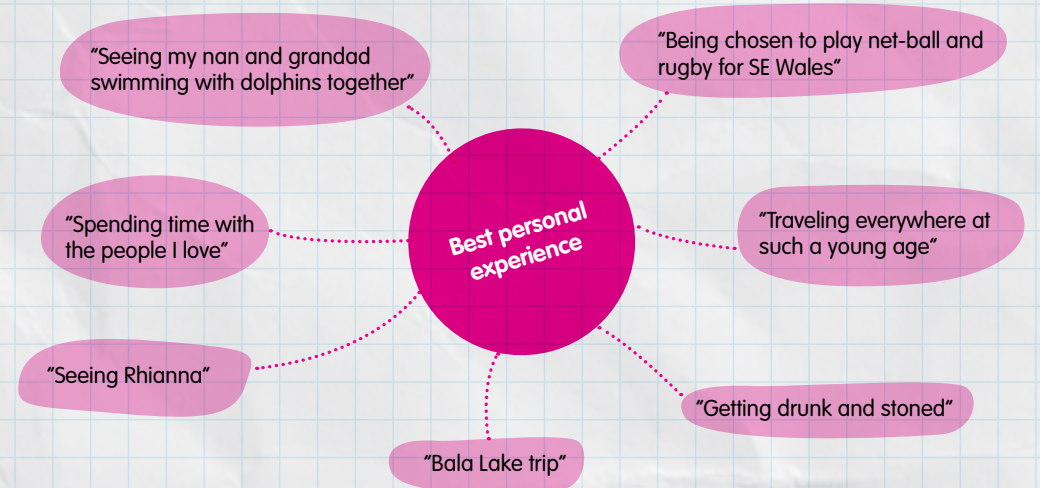
There was also a Big Brother Diary Room chair in front of a video camera which allowed the young carers to make a video diary and tell stories about their experiences if they felt comfortable doing so. We provided a range of funky masks should they wish to remain anonymous.

"NOTHING THAT I CAN DO WILL CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE. BUT MAYBE, BY RAISING MY VOICE I CAN HELP THE GREATEST OF CAUSES — GOODWILL AMONG MEN AND PEACE ON EARTH."  
ALBERT EINSTEIN.



RESULTS FROM  
THE PAPER QUESTIONS





# SELF-PORTRAITS



CHARLIE



Melissa!



Emyr



RYAN



Soph!!



BECKI!!



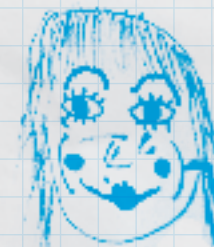
JERRY



DAN



EMILY!!



Ani



\*Tom



Emo



Martin os



Christie



CAZ



\*Hay Hay ☺ (Hannah) x

# FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

## Recognition

Our research indicates that young carers in Wales felt that their caring role was not always recognised and appreciated by the wider community.

### Results:

Q98 When was the last time you got recognition for your caring?

51% said they couldn't remember

Q132 My role as a carer is respected and valued by others

42% disagreed with this statement (21% strongly disagreed)

Q133 My choices and opinions are respected by others

37% disagreed with this statement.

### Ideas:

How do we inform the wider world of the important role that young carers play?

Young Carers Projects have an important role to play in promoting the contribution that young carers make to both families and the wider society. A National Young Carers Strategy would strengthen the status of young carers within a legislative framework and ensure that the identified needs of Young Carers are dutifully met by Local Authorities.

A Young Carers ID Card would lead to status recognition, the responsibilities and extra duties of young carers could be explained in a non personalised way to ensure that individual young carers were not required to 'share their story' in order to access supportive understanding.

"My mothers a big woman, if you know what I mean, they say to me in school 'she's not disabled, she's just too lazy and fat to walk'" **female 15**

"You sort of say to your teachers 'I've been looking after someone' – they just think its like an excuse. If you had something to prove to them that you are a young carer that would be more helpful you've got to have proof" **female 13**

"You get punished in school because of the reasons you give and no-one believes you" **male 14**

"Teachers have said 'I find it hard to believe you look after your mother – its meant to be the other way round' I get called a liar sometimes people don't believe I'm a carer" **female 15**

### Stress & its affects

Our research indicates that young carers in Wales regularly experience worry, anxiety and stress.

#### Results:

Q28 When was the last time you felt really stressed out?

86% in the last week (54% felt stressed today)

Q29 When was the last time you felt that you couldn't cope?

52% said 'within the last week'

Q32 How stressed do you feel at home?

64% felt stressed (30% really stressed)

Q33 How stressed do you feel at school/college?

64% felt stressed (44% really stressed)

Q48 Do you worry about others more than yourself?

77% said yes

Q14 Who does the most cooking at home?

28% said that they do

Q15 Who does the most cleaning at home?

36% said that they do

Q16 Do you feel that you have had to grow up quicker than your mates?

77% said that they agreed with the statement



#### Idea:

How do we reduce the levels of stress and its impact on young carers?

#### School/College – pressure of deadlines/targets

Increase staff understanding and awareness of the issues likely to affect young carers and provide better support to meet these needs. Develop a clear school policy to support the needs of young carers including the provision of a dedicated liaison worker with a remit to act as a focal point for multi-agency working.

"They don't understand how much worrying you do as a young carer – they just put more pressure on you"  
male 15 (talking about school)

"I can't learn in school because I'm worrying all the time about mum"  
female 15

#### Home/Caring role – having adult responsibilities

Identify inappropriate duties carried out by young people by ensuring that Young Carers Assessments are carried out leading to increased support in the home.

"Its stressful there's lots to do... you can't ever get out – you're always needed for something"  
female 16

"Have an extra person so it won't all be on me and my sister"  
male 11

"They have offered quite a lot of help but they could improve more by having more visits or something like that"  
female 13 (talking about health services)

"If I don't do it no-one else will"  
female 11

### Increased opportunities for enjoying childhood

Our research indicates that young carers would appreciate greater opportunities to spend time away from their caring responsibilities.

#### Results:

Q42 When was the last time you played sport (outside of school)?

34% said they couldn't remember

Q46 Would you like to do more exercise?

77% said Yes

Q59 Do you have enough time to yourself?

60% said No

Q63 How often do you miss out on hanging out with your mates because of being a young carer?

66% said Yes (21% Always, 19% Most of the time, 26% Sometimes)

#### Ideas:

How do we develop opportunities for young carers to have increased time away from their caring role in order to reduce the impact of stress and improve general wellbeing?

Increased funding for Carers Services to provide additional recreational and respite activities.

Promote the needs of young carers and encourage other service providers (leisure/recreation) to develop social opportunities to meet these needs.

Notice must be given to issues of rurality and 'joined-up' efforts must be made to overcome barriers of access and availability.

"I play a lot of sports - I find that that helps me to channel my aggression and frustration"  
female 17

"Life would be made easier if I could spend more time on my own" female 15

"I'd like to go out and do other stuff as well as staying in the house all the time" male 13

### On young carers projects:

"We meet once a month - I wish that it was more"  
female 15

"Young carers funding - sometimes its good, sometimes its bad, so I asked my school to donate some money from the charity committee, every term to young carers" female 17

"More support - one-to-one, even though Young Carers do so much for us it would be better if we had smaller groups and one-to-one sessions" female 14

"Its good - we just chill out and have a good time"  
female 17

### Medical Matters

Our research indicates that many young carers have a good understanding of the medical conditions and diagnosis of those that they care for – many are directly involved in the treatment of these conditions. However many young carers also reported a lack of specific training in administering medication and understanding its effects.

#### Results:

Q49 Do you have to give medication to someone you care for?

50% said Yes

Q50 Have you been offered any medication training?

73% said No

#### Ideas:

There is a role for Health Services in identifying young carers and providing them with information, support and where necessary, training, to enable them to effectively fulfil their caring role. Where the administering of medication is an inappropriate duty for a young carer alternative care arrangements should be made.

### Too Little Too Late

Our research indicates that whilst the majority of young carers value the support they receive a significant number feel that this support only becomes available during times of crisis.

#### Results:

Rate the support you receive from:

Social Services – only 40% said 'OK or better than OK'

School/College – only 54% said 'OK or better than OK'

Health Services – only 59% said 'OK or better than OK'

Young Carers Service - 91% said 'OK or better'

Q17 Do you feel that you only get support from people when it's a crisis?

54% said Yes

#### Ideas:

An early intervention model would ensure that young carers receive on going multi-agency support which would reduce the incidence of a crisis and prevent the build up of risk factors.

"Its all-right – but I don't feel comfortable talking to them in case they tell other people"  
**female 17**

"You don't know about it until you seriously need help – once you know about it – its good"  
**male 12**





**All Right Gov? Creation Team**

Tom Cavalot  
Dux  
Janet Bidgood  
YACs  
Dan  
Jay  
Chloe  
Katrina

**Thanks to the Young Carers**

**Projects consulted**

Flintshire Young Carers  
Conwy Young Carers  
Denbighshire Young Carers  
Gwynedd Young Carers  
Ynys Mon Young Carers  
Wrexham Young Carers  
Powys Carers Service  
Pembrokeshire Young Carers  
Monmouth Young Carers  
Torfaen Young Carers  
Newport Young Carers  
Blaenau Gwent young Carers  
Cynon Valley Young Carers  
Merthyr Young Carers  
Caerphilly Young Carers  
Swansea Young Carers  
Neath Port Talbot Young Carers  
Carmarthen Young Carers  
Rhondda and Taff Young Carers



**Support Team**

Marie Lewis, Admin and Finance  
Lucy Taylor, Admin and Event  
Management

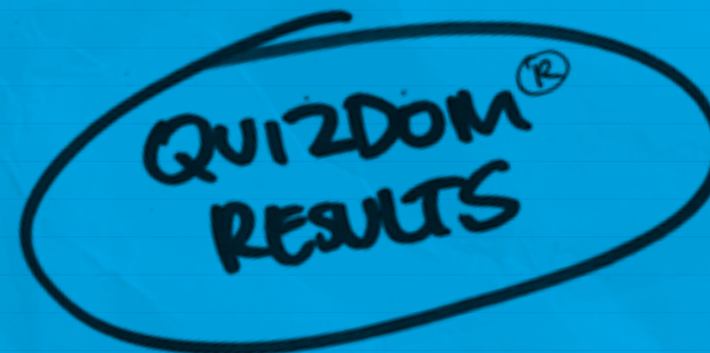
**All Right Gov?**

**Presentation Team**

Tom Cavalot  
Dux  
Janet Bidgood  
YACs  
Jay

**Analysis Team**

Tom Cavalot  
Dux  
Janet Bidgood



**Q1. What is your favourite kind of potato?**

1. Mashed	33%
2. Roast	12%
3. Chips	36%
4. Jacket	13%
5. Boiled	4%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q2. Are you male?**

Yes	33%
No	60%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q3. Do you feel safe in your own home?**

1. Always	49%
2. Most of the time	32%
3. Sometimes	11%
4. Hardly ever	2%
5. Never	4%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q4. Do you feel safe in your community?**

1. Always	16%
2. Most of the time	32%
3. Sometimes	28%
4. Hardly ever	11%
5. Never	8%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q5. Do you ever experience drug use in your home?**

1. Always	4%
2. Most of the time	2%
3. Sometimes	5%
4. Hardly ever	4%
5. Never	80%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q6. Do you feel like you receive enough support with your caring responsibilities?**

1. Always	36%
2. Most of the time	22%
3. Sometimes	24%
4. Hardly ever	7%
5. Never	6%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q7. Rate the support you receive from social services**

1. Excellent	12%
2. Good	13%
3. Ok	15%
4. Poor	6%
5. Awful	13%
6. Doesn't apply to me	32%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q8. Rate the support you receive from Young Carers Service**

1. Excellent	59%
2. Good	26%
3. Ok	6%
4. Poor	1%
5. Awful	1%
6. Doesn't apply to me	2%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q9. Rate the support you receive from your school/college**

1. Excellent	19%
2. Good	12%
3. Ok	23%
4. Poor	13%
5. Awful	23%
6. Doesn't apply to me	7%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q10. Rate the support you receive from health services**

1. Excellent	19%
2. Good	21%
3. Ok	19%
4. Poor	11%
5. Awful	8%
6. Doesn't apply to me	17%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q11. How safe do you feel in your school/ college?**

1. Very safe	27%
2. Quite safe	32%
3. Doesn't apply to me	9%
4. Not very safe	18%
5. Very unsafe	7%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q12. How safe do you feel with your social worker?**

1. Very safe	17%
2. Quite safe	13%
3. Doesn't apply to me	51%
4. Not very safe	7%
5. Very unsafe	6%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q13. Have you ever been bullied because of your caring role?**

1. Always	17%
2. Most of the time	8%
3. Sometimes	17%
4. Hardly ever	9%
5. Never	46%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q14. Who does the most cooking at home?**

1. Mum	47%
2. Dad	19%
3. Me	28%
4. Brother/Sister	1%
5. Someone Else	2%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q15. Who does the most cleaning at home?**

1. Mum	43%
2. Dad	8%
3. Me	36%
4. Brother/Sister	3%
5. Someone Else	4%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q16. Do you feel like you have had to grow up quicker than your mates?**

Yes	77%
No	15%
Didn't answer	8%
TOTAL	100%

**Q17. Do you feel like you only get support from people when it's a crisis?**

Yes	54%
No	39%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q18. Have you ever been bullied for the way you look?**

Yes	70%
No	26%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q19. Have you ever bullied someone for the way they look?**

Yes	19%
No	79%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q20. Have the people you care for got mental health issues?**

Yes	57%
No	39%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q21. Have you ever been involved in a fight?**

Yes	70%
No	28%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q22. Do you have a person you could tell anything to?**

Yes	72%
No	25%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q23. Do you feel safe out on your own at night?**

Yes	33%
No	66%
Didn't answer	1%
TOTAL	100%

**Q24. Have you ever been the victim of violent crime?**

Yes	34%
No	59%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q25. Have you ever committed a crime?**

Yes	32%
No	58%
Didn't answer	10%
TOTAL	100%

**Q26. Have you ever been bullied because of your caring role?**

Yes	28%
No	34%
Didn't answer	38%
TOTAL	100%

**Q27. When was the last time you felt really good about something?**

1. Today	32%
2. Yesterday	15%
3. Last week	13%
4. Last month	3%
5. Can't remember	32%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q28. When was the last time you felt really stressed out?**

1. Today	54%
2. Yesterday	23%
3. Last week	9%
4. Last month	1%
5. Can't remember	9%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q29. When was the last time you felt like you couldn't cope?**

1. Today	16%
2. Yesterday	21%
3. Last week	15%
4. Last month	13%
5. Can't remember	29%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q32. How stressed do you feel at home?**

1. Really stressed	30%
2. Quite stressed	34%
3. Doesn't apply to me	5%
4. Not very stressed	13%
5. Not stressed at all	13%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q35. What time do you usually go to bed on the weekend?**

1. 9pm	2%
2. 10pm	11%
3. 11pm	12%
4. 12pm	7%
5. After 12pm	62%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q38. Which of these is most important to your health?**

1. Rest and relaxation	15%
2. Exercise	25%
3. Balanced diet	18%
4. Good friends and family relationships	34%
Didn't answer	8%
TOTAL	100%

**Q30. When was the last time you felt scared?**

1. Today	12%
2. Yesterday	17%
3. Last week	23%
4. Last month	8%
5. Can't remember	37%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q33. How stressed do you feel at school/college?**

1. Really stressed	44%
2. Quite stressed	20%
3. Doesn't apply to me	5%
4. Not very stressed	10%
5. Not stressed at all	9%
Didn't answer	12%
TOTAL	100%

**Q36. How much sleep do you usually get each night?**

1. Less than 3 hours	11%
2. 3-5 hours	25%
3. 5-8 hours	40%
4. More than 8 hours	20%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q39. Where would you go for information on sex / contraception?**

1. School	11%
2. Doctors	25%
3. Friends	22%
4. Family	5%
5. Magazines / internet	17%
6. Youth service	11%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q31. What do you worry about the most?**

1. School/work	24%
2. Fitting in	7%
3. Relationships (girlfriend/boyfriend)	20%
4. Family problems	26%
5. Appearance	10%
6. Money	7%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q34. What time do you usually go to bed on a week night?**

1. 9pm	18%
2. 10pm	21%
3. 11pm	20%
4. 12pm	5%
5. After 12pm	32%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q37. Do you find it hard to get to sleep?**

1. Yes, always	44%
2. Yes, sometimes	34%
3. Hardly ever	13%
4. Never	9%
Didn't answer	0%
TOTAL	100%

**Q40. Do you dream?**

1. Yes, always	47%
2. Yes, sometimes	32%
3. Hardly ever	11%
4. Never	6%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q41. Do you eat breakfast?**

1. Yes, always	29%
2. Yes, sometimes	22%
3. Hardly ever	19%
4. Never	24%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q42. When was the last time you played sport (outside of school)?**

1. Today	20%
2. Yesterday	17%
3. Last week	17%
4. Last month	5%
5. Can't remember	34%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**43. What food is most likely to be in your house?**

1. Nothing	4%
2. Booze	12%
3. Frozen ready meal	19%
4. Chocolate and crisps	19%
5. Fresh fruit and veg	20%
6. Cheese and cold meats	17%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q44. Where are you most likely to do your food shopping?**

1. Local shops	9%
2. Big supermarkets (Sainsburys, Asda)	68%
3. Budget supermarkets (Netto, Aldi, Lidl)	11%
4. Market	0%
5. Dunno	8%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q45. How often do you exercise?**

1. All the time, I'm doing crunches now	26%
2. Quite often, 3-4 times a week	32%
3. When I can be bothered	18%
4. Hardly ever	5%
5. Exercise? Pass me my KFC	11%
6. I don't have enough time	7%
Didn't answer	1%
TOTAL	100%

**Q46. Would you like to do more exercise?**

Yes	77%
No	20%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q47. Are you a worrier?**

Yes	62%
No	34%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q48. Do you worry about others more than yourself?**

Yes	77%
No	17%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q49. Do you have to give medication for someone you care for?**

Yes	50%
No	45%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q50. If YES to Q49 then have you been offered any medication training?**

Yes	18%
No	73%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q51. Have you ever self harmed?**

Yes	46%
No	51%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q52. Do you know others that have self harmed?**

Yes	80%
No	14%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q53. Do you eat the recommended 5 fruit or veg a day?**

Yes	39%
No	57%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q54. Are you a member of a sports club or team?**

Yes	42%
No	54%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q55. Do you smoke?**

Yes	27%
No	70%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q56. Have you ever taken illegal drugs?**

Yes	21%
No	72%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q57. Do you consider yourself overweight?**

Yes	35%
No	63%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q58. Do you regularly binge drink alcohol?**

Yes	28%
No	70%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q59. Do you have enough time to yourself?**

Yes	37%
No	60%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q60. Have you ever been on a diet to lose weight?**

Yes	43%
No	57%
Didn't answer	0%
TOTAL	100%

**Q61. How often do you fall behind with your school or work responsibilities because you are a Young Carer?**

1. Always	20%
2. Most of the time	18%
3. Sometimes	25%
4. Hardly ever	12%
5. Never	16%
6. Doesn't apply to me	5%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q62. How often do you miss a day of school/work because of being a Young Carer?**

1. Always	8%
2. Most of the time	9%
3. Sometimes	17%
4. Hardly ever	21%
5. Never	32%
6. Doesn't apply to me	10%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q63. How often do you miss out on hanging out with mates because of being a young carer?**

1. Always	21%
2. Most of the time	19%
3. Sometimes	26%
4. Hardly ever	5%
5. Never	19%
6. Doesn't apply to me	5%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q64. On average how many hours of TV do you watch a week?**

1. 0-5	22%
2. 5-10	21%
3. 10-15	13%
4. 15-20	10%
5. 20+	31%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q65. How many hours do you spend on a computer a week?**

1. 0-5	30%
2. 5-10	12%
3. 10-15	11%
4. 15-20	17%
5. 20+	27%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q66. When was the last time you read a book (Outside of school)?**

1. Today	26%
2. Yesterday	10%
3. Last week	11%
4. Last month	13%
5. Can't remember	38%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q67. How often do you visit the shops?**

1. Every week	61%
2. Every month	5%
3. Now and again	24%
4. Never	6%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q68. How often do you visit the cinema?**

1. Every week	7%
2. Every month	15%
3. Now and again	60%
4. Never	17%
Didn't answer	1%
TOTAL	100%

**Q69. How often do you visit a museum?**

1. Every week	1%
2. Every month	5%
3. Now and again	32%
4. Never	59%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q70. How often do you visit the beach?**

1. Every week	10%
2. Every month	6%
3. Now and again	57%
4. Never	21%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q71. How often do you visit a sports centre?**

1. Every week	36%
2. Every month	14%
3. Now and again	29%
4. Never	19%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q72. How often do you visit your grandparents?**

1. Every week	37%
2. Every month	9%
3. Now and again	17%
4. Never	28%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q73. How often do you visit the theatre?**

1. Every week	7%
2. Every month	5%
3. Now and again	42%
4. Never	41%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q74. Do you have your own passport?**

Yes	54%
No	40%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q75. Have you ever been abroad?**

Yes	60%
No	34%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q76. Do you live with both of your parents?**

Yes	36%
No	61%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q77. Do you think you look cool?**

Yes	42%
No	55%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q78. Do you think other people think you look cool?**

Yes	39%
No	58%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q79. Is it important to wear designer labels?**

Yes	36%
No	58%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q80. Have your parents ever told you "You can't go out looking like that"?**

Yes	68%
No	30%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q81. Have you ever told your parents "You can't go out looking like that"?**

Yes	72%
No	22%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q82. Do you use social networking websites? E.g Facebook, Bebo, Myspace**

Yes	75%
No	22%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q83. Do you ever post videos on the internet? e.g. You Tube?**

Yes	42%
No	56%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q84. How often do you eat dinner together with your family?**

1. Always	32%
2. Most of the time	21%
3. Sometimes	15%
4. Hardly ever	12%
5. Never	15%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q85. How often do you read the local newspaper?**

1. Always	17%
2. Most of the time	15%
3. Sometimes	20%
4. Hardly ever	9%
5. Never	30%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q86. How often do you miss out on local events because of being a carer?**

1. Always	17%
2. Most of the time	18%
3. Sometimes	19%
4. Hardly ever	13%
5. Never	23%
Didn't answer	10%
TOTAL	100%

**Q87. Rate public transport in your area**

1. Excellent	16%
2. Good	11%
3. Ok	31%
4. Poor	15%
5. Awful	16%
6. Doesn't apply to me	5%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q90. When was the last time you paid somebody a compliment?**

1. Today	70%
2. Yesterday	13%
3. Last week	4%
4. Last month	1%
5. Can't remember	9%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q88. When was the last time got involved in a local community event?**

1. Today	15%
2. Yesterday	5%
3. Last week	10%
4. Last month	18%
5. Can't remember	49%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q91. When was the last time you felt proud of yourself?**

1. Today	30%
2. Yesterday	18%
3. Last week	11%
4. Last month	5%
5. Can't remember	30%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q89. When was the last time somebody paid you a compliment?**

1. Today	50%
2. Yesterday	14%
3. Last week	7%
4. Last month	5%
5. Can't remember	22%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q92. When was the last time you felt like you'd achieved something?**

1. Today	31%
2. Yesterday	14%
3. Last week	19%
4. Last month	8%
5. Can't remember	23%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q93. What should be the legal age for smoking?**

1. Younger than 16	11%
2. 16	26%
3. 18	24%
4. 21	15%
5. Older than 21	21%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q96. Which crime do you consider to be most serious?**

1. Theft	3%
2. Murder	50%
3. Rape	38%
4. GBH	4%
5. Blackmail	3%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q94. What should be the legal age for drinking?**

1. Younger than 16	28%
2. 16	24%
3. 18	23%
4. 21	10%
5. Older than 21	11%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q97. When was the last time you got recognition for your caring?**

1. Today	20%
2. Yesterday	7%
3. Last week	6%
4. Last month	9%
5. Can't remember	51%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q95. What should be the legal age for voting?**

1. Younger than 16	44%
2. 16	33%
3. 18	9%
4. 21	1%
5. Older than 21	9%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q98. What do you consider most important in a friend?**

1. Loyalty	28%
2. Honesty	27%
3. Attractiveness	7%
4. Good listener	10%
5. Good sense of humour	17%
6. Popularity	6%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%



**Q99. What do you consider most important in a teacher?**

1. Loyalty	18%
2. Honesty	4%
3. Attractiveness	33%
4. Good listener	5%
5. Good sense of humour	21%
6. Popularity	11%
Didn't answer	8%
TOTAL	100%

**Q100. Who do you feel most pressure from to look good?**

1. Yourself	15%
2. The media	15%
3. Your friends	15%
4. Your parents	4%
5. Boyfriend/ girlfriend	25%
6. Other	13%
Didn't answer	13%
TOTAL	100%

**Q101. Do you use public transport?**

Yes	69%
No	26%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q102. Do you prefer to go to mates houses rather than bring them to yours?**

Yes	69%
No	23%
Didn't answer	8%
TOTAL	100%

**Q103. Do you want to stay at home and be a carer?**

Yes	49%
No	42%
Didn't answer	9%
TOTAL	100%

**Q104. Does the local community value your role as a carer?**

Yes	19%
No	76%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q105. Do you know your local copper?**

Yes	56%
No	38%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q106. Do you vote?**

Yes	13%
No	77%
Didn't answer	10%
TOTAL	100%

**Q107. Do you know your local MP?**

Yes	30%
No	66%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q108. How much pocket money do you get per week?**

1. None	28%
2. Less than £5	15%
3. Between £5 and £10	23%
4. More than £10	8%
5. Whatever I want	23%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q109. What do you think is most important in a job?**

1. A good wage	46%
2. Enjoying your job	38%
3. Opportunity for promotion	3%
4. Opportunity to travel	2%
5. Working with friends	9%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q110. What is the most important purpose of school/college to you?**

1. To get a good job	44%
2. To meet people	8%
3. To challenge myself	10%
4. To learn new things	15%
5. Dunno	11%
6. Doesn't apply to me	8%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q111. How many people are employed in your household?**

1. None	55%
2. 1 person	26%
3. 2 people	8%
4. 3 people	1%
5. More than 3 people	3%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q112. Do you have to use your own money to help run the house?**

Yes	26%
No	68%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q113. Can you afford to use public transport?**

Yes	66%
No	32%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q114. Do you think being a carer will affect your future career choices?**

Yes	57%
No	40%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q115. Do you have a bank account?**

Yes	76%
No	19%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q116. Do you have a part time job?**

Yes	36%
No	60%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q117. Do you consider your family to be well off for money?**

Yes	34%
No	64%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q118. Do you worry that in the future you may suffer with the same issues as those you care for?**

1. Always	24%
2. Most of the time	12%
3. Sometimes	23%
4. Hardly ever	11%
5. Never	27%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q119. What do you hope for most in the future?**

1. To be rich	26%
2. To have lots of friends	12%
3. To have a good family	23%
4. To be famous	17%
5. To be healthy	17%
Didn't answer	5%
TOTAL	100%

**Q120. What do you fear most in the future?**

1. To be poor	25%
2. To have no friends	14%
3. To have no family	21%
4. To be doing a dead end job	15%
5. To be unhealthy	15%
Didn't answer	10%
TOTAL	100%

**Q121. What do you want to do when you finish school?**

1. Go to college/uni	48%
2. Get a job	15%
3. Go travelling	10%
4. Haven't thought about it	5%
5. Depends what grades i get	14%
Didn't answer	8%
TOTAL	100%

**Q122. In the future do you think you will get married?**

Yes	76%
No	20%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q123. In the future do you think you will have children?**

Yes	74%
No	19%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q124. In the future do you think you will move away from the area you live in now?**

Yes	76%
No	21%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q125. In the future do you think you will go to university?**

Yes	62%
No	36%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q126. In the future do you think you will live abroad?**

Yes	46%
No	50%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q127. In the future do you think you will learn a foreign language?**

Yes	66%
No	28%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q128. In the future do you think you will go travelling?**

Yes	72%
No	22%
Didn't answer	6%
TOTAL	100%

**Q129. EMAs help me out a lot?**

1. Strongly agree	18%
2. Agree	13%
3. Don't have an opinion either way	49%
4. Disagree	3%
5. Strongly disagree	6%
Didn't answer	11%
TOTAL	100%

**Q130. I have a tough life?**

1. Strongly agree	31%
2. Agree	30%
3. Don't have an opinion either way	15%
4. Disagree	12%
5. Strongly disagree	9%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q131. My role as a carer is respected and valued by others?**

1. Strongly agree	15%
2. Agree	19%
3. Don't have an opinion either way	11%
4. Disagree	21%
5. Strongly disagree	21%
Didn't answer	13%
TOTAL	100%

**Q132. My choices and opinions are respected by others?**

1. Strongly agree	20%
2. Agree	26%
3. Don't have an opinion either way	13%
4. Disagree	19%
5. Strongly disagree	18%
Didn't answer	4%
TOTAL	100%

**Q133. This survey was interesting**

1. Strongly agree	32%
2. Agree	42%
3. Don't have an opinion either way	9%
4. Disagree	3%
5. Strongly disagree	11%
Didn't answer	3%
TOTAL	100%

**Q134. Were there too many questions?**

Yes	56%
No	42%
Didn't answer	2%
TOTAL	100%

**Q135. Were the questions difficult to answer?**

Yes	22%
No	71%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

**Q136. Are you sick of being asked questions now?**

Yes	70%
No	23%
Didn't answer	7%
TOTAL	100%

## Recommendations

In our consideration of the need for policy change, we will follow the categories which the young carers themselves felt to be the most important:

- Recognition
- Stress and its effects
- Increased opportunities for enjoying childhood
- Medical matters
- Too little too late.

## Recognition

The young people who took part in the research were all receiving support from young carers projects and were therefore “recognised” as young carers. We also have concerns about the large numbers of young carers who have yet to be identified and those who may not wish to be identified due to fear of outside interference.

At a policy level, the Welsh Assembly Government sought to address the lack of recognition in a key action within the *Carers Strategy for Wales Action Plan 2007*<sup>6</sup>. That action stated that, by June 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government would have developed a:

— tool kit to help Social Services, Education and National Health Service organisations to audit and improve local policies and practice for identifying and engaging with young carers.

Enquiries at the Welsh Assembly Government have revealed that this has not, at the time of writing, begun.

The Carers Strategy and associated policy development is currently the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government’s Older People and Long Term Care Policy team. We question whether this team is best placed to lead on policy development relating to children and young people. Young carers have very different needs to older people and adults who may be carers. We would suggest that policy development for young carers could be developed jointly by the Older People and Long Term Care Policy team with their expertise in legislation for carers and the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills with their expertise in children’s policy.

### Recommendation 01

The Welsh Assembly Government should consider the need for a National Young Carers Strategy. This strategy should consider the evidence presented in this report from young carers themselves and also other research evidence.

A national young carers strategy should be developed with young carers from the outset of policy development and not just at the consultation phase. The strategy should seek to uphold young carers rights as children as outlined by the UNCRC. The strategy should also address the assessment and support that should be made available to young carers by all agencies, including, local authorities, health authorities, schools and colleges.

In conversations with the office and more recently during this piece of research young carers have told us there is a lack of recognition of their caring role in a wide range of situations such as at school and in particular when they have to collect medical prescriptions from a pharmacy if, as in many areas of Wales, there is no free prescription delivery service. A national ID card which clearly identifies them as young carers would prevent the tiresome explanations they often have to give. A similar system is currently in use for some adult carers which has proved invaluable in crisis situations when they are unable to continue with their caring responsibilities and the authorities have to be alerted to make alternative provision.

We have been told that a local initiative has been developed in a number of schools in Swansea where ID cards have designed by young carers themselves has been very well received in some schools.

Additional uses for the ID card could be linked to concessions for leisure activities and public transport.

### Recommendation 02

When developing the Young Carers strategy, the Welsh Assembly Government should conduct a feasibility study on the value of issuing ID cards to young carers.

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. Carers’ Strategy for Wales Action Plan 2007 [http://wales.gov.uk/dhss/publications/socialcare/carers/carers\\_strategy-e.pdf?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/dhss/publications/socialcare/carers/carers_strategy-e.pdf?lang=en)

## Assessments

Part of the problem of young carers being subsumed within the adult-centred Carers Strategy has resulted in a lack of clarity around assessments. It is unclear which assessments children and young people are entitled to have. We would agree with the statement in the *Carers' Strategy for Wales Action Plan 2007*<sup>7</sup> that young carers should be assessed as "children in need":

**(iv) Young Carers**

*The Welsh Assembly Government has reaffirmed the principle that young carers who are under 16 should be considered under the Assessment Framework for children in need, under the provisions of the Children Act 1989. However, young carers tell us that their main need may often include more support for the person they are looking after, to reduce high or inappropriate levels of caring. The perceived need is for children's services to develop better communication and co-ordination with adult services and the NHS, where young carers are involved. Many local authorities have developed or are developing young carers' strategies to address this point, and this is an approach the Welsh Assembly Government commends.*

What is far less clear is whether young carers should be assessed separately under the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995. At present 16 and 17 year old young carers fall between assessment stools and it is unclear whether they should be assessed as adult carers or under the Children Act 1989.

It is essential that the means of assessing young carers' needs is made clear and unambiguous in any new guidance that Welsh Assembly Government issues. In our discussions with Welsh Assembly Government officials, we are aware that this issue is already being reviewed as work progresses on the Carers LCO (Legislative Competence Order) which, by including young carers, has the potential to increase the age range and clarify how they should be assessed.

Project workers have told us that they experience great difficulty in getting assessments of any sort for young carers – despite the duty placed on local authorities, by the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004<sup>8</sup>, to inform carers, regardless of their age, of their rights to an assessment. Under this Act, assessment must consider their work, education and leisure needs. Work may not always be relevant to under 16s, but young carers can often miss out on education and leisure when they have an inappropriate caring role.

Data Unit Wales publish Performance Indicators relating to young carers on their website<sup>9</sup> which give an indication of the differences throughout Wales. Clearly only children and young people known to social services can be assessed but some local authorities assess 100% and some as few of 24% of those known

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2004/ukpga\\_20040015\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2004/ukpga_20040015_en_1)

<sup>9</sup> <http://dissemination.dataunitwales.gov.uk/webview/>

to them. However, assessment does not necessarily lead to the provision of services with some authorities providing services to as little as 23% of those who have been assessed. A full table of the performance indicators adapted from data from Data Unit Wales website is reproduced opposite.

It is difficult to see any trends in this data though it does illustrate that there is considerable variation between local authorities across Wales. We intend to discuss with colleagues in the Welsh Assembly Government how analysis of these performance indicators are used to improve services for young carers.

Given the need for a multi-agency, co-ordinated approach to delivering services to young carers, Local Service Boards could play a crucial role. According to the Welsh Assembly Government website: The purpose of Local Service Boards (LSB) and Local Delivery Agreements is to strengthen collaborative leadership at the local level.

- The role of the LSB is:
- to ensure concerted and collective leadership across public services, in areas of critical importance for the locality
  - to ensure an effective whole-system response to the needs of citizens by pooling resources
  - to remove bureaucracy or other obstacles.

<sup>10</sup> <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/improving/services/localserviceboards/?lang=en>

**Recommendation 03**

Local service boards should consider the evidence presented in this report alongside local sources of information in relation to the complexity of service delivery for young carers. Boards should seek to coordinate local responses to their young carers.

One very clear message that came from the young carers was their appreciation of the support they had from their various young carers projects. For many young carers these projects provide the only form of respite from their caring role and are the only source of advice and support. These projects

too have played a role in systemic advocacy for the tremendous value that young carers bring to our communities as well as awareness raising and training of professionals who work with young carers. Yet we became only too aware of the financial difficulties that some projects are experiencing. Any strategy that addresses the needs of young carers should include resources for young carers projects so that they can be sustainable in the long term.

For young carers to be able to influence planning and service development at a local level it is important that project workers are able to be effective systemic advocates as well as supporting

young carers to be involved and participate in all aspects of the service planning and delivery that they receive. Such involvement should be underpinned by the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales.

**Recommendation 04**

Local authorities should ensure that young carers are able to participate in their Children and Young People's Partnerships and that service provision for young carers form part of the Children and Young People Plans.

	<b>SCC/030a:</b> The percentage of young carers known to Social Services who were assessed	<b>SCC/030b:</b> The percentage of young carers known to Social Services who were provided with a service during the year
Wales	76.78	74.63
Isle of Anglesey	92.59	85.19
Gwynedd	100	91.67
Conwy	65.22	100
Denbighshire	75	53.57
Flintshire	52.94	23.53
Wrexham	100	100
Powys	100	28.57
Ceredigion	93.75	93.75
Pembrokeshire	64.52	54.84
Cardiganshire	100	98.39
Swansea	100	100
Neath Port Talbot	-	-
Bridgend	42.31	84.62
The Vale of Glamorgan	76.74	100
Cardiff	70.59	47.06
Rhondda Cynon Taf	63.04	30.43
Merthyr Tydfil	64.47	50
Caerphilly	100	85.87
Blaenau Gwent	100	81.25
Torfaen	100	100
Monmouthshire	23.46	81.48
Newport	100	66.67

**Provided by Data Unit Wales**

Neath Port Talbot were not able to provide data for this indicator last year however are making it a priority for the 2008-09 data collection (published in October 09).

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

## Stress and its effects

### Inappropriate responsibilities

What is clear from this research is the high level of stress young carers experience. This stress often arises because young carers are expected to take on many responsibilities that are inappropriate for their age and often with little support. Paid carers receive training and support that most young carers as well as most adult carers do not receive.

During discussions with project workers we heard that on many occasions those who were being cared for refused help from statutory agencies – preferring to place the duty on their children. There are ongoing Welsh Assembly Government consultations on paying for care and it is important that young carers receive sufficient consideration within these as, if the cost of care is to be a consideration, one result could be that even more inappropriate duties may be put on young carers and other unpaid carers.

Research<sup>11</sup> suggests that the average age of young carers is 12. Age should be a consideration in deciding what is considered “appropriate”.

The Welsh Assembly Government *Guidance on the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000*<sup>12</sup> is quite explicit:

**4.2.2** *The person cared for should be receiving sufficient services so that the young person is not undertaking an inappropriate caring role. In particular, assessment under the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families and the 1995 Act will be aimed at ensuring that the child is not undertaking a level of responsibility that may undermine their ability to participate in education, including further and higher education, normal leisure activities and social interaction with their peer group. Any such services provided will be designed not to support them in their caring role but rather to ensure that they do not undertake a caring role that is inappropriate.*

Professionals will need guidance to help them assess the appropriacy of caring responsibilities taking into account the age, maturity and physical ability of each individual young carer.

<sup>11</sup> Dearden, C. and Becker, S. (2004) *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* London: Carers UK

<sup>12</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. *Guidance on the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000*

### Recommendation 05

Any Welsh Assembly Government guidance on young carers should be very clear about what constitutes inappropriate responsibilities for young carers. Young carers should be enabled to participate in the formulation of any consultation and guidance. This guidance should be made available in an accessible form both to professionals and to young carers themselves.

### Schools and colleges

There are numerous references to school and college throughout the young carers report. Many of these are discussed in relation to stress. Clearly, balancing their caring role with the demands of school and college is very problematic. Sixty-two percent of the young carers in this survey have ambitions to go to university and yet 63% say that they fall behind at school.

All maintained schools in Wales have all received a training resource which is intended to help them support young carers. Yet the evidence from young carers themselves is that they mostly feel that schools are not offering support.

The most telling quote from the report sums this up:

*“They don’t understand how much worrying you do as a young carer – they just put more pressure on you.”*

*Carers Strategy for Wales Action Plan 2007*<sup>13</sup> stated:

*“Caring for young carers” – a training resource for schools initiated by young carers through the Young Carers’ Advisory Panel, and published in June 2004. The Assembly Government has recently commissioned Children in Wales to undertake an evaluation of this resource.*

The report of the evaluation conducted by Children in Wales was completed but is not yet in the public domain. However, a summary report to the Young Carers Network<sup>14</sup> in March 2008 suggested that the resource was not being used as had been hoped:

#### Findings from Primary Schools

- Few schools had used the pack, one had used the pack to raise awareness amongst student teachers but not for staff training.
- Many unaware of the training resource.
- Many schools believed they did not have young carers attending the school so would use training resource as something if young carers were identified.
- A small number of schools identified links with their local young carers project.

#### Findings from Senior Schools

- One school had used some of the materials to raise awareness amongst senior managers, heads of year and the education welfare officer.
- One school had used the pack during inset days and had used the young carer project manager to present the training.
- Two schools had not used the pack but had previously received training through the LEA and the local young carers project.
- Many schools did not use the pack because they did not have young carers attending the school.

#### Findings from EWO interviews

- Of the nine interviews, six were aware of, and had regular contact with their local young carers project.
- One education welfare department had used the training resource as part of team training.
- One education welfare department requested links with their local young carers project.
- When asked about non-attendance, six said they would look at the family as a whole and may identify young carers.

It is particularly concerning that a training resource designed to raise awareness of young carers is not used by some schools for the reason that “they did not have young carers in the school”.

Teachers and Educational Welfare Officers are well placed to both identify and support young carers. Urgent action is needed to ensure they can do both. Consideration should be given to having a designated teacher with pastoral responsibilities for young carers in the same way that there is a designated teacher for looked after children.

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. *Carers’ Strategy for Wales Action Plan 2007* [http://wales.gov.uk/dhss/publications/socialcare/carers\\_strategy-e.pdf?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/dhss/publications/socialcare/carers_strategy-e.pdf?lang=en)

<sup>14</sup> Notes from Young Carers Network Meeting 18th March 2008

The Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) has sub groups for Gypsy Traveller children as well as for BME issues and inclusion. They may wish to consider the formation of a sub-group to help address the educational needs of young carers and to assist in the implementation of any guidance or strategy that Welsh Assembly Government may publish. The Association of Directors of Social Services may also wish to do the same or work jointly with ADEW.

The Welsh Assembly Government initiative to make counselling available in secondary schools may well prove a particularly useful source of support for young carers and it is important that counsellors also receive information and training about young carers issues.

#### Recommendation 06

The Department of Children, Education Lifelong Learning and Skills should review their young carers training resource for schools in the light of the Children in Wales evaluation report and amend as necessary and reissue to schools with an explanatory guidance note requesting implementation in full.

## Increased opportunities for enjoying childhood

It is self evident that young carers have less opportunity for play and leisure and also for after school activities. They also report having less opportunity for associating with their friends. Yet all of these are important in their development and are their right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Any assessment of the needs of young carers must include leisure activities. Local authorities will then need to take steps to address those needs. It is worth remembering that without the young carers, paid care would have to be provided by local authorities. So subsidies or free access to leisure provision is offset by the young carers' contribution as a care giver.

Similar consideration should be given to young carers' needs for public transport. Unlike most other children and young people, young carers often can't rely on their parents to provide transport. In rural areas this need becomes even more acute.

#### Recommendation 07

Local authorities should consider whether they can make leisure opportunities more available to young carers either through rescheduling them or by offering reduced entry fees and reduced public transport costs. Such concessions could be linked to the use of a young carers ID card.

Young carers obviously value the support they get from Young Carers Projects and local authorities should ensure that they too are properly resourced to provide adequate opportunities to offer respite and leisure opportunities to young carers.



## Medical Matters

In our research sample 50% of the young carers administer medicines to those they care for and yet 73% said they had received no training on how to do this. Surely this is a responsibility too far?

A related issue, brought to our attention by project workers, is that of manual handling. In many cases young children have to lift and assist adults who are far heavier than they are. Paid carers are often prevented by Health and Safety legislation from performing some of the tasks that young carers regularly perform. Where it is considered necessary to have lifting equipment, training in its correct use should be given.

The Children's NSF<sup>15</sup> details the support that should be given to parents and carers of disabled children:

*5.31 Parents/ carers and other non-professionals are offered appropriate and on-going training to assist them in meeting the needs of their disabled child. As a minimum this includes:*

- *Appropriate training in the use of equipment. The arrangement of this training and support is coordinated by the person ordering the equipment in collaboration with the supplier;*
- *Manual handling training;*
- *Specialist parenting skills and understanding child development;*
- *Management of challenging behaviour if needed;*
- *Communication with children who do not use speech, if needed;*
- *Specialist administration of medication if needed.*

Ironically the Children's NSF does not include similar actions to support children and young people who care for parents who are disabled.

57% of the young carers surveyed said that they care for someone with mental health issues and young carers may also need training in managing challenging behaviour.

### Recommendation 08

Health and social care professionals should assess the appropriacy of young carers administering medication, performing manual handling and caring for those with mental health problems taking into account their age and ability. If necessary, alternative arrangements should be made, equipment provided and/or training given.

## Too little, too late

The fact that 54% of young carers in this survey felt that they only got support in a crisis underlines the importance of early identification and intervention. However, the young carers who took part in this survey were those who had been identified and were receiving support. It is essential that all those who work with children and young people are able to identify those who have caring responsibilities and reassure them that they can seek help and support.

Much of the existing guidance is intended to prevent crises arising through early identification and intervention. It is clear though that there is often a considerable gap between national policy and local practice.

Policy makers should not be complacent when promises to implement their own action plans and strategies are not followed through and when a critical evaluation report such as that on the training resource for schools is not acted upon.

<sup>15</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. National Service Framework for Children, Young People & Maternity Services [http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/441/EnglishNSF\\_amended\\_final.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/441/EnglishNSF_amended_final.pdf)

## Monitoring

Many of the recommendations contained within this report are intended to inject an element of urgency into reviewing how young carers are valued and supported in Wales.

It was not felt necessary to make formal recommendations about all the issues raised in this report. We will be continuing a dialogue with partner agencies and working with them for the benefit of young carers.

As usual we will be monitoring the acceptance and implementation of the formal recommendations contained within this report in the months and years to come.