

# Young Carers Strategy

2017 – 2019



Early Help  
Manchester.





## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Young Carers Strategy 2017–2019, which has been developed with young carers and other key partners in health, education and the voluntary sector.

There are many young carers in Manchester, probably more than we realise. Young carers often struggle to attend and achieve in education, to pursue hobbies and interests, and to have time to enjoy life with their friends. Everyone needs to work together to ensure that young carers can enjoy their childhood and that they are not held back by inappropriate levels of caring.

Recent legislation requires the development of an integrated response to the needs of young carers, and places statutory responsibilities on the local authority in relation to identification and assessment of young carers.

This presents us with the opportunity to improve the earlier identification of and support for young carers through a multi-agency response as part of the Early Help offer.

The strategy aims to support young carers to be protected from inappropriate caring, to achieve their full potential, and to have access to the same opportunities as their peers. We will achieve this by ensuring that all partners who come into contact with young carers and their families are aware of their needs and the pathways to support.

Improving outcomes for young carers requires good partnership working and shared responsibility, and I look forward to working with all of you to achieve this ambition.



**Councillor  
Sheila Newman**  
Executive Member for  
Children's Services



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## Our vision

The Children and Young People Plan describes Manchester's vision for all children and young people:

*"Our Manchester – building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for children and young people."*

For young carers this means having access to the same opportunities as their peers, being protected from inappropriate caring, and having access to any additional support they may need to ensure they are safe, healthy, aspiring and achieving. We will achieve this through effective partnership working and the delivery of timely and high-quality services.



## Our principles

The development of an integrated approach, which enables all agencies to recognise and respond to young carers appropriately, is underpinned by a set of key principles:

- There are no 'wrong doors': young carers are identified and assessed, and their families receive support to prevent inappropriate levels of caring regardless of which service comes into contact with them first.
- Listening to young carers and their families through the use of person-centred approaches and holistic assessments is embedded into everyday practice.
- Young carers and their families are identified and supported earlier to prevent inappropriate levels of caring.
- The voice of young carers and their families informs strategic developments and commissioning.
- Young carers and their families have access to community resources through effective information, advice and support.

These principles embed the following behaviours:

- We listen
- We understand
- We connect.



## Purpose

This strategy will set out how all partners will work together to raise awareness, plan, and deliver a range of support options for young carers in Manchester at the earliest opportunity.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- Improve the identification of young carers and their families.
- Prevent inappropriate caring roles from impacting on children and young people's wellbeing.
- Embed young carers into the Early Help offer, developing flexible and responsive services that promote the responsibility of all agencies for improving outcomes for young carers and their families.



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## Voice of young carers

Young carers in Manchester have told us they value their caring role and are proud of their contribution to their families. They want their views to be recognised and reflected in services that are available to support them.

The Young Carers Forum meets regularly, and the chair (an elected young carer) represents the voice of young carers on Manchester Youth Council. The forum is currently working on its own campaign to raise awareness of the barriers young carers face in their everyday lives.

The 'Be Bothered' campaign highlights some of the key challenges, including financial, educational and recreational, that young carers in Manchester face. However, the young carers' forum also points out that one of the biggest challenges they face in their day-to-day life is a lack of awareness and understanding of their caring role.

*"One of the biggest things we as young carers face is that no one understands what we do in our caring roles."*

They have also highlighted that a key reason for young carers remaining hidden is the 'Worry of intervention'.

*"One of the biggest causes of stress for young carers 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 they will be taken away from their families or their caring role will be affected. As a result, many young people with a caring role are not accessing support as they would rather struggle than have their caring role disturbed."*

The launch of the 'Be Bothered' campaign during autumn 2017 will ensure that these and other key messages from young carers in Manchester are shared across partner agencies and with children, young people and their families.

The Young Carers Forum will continue to be supported and developed to ensure that the voice of young carers is representative and that it influences the design and commissioning of support. The importance of all agencies to engage and listen to young carers will be reflected in communications and through work with the youth and play providers.



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## Our definition of a young carer

The definition of a young carer is taken from section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014:

*'...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work).'*

In Manchester we recognise that the impact on children and young people may be related to additional duties such as housework, shopping and caring for siblings rather than actual caring duties.

Therefore, our definition includes a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work). This relates to care or additional duties related to having a family member who has a physical disability, mental health need or learning disability, or who is affected by drug, alcohol or other substance misuse.

### Drivers for change – National context

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The Care Act (2014) and the Children and Families Act (2014) consolidate previous legislation affecting young carers and require the development of an integrated response to the specific needs of young carers. This new legislation places the responsibility for identifying and supporting young carers on both Adults' and Children's Services.

The Care Act (2014) introduces new obligations to young carers in transition to adulthood, including the requirement on adult services to provide transition planning for young carers who are likely to need support after becoming 18 years old.

The Children and Families Act (2014) requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to identify young carers in their area, provide assessments for young carers under the age of 18, and identify whether caring responsibilities are appropriate. The Care Act (2014) requires local authorities to put in place a transition plan for young carers aged 16–18. This key legislation refocuses the law around the person rather than the provision of a service, strengthening the need for a more integrated approach.

The revised Working Together (2015) strengthens the emphasis on early identification, assessment and intervention. This reinforces the need for agencies to work together effectively to support families with young carers, developing a whole-family approach.



National research has highlighted that the number of young carers is significantly higher than Census data reports (Hidden from View, Children's Society, 2013).

This research has also highlighted the potential longer-term impact of caring on young people.

- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level: the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers, eg. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
- Young carers are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19.
- One in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours per week. Around one in 20 misses school because of their caring responsibilities.

### Drivers for change – Local context

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Data from the 2011 Census (published in May 2013) 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 and is similar to the average for England as a whole. Around 11% of these young carers were providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week (England average = 9%).

However, the Children's Society (2013) believes this could be just the tip of the iceberg. Many young carers remain hidden from official sight for a host of reasons, including family loyalty, stigma, bullying, and not knowing where to go for support (2013). The most recent available local research (undertaken with a small sample in 2010) estimates that 18% of young people in Manchester have caring responsibilities (McIntyre et al, 2010). This suggests that there could potentially have been as many as 16,866 young carers living in Manchester at the time of the 2011 Census – a substantially higher figure than the official Census data quoted above.

McIntyre et al (2010) claim that national research has failed to capture the scope of caring responsibilities by young people. This research explores the extent of caring by young people in Manchester in more depth. Recognising different levels of caring responsibilities young people may have, they developed three categories of caring responsibilities.

CATEGORY	RESPONSIBILITIES
High care 'high'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Helping an adult to dress/undress</li> <li>● Helping an adult in and out of bed/wheelchair</li> <li>● Helping an adult to bathe or shower</li> <li>● Helping an adult to use the toilet</li> </ul>
Low care 'low'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making sure an adult in the house is taking the medication they need</li> <li>● Keeping an adult company by reading to them, talking to them etc</li> <li>● Ensuring an adult in the house is safe by watching them or listening in the night</li> <li>● Accompanying an adult to appointments, shopping etc</li> <li>● Helping an adult to communicate</li> </ul>
General responsibilities	Respondents who reported having caring responsibilities but who do not fill the criteria for 'high' or 'low' caring

The findings show that when applying this to a sample of young carers, over half of them have specific responsibility for an adult that falls into the 'low' or 'high' category; the remainder of the sample have other general responsibilities which, while not specifically involving caring for an adult, are related to an adult family member's condition. Although this is a small sample, it is helpful in the development of a graduated response that responds across each level of need.



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## Manchester: needs analysis

We know that in Manchester there is currently a significant under identification and recording of young carers. Current data recording systems do not routinely capture intelligence around the identification of young carers. The need for a robust data solution to capture the number of young carers in the city has been identified. This requirement is part of the current development of improved recording systems.

The only reliable data currently available is from the previously commissioned young carer's service. During 2014/15 this service assessed and supported 162 young carers.

### Age range

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Almost half the young carers supported (48%) were aged between 13 and 16 years; 30 per cent were aged over 16, and just 22 per cent were aged between 10 and 13 years.

A further breakdown of the younger age group reveals that the majority of them (65%) were aged 13 years, 25% were aged 11 years, and just 10% were aged 10 years.

### Type of caring

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#### **Mental health**

31.4% of young carers referred to the young carer's service were caring for someone with mental-health needs. The majority of these young carers were

aged 13–16 (67%); 18% were aged over 16 years and 16% were aged 10–13 years.

#### **Physical support – access and mobility**

22.8% of young carers were supporting someone with access and mobility due to physical support needs. The majority of these young carers were aged

13–16 years (51%).

#### **Physical support – personal care support**

19.7% of young carers were supporting someone with personal care due to physical support needs. The majority of these young carers were aged over 16 years (47%).

### **Learning disability**

9.25% of the young carers in this sample were caring for someone with a learning disability. The majority of these were aged 10–13 years (60%).

While this is a very small data set, it does give some indication of the age range and the nature of the caring role.

The fact that this sample does not include any young carers who are caring for an adult with substance misuse is perhaps a reflection of the hidden nature of this type of caring role. The drugs and alcohol team are part of the Young Carers' Partnership, and we will be working with them and other providers to raise the awareness of young carers.

### **Social care data**

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Current social care systems do not identify young carers. Analysis of open adult social care cases in December 2015 identified 446 dependent children under the age of 18 living with an adult with care needs open to social care. It is important to treat this data with caution as we cannot assume that a young person in this situation is a young carer. The adult may be receiving good support from other sources. However, it is likely that at least some of these young people do have some caring responsibilities.

This data was cross-matched with children's social care and identified 75 of these children and young people currently have a social worker.

Potentially, this could indicate that at least some of the remaining 371 children and young people may be unidentified young carers.

While it is impossible to draw any conclusions from this data, it clearly indicates a need for all services to improve both the identification and the recording of young carers to inform future commissioning.



## Delivery model

### Improving identification and prevention through Early Help

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Manchester has an Early Help strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people. Effective Early Help can happen at any age (including adults) and requires agencies to act early, appropriately and assertively, supported by a clear pathway to services and interventions. The Early Help strategy is delivered through locality-based Early Help Hubs and the new strengths-based Early Help Assessment (EHA). These developments will enable more effective work with universal services to support them in the effective identification and assessment of young carers.

The development of Early Help also presents an opportunity to strengthen the working relationships between children and adults services and to develop a shared protocol to ensure smooth pathways to information, advice and support for young carers and their families.

To be effective we need an integrated model that enables young carers to be identified and supported to access opportunities, and this requires all partners to work collectively.

### Partnership working

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To develop a more integrated approach, the Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS), commissioned in 2015, has identified a dedicated worker for young carers in each district who will be linked to the Early Help Hubs. This will strengthen and embed early identification and assessment through working with other services aimed at young people, including schools, colleges, health services and other youth organisations. It will promote awareness of young carers and ensure that their needs are identified through Early Help assessments, with clear guidance for practitioners. The TYSS will provide a graduated response through:

- Working with the Youth and Play providers to support young carers to access youth provision and other appropriate universal services, and to remain in education, employment and training appropriate to their specific needs.
- Ensuring that the voice of young carers is captured and influences service design, delivery and improvement.
- Ensuring that young carers with complex needs have a key worker to enable them to remain in or re-engage with education, employment or training – this will include contributing to person-centred planning, education health and care plans, and the delivery of information, advice and guidance where appropriate.

The TYSS will work with young carers, the transition planning team, and health and education teams to contribute to transition planning, including supporting young carers to access youth provision and remain in education, employment and training appropriate to their specific needs.

To support the implementation of this strategy, a young carer's operational partnership group has been established. Awareness-raising and the development of an integrated pathway to support and assessment for young carers are the main objects of this partnership.



## Integrated pathways and safeguarding

Young carers and their families should be supported regardless of which service is contacted first. There should be no 'wrong doors', as children's and adult social services are required to work together to fulfil their duties in law.

We will ensure that all practitioners are aware of local safeguarding policy and practice, and accept a joint responsibility to work in partnership to identify and respond to any young carers who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

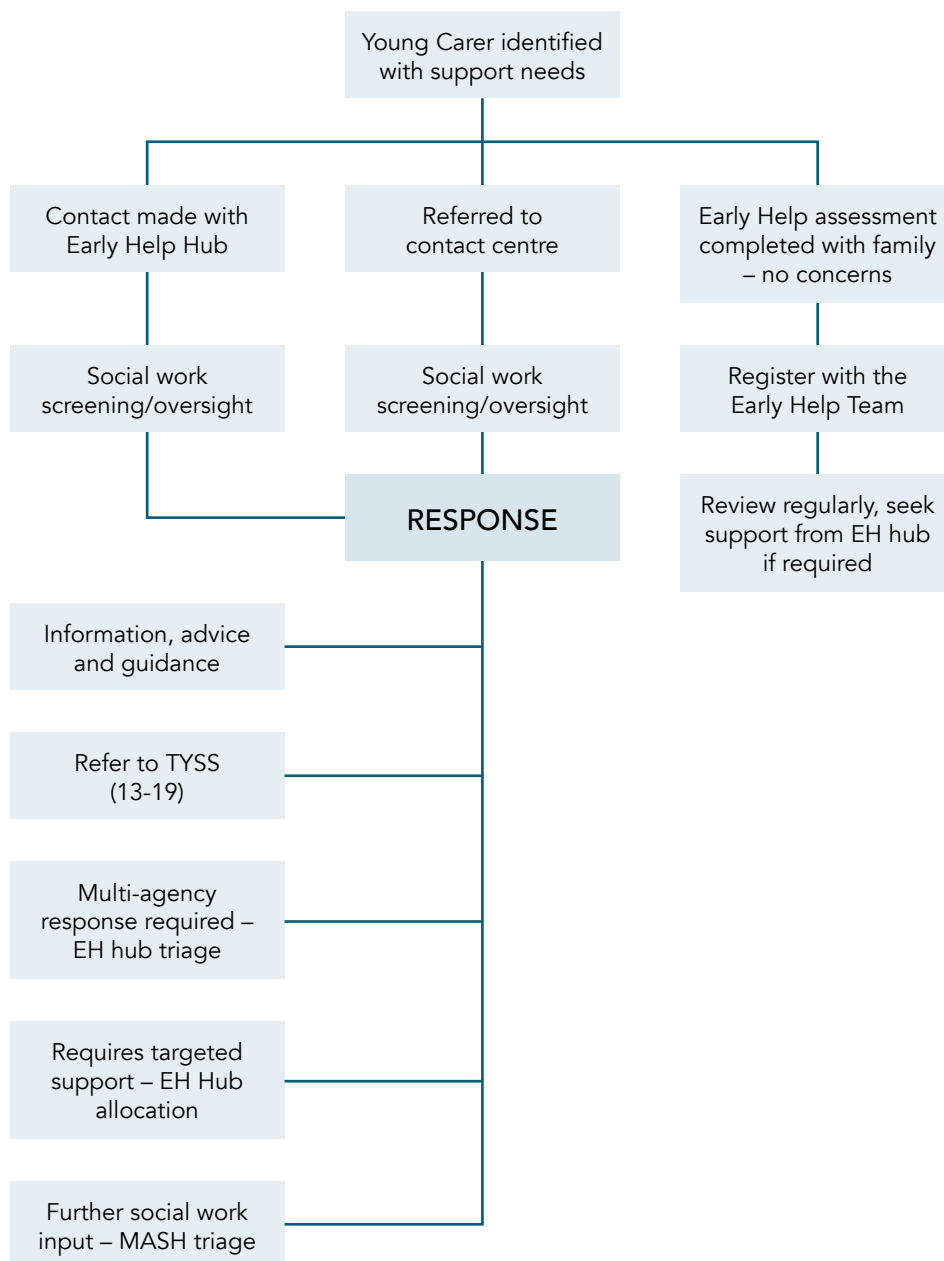
Whole-family approaches will enable all agencies to support the early identification and assessment of the needs of young carers by:

- Encouraging and raising awareness of information, advice and support available, including the use of digital resources.
- Using the Early Help assessment tools to support strengths-based conversations and outcome-focused planning with the young carer and their family at the centre.
- Ensuring a consistent approach that is underpinned by seamless pathways to support.
- Ensuring social work supervision with a prompt response for those young carers who need a targeted or specialist intervention.

The Young Carer Pathway will enable practitioners to navigate support available to young carers. The sooner young carers are recognised, the easier it is to prevent them from taking on inappropriate levels of care.

The purpose of the pathway is to ensure that young carers have their needs assessed using a graduated response to ensure an appropriate level of support. Practitioners are supported in identifying the level of caring responsibility through a set of assessment tools that measure both the level of caring activity and the impact of caring.

To support all agencies, a pathway to support for young carers has been agreed and implemented by the Early Help team, Children's Social Care and the TYSS.





Young carer is identified through any agency, including adult social care and health services. The agency involved will then either:

- Ring the Contact Centre for advice and support or if they are concerned about the child young person.
- or
- Contact the Early Help Hubs for advice and to check if there is an Early Help Assessment.

All referrals for young carers through the Early Help Hubs are screened by the Social Worker attached to the Hubs.

All referrals to the Contact Centre for young carers are screened by the Social Worker attached to the Contact Centre.

This will ensure social work oversight for all young carers regardless of the referral route. Following screening, one of the following decisions will be made:

- Refer to the TYSS for young carers aged 13–19 years. The TYSS will use the EHA and other tools to support strength-based conversation and effective support planning.
- Requires information, advice and guidance, including signposting to Help and Support Manchester through the Early Help Co-ordinator and linking into existing universal services.
- Requires a multi-agency response through the Early Help Hub Triage. This will identify the most appropriate agency to lead on the EHA.
- Requires a targeted response – Early Help Hub allocations will identify a targeted response, which may include a key worker.
- Requires further social work input through escalation to MASH.

This approach will ensure that all young carers identified are offered an appropriate level of support and that any safeguarding needs are identified and responded to.

## Tools and resources

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A set of resources has been made available for practitioners, including assessment tools and guidance for practitioners. A young carers section of the Carers Toolkit has been developed on Help and Support Manchester.

A programme of support for schools and young carers delivered through the Carers Trust has been promoted through school networks and forums.

To continue to raise awareness of young carers, the TYSS has an ongoing plan of communication and briefings for schools, colleges and other universal settings. Briefings will include an overview of the legislative requirements, an understanding of ways in which young carers may be identified earlier, and pathways to support.

The Young Carers' Partnership includes representation from the Young Carers forum, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Early Help, Education and Skills, Mental Health Trust, School Nursing, Youth Inclusion, schools, and voluntary sector providers, and is chaired by the TYSS. Members have agreed that they will champion and promote awareness of young carers within their own organisations. This group will report into the Early Help Operational Board.



## Achieving the vision

To achieve the vision, an action plan has been developed and will be delivered through the Young Carers' Partnership.

VISION	HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS	KEY ACTIVITY/ DELIVERABLES
<p>Young carers are identified at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>Promote awareness of young carers with all partners and frontline workers, including adult services. Ensure data-recording systems are able to capture and report on young carers. Work with schools and colleges to ensure they have effective systems for identifying and supporting young carers.</p>	<p>Awareness-raising campaign. Programme of school sessions and promotion of Carers Trust and young carers in school awards. Through the operation group, develop pathways with key partners to assessments and support for young carers. Young carer's representative is a member of the adult carer's network.</p>
<p>Young carers receive the same opportunity as their peers.</p>	<p>Work with commissioned providers to ensure they are aware and able to support young carers. Ensure young carers are aware of and have access to information about services and positive activities. Build capacity within the Early Help Hubs and with key partners.</p>	<p>Pilot in the north of the city to identify the role of youth providers in supporting young carers. Promote and develop the young carers section on Help and Support Manchester. Support the young carer's forum to develop awareness-raising resources. Young carers lead in the Early Help Hubs. There is a focus on young carers and a lead in the Early Help Champions.</p>

VISION	HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS	KEY ACTIVITY/ DELIVERABLES
Young carers who need support have strength-based holistic assessments with outcome-focused planning.	Embed the offer for young carers into the Early Help Hubs, ensuring all young carers are offered an Early Help assessment. Develop integrated pathways to ensure a consistent approach.	An integrated pathway for young carers that ensures a consistent approach to the identification and support of young carers in Manchester.
Young carers are supported through key transition.	Work with the TYSS and adult social care to raise awareness of the need for effective transition planning. Work with schools and colleges.	All young carers have access to effective transition planning to ensure good preparation for adulthood. This includes a reassessment by adult services of the cared-for support needs.
A reduction in persistent absence for young carers.	Improving identification of young carers in schools and attendance monitoring.	Attendance officers based in the Early Help Hubs working with schools to identify young carers and monitor attendance, ensuring an EHA is carried out if any concerns.



## Measuring success

Progress on the action plan will be monitored through the following performance indicators:

- An increase in awareness of volume of young carers in Manchester
- A reduction in young carers becoming children in need (or looked after)
- A reduction in the number of young carers who are persistently absent from school
- A reduction in young carers who are NEET
- A reduction in young carers becoming adult carers.

These measures will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Young carers are prevented from providing inappropriate levels of care.
- Young carers are helped to achieve their potential by having the same access as their peers to:
  - education and career choices
  - leisure and community activities/opportunities
  - advice and support
  - information
  - Youth and Play services.
- All young carers needing support have needs-led and outcome focused-assessments and where appropriate effective support plans.
- Young carers are supported through key transition stages.
- Young adult carers (18–25) are supported into education, employment and training.
- The voice of young carers influences local policy and service design.

## Useful links

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**The Care Act 2014**

[legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted](http://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted)

**The Children and Families Act 2014**

[legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)

**Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 2015**

[gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

**Measures of Caring Activities and Outcomes, Becker & Joseph, 2009**

[static.carers.org/files/2248-yc-outcomes-manual-sb-4047.pdf](http://static.carers.org/files/2248-yc-outcomes-manual-sb-4047.pdf)

**McIntyre et al (2010), Everyone should learn about young carers**

**MCC Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, July 2010**

[manchester.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/10021/9\\_young\\_carers&rct](http://manchester.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/10021/9_young_carers&rct)

**Hidden from View, (2013), The Children's Society**

[childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report\\_hidden-from-view\\_young-carers\\_final.pdf](http://childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report_hidden-from-view_young-carers_final.pdf)

**Manchester's Draft Carers Strategy (Manchester City Council 2015)**

[manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/23232/draft\\_carer\\_strategy.pdf](http://manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/23232/draft_carer_strategy.pdf)





