# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to Carers Lewisham</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main findings</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group and Questionnaire</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Interviews</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring responsibilities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of Caring</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs and Support</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Work/Aspirations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Needs</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving home and transitioning</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Socialising</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results of Focus Group and Questionnaire</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity Ideas</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendations and Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This report will outline the findings of the Young Adult Carers study 2009, carried out by Carers Lewisham to investigate the needs of Young Adult Carers living in the London Borough of Lewisham. The study was based on the findings of research carried out by Becker and Becker (2008). The use of the term Young Adult Carer in this report refers to those aged 16-24 who, unpaid take some or all of the responsibility for everyday living tasks and the emotional wellbeing of a friend or relative who has a mental health problem, physical disability, long term health problem or who is old and frail. The research was carried out over five weeks between 20th July and 21st August 2009. During this time all of the Young Adult Carers registered with Carers Lewisham were contacted via telephone, those who responded answered a series of questions in a semi structured interview about their experiences, needs and support as a Young Adult Carer. The aim of this research was to find out what support this group of Carers were receiving as well as what support they currently feel they need and how that could be provided.

The findings reflect a perception amongst these Young Adult Carers that their needs as a Carer are not recognised as much as the Young Carers (under 18). Although Carers are considered Young Carers up until the age of 18, there is a trend in Carers withdrawing from Young Carer project activities and services at the age of 16. This raises a concern that the service is not meeting their needs, thus the present study included the views of Carers that are aged 16 and 17. This report will begin with a background to the study and Carers Lewisham, an outline of the main findings with comparisons to Becker and Becker’s study were appropriate and will conclude with recommendations for service changes.
**Background**

**Research**

The rationale for the present study was based on the findings of a large study carried out by Becker and Becker (2008) into the experiences, needs and services of Young Carers in the UK. Becker and Becker identified this population of Young Carers (aged 16-24) whose needs were not being met. Moreover staff at Carers Lewisham had become increasingly aware that the Carers in this age group are particularly difficult to engage with and do not visit the Carers Centre as often as the younger and older Carers. This study aimed to investigate the needs of Young Adult Carers living in the London Borough of Lewisham and obtain local evidence for the needs of these Carers and contribute to the growing evidence base.

Services for Carers are normally age related and are either for adults or children. Research that conveys what life can be like for a Carer in the middle age bracket of 16-24 and how services can support them is scarce. Professor Saul Becker, who has headed up the research team in Nottingham with senior research fellow Fiona Becker, commented: “This new research is the first to show the extent of caring amongst 16-24 year olds and how they are often invisible to service providers” Following the publication of this major research the Princess Royal Trust for Carers have asked the government to create more joined up services and specialist projects for Young Carers (aged 16-24)

Becker and Becker’s study funded by the True Colours Trust association with the Princess Royal Trust for Carers investigated the experience, needs and services responses to 290,000 Young Carers aged 16-24. This was a mixed-methods’ investigation and included a literature review, secondary analysis of 2001 Census data, a survey of 25 Young Carers projects, a survey of 13 Adult Carers services, five focus groups with 29 Carers aged 16-17, discussions with staff at focus group sites, and in-depth interviews with 25 Young Adult Carers aged 18-24 across Britain. Becker and Becker felt that it was important to separate Carers aged 16-17 from those aged 18-24 as their experiences and needs were very different as well as services that are available to them in the UK. The former are going through an important transitional period of becoming a Young adult over 18 and facing new challenges as a Carer.

Becker and Becker’s research revealed new insights into this ‘hidden group’ of Carers. The matters that arose where services needed to be improved fell into the following main areas:

- School/College/University
- Relationships
- Income/jobs/Carers/aspirations
- The role of Young Carers’ projects
- Friendships
- Leisure and lifestyle
- Leaving Home and Transitioning

Hence when designing the interview schedule for the present study, the questions were based around these areas. This was to ensure the questions covered each of these subjects already known to be affecting
Young Adult Carers in the UK, including questions that allowed Young Adult Carer’s to communicate any other areas of their life that they may need support.

Joseph, Becker, Becker and Regel (2009) reported data from 410 Young Carers ranging in age from 7 to 22 who were recruited via The Princess Royal Trust for Carers database of UK projects and asked to complete two questionnaires to assess caring activities and caring outcomes, respectively. Following statistical analysis they reduced the length of the two questionnaires and piloted them with another 124 Young Carers. The statistical procedure allowed them to select a small set of items which are representative of a particular domain of activity.

From this 18 items were chosen to compose one of the questionnaires called the Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities (MACA-YC1800) (an 18-item self-report measure) that can be used to provide an index of the total amount of caring activity undertaken by the Young person. It is designed so that Carers can indicate how often they carry out different tasks by ticking ‘never’ ‘some of the time’ or ‘a lot of the time’ this forms six subscales of caring responsibilities which fall under domestic tasks, household management, personal care, emotional care, sibling care, and financial/practical care.

Due to time constraints it was not possible to include this questionnaire in the present study however Carers were asked how often they engage in these six areas of activity in order to gain some idea of the level of their caring responsibility.

As this research was intended to provide a starting point in engaging this group of Carers with services at Carers Lewisham, this contact was also used as an opportunity to find out what activities Young Adult Carers liked to do and invite them to a Focus Group event to bring the Young Adult Carer’s together to get to know each other, meet other people in a similar situation, and discuss possible future events and workshops that could be set up at the Centre.

**Carers Lewisham**

Carers Lewisham is an independent charity which is part of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers Network. Carers Lewisham has recently celebrated 21 years of supporting Carers, providing advice, support and information for anyone who has caring responsibilities in the London Borough of Lewisham. Carers can be all ages and can either be the sole Carer or share caring responsibilities with other people.

Carers Lewisham was set up in 1988 under the umbrella of the Carers National Association (now called Carers UK) and opened by Joan Ruddock MP. Initially the charity did not have a base for the project. Since then the charity has grown from strength to strength and in 1995 became an independent charity in its own right, by this time there were 900 Carers registered. By 1999 they joined the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and became a limited company, this opened up additional opportunities for the charity to develop. In 2001 they opened a new Carers Centre in Forest Hill, Lewisham. In the present year 2009 Carers Lewisham received a visit from Anne, Princess Royal and now has over 4,000 adult Carers and 500 Young Carers registered. Carers Lewisham provide the following services: advice and information on subjects of benefit to Carers, e.g. Financial benefits, Holiday and getting a break, managing care of a cared for person and getting access to services and support. Emotional support, counselling, Carers employment and training, respite service, coffee mornings, support groups, clubs, trips, activities, workshops and courses.
Carers Lewisham define Young Carers as children caring under 18 years of age. Carers Lewisham organise regular ‘respite breaks’ for children, including day trips and weekends away. They have a drop in at the Centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. Some of the Young Adult Carers in the sample made use of Young Carer services when they were eligible and did not feel there was any equivalent service for them now that they were too old to attend.
Main Findings:

- A portion of Young Adult Carers in Lewisham feel that their needs are not recognised as much when they turn 18. They describe Young Carer projects which they are no longer eligible for as somewhere to go for a break and time off.

- Young Adult Carer’s feel that they have outgrown the Young Carer’s activities by the age of 16 despite being eligible until they are 18. Although Carers are too old for the Young Carers activities many report the activities having a positive effect on them, indicating a need for a similar service for the 16-24’s.

- None of the Young Adult Carers are aware of any services for Young Adult Carers besides Carers Lewisham.

- 23% of the Young Adult Carers reported that one way Carers Lewisham could support them would be to if they stayed in regular contact with them. This is useful for two main reasons:
  1. Because carers are unclear about what Carers Lewisham have to offer. Many Young Adult Carers do not feel comfortable telephoning to ask for help but would find it easier to open up if Carers Lewisham made the initial contact.
  2. Having a phone call once in a while would be nice just to ask how they are getting on, so that Young Adult Carers feel that Carers Lewisham are there for them.

- 36% of the Young Adult Carers in the sample said they did not know what Carers Lewisham offered and have suggested ways to increase awareness.

- The sample described both positive and negative aspects of being a Young Adult Carer, commenting on how their responsibilities have shaped their personality and mind set and how it makes them feel physically and emotionally.

- Many expressed an interest in setting up a Carers Lewisham group on a social networking site (such as Facebook) as a way to keep in touch with other Carers as well as a way to find out what is going on at Carers Lewisham.

- The Young Adult Carers that attended a focus group were all registered on ‘Facebook ‘and said that they would make use of a group set up as a means to keep in contact with Carers Lewisham and advertise events.

- Many Carers have said that they find meeting other Young Adult Carers helpful and if a regular session was set up for their age group, it should be for their age group and something where they are able to learn and be creative, rather than simply sitting in a group and talking.
Almost half of the Young Adult Carers asked felt they were not receiving any support. This is significant because lack of support can sometimes lead to Carers feeling isolated. This gives us an indication of the amount of Young Adult Carers that can potentially benefit from support tailored towards Young adults provided by Carers Lewisham.

For those that were receiving support it has mainly been from family and friends.

24% of Young Adult Carers felt they still needed financial support, support at school or college was also mentioned many times.

This research identified a wealth of Young Adult Carers that describe Carers Lewisham as having supported them in different ways and offering them a break from their caring activities. Most of this took place when Carers were children.

In both this research and research by Becker and Becker Young Adult Carers are taking on a lot of responsibility for tasks that involve the running and upkeep of the house.

In contrast to Becker and Becker’s research Young Adult Carers in Lewisham are not taking on as much responsibility for financial and practical care.

Carers in the sample do not appear to be taking on as much financial responsibility as the Young Adult Carers in Becker and Becker’s sample. However they describe similar financial hardships, mainly with school materials and shopping for the house.

An astonishing 28% described feeling stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of being a Carer.

The majority of the sample of Young Adult Carers were in Full time Education. In line with Becker and Becker’s findings Young Adult Carers had both positive and negative experiences of education which fell into two main camps: those that found teachers and staff understanding and supportive and those who found the opposite- a lack of understanding and in some cases being penalised for disruption to their education as a result of their caring responsibilities.

Many Young Adult Carers feel that schools and College staff and pupils should be made more aware of the difficulties that caring at a Young age brings and how it can affect their education.

In Contrast to Becker and Becker’s findings that many reported poor careers and job search advice, 78% of Young Adult Carers in Carers Lewisham’s study found Connexions and other careers advice helpful and some were even disappointed that they have an upper age restriction of 19.

Caring seemed to mainly have a negative impact on Young Adult Carers forming and maintaining friendships. There were mixed accounts of caring having a positive or negative impact on family relationships.
o 53% of Young Adult Carers feel they do not have enough free time and 4 (7%) feel they have no free time. They want to go out more but are limited because they need to be available for the person they are caring for.

o The quality of Young Adult Carers’ social lives were strongly influenced by whether or not they shared their caring responsibilities with anyone else.

o Young Adult Carers that chose to leave home either temporarily or permanently lived nearby so that they would be available at short notice and some visited the cared for person every day.

o All of the Young Adult Carers that attended the focus group and many that were interviewed were interested in coming to a regular film club at Carers Lewisham
Method

Interviews

Participants

There was an attempt to contact all of the Young Adult Carers registered with Carers Lewisham however due to limited time, some of the contact details being out of date and Carers being away, a total of 53 Carers took part in the main study. This is the same number of Young Adult Carers that Becker and Becker had contact with through interviews and focus groups making comparisons to their research more relevant.

The ages of Young Adult Carers that took part in the study fall within the range of 16-24. The majority of Carers that took part were 16 and the average age was 18.6. (See figure 1)

Figure 1

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<th>Age</th>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>2%</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Chart to show Age of Carers
70% (37) of the Young Adult Carers interviewed were female and 16 (30%) were male. (See figure 2)

Figure 2

Chart to show Percentage of male and female carers

The sample consisted of Carers from various different ethnic backgrounds. The majority of Carers described their ethnicity as Black British (African or Caribbean background).

Figure 3

Chart to show ethnicities of the Young Adult Carers

The majority of the Young Adult Carers in the sample were caring for their mother. (See figure 4). This compares to the findings by Becker and Becker in their UK wide study. The total number of cared for people...
 totals 62 as some of the Young Adult Carers were caring for more than one person. 7 of the Young Adult Carers were caring for 2 people and 1 was caring for 3 people.

**Figure 4**

![Chart showing the number of different family members cared for by Young Adult Carers](chart.png)

The majority of people being cared for by the Young Adult Carers in the sample had care needs due to physical ill-health (28). The remainder were caring for someone due to mental ill-health (21), learning disabilities (3) and being old and frail (1). (See figure 5)

**Figure 5**

![Chart to show care needs](chart.png)
The majority (62%) of the Young Adult Carers were in Full time Education at the time of the Survey, 2 were in Full time Employment, 8 were in Part time Employment, 1 was in Part time Employment and Part time Education, 1 was in Full time Education and part time Employment, 8 were unemployed (neither working or studying). (See figure 6)

**Figure 6**

![Chart to show carers' employment status](chart.jpg)

The majority (34) of Young Adult Carers had been caring for more than 5 years at the time of the survey. (See figure 7). Two of the Young Adult Carers who took part were no longer caring at the time of the survey.

**Figure 7**

![Chart to show how long people have been caring for](chart2.jpg)
Materials

The interview schedule was designed based on the main areas of need identified by Becker and Becker (2008) (See appendix 1 for full interview schedule). It also included a section on how often Young Adult Carer’s engage in different caring tasks which was based on the Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities (MACA-Y18) (Joseph, Becker and Becker 2009).

The Interview was semi structured and comprises of 9 sections. These are; Carer demographics, Caring responsibilities, experience of caring, needs and support, relationships, Education and Work, Finances, Leaving home and transitioning and Leisure and Socialising. The answers were recorded on a spreadsheet.

The Carers Lewisham database of Carers was used to obtain the Young Adult Carer’s contact details.

Procedure

A week before the research began, all of the Young Adult Carers on the Carers Lewisham database were sent a letter informing them that Carers Lewisham were doing a survey into the needs of Young Adult Carers and that the researcher would be in touch with them over the next eight weeks via telephone. The letter included contact details should the Carer wish make the initial contact to express their desire to take part in the survey or request more information.

During the 5 weeks that followed Carers were contacted via the telephone and interviewed following a semi structured interview with a mixture of open and closed ended questions. The questions were reworded depending on the Carer’s circumstances. If a Young adult revealed that they were no longer caring they were asked to reflect on what the experience was like as a Young Adult Carer, what they needed and how it could have been provided. The Young Adult Carers’ responses were recorded verbatim and interviews lasted between 10 and 20 minutes.

It was understood that the questions asked may provoke distressing and personal feelings and the researcher was sensitive to this. Carers were made aware that they could refrain from talking about anything they preferred not to disclose, they had the opportunity to ask questions if there was something that was worrying them and in some cases a member of staff called them back to discuss their concerns further.

Included in each interview was a question asking Yong Adult Carer’s if they had any ideas for the upcoming Focus Group event as well as whether or not they would be interested in coming, about half way through the research it was decided this first event would be a barbeque at the Carers Lewisham centre. The Carers that were contacted subsequent to this decision were invited to the barbeque and asked if they had any ideas for events in the future.
Before and after each interview Young Adult Carers were informed that their answers were confidential and would not be passed on to any third parties. They were also told that their responses may be quoted in the report but would be anonymous. All participants were happy with their answers being included in this report. To preserve anonymity any identifying details, including the use of names of people or institutions besides Carers Lewisham in a quote has been removed.

**Focus Group and Questionnaire**

**Participants**

Additional to the main findings 10 Young Adult Carers attended a focus Group and filled in a paper questionnaire. 5 of these Carers had also been interviewed and 5 had not. 5 were female and 5 were male. The ages ranged from 16-22.

**Materials**

Young Adult Carers completed a short paper questionnaire (See appendix 2 for full questionnaire) which included questions about what support, activities or workshops they would like, whether or not they would like to volunteer to form a group of Young Adult Carers that help to plan and organise events and whether or not they would make use of a group on a social networking website.

The focus group was an informal discussion in a group. Young Adult Carers spoke about the ideas they had for activities and workshops and recorded their ideas on a flip chart.
Results

Caring responsibilities

Young Adult Carers in the sample were asked how often they have engaged in the following activities in the last 4 weeks. They responded with ‘never’, ‘some of the time’ and ‘a lot of the time’. The following six tasks derived from previous research were used to indicate the level of caring activity:

**Domestic Activity**- The extent to which the Young person engages in activities such as cleaning, cooking, washing dishes or clothes etc.

**Household Management**- the extent to which the Young person engages in activities to keep the household running such as shopping, household repairs, and lifting heavy objects etc.

**Financial and Practical Management**- The extent to which the Young person helps financially (for example with bills, benefits and banking), and takes practical adult responsibilities (such as working part-time, interpreting) etc.

**Personal Care**- The extent to which the Young person engages in caring activities such as helping the person dress and undress, wash and use the bathroom, helping with mobility and giving health care (such as administering medicine or changing dressings) etc.

**Emotional Care**- The extent to which the Young person provides company and emotional support to the person, keeping an eye on them, providing supervision and taking them out.

**Sibling Care**- The extent to which the Young person is responsible for looking after siblings either alone or with a parent present. This excludes any Young person caring for his/her own child.

In the current sample of Young Adult Carers domestic tasks and household management tasks were the activities that were engaged in most often with the majority (56%) of the Carers engaging in domestic tasks a lot of the time and 41% (22) doing them some of the time. 49% (26) engaged in household management tasks a lot of the time and 45% (24) some of the time. This corresponds with Becker and Becker’s findings as two thirds of their sample performed household tasks a lot of the time. What was striking was that Becker and Becker found that nearly two thirds of their sample provided emotional care a lot of the time. This contrasts with our findings as only 35% (19) of the sample of Young Adult Carers in Lewisham provided emotional care a lot of the time and 51% (27) some of the time. This difference may be due to a difference in the care needs in the two studies. Becker and Becker found that about a third of their participants were providing practical support like paying bills and writing letters a lot of the time, however just 15% (8) of our sample reported doing these things a lot of the time. Finally Becker and Becker found that just under a third of their sample were providing personal and intimate care, this is almost exactly the same for the Carers in the current sample as 32% of the present study’s Young Adult Carers engaged in personal care.
49% (26) engaged in household management tasks a lot of the time and 45% (24) some of the time. 62% (33) of all of the Young Adult Carers in the sample reported that they never engaged in sibling care (this excludes a sibling being cared for due to ill health).

**Figure 8**

Chart to show how often carers engaged in different caring tasks during the last 4 weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic care</th>
<th>Household care</th>
<th>Personal care</th>
<th>Emotional care</th>
<th>Sibling care</th>
<th>Financial/practical care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>A lot of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
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It appears that parents in this sample were retaining responsibility for sibling and financial/practical care. Thus Young Adult Carers are doing these tasks some of the time or never. In both the past and present research Young Adult Carers are taking on a lot of responsibility for tasks that involve the running and upkeep of the house.
Experience of caring

The Young Adult Carers in the sample described both positive and negative aspects of being a Young Adult Carer. Some Carers found it difficult to describe because they had been caring most of their lives and saw it as a normal part of their everyday life.

“I don’t really mind it to be honest...I’ve grown up with it so I’m used to it, it seems normal to me” Male 17

Others described in detail how it made them feel mentally, physically and emotionally. Some of the respondents found the experience of being a Young Adult Carer difficult, time consuming and tiring.

“In my personal experience being a Young Carer sometimes it can be hard and frustrating caring for a family member. Even though I don’t feel the full burden because my mum cares for him as well I still feel the amount of pressure” Female, 18

“Find I get tired a lot. It’s a sacrifice that you have to make. You can’t always do the things you want to do. You get slightly depressed sometimes but you get over that. I have to.” Female, 24

“It takes your time that’s one thing it’s time consuming and obviously it’s a sacrifice but that’s one you have to make.” Male, 22

“It's very tiring and that's probably about it... hard work definitely... a bit draining.” Female, 22
Many describe their experience of being a Young Adult Carer as stressful.

“Sometimes it's a bit stressful yeah 'cause like sometimes I have to take on my mum's feelings when her mood changes, like we have a lot of arguments. But I know I have to be careful what I say and like 'cause I know she's got illness so I can't be too aggressive with her. Even though I know I'm right I can't argue with her and she ends up really depressed. Even though she says she's going to do things like clean the house she doesn't do it. She says I'm ganging up on her when I'm not.” Female, 17

“....Well sometimes I feel like its ok because I have a good relationship with my brothers. But it can be stressful because space is quite limited we live in a two bed flat and I share with my brothers so it can be hard sometimes. To be honest because my parents protect me from a lot of stuff. Like my brother is incontinent and parents deal with that so it eases the load a lot. Studying can be quite difficult around my brothers. Just finished my GCSE's and had to go to the library to study if not I do it in the lounge. I think sometimes it’s not as bad now but my older brother sometimes he screams a lot at night not as much now but he used to. But now he just stays awake that disturbs me.” Female, 16

Example A is a 20 year old female and has been caring for her two Younger brothers with autism for about 8 years. She lives at home with her two brothers, their mother and their baby sister. She is going to university to study English Literature. She has suffered from depression herself and has found seeing her GP helpful. She feels that the area she needs the most help in is financially as things are hard at the moment. This is how she described her experience of being a Young Adult Carer:

“...it's been very stressful it's kind of hindered me. Like I've just found out I got into university today. I was scared of going I didn't think I could help as much because mum was sickly so I had to look after the kids and I thought I don't how I would balance it. I had depression myself which I'm just coming out of and anxiety”.

It is concerning the number of Young Adult Carers that have described feeling stressed, depressed and anxious. 30% (16) used these words to describe some aspect of their experience of caring. These accounts draw attention to the emotional impact that caring responsibilities can have on a Young Adult Carer and potentially the whole family. It is
important to speak to Young Adult Carers about how they are feeling and ensure that emotional support is on offer.

In contrast others described positive experiences of being a Young Adult Carer:

“It’s not as hard as I thought it would be...Well if I’m helping her it makes me feel better in myself that I’ve been able to help her...”
Female, 16

“Well me personally, mentally it's made me more stronger. I can be in more difficult situations and find ways to solve it. Yeah but I don't trust many people that's the only problem. I'm very protective towards me, my mum and my family.”
Female 21

“.... I think generally it's been quite beneficial, I've grown up a bit more and become more considerate of other people.”
Female, 18

“It’s alright because I’m doing it for my mum and it’s helping her. So it affects me in a good way”
Male 16

These inspiring accounts emphasise the fact that aside from the hard work and stress that caring can bring, it can also have a positive impact on shaping Young people’s personalities and outlook on live. One way service providers could support Young Adult Carers is by aiding them in realising the qualities and skills that they have developed as a Carer and how to utilise these skills to their full potential, either when selling themselves to future employers or by using them in education and other areas of their lives.
Some had a mixed experience of caring:

“... I think generally it's been quite beneficial, grown up a bit more and become more considerate of other people. But there are also days when I feel a bit sorry for myself” **Female 18**

Some reported it gets easier as you get older:

“Emotionally it's made me feel stronger. I feel more mature that I have responsibilities to look after my mum. Because I'm older now it’s not a shock anymore. It's not a big thing. It's getting easier as I get older because I know exactly what to do because it's been a long time.” **Male 16**
Needs and support

When asked “What support are you currently receiving?” 57% (30) Young Adult Carers reported that they were currently receiving support and 43% (23) reported that they were not receiving any support.

The chart below illustrates the number of times different types of support were mentioned. Amongst the 30 Young Adult Carers that reported receiving support, support from family and friends were mentioned most often (16 times), followed by Carers Lewisham and College/School which were both mentioned 8 times.

Figure 9

Chart to show support Young Adult Carers were receiving

Almost half of the Young Adult Carers asked felt they were not receiving any support. This offers evidence that there is not a lot of support currently tailored towards this group of Young people. Lack of support can sometimes lead to Carers feeling isolated, an introduction of services that support their needs will hopefully decrease the chances of this.
**Areas that Young Adult Carers feel they still need support**

Young Adult Carers were asked what areas of their lives they still needed support. The chart below illustrates the number of times different types of support were mentioned. 17 (30%) Young Adult Carers reported that they did not need any support. Of the 46 (24%) Young Adult Carers that felt they still needed support financial support was mentioned most often (13 times). Support at school or college was mentioned the next often (8 times).

**Figure 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of support needed</th>
<th>Number of times type of support was mentioned</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support at School/College</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a break</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support at work</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support from a sitter</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>More understanding from social services</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>A councillor</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support leaving home</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support in having more free time</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**A selection of responses to the question: ‘How can services improve support?’**

- **Schools could be more understanding**
  “Sometimes the school look at me like I’m just an anxious mum. They don’t stick to meetings. I have to keep going back to them and asking what is happening. It is not until I say something bad about the school that I get seen” **Female 24**

  “They could be more available there’s only certain times you could see them you couldn’t just go in for a chat I had to book an appointment with a Counsellor...teachers were aware and they were understanding” **Female 16**

- **Phone calls from Carers Lewisham**
  “I get letters, but I’m always doing other things I’m not as likely to reply to them. If they phoned me I would be more likely to do them” **Female 18**

  “They could improve like if they rung up once in a while to find out what’s going on with us. Maybe doing a spontaneous event where Carers and the person they’re caring for can come. So it’s more of a social event rather than just the Carers or the cared for.” **Female 24**

- **Support groups for 18-25 year olds**
  “Maybe a bigger support for people who are from the middle gap of 18-25. There seems to be a concentration
for really Young or really old not many services or us.  *(In what way do they concentrate on Younger and older Carers?)* Like I know they help with Younger people with grants for school it should carry on for students at Uni and apprenticeships and working and talking sessions to people our age who have been Carers themselves.”  Female 18

- Activities for 16-25 year olds
  “With Carers Lewisham maybe just like also make the newsletters more interesting, more activities for 16 and over, *(can you think of anything?)* Sport, or music stuff, quiet place to do work at, putting a map in or directions because I was interested homework club but didn’t know where it was. More respite for me and parents...information on newsletter...film club would interest me and maybe have like a pizza and chat. Mainly increase of respite....probably to like twice a month or 3 times a month.”  Female 16

- Advertise more
  “I can’t really judge that at the moment (hasn’t been registered long). But you could advertise a little bit more because I only found out through another Carer I didn’t know you existed”  Female 23

**Young Adult Carers in the sample described the different ways that Carers Lewisham and education services have offered them support:**

“.....from Young Carers I have a councillor once a week...I’ve been for a while...that’s very helpful.”  Female 17

“I feel like I’m getting a lot of support a while ago went to Thorpe Park...  *(With Carers Lewisham?)* Yeah *(how was it supportive?)* getting away helps me calm down...I also get support from the Carers group at my school...we talk about stuff...play games or do cooking.....”  Male 16

“Well the support...the Young Carers school officer... I sometimes... if I’m having trouble I sometimes go to Carer centre and ask if I can speak to her. I go to college and they have an entitlement and support area and I sometimes talk to them.”  Female 17

“With the Young Carers I can come to the after school club to get some work done, because mum doesn’t work. When my computer broke down they helped with that, so educational stuff.”  Female 16

**Young Adult Carers were asked to describe Carers Lewisham and the services they offer to Carers:**

“Help and advice”  Male 16  “Holidays and I think that’s about it”  Male 16

“They offer therapy, support, tea and coffee mornings”  Female 24  “Activities, emotional support, clubs”  Female 17

“Support to Young Carers, coffee mornings and you do like mini courses for ICT and English to help people get qualifications and days out with Young people and stuff”  Female 18

“Free time and stuff like ... but they allow us to have our space. They are the one’s that give us time of from caring.”  Female 17

“It’s a charity organisation that funds for Carers in different ways”  Male 22
“They offer emotional care and they also allow us to break away from the home and allow us to be more free and it’s a nice environment. And when they organise trips they organise someone to look after the person I’m caring for.” Female 16

“Offers support for Young people who don’t have confidence with caring and gives them an opportunity to socialise with people in the same boat” Male 16

“Help us to meet new people and help us to learn how to handle the situation” Male 18

“....basically offer a place to go to hang out and not have to worry about anything.” Female 19

“I found it very helpful with all the outdoor activities that you do it gives me a chance to meet others in a similar situation” Male 19

This research identified a wealth of Young adult Carers that describe Carers Lewisham as supporting them in different ways and offering them a break from their caring activities, these positive descriptions of Carers Lewisham services add more weighting to the aims of this research because they confirm that the service has benefited at least some Young Carers and provides justification for keeping that support going when Carers are 18.

Young Adult Carers were asked for their reasons for not visiting or make use of Carers Lewisham and what would encourage them to do so:

“Well I’m not gonna lie they have given me a lot of info but it’s a lot to take in........ I actually contacted Carers Lewisham they gave me a massive information pack. There are visits and things but I feel out of order leaving my dad so I spend time with him instead of going. It offers in a sense a lot but as I said it’s too much information. There’s a break but I haven’t got around to it because there’s so much information it’s too overwhelming in a sense. You do offer enough though it seems”. Female 24

“I think in some ways you do like offer like a variety of activities...it’s a lot for the Younger ones which is good but should be for older ones as well.” female 16

Example B is an 18 year old female attending college full time. She lives with her mum and brother and has been caring for her mother who suffers from Arthritis for more than 5 years. She describes the experience of being a Carer tiring. She feels that she would use Carers Lewisham’s services more if they kept in touch with her and organised activities that appeal to her.

“... well I say they offer stuff for like Younger Carers definitely it can get your mind of home and allows you to meet people in the same situation as you...(do you find that helpful?) Yeah ‘cause it makes you fell like you’re not the only one. (What could we do for over 16’s?) A weekly club just for older ones and trips”

12(23%) of the Young Adult Carers reported that one way Carers Lewisham could help them would be to keep in touch and contact them regularly. This was backed up by 5 of the Young Adult Carers that did not take part in the interviews but attended the Young Adult Carers Barbeque/ Focus Group reporting that they too would like regular contact with Carers Lewisham
Becker and Becker reported however that very few (three) Young Carers said that they would like to use ‘virtual’ systems of support. Most of their sample reacted strongly against telephone help lines (and Internet) as possible sources of support in the future, with a strong preference for face-to-face support:

19 (36%) of the Young Adult Carers in the sample said they did not know what Carers Lewisham offered. These are some of the ways that Young Adult Carers suggest Carers Lewisham could advertise better or make their services more known:

- Talk to schools and colleges and make teachers and pupils aware of Young Carers and how they can help them
- Adverts on Television
- Open days
- Leaflets
- Telephone calls
- Local Newspapers and Magazines
- Promote themselves through health visitors and GPs
- Internet/emails
- Posters in schools and colleges

Many suggested free local Magazines and newspapers that can be picked up and accessed by everyone, as some people do not have access to the internet to view the Carers Lewisham website. Many Carers said that Carers Lewisham newsletters are informative and they would like to continue receiving them although there isn’t currently anything on there that appeals to this age group. If Carers Lewisham takes on some of these suggestions they may be able to make their service known to Young people so they have a better understanding of the support that is available to them. As a few Young Adult Carers had expressed the need for communication via the internet and that they would like Carers Lewisham to be in touch more, it was felt that it would be useful to set up a Carers Lewisham Young Adult Carers group on a social networking website. Many people in this age group have already set up profiles on them and it is a quick and easy way to communicate with a large number of people.
Education/work/aspirations

64% (34) of the Young Adult Carers were in full time education and 1 was in part time education at the time of the interview. Young Adult Carers described mixed experiences of education. Those that were not in education during the time of the survey were asked to reflect on a time when they were in school, College and University, however some were not caring at that time. Some had positive experiences finding the teachers understanding when they are late or absent from school due to their caring responsibilities and giving them extensions on their deadlines. Others attended schools that had Carers groups and/or counselling set up after school.

(Sixth Form)...Also get support from Carers group at school... we talk about stuff...play games or do cooking...”

Male 16

In contrast some of the sample found teachers were not understanding or in some cases were not aware that they were a Carer. Leading to some of them being penalised for being late for school and other disruptions caused by their caring role.

(Full time College). “They are aware but not supportive at all... and they are quite... not penalise you for it but you are an outcast.” Female 21

These finding s completely match up with Becker and Becker’s findings from their focus group of 16-17 year olds and in depth interviews with 18-24 year olds. The Carers in Becker and Becker’s sample had positive and negative experiences of education and whether or not teachers were understanding played a part in this. Nearly a third of Becker’s sample were bullied at school, however this was not due to them being a Carer in all cases.

In the present sample at Carers Lewisham when asked if they had disclosed their situation to their teachers the response from Carers was almost half and half with 47% (25) of Young Adult Carers reporting that either one or more of their teachers were aware that they were a Young Adult Carer. 49% (26) reported that teachers were not aware and 2 were not caring at the time that they were in education.

(Finished secondary school going into first year of College) “In the morning my brother had a school bus to collect him and Mum went to work early and I had to wait for the school bus which made me late. My teacher was only aware much later like when I had nearly finished school. So they didn’t realise. I would just say “sorry I am late” (where they understanding once they knew?) yeah.” Female 16

(Finished secondary school going into first year of College) “Yeah, I need support. I think I need... Because I had time of school from April to June not this year last year so I needed to catch up. (Why did you miss school?) Because I was moving and caring for my mum. Even when I went back I had time off. (Did the teachers know?) The teachers were aware but they didn’t help me to catch up some teachers were mean. The college I’m going to now know. I think at college mum knows I won’t be home as much. She’s trying to get the Carer to come more.” Female 16

27
(Just finished college looking for a full time job) (Did caring affect education?) “Probably concentration, because I was worrying about what was happening at home. I didn't tell teachers it didn’t really come up” Female 18

(Full time University) “Yeah, obviously you know hard to read, hard to study didn’t affect it too much but a little bit. No teachers aren’t aware it didn’t come up.” Female 20

(Full time College) “Teachers were aware. I informed them. It’s easier if they know what’s wrong so they can understand” Male 16

(Reflecting on when she was at school) “No support when I was at school. I was always late for school because I was bathing her. When I was supposed to be doing homework I was cooking. It was late nights and early mornings. School were not aware I was a Young Carer not sure if it would have helped” Female 23

(Open University course) “When my son’s not well if I have assignments that I can't hand in on time I can call them up and they are understanding about it because they know my son’s not well” Female 22

The main reason given for not disclosing this information to teachers was because Carers felt that it was personal and did not want to be treated differently. Although some did feel that with hindsight it may have benefited them if teachers had been aware of the difficulties they faced at home.

Some were unable to concentrate at school because they were worrying about what was going on at home while they were there. Only one Carer in the present sample experienced bullying at school, although he said that it was for other reasons.

Below are Young Adult Carers responses to the question “What support do you feel you need from education?”

(Full time College) “I don't know, help using the internet and help with work. Young Carers started writing to me when I was at college but it would have been more useful at school because I was off the rails when my mum had my little brother. I would have needed more support and people to talk to.” Female 18

(Full time College). “I don't really need support at college. Some teachers know but not the main ones. They seem to be supportive they don't really show any action they just know.” Female 18

(Full time College) “I dunno just obviously sometimes you can't focus on work because I have to do stuff at home. I don't think teachers know I'm a Carer.” (Would you like them to know do you think it would help?) “Yeah in some ways yeah.” Female 17

(Full time College) “Nothing that much I’m basically up to date. When I’m at college I’m basically focussing on there so I don’t need that much support. (Are teachers aware?) Yeah if I say I'm having trouble at home they will give me an extension” Female 17

(Full time College) “Yes it has effected school I think I could have done better...well during the time of AS exams which I’ve just done I couldn’t revise and obviously because of everything that was going on it was hard to concentrate during them. I'm not sure what Young Carers can do. I don’t know something like extra tuition maybe.” Female 17

(Finished school going to sixth form) “Not much really just support on days when I feel down really...both teachers and Carers group at school were very supportive.” Male 16
(Full time College and part time work) “General help if I'm finding something difficult. help from teachers or they should have mentors like I had at school ... (were the teachers aware you're a Young Carer?) ....no I don't think so...it is a bit stressful when it comes to exam time and revision... and concentrating.” Female 17

(Finished college and going to university) “I managed to get extra help because they've read all my records, I got extensions on my coursework and emotional help if I needed I could go to teachers but they did have a councillor as well. I went to see him twice, it was helpful he calmed me down and explained that I could cope. (How do you feel about going to University?) I feel it might affect me because of all the work but in a way I don't because I know I can get help from relationships and friends” Male 19

The recurring theme was that teachers should be more understanding and that there should be some form of emotional and practical support at school. In cases where teachers were not aware they were not given the opportunity to be understanding. However for some, teachers were aware and not understanding. Thus having professionals visit schools and inform and update teachers and pupils on the experience and needs of Young Adult Carers may be valuable. As would setting up Carers groups after school as some schools in Lewisham already do.

Work

For Young people getting a job is an important part of the transition period of growing up from a child to an adult and gaining independence. For Young people who are Carers having a job also allows them to pay their way around the home and further support the person they are caring for. Thus finding a job was a priority for most of the Young adults in the sample. However their lack of success in obtaining work so far was for many attributed to the present economic climate and the shortage of jobs throughout the UK.

Becker and Becker found that most of their sample aged 16-17 were not in paid employment. Only a couple reported that they had a part time (unskilled) job. Amongst the 18-24 year olds just under a third had a part time job as a means to getting additional money for themselves and their family. Only 3 were in full time employment. It is important to note however that the three in full time employment were out of a sample of 18-20 year olds. Due to their age many of them were still in some form of education and training thus limiting the likelihood of them being in employment. The reasons for Carers not having a job in these samples was strongly attributed to the conflicting demands of balancing caring, work and education.

A similar pattern emerged in the sample of Carers at Carers Lewisham as a total of ten (19%) Young Adult Carers were in part time employment; some of these were also studying. 2 (4%) were in full time employment and 8 (15%) were unemployed (not working or studying). Similar to education not all Young Adult Carers chose to disclose details of their caring responsibilities to their employers. However the stark difference in the results of these two studies is that most of the Carers in this sample that were unemployed and in education were actively seeking jobs and did not feel their caring responsibilities would hinder them in being able to work part time.

Of the 33 (62%) Young Adult Carers that were in full time education and not working, 18 had been unable to find a part time job, 9 were not looking for a part time job and 6 felt they were restricted by their caring responsibilities.

“Well at the moment it's sort of creating a problem because it's summer now, and if I get a job it's like who will look after my brother because mum has a job as well but that will get sorted out. My brother might be going to one of those like boarding schools. So it will get sorted out.” Female 16
Of the 8 Young Adult Carers that were unemployed (not studying or working) 4 been un able to find a job, 3 were restricted by their caring responsibilities, and 1 was unable to work due to looking after their own children.

Those in the sample who were working were able to do so because they shared their caring responsibilities with other people, the cared for person did not need full time support and/or their employers where understanding about them working flexible hours to fit around their caring responsibilities.

(Finished University and working part time in retail). “I’m lucky in a sense because I was very strong to finish Uni and get a good grade that’s my mentality I suppose. But I’m lucky at work because I’ve been in this job for a long time. There are days I can’t do. But I just think if I had a different job and my manager wasn’t as lenient things would be different. It does get me down but I just get on with it.” Female 24

(Part time work in Carpentry). “My boss is understanding like if I have to take a longer lunch break to pop home and see mum or pop home every now and again and I only work locally” Male 17

These findings indicate that perhaps support should focus on helping Young Adult Carers to find and apply for local part time jobs that fit around their responsibilities, rather than focussing on their inability to work due their caring responsibilities. With employers advertising flexible and casual jobs that are targeted at students and people with other commitments this should be possible.

**Careers advice**

**Connexions**

Connexions is a service for Young people aged 13-19, living in England and wanting advice on getting to where you want to be in life. It also provides support up to the age of 25 for Young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities (or both).

In contrast to Becker and Becker’s findings, most Young Adult Carers in Lewisham describe careers advice given to them by connections and other careers advisors useful and beneficial.

A number of Young Carers aged 16-17 in Becker and Becker’s sample reported they had poor career and job search advice from school, connexions or their local equivalent. 18-24 year olds valued good careers advice but their experience was variable. It was rare for a careers advisor to ask them if they had caring responsibilities and talk to them about how it would impact their career.

The current group of Young Adult Carers mainly reported positive experiences of their encounters with connexions or college careers advisors. 32 (60%) of the 53 Young Adult Carers had careers advice at some point in their lives and 21 (40%) had not. Of the 32 that had 25 (78%) found their advice and information helpful and 7 (22%) found it unhelpful. In conjunction with Becker and Becker’s findings it was rare for careers advisor to ask Young people about their caring responsibilities, however in a case were a Young adult Carer disclosed information about their caring role Carers advisors were helpful.
“Yeah from Connexions. They talked to me about my options when I left school and how it would fit around caring. I did find it helpful, Female 23

Reasons why they were helpful:

“Yeah from Connexions at College. It was really helpful because I’m going into business they went through how to set up my own business, and what to study at Uni and stuff” female 18

“I went to connexions personal advisor…well basically just asked them for advice on doing a CV and trying to find jobs and they went through it with me how to do a CV and applications and it was good” Female 16

“I recently went to careers advisor at College. Just talked about what available courses there were. It was helpful.” Male 19

“Had careers advice from Connexions when I was young when I was in school. They were helpful because I was a bit confused about what to do. I was confused about what job I wanted to do I thought it was something and it was actually something else and they explained what it was.” Female 23

“Yeah. Connexions…showed me how to write my CV. It was helpful I got a job interview using that CV” Female 18

Reasons why they were unhelpful:

“Yes once. They came to college. Not really helpful it was all stuff I already knew” Male 19

“Yeah Connexions not really helpful basically asked me what I was looking to do in my future life, the grades I was achieving we looked over career expectations possibilities. He was really annoying he wasn’t really listening to me. I told him I had my mind set on being a lawyer and he was trying to sway me to do something else, he wasn’t really listening.” Female 16

“Went to Connexions when teachers were telling me to drop the physics course so they could tell me if it was a good idea. Spoke to a lady who said she would call me back and she never did….. I told her I wanted to be an architect and wanted to find out how dropping physics would affect it. She never got back to me. I gave her my details” Male 18

“Yeah I have. Connexions.. It was okay I didn't find her that helpful she sort of seemed like she didn't want to be there wasn't very comfortable...asked her what job I wanted how I plan to get there and about University.” Female 17

Criticisms about Connexions were mainly about a particular careers advisor rather than the organisation itself. Many were pleased about the fact that connexions visited their school.

Suggestions of how than can improve:

“By seeing what people already know and then work around that” Male 19

“More services for people aged 23 and 24. Connexions for example say that you can’t use the computers if you are over 19.” Female 24
“I think Connexions could stretch the age. Because I think they only go up to 19 but other people need help as well” Female 22

“I only started to use them recently...probably publicise a bit more” Female 16

A few highlighted the age restrictions for using the connexions service. It may therefore be beneficial to have careers advisors offering a similar service in all Colleges and university to support Young people over the age of 19. These services would pick up those people who did not have careers advice when they were Younger.
**Relationships**

Dearden and Becker’s (2000) study highlights some of the complexities confronting Young Adult Carers in terms of making and maintaining relationships. The authors surmised that Young women were more likely to defer relationships or try to fit them alongside family responsibilities. They also found that only a minority of their sample reported having close relationships with their parents.

Becker and Becker reported strained and difficult relationships were evident for some of their sample in respect of their relationships with the person(s) being supported; with friends; or with starting or sustaining close or intimate relationships with others of a similar age. Over a third (9) of their sample reported having strained relationships with the person(s) that they were caring for. Becker and Becker were not surprised that caring lead to negative relationships in a minority of their sample as they explained that caring inhibits the natural pattern of Western development and in some cases creates a role reversal where the child feels more like the parent and the parent more like the child.

Young Adult Carers in the current study were asked how caring role and responsibilities has affected relationships in the family and friendships and relationships outside of the family. 18% (10) reported their caring role having a negative affect on relationships in their family. Becker and Becker (2008) did not make reference in their report to any Young Adult Carers reporting a positive impact of caring on relationships. In the present sample 28% (15) of the sample reported their caring role affecting their family relationship, in particular the relationship with the person that needed support in a positive way. This was because they inevitably spend more time with the cared for person, getting to know them and strengthening the bond between them. However as one would expect the consequence of this is often having less time to spend with their friends. This is reflected in the fact that 40% (21) of the sample reported that their caring role had a negative impact on their friendships. This was for two main reasons:

1. Young Adult Carers did not have as much free time as their peers putting a strain on the amount of time they could spend socialising with current friends and making new friends.
2. Young Adult Carers felt that due to being forced to grow up faster they were more mature than the people their age and therefore found it difficult to relate to them.

Interestingly 3 Young Adult Carers in the sample reported their caring role as having a positive effect on their friendships. This was because their friends found what they do admirable which strengthened their friendship, friends came round and helped with the caring responsibilities and because being a Carer made them want to take up hobbies through which they have made friends.

“*Well it makes me more like always want to do stuff...and by doing that I make a lot of friends... *(When you say stuff do you mean hobbies?)* Yeah” Female 18

“*Probably made us more of a unit. We’ve grown together. People outside the home well the Teacher now knows I’m a Carer she finds me more reliable and more responsible so people look at me differently. *(Is that friends as well?)* My friend is like wow I can’t believe you do this. I wouldn’t say she’s in ore I don’t know what word to use.... She finds it commendable.”* Female 16
“I don’t know it depends because some of the family are falling apart and some actually help. Where my mum's disabled she doesn’t really contact people and they don't contact her to take her out and things like that but some members of the family do. (What about friends?) It doesn’t affect that… I get friends who come round and help with the chores, do the hoovering and make coffee and roll fags…they are quite understanding” Male 17

Positive affect on family negative on friendships

Example C is a 16 year old female who has finished school and will soon be starting College. She has been caring for her mum who has Arthritis for nearly 2 years. It is only herself living at home.

“With my mum it’s brought us together because we are always together I spend more time with her but don’t spend as much time with friends because I’m always with her but because she's got a Carer when I’m at school. That helps but he only comes for an hour I would like more (what does he do?) He gives her medication and takes her out because she can’t go by herself and sometimes he does chores. (How long would you like him to come for?) Would like if he came 10 to 2 because I finished school at 3.”

“….it’s probably made my family closer and with friendships it tends to be more difficult because I tend to be more mature than a lot of people my age.” Female 17

Positive effect on relationships:

“I'm closer to my family. My friends all know about it and they are understanding.” Female 17

“Built a relationship stronger with mum. I don’t go out as much as other people my age but I’m not bothered. Friends are not aware I’m a Carer” Male 16

“Gotten me closer with my family and I’m more responsible than before.” Male 16

“Caring for them made my relationship with sister and mum closer. I hardly go out. Also I help my brother but not that much because he can do anything he can cook he doesn’t have a physical problem. The only friend I go to his house often was the friend that lives near college. When he left college I would call him and go over. I call my mum and let her know that I will come back home a bit late. She says it’s fine. He is aware I’m a Young Carer and always asks how’s your mum? I don’t talk to people about it unless we’re close.” Male 18

I Prefer friends not to know:

“Well my mum’s happy to have me as a Carer. She tells me how good I’ve been. Don’t really talk to friends about it ...friends don’t know I prefer them not to know.” Female 16
I’m not sure how friends will react:

“... it hasn’t really it’s brought the family closer. But I do find it hard bringing friends and girlfriends round I don’t think they will understand.” Male19

Strained relationships:

“I think it’s really made it stressful in the family...not really enough time for friends because I have to stay at home to keep an eye so things don’t go wrong. Friends are not aware I’m a Carer” Female 16

“I don’t go out very often and when I do go out I find it difficult to have fun because I’m always worrying about home. Its stressful in the family and I suppose its quite difficult for the person you’re caring for as well because they have to rely on you and they don’t want to.” Female 20

“I think the family it's difficult I think they didn’t really understand my brother not so much now but they used to be scared of him and didn’t really now how to deal with him. I think its affected friendships the most because I had less and less time to go out. I got more and more scared to go out so I think I’ve got the least friends now the worst social life. My worst fear for me is seeing my mum ill again ‘cause its stress related as well.” Female 20

“That’s the thing I don’t really have relationships outside the family because I’m always in the family. Even when I have relationships outside the family I can’t really give that relationship time. (What about in the family?) It has caused divides within the family” Female 21

“... with my friends it’s alright but then sometimes it’s bad because I don’t go out that often so they think I’m pushing them away. But they offer they say if it gets worse give me a call. With family it's the same thing basically look after me but tell me to look after myself” Female 17

“.... me and my father have got a lot closer which is sort of like inevitable. Social life well money's limited because I used to work and have money to do what I want. People don’t understand what you’re doing. They need to be in my position. Sometimes you feel run down and you go out and people don’t understand why you’re tired. They need put themselves in your shoes...realise you are responsible for another person, a vulnerable person as well. I know it sounds silly but you know all this swine flu stuff going around, well like friends invited me to a BBq but if my dad gets swine flu don’t want him to get it and die. I would feel guilty. Friends don’t understand that we can’t go certain places. I steer clear of social events” Female 24

“....it can put a strain on relationships because of the disability like my brother can be like other brothers but doesn’t know when to stop...and sometimes parents shout at me when I say go away...My parents try to make time alone with me but more time would be good” Female 16

Caring seemed to mainly have a negative impact on friendships as Young Adult Carers had less time to go out with them and some were uncomfortable inviting them round to their house. Young Carers projects are extremely valuable to Carers under 18 as they can attend regular activities, socialise and make friends. Having activities and groups for Young Adult Carers at the centre would similarly help Young Adult Carers to meet new people and make friends. Many Young Adult Carers mentioned that they did not have enough time to go out with friends because of their caring responsibilities. Carers Lewisham could offer a sitting service for these Carers whilst they attend activities at the centre, allowing those who would not normally be able to go out a much deserved break from their caring even if only for a few hours.
Financial needs

Educational Maintenance Allowance

EMA is a means-tested benefit designed to support Young people from low income families to remain in education or specified training programmes. Young people aged 16-18 can claim it and based on parental income they can receive up to £30 per week (England). The benefit is available in other UK countries too.

Becker and Becker (2008) findings

Most of Becker and Becker’s sample of Young Adult Carers were in low income families, while some of the parents were in employment most relied on benefits and the majority of the Young Adult Carers who had been to college received EMA (educational maintenance allowance) which was an important source of income for them. Carer’s families often have additional costs (because of illness in the family and caring). For example additional costs of using public transport to take the cared for person to appointments, to do and carry shopping and paying for medication (Becker 2008).

Becker and Becker highlighted Young Adult Carers’ barrier to paid work. While Becker and Becker found that to a large extent the reason why most Young Adult Carers didn’t have paid work is explained by the fact that there was very little ‘spare’ time over and above caring responsibilities, school, college and other teenage interests, to actually go out and find or get a job, or keep it. In the sample of Young Adult Carers at Carers Lewisham those who did not have a job said it was not because of their caring responsibilities instead they have been unable to find one because of the current economic climate. Many of the Carers in the sample said that they would be able to work part time around their caring, school and college.

Becker found that his sample were drawn to local jobs rather than the best jobs for convenience, and Young Carers aged 16-17 were drawn towards caring professions, such as nursing, health and social care.

Many of the 16-17 year olds in Becker and Becker’s sample said that they would value information and advice about paid work, help in developing a CV, personal statement and other job-search skills. When Carers reach 16+ interest in paid work increases as a source of income but also to get a break from caring.
Financial Hardship for Carers aged 18-24 years

In common with other research Becker and Becker found that these Young Adult Carers experience significant financial hardships due to living in low income families with illness and disabilities. The majority of the sample were living in families reliant on state benefits for their income.

Carers allowance

Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance is payable to those aged 16 or over who spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person getting Attendance Allowance, or Disability Living Allowance (at the middle or highest rate for personal care), or Constant Attendance Allowance (at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension). Carers Allowance is not payable to anyone in full-time education with 21 hours or more a week of supervised

None of Becker and Becker’s sample were in receipt of Carers allowance and less than a handful were aware of its existence. The criteria for Carers allowance can work against those who are seeking to combine caring with studying for further qualifications or training.

Carers Lewisham findings

Finances appeared to be a prominent theme amongst the Carers that Becker and Becker researched and many of the Young Adult Carers in the sample at Carers Lewisham expressed the need for financial support when asked what area of their lives that they still needed support. Despite this, a considerable number of Young Adult Carers did not know much about their family’s financial situation (this is reflected in only 15% reporting they provide financial support a lot of the time). It seems responsibility for the family’s finances is still retained by many of the parents of Carers in the sample even when they are suffering from physical or mental ill-health. Young Adult Carers In the sample where asked about their financial situation and how they could be supported.

Has caring affected you financially?

“I had a job. It probably has. I had the internet before but now it’s harder to find a job. Stopped having the internet because of financial things.” Female 18

Have you experienced any financial hardships?

“We have done. After we finish paying the mortgage and bills there’s nothing else. I guess a bit extra because I’m part time working I should still get Carers allowance...... I can’t receive Carers allowance because I’m earning just over the cut off. I used to receive it” Female 24 (caring for mum with MS for 4-5 years)
What financial help do you feel you need?

“Financial support to do the shopping and stuff like that. We would like more money for food and bills.” Male 16

“Help with getting computers and activities to do, places to go during the holiday. Thing is when you do courses you need materials and help with that and within the house as well would be good.” Female 18

“I need help myself. My dad obviously gets his money and stuff he tries to help me but obviously he has things to pay for like paying for a house. And stuff but I’m not getting anything. I think its wrong people are not working and getting money and they don’t care for their children that much they just care about how much money they’re getting. And people like us caring are not getting anything. Something even if it’s just £20 a week. Just to make me feel good, even just a fiver to buy flowers just to feel appreciated by the government because I feel like their attitude is well you chose to do it so just get on with it. I don’t think it’s fair the way the money is distributed. I thought it’s a disgrace anyway before I became a Carer and now I am one I think its worse.” Female 24 (caring for father who has had an amputation and diabetes and she is part time employed)

“Nothing really....maybe a little like coz there are like stuff that I want to get for school...getting EMA and it helps” Female 18

“I need money for school materials for when I go back to college because they don’t give you the books when you go to college.” Female 16

“Well I do need financial support because obviously have to give mum house keep only earn minimum wage and that has to go to mum and can’t use it on what I need like going out and having fun. Just like £10 a week or something just to help.” Male 17

“It will help with bills so I can help mum and help the family because moneys really tight round here now” Female 16

23 (43%) of the sample where living in families relying on benefits as their income. 15 (28%) Young Adult Carers were not sure if their cared for person received any benefits. 2 Young Adult Carers were receiving Carers allowance.

Carers in the sample do not appear to be taking on as much financial responsibility as the Young Adult Carers in Becker and Becker’s sample. However they describe similar hardships, mainly with school materials and shopping for the house. It could be argued that financial support brings greater responsibility than other types of support because it affects the whole family. Thus it is possible that parents are trying to protect their children from having to take on that level of responsibility at such a Young age. It is important that Young Adult Carers are made aware of what financial support is available to them and the person they are caring for, given good careers guidance and that schools are supportive in assisting pupils that cannot afford to buy the materials needed.
Leaving home and transitioning

Leaving Home

It was evident that leaving home was not an option for most of the Young Adult Carers in the current sample.

Young Adult Carers were asked ‘Do you have any plans to leave home?’

“I want to leave home but I can’t imagine mum on her own. (How could you be supported?) If a family member could stay with her. I wouldn’t like if someone from outside came in.” Female 17

“For university yeah. Not comfortable because it would mean more time away from mum. And I won’t know what’s going on. When I’m away from her I worry and in fact she will be more dependent on me. So I would like support to help with leaving home.” Female 16

“No I was going to leave for university but I’m still kind of considering it. I have a friend who goes to Uni and she said I could move in with her but I will basically stay at home most of the time.” Female 17

“At the moment no but I was offered an army package but last minute decision turned it down I couldn’t leave home because mum wouldn’t be able to cope on her own. Male 17

“At the moment its doubtful…wouldn’t want to leave my mum with anybody else”. Male 19

“I can’t imagine moving out right now. Its difficult seeing friends move on feels like they’re growing up and moving on and I’m missing out. I think the only friends that understand are the ones that have children already.” Female 20

Becker and Becker found that for all the Young Adult Carers in their sample leaving home was important for independence. Many were unable to leave home until much later than they would have wanted to and for the Carers who did move away they would constantly worry about the cared for person, resume their responsibilities when they were home for the summer and would live nearby so that they could resume caring responsibilities at short notice. The majority of Becker and Becker’s sample were living at home and a minority had moved away temporarily for university.

For the Young Adult Carers at Carers Lewisham leaving home was just as important

“(Left home briefly for 2 and a half years) it was refreshing also felt more responsible as well when I was away. It was a good experience” Male 22

All but two of the Young Adult Carers that were either already at university or planning to start university are going to local universities so that they are available if they are needed. A small minority of Young Adult Carers had moved out permanently but they too live nearby and visit the cared for person regularly.
Example D is a 21 year old female and is caring for her mother who suffers from severe depressions. She moved out of the family home to look after her son. “I did feel uncomfortable leaving but I go to see mum everyday anyway” She explained how even though she has moved away caring is still very much a part of her life and affects her financially as well as restricting her social life. “No I don’t really have free time. The thing is when I go to my mum’s house everyday it takes up so much money and time so when I want to go out I don’t have any time left.”

(How do you feel about leaving home?) “I would be alright with that. The only thing that would bother me is finding somewhere nearby because I wouldn't go too far.” Female 23

(Do you have any plans to leave home?):

“Maybe but I would prefer to be nearer home to help mum” Female 18

“Yeah for university I think I'm going to stay on campus... In London, nearer so I can help out” Female 16

For those that shared their caring responsibilities with other people gaining independence was not as difficult

“Yeah going travelling in about 7 months (How do you feel about it?) Okay My sister will be there for mum” Female 18

Transitioning

Becker and Becker discovered that some Young Adult Carers found the transition period from being a Young Carer (under 18) to becoming a Young Adult Carer (over 18) difficult because responsibilities and demands from their family increase. Also they are unable to attend Young Carer projects where they have formed bonds and found somewhere to have a break from their caring. There is little evidence that Young Carers projects prepare Young Carers for this end to services. Most Carers in the focus group identified their need for what they termed a Young Carers plus+ this would be a group with an older upper age limit or a separate group for Carers aged 18+. Whatever the mechanism this would group would offer advice and information about further and higher education, careers, jobs, job search skills, CVs, money, advice etc.

This idea was put to the Carers in the current research study. The majority reported a keen interest in a group for Carers of their age to take over from the Young Carers project. They described their experiences of transitioning and how they could be supported.

“In a way it was kind of challenging but more fun because you got to learn more stuff. It was challenging kind of having to grow up faster than you normally would. (How about the Young Carer activities?) I kind of felt as I got older they weren’t as suitable for the older lot. (What could we do for older Carers?) archery and stuff like that most of the
people I’ve spoke to that are Carers say they’d like to do archery or go away for a weekend like to a climbing wall campsite. (What do you think of a Young Adult Carers group on Facebook?) Yeah sounds good I’m on Facebook and messenger” Male 19

“Responsibilities do increase because I’m the oldest in the house I’m like the second mum. Like even when I’m out I’m thinking about them I feel like there all mine. (How could you have been supported?) “I suppose if I hadn’t have been so shy and I met people in a similar situation I would feel better, because I am the only one out of my friends. But at the time I wasn’t thinking about it like that” Female 20.

“I suppose you get relied on more as you get older never went to activities in the first place. (Why?) Time and not that interested.” Female 20

“Definitely because obviously the demands on your time from studying increase when you are studying, demands on your time are much greater at that age as opposed to when you were Younger.” Female 22

“Well I mean you just have to talk about changes as a family. (How did it feel not being able to go to activities?) It was daunting because it was somewhere to go. (How would you feel about regular events for your age group and got any ideas?) That would be good Film club, Dance, Days out, (What do you think about setting up a Young Adult Carers group on Facebook?) That would appeal to me and I’m on Facebook.” Female 19

“It’s not too bad I don’t really use the services too much I think I’m a bit old for that…I used to go like macaroni woods…the summer one’s biking and all that and kayaking…(Why don’t you go even though you’re 17 and can still go?) Other people should get to go because I’ve been there other people would enjoy it more than me…I have a busy schedule I don’t feel I need to get away from him as much now” Male 17

“…. I would actually like…. when you’re 18 they say you’re not a Young Carer anymore. I think that’s unfair. I think not matter what age you are you still need to be around that environment and get that support. (If they continued after 18ys would the activities still appeal to you?) Actually some of the activities are actually fun like when they take you canoeing and activities. Like in house activities like workshops probably wouldn’t appeal to me at that age. But the outdoor ones are good like Macaroni woods. (What support would help?) I would say probably if Carers stay in contact and find out how we are doing and just to still contact us and let us know when their doing certain things. I see Young Carers as kind of like a family so stay in contact.” Female 16

“As you get older you do feel more responsible and get more aware of domestic tasks and finance and continuous bills you think is this what being an adult is? so I think for 18 year olds it must have been a struggle.” (How could you have been supported?) I think they should have classes I know it sounds silly… and teach them how to do things. Like cleaning and stuff how to budget finances and just like how to become an adult in a sense. Because for me I didn’t have anyone to teach me I just taught myself.” Female 24

“Transitioning was like I was given more responsibility like in the household. As with the Carers there was little done I got a letter saying you were 18 but haven’t heard of any services available (How could you have been supported?) I would like to feel that just because I’m 18 I am less of a Carer. Sometimes I feel that now I am 18 there is less attention and feel as if I am less important when I am not.” Female 18
Young Carers Project

*How do you feel about not being able to go to Young Carer activities anymore?*

“It will be a bit hard because I talk to some of the other Carers they’ll be saying I did this and I did that and I’m basically sitting at home but I am going to volunteer so hopefully still see them.” **Female 17**

“Not really bad because I thought I would still be part of the activities. I went there (Young Carers project) and they said that I can’t anymore because I’m 18 I felt kind of bad because I really liked the activities. *(what activities did you do?)*. Climbing, canoeing, another activity with lots of people” **Male 18**

Young Adult Carers in Lewisham feel that their needs are not recognised as much as much when they turn 18. They describe Young Carer projects as giving them a break and time off. This important aid is taken away from them when they become adults. Some support with this transition is needed even if it is simply a telephone call. More desirable a Young Adult Carers project to ensure the support is ongoing.
Leisure and socialising

It is inevitable that Young Adult Carers will have less time free time than their peers. This is due to them needing to be available to support the cared for person. Young Adult Carers were asked if they felt they had enough or any free time and what they liked to do in their spare time, or what they would like to do if they had more free time. Whether or not Carers had free time depended very much on whether or not they were the only Carer or they shared responsibilities with others. Similar to Becker and Becker’s findings Young Carers projects were extremely valuable to Young Adult Carers because of it provides an opportunity to meet people, socialise and go on trips and days out.

Becker and Becker found that restricted social and leisure time in their sample was due to a mixture of insufficient time, money, and for some living in rural locations a lack of transport.

28 (53%) Young Adult Carers feel they do not have enough free time, 21 (40%) feel they do and 4 (7%) feel they have no free time.

“Not as often as I would like to but then I can't be selfish. When I do I like going to friends houses or sports.”
Female 24

Figure 11

Chart to show how much free time Young Adult Carers feel they have
Free time often fits around the cared for person’s needs:

“Well I do and I don’t like sometimes if I wanna go out obviously I make sure I do stuff for my mum in the day so I can go out or I go out early and do it when I get back I do all sports really, go to go karts I dunno most of the time go park, play football and chill out with friends really.” Male 17

Some Young Adult Carers feel guilty for wanting free time:

(Do you feel you have any free time?)

“More now but I would have to ignore the guilt. I feel really guilty leaving them. More so in the day I don't mind going out at night because they're all sleeping” Female 20

As there is no easy way to provide Carers with more free time, it would be sensible to try and relieve Carers of their duties for a short time once or twice a month, through Carers Lewisham’s sitting service. During this time Young Adult Carers can attend sessions (such as a film club) at the Carers centre whilst a sitter looks after the person they are caring for. This will be an opportunity to socialise be it only once in a while and for many, this will be a much appreciated break from caring responsibilities with a group of people who share a similar goal.
Results of Focus Group and Questionnaire

- All of the Young Adult Carers were registered on the social networking website called ‘Facebook’ and said that they would make use of a group set up as a means to keep in contact with Carers Lewisham and advertise events.

- 8 Young Adult Carers are interested in volunteering to help plan and organise events.

- Half of the Young Adult Carers needed support with future plans in particular to do with educational aid, financial aid, and career choices.

- Young Adult Carers in the Focus Group felt as if they did not have enough free time and appreciated events held by Carers Lewisham giving them a chance to have a break.

- One theme that was discussed was the notion suggested by Becker and Becker that Carers aged 16-18 and Carers aged 18-24 have different needs, the Carers over 18 in the focus group felt that they did have separate interests and should separate them into two separate groups. One example is the film club that was popular with all of the Young Adult Carers in the Focus Group, there is a difference in the types of films people under 18 and over 18 watch, therefore it may prove difficult finding a film that suits everyone in the group.

- It was clear from speaking to the Young Adults that attended the focus Group that their vision of support at this time is very different from adults. Many adult Carers seek comfort in attended caring related sessions at the centre where they are able to share feelings and strategies with one another. However Young Adult Carers like activities that allow them to have a break from their responsibilities at home, be creative and socialise, rather than talking about their caring role with others.

- Perhaps once a core group of Young Adult Carers that meet regularly is established and they feel comfortable with each other they will share feelings and strategies nevertheless this does not seem like a probable starting point.

- Young Adult Carers spoke about the need to improve understanding and awareness in schools. In their opinion schools are the most sensible place to start when engaging Young Adults with services. They suggested poster and information about Carers and Carer activities in schools and speaking to staff and pupils about Young Adult Carers.
Activity ideas

The Young adults in the sample suggested the following when asked what future events and activities they would like Carers Lewisham to set up:

Main Interviews

- Roller Disco
- Theme park
- Camping
- Sports
- Get pampered
- Get nails painted
- Cookery
- Barbeque
- Music concert/festival, dance,
- Bowling
- Paintballing
- Day trip
- Cinema
- Ice skating
- Go Karting
- Adventure in the woods
- Beach
- Quad Biking

Focus Group/Questionnaire

- Film Club
- Gaming nights (games consoles)
- Holidays and trips out
- Pool and Snooker nights
- Music nights/DJ time
- Football
- Internet time
- First aid
- Drama/Dance Clubs
- Cooking Club/Classes/competition
- Theme Parks
- Theatre trips
- Ice Skating
- Horse riding
- Youth Club
- Drawing Class/Club
- Residential trip

A few activities were mentioned both during interviews and the focus group and questionnaires, like Theme parks, film clubs, sports, ice skating, cooking, music and dance related activities.
Outcomes

1. As a result of this research there have been a few positive changes to the services at Carers Lewisham. The idea of a regular film club was mentioned and endorsed by many of the Young Adult Carers that took part in the research. It was felt that a film club would be a good way for Young Adult Carers to get to know each other in a relaxed environment and does not require as much preparation as other activities mentioned. As a result the 1st Young Adult Carer Film Club has been organised. Young Adult Carers will watch an old film, be provided with snacks and have an opportunity to talk after the film. If this is successful, the Young Adult Carers that have volunteered can keep in going at a time that is convenient for them under the supervision of a member of staff.

2. Another outcome of the study is that a Carers Lewisham Young Adult Carers group has been created on a social networking website. This group allows Young Adult Carers to talk to other Carers, view news and updates from Carers Lewisham, be invited to events and post photographs and ideas.

3. Lastly Carers Lewisham now has 10 Young Adult Carers engaged with their services, and are optimistic that this number will grow with the help of Young Adult Carer volunteers, and their staff's greater understanding of the specific wants and needs of Young Adult Carers living in Lewisham.
Recommendations and Conclusions

1. Now that Carers Lewisham have a small number of Young Adult Carers engaged with their service they should try to keep in contact with these Carers so that they do not disengage again. If Carers Lewisham Encourage these Young Adult Carers to help organise the events themselves, it should help to maintain their relationship with them, as Young Adult Carers will have something to look forward to and know that they contributed to the outcome.

2. Explore funding opportunities so that a Young Adult Carers project can be introduced, tried and tested to see if it receives a good response. If this is not possible or unsuccessful existing Young Carers project need to put a system in place that prepares Young Adult Carers for their transition into adulthood. This should include a telephone call when they reach 18 letting Young Adult Carers know that Carers Lewisham is still there to support them. Preparation plans should be tailored towards individual Carers needs. This could include information about careers and future plans, information on benefits, skills classes (i.e. cooking), support with university applications, leaving home and ongoing emotional support.

3. As many Young Adult Carers feel they need financial support Carers Lewisham should either send Young Adult Carers leaflets explaining what if any support they are eligible for, including information about EMA. Should Carers Lewisham receive funding they may be able to set up a session specifically for Young Adult Carers to help them with financial support.

4. Now that Carers Lewisham know what activities and events appeal to their Young Adult Carers they should organise regular activities and trips with the help of Young Adult Carer volunteers.

5. Carers Lewisham already offer advice and coping strategy sessions for their Carers. Should they receive funding they will have the time and resources to hold advice sessions specifically for Young Adult Carers on topics of their choice.

6. Should Carers Lewisham receive funding they will have the time and resources to visit all of the local Schools and talk to teachers and pupils. It would also be beneficial to leave leaflets and posters to make people aware of their service. This will give Carers already registered with the charity a clear idea of what support is available and may even pick up people that have been caring but did not know that they were eligible for support.

7. Most Young Adult Carers are in education, will visit health professionals, and will have Careers advice at some point in their lives. Carers Lewisham should continue to liaise with GP’s, Schools, Colleges, Universities and Connexions to make them aware of this gap in the service, so that it becomes standard practice that they provide people with information about Carers Lewisham as soon as they realise that
someone is a Carer. This is particularly important for Young Adult Carers as many of them have been caring for most of their lives and do not necessarily know that they are a Carer.

8. Services need to address Carers wishes for careers and job search advice beyond the age of 19. A similar service should be put into place for Young Adult Carers aged 19+

There has been little research so far into the needs and experiences of Young Adult Carers, yet these Carers are in need of support and guidance especially because they are juggling their caring responsibilities with increased demands on their time which comes with getting older. The little research there is however, provides strong evidence for their need for support and guidance. This report is no exception as it describes and highlights these Carers experience, support and needs and recommendations for supporting these Carers.

Young Adult Carers in Lewisham describe both positive and negative aspects of being a Carer. For many caring has had a significant emotional impact on them. Young Adult Carers in Lewisham mainly feel that they are being supported by their family. Very few feel supported by an organisation. The few that felt supported by Carers Lewisham mentioned that the support was in the form of the Young Carers projects which is temporary support taken away from them when they turn 18. Some sought comfort in receiving regular newsletters from Carers Lewisham despite them not using the service.

The findings of this research show that Young Adult Carers feel that they still need support financially, at school, College, University and work, making decisions, with leisure and transitioning and getting a break.

Young Adult Carers do not fit neatly into children services or adult services and therefore fall into a hidden group of Carers and unless they are picked up and their needs are addressed they will continue to drift out of sight. It is hoped that this report will contribute to understanding the needs of Young Adult Carers and changes to services for Young Adult Carers living in Lewisham.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1

Young Adult Carers Project Interview Schedule

Family Set up and Background?
- Update and clarify Carer’s details? Who they are caring for? Care needs? How long they have been caring? Address?

Demographics?

Experience of caring?
- What has your experience of being a Young Adult Carer been like? (Probe: How does it make you feel physically/mentally/Emotionally)?

Needs and Support?
- What are your caring responsibilities? (Domestic tasks, Household management, Personal care, Emotional care, Sibling care, Financial/practical care)
- In what specific areas of your life do you feel you need help and support in caring for x?
- What support do you feel you are getting and from where? (Probe: school, work, charities, health services, etc)
- How can these services improve the support they are giving you?
- Do you feel that you know what services are available for Young Adult Carers and how to contact them?
- How could they make themselves more easily accessible or known?

Education/Work/Aspirations?
- Are you studying or working?
How has your caring role affected education or work? (Probe: Has your caring responsibilities stopped you from working or developing pursuing career goals)
How could you be supported?
- Are your school/college/university/work aware that you are a Young Adult Carer/ of your needs?
- Are they understanding about your needs?

- Have you had any career advice? (E.g. from connexions) has this been useful? If not why? How can they improve?
Relationships?
- How has your caring role affected relationships in your family and relationships outside of the family?
(Probe: has it made you stronger/has it caused arguments or divides?)
- Are your friends aware and understanding of your role as a Young Carer?

Finances?
- Are you or the person you care for receiving financial support?
- Have you experienced any financial hardships?
- What financial support do you feel that you need?

Leaving Home and Transitioning
-(Under 18) Do you feel you have enough/need support for the transition from a child to a Young Adult?
-(Over 18) Do you feel you had enough/needed support to help you with the transition from being a child to a Young Adult?
- Do you have plans to leave home (either permanently or for university) and how do you feel about it?
- How could you be better supported in leaving the family home?

Leisure and Socialising?
- Do you have any free time or many opportunities to go out?
- If not what sort of things do you wish you could do if you had free time?

Event
- Mention the event that we are organising and ask them what they would like to do?
Appendix 2

Share your Ideas Questionnaire!

Please complete this and pop it into the box on the main table and be in with a chance to win chocolates!

1. What is your name? Mobile number (optional)

2. Are you on Facebook? Yes no

3. Are you on another Social networking site please specify?

4. Would you join a ‘Carers Lewisham Young Adult Carers Group’ on Facebook or other site which advertises events?
   Yes no

5. What regular session could we set up at our centre that you would attend?
   E.g. film club? Cooking classes? Etc?

6. What would be the best time/ day for this?

7. What future events would you like us to organise for Young Adult Carers? E.g. Thorpe park, Go karting etc..

Have you got lots of ideas? We need a group of volunteer Young Adult Carers to meet up to discuss and help organise future Young Adult Carer events!

8. Would you be interested in doing this? Yes no

9. What else could we offer you at Carers Lewisham that would be helpful to you as a Young Adult Carer?

Any other comments

Thank You Enjoy the Barbeque!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1: Pie Chart show the ages of Young Adult Carers in the sample</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: Bar Chart to show the percentage of male and female Carers in the sample</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Bar Chart to show how many Young Adult Carers from different ethnic backgrounds took part in the study.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Bar Chart to show the number of different family members cared for by Young Adult Carers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5: Pie Chart to show percentage Cares with different needs (due to physical, mental ill health, learning difficulties or because they are old and frail).</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6: Bar Chart to show Young Adult Carers Employment statuses</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7: Bar Chart to show how long Young people have been caring for in percentages</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8: Bar Chart to show how often Young Adult Carers engaged in different caring tasks during the last 4 weeks</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9: Pie Chart to show the number of times Young Adult Carers received different types of support</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10: Bar chart to show the number of times Young Adult Carers mentioned different types of support they were still in need of</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11: Pie Chart to show how much free time Young Adult Carers feel they have in percentages</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank and acknowledge all of the Young Adult Carers who took part in this research. Without their honesty and time this report would not have been possible. It is hoped that the report reflects the experiences of life as a Young Adult Carer and contributes in some way to supporting them.

Thank you to Diana Jones for deciding on the need for this research to take place and for her supervision throughout.

Audience

This report will be presented at a Management Board; it will be sent to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers; presented to Carers Multi Agency Partnership Board; and used to put in a lottery bid for funding.