

# Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into practice

## Key Briefing – Local Authorities and Engagement with Health

### Introduction

**Carers Trust** and **The Children's Society** delivered a one year Department for Education funded programme between April 2015 and March 2016 to support local authorities develop collaborative, whole family models that effectively implement their duties toward young carers and their families as set out in the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014. This series of **Making a Step Change: Putting it into practice** briefings draws on practical examples in undertaking these duties to identify, assess and support young carers and their families within a whole family approach.

### Summary

Understanding the caring roles and challenges faced by young carers is essential. Studies and anecdotes have looked at the impact of caring roles on the physical and mental health of young carers and found staggering results.

Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have a special educational need or disability.<sup>1</sup> Boys under the age of 24 who are young carers are twice as likely as their peers to report 'not good health' (7.7% cf 3.7%) and girls over 2.5 times as likely as their peers to report 'not good health' (9.4% cf 3.6%).<sup>2</sup> In one local authority, it was found that 11% of young carers sustained an injury due to their caring role with less than half having told their GP they were caring for anyone. 35% said they thought their health had worsened due to their caring role, while 35% also experienced the symptoms of an eating disorder.<sup>3</sup>

The findings of many surveys reveal that young carers are not making their health a priority and are not aware of the impact that caring has on their health and well-being; however, no national research exists on the long-term effects that caring has on young people's health. Health professionals, children's and adults' services, community organisations and acute services therefore have a key role in identifying

and supporting the health and wellbeing needs of young carers, now and into the future.

## Legislation, Guidance & Strategy

In 2010, the Government's National Carers Strategy identified "supporting carers to remain physically and mentally well" as a key priority area, and recognized that more should be done to identify and support young carers in particular.<sup>4</sup> This commitment was followed in April 2015 by new legislation in the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 that required local authorities to assume new duties related to young carers and their families.

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 asserts that "local authorities must carry out their care and support responsibilities with the aim of joining-up the services provided, or other actions taken, with those provided by the NHS and other health-related services (for example, housing or leisure services)".<sup>5</sup>

The local authority is not solely responsible for promoting integration, however; similar duties are placed on NHS England and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to promote integration with care and support under the NHS Act. "NHS England must encourage partnership arrangements between CCGs and local authorities where it considers this would ensure the integrated provision of health services and that this would improve the quality of services or reduce inequalities."

## Putting it into Practice

Local Authority Trailblazers from the *Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into Practice* project have demonstrated innovative ways of integrating health services into a whole family, whole council, whole system approach to supporting young carers and their families.

**Surrey** Young Carers have developed support packs for young carers visiting their relatives in mental health wards. Funded by Virgin Care and Surrey County Council, these rucksacks aim to improve understanding about mental health for young carers and help facilitate dialogue between children, parents and healthcare professionals about the impact of parental mental health on children.

The content of the rucksacks was decided by the Surrey Young Carers Forum:

- Earphones, felt tips and a doodle book, and a connect 5 game
- Age specific books about mental health: 'Minds, myths and me' 6 for ages 12 and up and 'It's about you too' 7 for ages 6 – 12 years.
- 'Safe, sorted and supported' - a guide to help young people plan ahead.<sup>8</sup>
- 'Making time to talk' – an advice booklet for parents with mental health concerns.<sup>9</sup>
- Resources from Virgin Care – Information on "First steps" and 'Carers Club'.<sup>10</sup>
- A simple evaluation form for the young person to complete.

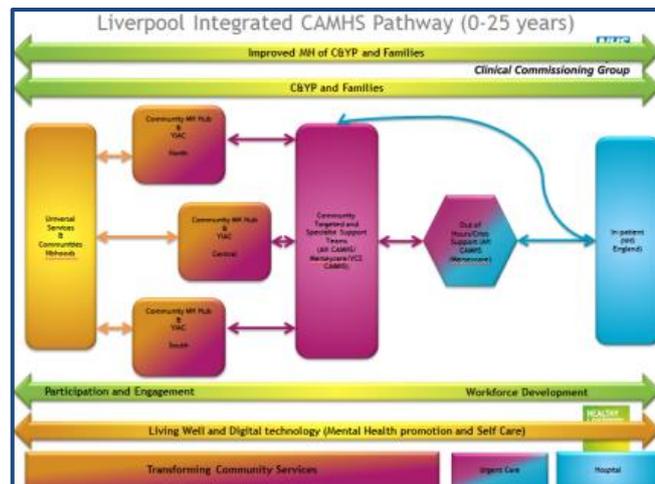
Surrey have incorporated the principles of the Triangle of Care for Young carers into their action plan which is monitored by their Carers Action Group in the Trust. They are working with young carers to develop information packs that are age appropriate,

a young carers web page and information on medication. Young carers packs have been developed for use on the wards when young carers visit family. Members.

**Surrey NHS** have developed their own **young carers pathway** where young carers who are identified are (generally) referred through to the young carers service by the completion of an **online 'carer prescription'**. GPs are also registering all carers including young carers and 167 young carers have been registered to date. GP registration is being facilitated by school nurses.

The **Liverpool Integrated CAMHS Pathway**<sup>1</sup> is a partnership of funded services commissioned by NHS Liverpool CCG, and works together to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, and their families. These partners are:

- Merseyside Youth Association
- Alder Hey CAMHS
- Barnardo's Action with Young Carers
- Young Person's Advisory Service
- Gay Youth Are Out
- ADHD Foundation
- PSS Spinning World
- ADDvanced Solutions
- Mersey Care Trust
- LivPIP
- Bullybusters



The partnership employs a multi-agency virtual approach, where all providers have partnership agreements in place to offer joint assessments and support for young people and their families. Young carers are integral to the pathway, and are involved in the development, design and delivery of workforce training, resources and awareness-raising.

## Next Steps

- Contact your Clinical Commissioning Groups to ask about their commitments to carers.
- Ask your school nurses about their identification and support of young carers.
- Implement or refer to your local NHS Memorandum of Understanding<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See An integrated approach to identifying and assessing Carer health and wellbeing NHS England (2016)

## Tools & Resources

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- <sup>2</sup> Census 2011, *Office for National Statistics*. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/detailedcharacteristics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/index.html>
- <sup>3</sup> Hustings, D. ***Surrey Young Carers Health Survey Report 2013***. Guildford and Waverley CCG. <http://carersworldradio.ihoststudio.com/ycreport/surrey%20young%20carers2.pdf>
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- <sup>5</sup> Department of Health. ***Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014***. 2014 London: Crown. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/366104/43380\\_23902777\\_Care\\_Act\\_Book.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366104/43380_23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf)
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- <sup>7, 8, 9</sup> Support in Mind Scotland. ***It's about you too***. <https://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk/its-about-you-too-a-guide-for-children-who-have-a-parent-with-a-mental-illness>. ***Safe, sorted and supported***. [http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Safe-Sorted-Supported\\_Low-Res1.pdf](http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Safe-Sorted-Supported_Low-Res1.pdf). ***Making time to talk***. <https://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk/making-time-to-talk-advice-for-parents-with-mental-illness> .
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- <sup>11</sup> Liverpool CAMHS <http://liverpoolcamhsfyi.com/about-liverpool-camhs/>
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Helen Leadbitter and Katherine Istead on behalf of Making a step change: Putting it into practice

April 2016