

Making a
step change for young carers
and their families
prevention, intervention and partnership

Making a Step Change for Young Carers and their Families: Putting it into Practice Final Evaluation Report




Making a Step Change for Young Carers and their Families: Putting it into Practice Final Evaluation Report



Acknowledgements

This publication was commissioned by Carers Trust and The Children's Society as a result of the Making a step change programme. Making a step change is funded by the Department for Education 2015/16.




ECORYS  Author: James Whitley, Senior Research Manager, Ecorys

Published by

Carers Trust
32–36 Loman Street
London SE1 0EH

Tel: 0300 772 9600
Email: info@carers.org

Carers.org
matter.carers.org
babble.carers.org
<http://professionals.carers.org>


 www.facebook.com/CarersTrust
 www.twitter.com/CarersTrust
 www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust

Carers Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1145181) and in Scotland (SC042870). Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 7697170. Registered office: 32–36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EH.

© Carers Trust 2016 unless stated otherwise.
All library photos posed by models.

The Children's Society
Unit 4, Calford House
Wessex Business Park
Wessex Way
Colden Common
SO21 1WP

www.childrenssociety.org.uk
www.youngcarer.com
www.makewav.es/ycif

 [@childrensociety](https://twitter.com/childrensociety)
 www.facebook.com/childrensociety

The Children's Society is a registered charity number 221124. Registered Office: Edward Rudolf House, Margery Street, London, WC1X 0JL.

Contents

Introduction	2
Part 1: Evaluation of trailblazer activity	8
1 Collaborative whole family approaches	8
2 Identification of young carers	18
3 Assessment and support services	22
4 Measures to assess impact	31
5 Working collaboratively with schools	34
6 Working collaboratively with health services	41
Part 2: Evaluation of the Making a step change programme	45
Conclusion, recommendations and next steps	48
References	55
Further information	56

Introduction

This is the third and final report¹ from an evaluation, undertaken by Ecorys and commissioned by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, of Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into practice (hereafter referred to as Making a step change).²

About Carers Trust

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with a UK wide network of quality assured independent partners, through our unique online services and through the provision of grants to help carers get the extra help they need to live their own lives. With locally based Network Partners we are able to support carers in their homes through the provision of replacement care, and in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. We offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

Our vision is of a world where the role and contribution of **unpaid carers** is recognised and they have access to the trusted quality support and services they need to live their own lives.

¹ The first and second reports are available at: makingastepchange.info/project-learning/project-evaluations

² See makingastepchange.info

About The Children's Society

The Children's Society is a leading children's charity committed to making childhood better for all children in England. We fight for change, supporting disadvantaged children to have better lives.

Our vision is a country where all children are free from disadvantage and safe from harm. Our priorities are centred on young people at risk of sexual exploitation; missing from home; involved with the care system; suffering poor mental health; misusing drugs or alcohol; those who are a young carer or young refugee.

The Children's Society Include Programme gives a voice to children and young people who care for parents, siblings or others who suffer from illness or disability. We campaign for change and promote best practice with central and local government and work in partnership with social workers, teachers and health care professionals to deliver solutions that consider the needs of the whole family and prevent children taking on inappropriate levels of care that impact upon their own wellbeing and needs for support.

About Ecorys

Ecorys is an independent, international provider of research, consulting, communications and management services focused on the development, delivery and evaluation of public policy. We aim to make a positive difference to society through the work that we do.

Making a step change for young carers and their families: Putting it into practice (April 2015–March 2016)

This partnership project between Carers Trust and The Children's Society built on previous work developed through its predecessor project, Making a step change – Prevention, intervention and partnership.

This new project, funded by the Department for Education for one year, set out to support the effective implementation by local authorities of the duties required under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 with regard to young carers and their families.

The programme team for Carers Trust and The Children's Society were: Helen Leadbitter, Daniel Phelps, Trisha Thompson, Katherine Istead, Fraser Cook, Bill Badham, Laura Bennett, Lou Flandrin, Susan Collom, Lydie Saint-Marc and Chantelle Lindo-Davies.

Background

The Department for Education funded Making a step change between April 2015 and March 2016 to support, in six local authority Trailblazer areas (see below), implementation of the duties required under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 with regard to young carers and their families.

The six Trailblazer areas were:

- 1) Devon
- 2) Liverpool
- 3) Oxfordshire
- 4) Sandwell³
- 5) Stockton-on-Tees
- 6) Surrey.

A predecessor project, Making a step change: prevention, intervention and partnership,⁴ ran between 2013 and 2015.

A young carer is defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act as a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person of any age. For the purposes of this document this refers to anyone who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances. The key principle is that 'children should not undertake inappropriate or excessive caring roles that have an impact on their development. A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing and their prospects in education and life'. (Care and support statutory guidance. Issued under the Care Act 2014 paragraph 2.49.) However, definitions of young adult carers vary between Trailblazer areas; therefore, please note how young adult carers are defined in the separate chapters of this report.

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 placed a legal duty on local authorities from 1 April 2015 to identify young carers, and carry out young carers' needs assessments and transition assessments respectively, that consider the whole family. It is believed that the Acts will encourage a step change in how children's and adult services work together to identify and support young carers. Further information on some of the relevant sections of the Children and Families Act 2014, and statutory guidance to the Care Act 2014, which reflect these duties, follow.⁵

³ One local authority (Sandwell) was not in a position however to engage fully with the evaluation process.

⁴ makingastepchangeprevention.wordpress.com

⁵ Further guidance on the legislation for young carers has been developed by Carers Trust, and is available at carers.org/knowyourrights. Also see the FAQ response at: makingastepchange.info/project-learning/faq/#Q7

Children Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Families Act 2014)

17ZA Young carers' needs assessments: England

- (1) A local authority in England must assess whether a young carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are, if
 - (a) it appears to the authority that the young carer may have needs for support, or
 - (b) the authority receive a request from the young carer or a parent of the young carer to assess the young carer's needs for support.
- (12) A local authority in England must take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are young carers within their area who have needs for support.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health, October 2014)

6. Assessment and eligibility

Whole family approach

6.65. The intention of the whole family approach is for local authorities to take a holistic view of the person's needs and to identify how the adult's needs for care and support impact on family members or others in their support network.

6.66. During the assessment the local authority must consider the impact of the person's needs for care and support on family members or other people the authority may feel appropriate. This will require the authority to identify anyone who may be part of the person's wider network of care and support.

6.67. In considering the impact of the person's needs on those around them, the local authority must consider whether or not the provision of any information and advice would be beneficial to those people they have identified. For example, this may include signposting to any support services in the local community.

6.68. The local authority must also identify any children who are involved in providing care. The authority may become aware that the child is carrying out a caring role through the assessment of the person needing care or their carer, or informed through family members or a school. Identification of a young carer in the family should result in an offer of a needs assessment for the adult requiring care and support and, where appropriate, the local authority must consider whether the child or young carer should be referred for a young carer's assessment or a needs assessment under the Children Act 1989, 112 or a young carer's assessment under section 63 of the Care Act. Local authorities should ensure that adults' and children's care and

support services work together to ensure the assessment is effective – for example by sharing expertise and linking processes.

6.69. When carrying out an adult's or carer's assessment, if it appears that a child is involved in providing care the local authority must consider:

- the impact of the person's needs on the young carer's wellbeing, welfare, education and development;
- whether any of the caring responsibilities the young carer is undertaking are inappropriate.

6.70. An assessment should take into account the parenting responsibilities of the person as well as the impact of the adult's needs for care and support on the young carer.

Evaluation activity

This final report presents the findings from the evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to capture and share models for supporting young carers and young adult carers that could be replicable in other local authority areas. As stipulated in the specification, the evaluation was asset-based, which means it focused on what worked well and areas of good practice across the Trailblazers. Findings also included Trailblazers' views on the support received from the Making a step change Programme Leads (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

The findings are largely drawn from visits to five of the Trailblazer areas and work observed and evaluated throughout the year. The visits involved consultations with young carers and staff responsible for the delivery or management of support for young carers, including local authority staff and staff from voluntary sector services commissioned by local authorities to undertake assessments or support for young carers.

The evaluation involved consultations with 21 young carers and 63 staff across the visits to Trailblazers. Consultation methods included one-to-one interviews, paired interviews, and focus groups using creative approaches.

A telephone consultation with key staff in each Trailblazer aimed to understand Trailblazers' progress in implementing different local authority-wide models. In addition, analysis was undertaken of secondary (self-reported) data made available by Trailblazers in advance of our first and second reports (published in October and December 2015 respectively). The evaluation also involved consultations with seven delivery staff from the Programme Leads (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

Structure of this report

Making a step change provided consultation, information and support to assist Trailblazers in developing these five areas of development:

1. Models of collaborative whole family approaches to support individuals with care needs to prevent young carers having to offer inappropriate levels of care.
2. Processes for identification of the number of local young carers.
3. Models of developing assessment and support services which specifically address the needs of young carers and their families.
4. Measures to assess the impact of the new duties in the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.
5. Working collaboratively with schools to better identify and support young carers and their families.

During the project, an additional area of working collaboratively with health services was introduced.

The report discusses these in turn, firstly in the context of an evaluation of Trailblazer activity, and then in the context of an evaluation of the Making a step change programme. Collaborative approaches in relation to health services are also presented.

The report ends with a concluding section that summarises the key themes identified across the Trailblazers, and recommendations⁶ and next steps for policy makers, local authority commissioners, Carers Trust and The Children's Society to consider when developing effective whole family delivery models for young carers and their families. To support this, the references and relevant web links that are referred to throughout the report are provided at the end.

To support replicability of effective approaches and ensure that they are shared as widely as possible, learning from this work will be disseminated across all local authorities in England by:

- Carers Trust and The Children's Society, through their websites, the Making a step change website,⁷ networks, newsletters and events; and
- Ecorys, through the Ecorys UK website, social media and Ecorys' participation in a number of learning networks (including the Improving Futures learning network, A Better Start learning network, and the Knowledge Exchange).

⁶ Recommendations relating to each section are also presented at the end of each section.

⁷ makingastepchange.info

Part 1: Evaluation of trailblazer activity

1. Collaborative whole family approaches

Introduction

A collaborative, whole family approach is where all services (including adult services, children's services, health, education and the voluntary sector) work together in a collaborative and preventative way to assess and support the needs of the whole family. To achieve this, services operating within the local authority must change the way they work, from an approach of individual services working with those they support, to one that embraces other services and systems to support the whole family.

The Children and Families Act 2014 and Care Act 2014 collectively underpin a collaborative whole family approach, which is made explicit in the legislation. For example, statutory guidance to the Care Act states:

Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health, October 2014)

Whole family approach

6.65. The intention of the whole family approach is for local authorities to take a holistic view of the person's needs and to identify how the adult's needs for care and support impact on family members or others in their support network.

6.68 ...Local authorities should ensure that adults' and children's care and support services work together to ensure the assessment is effective – for example by sharing expertise and linking processes.

The rest of this section discusses the individual elements Trailblazers have employed to bring about a whole family approach.

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

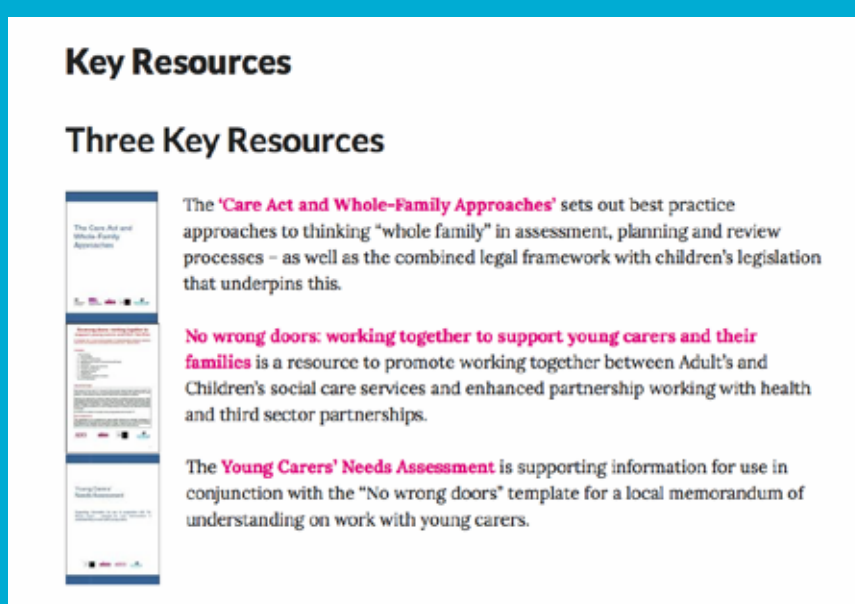
A memorandum of understanding for young carers and their families was a crucial pillar to achieving collaborative, whole family approaches

Collaborative approaches between services ensure that there are 'no wrong doors' for young carers and their families. Trailblazers were aiming to achieve collaborative approaches by implementing a memorandum of understanding for

young carers and their families – although this is only one of the key elements to achieving a collaborative, whole family approach. Making a step change identified the development and implementation of a local memorandum of understanding between children’s and adult services as key to joint working in relation to young carers and their families, with this forming a central (but not the only) aspect of the project’s approach (Figure 1), enabling identification and assessment through adult and children’s services.

Figure 1: Key Resources

A draft memorandum of understanding that local authorities can use as a template is available as one of the Key Resources on the Making a step change website at makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources.



The two other key resources are The Care Act and Whole-Family Approaches – which sets out best practice approaches to assessment, planning and review processes – and further information on the Young Carers’ Needs Assessment. Trailblazers based their approach on these three documents, which are essential reading for local authorities in relation to provision for young carers.

The memorandum of understanding worked best when the principles within it were recognised by staff at both strategic and operational levels. As one Trailblazer said:

“ The memorandum of understanding must underpin what we do.”

Trailblazer

Joint service training and bringing together staff from different services through co-location were ways in which Trailblazers achieved effective collaborative working, for example the use of Early Help Hubs⁸ in Surrey and Liverpool. This was necessary because, as one adult services practitioner put it: “I’m not sure how to talk to children”. The same may potentially be true for a number of children’s services practitioners when talking to adults, again confirming the likely importance of effective joint service training.

At a more fundamental level, getting partners to ‘think family’ was crucial to achieving collaborative approaches, given that a whole family approach works best in a multi-agency context. Developing a strong relationship between the local authority and any voluntary sector providers was also important given that the latter often delivered a large part of assessment and support to young carers. According to local authority and voluntary sector staff in Trailblazers, developing an effective relationship in this sense was characterised by:

- The local authority maintaining overall accountability for the implementation of the Acts.
- Recognising complementary and contrasting areas of expertise.
- Working together and using each other’s specialisms to provide the right support for the family.
- Learning from other experiences of services working together.
- Considering the characteristics and workings of organisations (one size does not fit all) as one of the considerations when designing any young carers’ assessments.

However, having a memorandum of understanding is not sufficient in isolation. The rest of this chapter goes on to report other elements of good practice from the Trailblazers that have helped to achieve collaborative working.

Strategic foundations are key to effective whole family working with young carers and their families

Strategic foundations are important for services to collaborate to support young carers and individuals with care needs. Strategic foundations – a term described by the Making a step change Programme Leads – means having:

- Effective leadership: for example, an overarching strategy for/or that includes young carers and their families.
- Effective management: for example, strong partnerships and joint commissioning processes.
- Effective practice: effective identification, referral, assessment and support for young carers and their families.

⁸ Early Help Hubs are a single point of access for council and community based early help services for children, young people and families.

There were a number of ways that Trailblazers achieved strong strategic foundations. These included:

- Holding a young carers multi-agency strategy group to cascade messages and actions to staff in different partners. Attendees at these groups across the Trailblazers included strategic and practitioner representatives from partners including the NHS, clinical commissioning groups, mental health trusts, schools, local councillors and drug and alcohol teams. These groups engaged adult-focused services, secured senior support, and brought a range of attendees from a number of agencies around the table. This facilitated the sharing of action points on young carers more widely within the services involved.
- Creating a multi-agency strategy or plan for young carers – co-designed and co-produced with young carers to enshrine joint working between children’s services and adult services and to act as a framework to hold partners to account. One Trailblazer commented that an: “accessible, short, simple, punchy” strategy was particularly effective in engaging its target audience.⁹
- Giving strategies and targets meaning, by having qualitative targets, not just numbers. Surrey maintained an ongoing action plan alongside its multi-agency strategy group meetings, with clear To Do Lists that allocated a named person to each task (Figure 2). The lists were designed to clearly identify actions, overcoming the problem of senior stakeholders supporting the young carers agenda, but then not taking forward specific actions.

Figure 2: Example of a To Do List for Young Carers © Surrey County Council

Young Carers Trailblazer “To do list”						
Project	Planned Action	Start Date	End Date	Named Lead	Update or Summary	Completed (Y/N)
1. Trailblazer Project	Working as one of 5 areas (trailblazers) Surrey, Oxfordshire Devon, Liverpool Stockton on Tees. This will be to strengthen a whole family approach across the whole system.	01/08/2015	01/03/2016	[names given]	The new legislation creates opportunities to improve performance e.g. Identification, assessment, support to prevent inappropriate care and help post 18 years of age.	N

Some of the Trailblazers also undertook joint commissioning between services. For example, using a pooled budget for young carers and young adult carers that children’s and adult services and the local clinical commissioning group contribute to, the local authority and clinical commissioning group in Liverpool jointly procured their young carers service using pooled budgets across health

⁹ See, for example, Surrey’s Young Carers Strategy at carersworldradio.ihoststudio.com/carersnet/young%20carer%20strat.pdf

and social care (Better Care Fund, children’s and adult social care budget and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) budget). Joint commissioning between the local authority and health services also took place in Stockton-on-Tees and Surrey.

Committed leadership supported the development of effective strategic foundations. Relationships at a senior level in the Trailblazers, from adult services or health in particular, were crucial in removing blockages to collaborative working (for example, when under pressure, Trailblazers reported there can be a tendency to retreat from collaborative working). Collaborative working was seen as important in particular given the challenges facing young carers as an issue in its own right, as two of the Trailblazers put it:

“ Young carers have always been seen as a children’s issue.”

Trailblazer

“ Young carers aren’t always everybody’s priority ... historically, they have been the forgotten young people.”

Trailblazer

In addition, young carers themselves reported that they were sometimes left to deal with issues resulting from problems with adult care packages for example, their parent’s care worker frequently changing or, if the care worker did not turn up, the young carer being left to provide the necessary care.

Trailblazers expressed a desire that all partners should positively embrace their role in supporting young carers, given that referrals to specialist services are only adding to provision. Strategic stakeholders wanted services to move away from language like ‘referrals’ that goes against there being no wrong doors for young carers and their families, and encourage ownership and a duty of care in supporting young carers.

Beyond children’s and adult services, if there is senior support for young carers within agencies, with the willingness and ability to drive things through, it is easier to raise the profile of young carers within that agency. As one councillor said:

“ I’ve ensured doors have been opened.”

Local councillor

One Trailblazer added:

“ You need someone who is constantly saying ‘And what about the needs of young carers?’”

Trailblazer

Making a step change Programme Leads attended and presented at strategy meetings in Trailblazer areas, emphasising the importance of strategic foundations to key stakeholders within those areas. Trailblazers reported that an external project such as Making a step change was, as one put it, “a useful way to ‘sell’ the issue of young carers to senior management”.

However, senior support is necessary but not sufficient to achieve collaborative approaches for young carers. It is important that senior support complements strong relationships and a commitment to partnership working at an operational level. Trailblazers noted that awareness was key to achieving this, through events such as Carers Week,¹⁰ or Young Carers Awareness Day.¹¹ Reflecting this, one local councillor added:

“ If you win hearts and minds, everything else falls into place.”

Local councillor

The voice of young carers is a key driver to get change to happen

Nearly all stakeholders acknowledged that young carers articulate their own needs well, which services have responded to. As one Trailblazer said:

“ Nobody can tell it like they [young carers] can.”

Trailblazer

In all Trailblazers, the voice of young carers was an important catalyst to influence and engage partners. In addition to contributing to Trailblazers’ multi-agency plans for young carers, the following are examples of how young carers have influenced Trailblazers:

- In Liverpool, young carers work alongside Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group, Mersey Care NHS Trust and other organisations at various levels. Young carers have the opportunity to have their voices heard which has led to service improvements that better meet the needs of young carers and their families. Young carers, through a range of methods, have been directly involved with influencing clinical commissioning group/CAMHS commissioning and Transforming CAMHS, which were integral to developing the core CAMHS offer. Young carers have won numerous awards for the work that they have done; most recently they won the Ensemble Award for a film as part of the NOW Young People’s Arts Festival 2016 (Figure 3).

¹⁰ carersweek.org

¹¹ carers.org/young-carers-awareness-day-2016

Figure 3: #Mood (Ensemble Award-winning film made by young carers in Liverpool as part of the NOW Young People's Arts Festival 2016)

© Liverpool City Council



The film can be watched at www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cTsdGt9ygY.

- In Stockton-on-Tees, young carers met with adult social care providers and, at a Children and Young People Partnership meeting, the Lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, the Director of Children's and Adult Services, the Director of Public Health, the young carers lead and representatives from the clinical commissioning group and NHS. At this meeting, young carers described issues with their care packages; the Director of Children's and Adult Services passed on this feedback to senior care services representatives and then met with young carers themselves to hear their concerns directly.
- In Surrey, young carers made a presentation to the council's cabinet and a presentation that formed part of the Young Carers Awareness training offered to professionals. Young adult carers in Surrey also created a YouTube video to help raise awareness called *See Us* (Figure 4).

Figure 4: See Us © Fixers



The film can be watched at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLQ9WaxmvJU.

Integrating young carers into other agendas has been successful, but making young carers an issue in its own right is still necessary

As an example, Surrey felt that integrating young carers training within a wider but relevant agenda such as safeguarding made practitioners more likely to attend. This way, more topics were covered, leading to a more informative and productive use of practitioners' time and avoiding duplication. Surrey also employed mandatory e-learning (Young Carer Aware),¹² which ensured at least a basic level of knowledge among all practitioners, without the need to attend a face-to-face training course in the first instance.

Young carers also benefited from programmes or funding streams that were complementary but distinct from young carers specifically. Trailblazers used funding from the Better Care Fund¹³ or Healthy Schools¹⁴ to support their young carers and families in a whole family way; for example, supporting young carers both in school and at home to deal with issues affecting their family. Young carers funding was also sought from, for example, the Pupil Premium¹⁵ and a local healthcare provider's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme, along with monies designated to support communities, harder-to-reach groups, people with diabetes, adult carers, and parents misusing alcohol. Trailblazers also reported working closely with local authorities' Troubled Families programmes, which support a whole family approach to tackling families' issues.¹⁶

¹² cylux.co.uk/products/young_carer_aware.html

¹³ local.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-and-adult-social-care/-/journal_content/56/10180/4096799/ARTICLE

¹⁴ healthyschools.org.uk

¹⁵ gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings

¹⁶ gov.uk/government/policies/support-for-families

That being said, Trailblazers commented on the value of making young carers separate to other agendas, for example commissioning a separate young carers service or ensuring a dedicated focus on this, rather than it just being an add-on to a carers service where the focus naturally falls on adult carers. Devon reported that, although commissioned alongside the adult service in a single contract, there is a clear focus on the young carers service, which helped provide a clear impetus and brought more partners together. It also provided accountability, with a separate service ensuring that the local authority has targets for its provision to young carers.

This finding does mean that, to maintain adequate provision for young carers and their families, all partners do need some dedicated resource or management devoted to young carers. At the local authority level, a designated strategic role was necessary to drive forward change. One Trailblazer did note that, once this role has gathered the necessary strategic support for young carers, its functions could be sustained by others.

Different systems are a challenge to collaborative working – but can be overcome

The steps to integrated working described above can be achieved relatively easily, even before considering changing systems or processes (for example, IT systems), which typically requires more effort, resources and takes much longer.

Nevertheless, although for some Trailblazers progress had been made independently of the Acts, it was clear that different systems used by different services can provide a challenge to collaborative working. Because of this, Trailblazers were concerned that opportunities to support young carers and their families could, as one put it, “slip through the net”. This makes collaborative working at the personal level all the more important. For example, Oxfordshire reported that personal relationships between professionals and adult services’ staff developed through working collaboratively, allows staff to have conversations and get information about families that they do not hold themselves. Devon added:

“ I think it is far better to make a link and talk to that person and get a conversation going. If I can’t see something that tells me what that agency is doing with a particular individual or family, maybe I ought to have a conversation with them and try to find out.”

Trailblazer

Consent to share information was also reported as a concern; as one Trailblazer said:

“ Individuals get terrified of being caught sharing information.”

Trailblazer

However, the Trailblazer continued saying that the public think that services working together share the information and make this clear to the families they are working with. Therefore, the perception was that this is generally not seen as an issue.

Recommendations to consider when developing collaborative whole family approaches

- All local authorities should implement a memorandum of understanding among key partners for young carers and their families. Local authorities should view the Key Resources on the Making a step change website for a possible template for this at makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources.
- Local authorities should ensure that the memorandum of understanding is recognised by staff at both strategic and operational levels.
- Local authorities should promote collaborative working in relation to young carers and their families by for example, joint service training and bringing together staff from different services through co-location.
- Local authorities should encourage partners working with young carers and their families, across children's and adult services, to Think Family.
- Partners and services supporting young carers – most notably local authorities and voluntary sector providers – should work closely together to develop a strong relationship, based on for example, learning, accountability and each other's specialisms.
- Local authorities should ensure strong strategic foundations for supporting young carers, based on effective leadership, management and practice for example, holding a young carers multi-agency strategy group and creating a multi-agency strategy plan for young carers.
- Local authorities should consider joint commissioning and pooled budgets as possible mechanisms to support young carers.
- Local authorities should ensure that the voices of young carers are heard, through for example, a Young Carers Forum or Young Carers Council (though other means to gather young carers' voice are possible).
- Local authorities should consider appropriate opportunities to integrate the young carers agenda into other agendas for example, integrating young carers training into wider training or e-learning (for both for managers and practitioners).
- Local authorities should consider how young carers could benefit from complementary programmes or funding streams.
- Local authorities should provide a designated strategic lead for young carers (functions of which could be sustained by others once the necessary strategic support for young carers has been embedded).
- Local authorities should seek to ensure that all relevant partners dedicate some resource (one Young Carer Champion per organisation as a minimum) to young carers.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Leadership and Management briefing (Badham, B, 2016).

2. Identification of young carers

Introduction

Identifying young carers has been an important focus of Trailblazers. Identification is underpinned by the law, which states that local authorities have a duty to identify the extent to which there are young carers in the area.

Children Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Families Act 2014)

17ZA Young carers' needs assessments: England

(12) A local authority in England must take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are young carers within their area who have needs for support.

Statutory guidance on the Care Act further states the following:

Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health, October 2014)

6.68. The local authority must also identify any children who are involved in providing care. The authority may become aware that the child is carrying out a caring role through the assessment of the person needing care or their carer, or informed through family members or a school. Identification of a young carer in the family should result in an offer of a needs assessment for the adult requiring care and support and, where appropriate, the local authority must consider whether the child or young carer should be referred for a young carer's assessment or a needs assessment under the Children Act 1989, or a young carer's assessment under section 63 of the Care Act.

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

Awareness is key to identifying young carers

There is generally a desire across services for young carers to be a high-profile issue as it is widely acknowledged that early help is the best way to support young carers, which places an expectation on all services to identify young carers. As one Trailblazer said:

“ Young carers are everybody's business ... they don't care what service it comes from.”

Trailblazer

Awareness about young carers generally, and detail about what the two Acts mean for young carers, takes time and persistence. Trailblazers are continuing this process across services and have had some success, but recognised that there was more work to be done. Examples of how Trailblazers have effectively promoted identification of young carers included:

- Developing pathways for young carers.¹⁷
- Streamlining referral forms, as in Oxfordshire.¹⁸
- Extending or adapting the referral form: for example, Surrey employed an online referral form for health services.
- Putting young carers on checklists or assessment tools for example, health checklists (such as on GP IT systems in Stockton-on-Tees).
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or Early Help Assessment (EHAT) as in Liverpool.
- Employing Carers Practice Advisers, as in the case of Surrey. These can be described as akin to ‘practitioner queen bees’, tasked to develop practice among fellow practitioners in relation to all carers but including young carers. The advisers hot-desk ensures they share their knowledge across a wide range of practitioners and localities.
- In Oxfordshire, the Young Carers Service worked with the Carers Project Team within adult services to make recording children and young people – whether they are identified carers or not – part of their adult carers’ assessment process. The adult carers’ assessment asks whether the adult carer has children and, if so, records their names, dates of birth and caring responsibilities. Adult services receive and follow-up on this information, which means they get a clearer picture of the family. This process has been effective at identifying children who could be or are young carers, with adult services identifying 170 young carers through this route to date, according to local authority data. The Young Carers Service then emails the parents of any children identified with contact details of the young carers service and a referral form.

Trailblazers also took steps to remove some of the onus from how young carers have traditionally been identified and assessed by encouraging self-referral. This was done by making young carers and their families aware of their rights and support available¹⁹ and of their caring role (in a positive way), through for example, school assemblies. Self-referral is growing in importance as a referral

¹⁷ A pathway aims to ensure that however a family (parent or child) in need of support first makes contact with an agency, the same key points are followed. For more information, please visit: youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway

¹⁸ Oxfordshire’s self-referral and professional referral forms are available here: spurgeonsyc.org/oxfordshire/#referrals

¹⁹ See Oxfordshire County Council website: oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/young-carers-services

method for example, Devon found that about 40% of young carers referred themselves, often after an assembly or awareness raising event in a school. However, our analysis of data provided by Trailblazers suggests that self-referral was still dwarfed by other referral methods, and typically dominated by referrals from children’s services. As one Trailblazer put it:

“ We all get excited in the office if a referral comes from a GP or adult social care and we’re always sure to tell them what a great job they’ve done ... sometimes I think it is quite a brave move by that practitioner to do something out of their comfort zone.”

Trailblazer

There are moral and economic reasons for all services to identify young carers

Trailblazers employed a number of ways to engage stakeholders to identify young carers, citing moral and economic reasons. The moral argument to support young carers was typically cited by Trailblazers, as the following comments illustrate:

“ I’m not in the business of making my job easier; I’m in the business of making a life better.”

Trailblazer

“ We have to make every contact count.”

Trailblazer

Economic arguments focused on the potential for money to be saved from intervening early, preventing a knock-on effect on other services from the young caring role. As several stakeholders commented, for example:

“ Most referrals [to the commissioned young carers service] come through a crisis approach.”

Trailblazer

“ We should be spoken to as adults – we’re basically adults. We’re saving the government money.”

Young carer

“ The Department of Health says that non-investment in carers is a false economy.”

Trailblazer

“ You can do it without lots of money.”

Trailblazer

This aspect reflects other existing evidence. For example, projects involved in the Young Carers Pathfinders Programme run by the Department for Education saved on average £1.89 for every £1 spent (Kendall et al, 2011) as a result of intervening early, given that costs are incurred from negative outcomes and further crisis and statutory support required.

There was some concern raised by Trailblazers that the increased awareness brought about in Trailblazer areas (following the onset of the legislation in particular) resulted in more young carers being identified and referred.²⁰ This presented a challenge for services to cope with, with some needing to employ waiting lists as a result. However, as the Young Carers Pathfinders demonstrated (Kendall et al, 2011) this short-term challenge can be overcome in the long-run.

Recommendations to consider for effective identification of young carers

- Local authorities and other relevant partners should promote an understanding that early help is the best way to support young carers and there is an expectation on all services to identify young carers.
- Local authorities should improve the identification of young carers through, for example developing jointly-owned pathways for young carers, streamlining or adapting referral forms, or putting a requirement to consider young carers on checklists.
- Local authorities should encourage young carers to self-refer and develop a clear and transparent offer of support to young carers and their families on the local authority website.²¹
- Local authorities should promote to partners the moral and economic arguments for identifying and supporting young carers.
- To encourage ownership, local authorities should work to improve the attitude and language used between services, to encourage practitioners to see their role in identification as part of their moral responsibility, rather than a duty.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Identification and Assessment briefing (Phelps, D, Cook, F, 2016).

²⁰ Numbers of referrals to Trailblazers is discussed in the first Making a step change evaluation report: makingastepchange.info/project-learning/project-evaluations

²¹ See Local Authority Young Carers Portal resource, available at youngcarer.com/sites/default/files/la_yc_website_portal_2012_3rd.pdf

3. Assessment and support services

Assessment

Introduction

The Children's Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, section 17ZA) and statutory guidance on the Care Act (sections 6.65–6.70) place a legal duty on local authorities from 1 April 2015 to carry out young carers needs assessments and transition assessments respectively that consider the whole family.²² It is believed that the Acts will encourage a step change in how children's and adult services work together to identify and support young carers.²³

Two models of undertaking assessments operated in Trailblazers:

- In Devon, Liverpool, Oxfordshire and Stockton-on-Tees, responsibility for carrying out the statutory assessment was devolved to a voluntary sector provider.
- In Surrey, the statutory assessment was carried out by the local authority (either children's or adult services).

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

Trailblazers were starting to overcome confusion with terminology surrounding young carers' assessments

When the Acts have come into force, across the Trailblazers there was some confusion about the terminology for the different assessments, not only from young carers²⁴ but from some practitioners as well. In particular, there was confusion about what constituted a statutory and a non-statutory assessment. As two young carers said:

“ We know we are entitled to support, but what does this mean in practice?”

Young carer

²² Please note that a formal assessment may not be necessary if – for example – a care worker makes immediate provision for the person being cared for, which reduces the level of care being undertaken by the young person.

²³ Further guidance on the legislation for young carers has been developed by Carers Trust, and is available at carers.org/knowyourrights. Also see the FAQ response at makingastepchange.info/project-learning/faq/#Q7

²⁴ This was also found in a recent study – (Clay, et al, 2016, p5).

Assessments worked best when young carers and their families felt that the assessment was meaningful to their own lives (rather than something practitioners do for their own purposes) and happened as early as possible, for example being triggered during the assessment of an adult carer or adult with support needs, as in guidance to the Care Act. That way, if adult services see the person they are supporting as a parent – rather than just an adult – the needs of a young carer can be picked up before it starts to have a negative impact.

Whole family working means that a service's approach to assessment should not begin and end with them making a referral to a young carers service (often provided by a voluntary sector provider). Making an assessment requires more than this in order to incorporate a whole family approach as required in law, and to ensure that the local authority remains engaged throughout the process. Taking account of these considerations should reduce the potential for the assessment to be duplicated unnecessarily, which frustrated young carers and their families and wasted professionals' time. Throughout Making a Step Change, the Programme Leads highlighted to local authorities the law including The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015.²⁵

Establishing a jointly-owned pathway (for example, between children's and adult services) could help local authorities achieve joint working in relation to assessments. Carers Trust and The Children's Society have provided a guide outlining the benefits of a jointly-owned pathway and how this can be achieved.²⁶ For example:

- Stockton-on-Tees found that the local authority and voluntary sector provider jointly undertaking an initial assessment reduced each other's apprehension of an increased workload and encouraged both services to work together in an open and honest way.
- Liverpool's pathway and process for assessing the needs of young carers and young adult carers has been shared in many formats including a webinar.²⁷

Age appropriate materials – best developed in conjunction with young carers – helped

In two of the Trailblazers, age appropriate assessment materials encouraged services to take on assessments, making the assessment process easier for both the young carer and practitioner. A young carer in Liverpool commented that:

“ The assessment in Barnardo's is an opportunity to share our experiences, talk about our caring role, and think about parts of our lives that we want to improve and plan together how this might happen.”

Young carer

²⁵ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/527/pdfs/ukxi_20150527_en.pdf

²⁶ A pathway aims to ensure that, however a family (parent or child) in need of support first makes contact with an agency, the same key points are followed. For more information, visit: youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway

²⁷ makingastepchange.info/project-learning/webinars-2/#webinar3

Surrey developed two assessment tools to support the statutory assessment – About Me and iCare – for primary and secondary age young carers respectively.²⁸ About Me is more visual and has less text than iCare, with smiley faces used as part of rating scales. It was thought that About Me and iCare are more engaging and informal for young carers compared with other assessment tools, because young carers influenced their design. These were described as an “aid to a conversation”, form part of the information gathering for the statutory assessment, and young carers get to keep them. The local mental health trust also uses About Me and iCare, which were nominated for an award at the Children and Young People Now 2016 Awards.

Young carers felt the most important aspect was to include them in any assessment as an equal partner. Young carers hated “being forgotten” in the assessment or support processes for themselves or their parent/sibling, and reported previous examples of professionals talking adult to adult or breaking the young carer’s trust.

Support

Introduction

Section 1 of this report outlines the main criteria that are key to supporting young carers and their families effectively and in a collaborative, whole family way, for example:

- Early access to help
- The voice and needs of the child heard and responded to.
- Preventative measures through whole family support packages.
- Partnerships (with schools and health stakeholders).

The Care Act puts the focus of support onto the whole family, not just the person with care needs. Support for the person with care needs can reduce the impact of caring on the young carer, reducing the need for support from young carers services. The roles of information and advice, and signposting to other services, are made explicit in the statutory guidance to the legislation; for example:

Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health, October 2014)

Whole family approach

6.65. The intention of the whole family approach is for local authorities to take a holistic view of the person’s needs and to identify how the adult’s needs for care and support impact on family members or others in their support network.

6.67. In considering the impact of the person’s needs on those around them, the local authority must consider whether or not the provision of any information and advice would be beneficial to those people they have identified. For example, this may include signposting to any support services in the local community.

²⁸ youngcarersstuff.org

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

An increased focus on one-to-one support for young carers helped Trailblazers meet their needs more effectively

Support for young carers has traditionally focused, sometimes exclusively, on group-based support. While this has provided young carers with some respite, it does not necessarily tackle specific issues with young carers' caring role. Trailblazers had moved to a different approach, primarily supporting young carers on a tailored, one-to-one level (casework), as well as through a whole family approach. For example, Trailblazers have worked to get support packages to include young carers (for example, when a young carer is home from school, someone is at home to help). One young carer said this type of support was better at "relieving stress".

In Oxfordshire, the assessment form has a number of signposting boxes that identify what support the young carer and their family receives. Options include one-to-one support, transition support, and sharing the assessment with the school. There are two sets of boxes: one for the young carer and one for the family as a whole.

Provision of intensive one-to-one support was necessarily restricted to some extent, given its resource intensive nature, but often was more effective as a result of its personalised, one-to-one character. However, resources can be shared out. Support need not be provided by a service dedicated solely to young carers; it could tie-in to other support for example, family support provided by a Family Support Worker, or from other services in a Team Around the Family (TAF). As one Trailblazer commented:

" We don't need more support from agencies, but some agencies need to respond differently."

Trailblazer

It should also be remembered that not all young carers want nor require intensive support from a dedicated young carers support service,²⁹ particularly if they are happy to access support elsewhere that is not specific to young carers. For example, it was noted that schools typically provide a range of positive activities.

²⁹ This was also found in a recent study (Clay, et al, 2016, p7).

There is still a role for group-based support – not least because young carers liked support with and from other young carers

Young carers valued support from their peers. The opportunity to meet others and make friends were two of the best aspects of support identified by young carers across the Trailblazers. Meeting others made young carers realise that there were other young people in their situation and that they were not alone. Friendships were made during group-based support or respite sessions run by young carers services, and then continued offline and via supported online mechanisms. Young carers felt that this added to their informal support network.

Although not every Trailblazer had one, where present young carers on the local authority's Young Carers Forum or Young Carers Council (a small group of young carers that the local authority consults with when making decisions related to young carers and their families) praised the value of such structures. The forums provided an opportunity for the young carers to be productive and socialise, and gave them, as they put it, a "stress-free environment" to relax and "get away from things". The forums also helped young carers to develop their skills and take part in activities, such as trips and arts performances, deliver training for professionals and raise awareness in schools and hospitals. For example:

- In Oxfordshire, the Young Carers Forum helped to deliver training to mental health professionals.
- In Devon, young carers attend a Patient Liaison Group at a local hospital.

As one member of a Young Carers Forum said:

" I feel like I developed my public speaking. I was shaking before but once we did it everybody clapped and it seemed so much better than before."

Young carer

The Young Carers Forum/Council was also instrumental to local authorities, providing young carers' views in an unadulterated fashion. As one Trailblazer said:

" It is very empowering for them. Young people feel that they are happy to give their views but if they don't see something coming back, they will lose interest and disengage. So [the Young Carers Forum] is integral to our practice. It involved minimum input and maximum output. The information they give us is gold."

Trailblazer

Some Trailblazers also provided young carers with mentors, or paired a young carer with another young carer directly (for example, at school).

Although Liverpool does not have a specific Young Carers Forum, young carers work alongside Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group, Mersey Care NHS Trust and other organisations at various levels. An example of this is when young carers worked with Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group, CAMHS and other CAMHS partner agencies to co-design the new CAMHS logo, and worked with a theatre group to make what would have been an otherwise dry strategy come alive.

Young carers in transition to becoming adult carers reported that peer-led support was particularly important, principally given its potential to help with anxieties about securing further education, a job, housing or bursaries for university study.

We found innovative use of resources from Trailblazers to support young carers in a variety of ways

Examples included:

- Personal budgets for young carers provided by a number of Trailblazers (for their or their parent's care) or grants of up to £500. Driving and cooking lessons were two examples of how young carers had used these.
- Travel cards.
- A carers app (mobile phone application).³⁰
- A podcast for young carers.
- Young carer cards, which the young carer shows to identify themselves as a young carer and explain their role (for example, at school to avoid having to explain their reason for being late).
- A Carers Passport, allowing young carers flexible visiting hours and discounts when visiting their parent at hospital.³¹
- A Young Carers Stuff website (titled as such to be more engaging for young carers), containing important documents, videos and links at youngcarersstuff.org.
- Young carers packs, mentioned by at least three Trailblazers. For example, among other resources, Surrey had packs that were designed for young carers visiting mental health wards.³² They have been part-funded by Virgin Care, which is considering rolling them out nationally. They raise awareness and improve understanding for young carers visiting relatives in mental health

³⁰ surreycc.gov.uk/jobs/mybenefits-exclusive-for-surrey-county-council-staff/advice-and-support-services-for-staff/app-for-surrey-carers

³¹ royalsurrey.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PIN715b_Carer_passport_for_family_members_w.pdf

³² actionforcarers.org.uk/index.php/getting-help/publications

wards, encourage dialogue between children and parents on mental health, and educate professionals. Surrey staff said they acted as an icebreaker for staff, were a positive thing to give to young people, and were a good introduction to the young carers service.³³

Young carers wanted a package of support to continue beyond age 18

Young carers' transition to adulthood (age 18 and beyond) can present them with new challenges, with many young adult carers considering leaving home, entering employment or training, or attending further or higher education, at the same time as perhaps having other concerns related to their caring role.

When offered the option, young carers preferred the idea of continuing to be supported by a young carers service or young adult carers service beyond age 18, rather than to be supported by an adult carers service. One young carers service said that their former clients even volunteer with them after they are aged 18 to maintain that link. One young adult carer reflected on the anxieties of young carers approaching age 18:

“ [Adult carers' services] don't provide the right support. There is a gap between them and our age group.”

Young carer

Trailblazers undertook a transition assessment (under the Care Act) with young adult carers to see what support a young carer needs after they are 18, and how to help them prepare for adulthood.³⁴ They also considered young adult carers as a specific group (typically from the age of 14–16, up to the age of 25). For example, Surrey has a Preparing for Adulthood multi-agency strategy group that includes young adult carers within its remit. However, young carers reported that not all services considered young adult carers specifically. To overcome this potential gap in assessment of and support to young adult carers, Trailblazers employed a dedicated young adult carer transition worker(s) within adult services, used volunteer mentors or commissioned a young adult carers service for example, in Oxfordshire and Liverpool. In Liverpool, the young carers service supports young carers and young adult carers up to and including the age of 25. This ensures a seamless transition from children's to adult services and at any point that is appropriate to them. Liverpool reported that an evaluation of its young adult carers service showed that young adult carers require more support than adult carers when accessing support to meet their needs; however, at around age 23 they are ready to move on [to an adult carers service] and able to access support more independently.

³³ For further information, see carers-mail.org/Bulletin%207%20Making%20a%20step%20change/I34-13JH-99KPSIPM16-1YDOMW-1/Young%20Carers%20Packs%20in%20Surrey.aspx?dm_i=I34,3Z08W,KPSIPM,0,1

³⁴ For further information, see makingastepchange.info/project-learning/faq/#Q7

Young adult carers wanted meaningful but light-touch support

Young adult carers welcomed receiving support to secure a college or university place in particular. Trailblazers connected with universities' outreach services to help with this. Liverpool, for example, established the Liverpool Universities and College Steering Group for Young Adult Carers in Higher and Further Education to support collaborative working between further and higher education establishments, Barnardo's (as service provider), the local authority and local clinical commissioning group.

In addition, the local authority in Liverpool also operates a cross-border protocol, working with another local authority if the person being cared for is in a different local authority to that in which the carer resides. Liverpool University and Liverpool John Moores University also supported Carers Trust with the development of its young carers toolkit for universities.³⁵

Recommendations to consider when developing assessment and support services for young carers and their families

- Local authorities should ensure that the assessment process is clear to young carers, their families and practitioners, and is a meaningful process to all parties.
- Local authorities and all relevant partners should work towards assessments being more than just making a referral to a young carers service through, for example a jointly-owned pathway.³⁶
- Local authorities should encourage the use of age appropriate assessment materials for young carers,³⁷ preferably consulting with young carers about their design.
- Local authorities should consider tailored, one-to-one, whole family based support for young carers, in addition to group-based, respite-focused support.
- To share resources and workloads, local authorities should consider support for young carers from all services, for example from a Family Support Worker or from services in a TAF.
- Local authorities and relevant partners should consider innovative uses of resources; for example, personal budgets, travel cards and packs for young carers supporting family members who have a mental health condition.
- Local authorities and other relevant partners should view the Key Resources on the Making a step change website for guidance on the young carers needs assessment. See makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources.

³⁵ professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/university_toolkit_master_webversion_final.pdf

³⁶ youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway

³⁷ See, for example About Me and iCare, which are used in Surrey for primary and secondary age young carers respectively at youngcarersstuff.org

Transition

- Local authorities should consider young adult carers (between the ages of 16 and 25) as a specific group.
- Local authorities should consider provision of support to young adult carers up to age 25 by a separate young adult carers service or continuing support from the young carers service (as opposed to a service for adult carers).
- Local authorities should ensure that workers from the young carers service and young adult carers service share information and cases.
- Local authorities should encourage and consider commissioning peer support for young carers, particularly for young adult carers.
- Local authorities should work with colleges' and universities' student support and outreach services (including universities outside the local authority) to support young adult carers to access and succeed at college and university.

4. Measures to assess impact

Introduction

Making a step change has promoted the need for “strong local measurement of impact of local support”³⁸ and Programme Leads have written a briefing on measuring the impact of a whole system approach (Phelps, D, 2016). This helps to present the case for early, preventative support for young carers and their families, overcoming the negative outcomes for young carers if they are not supported. Moreover, statutory guidance on the Care Act states that provision to assess impact should be included in local plans for delivery as a minimum – not an optional extra:

Care and Support Statutory Guidance: Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health, October 2014)

3.59 ... As a minimum, the process of developing a local plan should include: ... building into the plan opportunities to record, measure and assess the impact of information and advice services rather than simply service outputs.

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

Trailblazers prioritised implementation of their duties under the Acts

This meant that assessing impact has received relatively little focus to date. This is perhaps understandable given that the legislation was, at the time of the evaluation visits, less than one-year-old. However, this does mean that the improvements that Trailblazers were making were not necessarily all being measured.

There were some examples of where Trailblazers were assessing the impact of their work. Examples of outcome measurement tools that were used to achieve this were:

- MACA (Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities) and PANOC (Positive and Negative Outcomes of Caring). See static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf.
- Outcomes Star – examples include use of the Family Star and the Carers Star. See outcomesstar.org.uk/carers-star.
- WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale). See warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs.
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. See yorku.ca/rokada/psyctest/rosenbrg.pdf.
- Follow-up assessments.

³⁸ makingastepchange.info/project-learning/faq/#Q17

For example, the MACA and PANOC are nationally recognised outcome measurement tools, which can be used with young carers receiving support. MACA and PANOC can be embedded into assessments and used in practitioners' case work as well. They are both multidimensional assessments and the PANOC also considers the positive aspects of caring, not just negative ones. In addition, Liverpool found using the Liquidlogic case monitoring system enabled them to monitor outcomes across the whole family.

All Trailblazers were monitoring the number of young carers in the local authority, using data supplied by schools, completed CAFs, and through data from young carers services. Trailblazers also measured characteristics among the young carers cohort to varying degrees, including age, number of person(s) caring for and – in some cases – number of young carers who were absent from school or not in education, employment or training (NEET). These figures could then be compared against local, regional and national benchmarks. In addition to school absence and NEET figures, other benchmarks could be school or safeguarding related data. For example, Oxfordshire was measuring Key Stage 2 and GCSE attainment data.³⁹

The Acts are now well embedded and their impact should be being assessed

As a minimum, local authorities need to know what their baseline (or 'starting point') is, so that any future impact (or 'distance-travelled') can be measured against this.

Measuring impact adds weight to the moral and economic arguments outlined earlier and, moreover, will help to engage commissioners and other relevant stakeholders with the issues facing young carers and their families. One Trailblazer said that the impact measures "add value and credibility", providing weight behind Trailblazers' work with young carers and their families. As another Trailblazer said:

" If it gets monitored, it gets managed."

Trailblazer

The measures can also be valuable in their own right, allowing practitioners to "delve deeper" with young carers and their families following the initial assessment. Oxfordshire uses the Outcomes Star with all individual young carers who receive specialist one-to-one support. Not only does this provide the organisation with an overview of outcomes achieved but is felt by staff to be a good way to unpick what is happening. They also believed that such use allows young carers to "own their own progress", which it was believed helps young carers with their self-esteem.

³⁹ gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics

Recommendations to consider when implementing measures to assess impact

- Local authorities should consider the use of nationally recognised outcome measurement tools (including the MACA, PANOC, Outcomes Stars, WEMWBS and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale)⁴⁰ to assess the impact of support for young carers.
- Local authorities should consider measuring the characteristics of their young carer cohorts, and compare these to local, regional and national benchmarks (for example, school or safeguarding related data such as school absence, young people who are NEET or Key Stage 2 and GCSE attainment data).
- As a minimum, local authorities should measure their baseline (or ‘starting point’) for key indicators, so that any future impact (or ‘distance-travelled’) can be measured against these (ideally, local authorities should implement longitudinal (before and after) measures to assess impact).
- As well as measuring the outcomes of young carers who have received support, local authorities should also consider the potential to measure the impact of their whole council approach.
- Local authorities should read the *Making a step change* Measuring the Impact of a Whole System Approach briefing (Phelps, D, 2016).

⁴⁰ **MACA** (Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities)
static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf
PANOC (Positive and Negative Outcomes of Caring)
static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf
Outcomes Star – examples include use of the Family Star and the Carers Star
outcomesstar.org.uk/carers-star
WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale)
warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
yorku.ca/rokada/psycetest/rosenbrg.pdf

5. Working collaboratively with schools

Introduction

The Care Act statutory guidance (section 6.68) puts schools at the heart of the identification of young carers, stating that local authorities may become aware that the child is carrying out a caring role through their school. As such, an aim of Making a step change was to assist Trailblazers to work collaboratively with schools to better identify and support young carers and their families. A key component was linking local authorities and schools to the Young Carers in Schools programme,⁴¹ run jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society. Young Carers in Schools sets out a whole school approach to identifying and supporting young carers, supporting schools through tools, e-learning and professional development. Schools implementing the whole school approach can also gain recognition for good practice at Bronze, Silver and Gold level through the Young Carers in Schools Award.⁴²

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

Trailblazers recognised that schools have a unique interface – and so opportunity – with young carers

There is copious evidence on the negative impacts of caring on educational engagement and outcomes:⁴³

- The Department for Education's The lives of young carers in England (Clay et al, 2016) discovered caring responsibilities had an impact on the academic engagement and performance of some young carers, and that young carers experienced more problems where school staff were not aware of their situation.
- There is evidence of the impacts of caring on key educational outcomes (attendance, attainment, personal development):
 - 27% of young carers aged 11–15 miss school or experience educational difficulties (Dearden, C, Becker, S, 2004).
 - They have significantly lower attainment at GCSE level – the difference between nine Cs and nine Ds (The Children's Society, 2013).
 - A quarter of young carers said they were bullied at school because of their caring role.
 - Young carers are more likely than the national average to be NEET at 16–19 (Sempik, J, Becker, S, 2013).

⁴¹ youngcarersinschools.com

⁴² youngcarersinschools.com/the-award

⁴³ youngcarersinschools.com/about/young-carers

- Ofsted’s Common Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2015) states that inspectors will pay particular attention to young carers’ outcomes when making judgements.

Furthermore, it is estimated that one in twelve young people are a young carer (BBC, University of Nottingham, 2010) which means that there are two or three young carers in each class on average. The sheer numbers involved means that schools are well-placed to identify and engage young carers. Given that every school’s aim is to improve its own performance and ensure all children reach the potential they can, removing any obstacles in that path – such as a caring role – should logically be a priority for schools. For example, Oxfordshire described early evidence of the positive difference being made to GCSE results and attendance arising from identifying, assessing and supporting young carers and their families adequately.

Moreover, young carers expressed that they wanted support from their school. Although schools can be a source of support for young carers, they can also be where young carers are most unhappy (due to, for example bullying). This makes supporting young carers in schools all the more vital.

Despite this, schools’ engagement with young carers and their families was reported by Trailblazers to be variable. Some schools identified over 100 young carers; other schools insisted they had none. Young carers reported some good examples of support from dedicated individuals at school, whereas others were less sympathetic or attuned to their needs. These three examples from young carers illustrate this point:

“ Just because you look happy or smiley, doesn’t mean you are ... Don’t judge without asking the young person. ... Be aware of conditions we care for [and] check we’re OK.”

Young carer

“ Schools need to understand about homework or if you’re not in school. Some teachers don’t understand and put you on the spot. And you have to bring a note in but your parents are not well and you can’t bring that note in. it’s harder and they need to understand.”

Young carer

“ It depends which school you go to. Like my school thought I was lying. I was late nearly every day and I would have to stand at the front of the school while the teachers screamed at me. And I said I told you yesterday, I’m not going to tell you again.”

Young carer

Trailblazers employed successful strategies to increase school engagement

Supporting young carers in schools should be a priority area for local authorities to dedicate any available resource to. This was reflected by the Trailblazers for example, Stockton-on-Tees had a School Engagement Officer, and Surrey employed Young Carers Education Advisers, who are staff based across the county who have built relationships with schools.

Trailblazers also found that operational school staff taking on a Young Carer Champion role was effective. It was felt that these champions have been effective in raising awareness of young carers with colleagues in schools and also in identifying more young carers. Once established, the role provides professionals with a named contact in the school to distribute information to or raise any issues related to young carers. The champion can then liaise to take the matter forward – they do not necessarily have to complete every action with regards to young carers in the school. The champion can also be a key contact for the local authority in relation to data and measuring impact of any support to young carers and their families. Champions operating in Trailblazer areas were provided with some resources to undertake their role effectively by the local authority, and one champion per school must attend training provided by the local authority.⁴⁴

On an operational level, Trailblazers believed that the most effective champions have been those in a pastoral role for example, an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or school nurse.⁴⁵ This enabled the issue of young carers to be discussed at, for example, School Nurse Network meetings, and circumvented blockages at a strategic level (because senior staff with less contact with young carers may not cascade messages to operational staff, and teaching staff may prioritise other considerations). Carers Trust and The Children's Society have recognised this and in 2014 a School Nurse Young Carers Pathway,⁴⁶ was published by the Department of Health, which Trailblazers have begun to implement.

However, having a Young Carer Champion at an operational level is not sufficient and a whole school approach⁴⁷ with a leadership role is needed as a minimum. Young Carers in Schools supports this principle and promotes the idea that it is vital that schools allocate a Senior Leadership Team lead and a Governor lead for young carers. Without this strategic ownership, operational leads can struggle to engage other staff members and deliver a sustainable approach. Encouraging school governors to make pledges to Think Young Carers was reported to be effective in engaging schools and ensuring commitment at a strategic level.

⁴⁴ If there is more than one champion in a school, only one need attend training to not duplicate resources; it is assumed the champion attending training distributes the training information to any other champions within the school.

⁴⁵ Although school nurses are not school employees, and some EWOs may not be school employees either. If an EWO or school nurse is the Young Carer Champion within the school but not employed by the school, the school should put forward a school employee to proactively identify and support young carers.

⁴⁶ Available at gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299270/Young_Carers_pathway_Interactive_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁷ <https://professionals.carers.org/stepbystep>

One Trailblazer also mooted the idea of having champion schools to promote good practice among local schools, although finding schools willing to devote time to such a role could be a challenge.

Trailblazers recognised that extending Young Carer Champions more widely than just in schools has the potential to lead to culture change throughout services, which is often elusive. As one senior stakeholder in a Trailblazer area mentioned:

“ You need willing champions
who want to see change ...
it can't just be left to
young carers services
themselves – change
needs to be internalised.”

Trailblazer

Some Trailblazers had already begun to extend Young Carer Champions to adult social care and customer services teams – the latter processing adult carers' assessments in the first instance as a one-stop-shop enquiry service for all enquiries related to council services. Making customer services staff aware of young carers has already led to a positive outcome because they can immediately flag any cases that they come across, resulting in an assessment beginning in as little as 48 hours. Training on young carers has been made available for staff in the Customer Services team in Oxfordshire.

Raising awareness among schools has again been important among Trailblazers

A number of awareness raising activities or events held by Trailblazers were effective in increasing schools' engagement with young carers. These included:

- Taking advantage of UK initiatives such as Carers Week,⁴⁸ Young Carers Awareness Day⁴⁹ or the Young Carers Festival.⁵⁰
- Visiting schools to speak at assemblies, with staff or parent groups, and with young carers.
- Hosting a local or regional Young Carers Conference, inviting relevant professionals, typically developed and delivered jointly with young carers, as in for example Oxfordshire⁵¹ (this also proved effective raising awareness across a range of services and agencies, not just schools).

⁴⁸ carersweek.org

⁴⁹ carers.org/young-carers-awareness-day-2016

⁵⁰ youngcarer.com/events-and-training/young-carers-festival

⁵¹ oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/oct/oxfordshire-hosts-successful-young-carers-conference

- Holding other local events; for example:
 - Liverpool influenced professionals in children’s centres and community mental health teams. Liverpool also invited Making a step change Programme Leads to speak at a regional Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) Carer Leads Network to promote Young Carers in Schools and open up a discussion about barriers and good practice engaging with schools.
 - Surrey plans to commission a drama group to undertake a play about young carers, which is estimated to reach around 6,500 young carers across the local authority.

The Young Carers in Schools programme could help continue Trailblazers’ journey with school engagement

The Making a step change programme included funding for meetings and training of 15 young carer services to promote Young Carers in Schools, reaching a total of 127 additional schools across England. Among the Trailblazers, Stockton-on-Tees and Surrey each reached 16 schools. Local authorities can utilise Young Carers in Schools to drive the young carers agenda with schools.

As before, Trailblazers reported that the fact that Making a step change was an external project helped to influence stakeholders, including schools. Making a step change was seen as providing a good opportunity for the local authority to learn from others. Trailblazers benefited from suggestions being shared through Making a step change such as how to engage schools, particularly in terms of identifying young carers – some of which are outlined above. However, it was reported that there remains a challenge in engaging schools to support data collection and measure impact in particular.

Trailblazers hope to have a Young Carer Champion in every school, but this remains some way off yet. The Director of Children’s and Adult Services in Stockton-on-Tees wrote to all schools in the local authority asking them to allocate the role, which proved effective in encouraging take-up. The Young Carers in Schools programme⁵² then provided an effective framework for follow-up work with each lead in every school (rather than designating a lead being a piecemeal initiative). It was understood that more work is required until every school allocates a lead for young carers, but Trailblazers believed that Young Carers in Schools will help to attract schools to do so.

Young Carers in Schools offers, as part of its wider programme of activities and influence, an award scheme⁵³ for schools that meet standards for supporting young carers and their families. The awards offer recognition for schools at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. The Young Carers in Schools Award can therefore provide recognition for good practice in schools, as well as fostering competition between schools and further engagement. Stockton and Surrey have held local

⁵² youngcarersinschools.com

⁵³ youngcarersinschools.com/the-award

authority-wide events to engage schools in the programme. Data from the Young Carers in Schools programme reported that the events brought together a total of 33 schools, with 29 of them stating they are likely or highly likely to apply for a Young Carers in Schools Award.

Oxfordshire also has its own Young Carers Standard awards. Seven schools in the county have achieved its Gold Award. Oxfordshire worked closely with Carers Trust and The Children's Society to enable schools applying for a local award to gain a Young Carers in Schools Award, due to the perceived value of joining up a local award to a national one. One of the local Gold Award winning schools was put forward for and achieved the Young Carers in Schools Gold Award, one of only two schools in the country. The following case study (Figure 5) illustrates how Oxfordshire's local awards developed.

Figure 5: Young Carers School Standards awards in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire created its school standards programme after learning from a two year Narrowing the Gap for Young Carers project and using small amounts of funding to ensure that six secondary schools focused on the attendance and attainment of young carers. The programme is now in its third year, with 44 schools signed up, though the original funding has ended. Under the current model, interested schools are assigned a contact in their locality, who visits the school. The school then signs a partnership agreement, which includes – among other things – having a young carers lead in the school.

From that point on, the relationship is dependent on the needs of the school. For example, the contact may help to deliver school assemblies, or help the school draft a policy for young carers. The schools are provided with an information pack, which details what is expected of them, and can then work towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold standard.

Schools are also offered a variety of other support, such as networking events where social workers and other people from the community are in attendance. Young carers have visited schools and helped to train members of staff and raise awareness of young carers. The idea is to foster an environment in the school where young carers, should they wish to do so, can come forward and identify themselves as a young carer. Once a young carer is identified, the school fills in a referral form.

The Young Carers Forum visits schools applying for a Gold Award to meet with the young carers lead and young carers in the school. The young carers then look at the framework for what a gold-standard school should look like, and write a report for the school with recommendations and points for following up.

It was felt that most schools have taken on the standards enthusiastically. The biggest challenges with the schools have been the following:

- Managing the expectations of the schools. Schools are now given more autonomy in how they achieve the standards.
- Schools work in different ways, with different data sharing practices.

- Convincing schools of the value of ‘doing more’ to achieve the standards and remaining consistent.
- High levels of staff turnover in schools.

Schools have varying ways of making staff aware of their identified young carers. One of the Gold Award schools has a young carers register in the staff room, showing the young carers, their family and what classroom they are in. Other schools put the information on their pupil records, but advise discretion and ensure that the permission of the young carer has been obtained before any information is available to other members of staff.

Oxfordshire worked with Carers Trust and The Children’s Society to align the local award with the Young Carers in Schools programme, embedding tools from their programme in their existing support for schools, and enabling schools successfully applying for a local award to gain a Young Carers in Schools Award.

Recommendations to consider when developing collaborative working with schools

Recommendations for local authorities

- Where possible, local authorities should support schools to identify young carers, and encourage schools to raise awareness of young carers more generally through for example, school assemblies, staff or parent groups and with school professionals.
- Local authorities should promote and support the Young Carer Champion role with schools, particularly among pastoral staff.
- Local authorities should raise awareness of the Young Carers in Schools programme.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Local Authorities Engagement with Schools briefing (Carter, E, Smith, T, 2016).

Recommendations for schools

- To improve performance and ensure all children reach the potential they can, schools should prioritise the identification of young carers.
- Every school should allocate one Young Carer Champion (as a minimum), and contact the local authority to make them aware of them so they can link in to any relevant networks and be supported in their role.
- Schools should sign up to the Young Carers in Schools programme⁵⁴ to continue with their commitment to young carers and draw upon learning from across England.

⁵⁴ youngcarersinschools.com

6. Working collaboratively with health services

Introduction

The Children’s Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Families Act section 17ZA(12)) states that local authorities must take “reasonable steps” to identify young carers in their area. Collaborating with health services to support the needs of young carers and their families can play a vital role in this. Supporting this view, NHS England has developed a resource (including a memorandum of understanding) promoting joint working between adult services, NHS commissioners and providers and voluntary sector organisations, focusing on developing an integrated approach to the identification, assessment and support of carers and their families across health and social care.⁵⁵

Furthermore, the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014: “places a corresponding duty on local authorities to carry out their care and support functions with the aim of integrating services with those provided by the NHS or other health-related services.” The local authority is not solely responsible for promoting integration, however. Similar duties are placed on NHS England and clinical commissioning groups to promote integration with care and support under the NHS Act: “NHS England must encourage partnership arrangements between [Clinical Commissioning Groups] 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.”

What Trailblazers have achieved (models of practice)

Engaging with health services is very important to the young carers agenda

However, it must be recognised that health is a broad agenda, encompassing adult mental health services, CAMHS, hospitals and emergency care, general practices and primary care, community health, and the wider NHS and Clinical commissioning groups.

Trailblazers said that this fragmentation across health services has provided difficulties in translating good intentions to support young carers into real operational buy-in and action. Similar to schools, Trailblazer reported variable practice. Some healthcare professionals have been open to and aware of young carers and include them in any conversations with the person being cared for, while others will not consider young carers, nor necessarily include them in conversations.

⁵⁵ NHS England (2016). Available at england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/identifying-assessing-carer-hlth-wellbeing.pdf

Trailblazers engaging health services employed similar approaches to those employed with schools

In this context, the suggestions provided through Making a step change with regards to engaging schools again resonate. On the strategic side, the most effective Trailblazers secured support from senior health stakeholders. Most were at least aiming to develop a memorandum of understanding with health services concerning young carers. Surrey has taken this further, and all health providers (NHS Trusts, clinical commissioning groups and a mental health provider) have an individual Young Carers Action Plan. Some of the Trailblazers also undertook joint commissioning with health services or had pooled budgets (see Part 1, Section 1 of this report). As one senior stakeholder said, empowering health services to take a lead, rather than dictating what they should do, has proven an effective approach:

“ You need to let them [partners] decide what they CAN do.”

Trailblazer

On the operational side, Liverpool delivered a webinar about its work with health partners (both adult and children’s mental health services).⁵⁶ Young Carer Champions were again effective in this area. For example, Devon has designated a GP lead for carers, who has a particular passion for issues related to young carers and is pushing his colleagues to take it seriously. Also relevant have been:

- Events and conferences attended by key stakeholders.
- Raising the issue of young carers at meetings of various health networks.
- Workforce development and training, to raise awareness.
- Sending young carers bulletins, which act as reminders.
- Encouraging professionals to make pledges for example, so-called Pinky Pledges.⁵⁷
- Displaying posters in health settings. In Surrey a poster is displayed in all hospitals which was designed by a young carer following a competition. A similar poster is also displayed in a prominent position of the council’s main offices.

⁵⁶ makingastepchange.info/project-learning/webinars-2/#webinar3

⁵⁷ nhsiq.nhs.uk/media/2645793/pinky_pledges_v4.pdf

As with schools, some Trailblazers devoted dedicated resources to engaging health partners. Surrey had 60 Carers Leads across the local authority; because they are funded by health services themselves, a strategic stakeholder said that: “they (health services) see the post as theirs.” The voluntary sector provider – Action for Carers Surrey – was also tasked with raising awareness among all general practices. Similar to the GP lead for carers in Devon, Carers Oxfordshire is allocating a support worker through its service to a general practice, and the young carers team will be working with them to promote awareness of young carers.

Oxfordshire also developed work in hospitals and mental health teams to maintain awareness of young carers. In terms of hospitals, there is a project called Seldom Heard Voice, which aims to hear the voices of under-represented patient groups, of which young carers are a part. There is similarly a project about Hearing a Child’s Voice in hospitals, whether these are patients or the children/siblings of patients.

Surrey has developed its own young carers pathway where young carers who are identified can be referred through to the young carers service by the completion of an online Carers Prescription,⁵⁸ on the basis that 84% of prescriptions in Surrey are collected by someone other than the patient themselves. Naturally, young carers play a part in this, so the Trailblazer has held a young carers medicine event and refreshed information about medications specifically for young carers.

With GPs, there has been a little more difficulty

Although some GPs really want to help and do whatever they can – some attend TAF meetings – generally, it was felt that GPs do not see young carers as a priority. To mitigate this, as well as providing dedicated resources (see Devon and Oxfordshire examples above), Trailblazers advocated liaising with general practices directly. Oxfordshire offers to write to the GPs of all families where a young carer has been identified through other routes. It was felt that this was particularly important as the GP has a historical relationship with every member of the family.

Trailblazers have also concentrated on identifying young carers from general practice registration as a matter of course, although given the infancy of this route of identifying young carers, this is seen as an area for development. However, it is an area that may lead to more consistent identification in future, if the support of more general practices is forthcoming. Surrey mentioned that front of house staff at general practices (for example, receptionists or practice managers) may supplement, or even be more effective, than dealing with GPs directly, because they may be more willing and able to take on being a Young Carer Champion as a development opportunity.

⁵⁸ actionforcarers.org.uk/index.php/professionals/general-practitioners/surrey-gp-carers-prescription

Recommendations to consider when developing collaborative working with health services

- Local authorities should secure support for the issue of young carers from senior health stakeholders.
- Local authorities should develop a memorandum of understanding with health services concerning young carers⁵⁹ (or even an individual Young Carers Action Plan with individual health trusts or clinical commissioning groups).
- Local authorities should promote and support the Young Carer Champion role within health services, particularly among staff in general practices and with GPs themselves.
- Local authorities should make efforts to raise awareness of young carers within health settings including, for example, events, conferences, health-related networks, workforce development, bulletins, pledges and posters.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Local Authorities and Engagement with Health briefing (Istead, K, Leadbitter, H, 2016).

⁵⁹ (NHS England, 2016)

Part 2: Evaluation of the Making a step change programme

Making a step change helped Trailblazers achieve collaborative approaches

Trailblazers used Making a step change as a hook to get people involved with the young carers agenda, and develop their own understanding of successful approaches from other Trailblazers. One Trailblazer said it gave the young carers agenda more impetus and recognition; for example, Carers Trust and The Children’s Society presented at key local strategic meetings in Trailblazer areas. Positive comments were made on what was seen as very much a two-way relationship between Carers Trust and The Children’s Society and the Trailblazers.

Making a step change Programme Leads described being open as a helpful quality of a Trailblazer. They said Trailblazers had a “thirst for knowledge” and a desire to continually develop their own practice. Trailblazers themselves welcomed Making a step change as it made them feel they were not on their own. They appreciated the shared learning that was possible from Making a step change and the community that this created.

It was also felt that Making a step change has resulted in more interest from senior management, which has generated the impetus to bring partners to the table. One Trailblazer commented that:

“ It doesn’t matter how good a service is. It is only one part of a system. [Making a step change] has re-focused us on the wider context and has brought others to the table. That is fantastic.”

Trailblazer

In the local authority being referred to in the above quote, it was reported that schools and colleges are now focusing more on the performance of, and provision for, young carers, starting from the point of identifying young carers (as discussed further below). For example, a young carer’s attendance or time keeping may not be as good as a pupil who does not have caring responsibilities. Similarly, the quality of their work and exam results may fluctuate. Schools and colleges in this local authority were now starting to realise this and taking different approaches in how they manage this. This is discussed further in the context of the Young Carers in Schools programme below.

Trailblazers said that Making a step change helped to raise the profile of young carers in their areas

Trailblazers believed that Making a step change gave young carers and their families an “identity” or “resonance”. As stated previously, in this context it was noted that senior staff respond well to a project or award, and Making a step change was recognised as such by these stakeholders.

Information shared throughout Making a step change was also seen as useful, with referral paperwork being one example cited by a Trailblazer. Trailblazers generally said that they would like to continue this process of developing and sharing tools and information for example, one commented that they would find it useful to develop a pathway to know where their referrals are coming from, and so be able to judge which areas need to refer more. An ID card for young carers was another suggestion that Trailblazers were keen to develop.

Making a step change provided useful suggestions and recommendations about assessments and support

Trailblazers reported that being able to access the Making a step change website⁶⁰ to see what others around the country have been doing was particularly useful. It was also noted that webinars⁶¹ were informative and good avenues to hear how other Trailblazers were working with young carers and their families and to share good practice.

Some Trailblazers also felt that Making a step change had helped them to overcome difficulties, particularly concerning assessments. The Young Carers’ Needs Assessment guidance document – one of the Key Resources on the Making a step change website⁶² – is one resource helping local authorities implement statutory young carers needs assessments effectively.

Making a step change helped Trailblazers share information on transition, but more is still to be done

Information shared on young adult carers’ transition arrangements was an example cited by a Trailblazer of where information shared throughout Making a step change has been useful. However, other Trailblazers appeared to be less assured with their arrangements for transition, with young adult carers representing a relatively small – but still significant – cohort of carers below the age of 25. In this context, more than one Trailblazer would welcome further guidance on transition arrangements for young adult carers. To help overcome this, Making a step change ran a Transition workshop⁶³ at the final Making a step change event.

⁶⁰ makingastepchange.info

⁶¹ makingastepchange.info/project-learning/webinars-2

⁶² makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources

⁶³ makingastepchange.info/project-learning/

Making a step change had begun to get Trailblazers to think more about measuring impact

Trailblazers were strongly encouraged to think more about measuring impact in a variety of ways and ensuring they collect the data that is necessary. However, Trailblazers recognised that much more was still to be done. They did cite workshops, webinars and suggestions provided throughout Making a step change as providing useful aspects to consider, as well as acting as a sounding board and affirmation for ideas. Some of the Trailblazers said that they were considering outcomes data more closely as a result. Making a step change Programme Leads have developed a briefing⁶⁴ on the topic to further support local authorities.

⁶⁴ (Phelps, D, 2016).

Conclusion, recommendations and next steps

The strategies and approaches outlined in this report have worked in supporting young carers and their families

At the time of writing, we are one year on from the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014⁶⁵ making local authorities accountable for implementing the duties as outlined in the Acts. This report has provided some suggestions as to what effective practice could look like.

However, as one Trailblazer said, “there’s no single bullet” or single model for addressing the needs of young carers. Trailblazers discussed how the size, type, structure, population, pre-existing provision, infrastructure and geography of their local authority had influenced their delivery model. Local authorities have different strengths and face different challenges, so must develop a tailored local solution, not least because it is acknowledged that the amount of resource that can be dedicated to young carers will be variable across local authorities. In addition, an effective programme of support for young carers and their families is likely to be based upon a combination of efforts/initiatives, rather than directed on one or a few particular areas.

Trailblazers found Making a step change to be a useful catalyst to continue to develop their own practice and raise awareness about young carers across services

Making a step change supported Trailblazers with five main areas of development. It also supported the development of collaborative approaches in relation to health services, and young carers’ transition to adulthood. Other local authority areas may wish to consider these collaborative approaches when implementing their own young carers services and strategies.

Trailblazers were generally positive about the influence of Making a step change on them, stating that it had contributed to the progress they had achieved since the introduction of the legislation specifying duties to support young carers and their families. An external programme like Making a step change provided Trailblazers with more impetus and recognition of issues around young carers, even if Trailblazers had made progress before the legislation came into effect. It provided Trailblazers with a space to interact and share practice, and facilitated

⁶⁵ For further information, see [Carers.org/article/care-act-2014-england](https://www.carers.org/article/care-act-2014-england) and [Carers.org/care-act-carers-one-year-commission](https://www.carers.org/care-act-carers-one-year-commission)

this process of knowledge transfer between the Trailblazers. One Trailblazer summed up others' sentiments:

“ It [Making a step change] feels as though it has enabled a time of reflection on what we are doing and we are on the right track and looking back on where we came from.”

Trailblazer

As part of encouraging further consideration of the issues involved, see below a series of recommendations arising from the evaluation.

Now the Acts are well embedded, it is time for local authorities to take action

The legislation underpins a whole family approach and has sharpened focus – particularly with regards to assessment – but it has not yet achieved its aims across all partners. There was a feeling that the Acts are having a drip-drip effect and it will take time for all services and bodies to fully understand their responsibilities within them. However, stakeholders who had worked with young carers for a number of years – and young carers themselves – felt that providing the necessary support to young carers and their families was already overdue.

Summary of recommendations to consider when developing effective whole family delivery models for young carers and their families

1. Collaborative whole family approaches

- All local authorities should implement a memorandum of understanding among key partners for young carers and their families. Local authorities should view the Key Resources on the Making a step change website for a possible template for this at makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources.
- Local authorities should ensure that the memorandum of understanding is recognised by staff at both strategic and operational levels.
- Local authorities should promote collaborative working in relation to young carers and their families by, for example joint service training and bringing together staff from different services through co-location.
- Local authorities should encourage partners working with young carers and their families, across children's and adult services, to Think Family.
- Partners and services supporting young carers – most notably local authorities and voluntary sector providers – should work closely together to develop a strong relationship, based on for example, learning, accountability and each other's specialisms.

- Local authorities should ensure strong strategic foundations for supporting young carers, based on effective leadership, management and practice for example, holding a young carers multi-agency strategy group and creating a multi-agency strategy plan for young carers.
- Local authorities should consider joint commissioning and pooled budgets as possible mechanisms to support young carers.
- Local authorities should ensure that the voices of young carers are heard, through for example, a Young Carers Forum or Young Carers Council (though other means to gather young carers' voice are possible).
- Local authorities should consider appropriate opportunities to integrate the young carers agenda into other agendas for example, integrating young carers training into wider training or e-learning (for both for managers and practitioners).
- Local authorities should consider how young carers could benefit from complementary programmes or funding streams.
- Local authorities should provide a designated strategic lead for young carers (functions of which could be sustained by others once the necessary strategic support for young carers has been embedded).
- Local authorities should seek to ensure that all relevant partners dedicate some resource (one Young Carer Champion per organisation as a minimum) to young carers.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Leadership and Management briefing (Badham, B, 2016).

2. Identification of young carers

- Local authorities and other relevant partners should promote an understanding that early help is the best way to support young carers and there is an expectation on all services to identify young carers.
- Local authorities should improve the identification of young carers through, for example, developing jointly-owned pathways for young carers, streamlining or adapting referral forms, or putting a requirement to consider young carers on checklists.
- Local authorities should encourage young carers to self-refer and develop a clear and transparent offer of support to young carers and their families on the local authority website.
- Local authorities should promote to partners the moral and economic arguments for identifying and supporting young carers.
- To encourage ownership, local authorities should work to improve the attitude and language used between services, to encourage practitioners to see their role in identification as part of their moral responsibility, rather than a duty.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Identification and Assessment briefing (Phelps, D, Cook, F, 2016).

3. Assessment and support services

- Local authorities should ensure that the assessment process is clear to young carers, their families and practitioners, and is a meaningful process to all parties.
- Local authorities and all relevant partners should work towards assessments being more than just making a referral to a young carers service through, for example, a jointly-owned pathway.⁶⁶
- Local authorities should encourage the use of age appropriate assessment materials for young carers,⁶⁷ preferably consulting with young carers about their design.
- Local authorities should consider tailored, one-to-one, whole family based support for young carers, in addition to group-based, respite-focused support.
- To share resources and workloads, local authorities should consider support for young carers from all services, for example from a Family Support Worker or from services in a TAF.
- Local authorities and relevant partners should consider innovative uses of resources; for example, personal budgets, travel cards and packs for young carers supporting family members who have a mental health condition.
- Local authorities and other relevant partners should view the Key Resources on the Making a step change website for guidance on the young carers needs assessment. See makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources.

Transition

- Local authorities should consider young adult carers (between the ages of 16 and 25) as a specific group.
- Local authorities should consider provision of support to young adult carers up to age 25 by a separate young adult carers service or continuing support from the young carers service (as opposed to a service for adult carers).
- Local authorities should ensure that workers from the young carers service and young adult carers service share information and cases.
- Local authorities should encourage and consider commissioning peer support for young carers, particularly for young adult carers.
- Local authorities should work with colleges' and universities' student support and outreach services (including universities outside the local authority) to support young adult carers to access and succeed at college and university.

⁶⁶ youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway

⁶⁷ See, for example About Me and iCare, which are used in Surrey for primary and secondary age young carers respectively at youngcarersstuff.org

4. Measures to assess impact

- Local authorities should consider the use of nationally recognised outcome measurement tools (including the MACA, PANOC, Outcomes Star, WEMWBS and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale)⁶⁸ to assess the impact of support for young carers.
- Local authorities should consider measuring the characteristics of their young carer cohorts, and compare these to local, regional and national benchmarks (for example, school or safeguarding related data such as school absence, young people who are NEET or Key Stage 2 and GCSE attainment data).
- As a minimum, local authorities should measure their baseline (or ‘starting point’) for key indicators, so that any future impact (or ‘distance-travelled’) can be measured against these (ideally, local authorities should implement longitudinal (before and after) measures to assess impact).
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Measuring the Impact of a Whole System Approach briefing (Phelps, D, 2016).

5. Working collaboratively with schools

Recommendations for local authorities

- Where possible, local authorities should support schools to identify young carers, and encourage schools to raise awareness of young carers more generally through, for example, school assemblies, staff or parent groups and with school professionals.
- Local authorities should promote and support the Young Carer Champion role with schools, particularly among pastoral staff.
- Local authorities should raise awareness of the Young Carers in Schools programme.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Local Authorities Engagement with Schools briefing (Carter, E, Smith, T, 2016).

⁶⁸ **MACA** (Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities)
static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf
PANOC (Positive and Negative Outcomes of Caring)
static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf
Outcomes Star – examples include use of the Family Star and the Carers Star
outcomesstar.org.uk/carers-star
WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale)
warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
yorku.ca/rokada/psyctest/rosenbrg.pdf

Recommendations for schools

- To improve performance and ensure all children reach the potential they can, schools should prioritise the identification of young carers.
- Every school should allocate one Young Carer Champion (as a minimum), and contact the local authority to make them aware of them so they can link in to any relevant networks and be supported in their role.
- Schools should sign up to the Young Carers in Schools programme⁶⁹ to continue with their commitment to young carers and draw upon learning from across the country.

6. Working collaboratively with health services

- Local authorities should secure support for the issue of young carers from senior health stakeholders.
- Local authorities should develop a memorandum of understanding with health services concerning young carers⁷⁰ (or even an individual Young Carers Action Plan with individual health trusts or clinical commissioning groups).
- Local authorities should promote and support the Young Carer Champion role within health services, particularly among staff in general practices and with GPs themselves.
- Local authorities should make efforts to raise awareness of young carers within health settings including, for example events, conferences, health-related networks, workforce development, bulletins, pledges and posters.
- Local authorities should read the Making a step change Local Authorities and Engagement with Health briefing (Istead, K, Leadbitter, H, 2016).

Next steps

Next steps for local authorities

We hope to see good practice from Trailblazers being replicated and practice continuing to be developed in other local authority areas.

Profiting from this evaluation and the briefings and resources from Making a step change,⁷¹ we hope that learning will continue, but now the expectation is on local authorities to put the learning to date into practice and drive change, in terms of: profiling and targeting young carers, training and raising awareness among staff, winning hearts and minds, and changing work cultures to recognise a whole family, whole council approach best supports young carers and their families.

⁶⁹ youngcarersinschools.com

⁷⁰ (NHS England, 2016).

⁷¹ makingastepchange.info

Next steps for Trailblazers

This report has presented largely positive progress in respect of the Trailblazers. Engaging schools and health services should continue to help provide a truly seamless service for young carers. More focus should be given to developing whole family assessments, transition arrangements and, in particular, putting robust measures in place to assess the impact of support for young carers, to secure long-term support for this issue.

Next steps for the Making a step change approach

For the Making a step change team, Trailblazers stated that they would welcome further learning via contact with each other and indeed wider local authority areas, including contact on a bilateral basis. Transition for young carers, service and outcomes monitoring and further school engagement were areas that Trailblazers identified as warranting further guidance, which Making a step change could potentially look to provide in future.

Extending Making a step change from six to potentially all top-tier local authorities in the UK would necessarily require more resources, although facilitating local authorities (and voluntary sector young carer providers within them) to share knowledge and support each other – including potentially on a bilateral basis, could be achievable without such a wholesale expansion.

References

Badham, B (2016), *Briefing: Leadership and Management* (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

BBC, University of Nottingham (2010), *Kids in Care* (BBC, University of Nottingham).

Carter, E, Smith, T (2016), *Local Authorities Engagement with Schools* (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

Clay, D, Connors, C, Day, N, Gkiza, M, Aldridge, J (2016), *The Lives of Young Carers in England: Research Brief* (Department for Education).

Dearden, C, Becker, S (2004), *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* (Carers UK and The Children's Society).

Istead, K, Leadbitter; H (2016), *Local Authorities and Engagement with Health* (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

Kendall, S, Palmer, H, Ronicle, J, Rodger, J, Mahon, J, Starks, L, Hall, Whitley, J (2011), *Turning Around the Lives of Families with Multiple Problems: An Evaluation of the Family and Young Carer Pathfinders Programme* (Department for Education).

NHS England (2016), *An Integrated Approach to Identifying and Assessing Carer Health and Wellbeing* (Carers UK, Carers Trust, The Children's Society, ADASS).

Ofsted (2015), *The Common Inspection Framework: Education, Skills and Early Years* (Ofsted).

Phelps, D (2016), *Measuring the Impact of a Whole System Approach* (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

Phelps, D, Cook, F (2016), *Identification and Assessment Pathways: 'No Wrong Doors'* (Carers Trust and The Children's Society).

Sempik, J, Becker, S (2013), *Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education* (Carers Trust).

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

Further information

The following web links are provided throughout this report. They are presented here in the order in which they appear in the report. Local authorities may wish to consider these sources when developing effective whole family delivery models for young carers and their families.

makingastepchange.info/project-learning/project-evaluations

makingastepchange.info

carers.org

childrenssociety.org.uk

uk.ecorys.com

makingastepchange.wordpress.com (The predecessor to Making a step change: Putting it into practice)

carers.org/knowyourrights (A guide to ensure young carers and young adult carers know their rights)

makingastepchange.info/key-themes/identification-of-young-carers/

makingastepchange.info/project-learning/faq/#Q7
(Further information about young carers' assessments)

makingastepchange.info/resources-2/key-resources

carersworldradio.ihoststudio.com/carersnet/young%20carer%20strat.pdf
(Surrey's Young Carers Strategy)

professionals.carers.org/stepbystep

carersweek.org

carers.org/young-carers-awareness-day-2016

youtube.com/watch?v=5cTsdGt9ygY
(#Mood: Ensemble Award-winning film made by young carers in Liverpool as part of the NOW Young People's Arts Festival 2016)

youtube.com/watch?v=fLQ9WaxmvJU
(See Us)

cylux.co.uk/products/young_carer_aware.html
(Young Carer Aware: e-learning package used in Surrey)

local.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-and-adult-social-care/-/journal_content/56/10180/4096799/ARTICLE
(Further information on the Better Care Fund)

healthyschools.org.uk
(Further information on the Healthy Schools programme)

gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings

gov.uk/government/policies/support-for-families
(Further information on the Troubled Families programme)

makingstepchangepractice.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/leadership-and-management.pdf

youngcarer.com/resources/whole-family-pathway

makingstepchange.info/project-learning/webinars-2/#webinar3

spurgeonsyc.org/oxfordshire/#referrals
(Oxfordshire's self-referral and professional referral forms)

oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/young-carers-services

gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-family-and-young-carer-pathfinders-programme (Kendall S et al, 2011)

gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498116/DFE-RB499_The_lives_of_young_carers_in_England_brief.pdf (Clay D et al, 2016)

youngcarersstuff.org

surreycc.gov.uk/jobs/mybenefits-exclusive-for-surrey-county-council-staff/advice-and-support-services-for-staff/app-for-surrey-carers

royalsurrey.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PIN715b_Carer_passport_for_family_members_w.pdf

actionforcarers.org.uk/index.php/getting-help/publications and actionforcarers.org.uk/Bulletin%207%20Making%20a%20step%20change/I34-13JH-99KPSIPM16-1YD0MW-1/Young%20Carers%20Packs%20in%20Surrey.aspx?dm_i=I34,3ZO8W,KPSIPM,0,1
(Packs designed for young carers in mental health wards in Surrey)

professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/university_toolkit_master_webversion_final.pdf

makingstepchange.info/project-learning/faq/#Q17
(Making a step change has promoted the need for “strong local measurement of impact of local support”.)

gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics

static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf
(MACA: Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities)

static.carers.org/files/4089-yc-outcomes-manual-spreads-sb-6261.pdf
(PANOC: Positive and Negative Outcomes of Caring)

outcomesstar.org.uk/carers-star
(Outcomes Star – examples include use of the Family Star and the Carers Star)

warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs
(WEMWBS: Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale)

yorku.ca/rokada/psyctest/rosenbrg.pdf
(Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale)

makingastepchange.info/measuring-the-impact-in-your-local-authority/

youngcarersinschools.com

youngcarersinschools.com/the-award

youngcarersinschools.com/about/young-carers

gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299270/Young_Carers_pathway_Interactive_FINAL.pdf
(School Nurse Pathway)

youngcarer.com/events-and-training/young-carers-festival

oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/oct/oxfordshire-hosts-successful-young-carers-conference

makingastepchange.info/key-themes/engaging-with-schools/

england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/identifying-assessing-carer-hlth-wellbeing.pdf

nhsiq.nhs.uk/media/2645793/pinky_pledges_v4.pdf

actionforcarers.org.uk/index.php/professionals/general-practitioners/surrey-gp-carers-prescription

makingastepchange.info/key-themes/engaging-with-schools/

makingastepchange.info/project-learning/webinars-2

carers.org/article/care-act-2014-england




carers.org/care-act-carers-one-year-commission



Carers Trust
32–36 Loman Street
London SE1 0EH

Tel: 0300 772 9600
Email: info@carers.org

[Carers.org](http://carers.org)
matter.carers.org
babble.carers.org
<http://professionals.carers.org>


 www.facebook.com/CarersTrust
 www.twitter.com/CarersTrust
 www.youtube.com/user/CarersTrust

Carers Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1145181) and in Scotland (SC042870). Registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 7697170. Registered office: 32–36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EH.

© Carers Trust 2016 unless stated otherwise.
All library photos posed by models.

The Children's Society
Unit 4, Calford House
Wessex Business Park
Wessex Way
Colden Common
SO21 1WP

www.childrenssociety.org.uk
www.youngcarer.com
www.makewav.es/ycif

 [@childrensociety](https://twitter.com/childrensociety)
 www.facebook.com/childrensociety

The Children's Society is a registered charity number 221124. Registered Office: Edward Rudolf House, Margery Street, London, WC1X 0JL.