

## JOINED UP LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR YOUNG CARERS

The Government has indicated its intention to consider amendments to the Children and Families Bill and Care Bill, both currently before Parliament, to address inconsistencies and improve synergy in the legislative framework for young carers. We believe we can build upon our joint work to identify and facilitate good practice in local services.<sup>1</sup> We outline below some of the current challenges and what we should aim for to improve outcomes for young carers and their families. Our organisations remain keen to participate in discussions about how best to achieve improved outcomes for young carers within a more clearly joined up legislative framework and consequent improvements to policy guidance and local practice and understanding that would flow from it.

Current Challenges	Expected Outcomes of Reform and Joint Working
<p><b>Legislative and policy framework for young carers is complex and inconsistent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of common and shared understanding about who young carers are.</li> <li>Inconsistent and complicated policy guidance for the front line.</li> <li>Duplicate assessment pathways resulting in a lack of clarity about responsibility/ accountability for young carers, and barriers to identification, assessment and support.</li> <li>Confusion for parents and young carers about how to access available support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entitlements and guidance for young carers is codified, clear and coherent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universal understanding about who young carers are to improve identification.</li> <li>Co-ordinated guidance that empowers the frontline to provide appropriate support.</li> <li>Shared understanding and awareness by health and social care agencies about respective roles and duties resulting in early intervention support.</li> <li>Families and young carers understand entitlements to support and can hold agencies to account.</li> <li>Existing agreements between statutory directors for adults and children are built upon.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unclear interface between adult and children's social care arrangements and law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inhibits co-operation between adult and children's services to undertake whole family working &amp; joined up approaches with schools, health and communities.</li> <li>Referral systems are at odds with a clear whole family pathway.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Joined up legal and guidance framework which supports whole family working.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joined up legislation and guidance leading to young carers being identified by a range of professionals and care is delivered in ways that sustain families.</li> <li>Understandable and proportionate common assessment pathway; young carers are identified as part of an adult needs assessment and adults are assessed and supported in relation to parenting responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inappropriate caring by children is not being prevented resulting in negative and costly impacts on their health and wellbeing, education and employment outcomes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young carers have to request an assessment and have to be doing regular and substantial caring to be entitled to assessment.</li> <li>Barriers to identification and thresholds mean assessment and support is often only provided when there are serious safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>Failure to adequately support disabled adults who are parents.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Young carers are protected from inappropriate caring. Improved outcomes for them and their families, with reduced costs and improved value for money for the state, are possible.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and families are able to easily access early, tailored support packages, without having to hit certain 'thresholds' or experience crises.</li> <li>Independence and improved wellbeing for families and parents who have care and support needs through low level and personalised solutions for the whole family.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> See: ADCS, ADASS and The Children's Society's 'Working Together to Support Young Carers and their Families: A template local memorandum of understanding between Statutory Directors for Children's Services and Adult Social Services' (2009 and revised 2012).