

## Torbay Carers Strategy for Under 25's - A New Approach



## TORBAY STRATEGY FOR YOUNG CARERS UNDER 25 – A NEW APPROACH

### Introduction.

This joint strategy for Young Carers under 25 years old represents a new approach by Torbay Council, Torbay and Southern Devon Health and Care NHS Trust, together with their partner agencies (see Appendix 1), to develop joined-up support services for an important group of young people and their families. In producing this joint strategy, there is a recognition that we need to take a whole family approach to addressing the needs of carers under 25 and that for the strategy to be effective we should design it around those needs and not organisational boundaries. Torbay has a well-developed Young Carers Service working with carers up to 18 and, since 2009, a Young Adult Carers Service for 16 – 25 year olds. By bringing these services together, we can be more effective in our response to Young Carers under 25.

There are good reasons for looking at Young Carers throughout childhood into young adulthood:

- The development needs of children and young people do not fit neatly with the boundaries between Children and Adult services. Evidence from the experience of Young Carers and the development of Torbay Young Adult Carers service has highlighted that the needs of most Young Carers over 16 were closer to those of adults than young children (e.g. issues of employment, higher education, personal relationships)
- Many disabled and vulnerable parents are known to Adult services, who have a duty to support them in their parenting role. This support could have a significant impact on reducing inappropriate caring by Young Carers.
- Planning for the transition of young people into adulthood requires effective joint working and a shared commitment to seamless services.

The Memorandum of Understanding for Young Carers (a protocol established by the Association of Directors of Adult Services (ADASS) and Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS)<sup>1</sup> emphasises the benefits of a joined-up approach. The Memorandum was endorsed by both Torbay Children's Trust Board (superceded by the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board) and Torbay Care Trust Board (now Torbay & Southern Devon Health and Care trust Board). Revised guidance<sup>2</sup> now strengthens and deepens this memorandum, and introduces pending audit requirements within wider Council processes for the management of risk and provision of reasonable assurance.

This strategy will provide a flexible and effective mechanism that confirms our common intent to find the most effective ways of supporting Young Carers under 25 and their families. The Action Plan at the end of the document sets out the goals, expectations and responsibilities for the next 3 years and will inform the future commissioning of services.

### Torbay's Definition of a Young Carer

*"Young carers are children and young persons under 25 who provide, or intend to provide, care, assistance or support to another family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, or has*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Working Together to Support Young Carers' – A model Local Memorandum of Understanding between Statutory Directors for Children's Service and adult Social Services, ADCS and ADASS 2009.

<sup>2</sup> 'Working Together to Support Young Carers and their Families', ADCS and ADASS 2012.

*a substance misuse problem. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks, taking on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age or development.”<sup>3</sup>*

### **The impact of being a Young Carer**

*“Young carers tell us that they value their caring roles and are often proud of the contribution they are able to make in their families. All too often, however, children and young people become carers because someone in their family has significant unmet care needs arising from disabilities, mental health needs or substance misuse. All too often young carers have stepped into the breach, sometimes assuming a level of responsibility that no child should be expected to take on”.*<sup>4</sup>

Young Carers under 25 are vulnerable to poor outcomes because they frequently forego opportunities, worry when they do take up opportunities, feel responsible for others and lack the social networks experienced by peers without caring roles. Evidence shows that 30% of Young Carers experience problems at school with attendance, attainment and social development, rising to 40% where they care within a family affected by substance misuse<sup>5</sup>. These factors also contribute to issues with employment for Young Carers. In addition, there may be physical problems such as excessive tiredness or injury from lifting and assisting others, and emotional and mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, depression and a sense of isolation. Coping strategies may sometimes include excessive use of alcohol or substances, self harm, or involvement in crime or risk taking activities. Recognised national risk factors attributed to teenage pregnancy are also highly prevalent for this group of young people<sup>6</sup>.

### **Young Carers – the National Context**

The Key Principles of Practice’ document (2007) provides a template for agencies to respond sensitively to recommendations of national policy affecting carers and their families.<sup>7</sup> The shared principles of practice are specifically around:

- Safeguarding of children through preventing inappropriate care of any family member
- Adopting the whole family approach to needs-led assessments
- Involvement by Young Carers and their families in the development of support services
- Ensuring Young Carers have the same access to education and career paths as their peers
- Continuing awareness-raising, influence of change and regular monitoring and review of services
- Safe, quality support for Young Carers through local projects and other direct services

In 2008, the Government published its ‘Think Family’<sup>8</sup> initiative, distilling the understanding that impacting on multiple disadvantage and reducing vulnerability of children requires a whole

---

<sup>3</sup> Social care Institute for Excellence (2005) Practice guide 5: Implementing the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

<sup>4</sup> see footnote 1

<sup>5</sup> HM Government, Carers at the Heart of the 21<sup>st</sup> century families and communities, “A caring system on your side. A life of your own.” HM Government, June 2008

<sup>6</sup> Social Exclusion Unit: Teenage Pregnancy; London: HMSO, 1999

<sup>7</sup> Key Principles of Practice (Young Carers), The Children’s Society, 2007

family approach. Also key to raising the profile of Young Carers under 25 and integrating the understanding of their vulnerability is the National Carers' Strategy 'Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities'<sup>9</sup> which sets a ten year plan for all carers and has a vision that:

*"children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the Every Child Matters outcomes."*

Torbay fully endorses both the Principles of Practice, the Think Family approach, and the ideas developed within the national strategy, and is seeking to bind these together with the delivery of this joint strategy. An Action Plan within this strategy will set out our priorities for Young Carers under 25 and will include measurable outcomes.

### **Torbay's Vision for Young Carers under 25.**

The priorities for Young Carers are no different from those we hold for all young people in Torbay, and the 7 priorities within the Children and Young Peoples' Plan (CYPP) 2010-13 are key aspirations we hold for Young Carers alongside our targets for them as a unique group. The priorities of the CYPP are:

- Raise attainment at all stages of education
- Improve attendance and behaviour at education settings
- Ensure all children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect and feel safe and supported in their families and communities
- Increase participation and positive activities
- Reduce the number of teenagers becoming pregnant
- Reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty
- Reduce the use of alcohol and substance misuse

In Torbay the needs of Young Carers under 25 are recognised in the current Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA) and in the interagency carers strategy "Measure Up 2012 – 14"

### **Young Carers in Torbay – current need and provision**

National estimates suggest that between 6-12% of all children and young people of school age are caring for a parent. Adding a sibling to this will increase it further and would put the number in Torbay closer to 2,400 (by 2001 census figures). However, these are estimates, and it is recognised that for strategic planning to be effective we will have to collect more accurate local data. This is built into the Strategy Action Plan.

---

<sup>8</sup> Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risk. Cabinet Office, Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Carers at the heart of 21<sup>st</sup> century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own, Department of Health 2008; and 'Recognised, Valued and Supported: next steps for the Carer's Strategy', Department of Health 2010

Data from known Young Carers shows a geographical correlation in terms of disadvantage when compared with a map of the indices of multiple deprivation, albeit with a wider spread for Young Carers across the Bay. This is no surprise since key indicators of disadvantage include: at least one parent with a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity, mother with mental health problems, low income, worklessness, poor education and housing<sup>10</sup>. This strategy then needs to work alongside strategies to Narrow the Gap, focusing on localised plans to reduce poverty if it is to impact on attaining improved outcomes for Young Carers under 25.

Young Carers being supported in Torbay range from 5 years to 25 years, and experience a varying level responsibility for providing care. Torbay Young Carers Service and the Young Adult Carers Service are working with over 650 young people, providing graded support according to level of caring role and need.

A broad range of services for Young Carers is delivered in Torbay:

- A drop-in and appointment based service within most secondary schools and South Devon College.
- Saturday drop-ins for Young Carers under 18; alternate Wednesdays for 16-25 year olds.
- A group-based service for young people whose caring roles are due to substance or alcohol misuse, mental health or domestic violence (run in partnership with COOL, a community mental health voluntary service).
- Targeted weekly groups for younger carers with higher level need.
- Supporting transition for those young people moving from primary to secondary school, from secondary school to college, and into employment
- Individual support for those Young Carers under 25 with higher intensity of need.
- Advocacy and participation of workers in child protection, Child in Need and Common Assessment Framework forums and plans.
- Events and activities for Young Carers and their families

### **Strategic Priorities 2012 – 15 for Young Carers under 25**

The overall aims for this strategy are that young people with caring responsibilities will be identified as early as possible through sound understanding and awareness in both Adult and Children's services. This will enable them to achieve the best outcomes possible, thereby reaching their potential while their special roles within their families are acknowledged, rewarded and supported. We will adopt a whole family approach to reducing inappropriate levels of care by young people and will ensure Young Carers' voices and those of their families shape our services, and provide regular review and audit of those services.

Auditing our services and plans against the Key Principles of Practice, The Memorandum of Understanding, and the five \*Every Child Matters judgements has highlighted four priority areas of work that will help us to achieve our vision for Young Carers under 25 and raise the quality of services we provide for them. Additionally we established a consultation process to develop the priorities for action:

- Consultation with Young Carers / Young Adult Carers Strategy Steering Group (Jan 12)

---

<sup>10</sup> Families at Risk review, Cabinet Office 2007.

- A workshop for Young Carers under 25 and staff in voluntary and statutory agencies, to review the needs of Young Carers, and identify gaps in service (March 12)
- Christmas 2011 family event with consultation.

**Our four priority areas for Action are to:**

- 1. Raise awareness and promote early identification of Young Carers under 25 across all services dealing with this age-group**
- 2. Implement a Whole Family Approach to assessments and service delivery across health and social care**
- 3. Strengthen the safeguarding of Young Carers under 25**
- 4. Ensure participation by Young Carers and families in specification, evaluation and commissioning of relevant services**

The Action Plan attached to this strategy sets out the steps within each priority area that we will take, what outcomes will be achieved, the timescales and accountable agencies.

# Torbay Strategy Action Plan 2012 – 2015 for Young Carers under 25.

## 1. Raising awareness and promoting early identification of Young Carers under 25

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target/Service Standard</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
1	Schools identify children with caring responsibility at admission, transition from primary to secondary school, and to College	All schools have protocol for identification	Reduce inappropriate caring. Attendance and attainment supported. 7 priority outcomes met.	March 2014	Individual School Leaders
2	Establish a 'liaison' worker within each school and college with responsibility for Young Carers	Named staff member with responsibility in each school / college	Reduce inappropriate caring. Attendance and attainment supported. 7 priority outcomes met.	March 2014	Schools/YC/YAC
3	Targeted awareness raising for key staff through face to face sessions or e-learning tools	Sessions available for: Primary school staff and governors, school nurses, GPs, Primary Health Care Teams, Adult Health and Social Care Services, locality and specialist Children's Services.	Increase numbers known to be YC under 25. Reduce inappropriate caring. Access to support. 7 priority outcomes met.	Ongoing	YC/YAC

4	Awareness-raising for students in schools / college to raise the profile of Young Carers and the support available to them	Materials available for all schools and colleges	Increase numbers known to be YC under 25. Reduce inappropriate caring. Access to support. 7 priority outcomes met.	June 2013	YC/YAC
5	Undertake an audit of recording systems in YC/YAC services to ensure data held is fit for purpose and to monitor patterns of referrals and gaps in identification	Complete audit of current recording systems and agree a joint approach for 5 – 25 year old services.	Implement comparable measurement tools. Analyse data for YC under 25 for joined up approach to service delivery.	April 2013	YC/YAC
6	Increase number of Young Carers known to adult health and social care teams and included in care planning for their relative.	400 Young Carers under 25 known to operational Adult Health and Social Care Teams Services Teams (recorded cases) and included in planning.	Reduce inappropriate caring. Access to support. 7 priority outcomes met.	April 2013 120 Oct 2013 170 April 2014 240 Oct 2014 330 Mar 2015 400	TCT Zone Teams
7	Young Carers will be identified at the point of diagnosis of parents with long term conditions, enduring mental health problems and other significant health crises.	Protocol in place for identification of Young Carers under 25.	Reduce inappropriate caring. Access to support. 7 priority outcomes met.	March 2014	GPs, DPT, SDHCT, T&SD HCT

## 2. Implementation of a Whole Family Approach to assessments and service delivery

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target/Service Standard</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
1	Develop a good practice model in a 'whole family approach' to Young Carers through a 'pilot' for carers of people with substance misuse. Disseminate learning.	Development and evaluation of service. Publication of report on pilot.	Learning from pilot will inform model of working with young carers of people with substance misuse difficulties.	March 2014  Sept 2014	DASH / TCT Carers Services
2	Review assessments in Adult Health and Social Care to incorporate support for parenting roles.	% of Community Care assessments of disabled / vulnerable adults showing parenting support was addressed	Parents supported in their parenting role.	March 2015	T & SDHCT
3	Embed the whole family approach into staff development and training programmes in adult services to ensure support for disabled parents in their parenting role is considered .	Inclusion of awareness of Young Carers and parents in mandatory training.	Parents supported in their parenting role.	March 2014	Director of Education and Development TCT

4	Develop appropriate assessment and review tools for Young Carers and their families, which are age-appropriate, address a range of situations and can clearly identify risks.	Complete review of current assessment tools	Service matches need. Carers under 25 are safe.	July 2013	Young Carers services
5	Develop a protocol between Children's and Adults services to ensure co-assessment of care using a whole family approach, identifying responsibility and accountability to young carers and their families	Protocol in place	Families needs are met without duplication and with one plan.	March 2014	TCT / Children's Services
6	Promote services to families which focus on prevention and health promotion – healthy lifestyles, self care, managing risky behaviours	Number of Carers under 25 and families report engaged with "Lifestyles" support. Mechanism to monitor	Healthier carers under 25. Healthier families.	Oct 2013 100 YC/families  April 2013	Public Health / Lifestyles / Young Carers Services
7	Provide access to information and advice in relation to benefits and welfare reform.	Access routes established; carers and parents know where to access this.	Reduction in poverty for carers under 25 and families.	April 2013	YC/YAC

## 2. Safeguarding

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target/Service Standard</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
1	Establish quality-assured services that effectively assess risk and direct support to the appropriate level and area of need	Agreed criteria for assessing quality of Young Carers Services (0-25)	Carers under 25 are safe. Service matches need.	December 2012	Manager YC
2	Develop clear pathway through Safeguarding Hub for those identified as Young Carers	Pathway in place; descriptors matching level of caring with need within Child's Journey	Young carers are safe. Service matches need.	January 2013	YC/ Safeguarding Hub
3	Clear protocol between adult safeguarding and childrens' Safeguarding Hub to follow Young Carer's pathway.	Protocol in place Protocol communicated (including necessary training)	Young carers are safe.	March 2013 Oct 2013	Lead Children's Safeguarding Hub and Lead adult safeguarding Hub

### 3. Involvement of Young Carers and their Families in service delivery, evaluation and commissioning

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target/Service Standard</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
1	Undertake an audit of current provision for Carers under 25 and their families to 'benchmark' services and identify gaps in provision	Completion and publication of Audit	Better service commissioning and delivery. Services match need.	June 2013	Managers of YCS/YAC
2	Conduct a literature review and audit of good practice in relation to involvement of carers under 25 and awareness raising to inform the Torbay Strategy reviews.	Completion of review	Better service commissioning and delivery. Services match need.	March 2013	Managers YCS/YAC
3	Develop training for Carers under 25 in involvement and evaluation and confirm processes to recognise their involvement.	Training delivered	Better service commissioning and delivery. Services match need.	June 2013	YCS/YAC / Healthwatch
4	Involve young carers and families in development of publicity and promotion	Involvement in first 3 actions in this section.	Services are accessed more readily by carers under 25 and families.	June 2013	