

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

10 November 2011



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Supplementary Information – Young Carers

Young Carers and Adult Services

The Young Carers Steering Group is governed and reports to the Carers Strategic Partnership, which is chaired by Pam Marsden, Assistant Director for Adult Health and Social Care.

In order to strengthen the ability of services for adults to identify young carers, the following actions are in place:

- Agencies such as Harbour, Adult Social Care, Children and Disabilities Services (Parent Carers), are now full members on the Young Carers Steering Group.
- Operational links between Adult and Children Social Care have been improved to ensure that systems are designed to facilitate and support easier processes and joined up working between all agencies. This includes the co-ordination between the relevant commissioning managers in Adults, Health and Children Services for Children and Young People.

This has resulted in several new initiatives such as:

- **Memorandum of Understanding** – builds positive joint work that takes place and sets out a shared understanding of the issues. This is based on a shared set of aims about how we can deliver better integrated support for families to ensure better protection from harm and improved outcomes for young carers. The aim is to prevent and protect children and young people from undertaking excessive and inappropriate caring roles.
- **Electronic Referral Form**- by using the social care system (CareFirst) the referral process will give direct links to the Adult Client file, thereby enabling professionals to easily check on the adult's care plan, to ensure young carers have not taken on inappropriate caring responsibilities, such as bathing. This will reduce the number of times that families have to explain their circumstances.

- **Map of Medicines**- this is a diagnosis tool used by health professionals, particularly GPs to assist in diagnosis, treating and support, for all types of medical conditions.

This tool now includes triggers specifically designed to alert GPs to check for the presence of young carers. In the event that a young carer is identified, the tool then provides a series of pathways and the current up to date, local resources, all of which can be downloaded and shared by the GP with their patient.

- **E-Learning Package** – Young carers and their needs will feature in this learning tool, including clear steps for practitioners to follow in their professional role to support and protect young carers. It will be part of adult social care workers professional development to undertake this training.

Use of the Common Assessment Framework

The common assessment framework (CAF) enables practitioners from all agencies including the voluntary sector to work together with families to assess, identify and meet the needs of children and young people. The CAF process enables targeted multi-agency packages of support to be tailored to the needs of individuals; because it is a process that is completed in partnership with the family and with consent to share the information appropriately, it reduces the number of times a family has to repeat information. It also reduces repetition and cross over between agencies providing support as the team around the family will work to an agreed plan.

- Any practitioner working with a family can start the process. Once they have initiated the CAF they are able to invite other agencies to support the family and share information about existing support. Over 4000 practitioners across the city have been trained to use the CAF process.
- Once information sharing starts, underlying issues that may not have been previously shared, often come to the surface. This is particularly relevant for young carers as the issues that often present themselves are a result of them taking on a caring role within the family. The CAF is often called because of symptoms e.g. behaviour or attendance; the process ensures the cause, such as being a young carer, is discovered and addressed.
- The CAF process ensures identification of these concerns and offers support tailored to the needs of the individual young person. As the CAF is an organic process the packages of support can be adapted as the needs of the young person change.
- The CAF process is now the primary method of identifying the unmet needs of young carers within the city.
- The CAF also provides a central register of all young carers within Plymouth; ensuring services are better able to support them as they move between settings, change schools or leave children's services and transition into adulthood.
- The CAF manager has developed a relationship with adult services to support them with the common assessment framework and the team are allocating link CAF Officers to adult drug and alcohol services, the Probation service and Adult Social Care. This will raise the profile of multi agency working to support the children in the families they work with - identifying young carers in these households.

Common Assessment Framework and Young Carer Statistics

• October 2009 to September 2010

593 CAFs were initiated relating to 459 Families

46% (271) were on school age children and young people

35% (209) were initiated by health services

38% (229) were initiated by education – this equates to 84% of the school age CAFs

27% (155) were initiated by other services

• October 2010 to September 2011

717 CAFs were initiated relating to 567 Families

- 21% increase in number of CAFs on previous year
- 23.5% increase in number of Families

41% (294) were on school age children and young people

29% (215) were initiated by health services

29% (214) were initiated by education – this equates to 73% of the school age CAFs

42% (294) were initiated by other services

- **CAF analysis**

A recent sample of 6 month CAFs identified 67 young people with caring responsibilities receiving multi-agency responses, out a total 367 CAFs.

CAFs are initiated primarily because of issues such as non-school attendance, behaviour, anti-social behaviour not because the young person is a carer.

Reason for initiating CAF (sample)	Number	% age of all CAFs
Low self esteem	14	4
Non school attendance	58	16
Behaviour at school	40	11
Anti-social behaviour	60	16
Young Carer	6	2

The CAF is effective at identifying these children and young people as caring roles and reasons

Caring reason	Number	% age of all CAFs
Parental Disability	6	2
Parental Learning Disability	4	1
Parental Mental Health	30	8
Parental Substance Misuse	21	5
Other reason	6	2
Total	67	18

Potentially 61 young carers have been identified through multiagency working that would have struggled unrecognised without the CAF response.

Joy Howick

Head of Children Services – Children in the Community – Services for Children and Young People

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