

Flintshire County Council

A Young Carers' Service

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Executive Summary

Young carers are particularly at risk of poor life chance outcomes and child poverty. The Audit Commission (2010), for example, report that three-quarters of young carers had been NEET at least once, and just over 40 per cent had been NEET for six months or longer. Flintshire County Council (FCC) identifies young carers as a particular at risk group in relation to child poverty. These young people are identified as a target group in '*Delivering Together*' 2014- 2018 integrated youth services plan and in the Local Services Board commitments to more effective early intervention to avoid problem escalation for children, young people and families.

FCC invests in wide-ranging support and initiatives for young people, including support for young carers. This includes direct support provision available through Barnardos and NEWCIS for young carers aged 5-18 years. To build the effectiveness of services that work with young people at greater risk, FCC also invests in workforce development which builds multidisciplinary practitioner skills and confidence working to engage successfully and secure good outcomes for young people at greater risk. FCC also invests in information services designed to enable young people and practitioners to know what support is available throughout the county.

FCC service commissioners identify an opportunity to work with young people and service providers to develop a more coordinated joined-up young carers' service. This takes place within a context where realignment of local authority services is towards those children, young people and families where there may be opportunities to intervene earlier to secure better outcomes.

Assisted by George Selvanera, the following report sets out the components of a 'single comprehensive service for young carers' and the key actions that might be taken to move towards establishing the service for 2016/17.

This is a second version 'straw man' based on consultation and review work. An initial report was prepared and discussed with service commissioners, amendments made and this second report is intended for 'test and challenge' with service commissioners and support providers. There is more detail that is required in terms of agreeing the specifics of the support for example through Barnardos and NEWCIS and appropriate targets and performance measures.

Introduction

Strategic context

In 2011, Wales has a highest proportion of young carers providing unpaid care than in England, at 2.6% of all young people (11,555) and this had grown more than 7% since 2001 census. Young carers are particularly at risk of poor life chance outcomes and child poverty. The 2011 census identified that the greatest impact upon general health amongst those that care for others appeared to be for young people up to the age of 25. Almost 8% of males under the age of 25 providing some level of care reported themselves to be in 'not good health' compared with 4% of males in this age group who weren't carers. For females, the respective figure was more than 9%, compared with 4% of non-carer females in this age group.

In the refreshed Wales Carers Strategy 2013, the Welsh Government broadened their focus to include young adult carers aged 18-25. It was a recognition that in addition to the transition issues to be considered as a young carer approaches adulthood between the ages of 16-18, there are also transition issues when a young person moves from being a young carer to being a young adult carer. The Carers Strategy 2013 recognises a need to ensure that appropriate support is in place for this specific group of carers in addition to mainstream adult carer support. There are also particular issues to be considered around supporting young adult carers in accessing further or higher education, training and employment.

In preparing the Wales Carer Strategy¹, common themes identified about what young carers identify matters most to them are:

- The need for government and professionals in health, education and social services to recognise young carers and understand the role young carers play
- The need for greater awareness raising and training for professionals so that they can identify, listen to and engage appropriately with young carers
- The need for adequately funded young carers services across Wales, and better support for young carers to access other services such as transport and leisure
- The need for ongoing support to young carers, not just when things go wrong.

Flintshire context

In Flintshire, the Young Carers Subgroup is responsible for producing and implementing a multiagency Young Carers Action Plan. The CSSIW *Performance Evaluation Report* for Flintshire 2013/14 identified that reaching young carers has been a priority and numbers have recently been increasing with assessments now commissioned through Barnardo's Flintshire Young Carers project. The CSSIW report that these arrangements require strengthening to ensure more stretching service level agreement targets given that recent data suggests a fall in those known, assessed and

¹ See Wales Carer Strategy 2013 *Welsh Government* p.27

provided with a service by social services. This corroborates with FCC priorities that recognise young people as a target group in '*Delivering Together*' 2014- 2018 integrated youth services plan and in Local Services Board developments for more effective early intervention to avoid problem escalation for children, young people and families.

FCC invests in wide-ranging initiatives to secure good outcomes for young people with additional requirements through services relevant to education, youth, family support and parenting, social care and transitions into adulthood. In addition, there is investment for Barnardos and NEWCIS to meet some very specific needs of young carers. The purpose of this targeted investment through Barnardos and NEWCIS was always intended to enable highly focused provision for young carers and young adult carers in addition to support that was available through provision for young people generally.

Currently, youth services are realigning to a greater focus on support that meets the needs of young people at risk of poor life chance outcomes in Flintshire. There has also been funding available through Families First to invest in support for parents and plans are being developed for a more comprehensive 'children in need' offer linked to a prevention or early help focus. It is anticipated that funding will again be available through 2016/17 to support this through Families First. This takes place concurrently with substantial budget pressures however with FCC, and savings are required from commissioned services such as Barnardos as it relates to young carers. These are estimated at 10% of current investment in Barnardos Young Carers.

As a result, FCC commissioners of support for young carers have identified the opportunity to move from a more ad-hoc approach to providing activities and support for young carers to a planned 'single comprehensive service for young carers'.

To assist, an initial report was developed with the purpose of creating a 'straw man' about the components of a 'single comprehensive service for young carers' for test and challenge with service commissioners. This is a second version 'straw man' for test and challenge with service commissioners and support providers. Thereafter, a final specification will be developed.

The report has been developed through:

- Consultation with young carers
- Interviews with FF service commissioners representing community services and youth services/ Families First
- Interviews with managers from Barnardos and NEWCIS
- Interview with team leader, Children's Services
- Review of good practice and key local and national strategic priorities
- Review of current service specifications and performance and monitoring reports
- Meeting with FCC service commissioners to discuss and agree areas for improving the initial draft report.

What matters most

Young carers

With assistance from Barnardos, consultation took place with 11 young people with caring responsibilities aged 11- 16 years in June 2015. Overwhelmingly, young people reported that they valued most the opportunity to '*relax*', '*hang out*' and have social time afforded by access to targeted support for young people with caring responsibilities. Most also reported that they valued chances to learn new skills and have new experiences. Those that were reported as particularly useful were manual handling and first aid training and opportunities for outings.

Most young people with caring responsibilities also took up opportunities in their local communities such as youth clubs, dance classes, sporting activities, church and after school clubs. One young person was working part time in a local sandwich shop. 2 young people said they liked the opportunities afforded by Banardos better than other activities, while saying that they would like to know much more about what else might be available.

Most said it was important to have a chance to be with other young people with caring responsibilities but certainly on its own that this was insufficient to their needs and interests. There was, however, disparity in young people's experience of taking up these opportunities with young people that lived in Pen y Ffordd speaking to a lack of local opportunities. They indicated a strong willingness to take up opportunities and said if these could not be provided locally, ensuring access to transport was key to their participation. 5 young people spoke to the importance of having access to transport so they could take up opportunities. None reported that they felt that caring responsibilities may limit their ability to take up these opportunities.

In relation to service priorities, young people spoke particularly of the importance of staff having qualities of reliability, consistency and friendliness. There was particularly effusive support for Kelly at Barnardos: '*she's always got my back*', '*rang my mum when I needed her to*', '*Kelly helped with my school*'. They also reported that being able to contact workers for information and advice and that having more knowledge about what activities might be available and to have support to take up these opportunities (particularly with transport) were very important.

3 young people described that they would soon be attending NEWCIS and all felt confident about this transition. Young people all knew other young people that had moved on from Barnardos to take up support through NEWCIS. For these young people, they all indicated wanting similar opportunities to '*hang out*' and '*relax*' but also to wanting to know more about what else might be accessible to them.

Service Providers

Discussions with NEWCIS and Barnardos managers were very straightforward. There is a strong willingness to work with service commissioners and young people to ensure that a single comprehensive for young people with caring responsibilities is developed, secures good outcomes for young people and is sustainable.

Barnardos have had in place fortnightly referral meetings to discuss initial information provided by the referring agency since October 2011. Following on from this, a home visit takes place involving the family and the young carer and an assessment is completed that takes into account the caring tasks the young person undertakes and the emotional impact this has on them, as well as wider family priorities. For many young carers and families, this assessment is in addition to those undertaken by referring agencies.

Following discussion, referrals to supporting agencies may be made and a tiered level of support agreed that allows the service to provide activities to meet individual needs: Tier 1 – At least monthly fun/social activities; Tier 2 – At least monthly fun/social activities + peer support groups; and Tier 3- All of Tier 1 and 2+ 1:1 support.

Across 2013/14, 80 young carers took up opportunities through Tier 1 ,81 group training sessions were offered through Tier 2 and 22 young carers accessed 1:1 support and counselling (against a target of 20). In total, 206 young carers have been assisted. Support takes place involving mostly young carers. Together with NEWCIS, Barnardos also provide training to young adult carers which had 29 attendances across 3 sessions in 2013/14. The monthly adult young carers group meets monthly with any one session attended by approximately 12 young people.

Barnardos report that they have undertaken work to raise their profile; particularly so with Children's Services to increase referrals. This has been an area of considerable challenge and Children's Services particularly is identified as a target agency to increase referrals from. A target level of referral is 15 per six-month period, whereas 5 were referred and assessed for support through Barnardos in 2013/14. A key priority for Barnardos is increasing the profile of their service for young carers by key agencies such as Children's Services.

NEWCIS report that as young carers' transition from support made available through Barnardo's to post 16 support, the support available is too limited and underestimates the intensity of support necessary. This is particularly so given that young carers may well have missed substantial periods of education and have had fewer opportunities for social and emotional development². NEWCIS identify the importance of having consistent staffing to enable quality and durability in relationships with young carers and so help with securing better outcomes. The current project funded approach to staffing makes this more challenging to deliver.

NEWCIS make available monthly activities and peer support which are taken up by approximately 8 young carers. However, the need of individual young carers is substantial. 4 young carers aged 16 have had babies of their own in the last 12 months in addition to other caring responsibilities, for example. Key service opportunities identified are:

- Better knowledge about what services are available that meet individual young carers' needs and brokerage to access these services.

² See: http://www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/584188/YCinSchools_Info_Leaflet.pdf

- Access to advice and guidance relevant to key priorities for all young people. For example, in relation to healthy lifestyles, sexual health, positive relationships and support for further education, employment and training.
- More intensive transition support for young carers focused on enabling independence and taking up wider opportunities in the community.
- Ensuring sufficient funding to enable care of a family member who has an illness, a disability, a mental health and/or substance/ alcohol misuse problem while a young carer takes up other opportunities.
- Parenting programmes that help parents and carers in parenting young carers.

Service Commissioners

As set out previously, FCC invests in wide-ranging initiatives to secure good outcomes for young people with additional requirements. In addition, there is investment for Barnardos and NEWCIS to meet some very specific needs of young carers. This funding is made available through the Carers budget, Families First and Youth Support Grant. There is some additional support available through BCUHB given young carers are disproportionately less physically and mentally well than other young people, at the same time as requiring support to address the health, disability and other needs of the family members they care for such as related to alcohol and substance misuse.

The total value of the targeted investment from FCC is approximately £105,000 of which £60,000 is through the Carers' budget. Given a need to find County Council wide savings, the Carers budget will reduce by 10%. Barnardos also contributes to the support an estimated £80,000 and NEWCIS have a project based part time role that works with young adult carers funded partly from Carers' Trust.

In discussions with service commissioners, key priorities identified are:

- A young carers' service that enables young carers to be independent, happy and healthy.

Consistent with this objective is a service development priority that emphasises integrated approaches to addressing the different needs of young carers such as key-workers³. It is also about being clear that very young children such as those aged to 7 years cannot reasonably be expected to be young carers and where there is evidence that very young children are taking on 'young carer' functions that this is a Child in Need.

Barnardos have identified a willingness to reshape an existing role to enable some key-working with young carers that will benefit from more integrated provision that addresses a spectrum of requirements. Barnardos have also

³ This is consistent with Cordis Bright *Literature Review of Good Practices for Family Focused Service Provision* Feb 2012 pages 11-14

identified as part of their budget saving proposals with FCC commissioners that they will deliver a volunteering programme which will enhance skills and community participation for young carers.

- A young carer's service that encourages take-up of wide-ranging opportunities available to all young people in Flintshire. Consistent with this aim, is recognition of:
 - A workforce development priority relevant to improving the skills and confidence of all multidisciplinary practitioners that work alongside children and young people to identify 'hidden' carers and to engage young carers in positive outcomes; and
 - A service development priority which enables young carers and practitioners that work with young carers and their families to have access to good information about what support is available to meet different needs.

The Head of the Youth Service/Families First Coordinator identified it may be possible to co-locate a youth worker in the young carer support services to help with improving knowledge about what is available and to broker access for individual young carers and young adult carers when required.

- A young carers' service which is family focused.

The Flintshire Families First Management Board has invested in increasing parenting programmes and parenting interventions available for parents as part of 'whole-family' services. The Head of the Youth Service/Families First Coordinator identified this offered scope for a TAF style model of ensuring family needs are met: young carers access support through commissioned young carers support providers; and parents have access to parenting support or temporary care while their children are taking up support and other opportunities.

- Increasing the profile of support for young carers so that multiagency partners are identifying and increasing referrals of young carers to Barnardos and NEWCIS.

The Flintshire Children's Service Team Leader recognised, for example, that there is much more scope for Children's Services to refer young people for available support. He identified that it was important for social workers and other multidisciplinary practitioners to be kept aware and to be reminded of the support available for young carers. He wondered also whether there might not be scope for more sharing of assessment information as well to reduce the number of times children, young people and their families describe their needs and circumstances.

As FCC realigns its children in need and early help services, locating the support available for young carers within this service system will help maintain

profile for what is available for young carers. The same is true with the increasing integration of youth services as these increasingly focus on support that meets the needs of young people at risk of poor life chance outcomes in Flintshire

A template for a single comprehensive service

Key service priorities are⁴

- (a) All workforce and service development priorities require specific actions for identifying young carers and engaging them.
- (b) To effectively engage young carers, multidisciplinary practitioners need to develop their trust and build their confidence and feelings of self-efficacy.
- (c) Engagement needs to encourage young person to reduce their caring role as they perceive no negative impact. It also provides some respite so parent or other family needs must be taken into account to support the engagement of the young person.

Definition of a Young Carer

For the purpose of this service, a young carer is a young person aged 8- 25 years who provides care to a family member who needs support for reasons relating to age, disability, health condition, substance misuse and mental illness. Young carers live with the person they care for.

It is important to recognise that many young carers do not see themselves as carers because, first and foremost, they are just themselves. They may be a son, daughter, brother or sister. Young carers are groups in particular that are likely to remain hidden.

Purpose of the Service:

Flintshire County Council recognise the essential contribution carers make to the local economy and health and social care system by devoting time to caring for and supporting people who need help.

Commissioners recognise the importance of support services for young carers and the individuals they care for as a means of enhancing wellbeing and quality of life by enabling people to maintain their independence and remain in their own homes. Commissioners acknowledge that recognition is required of the practical support that carers provide and that future services should be available that support carers to maintain their social, physical and emotional well-being and maintain a positive relationship with the individual they care for.

It is the intention of Commissioners to develop with key service providers and young people themselves: a young carers' support service that is responsive to local needs and circumstances and encourages independent, happy and healthy young people.

⁴ See Cordis Bright *Literature Review of Good Practices for Family Focused Service Provision* Feb 2012 pages 11-14

Commissioners recognise that although young carers have caring responsibilities they are also vulnerable young people who may have support needs of their own. Due to their caring responsibilities young carers may be isolated from their peers, their schooling may suffer and their long term life choices may be reduced.

FCC vision for a single comprehensive young carers' service not only supports the role of the young person as a carer but also challenges inappropriate caring roles, and puts in place support that improves the long term educational and employment prospects for young carers. Young carers are under reported and so the service needs to be high profile raising awareness amongst children and young people and multiagency multidisciplinary practitioners that work with children and young people about issues relevant to young carers and the support available.

FCC recognises this requires investment in workforce development specifically for practitioners that engage with children and young people. Most particularly this relates to help with spotting signs of who might be young carers and how these young carers can be supported within all environments to be independent, happy and healthy.

Table One: The single comprehensive service

| Key priority | Independent, happy and healthy young people with caring responsibilities |
|-------------------------|---|
| Who the service is for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is available to all young carers with priority for support young carers referred through Children's Services, and their families. |
| Core service components | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service objective is building resilience and coping strategies amongst young carers, with a particular focus on enablement and independence for young carers. A tiered model of support along lines used by Barnardos guides the types of support available for individual young people. For most children and young people, support is most likely to be information, advice and access to community based and group activities. A smaller cohort of approximately 10% of children and young people supported will require access to dedicated key worker support. FCC commissioners prioritise increasing support for young people with 1:1 requirements and for young carers support services to work as part of a 'whole family' approach. This will occur through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an active parenting offer. This includes Barnardos and NEWCIS taking account of parenting needs and facilitating access to parenting programmes and other family provision available across Flintshire. In addition, Flintshire Families First will ensure as part of Parenting Support: parenting programmes specifically for parents with children with caring responsibilities. This is supported through Bridging the Gap with flexible temporary care for parents while young carers are taking up opportunities (which has in recent years been under-utilised). (b) Flintshire Youth Services makes available a youth worker/key worker co-located at Barnardos and NEWCIS to provide information and advice about available community based provision that young carers and their families can access. This aims to help both practitioners working with young carers and their families and young carers |

themselves. The youth worker/key worker will also help broker access to particular opportunities for individual young carers.

(c) In line with consistently understood thresholds, Barnardos provide information, peer support, advocacy, respite activities, group sessions and 1:1 key worker support for young carers aged 8- 18 years. For children aged 5-7 evidence of young caring should trigger a referral to Barnardos also to deliver a volunteering programme for young carers. It is expected that approximately 10% of children and young people supported will require access to dedicated key worker support.

(d) Working closely with Barnardos and in line with consistently understood thresholds, NEWCIS will provide information, peer support, advocacy, respite activities, group sessions and 1:1 key worker support for young carers aged 18- 25 years. It is expected that approximately 10% of young adult carers supported will require access to dedicated key worker support.

(e) In providing the types of activities and support set out at (c) and (d) Barnardos and NEWCIS will:

- (i) provide a range of family activities that allow young carers to have fun with their family without being a carer.
- (ii) identify and support young carers and their families in Welsh language medium where preferred.
- (iii) provide activities that enable young carers to have a break away from their caring and cared for role.
- (iv) identify and support accessibility for young carers to activities and interests outside of their caring role. This will be tailored to individual requirements and take account of needs for example in relation to transport.
- (v) work with young carers and their families to identify alternatives to inappropriate caring roles.
- (vi) work with other children's/young person's services to identify and support young carers.

(f) NEWCIS and Barnardos promote the targeted support available for young carers through a schedule of outreach to key referring organisations (e.g. Children's Services, Family Information Service, BCUHB Youth Forum etc.).

(g) Close work with BCUHB to contribute to positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young carers. Most particularly this concerns efforts to encourage healthy lifestyles; most particularly in relation to physical activity, sexual health, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance misuse and mental ill health.

(H) Both NEWCIS and Barnardos work together to jointly deliver training to multiagency practitioners that equips them with the skills and confidence to identify and successfully engage young carers. In addition, Flintshire Youth

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| | <p>Service and Flintshire Families First to facilitate opportunities by NEWCIS and Barnardos to deliver training to multiagency practitioners that work with children, young people and families as part of wider workforce development activities taking place in Flintshire.</p> |
| Working with partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering on the service components requires excellent partnership working. This will be supported through workforce development but also through increasing joint-work with partners to wrap the relevant support around the young person and his/her family. This is particularly true in encouraging more and more young carers to take up the wider provision available for young people within Flintshire. • Increasing joint-work with schools and educational establishments, Children's Services, Families First commissioned services and Youth Services will increase profile of the service for young carers. In addition, programming regular attendances by NEWCIS and Barnardos at team meetings or multiagency events for key partners to share information about what support is available and how this can be accessed and ensuring that this information is up to date and available through the Family Information Service and Single Point of Access arrangements will all help support increased engagement with young carer support. |
| Key outcomes | <p>Increasing consistency in how service outcomes are measured and reported on will help with a comprehensive understanding of progress in securing good outcomes for young carers. For service providers, this will help demonstrate added value. These will relate to evidencing contributions to outcomes set out in '5-ways to well-being': Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give, augmented with activity level data about levels of take up of different tiers of support by young carers, their families and multiagency practitioners.</p> |

