

# Young Carers Action Plan

**2011-2014**



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Young Carers Sub Group reports to and is mandated by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). The Sub Group has been charged by the CYPSP with drawing up a plan for integrated commissioning of supports and services for young carers, which will improve their outcomes. The work is Northern Ireland wide. Membership of the Group consists of representatives from the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sectors. Current membership can be found at Appendix xxx. The participation of young carers and their families in all stages of this process is paramount.

The following draft action plan sets out how the Young Carers Sub Group will contribute towards the implementation of the Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014. The draft plan includes the priorities that need to be taken forward to improve the six high level outcomes for young carers.

This draft action plan should be read in conjunction with the overall NI Children and Young People's Plan. This overall plan sets out that all CYPSP planning work will contribute towards a shift to early intervention, and to integration of resources from all possible sources in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

This action plan is one document in the suite of action plans, which, together, make up the NI Children and Young People's Plan. The Young Carers Sub Group will collaborate with the other Regional Sub Groups, the CYPSP Groups and the 5 Outcomes groups in order to implement the overall Plan, under the leadership of the CYPSP.

The group has identified a range of quantitative information. Given the range of indicators that could be used for any outcome, the group has decided to prioritise a number of key indicators that will enable them to monitor progress against the outcomes over time. The quantitative indicators are either, currently collected and available to the group, or identified by the group as not readily available but useful information that they wish to collect as part of their ongoing work.



The Plan is therefore a live document – at any one time the latest version of the overall Plan and the Action Plans of all of the planning groups will be available on our website, at [www.cypsp.org](http://www.cypsp.org).

Young Carers are defined as children and young people aged up to 18 years who have a substantive caring role for a member for their family and Children and young persons aged up to 18 years whose health or development is affected due to their caring responsibilities. It is important to view young carers as children and young people first, with the same rights as their peers to achieve the six high level outcomes. Therefore, this group has a long term view, through a focus on early intervention and integrated working, that young carers are, as far as possible, alleviated from their caring responsibilities to enable them to achieve the six high level outcomes. In the meantime, given the importance of their role within the family context and the effect that this level of responsibility may have on their development and emotional well-being, it is vital to ensure that Young Carers receive additional support they may require.

There is currently a Regional Service for Young Carers. More information is available on their website:

<http://www.youngcarersni.com/>

Other information is available at [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)

**Outcome**      *Healthy*

**What do we know about children and young people...**

**Quantitative Information**

- % of young carers benefitting from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- % of young carers caring for someone with Hidden Harm ( i.e. with a parent or carer with drug or alcohol difficulties) issues
- % of young carers caring for someone with mental health issues

**Qualitative Information**

- Young carers report concerns about often being responsible for preparing meals and are wanting to know more about healthy eating
- Many young carers report that their caring role can adversely affect their emotional wellbeing as they are constrained from leading a 'normal' lifestyle (Becker and Becker 2008). This leads to stress, isolation, bullying and 'no-one to talk to', which are key concerns.
- When trying to access CAMHS services, some young carers can be referred directly; however, others have to be referred through a GP. Often there is no one to take them to a GP except a young carer worker. Access to CAMHS is beneficial not only for the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the young carer but also in understanding the mental health of their parents, which would be better explained by CAMHS

## What we will do

There is a regional service that provides emotional and practical support for young carers. We will ensure and promote access to this service.

We will ensure equity of access to CAMHS services across the region

<b>Outcome: <i>Healthy</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/ other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcome s</b>	<b>By when</b>
Promote access to Regional Young Carers Service	Develop use of the Outcome Star Assessment Tool	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ Regional Young Carers Service	This will ensure young carers are able to obtain supports and services that will improve their emotional wellbeing.	LSS, LSSR, EEEW	2014
	Obtain a more comprehensive picture of the situations faced by young carers in their caring role.				2014
	Develop local volunteers to help link young carers to existing community networks and facilities				2014
Ensure equity of access to CAMHS services across the	Obtain and track information on young carers accessing CAMHS services across Northern Ireland to determine				2014

<b>Outcome: <i>Healthy</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/ other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
region	<p>the detail of regional disparity.</p> <p>Address this regional disparity by coordinating with the relevant Trusts to promote young carers' access to CAMHS in their area.</p> <p>Link with the ongoing work that will ensure a CAMHS representative in Family Support Hubs and promote this service for young carers to ensure early intervention when required</p> <p>To collect information about young carers and Hidden Harm and feed into the Regional Hidden Harm Quality Assurance Group</p> <p>To collect information about young carers and parents/carers with mental health difficulties and feed into the established protocol regarding link between Children's and adult's mental health service</p>	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ HSC Trusts/ Family Support Hubs/ Regional Hidden Harm Sub Group	Young Carers have the right to, and receive the same appropriate CAMHS support as their peers, improving their own mental health and wellbeing and also enhance their understanding of parental mental health issues.	LSSR	<p>2014</p> <p>2014</p> <p>2014</p> <p>2014</p>

**Outcome**      *Enjoying, learning and achieving*

**What do we know about children and young people...**

**Quantitative Information**

- School attendance rates of identified young carers
- % of young carers referred to services through education
- Research highlights that 27% of young carers of secondary school age experience educational difficulties or miss school. This rises to 40% when caring for someone with Hidden Harm issues. Furthermore 68% experienced bullying at school and 39% said that nobody was aware of their role as a carer (Carer's Trust, 2011).

**Qualitative Information**

- Young carers report that the education is a very important issue for them and supporting them to remain in school will have long-term benefits.
- Young carers want to socialise, either with other young carers or new groups. This includes access to out of school activities. Young carers report that they would feel more comfortable participating if they knew they had someone to rely on at home.
- Young carers often experience barriers to learning. The impact of these barriers includes low attainment, social isolation, school absence and behavioural issues. This can consequently affect future wellbeing, life chances and fulfilling potential (Carer's Trust 2011)
- Research suggests that there are contrasting experiences in school for young carers between those who had support and those who did not (Becker & Becker 2008).
- There is a need to raise awareness within schools about the issues young carers face and to show sensitivity and flexibility with these issues. This is particularly important as



young carers report their problem as not so much attendance but rather that there should be more understanding in schools such as extra classes, counsellors or little things such as being allowed to text or phone home.

### What we will do

The group will aim to promote the identification of young carers in the school population appropriately through the development of a toolkit/ resource pack for education professionals and a rolling programme of awareness-raising within education.

This group will encourage and support young carers in accessing community based activities.

<b>Outcome: <i>Enjoying, learning and achieving</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Develop a toolkit/resource pack for education professionals	Research and review any existing toolkits designed for educational settings in relation to young carers and associated issues	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ Regional Young Carers Service	Young carers benefit from an educational environment that is more responsive as education professionals have access to more resources	LSRR, EEEW, H	2014
	Update existing schools information packs for regional use				2014
Develop a rolling	Roll out of awareness raising	Young	Awareness raising sessions	LSRR,	2014



<b>Outcome: <i>Enjoying, learning and achieving</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
programme of raising awareness within school	programmes within schools  As part of the awareness raising programme, highlight the need to collect and collate data in order to support referrals to other support services	Carers Regional Sub Group/ Regional Young Carers Service/ ELBs	will raise the profile of young carers as a group who may be in need of additional support. Furthermore, it will ensure that teachers have an enhanced understanding of the needs of young carers and can provide flexibility that will ensure the education experience of young carers is supported.	EEEEW, H	2014
Encourage and support Young Carers in accessing community based activities	Build links with Youth and community based services  Promote the Family Support website in young carers information materials  Awareness raising seminars/workshops aimed at community organizations, voluntary sector organizations, and youth services.	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ Relevant community and voluntary organizations.	This will reduce the social isolation that young carers can experience and facilitate young carers individually to access social networks in the community and to help them develop independence	LSRR, EEEW, CPCS, H	2014  2014  2014

**Outcome**      *Living in safety and with stability*

**What do we know about children and young people...**

**Quantitative Information**

- % of identified young carers on the Child Protection Register
- % of young carers with siblings who have behavioural difficulties
- % of young carers who have a child protection plan/ care plan/ family support plan
- User feedback regarding services, health and wellbeing, education and ability to learn, assistance in caring, information and advice, guidance and practical assistance, signposting and participation.

**Qualitative Information**

- There is no consistent carer if a parent is hospitalized and young carers may have to go into care
- There is a need to provide support for young carers where there is a child with behavioural difficulties in the family. Young carers report being physically assaulted by them.
- Absence of services for parents of children with social and emotional behavioural difficulties
- Child protection plan/case plans/ advice to gateway/ Family Intervention Services (FIS)
- Young carers often become young carers due to issues in the family regarding substance misuse and mental health issues in the family

## What we will do

Raise awareness of issues, and promote support for, young carers face regarding Hidden Harm, living in a family in which an individual has a disability, young carers with a sibling who has behavioural difficulties or young carers of a family member with mental health issues

Collate and track information in relation to numbers of young carers with siblings who have behavioural difficulties and who have a child protection plan/ Care Plan/ Family Support Plan

<b>Outcome: <i>Living in safety and with stability</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Raise awareness of issues, and promote support	Develop awareness raising strategy regarding Young Carer Hidden Harm issues across the region.	Young Carers Regional Sub Group / Regional Young Carers Service	Reduce detrimental effects of hidden harm mental health issues on young carers. Integrated working can reduce the burden on young carers and alleviate	H, LSRR	2014
	Link to ongoing work on Hidden Harm				2014
	Link to CYPSP group on Children and Young People Affected by				2014

<b>Outcome: <i>Living in safety and with stability</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Collate and track information	Sexual and Domestic Violence.				
	Link to CYPSP Think Family Sub Group		responsibilities, enabling them to achieve outcomes as children and young people first		2014
	Track numbers of young carers who have been admitted to care				2014
	Collect data on number of young carers with siblings who have behavioural difficulties	Young Carers Regional Sub Group	With more information on young carers, more action can be taken to ensure better outcomes for this group.	H, LSRR	2014
	Collate information on number of young carers who are on a child protection plan/ Care Plan/ Family Support Plan				2014

**Outcome** *Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing*

**What do we know about children and young people...**

**Quantitative Information**

- % of identified young carers not in employment, education and training at 16 years
- % of young carers (16+) receiving benefits
- % of young carers with inadequate housing
- % of young carers over 16 years and study 20 hours or less
- % of young carers offered adult carers assessments at age 18

**Qualitative Information**

- Young carers (16+) are not receiving benefits that would enable them to pursue further education
- Young carers often live in poor housing conditions
- Young Carers report that they need information, advice and support on their available options, jobs, further education and financial support. This includes supporting them into further education, training or employment but also support for young carers 18+ who may still be at school.
- Young carers have been reported to be one of the groups most likely to not be in education, training or employment. Young carers are twice as likely as their peers to be not in education, training or employment (Carer's Trust 2011)
- Young carers often report financial difficulties as they balance part time employment and their caring role (Becker and Becker 2008)

## What we will do

We will develop a strategy for improving resources and expertise with Young Carers services for the 16-18 age group.

We will build upon young carer's projects regarding transition to ensure the development of preparation programmes e.g. job/ course search skills, grant and applications for further education, preparing CVs, first aid, benefits, relationships and adult social services.

<b>Outcome: <i>Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Improve resources and expertise for working with young carers aged 16-18	Direct help and advice from young carers, particularly at early stages to prevent them becoming NEET,	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ relevant education/employment agencies	Ensuring that Young Carers in this age group receive the specialist supports and services- both practical and emotional- that they need to access further, education, employment, training and benefits.	LSS, H, LSRR, ELA	2014
	Awareness raising with schools, colleges, training and employment agencies				2014
	Employers to raise young carers issues				2014
	Improve links to Health and Social Care services for adult's services, in relation to the period of transition.				2014

<b>Outcome: <i>Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Build upon Young Carers Transition projects	Improve equity of access to available grants e.g. Belfast up to £100 for young carers for equipment for college- need to improve equity across Northern Ireland.	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ Regional Young Carers Service / Multi-agency Liaison Groups/ Trusts Carers Coordinators	Young Carers will be better prepared for this important transitional phase in their life and be supported in balancing their caring role with their new role and experiences into adulthood	LSS, H, LSRR, ELA	2014
	Link with Multi-agency liaison group, Trust Carers Coordinator				2014
	Linking with work of Regional Young Carers Service, which supports young people to access benefits and adequate housing				2014



**Outcome**      *Contributing positively to community and society*

**What do we know about children and young people...**

**Quantitative Information**

- % of young carers engaged in civic activities (survey)

**Qualitative Information**

- Young carers, by virtue of their caring role continue to contribute massively to society as they undertake many caring roles that would otherwise have to be provided by others.
- Due to their caring role, young carers do not get the opportunity to take part in social and civic activity as easily as their counterpart and are excluded from activities such as Youth Forums.

**What we will do**

This group will ensure that the contribution that young carers make to society continues to be promoted and recognised.

Promote the inclusion of young carers in social and civic activities.

<b>Outcome: Contributing positively to community and society</b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Promoting and recognising young carers contributions	Link with Regional Young Carers Service to promote the work of young carers	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ Regional Young Carers Service	Young Carers will be recognised for their continuous efforts in contributing positively	H, ELA, EEEW, LSS, LSRR	2014
Promote the inclusion of young carers in social and civic activities.	A strategy to improve engagement with civic activities	Young Carers Regional Sub Group	Ensure young carers have the same access to opportunities as their peers	H, EEEW, LSRR	2014
	Represent the need of young carers in the ongoing regional review of short breaks	Young Carers Regional Sub Group	Young carers will have the opportunity to participate in a 'normal' social lifestyle which will help to improve their emotional wellbeing	H, EEEW, LSRR	2014
	Work with Local Councils to encourage and support young carers to access community based activities	Young Carers Regional Sub Group			2014

**Outcome**      *Living in a society that respects their rights*

**What do we know about children and young people...**

**Quantitative Information**

- % of young carers from the BME community
- Number of young carers per Trust area compared with incidence from the research.
- % of young carers offered carers assessments

**Qualitative Information**

- Young carers are children in need and as such they are entitled to a UNOCINI assessment and to avail of supports and services. There is regional disparity in the number of assessments offered to young carers with young carers in some areas more likely to be offered an assessment than those in another area.
- Small number of young people from the BME community accessing Young Carers services however, with the increasing population of the BME community in Northern Ireland it is likely that BME young carers exist and therefore this proportion should be higher
- The caring role that young carers undertake means that their rights are not fulfilled as highlighted in the previous outcomes. They are often not able to enjoy their rights in the same way as their counterparts because of this..

## What we will do

Develop a strategy to increase engagement with the BME community, through BME organisations, and to enhance understanding of BME young carers' issues.

Working with statutory agencies and the Regional Young Carers Service to ensure that supports and services are in place that mean the rights of young carers, highlighted in previous outcomes, are respected, protected and fulfilled.

### **Outcome: *Living in a society that respects their rights***

<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Develop a strategy to increase engagement with the BME community	Link with CYPSP sub group on Black and Minority Ethnic children and young people	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ BME organisations	Ensure that young carers from the BME community have access to the same supports and services as their peers	H, ELA, LSS, EEEW, CPCS	2014

<b>Outcome: <i>Living in a society that respects their rights</i></b>					
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Lead person/other groups</b>	<b>What difference will it make to children and young people</b>	<b>Other outcomes</b>	<b>By when</b>
Working with statutory agencies and the Regional Young Carers Service to ensure that supports and services are in place that mean the rights of young carers, highlighted in previous outcomes, are respected, protected and fulfilled.	Protocol issued from Health and Social Care Board to Health and Social Care Trusts regarding the duty to offer assessments to young carers due to their legal status as children in need.	Young Carers Regional Sub Group/ HSCB/ HSC Trusts	Ensuring that every young carer has their needs assessed means that they will be able to access services and supports to which they have a right to access, regardless where they live.	H, ELA, LSS, EEEW, CPCS	2014
	Young carers will be supported, through clear arrangements for young carers through Trusts				2014
	Regional equity will be promoted regarding assessments for support for young carers.				2014

