

Cornwall Young Carers Strategy 2010 – 2013

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Young Carers are young people (up to the age of 18 years) who are affected by the illness or disability of a family member and who provide them with care and support. Young Carers support family members who have physical disabilities, learning disability, mental ill health and problematic drinking and drug use. Young Carers will often also be responsible for a great deal of their own care.

2. The Vision for Cornwall's Young Carers Strategy

The overall outcome of this strategy is to ensure that Young Carers are recognised and valued, receive support for their caring role and are safeguarded against taking on responsibilities which prevent them achieving their full potential under the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes.

We aim to achieve this by:

1. Ensuring that a young carer is seen as a child/young person first.
2. Listening to Young Carers and their families and recognising that they are the “experts” on their situation.
3. Identifying and reducing the incidences where the reliance on the caring role provided by a child or young person impacts negatively on their well being and life chances and thereby protecting them from harm.
4. Reducing the incidence of families with unmet care needs.
5. Ensuring that all professionals are aware of what it means to be a young carer and work to improve the outcomes for Young Carers.
6. Encouraging Young Carers and their families to come forward for the help they may need.
7. Ensuring all agencies coming into contact with families carry out their duty to safeguard children and young people, have the knowledge they need to identify problems early and arrange for effective support to be provided for the young carer and the person being cared for.
8. Ensuring full access to current range of services and developing other services as required that meets the diverse needs of Young Carers, in partnership with Young Carers and their families,

9. Delivering better, joined up, whole family support to families affected by illness, disability or substance misuse.

3. How many Young Carers are there?

Many young people with caring responsibilities do not consider themselves to be Young Carers; they merely see themselves as supporting another family member and doing what anyone else would in their situation. This can mean that their role and their needs are hidden and they do not receive any support unless the situation reaches crisis point.

The data relating to the numbers of Young Carers in Cornwall at the present time is that provided by the Cornwall Young Carers Project. They are currently aware of 420 children and young people. This figure is accepted as an underestimate and also does not take account of sibling carers. It is vital to establish systems for their improved identification and for the collation of that data if a needs analysis is to properly inform future service development for this group of children and young people. Essential to this is to improve the confidence of Young Carers and their families in asking for the help they need and to raise awareness and understanding amongst professionals and the wider community.

4. Why do we need a strategy?

The Children's Society, funded by the Department of Children, Schools and Families published "Young Carers, parents and their families – Key Principles of Practice, 2008". **The six principles**, to be used alongside legislation and guidance already in place, to enable agencies to respond to the recommendations of national policy which affects Young Carers and their families in ways that are sensitive to their needs are:

1. Children's welfare should be promoted and safeguarded by working towards the prevention of children undertaking inappropriate care of any family member.
2. The key to change is the development of a whole family approach and for all agencies to work together, including children's and adult services, to offer co-ordinated assessments and services that are child focused and family orientated.
3. Young Carers and their families are the experts in their own lives and as such must be fully involved in the development and delivery of support services.
4. Young Carers will have the same access to education and career choices as their peers.

5. It is essential to continue to raise awareness of Young Carers and to support and influence change effectively. Work with Young Carers and their families must be monitored and evaluated regularly.
6. Local young carer projects and other services who work directly with Young Carers will provide safe, quality support to those children who continue to be affected by any caring role within the family.

5. The voice of Young Carers and their families

Nationally and locally Young Carers have told us:

- They want schools to respect and understand the issues they have to deal with at home and to promote more awareness and tolerance of disability and illness:
- They want health professionals to communicate with them about the medical care of the person being cared for in a clear and simple way, e.g. explain what to expect in the way of illness or behaviour, what to do in an emergency, how best to lift or move someone.
- They want professionals from all agencies to recognise that it is vital to consult with Young Carers and their families because they know their situation best.
- They want all workers to consider all the family members needs, not just one member and to provide flexible services because circumstances can change affecting the level of support Young Carers need.
- They want good information, advice and guidance that is easily accessible and flexible, responsive services.

If we are to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cornwall it is vital we address these issues and the strategy is an embracement of that challenge.

6. Who is this strategy for?

The strategy has been produced for all those who have a responsibility and interest in supporting Young Carers and their families. Its implementation is a significant task that requires joint working and partnership both within and between the statutory organisations and with voluntary organisations.

This will include:

- All services within Children, Schools and Families Directorate
- Adult Care and Support Directorate
- Schools
- Health services and professionals in the community and in hospitals

- DAAT
- LSCB
- Voluntary sector
- Police

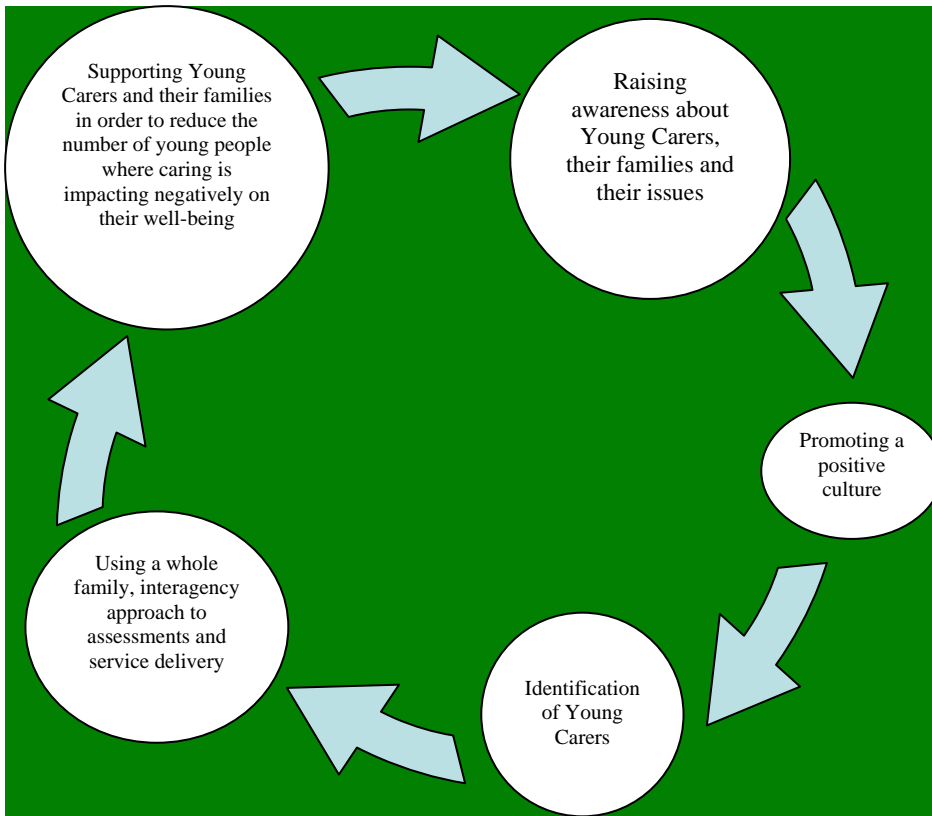
Working together with Young Carers and their families will be core to its success.

7. The Action Plan

The action plan that accompanies the strategy comprises 5 specific areas of work, with associated tasks that are outcome focussed:

1. Promoting a positive culture.
2. Identification of Young Carers.
3. Using a whole family, interagency approach to assessments and service delivery.
4. Supporting Young Carers and their families in order to reduce the number of young people where caring is impacting negatively on their well-being.
5. Raising awareness about Young Carers, their families and their issues.

The responsibility for the delivery lies with **ALL** agencies that work with children and young people and those who work with people with ill health and/or disability.



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