

From: Helen Davies, Director of Specialist Children's Services

Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education Directorate

To: Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee

Date: 29 June 2010

Subject: Kent Young Carers' Strategy Annual Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Report to update Members on the implementation of the Young Carers' Strategy during 2009/10

Introduction

1.1 Kent's Young Carers' Strategy was launched in 2007. The Adult Services Carers' Select Committee considered the strategy and accompanying action plan in 2008 and made a number of recommendations. Action taken in response to these recommendations was reported to the Carers' Select Committee Review in January 2009. It was agreed at this meeting that the Vulnerable Children and Partnership POSC would receive an annual report regarding the implementation of the Young Carers' Strategy.

1.2 Young Carers are now recognised nationally as a group vulnerable to poor outcomes. Locally they are identified as a vulnerable group within the Children and Young People's Plan.

Priority 5

Supporting vulnerable children to improve their life chances including improving the achievement and quality of life for young carers by implementing the Kent Young Carers' Strategy. *Kent CYPP 2008-11*

National Developments

2.1 During the last year central government and associated organisations have produced guidance that indicates how the needs of young carers are best identified and met.

2.2 The 'Think Family' Toolkit lays out process and good practice to improve outcomes for children in families that may be receiving support from a variety of

children's, young people's and adult services. 'Working Together to Support Young Carers - The Local Memorandum of Understanding between the Statutory Directors of Children's Services and Adult Services' is one of the tools issued under the 'Think Family' approach.

2.3 The new Healthy Schools Enhancement Model, using both universal and targeted interventions, has been designed to help schools develop their wider thinking and planning to achieve improved health and well-being outcomes for children and young people. The new guidance includes detailed information on how to identify, support and meet the needs of young carers in school. This guidance reiterates that which has already been made available to Kent schools for the past two years. The formalisation of the need to consider young carers under the Healthy Schools banner is a positive step forward for this vulnerable group.

2.4 Nationally, in recent years, concern has grown regarding the number of young carers who are home educated. The recommendations from the Review of Elective Home Education, which proposed the registering of all home educated children, assessment of the suitability of the home education and subsequent monitoring, featured significantly in the Children Schools and Families Bill 2010. This requirement does not, however, appear in the final Act. Despite this it is likely that future guidance regarding home education will be published. Hopefully, this will provide an additional form of monitoring for those young carers who are educated at home.

2.5 These new initiatives and proposals provide a range of tools to identify young carers, access and monitor their well-being and mainstream support for them in a range of settings.

Activity during 2009/10

3.1 When Kent's Young Carers' Strategy was launched in 2007 it was estimated that there were 2800 young carers in the county. In 2008, there were 600 young carers across the county receiving support. This figure has more than doubled with over 1200 young carers being supported across the county during 2009/10. This support, commissioned currently through the Local Children's Services Partnerships, includes:

- A range of social and recreational activities for young carers including residential weekends, weekly support groups, holiday and weekend activities;
- Activity in more than 130 schools to build awareness of young carers and develop capacity to deliver in school support and identify young carers; and
- Tailored individual support for those young carers most in need.

3.2 Through the Home Access for Targeted Groups Funding, 62 young carers and their families have been provided with a laptop and broadband access for two years. The allocation of laptops has been targeted at the most vulnerable young carers.

3.3 The Youth Capital and Youth Opportunities Fund (administered through the Communities Directorate) provides young people with the opportunity to take an active part in the commissioning process for the services that are designed to support them. Young people are trained as decision makers at a number of events, including residential courses. This year, 25% of the decision makers trained were young carers.

3.4 During this year, three young carers have been supported to stand for election to the Kent Youth County Council. All three were successful and have achieved a position in the council.

3.5 Joint Policy and Protocols between CFE and KASS to meet the needs of young carers were developed last year. These protocols have been reviewed in light of the Memorandum of Local Understanding. Joint training on the Young Carers' Protocols for staff across CFE and KASS is being planned. Currently both Kent Mental Health Trust and KDAAT are looking at adopting these protocols.

3.6 A Young Carers' DVD produced by young carers in the county is being made available to all schools through the Healthy Schools Programme and will be incorporated into training for staff across all agencies.

3.7 As part of KASS monitoring of the implementation of the Adult Carers' Strategy a Carers' Joint Needs Assessment is in development. Lead by KASS, this will monitor needs and activity to support carers across the county and will include an assessment of the needs of young carers.

Consultation with Young Carers

4.1 Kent's Young Carers' Strategy was written following extensive consultation with young carers who identified the key the themes around which the document focuses. During this year, consultation has taken place with young carers to evaluate the impact of the strategy. The consultation, based on the views of 68 young carers across the county (a 10% sample of the 600 known at time of commissioning) identified that:

- Support in school is most important element of the strategy for young carers. 44% of the young carers interviewed had a named worker, but all felt that support in school could be improved. Only 7 young people stated that no-one in school knew about their caring status.

- Young carers see support for the person for whom they care as the major consideration when seeking support for themselves. If the cared for person is not getting the support they need young carers are unlikely to seek or accept support themselves.
- Young carers felt strongly that professionals from both Adult and Children's services, those within schools and in the community still do not understand the role that they undertake. They think more training and information should be made available to them.

Workers aiming to support young carers should identify both their needs and their strengths developing plans to assist them.

4.2 The full consultation is being made available to Local Children's Services Partnership Staff and Children's Social Services District Managers in order that young carers' views may inform and improve local delivery and commissioning of services. The new Preventative Service Managers will lead on this from September 2010 within the new local arrangements.

Next Steps

5.1 Our Joint KASS and CFE Young Carers Protocols (available at <http://knet2/directorates/adult-services/policies-and-procedures/operational-and-sds-policies/carers/young-carers>) identify appropriate routes of referral and support for young carers in Kent. New and emerging government guidance is providing increased clarity as how the needs of young carers should be met in schools and family situations that do not meet the thresholds for statutory intervention.

5.2 Our consultation with young carers provides a positive overview of what has been achieved in the last 2 years. However, the document does provide a salutary reminder that some professionals are unaware of the needs of young carers and that support for them, the person for whom they care and their family remains variable.

5.3 During the next year it will be important to consolidate the work that has already taken place to improve outcomes for young carers. Key to achieving this, within the restructured CFE, will be the mainstreaming of activity as well as responsibility for monitoring and review. Alongside this we must maintain a dialogue with our young carers, ensuring that the issues they have highlighted as most important to them continue to be the focus for improved delivery of services and support. Key areas for future development are given in Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

Members of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee are asked to:

- Approve this report and agree presentation of the report to the next meeting of the Kent Children's Trust Board.

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Background Documents: Kent Young Carers' Strategy

Think Family :
ADSS and ADCS Model of Local Memorandum of
Understanding between the Statutory Directors of
Children's Services.

Other Useful Information: None

Young Carers

Activity 2010/11

Task	Responsible Body	Timescale	Completion Date
Continue dialogue with young carers regarding their needs and outcomes of the recent consultation.	12 Local Children's Trusts and Operational Groups in partnership with the Provider Groups.	December 2010	March 2011
Continue to develop joint working between children's and adults services to ensure that young carers are prevented from engaging in inappropriate caring.	KASS Carers Advisory Group.	Ongoing	Review February 2011
To continue to develop support in school for all young carers ensuring this is linked into the New Healthy Schools Enhancement Model.	Healthy Schools Strategic Group. (This group is currently subject to review.)	Ongoing	Review February 2011
To integrate the Young Carers Protocols within the development of tools to deliver whole family assessments within the county.	Think Family or Parenting Strategy Group. (To be identified as part of CFE restructure)	December 2010	March 2011
Continue to raise awareness with professionals, across all services, regarding the identification and needs of young carers and provides specific training as required.	12 District Operational Groups.	Ongoing	Review 2011