

ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF CHILDREN SERVICES (ADCS)

ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES (ADASS)

DATE: TUESDAY NOVEMBER 1, 2011

Adults and children's directors redeem a pledge to young carers

YOUNG CARERS SHOULD be identified early, protected from having to carry out inappropriate caring roles and, along with their families, should be listened to, with their experience being used to inform policy and practice.

These are some of the conclusions of a review published today which honours a pledge made by Graeme Betts (ADASS lead on carers) and Clair Pyper (ADCS lead on young carers) to a group of young carers they met in November last year*, that we "will say more in future about young carers and families affected by enduring parental mental illness and/or substance misuse."

The voices of young carers have been a critical component of this short review and are reflected in its content, which goes on to stress the importance of making sure that support for families:

- * Is more **personalised**, integrated and holistic,
- * Tackles the **underlying** causes of inappropriate caring roles, and
- * Has its intended **outcomes** are clear and shared

The approach builds on the 2009 vision in *Working Together to Support Young Carers*, a vision which stresses prevention and the active protection of children from excessive or inappropriate caring. The vision also highlights the importance of parental roles being supported, risks managed and children being safe.

This new review points to a continuing need to explore progress around:

* **Improved information**, earlier identification and a range of opportunities for engagement of children at risk of becoming young carers or who are already in this role as a result of supporting a parent with enduring mental illness or a parent affected by substance misuse.

* **Robust partnership** working and effective first line response mechanisms across schools, council access/contact services, health, treatment services and local organisations with a "no wrong doors" approach for those seeking advice and support linked to safe environments in which to say something and to respond.

The Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd

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* **Integrated assessment mechanisms** and recording so that young carers and their families do not have to keep repeating their story to professionals they come into contact with.

* **Whole Family working** for enhanced outcomes and to promote resilience and parental responsibility while recognising and managing risks to the safety and wellbeing of young carers where needed.

* **Greater understanding** of local population needs, use of feedback on what works, and including this within service commissioning arrangements across agencies that are then kept under review.

* **Leadership and ownership** by Directors, senior managers linked to perseverance and commitment in sustaining partnership working.

According to the Associations' two leads for young carers, the review is a signposting document and not a prescription. They said: "Feedback from young carers shows the real differences we can make by working better together with a shared focus on outcomes.

"Progression needs to be in tune with local needs and the aspirations and experience of young carers and their families. Translating the evidence base we have into local practice is a continuing challenge. We want this review to encourage greater information and knowledge exchange and help identify key areas for involvement, learning and for progress.

"We recognise the challenges of the present resource climate. In this review we focus on what works well and what else needs to be done to drive value and obtain improved outcomes. It should help make the best use of available resources and ensure we deliver on the statutory guidance on carers which we are all working to and which has been in place for some time."

ENDS

For further information contact:

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The full document – "Signposts" is available from the ADCS website here:

<http://www.adcs.org.uk/download/news/signposts.pdf>

* *Details of the pledge are available from Drew Clode, contact number above.*

* *Correspondents wishing to interview appropriate family members should contact Drew Clode in the first instance.*

EDITORIAL NOTES

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This paper has been prepared as part of our work on taking forward the national strategy for carers. It follows on from ***Working together to Support Young Carers – A Model Local Memorandum of Understanding between Statutory Directors of Children’s Services and Adult Social Services*** published by ADASS/ADCS in December 2009 .

This joint paper takes a close look at how agencies are working with young carers and their families where enduring mental illness and/or substance misuse is a factor. It outlines the evidence from research and practice, the complexities professionals face and the views and experience of young carers. The paper does not seek to cover the position of young carers within families where there are children with additional or other needs.

Its intended audiences are: Directors of Adult and Children’s Services, Lead Members, Carers’ Leads, Commissioners, Health and Well-Being Partnerships and Carers Organisations working with young carers and their families.

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