

Memorandum of Understanding for Young Carers and their Families between:

- **Department for Children, Young People and Culture (CYP&C)**
- **Department for Communities and Wellbeing (C&WB)**

1. Definition

According to Carers Trust, a young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.¹

2. Introduction

To support the importance of joint working between Childrens' Services and Adults' Services, a Memorandum of Understanding was published jointly by the Association of Directors for Childrens' Services (ADCS) and the Association of Directors for Adult Social Services (ADASS) in December 2009 and updated in 2012. A third edition now reflects the important new duties and powers placed on local authorities by the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014. These obligations are reinforced in the Young Carers Assessments Regulations 2015, the Guidance related to both of these Acts and "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (DfE – 2015). Many of the things highlighted as good practice in earlier versions of the Memorandum of Understanding are now incorporated into law.²

Children and young people who are carers have the same rights as all children and young people. Young carers should be able to learn, achieve, develop friendships and enjoy positive, healthy childhoods; just like other children. Where services are working with families we should try to ensure that the needs of children in the family, including those who may be assisting with caring, are recognised. This means taking account of their hopes, aspirations, strengths and achievements; and the need for advice and support for all the family. Young carers and families are experts on their own lives. It falls to professionals across all sectors to include them in shaping the personalised and

¹ About Young Carers - (2015) ~ Carers Trust

² Responsibilities for identifying and supporting young carers are placed on the local authority as a whole. These responsibilities are set out in the Children's Act 1989 (as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) and under the Care Act 2014. Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 introduces new rights for young carers to ensure young carers and their families are identified and their needs for support are assessed. From April 2015 all young carers will be entitled to an assessment of their needs from the local authority. This new provision works alongside measures in the Care Act 2014 for transition assessment for young carers as they approach adulthood, and for assessing adults to enable a "whole family approach" to providing assessment and support.

integrated responses that best respond to their needs. This applies equally whether care needs arise as a result of mental or physical illness or disability, substance misuse and whether a parent, a sibling or a family member is the focus of support.³

In Bury, we want young carers and their families to receive personalised and joined up support from Bury Council and partner agencies, including, but not limited to, our health colleagues, education colleagues and the third sector. We want to work together adopting a whole system, whole council and whole family approach.

This memorandum is an agreement between Bury Councils Department for CYP&C and Department for C&WB, that we will proactively work towards the early identification of young carers and prevent crisis from occurring - young carers will be supported throughout the life of their caring role and suitable transition arrangements will be in place.

Signed by:

Commencement Date: To be inserted **Review Date:** To be inserted

3. Current Context

³ No wrong doors: working together to support young carers and their families. A template for a local memorandum of understanding between statutory Directors of Children's and Adult Social Services – (March 2015) ~ ADCS, ADASS, The Children's Society and Carers Trust

The Connect and Direct Hub (CAD HUB) is the first point of contact for people who need information, advice, signposting, an initial assessment or response from C&WB. Following a screening process, some people will be referred on for an assessment of their needs. People who do not meet the eligibility criteria for services will be provided with information and advice and signposted/ referred on as appropriate. People who do meet the eligibility criteria for services will be offered a package of support to meet their identified needs in the form of traditional care (such as home care or day care) or Self Directed Support which provides more choice, control and flexibility (such as employing a Personal Assistant). A short term package of care may also be suitable (such as Reablement). The professional carrying out the assessment should take a whole family approach and ensure that any carers (including young carers) are aware of their right to a carers' assessment and the services that are available to support the caring role. C&WB will complete a carers' assessment for adults caring for other adults and young carers/ parent carers who are going through the transition stage.⁴ The record of assessments and interventions are stored on Protocol. The assessment outcomes for carers vary depending on identified need, but most result in one or more of the following:

- Information, advice, signposting and referrals to other services as appropriate (including referrals to the Carers' Centre); and/or
- A Carers Personal Budget.

Customers and carers with support plans are reviewed as required and closed when appropriate.⁵ C&WB will refer young carers who are not going through the transition stage to the Bury Young Carers Service.

The Bury Young Carers Service is made up of two part time workers (1.2 posts) who assess children and young people aged between 7 and 18 (again, a whole family approach should be taken). The assessment outcomes vary depending on identified need, but most result in one or more of the following:

- Information, advice, signposting and referrals to other services as appropriate (including referrals to the C&WB CAD HUB);
- Intensive 1:1 support provided by the Young Carers Service; and/or
- Weekly drop in sessions and holiday provision facilitated by the Youth Service (funded by the Friends of Bury Young Carers Charity).

A group for young adult carers also runs from the New Kershaw Centre. The amount of time a young carer is open to the Young Carers Service varies depending on need, but once all interventions have been completed the case is closed. The record of assessments and interventions are stored within files on the Q drive at present, but recording is planned to move to Protocol in the near future. Along with

⁴ The Care Act gives local authorities a responsibility to assess a carer's need for support, where the carer appears to have such needs. Carers have the right to an assessment whether the person they are caring for is eligible for local authority support, or not. Carers also have the right to an assessment whether the person they are caring for is engaging with the local authority or not. Carers are able to self refer for a carers assessment.

⁵ Please note: Customers and carers open to the Community Mental Health Teams may follow different processes.

completing assessments and interventions, the Young Carers Service also works with key stakeholders to identify and raise awareness of young carers. Children under the age of 7 are referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as children in need. Where a young carer is caring for another child, a sibling for example, CYP&C are responsible for assessing the child with care needs.

4. What is the need?

Many young carers remain 'hidden' from health, social care and education services, partly as a result of agencies needing to do more to identify them, but also because of family fears that they will be taken into care or because the young people themselves are concerned about the reactions of others and bullying by their peers.⁶ Bury follows this trend as, statistically, there are potentially 900 young carers in Bury aged 11-16,⁷ however currently only 78 young carers in this age group are supported by the Young Carer's Service. This is a potential shortfall of 822 young people who are providing care to a family member (usually an adult) without any support. It is likely that the number of young carers in Bury is even higher, as this does not take into account children under 11 or over 16. According to Carers Trust, the number of 5-7 year olds providing care increased by 83% between 2001 and 2011.⁸

Young carers are likely to achieve a grade less in each subject at GCSE than their peers, they are 1.5 times more likely to have a special educational need or a disability, and they are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19.⁹ In addition, young carers are more likely to have poor mental and physical health due to the anxiety caused by their caring role, they are more likely to be socially isolated or bullied, and they are more likely to live a household with a lower income than their peers.

This Memorandum of Understanding is a first step to ensuring that Bury Council and our partner agencies make these children visible. It is important that all agencies involved recognise that each young carer is an individual and will respond differently to each unique situation; a combination of their age, personality and the type of illness or disability, both physical and mental, their cared for person has. Currently, young carers tend to come to the attention of services if their family has reached crisis point and they are no longer able to cope with the

⁶ Recognised Valued and supported: next steps for carers strategy - (2010) ~ Department of Health

⁷ Bury secondary schools have approximately 10,800 children enrolled. According to Carers Trust, approximately 1 in 12 secondary aged children provide a caring role.

⁸ Young Carers and School - (2015) ~ Carers Trust

⁹ Hidden from view: The experiences of young carers in England - (2013) ~ The Children's Society

demands placed upon them. By this stage, a young carer may already be struggling with their education and have substantial health needs. Better outcomes can be obtained for young carers, their family and ultimately society, if services focus on the prevention of family crisis by intervening early. This Memorandum will aim to support young carers to achieve the best outcomes they can through early identification of their caring role.

5. Legislation

The Children and Families Act and the Care Act both address the needs of young carers directly:

- The Children and Families Act requires a local authority to carry out an assessment of a young carer's needs for support on request or on the appearance of need, and provides for local authorities to combine the assessment of a young carer with an assessment of the person they care for.
- The Care Act requires a local authority to undertake a needs assessment of a young carer if there are likely to be needs for support after becoming 18 and that the assessment would be of significant benefit to him / her.
- These requirements are also similar for parent carers.

It is expected that where eligible needs are identified in relation to young carers, local authorities will have to either provide support under section 17 of the Childrens Act 1989 to the young carer, or demonstrate that the cared for person's assessment has provided adequate care and support to prevent inappropriate care being required from the young carer.¹⁰

It is also expected that a whole family approach will be embedded into local assessments. This means making sure that any assessment takes into account and evaluates how the needs of the person being cared for impacts on the needs of the child who is identified as a possible young carer, or on any other members of the household. A thorough assessment centred on the family should result in appropriate support being provided for the person in need of care and support. This may result in the young carer being relieved of part or all of his or her caring role. Any remaining unmet support needs for the young carer should then be considered and responded to.¹¹

¹⁰ Care Act Overview (revised 13th March 2016) ~ Luke Clements

¹¹ No wrong doors: working together to support young carers and their families. A template for a local memorandum of understanding between statutory Directors of Children's and Adult Social Services – (March 2015) ~ ADCS, ADASS, The Children's Society and Carers Trust

6. Key Principles in line with 'No wrong doors: working together to support young carers and their families' by ADCS and ADASS (2015)

- The starting point should be to assess the needs of the adult or child who needs care and support and then see what remaining needs for support a young carer in the family has.
- The presence of a young carer in the family should always constitute an appearance of need and should trigger either an assessment or the offer of an assessment to the person needing care.
- A whole family approach is key when assessing an adult needing care where there are children in the family providing care to the adult or undertaking wider caring responsibilities. The adult's assessment and eligibility for support should take into account their parenting responsibilities and the functioning of the family.
- Assessments should ascertain why a child is caring and what needs to change in order to prevent them from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities which could impact adversely on their wellbeing, education, or social development. It will be good practice to seek the views of children and adults separately, as it may be very difficult for children to say how they really feel in the presence of an adult who may also be the person they care for.
- Consideration must be given to whether a young carer is a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989. The assessment must establish if they are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services and whether their health or development may be impaired if they or their family are not provided with support.¹²

7. Our Joint Action Plan¹³:

¹² Joint statement on key principles for supporting young carers made by DH and DfE (updated 2015)

¹³ Please note: Partner agencies and Lead Officers will be identified through a Communications Plan following the sign off of this document.

Please note: the overall accountability for this document lies with the Health and Wellbeing Board. Lead Officers will visit the relevant boards annually or as and when required (including the Safeguarding Boards).

Short and Medium Term Achievable Goals						
	Priority	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	RAG Status	Comments
1.1	Awareness and identification of young carers will improve.	<p>Agencies will develop a shared understanding of what it means to be a young carer and work together to promote identification, health and wellbeing of young carers.</p> <p>Awareness raising could include lunch time learning sessions and online training for Bury Council employees and partner agencies.</p>	TBC	TBC		<p>In order to implement our joint action plan, relevant agencies and Lead Officers will be identified to join a partnership meeting. Each agency will identify outcomes for their own area of work.</p> <p>Further work is required to embed principles from the Care Act and the Children and Families Act into practice.</p>
1.2	Quality information, advice, advocacy and local provision will be available and accessible.	<p>A mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify the current information, advice, advocacy and local provision available.</p> <p>Lead Officer will ensure that support is promoted through various means of communication, including an updated leaflet and the Bury Directory.</p> <p>Lead Officer to link into the neighbourhood trailblazer work.</p> <p>The option of joint commissioning will be explored in line with plans for one commissioning organisation.</p>	TBC	TBC		<p><u>A challenge for both CYP&C and C&WB will be added pressure to current workloads and lack of capacity. This is a particularly high risk to the Bury Young Carers Service due to their lack of resources.</u></p>

1.3	Appropriate and proportionate assessments will be carried out using a whole family approach.	Key principles will be applied (please see section 6) by ensuring that social care workers in CYP&C and C&WB have sufficient training and knowledge. This includes embedding early identification, support and safeguarding duties into practice. All assessments will take a holistic approach and joint assessments will be carried out when appropriate. Named operational leads from both CYP&C and C&WB will be available.	TBC	TBC		
1.4	Young carers will be supported throughout the life of their caring role.	A step down service will be explored and developed with other agencies (schools will be approached in the first instance).	TBC	TBC		
1.5	Suitable transition arrangements will be in place for young carers.	Better partnership working between CYP&C and C&WB to support the development of a formal transition pathway for young carers. This will mirror the transition pathway for other vulnerable children. A range of options will be offered to young carers and they will be supported to make their own choices (the wishes and life choices of the young carer will be central to transition planning).	TBC	TBC		
1.6	Mandatory and other relevant data will be collected via competent systems.	Relevant data will be collected, analysed and reported on. This data will be used for statutory returns.	TBC	TBC		
1.7	Local Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards will be made aware of issues surrounding young	Information will be shared between agencies as appropriate.	TBC	TBC		

carers and of this Memorandum of Understanding. This is to ensure consistency with local multi-agency policies and procedures.					
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