

# NO WRONG DOORS

*Working together to support young carers and their families*

**Protocol for joint working arrangements between  
London Borough of Ealing Adult, Children's and  
Housing Services, West London Mental Health  
NHS Trust Adult Services and the CGL Adult  
Substance Misuse Service**



Date agreed: February 2016

## 1. Introduction

This is a protocol for joint working between London Borough of Ealing's Adult, Children's and Housing Services, West London Mental Health NHS Trust Adult Services and the CGL Adult Substance Misuse Service. The protocol is designed to ensure the identification, assessment and support of young carers.

## 2. Definition of a young carer

The definition of young carers is consistent across a wide range of legislation and statutory guidance. The Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2015 and section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines young carers as "...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work) who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances." This is broadly reflected in section 63 of the Care Act 2014.

The day to day responsibilities of young carers can include:-

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Shopping
- Looking after family finances/budgets
- Nursing tasks such as administration of medicine and lifting
- Providing care including intimate care such as toileting, washing, feeding, bathing, dressing and attending to personal hygiene of cared for person
- Emotional support.

With so many responsibilities, young carers often miss out on opportunities that other children have to play and learn. Many struggle educationally and sometimes they are stigmatised for being different. They can become isolated, with little or no relief from pressures at home, and with little chance to enjoy a normal childhood. They are often afraid to ask for help as they fear letting the family down or being taken into care.

Under legislation, young carers up to the age 18 are entitled to their own assessment of need regardless of whom they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it. Local Authorities are required to:-

- i. Assess young carers where they may have support needs
- ii. Ensure young carers are identified
- iii. Align the assessment of a young carers with an assessment of adult they care for

The Care Act 2014 works with and complements the Children Act 1989, as amended. Under the Care Act 2014, Local Authorities are required to:

- i. Consider the support disabled parents and carers may need in carrying out their responsibility to care for a child
- ii. Take a whole family approach
- iii. Consider the impact on a young person if they are carrying out caring tasks including the impact of inappropriate levels of caring
- iv. Ensure that adult services identify children in the household and consider whether they are a young carer.
- v. Support young carers with the transition to adulthood.

### **3. Our commitment to young carers in Ealing**

There should be “no wrong doors” for young carers and their families. Regardless of which service or agency is contacted first, young carers should be identified, assessed and their families supported in ways that prevent excessive or inappropriate caring and support parenting roles. The parties to this protocol commit to working together and to adopting a whole family approach to providing support for young carers and their families. Specifically the commitment is to:

- Working together to support the whole family.
- Assessing the needs of the adult or child who needs care and support and;
  - Finding out if there are children in the family providing care
  - Ascertaining why a child is caring and what needs to change in order to prevent them from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities
  - When assessing adults, taking into account their parenting responsibilities
- Identifying young carers and considering whether to combine relevant assessments.
- Assessing the needs of young carers and identifying whether there is any negative impact on their wellbeing, education, or social development.
- Considering 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.
- Training and supporting staff in identifying and supporting young carers.

### **4. The role of London Borough of Ealing Adult Services, West London Mental Health NHS Trust Adult Services and CGL Adult Services**

1. As the first point of contact, those receiving referrals or with responsibility for undertaking assessments will have a key role in identifying young carers.
2. In assessing the needs of the cared-for person, find out if there are children in the same household and, if so, establish how much care and support is undertaken by any children through discussions with family members including children in the family who may be young carers.

3. Practitioners responsible for assessing people with care needs should consider how it will be possible to support the person in need of care so that children and young people are not relied on to provide excessive or inappropriate care. It is important that the particular vulnerabilities and needs of children and young people are recognised. Practitioners responsible for assessing adults with care needs must be able to recognise and respond to risks to children's safety and welfare. They must know how to respond where they have concerns that children are, or may be, suffering significant harm.
4. Make a referral to Children's Services where the child is thought to be a child in need or where a young carers assessment is wanted by the young carer and or cared for person. They may also refer to the Young Carers project. In complex situations where a young person is considered to be a child in need a referral will be made to ECIRS and shared information on the needs of the cared for person and the tasks and care needs undertaken by the young carer. If in the professionals view there are no tasks being undertaken this will be reflected in the assessment and there will be no need to involve a worker from Children's Services.

Key points:

- Meeting the needs of the adult may reduce the caring responsibilities the young person is undertaking.
- An assessment of the adult should take into account the parenting responsibilities of the person as well as the impact of the adult's needs for care and support on the young carer.
- It is reasonable to expect the worker undertaking the assessment of the adult to talk to the young people and identify directly their involvement in caring and to some extent how that impacts upon their life. If the young carer is not at home at the time of the assessment the worker will question the adults regarding the children in the house and the role they fulfil.

## **5. The role of London Borough of Ealing Children's Services**

1. Children's Services will identify siblings who care for children with additional needs, ensuring that they have access to a young carer's assessment.
2. Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS) will receive young carer referrals from adult services and any other sources including self-referrals.
3. The SAFE service in Children's Services will undertake young carer assessments.
4. Children's Social Care will assess needs if there are safeguarding concerns.
5. Young carers, the person cared for and, if different, the parents of the young carer will be informed about the assessment process and enabled to participate in the process as effectively as possible.
6. Where Adult Services, are not already involved, then Children's Services will consider making a referral of the cared for person to Adult Services for an assessment of eligibility under the Care Act 2014. If the adult has eligible adult care needs, the duty to meet their needs may help to reduce the level of care provided by a young carer.

## **6. Joint working between services**

Where a young carer appears to be a “child in need” needing protection and support or needs early help support, adult workers can discuss the case with ECIRS in Children’s Services to decide if further action is needed or a joint assessment.

## **7. Principles of Practice in undertaking assessments**

No care or support package for a parent, other adult or sibling should rely on excessive or inappropriate caring by a young carer to make it sustainable.

When carrying out an assessment, a whole family approach will be the primary consideration.

When carrying out an assessment of need of the cared for person we will consider:

- the amount, nature and type of care which the young carer provides;
- the impact of the caring role on the young carer’s wellbeing, education and personal and emotional development;
- whether any of the caring tasks the young carer is performing are excessive or inappropriate having regard to all the circumstances;
- whether any of the young carer’s needs for support could be met by providing support or services to the person cared for or another member of the young carer’s family.
- what the young carer’s needs for support would be likely to be if he or she were relieved of part or all of his or her caring role and whether the young carer has any remaining unmet needs.

When carrying out a young carer’s assessment, we will:

- consider whether a needs assessment of the cared for person (be they a child or adult) has been carried out, and if not, to request one.
- ensure that the assessment is carried out in a manner which is appropriate and proportionate (in the light of the young carer’s age, needs and wishes and feelings)
- ensure that any person who is to carry out a young carer’s needs assessment has sufficient competence, knowledge, skills and training to be able to carry out that assessment and be an appropriate person to carry out the assessment in the light of the young carer’s age, sex and understanding
- where considered appropriate or necessary, consult people with expertise and knowledge relevant to the young carer; and also to consult any person the young carer or their parent wishes to involve

- ensure that the young carer, the person cared for and, if different, the parents of the young carer are informed about the assessment process, usually prior to the assessment, and are helped to be able to participate in the process as effectively as possible.
- provide young carers, their parents and any person at the request of the young carer or their parent with a copy of the assessment with information about the actions to be taken including whether the young carer has been assessed as a “child in need” and confirming arrangements for review.

## **8. Information, Advocacy and Support**

Information and advocacy will be made available to support young carers. A young carers’ support project is in place and will accept referrals from young people, parents and professionals.

## **9. Transition to Adulthood**

Young carers often find their education; training and employment prospects are challenged by their caring role. We will therefore consider how to support young carers to prepare for adulthood and to raise and fulfil their aspirations. This is regardless of whether the young carer currently receives any services and includes young carers whose parents do not have any eligible needs.

Where young carers are not eligible for services and or where the parents have no eligible needs the transition assessment will be followed up with information and advice about support in the community.

We recognise that the power to join up assessments can be important at transition and where appropriate we will consider combining any existing Education Health and Care plans with transition plans and plans for the adult carer. When assessments are combined, we will as appropriate designate a named person to coordinate transition assessment and planning across agencies.

## **10. Information Sharing**

Effective and timely information sharing between agencies, including health, is critical to empowerment, preventative work, supporting transitions and promoting the welfare of young carers. Where appropriate, a young carers’ prior consent shall be sought to sharing any information. Within the framework of existing local information sharing protocols our aim is to ensure specific recognition of the position of young carers and their identification and support.



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