

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Regional Sub Group on Young Carers

25th October 2012

Present: Billy McMillan (Co-Chair) Barnardo's
Paul McCormack Carers NI
Nicola Topping WELB
Rosemary Breslin NHSCT

In attendance: Andrew Hawthorne Children Services Planning, HSCB

Apologies: Ann Godfrey Children Services Planning, HSCB
Carina Boyle Action for Children

1. Introduction

Billy McMillan welcomed everyone to the meeting and agreed to chair the meeting in Carina's absence.

2. Apologies

Apologies received from Ann Godfrey and Carina Boyle.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Minor amendments were suggested.

Action: AH to make amendments

4. Matters Arising

Nicola Topping informed the group that there are local policies in some schools for collecting information on young carers. It is related to the issue of pastoral care in

schools and is reflected in the action plan. Paul McCormack highlighted the need for a top down regional policy that would support the recognition, rather than identification of young carers.

The group recognised issues for young carers regarding hidden harm and particularly prescription medication. The group will link with ongoing Hidden Harm regarding this.

The group recognised a wider issue which is the number of children and young people who fall just below threshold levels for statutory support. This led the discussion onto the balance some felt for raising awareness and having the capacity to deal with increased numbers. The group explored other mechanisms for identifying young carers, for example through GP's, programmes such as Caring for Carers, Think Child, Think Parent, Think Family and linking with community addiction services. The group further recognised the need to identify the number of young carers, for example, by using established internationally recognised, population based formulae used elsewhere. This is particularly true for BME communities. Andrew Hawthorne reminded the group of the significant influence it has as part of the CYPSP to be able to flag these issues and to work with other groups and ongoing work to make a difference.

Action: Andrew to investigate the population formulae for identifying young carers

With regards to increasing membership, Andrew informed the group that, as an open call process had been completed on two further occasions with no success, it would now be appropriate for the group to approach other community and voluntary organisations if they think it would add value to the group. Helen Ferguson from Carer's NI was identified as a potential addition and a formal approach was considered the best way forward.

Action: Billy McMillan to write a formal letter to Carer's NI

Minutes were agreed.

5. Consultation Feedback

Andrew Hawthorne explained the process of feeding back the consultation responses. Three documents were circulated around the group; a list of respondents; a document detailing general responses for all groups, and a document detailing responses for the Young Carers group specifically. Andrew emphasised the importance of determining what action the group had decided to take against each issue raised so that respondents could trace their input and see the results of that input. Responses were split into positive responses and constructive suggestions for change. The group worked through the constructive suggestions for change to determine what would change in the action plan as appropriate and what the group's response would be.

Based on the consultation feedback a significant issue was raised regarding the remit of the group i.e. was it to provide emotional and physical support for young carers to continue their role or was it to relinquish young carers from their roles completely and allow them a childhood and development free from unnecessary strain. Billy McMillan stated that in line with CYPSP principles, the group is not recognising young carers as young carers first, but as children and young people first, entitled to achieve the six high level outcomes. Therefore, the group agreed that in the short term, the group was responsible for greater emotional and physical support with a long term view, through an early intervention approach and integrated working with others, to relinquish the responsibility on young carers as much as possible.

Action: Andrew Hawthorne to amend the action plan introduction to reflect the above point

Andrew agreed to write up the actions agreed by the group, make the necessary changes to the action plan and circulate for comment before signing off at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 22nd November 2012, 10.30am- 12.30pm Barnardos, Upper Newtownards Rd.
Belfast