



# **Support for Carers Task Group / Young Carers: Joint Report**

**People's Scrutiny Committee**

**10 January 2012**

# Contents

	<b>Preface</b>	3
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	4
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	5
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Summary</b>	7
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Devon Virtual Carers Centre</b>	8
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>	9
	Identifying and Supporting Carers	9
	Health	9
	Contract Monitoring	10
	Respite	10
	Carer Support Helplines	11
	Transitions	11
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Recommendations: Support for Carers Task Group / Young Carers Task Group</b>	12
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>Task Group Activities</b>	14
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>Contributors/Representations to the Review</b>	15
<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>	16

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# Preface



**Councillor Andy Boyd  
Chair, Support for Carers / Young Carers Task Group  
People's Scrutiny Committee**

I published the report 'Support for Carers' on behalf of Devon County Council's Health and Adults Services Scrutiny Committee in 2010. In 2011, Councillor Polly Colthorpe published 'Young Carers' on behalf of the new People's Scrutiny Committee. This report is a 'follow-up' to both of them from a jointly-formed group tasked with monitoring the implementation of the 31 recommendations that the two task groups put forward between them. The previous reports highlighted inconsistencies in the identification of carers and their needs, as well as worrying inequalities in service provision which were causing difficulties and hardships for many carers – particularly those in the wider, more rural areas of the County.

Whilst the investigations for this report showed an encouraging improvement in the efforts being made to address the previous recommendations, there is still concern regarding equality of provision. It is imperative that the momentum for improvement is maintained in order that all carers equally receive the best possible assistance and service across the county.

I would like to thank the officers from Devon County Council and NHS Devon for their open and proactive contributions, and for the positive approach of both organisations toward the essential improvement of provision for carers of all ages.

Andy Boyd  
Chairman

# Introduction

The Task Group — Councillors Andy Boyd (Chair), Alison Boyle, Caroline Chugg, Polly Colthorpe and Philip Sanders — would like to place on record its gratitude to the witnesses who contributed to the review. In submitting its recommendations, the Group has sought to ensure that its findings are supported with evidence and information to substantiate its proposals.

The Joint Task Group was set up to review the implementation of the recommendations made by the Support for Carers Task Group (CX/10/95) and the Young Carers Task Group (CX/11/01) and to revise the recommendations according to both Groups' findings.

In July 2009, the County Council's then Health & Adults Services Scrutiny Committee established the Support For Carers Task Group which started its work in February 2010. The Group comprised Councillors Andy Boyd (Chairman), Caroline Chugg, Polly Colthorpe and Debo Sellis and included South Hams district councillor John Squire and a representative of the Devon Association of Local Councils, Mrs. Jenny Roach.

The Support for Carers Task Group presented its final report to Health & Adults Services Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2010, following which on 10 November 2010 Cabinet agreed that the Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and the Executive Director for Adult Community Services be asked to consider the recommendations and respond, taking whatever action as appropriate. On 10 March 2011, an update report of the Chief Executive went to the Health & Adults Services Scrutiny Committee, at which Task Group members, whilst pleased with the efforts of Adult & Community Services, expressed disappointment at the lack of substantive information and real progress on the implementation of the Task Group's recommendations from NHS Devon.

At its meeting on 18 January 2011, the then Children's and Young People's Scrutiny Committee agreed that a Young Carers Task Group be formed following a recommendation from the Support for Carers Task Group that support arrangements for young carers be separately reviewed. The Task Group, composed of Councillors Polly Colthorpe (Chair), Peter Bowden, Alison Boyle, Michael Lee, Philip Sanders, Brenda Taylor and Mrs Liz Wilson (Primary Parent Governor Representative) published its final report at the new People's Scrutiny Committee on 15 June 2011. It was agreed that, further to the Young Carers Task Group report being commended to the Cabinet for approval and implementation, future work be undertaken to monitor and consolidate the work of both this and the Support for Carers Task Group.

# Recommendations

## **Identifying and Supporting Carers**

(See page 9)

- Recommendation 1**
- (i) That all schools in the County have a 'young carer' policy and be provided with a resource pack for identifying and supporting young carers.
  - (ii) That the new providers give a presentation and make strong links with the Devon Association of Governors, Devon Association of Primary Headteachers and Devon Association of Secondary Headteachers highlighting the role and responsibilities of schools in identifying and supporting young carers. The presentation should also be made available for individual schools to present to the governing body.
  - (iii) That it be ensured that carers continue to be involved in the planning and decision making process for carer services.

## **Health**

(See page 9)

- Recommendation 2**
- (i) That GP practices be strongly encouraged to improve their ability to identify and support carers, particularly young carers.
  - (ii) That ways be found to ensure that carer information is available in the electronic discharge summaries made by hospitals to GPs and that carers are kept fully informed.
  - (iii) That all young carers' aged 14+ be offered a health and wellbeing check appropriate to their age and circumstance.

## **Contract Monitoring**

(See page 10)

- Recommendation 3**
- (i) To ensure adequate and appropriate services for carers are available equally across the County.
  - (ii) That the monitoring procedures for the new carers' services contract be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently robust and that the bespoke young carers' element remains distinct within the wider contract.
  - (iii) That there is member involvement in the contract monitoring process.

## **Carer Support**

### **Helplines**

(See page 11)

#### **Recommendation 4**

That national help lines (such as Childline) are widely promoted to young people via carers' projects; schools and other partners such as health.

## **Respite**

(See page 10)

#### **Recommendation 5**

- (i) That an open and available short break provision be continued to allow respite for all carers.
- (ii) That advance bookings be allowed for respite provision for short or longer breaks.

# Summary

Overall members felt encouraged by the developments in support for carers over the last 12 months. The move to the Devon Virtual Carers Centre should help develop a more comprehensive identification and assessment process for carers and their families than was previously available. The new arrangements will allow the service to develop further, ensuring that an offer of support exists for every carer.

In reviewing the recommendations from the Support for Carers and the Young Carers Task Groups members were broadly satisfied with the progress that has been made to date. A number of the recommendations have now been incorporated into the work of the Devon Virtual Carers Centre; however, not unsurprisingly given that the Young Carers Task Group's report was only published in June 2011, some important work has not yet been fully developed and it is hoped that this will be given priority. The new recommendations contained in this report cover areas in which members feel further work to be essential.

# Devon Virtual Carers Centre

As of 1 October 2011, there was a new contract for carers services, combining young and adult carers. A rigorous tender process was undertaken which involved direct input from carers. The priorities which were identified for carers were drafted with carers to ensure that the services and support provided should be as helpful and as useful as possible. The provider Westbank was successful in meeting the demands of the tender process and the contract was awarded on 16 August 2011. Officers reported that the new specification has a bespoke young carers' provision which covers a much broader spectrum of services, including a helpline and improved support for transitions. Westbank will be working with many of the existing providers to maintain the current framework of support.

The Devon Virtual Carers Centre provides a more focussed assessment process within which the Common Assessment Framework is formally incorporated. The new contract also allows for a single point of contact for young carers and their families. The former consortia are now part of the Devon Virtual Carers Centre and provide bespoke projects, while the new service has a local offer which includes groups, outings, health checks, support workers and mentoring. The health checks include a market place approach where young carers can access information.

The New Devon Virtual Carers Centre will provide:

- A new single point of access telephone helpline 08456 434 435 available for longer hours, Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm and on Saturdays from 9.00am to 1.00pm, for all carers whatever their age or whoever they care for.
- More carer support workers in each area of Devon and extra individual 'support hours' for carers from support workers.
- Lead practitioners providing expertise and knowledge in caring for older people; people with mental health issues; people with learning, sensory or physical disabilities and in how to help young carers.
- Young carer projects providing activities for young carers, and with greater access to GP practices and adult care support workers, so that more young carers are supported through the transition to adult services.
- Carer support available in or near GP practices every month.
- More work with acute and community hospitals to identify and support carers to access the wider support available.
- Continuity of existing carer support groups and the development of new groups.
- And from January 2012, there will be Health & Wellbeing Checks for all carers needing intensive support and carer breaks.
- All the existing Devon Carers Link services - take a break, flexible breaks, carers alert cards, support groups and newsletters - which will continue and grow with extra funding and more workers, as well as the launch of an extended and improved website.
- The Devon Carers Voice service which tells providers what carers think of the services they commission and provide for carers and which will be managed independently.



# Key Issues

## Identifying and Supporting Carers

Members were advised that Devon had become increasingly 'joined up' in its approach to identifying carers. The new Carers' Contract emphasised that providers should continually seek to identify new carers. Generic 'carer support workers' would, under the new contract, be specifically trained in dealing with carers' issues, which was a significant step forward.

The County Council is seeking to ensure that support workers are effective in their engagement and work with young people. Young carers data will be published quarterly and will show how many young carers attended groups / outings and also how many young carers have been newly identified. The Devon Virtual Carers Centre, Young Devon and the voluntary sector are also likely to be involved in data capture to explore what is appealing or otherwise about certain young carer groups. The new carer's service will work to raise the profile of young carers. Accreditation through the Princess Royal Trust for Carers will help the process, as will the fact that the carers' service is more widely advertised for all ages.

Work in identifying carers' needs to be undertaken with adult services and officers have briefed adult providers on commissioning requirements. Wherever there is a cared for person providers should check whether there is a young carer within the family. Officers will continue to monitor referral rates though it should be noted that, with the commissioning arrangements as they are, funding some additional work may be problematic.

Officers advised that work is being prioritised to ensure that the identification of young carers be highlighted to schools and headteachers. It was remarked that the independence of Academies may put them beyond the influence of this authority but all schools are required to identify someone responsible for young carers. Schools of all descriptions need to be aware of the mutual benefits which can accrue from engaging with, for example, young carers' groups and projects and the fundamental role such support can play in improving pupils' school attendance, behaviour and attainment. There remain questions concerning how schools choose to capture data and how they share this information.

Members questioned the reach of Devon Carers Link across the County and expressed some concern as to gaps in provision. Officers advised that the new model which Westbank would be leading would be much more encouraging and work would continue towards an equitable distribution of resources across Devon.

## Health

Concerns were raised about GP practices and their engagement in identifying and supporting carers, particularly young carers. Officers reported that the new Clinical Commissioning Groups will be looking at how efficiencies can be provided and how supporting carers may impact on other services. If carers are well supported there is, for example, likely to be a reduced footprint in surgeries and hospitals and this is something 'smart commissioning' will recognise. Buddying arrangements can be made with GP practices which will be shared with other practices when it is seen that the model works. Devon Carers Link will be going into GP practices on a monthly basis and this improved visibility will help to flag carers up and raise their profile with GPs. GP patient participation groups are also being set up which will further help in the identification of carers. Nationally the Department of Health has been undertaking accredited training for GPs. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers has also published recent guidance on GP identification of carers. Commissioners will ensure that the

Director of Public Health is aware of work which should be done to raise the profile of young carers with the nursing profession.

NHS Devon is one of the few primary care trusts to use its share of the £400 million Government allocated for carers' services for its intended purpose and £1,000,000 of funding for carers services is to be provided by NHS Devon which the Task Group welcomed.

In 2009, as one of 25 successful bidding teams in England, a partnership between NHS Devon and the County Council was awarded funding as part of an initiative to design, develop and deliver 3000 new Health and Wellbeing Checks to carers in Devon over a two-year period commencing in October 2009. 'Looking After Me' is part of a drive to encourage carers to talk to health professionals and support them in looking after their own health and wellbeing. The sessions are delivered by trained and accredited tutors who have experience of being carers themselves.

## **Contract Monitoring**

Officers reported that, alongside relevant stakeholders, they will try to ensure the new contract makes a difference in improving carers' lives. The contract monitoring process will involve critical friends around the County who will seek to ensure the contract is working as it should. The Joint Planning & Strategic Commissioning Manager – Carers will lead on a monthly monitoring of the contract for the first 6 months, alongside the Physical and Sensory Learning Disability Programme Manager in order to check that the provider is doing exactly what it said it would do. After this period there will then be a quarterly monitoring meeting which, in the first part of the meeting, will involve senior commissioning officers who will examine the contract information available. In the second part of the meeting, carers' representatives from across the County will then have opportunities to flag up issues which have not been resolved at a local level.

Officers will also, as a matter of course, be in direct talks with providers and carers to ensure they have an understanding of how the provisions in the contract are actually working out on the ground. How providers run the service they provide is, of course, their responsibility. There are inevitably pressure points within the system and a considerable amount of work will be undertaken by providers in building community capacity to ensure that there are sufficient support groups and mechanisms available.

Officers reported that monitoring meetings with the Devon Virtual Carers Centre to date had demonstrated added value and that new referrals were being received. Members felt convinced that the Joint Planning & Strategic Commissioning Manager – Carers, and the Physical and Sensory Learning Disability Programme Manager will ensure the robust monitoring of the carers contract. The Task Group however recognised that the reliance on these two officers does represent a risk if either member of staff is absent or their roles change. Measures therefore need to be established to ensure that the process of contract monitoring continues to be undertaken in all eventualities.

## **Respite**

In spite of the considerable work which has been undertaken in looking at support for carers county-wide, evidence indicates that there are still significant gaps; the majority of the extra £1,000,000 from the NHS will therefore be used to expand respite based on the needs of individual carers. The flexible grant for carers has been increased as has the 'Take a Break' service, a county-wide subsidised scheme which gives carers a single route by which to arrange day time or evening breaks from their caring responsibilities. The breaks are provided by a care worker coming to look after the cared for person so the carer can have a break. The scheme was initially set up for older people but has now been opened up to include young carers. There is however a limited number of providers in the County, particularly in rural areas. Members also

felt it should be recognised that a 3-hour break for a carer in an urban area was a very different proposition from a 3-hour break in a rural community with transport and travel times being a significant factor.

66% of Devon Carers would need some-one to take over their care if they wanted to take a break for a couple of days, 27% for a couple of hours; of which 84% had a family member or friend that would support them to take a short break, 16% who had no-one they could rely on to do this. Based on this some 12,000 carers would need a commissioned service to enable them to have a short break. In 2010/11 the County Council helped some 3,787 people through a range of respite services. Officers reported that it is a priority to improve significantly upon this record.

### **Carer Support Helplines**

There has been a stepped increase in the Carers Helpline service through the Devon Virtual Carers Centre which will now be available Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm instead of from 9.00am to 5.00pm as was previously the case. The helpline will also be open on Saturday mornings and throughout the school holidays. Work is underway on the possibility of development of a card or a smart phone app which will link into Childline, Devon Doctors, the Samaritans etc. Officers recognise the importance of ensuring young carers are signposted to Childline, NHS Direct and emergency lines when the Carers Helpline is not available as carers in crisis **must** be supported. It is important to find a means of doing this which is relevant and user-friendly for young people. Helplines should not, however, deflect from the necessity of providing quality services as it is vital that providers have adequate support plans.

### **Transitions**

A report from the Transitions Task Group, which will be published in the People's Scrutiny agenda for 10 January, 2012, recommends the implementation of a 14-25 transitions service, which would provide young carers with continuity of support and social workers as they make their transition from being a 'young' to 'adult' carer. The Support for Carers / Young Carers Joint Task Group fully supports this recommendation.

Andy Boyd (Chair)  
 Alison Boyle  
 Caroline Chugg  
 Polly Colthorpe  
 Philip Sanders

Electoral Divisions: All

<b>Local Government Act 1972 List of Background Papers</b>		
Report originated by:	Dan Looker	
Room:	G.32	
Tel No:	01392 382722	
Background Paper	Date	File Reference
—	—	—

## Appendix 1:

### Support for Carers Task Group Recommendations

1	That the Public Information Strategy considers how it can respond to the request to produce condition-specific information which describe conditions and typical caring requirements from the point of view of carers.
2	To develop a carers impact assessment for all needs assessments and business plans across statutory bodies, to involve carers in the planning and decision-making processes where appropriate and to strengthen current practice.
3	To encourage partner organisations in the Devon Local Strategic Partnership to develop approaches of assessing impact on carers.
4	To develop early intervention measures and consider how current arrangements for carer involvement and support could best be offered in the future.
5	To allocate funding for their intended purpose locally and to establish an audit trail for all funding which has not been allocated for the intended purpose.
6	To recommend to the Health & Adults Services Scrutiny Committee that a separate task group be convened to review in general the a) criteria, choice and priorities in the distribution of funding and resources b) impact on services, including voluntary services c) impact of the decrease in public spending
7	To undertake research to establish current spending patterns to inform future projections, especially in the light of the future of public expenditure.
8	To establish means of contract monitoring on the implementation and achievement against the Devon carer strategy and to support health & social care providers in the implementation of the carers strategy.
9	To ensure that professional provider organisations do not evade non-profitable duties by passing some domiciliary and respite care to the voluntary sector, especially in rural areas and to review the hourly rate to ensure that it recognises the full cost of delivering the service in rural areas.
10	To ensure that the booking system for respite beds suits the needs of carers, e.g. in the longer-term booking of beds.
11	To ensure easy contact with providers and the general satisfaction of people who use services with regard to time-keeping and continuity of individuals' professional carers.
12	To ensure that providers train and manage staff adequately.
13	To explore how best the County Council and NHS trusts can support staff with caring responsibilities in the workplace and issue information and advice to line managers.
14	To seek an informed consent with every person who uses a service who has a carer so carers can be fully engaged in any decision-making process about the cared for person.
15	To highlight carer information in the electronic discharge summaries to GPs.
16	To establish a group representing carers issues at the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust.
17	To suggest to the Local Medical Committee that it raise awareness with its members on how to improve carer support and to highlight Clyst Caring Friends as an example of best practice.
18	To provide coordinated support for carers by named and contactable staff with capacity for visits.
19	To introduce one-to-one or call-back services to assist carers with paperwork, self-assessments and membership forms if needed.
20	To develop a locally accurate service directory which provides relevant parish or postcode specific information on all statutory and voluntary services across Devon and which can be used by all involved agencies to identify more coordinated, creative, tailor-made, local and need-led solutions.
21	To involve all carers in all brokerage assessments early on.
22	To support local, innovative solutions for service delivery.
23	To establish how providers can work together and how resources can be combined or released on the basis of the locally accurate service directory (recommendation 20).
24	To recommend to the Health & Adults' Services Scrutiny Committee to request a report on the implementation of the recommendations of the support for carers task group in March 2011 and in regular intervals thereafter.
25	To recommend to the Children & Young People Services Scrutiny Committee to review support arrangements for young carers.

## Recommendations from the Young Carers Task Group

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) That through an improved multi-agency approach young carers and their families be identified and worked with at the earliest possible stage.</li> <li>(ii) That Health be urged to take on a more prominent role in the identification of young carers.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) That all schools in the County have a 'young carer' policy and be provided with a resource pack for identifying and supporting young carers.</li> <li>(ii) That as soon as possible the new provider(s) gives a presentation and makes strong links with the Devon Association of Governors, Devon Association of Primary Headteachers and Devon Association of Secondary Headteachers highlighting the role and responsibilities of schools in identifying and supporting young carers. The presentation should also be made available for individual schools to present to the governing body.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) That the transition from young carers to adult carers be improved and extended to ensure that there is appropriate and sufficient provision covering the whole of the 14 – 25 age range.</li> <li>(ii) That all young carers' aged 14+ be offered a health and wellbeing check to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) that their own health is not being compromised by their caring role and</li> <li>c) that they are in the best possible position from which to consider whether they feel able to continue their caring role into adulthood.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iii) That further research be commissioned into the affects of caring responsibilities during the 'transition' period from secondary through tertiary education.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) That there be an out of hours service for young carers to contact in an emergency. The service should operate throughout the year.</li> <li>(ii) That national help lines (such as Childline) are widely promoted to young people via carers' projects; schools and other partners such as health.</li> </ul>
5	<p>That the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) be amended to include a question about young carers.</p>
6	<p>That the monitoring procedures for the new carers' services contract be reviewed to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) that they are sufficiently robust;</li> <li>b) that the bespoke young carers' element remain distinct within the wider contract and</li> <li>c) that monitoring of b) does not become absorbed into monitoring of the wider contract.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Task Group Activities

- A2.1 The first meeting of the Joint Task Group took place on **19 August 2011**. Members met with the Joint Planning and Strategic Commissioning Manager – Carers, People / NHS Devon and the Assistant Director of Strategic Development, NHS Devon to discuss the implementation of the recommendations from the Support for Carers Task Group.
- A2.2 On **21 October 2011**, the Task Group met with the Physical and Sensory Learning Disability (PSLD) Programme Manager, People to discuss the implementation of the recommendations from the Young Carers Task Group.
- A2.3 On **22 November 2011**, the Task Group met to discuss its draft findings and revised recommendations.

## Appendix 3

### Contributors / Representations to the Review

Witnesses to the review (in the order that they appeared before the Task Group)

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Clare Cotter	Joint Planning and Strategic Commissioning Manager – Carers	Devon County Council / NHS Devon
Jenny McNeil	Assistant Director of Strategic Development	NHS Devon
Beryl Perrin	Physical and Sensory Learning Disability, Programme Manager, People	Devon County Council

## Appendix 4:

### Bibliography

- *Support for Carers Task Group*, Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (Devon County Council, 2010)
- *Young Carers Task Group*, People's Scrutiny Committee (Devon County Council, 2011)