MAKING IT REAL for Young Carers
Dear everyone,

Welcome to the strategy for young carers. This is all about what you as professionals and policy makers need to do to help support us and our families.

Young carers from all over Surrey were asked what could be done to make their lives better. We used bunting to get our views across.

We asked professionals to make a pledge to do one thing that would improve our lives. They then became a Surrey Young Carers Guardian Angel - looking out for us as they do their jobs.

There are over 14,000 young carers in Surrey. They all care for someone and have no choice as to whether they want to or not.

Caring and coping is always difficult for us and affects us either physically, emotionally, socially or educationally; in some cases, all of these.

Please take the time to read this strategy. It's not just another piece of paper, this is our lives and we have taken time out from our caring responsibilities to contribute to it.

Little changes that YOU make, can make a huge difference to us and our families. Like the Beyonce song 'halo' we ask you to not to let your pledges fade away.

PS check out the conference on YouTube - http://youtu.be/Y024P9rvJzs
The term “Young Carer” applies to: anyone under the age of 18 years who helps to look after someone with a physical or long term illness. This may be a physical disability, frailty due to old age, a learning disability like autism, a mental problem like depression or a drug or alcohol problem.

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About this Strategy

Our Surrey Young Carers Strategy for 2015 to 2018 is based on:
• What Young Carers have said
• Pledges from professionals to improve support for young carers
• Changes to the law that give important new rights to young carers
• A need to ensure young carers are not left unsupported when they reach 18

It is a three year plan supported by a lot of organisations in Surrey to help them work together to improve support for young carers. So many organisations touch on the lives of young carers and their families - so working together to improve support for young carers is crucial.

Numbers of Young Carers

Research by Nottingham University “Kids who Care” 2010 undertaken for the BBC suggests that there are about 700,000 young carers in Britain. This equates to about 14,000 in Surrey.

More information about the numbers of young carers and research about their needs can be read in a document called the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This also includes lots of facts and figures as well as information about young adult carers (aged 18 to 24).

See link:
Young Carers Supported

Our young carers service “Surrey Young Carers” now supports 1650 young carers a year; a service that is very highly valued by professionals in social care, health and education teams. Surrey Young Carers provide a wide range of support including:

- Young Carers Groups
- Fun days and residential activities
- Issue based workshops
- One to one support and advocacy
- Work to identify and support young carers in schools
- Helping arrange young carer support payments
- A Young Carers Forum to represent the views and opinions of young carers

The level of support provided is to double the numbers helped five years ago but still represents only 12% of all young carers; so there is much more to be done.

Some support is also provided through “statutory services”. Both Adult Social Care and Childrens Services provide support to some young carers and their families but again there is more to do: particularly as there will soon be new legal requirements.
New Rights for Young Carers

The Government have significantly strengthened the rights of young carers. An amendment to Section 17 of the Children Act gives young carers new rights to assessments from 1 April 2015. This law applies equally to adult and childrens services and young carers will either need to have:

• a young carer’s assessment of their own ..... 
• or the assessment of the person they look after ensures sufficient support is provided to avoid young carers having to undertake inappropriate care.

The assessor will also be required to establish whether the young carer is a “child in need” (as defined by the Children Act). Councils also have new responsibilities to identify young carers in the community and to take steps to reduce their need for support by providing early help and preventative services.

A Whole Family Approach and the Care Act

The Regulations and Guidance to the Care Act 2014 will require councils to consider what support disabled parents and adult carers need to help them in their parenting role. There is a key responsibility to ensure that adults are supported so that inappropriate caring responsibilities do not fall to children or young people.

Surrey County Council and Surrey Young Carers have developed new young carer assessment forms that are more child/young person friendly. There will be a pictorially based version for young carers under 12 and more text based version for older young carers.

The Care Act creates new responsibilities to support young carers in their transition to adulthood. It also means there is a need to improve support for young adult carers (aged 18 to 24) so that young carers are not left unsupported when they reach 18.
**Young Carers and the Children Act**

The change to Section 17 of the Children Act means that the outcomes of young carer’s assessments must be taken into account as part of statutory assessments; again ensuring that young carers are not left with inappropriate caring responsibilities.

The “Early Help” system for providing preventive support to children and families will be adjusted to ensure better recognition and support for young carers.

Our Surrey protocol between Adult and Childrens Services about support for young carers will be updated to make sure that practitioners are clear about who does what so that there are no gaps in response.

**Young Carers in Schools**

There is already a lot of work going on with Surrey Schools including the work of Surrey Young Carers Education Advisers but we need to redouble our efforts to get the help of all Surrey Schools and colleges in identifying and supporting young carers. A major new programme of awareness raising in schools is being organised to help make this happen.

**Raising awareness across the whole system**

Many professionals come into contact with young carers and their families so a wide range of organisations work together through a Multi Agency Young Carers Strategy Group. This includes people from the NHS (Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Trusts and other health provider services), the County Council (Childrens and Adult Social Care and Service for Young People), Voluntary, Faith & Community Sector and representatives of the Young Carers Forum.

Our E-learning Course “Young Carer Aware” is now widely used by partner agencies to help support their staff in understanding young carers needs. A new more detailed follow on course for professionals is also being developed.
Young Carers Health

A Young Carers Health Survey has been undertaken and highlighted the need to do more to address young carers’ health needs and the national organisation NHS England are planning new initiatives to promote better support for young carers.

People in the NHS locally have begun working on the improvements young carers have asked for. This will include more work with doctors, nurses (including school nurses) and other health professionals throughout Surrey. Young Carers issues have been highlighted in the Surrey Carers Pathway for health services to help support this.

Growing up: “transition” to adulthood

Young carers have told the Government and professionals in Surrey that they need more help with the transition to adulthood and that better support is needed for young adult carers (aged 18 to 24).

As a result the Government has given councils new duties through the Care Act to support young carers in transition (aged 14 to 17).

The Government has also said that there is a need for more work to support young adult carers. They are setting up a national “Task and Finish Group” to improve support for young adult carers. In Surrey research on the needs of young adult carers has already led to support being given to establish work to improve support for this group.

The Voice of Young Carers

The Surrey Young Carers Forum have done a fantastic job in helping raise awareness of young carers needs. Young carers from Surrey played a key role in developing the national guideline “Making It Real for Young Carers” which forms the basis of our new strategy. See: http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Resource/?cid=9629

Young Carers Forum members are also heavily involved in updating and implementing our multi agency young carers strategy; making real improvements for young carers.
A New Strategy; Much more to do

A lot has been achieved through the last plan but there is much more to do. We held a conference in May 2014 to look at what need to be done over the next three years based on the commitments in "Making It Real for Young Carers". Many of the conversations at the event were led by young carers themselves. We have an action plan (our “To do lists”) based on priorities identified by young carers and pledges made by professionals to help improve support.

A short film about what was said on the day can be seen here

http://youtu.be/Y024P9rvJzs

Progress with these actions will be monitored by our multi agency Surrey Young Carers Strategy Group and regular feedback will be given to young carers.

It is also hoped that each organisation that signs up to support this Strategy will develop its own set of complementary priorities/ actions so that young carers needs are recognised and supported across the whole system.
What Young Carers said

More help for my mummy

Less stress, more time

I wish I could just talk

The same group of people helping my mum

I wish mental health didn't exist

I wish I had more time alone with my family while somebody looked after my sister

Not having to fight for everything

Ask and listen to me
Make disability forms and process more easier and less stressfull

For teachers to listen and cut some slack. Also to help.

I just want people to understand

I wish GP’s would see me as a young carer

I wish I could have more time for myself. Also doing things when I want to do them

I would like professionals to believe what I say

School could understand what it’s like to be a young carer
Examples of Pledges from Professionals

To help make the NHS listen better. Epsom general and GP’s

I will ensure that our staff become young carer aware and do the e-learning package

I promise to treat young carers as individuals

I will always focus on the views of young carers and not make assumptions over what they want or need

Raise awareness of young carers and help them be their own young person

I pledge to think about support to siblings when commissioning services for children and young people with disabilities

To make sure Surrey Downs CCG is doing it’s bit

I promise to listen to you

I promise to listen to you

I promise to raise awareness of young carers needs amongst GP’s and hospital staff
I promise to raise awareness of young carers in the teams I manage and ensure young carers' needs are not missed in mental health.

I will make sure I always remember young carers in all training I deliver.

I pledge to ensure that the emotional and mental health needs of young carers and priorities are met.

I will take the time to explain things to them so they understand.

I promise to take your story and requests to the GP's and pharmacists in Surrey Health.

To ensure I identify young carers within the household and invite to meetings as appropriate.

I will offer to run young carer drop in regularly within adult social care.

I will ensure that staff think of adult referral as more family referral. Focus on all family members.

I promise to learn more about young carers in Elmbridge and work to increase their support.

I will offer to run young carer drop in regularly within adult social care.

I pledge to FIGHT for funding for young carers services across Surrey.
Young Carer Guardian Angels

Surrey Young Carers Forum, wanted a way of identifying professionals who “would be there to help and support us and our families”. The name ‘ambassador’ or ‘young carer lead’ didn’t really appeal to us. Both names sounded like there would be lots of extra work to do! So, we came up with the guardian angel concept.

The idea behind this is that an angel is assigned to protect, guide and watch over a particular group or person. In this case, it's young carers.

When you all made your pledge, you were given an angel pin. This shows that you have become one of Surrey Young Carers' guardian angels.

When you promise in your job to look after us and our families, you'll become one of our guardian angels. You'll watch out for us in your everyday working life and always try to do your best for us.

To ask about becoming a Young Carers Guardian Angel phone 01483 568269
Young Carers Action Plan: “Our to do lists”

Our strategy is based on the national guidelines “Making it Real for Young Carers”. Our action plan is designed to turn this into action in Surrey and is divided into six themes:

• Information and advice - having the information I need, when I need it
• Active and supportive communities - help to keep in touch with friends, maintain family relationships and join in activities in the place they live
• Flexible and integrated support - my support, my own way
• Workforce - my support staff
• Risk enablement - feeling in control and safe
• Personal Budgets and self funding - my money

Each section has a “to do list” that highlights some of the things young carers have said are most important to them. The “to do list” identifies actions to build on existing support. The Surrey Young Carers’ Strategy Group will regularly monitor progress on these issues and give feedback to young carers through the Surrey Young Carers Forum.

Each organisation that signs up to support the strategy will also be asked to make some commitments to improve their response to young carers. This should include agreeing their own “to do list”.
1. Information and Advice - having the information I need, when I need it

“At 11 years, I started managing mum’s medicine. No one spoke to me or told me about mum’s condition; no one explained the behaviour. The pharmacist didn’t speak to me when I picked up the prescription. Doctors don’t tell you what’s going on. They didn’t register me as a carer and didn’t explain what services would be available to me.”

- Talk to me, really listen and don’t make assumptions about what I do or don’t know. Give me a chance to ask questions.
- Be open about what’s going on with the person I care for. Don’t keep useful information too private.
- Don’t underestimate my expertise and knowledge. Ask my opinion. What is my experience?
- Make sure information is easily available at times that suit young people, like evenings and weekends. I should also be able to access information whilst at school or college e.g. via school library.
What we are we going to do to make things better for young carers?

1. Provide information that young carers want/need - ask them - don't assume what they want
2. Young carer friendly materials in accessible and age appropriate formats - offered by everyone who comes into contact with young carers (supported by awareness raising for professionals)
3. Age appropriate accessible information about new rights including young carers assessments
4. Not just leaflets - somebody to talk to help young carers access the right service
5. Right information at the right time, right away
6. Target at key areas (including schools, GP surgeries, Youth centres local information points)
7. Promote Young Carers issues during carers week (including the Young Carers awareness day)
8. Work with Pharmacists to ensure young carers have medicines explained to them
9. Information for young carers on school and college websites and Surrey Information Point
10. Include information about young carers on the Surge website created by Surrey young people, for Surrey young people: www.wearesurge.co.uk
11. Work to embed the provision of timely information, advice and guidance at pivotal stages of transition in school: e.g. year 11-12 and (pre) post 16 (Education, training and employment options)
12. Use local radio and papers to raise awareness of young carers' needs
13. Social media - better use for supporting young carers
2. Active and Supportive Communities - keeping friends, family and place

“I need time to be my mum’s daughter as well as her carer.”

• We need the chance to have fun as a family.
• I need time to be a young person and to look after myself. Young carers should have the same opportunities and expectations as their friends.
• It helps to meet other young people in similar situations and to have our own space to talk.
• Young carers should be helped to understand how the skills we have developed in caring can be useful in the world of work eg prioritisation, planning, sorting out and managing emergencies.
• We need support to think about the future and information on the opportunities available to us and how to access these.
Active and Supportive Communities – To do list

What we are we going to do to make things better for young carers?

1. Whole family approach is essential – Could be supported by regular family events
2. Promote Around the Family Support for them; identify responsibilities and referral routes
3. Peer events for peer support
4. Information days
5. PSHE lessons (Personal Social Health and Economic education) to include teaching on young carers’ issues
6. Work with school governors
7. Life skills to help young carers
8. Work with local community groups to raise awareness of young carers’ issues and explain how local groups can help
9. Directory of help available to community based organisations (should be on Surrey Information Point)
10. Libraries could have a role in information sharing
11. Identified advocates for young carers
12. Address young carers’ transport needs (in discussion with Services for Young People)
“Don’t promise what you cannot deliver, but deliver what you promise.”

3. Flexible integrated care and support - my support, my own way

- We need really good support for the person we care for so we are not relied on to do too much which affects our wellbeing and education.

- Arrange assessments, reviews at a time when I can be available so that you can hear my opinion and include me in planning support.

- Have one named person who makes all the arrangements and one phone number.

- We need support for the whole family and to think about the needs of the adult as a parent to support the young carer.

- We shouldn’t go from loads of support to nothing when we are 18. It’s almost impossible to think about having a life and caring at the same time with nothing.
Flexible integrated care and support – To do list

What we are we going to do to make things better for young carers?

1. Use new child/young person friendly young carers’ assessment forms (young carers have helped design these)
2. Ask Health and Well Being Board to promote a whole system message about support for young carers
3. Early Help (CAF) system needs to fully address young carers’ needs with professionals appropriately trained/briefed
4. Address young carers emotional well being (sometimes a gap in service provision for young carers)
5. “Transition” – help for 18 to 25 year olds - help in considering the future needs to start earlier
6. Clear “pathways” so people know who is responsible for what
7. Develop internal support in schools and colleges, including education support plans for young carers
8. Help for young carers to consider future options; about education, work and independent living - with support to acquire transferable skills to help young carers with this
9. Help with preparing CVs
10. Employer days to help young carers understand future options
11. Lead professionals to coordinate and talk to young carers
12. Promote Surrey Young Carers’ Guardian Angel Scheme
13. Extended opening times for services can help: make sure young carers know where these are in place
14. Increase awareness raising for schools encouraging them to link with other organisations
15. A named person essential (not just held on duty)
16. Be clear about need to support sibling young carers (now to be a legal duty)
17. Joint work between Surrey Young Carers and Surrey Domestic Abuse Service; promoting health relationships.
4. Workforce - my support staff

“It was scary (reference to being assessed by social services). We were scared we were going to be taken away. It felt like it was like a quiz and I might get the answers wrong. They should make you feel comfortable.”

- Don’t talk down to me, or at me, or ignore me
- Give us basic information about who’s who. I don’t get the jargon. Tell us who you are, what your role is and leave us with a card / contact details.
- Respect my expertise and knowledge and think about how to support me to express my views.
- Schools need to know you are a young carer. There should be an identified teacher for young carers.
- I need staff with good listening skills who get things sorted and know how to signpost to the right support and services.
Workforce – To do list

What we are we going to do to make things better for young carers?

1. Make opportunities for professionals and policy makers to hear direct from young carers
2. Avoid use of jargon – clear English – jargon busting group?
3. Inter agency working about who does what (clear protocols)
4. Joint working in Transition (when young carers are moving towards adulthood)
5. Make sure professionals understand young carers’ new rights and are aware of how to identify and support them
6. Multi agency training to make sure professionals understand young carers’ needs and listening to what they say
7. Improve training for staff in schools including during “inset days”
8. Information to explain who is who so young carers can understand who is dealing and why (could include use of photos of who is involved - youth justice have used a similar approach)
9. Learning from experience – sharing good practice and learning from case work
10. A wide range of staff need to identify with young carers - make sure this is reflected in job profiles
11. Establish a lead for young carers and their families in schools
12. Promote good practice tools in schools, such as young carers’ standard (Action for Carers/SYC recommendations)
5. Risk Enablement – Keeping me safe

“Young carers often don’t say about safety issues e.g. moving and handling or child protection matters for fear of being removed from the family home or the parent getting in trouble for not being able to look after the young carer.”

• I need a back-up plan to help me feel more secure about leaving to go out, or leaving to go to university and a support worker to contact in an emergency.

• As a young carer, I need to learn about first aid and taking care of my body when I am providing care.

• Be open with me about what’s going on with the person I care for.

• There are real issues about time for homework, I am busy doing other things like washing, making coffee for mum etc.
Risk Enablement - To do list

What we are doing to make things better for young carers?

1. Highlight need for support to prevent “inappropriate care” (a legal requirement from April 2015)
2. Make sure young carers get advice on keeping safe (and knowing what is “normal”)
3. Robust contingency plans
4. Well informed GPs and other local health staff
5. Schools being well informed and supportive
6. Don’t use confidentiality as a barrier – lack of information harms young carers
7. Skills training for young people in keeping safe
8. Support to avoid young carers being pressured into providing inappropriate care (more than is age appropriate)
9. Raising awareness with professionals about safeguarding issues for young carers
10. Support around mental /emotional wellbeing
11. Recognise need to support Young Carers in school bullying policies
6. Personal Budgets and Self-funding - my money

“I got a grand last summer for one year” “I got a new laptop. I could use the laptop for course work”

• We should have free travel and help with costs of activities. The cost of transport and high cost of some activities is a big problem.

• Make sure any money ear marked to support me is not just absorbed into the family budget.

• There can be worry and extra work for me and my family managing money and support arrangements. We need good information and good support.

• Help us understand how to manage money and budget.
Personal Budgets and Self-funding - To do list

What we are going to do to make things better for young carers?

1. Young carers' payments have been really helpful for some young carers so more use should be made of this system
2. More use of direct payments to support young carers in “transition” (transition to adulthood)
3. Provide age appropriate information about direct payments
4. Payment cards could be used – Could be pre paid store cards – or pre paid Visa/MasterCard
5. Managing money skills at school – what works/ what's available
6. Managing money particularly needs to be addressed as part of transition for young carers
7. Make sure young carers’ families get benefits advice where needed
Making It Real for Young Carers in Surrey is a three year plan to improve recognition and support for young carers. It is supported by a wide range of partners including Surrey County Council, Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations and the NHS in Surrey.

The views of young carers have been central to the development and particular thanks are due to members of the Surrey Young Carers’ Forum.