Update: NHS Young Carers Call to Action

Thursday 18th December 2014

The NHS Young Carers Call to Action

At the event on the 30th October 2014 at London Zoo young carers and young adult carers talked to NHS decision-makers. They told them about their lives and the impact of caring on their wellbeing and life opportunities.

Before the day began the group of organisations that planned the event were aiming to:

- Build more understanding of the specific issues that young carers and young adult carers say are a priority for action
- To get a commitment from health leaders that they understand and will act on young carers’ and young adult carers’ health and support needs
- To find out how the health sector will engage with the rules and requirements in new laws: the Care Act (2014) and Children’s and Families Act (2014)
- For those attending to commit to actions as a result of hearing the voices of young carers and young adult carers.

Read through the following pledges from NHS decision-makers. They are grouped depending on whether the pledge has been achieved, is nearly there or yet to happen. You can see what has been achieved and what is still on the horizon.
Pledges that have already been achieved:

Neil Churchill, Director of Patient Experience at NHS England has included young carers in a research study about improving experiences of mental Health Services.

Wendy Nicholson, Professional Officer for School and Community Nursing at the Department of Health has made sure there are now nearly 500 community champion nurses for carers and recently awarded a group of young carers awards for their contribution to shaping school nursing services and training.

Dame Philippa Russell, Chair of the Standing Commission on Carers has spoken to people about the event and at least 6 Carer Centres are now encouraging young carers and older carers to work together to improve carers identification and support in their area.

Neil Hunt, Chief Executive of the Royal College of GPs has written a blog that is sent to 50,000 GPs, telling them about the event and about young carers.

Angela Mkandla, Project Development Manager at NHS England has worked on the advice for those who decide on NHS local services so that it includes lots of comments on thinking about young carers. You can see the document here.

Eustace de Sousa, Deputy Head of Children, Young People and Families and Public Health England has shared the information from the event with colleagues. They have agreed to look at what more they could and should be doing around young carers as part of our work on older people. One of PHE’s national priorities is on dementia. They know that many young people support parents, and especially grandparents, and they will look at this further.

Dr Alan Cooklin, a Family Psychiatrist working with Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust has made an appointment with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to ask how we can begin to influence College policy so that adult psychiatrists recognise their responsibility to respond to young and children of parents with mental illness.
Angie Robinson, National Improvement Lead at NHSIQ has written a blog.

Paul Deemer, Head of Equality, Diversity and Human Rights at NHS Employers has written a blog and has offered a young carer the chance to shadow him at work.

**Some pledges that are nearly there:**

Anne Pearson, Director of Programmes at the Queen’s Nursing Institute is in the final stages of developing a resource for school nurses to help them support young carers to be launched at a Carers event in March 2015.

Laura Marshall, Head of Nursing and Quality at Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and co-deputy chair of the RCN’s Children and Young People: Continuing and Community Care Forum is making sure that young carers will be part of our patient / carer group at the CCG. This is set up but are just waiting for the next meeting date.

**What we still want to see happen:**

Dr Raj Bethapudi, GP Champion for Carers at the Royal College of GPs has pledged to write to GP colleagues on behalf of the RCGP.

Professor Juliet Beal (Director of Nursing: Quality of Improvement and Care at NHS England) has pledged to talk to nurses about the importance of supporting young carers. She also pledged to include young carers experiences in the Nursing and Midwifery Strategy for England’s Compassion in Practice.
Moira Fraser, Chief Executive (Interim) at Carers Trust has pledged to work towards the identification of all carers including young carers.

Chris Gush, Head of Clinical Innovation and Research at the Royal College of GP’s has pledged that the College’s young mental health work will recognise the needs of young carers and carers needs will be thought about when developing resources for GP’s.

Neil Hunt, Chief Executive at the Royal College of GPs has said he will ensure that young carers are considered along with the cared for at the centre of the House of Care Model.

Neil Churchill, Director of Patient Experience at NHS England has said he will consult and develop ideas on how they can extend young carers’ rights in health care.

Karen Gower, Deputy Director – Children and Young People’s Health and Wellbeing Team at the Department of Health has pledged to make sure that young carers’ need for mental health support is heard, loud and clear by the government’s children and young people’s mental health task force.

Xane Panayiotou, Children in Care Portfolio holder at the Department for Education has said he will drive forward changes in the law for young carers, introduced as part of the Children and Families Act to have in place draft regulations and guidance for young carers and professionals to comment on.

Judith Welikala, a journalist at the Health Service Journal has pledged to write a news story about young carers and the NHS.

Amy Baldwin, Policy Lead for Carers at the Department of Health has said she will spend time with young adult carers to understand the issues specific to them and listen to the voices of young adult carers when making decisions that impact on them.

Kat Kirby, Senior Communications Manager at NHS IQ has said she will promote the young carers agenda throughout NHS Improving Quality and
beyond, raising awareness of the event and encouraging colleagues in the NHS to be more aware of the issues faced by young carers, and encourage them to act as champions in driving change.

Wendy Nicholson, Professional Officer for School and Community Nursing at the Department of Health has said she will e-mail and tweet all our school, district and general practice nurses reminding them of the young carers' needs.

Sue Covill, Director of Employment Services at NHS Employers has said she will talk to her head of communications about how we can raise awareness of #thinkyoungcarer amongst NHS staff and their employers.