



## **Report on Young Carers Seminar of September 25<sup>th</sup> 2012. Facilitated by Care Alliance Ireland, Crosscare (Carer Support) and The Carers Association**

On Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of September Care Alliance Ireland, Crosscare Carer Support Programme and The Carers Association co-facilitated a morning seminar and information exchange on Young People with Caring Responsibilities entitled “Current Practice, Future Direction” in Clonliffe College, Clonliffe Road, Dublin 9. The seminar was partially funded by a local National Lottery Grant.

The Seminar was aimed at those who work with young people and their families in a range of settings with a view to gaining:

- A better understanding of issues facing young carers
- Connection with leading practitioners in this emerging area
- Enhanced collaboration between organisations
- Movement to set up and develop additional local young carer support projects

In attendance on the day were 60 people representing 40 agencies, the majority based in Dublin. A seminar pack was given to each participant, included in it were various research and practice resources to support those interested in developing support services for young carers, together with copies of the presentations made by the various speakers. Further hard copy resources were available at the venue for reference or for attendees to take away. See Appendix I for a full list of contents of the seminar pack.

The morning began with a presentation on young carers and child protection by Dr Geoffrey Shannon, Solicitor and Special Rapporteur for Child Protection. He spoke of the lack of a link between services, risk assessments, the approach to family supports and how changes to the constitution can help young carers.

Following a question and answer session Amanda Norris, Young Carer of the Year 2012 spoke of her experience of being a young carer in Ireland and how she came to

recognise herself as a young carer and receive support in this role. Members of the audience asked Amanda questions about her experience and how she became aware of the support available to her.

After the coffee break and opportunity to network Lee Anne Greville, Projects Executive from the Carers Association showed the seminar group the website [www.youngcarers.ie](http://www.youngcarers.ie) and highlighted interactive features such as an Agony Aunt Section, video and cartoons on the website. Gary Rutherford, Young Carers Outreach & Development Coordinator, The Carers Association gave a presentation on the work that he has done to date as the first dedicated Young Carers Outreach & Development Coordinator in Ireland including the toolkit that is currently being developed.

Mandy Bell, Development Lead and Locality Manager, Gloucestershire Young Carers gave her presentation on the how Gloucestershire Young Carers began and how they identify, engage and interact with young carers and what kind of supports they offer them.

Liam O'Sullivan, Executive Director, Care Alliance Ireland spoke about the current European Young Carer Initiative, the National Carers Strategy and other service developments.

The seminar was concluded with a discussion with the panel on issues arising from the morning and information on other projects at different stages around the country.

### **Questions to Panel**

**(Mandy Bell, Amanda Norris, Gary Rutherford, Lee Anne Greville, Liam O'Sullivan, Nora Kirrane)**

1. How do we raise awareness in the school environment about young carers, what is the best starting point?

Response;

(AN) In her experience there was a youth service conference, which the whole school attended and everyone had the opportunity to say if they had a caring role.

(MB) It is essential to create an environment in the school that the teachers are aware of young carers and support them. In Gloucestershire they use a TLC card which allows the young carers to go to a centre if they are feeling stressed or upset. Posters with child appropriate terminology can also raise awareness. In

the UK part of the healthy school accreditation includes a section on young carers.

(NK) In Crosscare' experience we set up an awareness group with Crosscare, VEC and CDYSB to reach young carers three years ago. We began from a partnership perspective with VEC, CDVEC and now with CDYSB. A starting point could be to approach caring organisations that are at the coal face of caring.

2. If young carers are referred to a school what support is there available? How can we fill the gaps?

Response;

(GR) There are youth cafes but often there is no connection to young carers supports. Professionals being made aware of what carers are and a link in to schools so that the professionals can reach them is a way to fill the gaps. To create mechanism where you know what to look out for and you can link in to different groups such a headstrong for example.

Comment;

Tanya McEntagart, CDYSB – Having awareness sessions for students and teachers, getting youth worker referrals and holding drop in sessions can help to reach young carers. Also when schools are filling in transfer forms from primary to secondary school for a student that they include details on any caring responsibilities so that the new school is aware of them. To have youth services and schools working together to support young carers.

3. Referring to Mandy Bells presentation, when children visit parents in hospital in Gloucestershire and are given an information pack, is someone available to help them process the information in it?

Response;

(MB) Juniors would have to have the parents consent before the pack is given to them as they are seen as not just a patient but a parent also. Gloucestershire Young Carers try to get staff to be able to support kids and use family rooms. They also have family empowerment workers that can help deal with any issues. Mandy also referred to Minds, Myths and Me on their website  
<http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/Order%20form.pdf>

4. How do we find out about the services that are available to support Young Carers?

Response;

(GR) To identify and help young carers we need to look at the whole family to ensure buy in. Education Teams and home school community liaisons can help

identify young carers but there is currently no mechanism to find out what services are provided and who is doing what. We need to create a system so that there is more communication and connection between services so that once a young carer is identified there is the support there to follow up.

(MB) It is a chicken and egg situation in that without identification it is hard to develop support, but we need support to offer young carers once they have been identified.

Comment;

Young Carers have to become part of the core training at the HSE

In considering state services, support from young carers shouldn't be factored in for example – home help is not required as she has a daughter that helps her.

By identifying the parents disability and contacting the disability organisation there could be a support worker that could help. Also by contacting the Citizens Information Board about designated disability advocates that can look for support for the family thus taking this pressure off the young carer.

Nora Kirrane – If groups want to look at issues and contact Care Alliance, Crosscare or The Carers Association with ideas or suggestions on what can be done next to support young carers it would be most welcome.

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## Appendix I – Seminar Pack Contents



# Seminar & Information Exchange on Young People with Caring Responsibilities

September 25<sup>th</sup> 2012

### Pack Contents

- Seminar Programme
- List of Participants - Names and Organisation
- Presentation by Mandy Bell , Gloucestershire Young Carers
  
- Research and Practice Resources;
  - Page 45 – CSO Census 2011 Preliminary Data
  - Children’s Society – June e Bulletin
  
- Care Alliance Ireland – About Us
- Crosscare (Carer Support)- Description of Services flyer
- Carers Week Pen and Trolley Coin Holder
- Evaluation Form