



## Willow Young Carers Service

### Guidance on Referral

#### Who are we?

Willow has been supporting young carers in Leeds since 1994. We are a voluntary service run by one of UK's children's charity Barnardo's in partnership with Leeds City Council, Education Leeds and Connexions.

Our work is guided by Barnardo's vision that all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination. We are one of Barnardo's 16 projects that support young carers and their families. By providing emotional support and practical help we aim to make sure that young carers do not lose out on their childhood.

#### Who are young carers?

"Young carers are children and young persons *under 18* who provide or intend to provide care, assistance or support to another family member. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which *would usually be associated with an adult*. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a *need for care, support or supervision*"

(Becker, S. (2000) 'Young Carers' in Davies, M. (ed.) The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Social Work, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd p. 378.)

The caring responsibility can last for a short time or can go on for years. Some children help with intimate tasks such as washing, showering or toileting; and others take on domestic chores like cleaning, laundry and shopping, cooking or helping administer medication (*practical care*). Some also offer considerable emotional support to the person they are looking after (*emotional care*).

#### Criteria for referral

To meet eligibility for a service, children and young people must meet our definition of a young carer:

*"Young Carer is a child between the age of 5 – 17 who is affected by or responsible for someone close to them who has a physical or mental illness, impairment or disability."*

The young carer must live within the City of Leeds area.

At referral stage you will be asked to identify the ***caring responsibilities (practical and/or emotional)*** undertaken by the child or young person as well as ***the impact those responsibilities*** are having upon at least one of the following, their:

- physical/mental wellbeing
- education
- emotional and behavioural development
- identity
- family and social/peer relationships.

If the referral does not give detailed information on caring responsibilities and the impact on the child of those, the referrer will be asked to find out more about the young carer's situation and then re-refer to Willow.

The more detailed information you provide on ***page 3 of the Referral Form*** the more child centred your approach is. Finding out about the child's or young person's caring role could mean a lot for the family you are working with and it could be perceived as a support itself.

### **Who can refer?**

We accept referrals from ALL professionals and agencies (e.g. GPs, social workers, health workers, teachers, educational staff, community workers) as long as they complete the referral with the child or young person and their parent.

**Please answer all questions on the Referral Form and provide detailed information on the caring role! If the Referral Form is incomplete or the child's or young person's signature is missing we will NOT accept it and return it to you.**

*Parents, children and young people or family members can approach Willow directly by contacting us via letter, phone or e-mail.*

### **How can you speed up the process?**

The referral process may be accelerated by *sharing with us (with the agreement of the family) any recent 'Child in Need Assessment'* on the young carer as long as it clearly identifies the practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities and the impact of those on the child's life. You may choose to send a copy of the 'Child in Need Assessment' with a *covering letter* providing detailed information on the young caring role and its impact.

In such circumstances the assessment process will be shorter and the child or young person will be offered the relevant support sooner.

## Issues which should be referred to other agencies

Please note that Willow is a service specialised in young caring issues only. You may decide to refer the child or young person to another, more appropriate service. For example:

- If the child is under 5, contact the local Sure Start, Home Start or 0-16 Team.
- If the young person approaching his/her 18 birthday, contact Carers Leeds, local CMHT, Connexions or request a Carer Assessment from Adult Social Care.
- If you are concerned about the mental and physical wellbeing of a young carer, contact the GP or a CAMHS service like 0-16 Team and The Market Place.
- If the cared for person has alcohol or drug-related problems, contact BASE 10.
- If the family needs support to sort out their benefits, contact Leeds City Council Welfare Rights Unit or Citizen's Advice Bureau.
- **If you are concerned about a child's or young person's safety, make a Child Protection Referral to Children & Young People's Social Care!**
- If the family needs help with housing issues or adaptation, contact the Housing Department or the OT at Adult Social Care.
- If you concerned about the child's or young person's school attendance/performance, contact the Learning Mentor, Head of Year or the Attendance Improvement Officer.

**If you are not sure where and how to refer, please call us and we will be happy to advise you: ☎ 0113 240 8368**

## Where to send your completed referral?

✉ **Barnardo's Willow Young Carers Service  
c/o Anglers Social Club (basement)  
75a Stoney Rock Lane  
Burmantofts LEEDS LS9 7TB**

📠 **Fax: 0113 240 9113**