

# Islington Young Adult Carers Group



Respite Activity, Stomp! Feb 2007

## Progress report & discussion paper March 2007

Prepared by Andrew J. Richardson, Project Coordinator

*“It is good to have a group of carers coming together and having fun and being able to relax and let our hair down for once... [and being able] to feel young again.”*

Evaluation feedback from young adult carer, female, 22,  
carer for mother and father.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

8 March 2007

A message of support from Jeremy Corbyn,  
MP for Islington North

To Whom it May Concern

**Islington Young Adult Carers Group**

(c/- Family Welfare Association, 608 Holloway Rd, London, N19 3PH)

This innovative project has done excellent work in Islington in serving the needs of some 25 people who would otherwise not be getting any support. I have met with Andrew Richardson and some of the youngsters he has helped and these young carers are clearly tackling all of the difficulties that go with the transition into adulthood and the responsibilities that go with it. They seem to draw a great deal from the assistance offered by the group and having spent a lifetime caring for others, this seems the least we can offer them in return, at what is a particularly needy time in their life.

The project is just one year old and I visited it last summer and was impressed with the good work being done there.

I would hope that whatever can be done to assist this project will be done. I understand that it is the first of its kind in Islington, and possibly even London which makes it all the more special and valuable.

Jeremy Corbyn MP  
Islington North

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Respite Activity, Thorpe Park, July 2006

## 1. Acknowledgments

This project owes its existence to the generosity and unfailing support of several individuals. Without them, this project would not currently exist.

Sue Phillips, Ushma Mehta and Gaby Santacruz from *Islington Young Carers* have always sought to do what is best for the service users and have been a delight to work with. They have demonstrated a strong commitment to partnership work. Mary Rose Brady and Mark Stogdon from the *Family Welfare Association* are to be acknowledged for coming to the aid of the group by providing a new organisational home.

Bianca Kokkolas, Rosemary Lamport and Tanya Parr have demonstrated a strong commitment to the needs of young adult carers in Islington by working tirelessly to ensure that the group had a budget and a home. As a professional, I feel humbled by the trust and confidence afforded to me. Jackie Hollands is to be acknowledged for her role in supporting the group in its formative stages.

Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North, has made time in his hectic schedule to meet with the group members. I thank him for his commitment to the group and for being a vocal advocate for young adult carers in Islington. I also acknowledge the kind support of our sponsors and donors: *Richard Cloudesley's Charity*, *Glenys Henderson Productions* and *OneLifeLive*.

Working with young adult carers is a new area for services in Islington and therefore courage and daring was required from all those involved. On behalf of the group and the young adult carers of Islington I offer my sincere appreciation for all those that have supported the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group*.

Andrew J. Richardson  
Coordinator, *Islington Young Adult Carers Group*



**Education/employment opportunities  
OneLifeLive, Feb 2007**

## 2. Introduction

The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is a forum for emotional and social support, respite and information for young people aged 16-25. The group is open to all young adult carers in Islington, with a particular emphasis on young people caring for someone with a mental health problem and/or substance misuse. The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is also concerned with improving the mental health and wellbeing of its members, by seeking to enhance coping strategies, social networks and building leadership, self-confidence and self-esteem. The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is based at the *Family Welfare Association*, 608 Holloway Rd, Islington, London N19 3PH.

This document aims to provide a progress report about the extent to which the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is meeting its initial aims and objectives. This document will also seek to clearly establish the justification for continued targeted support for this client group and will make recommendations about future directions in policy and practice for working with young adult carers in Islington. Relevant research and policy guidelines will be drawn upon in an effort to frame this discussion and locate this project in its broader policy context. It is important to note that due to the protracted suspension of the project for some 4 months this document is presented as a “progress report and discussion paper”. A final report will be submitted when the allowed project period is reached. It is hoped that this report generates a discussion between key players about how best to progress this project. Please note that recommendations are intended to generate dialogue to arrive at the best possible arrangement for this group and its membership.

From its inception this project has always sought to be based on service user led and empowerment methodologies. Consistent with this approach, this document aims to prioritise the voices of service users, and it is intended that the expressed needs and aspirations of service users shall reverberate throughout this document. Service user evaluation forms a central part of this document and

informs the final conclusions and recommendations that I make regarding future directions of this project.



Respite Activity, Thorpe Park, July 2007

### **3. Project background**

In early 2006 *Islington Young Carers* (IYC) and *Islington Carers Forum* (ICF) commenced discussions about the establishment of a group to support carers between the ages of 16 – 25. At this time the two organisations developed a transition policy with the aim of facilitating the transition of service users from the *Islington Young Carers* into *Islington Carers Forum* when they turned 18. In May 2006 service users from both organisations who were between the ages of 16 – 25 were invited to a meeting to discuss their needs as young adult carers. The needs and views provided at this meeting confirmed the need to provide a new and age-appropriate service for such carers and the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* was thus established.

The group met on a monthly basis, with a worker from both ICF and the IYC present, until August 2006 at which time the ICF worker resigned from his position at ICF. The *London Borough of Islington* (LBI) and *Islington Primary Care Trust* (PCT) were keen to see the group continue and appealed to ICF to continue in the capacity as host organisation. ICF declined this invitation and eventually in late 2006 the project was relocated to the *Family Welfare Association* (FWA). Group meetings were suspended during this period and resumed in January 2007 with Andrew Richardson being employed on a freelance basis to coordinate the group. The PCT provided a small budget for the group, which is due to expire in early 2007.

The current format of the group comprises a monthly meeting/discussion or respite activity. The Project Coordinator manages all activities and administrative duties relating to the group. IYC provides a member of staff who attends all activities alongside the Project Coordinator.

#### 4. Project aims

- To improve the health and well being of young adult carers (aged 16-25) in Islington
- To facilitate the transition of young adult carers into adulthood and to assist in achieving independence and self-determination
- To actively target young adult carers who care for someone with mental health and/or substance misuse issues
- To encourage young adult carers to prioritise their own health and well being
- To equip young adult carers with advocacy and leadership skills, enabling them to take greater control of their own lives
- To encourage educational and recreational pursuits among young adult carers
- To provide an age-appropriate forum for respite, self-help and emotional support among group members
- To provide information about all services available to young adult carers in Islington that could support group members in managing their caring responsibilities

\*\*Please note that at its inception one of the key aims of the group was to facilitate the transition of service users from the *Islington Young Carers* to *Islington Carers Forum*. This aim has since been revised with a greater emphasis placed on facilitating transition into adulthood and providing information about all available services that could be of use to the group members. The aim of facilitating transition into a single adult service has since been viewed as too limiting in its scope.

## 5. Rationale

Young people are increasingly burdened by various social and economic demands. The transition from childhood to adulthood is a complex and challenging time. In the formative years of one's adult life the choices, expectations of others and confusion about identity and purpose can often be overwhelming. Alongside these demands, young adult carers have another dimension to grapple with- that of being a carer. Carers give so much to society yet they experience ill health, poverty and discrimination because they provide care. Carers of a person with a mental health problem and/or substance misuse are often victims of stigma and prejudice. Being both a young person and a carer can be a considerably challenging experience.

The plight of children providing care is increasingly recognised as something that requires an appropriate social care response. *Islington Young Carers'* existence is testimony to the increased recognition of young carers and it provides a vital service for its vulnerable client base. The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* seeks to build on the work of *Islington Young Carers*, by intervening at the point of transition into adulthood. The services of *Islington Young Carers* begin to be age-inappropriate for service users around the age of 16- reflecting the period of transition into adulthood. In addition, other carers organisations in Islington are equally age-inappropriate for this client group, with services largely targeted at, and benefiting older carers. The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* exists to fill this gap in services. There are currently only two carers projects working with this age group in the UK. The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is the only one of its kind in London.

There is a growing interest, albeit slowly, in the needs of young adult carers. The '*Carers Strategy for Islington*' observed that young carers experience "problems moving into adulthood, especially with finding work, their own home and establishing relationships" (Islington Social Services, 2003). The *Social Care Institute for Excellence* (SCIE) highlights challenges relating to employment and education.

Being a young carer, especially where personal and practical support is lacking, can affect elements of a child's transition to adulthood. The further / higher education and employment opportunities of young carers may also be adversely affected because this group are more likely to experience problems with school work and attendance. (SCIE Briefing, Feb 2005)

The *Princess Royal Trust for Carers* has provided a framework that is aligned to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, "Delivering Every Child Matters for Young Carers". This document highlights potential barriers young carers experience, some of which are relevant to young adult carers, including "young carers are not encouraged to continue further/higher education [and] reliance on the young person can persist into adulthood" (PRTC, 2006). The Every Child Matters outcomes are concerned with young people up to the age of 18. However, it is apparent that caring doesn't automatically cease at the age of 18. Indeed, the transition into adulthood can be described as a critical juncture for young carers.

Exclusion from the labour market and delayed moving out of home as a consequence of being a carer were the two key findings in a landmark study about the affects of being a young carer: "Growing up caring: Vulnerability and transition into adulthood- young carers' experiences" (Dearden & Becker, 1999). The research found that "although career and job choice were sometimes influenced by the skills gained through caring, for example a desire to enter the 'caring professions', they were often restricted by a lack of formal qualifications as a result of missed school and poor educational performance" (Dearden & Becker, 1999). This finding suggests that young adult carers may need increased support to equip them with the skills and qualifications necessary to enter the labour market. Moving out of home is a key part of becoming an adult. In the context of caring, this can seem impossible to achieve. In addition, the risks of inadequate support during this period of transition were highlighted in the study: "where a parent had a severe and enduring mental health problem, some young people reached crisis point and left home prematurely, sometimes to be taken

into care” (Dearden & Becker, 1999). What this suggests is that young adult carers may need greater support in developing a plan to leave the family home to minimise the risks of leaving prematurely and without adequate support.

The available research confirms that young adult carers are an ‘at-risk group’, who are vulnerable to mental and physical ill-health. This fact establishes the need for a project that is concerned with early intervention for young adult carers: to encourage them to have concern for their own health and wellbeing, to provide them with choices about their future; to facilitate moving out of home; to encourage and support educational pursuits and the formation of relationships.

Young adult carers are less likely to access generalist adult services due to the services not being ‘young person friendly’ and/or providing age-inappropriate services. To meet the needs of this client group it is therefore necessary to provide targeted and age-appropriate support. The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* exists to meet this gap in services.

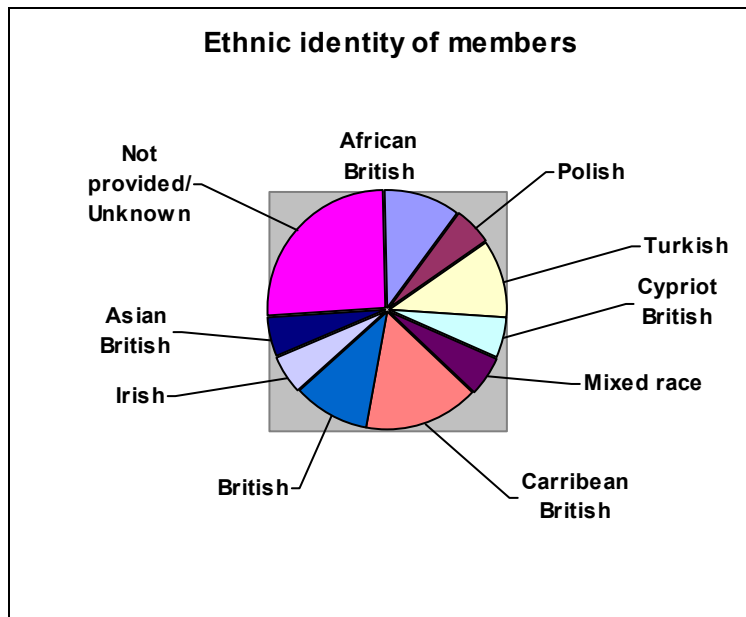
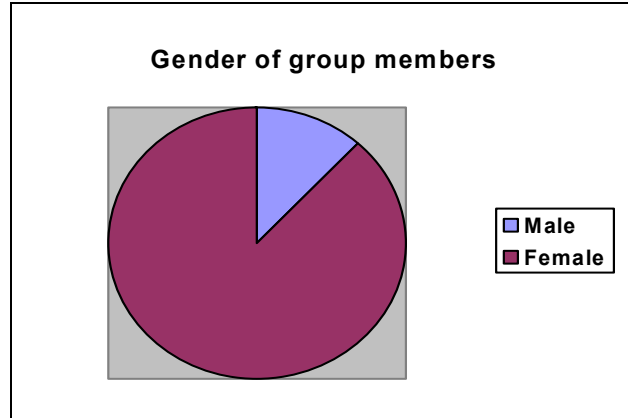
## 6. Funding source/s & budget

<b>BUDGET 2006/2007</b>	
<b>Income</b>	
Grant: PCT/LBI	+3500
Grant: Richard Cloudesly Charity	+250
<b>Total income</b>	<b>3750</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salary Dec/Jan	-500
Salary Feb	-500
<b>Total salary</b>	1000
Expenses: postage	-23
Expenses: transport	-41.40
Expenses: food/refreshments	-73.82
<b>Total expenses</b>	-138.22
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1138.22</b>
<b>In-kind donations</b>	
Stomp tickets x 10	NIL
OneLifeLive tickets	NIL
<b>Summary position March 2007</b>	<b>+2361.78</b>

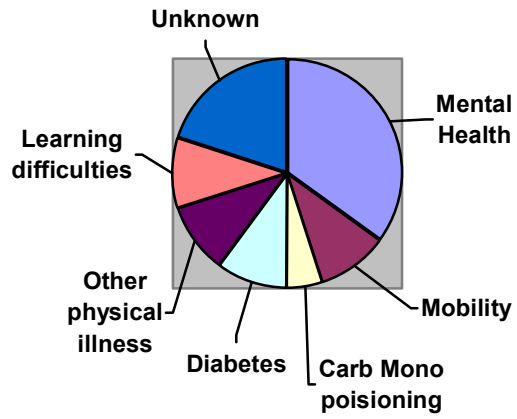
## 7. Observable measures & indicators

### (a) Membership demographics

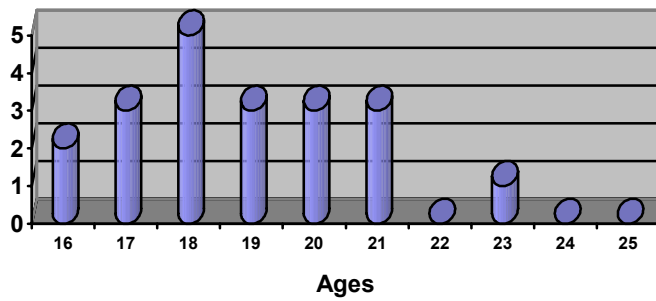
Total membership: 25



### Disability/illness of person cared for



### Age of group members



## **(b) Summary of activities**

Activities to date:

- 22/05/2006 Inaugural meeting, pizza and discussion group
- 26/06/2006 Q&A session with Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North
- 27/07/2006 Respite activity: Thorpe Park
- 29/01/2007 Pizza and discussion group meeting
- 28/02/2007 Respite activity: Stomp (dance/theatre)
- 04/03/2007 OneLifeLive- Career and life opportunities convention

Forthcoming:

- 26/03/2007 Group discussion with Connexions and City & Islington College Representatives (employment & training opportunities)
- First Aid training with *St John's Ambulance* commencing in April 2007
- Respite Activity: theme park or paint balling
- Pizza and discussion group meeting: "Moving out of home? Things to consider as a young adult carer".
- 06/07 Carers Week Party
- Respite Activity: Theatre trip
- Pizza and discussion group meeting: "Sometimes I am fed up with being a carer."
- Pizza and discussion group meeting: "I chose to be a carer". A discussion about the choices we make, and have, as carers.

\*\*Note: forthcoming activities have been determined by the group membership.

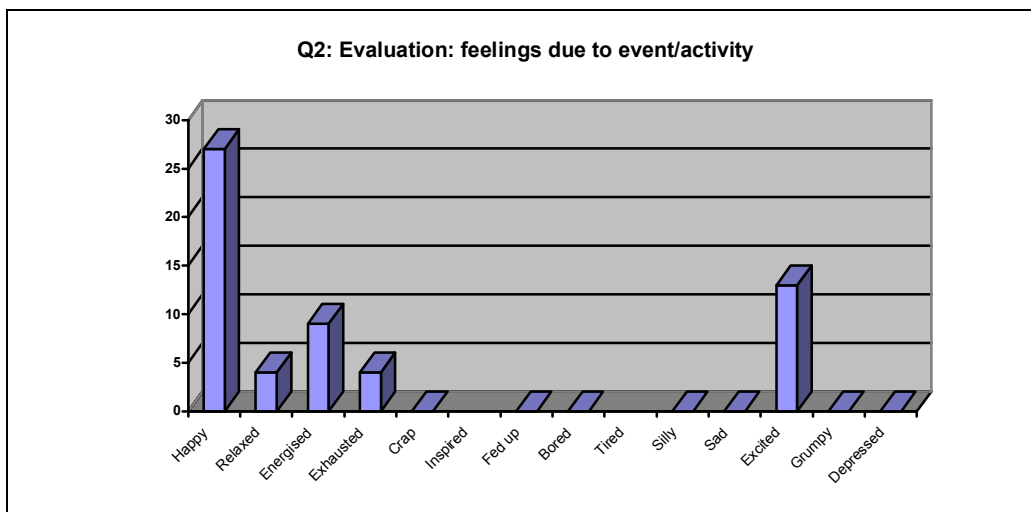
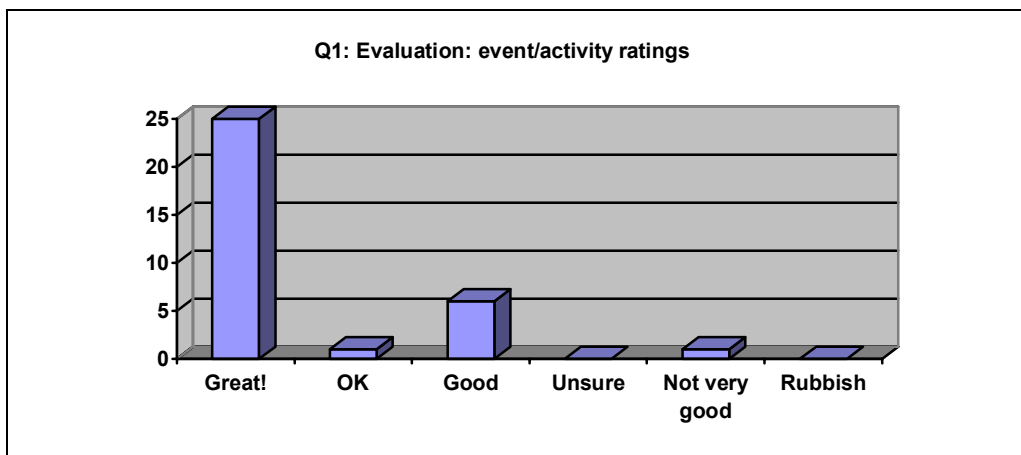
## 8. Service user evaluation

### (a) Evaluation forms

At the end of each meeting, activity or event a feedback form is circulated to participants. The following three questions feature in the feedback forms:

- Q1: How would you rate the event/activity?
- Q2: How did the event/activity make you feel? (Prompters, i.e. happy/sad provided)
- Q3: Please provide other comments/feedback.

What follows in the combined feedback from service users across all meetings and activities.



### Q3: Evaluation: Other comments/feedback

“We should go on more big trips like this: Alton towers, the beach, Drayton Manor, the zoo, paint-balling.” (Male, 22)

“It was brilliant and everyone was really friendly” (Female, 17)

“I think the trip to Thorpe Park was really fun and we were able to get to know each other more. The Young Adult Carers Group is really good, as we can meet other young people in similar situations.” (Female, 18)

“It is good to have a group of carers coming together and having fun and being able to relax and let our hair down for once... [and being able] to feel young again.” (Female, 22)

“I want a mixture of activities and focal points in the group”. (Female, 23)

“I think the YACG is really good and all the staff are really friendly. I really like the idea of having first aid training and I hope we have more fun trips together in the future”. (Female, 16)

“I enjoyed the event. I think it was fun and useful. I had a really good time”. (Female, 20)

“It was a very good event. I really enjoyed it” (Female, 21)

“Thank you so much for tonight (Stomp!) I really enjoyed myself. (Female, 17)

### **(b) In their own words**

In preparing this report a number of carers were asked to write a small statement in response to this question: “How does the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* help you?” Some of the responses now follow.

Female carer, aged 17

*“Islington young adult carers group is a very supportive group. Since I have joined I have really come out of my shell, I’m more open about things, I can talk to the group about any issues that are going on at home and they can do the same. Personally, as a carer I love to go out with the group because I can clear my head for a couple of hours and de-stress before I go back to doing my role as*

*a carer. I would love the group to still carry on because not only have the other carers helped me through tough times but so have the workers. Andrew has been a real star to me and he boosts the group up even more, he is funny/crazy and he makes everyone laugh, he is also a good person to talk to when you need advice. If the group goes then all us carers will be stuck and we will have no one to turn to and go back to square one were we all started off by looking for help.”*

Male carer, aged 21

*“The group is great fun. I really enjoy the activities like Thorpe Park. It’s good to have a break sometimes from being a carer. Nice to be around other people who are in the same situation.”*

Female carer, aged 22

*“A break from the every day responsibly of care for someone, being around people who understands my situation and who are young and around my age group. Being in the group make me have some time out for my self and makes me feel well. I spend my life caring for someone and I need to be cared for too. I would like the group to be continue, the reason being it has a positive affect on me and make me have some time out to distress myself instead of having to be responsible and stress all the time.”*

### **(c) Summary of evaluation**

The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is a service that is highly regarded by its membership. Consistently positive feedback has been received about events and activities. Members of the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* appear eager to emphasise the importance of the project and its positive affect on their lives. The evaluation data confirms that the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is a vital project that provides substantial benefit to its membership.

## 9. Results

What follows is a critical analysis of the results as they relate to the project aims. As previously mentioned the suspension of the group's activities has affected the extent to which conclusive reporting can occur, and therefore these results should be considered with such limitations in mind.

- **To improve the health and well being of young adult carers (aged 16-25) in Islington**

This aim is difficult to quantify, due to its expansive nature. However, the group is geared towards encouraging respite, providing a social support network and promoting self-care and self-regard. From a psychosocial perspective, such things contribute to improvements in health and wellbeing. The membership statistics suggest that a significant number of young adult carers are being reached with strong potential for membership growth. In addition, evaluation data suggests very positive experiences of the group from its members. Therefore, we can broadly infer that, the health and wellbeing of young adult carers in Islington who participate in the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* has improved since the advent of this project.

- **To facilitate the transition of young adult carers into adulthood and to assist in achieving independence and self-determination**

The philosophy that underpins the activities and conduct of the group is that of treating the membership as adults. This approach appears to have facilitated rapport building with the membership. Improvements in confidence and self-esteem have also been observed in members who have been encouraged to take on leadership roles.

The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* seeks to give its members choices that they have otherwise been deprived of due to being a carer. The group meeting that occurred with Jeremy Corbyn MP largely centred on barriers to housing and

moving out of home. It became clear at this meeting that moving out of home was a key developmental task for many group members that was more complex and challenging to achieve due to caring responsibilities. A number of people followed up with Jeremy Corbyn after this meeting occurred. The *OneLifeLive* conference also provided an opportunity for life choices to be explored, thus promoting independence and self-determination.

- **To actively target young adult carers who care for someone with mental health and/or substance misuse issues**

The membership demographic data demonstrates that a large number of carers of someone with a mental health problem have been reached. Substance misuse issues may have not been recorded on the monitoring form due to fear of disclosure.

- **To encourage young adult carers to prioritise their own health and well being**

The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* seeks to give options and choices to young adult carers. The group seeks to normalise the feelings of resentment and guilt that often accompany being a carer. Directly and indirectly the message given to group members is that it is both legitimate and necessary to prioritise their own health and well-being.

- **To equip young adult carers with advocacy and leadership skills, enabling them to take greater control of their own lives**

Forthcoming training programs will seek to address this aim. Leadership skills are promoted in the group by virtue of the service user led approach. The approach of the workers involved in this project is to have a role of 'facilitator', not 'leader'.

- **To encourage educational and recreational pursuits among young adult carers**

The *OneLifeLive* event provided information about educational opportunities. The forthcoming *Connexions/City & Islington College* event regarding employment and training opportunities will provide information and advice from key professionals in the field. A further benefit of this event will be the establishment of partnerships with these organisations, whereby a designated contact will receive referrals from the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group*.

The group will be undertaking First Aid training commencing in April. This opportunity is provided by LBI via an 'In Kind' Section 106 agreement. This educational activity will provide the group with a qualification and an experience of professional training that they would not otherwise have access to.

Recreational pursuits are encouraged via the group respite activities.

- **To provide an age-appropriate forum for respite, self-help and emotional support among group members**

An age-appropriate forum is being provided to the group as evidenced by the kinds of activities undertaken and the attitude and conduct of the group facilitators. The trip to *Thorpe Park* and *Stomp!* were both respite ideas that the group itself determined. The group determines what food is to be eaten at meetings- more often than not pizza is preferred. The discussions and meetings are based on the expressed needs of the group. The service user led approach taken by the group facilitators ensures that the group is age-appropriate.

Respite activities are affirmed as legitimate by the group facilitators and presently the activities of the group alternate between a discussion/meeting and a respite activity.

The self-help and emotional support component of the program needs more time to develop. Rapport and trust are necessary preconditions of more therapeutic discussions that are slowly building among the group.

The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* provides respite and childcare arrangements to ensure that being a carer is not a barrier to accessing the group.

- **To provide information about all services available to young adult carers in Islington that could support group members in managing their caring responsibilities**

The meeting with Jeremy Corbyn MP for Islington North was concerned with what assistance can be provided by your local MP. The forthcoming education/training forum will provide information about the *Connexions* service and *City & Islington College*. The group are aware that there is a designated worker at *Islington Carers Forum* who they can be referred to for individual casework. Further forums and workshops that involve other services in Islington will be arranged in the future according to the needs and interests of group members.

## **10. SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- Innovation
- Service user led
- Concerned with early intervention
- Consistently positive feedback from service users
- Generally recognised in sector as a valuable project
- Positive feedback and evaluation from service users
- Diversity of age and ethnicity of membership
- A large proportion of group are mental health carers
- Value for money- maximum outcomes from small budget

### **Weaknesses**

- Insecure funding base
- No fixed organisation auspice
- Inability to meet at more regular intervals due to staffing limitations
- Project coordination reliant on single individual- sustainability concerns
- Not presently able to have group members come to office and help coordinate group themselves

### **Opportunities**

- Community sympathy for the plight of young carers is strong- sponsorship and in-kind donations are easier to acquire in this context
- Innovative nature of project means it could be professionally evaluated and promoted as a model for other agencies
- More regular meetings would enhance group member's experience
- Could attend youth conferences and carers events with group members- thus helping to raise the profile of this largely hidden sub-group of carers

## **Threats**

- Cessation of funding from LBI/PCT
- Relocation of the group again

## **11. Future directions**

This document has established the critical need for this vital project and has outlined the consistently positive feedback from service users. Despite some considerable challenges and constraints, a great deal has been achieved, owing largely to the enthusiasm and commitment of the service users. The arrangement with the *Family Welfare Association* and the current budget is due to soon expire. Based on the project results and the evaluation this project is clearly meeting its aims and therefore should be funded to continue and expand.

### **FWA: The logical home**

The *Family Welfare Association* is the most appropriate venue to house the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group*. *Islington Young Carers*, housed at FWA, provides a continuous stream of referrals into the *Young Adult Carers Group* and having both an environment and staff members who are familiar is advantageous in terms of encouraging new members to access the group. The principal activities of the *Young Adult Carers Group*, that is, facilitating transition into adulthood, should rightly be considered an extension of the work already undertaken by *Islington Young Carers*. In addition, research suggests that as many of the issues young adult carers face have arisen during their young carer role, they are more likely to identify with young carers services (Carers NSW, 2004). This is particularly the case where adult services are framed with older people in mind. While the initial move from ICF to FWA did cause considerable disruption to the group, it has proven to be fortuitous, with the group's new home proving both logical and beneficial. For all these reasons the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* should continue to be based alongside *Islington Young Carers* at the *Family Welfare Association*.

### **Permanent is preferable**

The current arrangement, that is, of a freelance worker coordinating the group, was conceived as a measure to allow the group to continue during its transition

from ICF. LBI and the PCT are to be commended for coming to the aid of the group during this difficult period and on balance, this arrangement has been positive. However, the sustainability of the arrangement and the resultant affect on the continuity of the group is a concern. For this reason, it would be preferable to have a permanent half time worker based at FWA coordinating this project. In this way greater engagement with service users could occur- and they could be encouraged to take on group coordination activities alongside the project coordinator in an office context. The group has potential to expand considerably- targeting other agencies, schools, etc as referral sources.

In recommending a permanent post, I add the following suggestions, which I make based on my role as freelance project coordinator. The role of the *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* project coordinator should be focused on 3 key areas- 1: Coordinating the activities of the group, 2: Raising the profile of the group among other agencies and in the community, 3: Procuring sponsorship and in-kind donations for group respite activities. As has previously been mentioned, there is considerable community support for the plight of young carers and young adult carers. Sponsorship and in-kind donations are easier to acquire in this context. Indeed, the group has already benefited from in-kind donations to go to the theatre and attend special events. With this in mind, I would suggest that it is less pressing to have a large activities budget and more pressing to have a half time worker coordinating the project at FWA.

The project development worker should not engage in casework. This should be referred to appropriate agencies- *Islington People's Rights, Islington Carers Forum, Social Services*. My concern is that the development aspect of the post could be sidelined by individual casework and this should be avoided.

In the event that funding cannot be secured for a permanent post from the local authority, other funding possibilities could be explored. A meeting could be convened with all key players invited to attend to discuss the future of this project and funding possibilities.

## **Volunteer solution**

At present it is not possible to meet more frequently than once a month. This is due to the heavy workload of the staff at *Islington Young Carers* and the need to have two members of staff present at all meetings/events. The group has expressed a desire to meet more regularly and the project coordinator believes that fortnightly meetings would be preferable. At present the format alternates between a respite activity (i.e. Stomp!) and a discussion group. The frequency of meetings is inadequate given the needs and issues presented herein relating to transition issues into adulthood.

A volunteer could be engaged to support the Project Coordinator and to relieve pressure on the *Islington Young Carers* staff. The volunteer would need to be CRB checked, along with other organisational requirements, and would be coached by the Project Coordinator in co-facilitation and empowerment methodologies. The group members would be involved in determining if a prospective volunteer is suitable for the group.

With adequate planning the use of a volunteer would have minimal budgetary implications, whilst allowing the group to grow and develop. The use of volunteers combined with the successful efforts that have already been made in terms of sponsorship, in-kind donations and grants highlight the project's innovative edge and represents value for money for funders.

## **Publicity and promotion**

The *Islington Young Adult Carers Group* is a relatively new project and it is likely that most social care organisations in Islington are unaware of its existence. For this reason the group's profile needs to be raised as a priority. Efforts should be made to have the group included in the next *Carer's Strategy* for Islington. A promotional flyer could be developed and disseminated to appropriate agencies. A website could also be used to promote the group. It may be preferable to draw on group members' skills and experience to publicise the group more widely.

Training could be provided to group members in public speaking and then they could visit Social Work teams and voluntary organisations in Islington to promote the group.

A publication made by, and for the group could be used as both a team building and empowerment exercise and could prove a useful tool in promoting the group to other young adult carers and other agencies in Islington. It could also provide a directory of services available to support young adult carers in Islington. Funding will need to be sourced to develop this publication.

## 12. Recommendations

1. Procure funds to employ a half time *Young Adult Carers Project Development Worker* to coordinate this project at the *Family Welfare Association*.
2. Engage a volunteer youth worker to assist the group.
3. Increase the frequency of meetings and events.
4. Develop a publicity and promotions strategy
5. Seek to have the needs of young adult carers included in the next *Carers Strategy* for Islington.
6. Explore funding opportunities for the development of a publication for the group members.
7. Explore opportunities for training for group members. Training priorities highlighted by the group include: first aid training, public speaking, and workshops about self-esteem, assertiveness, and life skills.

### 13. References

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**Respite Activity, Thorpe Park, July 2006**