

The Department of Health and Social Care (request via ADASS Policy Network)

Case Study in preparation for the launch of the **Carers Action Plan**

Name

Katie

The local authority involved

Liverpool

Background

Katie is aged 24 and until very recently she lived with her mother and father. Katie's mother is in her early 60's and has a diagnosis of vascular dementia, she was diagnosed in 2012, this coincided with her first year at university. Katie found that the course that she was doing was not right for her and she found herself taking weeks off at a time to care for her mother. Katie explained that at the time it did not feel like a big responsibility. Katie planned to enrol onto another course however as she began to spend more time at home and her mother's health deteriorated to the point where she required 24 hour care, she felt that she could not resume her education. It was at this point that Katie became her mother's full time carer. Katie's father works full time and her siblings are all older than her and had families of their own, therefore Katie felt that she was the only person who could provide care for her mum.

Katie says that during this period many of her friendships broke down because she was always at home and could not make plans to spend time away from caring. Katie's emotional health and wellbeing declined rapidly, she describes this period as a dark time in her life.

What innovative practice the carer has benefitted from

Katie's mother was assessed by an adult social worker at Liverpool City Council, who arranged for her mother to attend a day centre two days per week giving Katie some respite. Katie used this time to do some volunteering in a local primary school. Shortly after, Katie was referred

to Barnardo's Action with Young Carers¹ where she was supported to complete a statutory carers assessment and support plan. Katie was asked about her aspirations for the future and she shared that she would like to go back to university and in the longer term future move out of her family home, however felt that this was not possible unless the support offered to her mother changed. Katie felt that she was not always included in decisions made about her mother.

How the carer benefitted/what difference it made to the carer's outcomes

Through Katie's mother's social worker and Barnardo's young adult carers worker working jointly Katie's mother's package of care offered by the local authority was increased meaning that Katie could go back to university. Katie felt listened to. Katie explains that things were still tough as she was still caring for her mother, but her role significantly reduced and she was able to manage her own life much more easily as she felt the support for her mother worked for her. As Katie's mother's health changed, her package of support was reviewed and adjusted meaning that Katie could juggle her studies alongside her caring role, she felt much more positive about her future.

Four years on from Katie and her family first accessing support, Katie has moved out of her family home and is living with her partner. Katie has just finished her English Literature degree at Edgehill University and she is planning to undertake a Masters in Psychology next year as Katie plans to train as a Clinical Psychologist.

Katie's caring responsibilities have decreased since her last support plan review. Katie now supports her mum one day of a weekend if her dad "needs her". This is not every weekend. Katie explained that since taking a step back from her caring role, her relationship with her dad and siblings has improved. Katie feels like a family member again, as oppose to her mum's carer.

Katie explained that she feels positive about the future, much more relaxed and less stressed

¹ Barnardo's Action With Young Carers is commissioned to ensure that young carers and young adult carers up to the age of 25 are identified and can receive a carers assessment under the statutory duty of Liverpool City Council.