

Helen Leadbitter MBE

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Professional summary and supporting statement:

I have over 20 years' experience working in the charity and not for profit sector. I am an experienced programme development and delivery manager and Director of National Programmes and Innovation. Responsible for high profile local and national programmes of work driving change for vulnerable children and young people; I have specialist knowledge of the young carers sector both nationally across England and internationally. I have developed, delivered and evaluated both national and local strategic and operational programmes driving change. Combining strategic thinking with programme delivery; ensuring the voices and opinions of young people are the foundation of programme and business development and are the drivers of systemic impact and policy change.

I have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the Health and Social care policy and practice landscape, including in relation to children whose parents have a mental illness, and families where there are young carers. I have shaped and modelled services and campaigns, working with partners across the sector and within the UK Government influencing national and local decision makers across England. Including the duties outlined in the Care Act 2014, the Children and families Act 2014, the Health and Care Act 2022. Having worked in the sector for over 20 years to ensure a collective voice influences effective change for vulnerable families.

My skills are grounded in social work, with extensive knowledge of the health and social care landscape and at both local and national level and when working with local partner organisations. I have expertise and knowledge of Parliamentary business and the mechanisms involved in developing legislation, policy and statutory guidance. I have built and managed trusted relationships with Government Departments to influence change; including the Department of Health and Social Care Carers Policy Team and informed the response to Covid Guidelines and the Department for Education to influence the inclusion of young carers in the national school census in 2023. I have worked with the Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Community Covenant to ensure recognition of young carers were included in the review of the needs of UK Armed Forces Families and Veterans. I have built and managed relationships with a number of Government All Party Parliamentary Groups to influence their thinking and priorities regarding unpaid carers; including the APPGs for HIV / AIDS, Carers, young carers and young adult carers, APPG for Children and Refugee and Migrant families. This has ensured I have experience and expertise and knowledge of Parliamentary ways of working and the mechanisms involved in developing legislation, policy and statutory guidance.

I have published research, policy and practice guidelines and influenced both national and regional development of multi-sector services. I hold personal positions and membership on a number of national strategic groups; including the Department of Health and Social Care Unpaid Carers Strategic Oversight Group, NHS England's Commitment to Carers Oversight Group, the Associate Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) regional carers oversight group, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Carers and the APPG young carers and young adult carers.

I am passionate about the voices of children and their families driving programme development, policy and systems change and increasing their visibility within the systems. I have lead on the design and delivery of effective and engaging participation activities recognising young people and their families are the experts in their own lives and need to be engaged in influencing and informed about decisions which affect them. For 20 years I lead on the planning and safe delivery of the 'Voice Zone' activities at the National Young Carers Festival in England organised in partnership by The Children's Society and YMCA Fairthorne Group in order to engage the voices of young carers in policy change; including the rights and duties in the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.

I have developed successful programmes of work tackling the root causes of issues relating to adverse childhood experiences. Including isolation, sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, county lines, coercion and grooming. Responsible for the safeguarding of children and implementing safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies. I have published Government endorsed documents and resources, enabling practitioners to effectively identify the multiple vulnerabilities of young carers and implement effective whole family, whole council, multi-agency support.

I developed the national Young Carers in Schools Programme delivered in partnership by Carers Trust and The Children's Society. Which provides schools with the tools and resources they need to embed a whole school approach to recognising, understanding and meeting the needs of young carers. To date this programme has engaged with over 1000 schools, including engagement with Multi-Academy Trusts, private schools, Local Authority funded schools. Pupil Referral Units, Colleges and further and higher education institutions, across England who are showing increased positive outcomes for the young carers, their peers and the school staff.

I'm an experienced and approachable team player and I have extensive experience of managing teams and individuals, project and programme management. I have experience of managing conflict within teams, capability and disciplinary processes as well as professional development and enabling multi-disciplinary teams to thrive. I have developed opportunities for volunteers including management and co-ordination and safe record keeping. I have managed social work students from the Universities of Winchester, Southampton and Portsmouth and provided Practice Education supervision, International fellows on placement from Japan and Kenya and supported young carers themselves into internship and apprenticeship opportunities. I have previously been commissioned by the International Federation of Social Work and Commonwealth Organisation of Social Work to deliver training, consultancy and

development of services overseas regarding the needs of young carers internationally in Kenya and East Africa, Canada, Japan and Europe.

I have been responsible for writing the Business Plans for individual programmes of work as well as writing the organisational strategy for a large national charity working across England and Wales as part of the Senior Leadership Team. Alongside this I wrote the organisational Anti-Racist statement of intent and commitment to be an inclusive organisation.

I have experience of budget setting and financial management of programmes; including large national programmes with small and restricted budgets and regional programmes holding multiple budgets and contracts of work. I have experience of successful bid writing for both smaller and large multi-million funds and understand commissioning cycles and processes. Managing relationships with commissioning managers and reporting including outcomes and finance management.

I have excellent interpersonal skills and self-awareness and am approachable. I am able to build strong and trusted relationships with a range of stakeholders. I am able to build inclusive relationships with young people, carers and families accessing support services and at community events and outreach, including the particularly vulnerable to enable effective engagement. I have experience of building and maintaining long-term relationships and alliances with Commissioners, multi-agency sector organisations and partners. Experience of working with statutory agencies including NHS Englands regional carers leads, ICS's (previously CCG's), Local authority Adults and Childrens Services, Health Providers, Schools and Education settings including further and higher education and partnership working with other charities.

I have excellent IT skills including using databases, excel, Publisher and Powerpoint, Microsoft Teams and Zoom for meeting and training, Mosaic and Lamplight case management system, website maintenance, development and content writing and Cascade people management and personnel systems, eCRM systems, finance management and budgeting tools including MyFinance and MyBudget.

I am a self-starter, I am able to juggle busy workloads and work at pace, I am able to recognize and respond to opportunities as they appear and plan well to manage conflicting priorities. Using organisational planning tools such as Gantt charts, timelines and managing teams diaries and events calendars. I am able to work flexibly across the week and travel to ensure attendance at all required events and meetings and opportunities to develop services and build strong partnerships. I have the ability to manage own workload, am self-motivating and overall passionate about supporting and developing support and services and influencing change for children and families where there are young carers.

Work History Curriculum Vitae

Independent Consultant and Director Young Carers Initiative 02/2023 - Current

Founded the National Young Carers Initiative an Independent Ltd Company providing consultancy to influence policy and practice for young carers and their families. Have been commissioned to inform the national inquiry into Young Carers Life Chances.

Hampshire Young Carers Alliance Strategic Lead 04/2023 – Current

Co-ordinating the 10 young carers services working across Hampshire to collaborate in partnership to share learning, apply for major grants to deliver and develop young carers programmes across the County. To inform the Hampshire County Council young carers and young adult carers strategy.

Director National Programmes and Innovation, 08/2022 – 02/2023

The Children's Society – National

An Interim Director position in the organisational senior leadership team. A strategic leader directing the systemic impact function of the organisation; including the Policy team consisting of Policy Officers influencing policy change in England and Wales. Leading and managing the Research and Evaluation team of The Children's Society as well as the Service Design and Systems Change functions. Developing and enabling connections across and beyond the organisation to create systemic change for young people. Responsible for shaping the organisational policy strategy and informing the public affairs strategy as a member of the leadership team. Responsible for shaping and implementing an impact measurement framework that was cross-cutting to measure the charity's outcomes of Policy Influencing, Systems Change and Practice delivery of programmes across England and Wales and including a focus upon the Social Return of Investment of the organisational programmes of work. A pivotal element of the role included the safe delivery of The Childrens Societys national programmes of work support the most vulnerable children in our society. Ensuring programmes of delivery were informing well evidenced policy influencing and combining strategic thinking with service delivery. Working directly with children and their families and in close partnership with professionals and strategic partner organisations. Nurturing strategic relationships with potential partnerships, internal and external stakeholders whilst being accountable to the Executive Director for Youth Impact. Promoting and delivering the highest standards of practice including safeguarding as well as regional and national systems change. Providing good financial and commercial acumen to ensure financial sustainability of the programmes. Writing and securing successful funding bids to both sustain and grow the support programmes for children and young people and their families.

Head of Youth Practice Programmes, 11/2021 – 07/2022

The Childrens Society – Regional South West, North East and North West

Lead the development and delivery of outstanding practice models for disadvantaged young people and their families, seeking to improve the wellbeing of young people at an individual and systemic level, working in strong

collaboration with partners locally and nationally; and with young people, families and communities.

With a focus upon Business Planning, developing and sustaining services, including therapeutic wellbeing services, NHS commissioned mental health services, services designed to disrupt and respond to the impacts of exploitation upon young people and services responding to young people who regularly go missing from home or care.

With responsibility for supporting team and service managers in the South West - Torbay and Devon, the North East - Manchester and Cheshire and the North East - Newcastle, Bradford and Leeds, to build portfolios and respond to the safeguarding needs of vulnerable youth at risk. Including Business Development bid writing to secure and sustain funding from County Council, NHS, Lottery and other commissioners. Ensuring all commissioned services in the regions are both externally and internally evaluated.

Programme Manager and National Young Carers Lead, 04/2015 – 11/2021

The Childrens Society – National

Lead and manage, both strategically and operationally, national policy and campaigning programmes for young carers; ensuring high quality delivery of services. Delivering long term sustainable and strategic approach to offer core young carers provision nationally.

Formulating and delivering high profile training and conference events to share learning and developments within the sector and to build positive and influential relationships with key stakeholders, informed directly by children and young people and their families, in order to achieve improved and sustainable services. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Programme, Business Plans and paper trails, and being accountable for effective and well ordered administration. Taking into account the standards, policies and procedures of the organisation and representing the organisational mission, vision and values at the highest levels to drive change for unpaid carers and those they care for.

Effectively manage and develop all aspects of The Children's Society's Include Young Carers Programme, including safeguarding, health and safety and delivery of services. Delivering outcome targets in line with funders requirements.

Identifying public awareness opportunities to improve public understanding and positive attitudes towards young carers. Developing and managing marketing and media strategies for the programme, overseeing the development of promotional materials including digital and social media activities.

Researching and writing practice guidance for identifying and supporting young carers from particularly hidden groups; including black, minority ethnic and mixed heritage. Refugee and migrant families where there are young carers. Those affected by stigmatised illness including parental mental health, substance misuse including alcohol dependency, HIV. Young carers in Armed Forces families. Young Adult Carers and those in transition to adulthood. Those young carers often not recognised

as being young carers including those in the youth justice and youth offending system and those on the edge of care.

Young Carers Policy and Programme Development, 05/2003 – 04/2015

The Childrens Society – National

Developing policy and practice across England for young carers and their families. Ensuring policy development work to be grounded in the voices of young carers and informing tools for multi-agency practitioners to effectively identify and support vulnerable children and prevent them from taking on inappropriate caring responsibilities. Implementation of multi-agency, whole family, whole council approaches. This role included the writing and publication of Government funded and endorsed online resources such as the Young Carers Whole Family Pathway, Young Carers Know your Rights Pack, Refugee Family Carers Toolkit, Culturally Inclusive Practice Toolkit to enable services to ensure inclusivity in their identification and support to families. In addition this role included managing a number of national programmes developing services for young carers in families affected by stigmatised illness including HIV, Substance Misuse, Mental illness and poor mental health, Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seeking families affected by the impacts of forced migration, PTSD, War and Torture. Underpinning all of this work the voices and opinions of the young carers themselves were embedded through innovative and fun participation, consultation and engagement activities.

Youth Engagement Worker, 04/2002 – 04/2003

The Childrens Society – Portsmouth

Youth Worker for The Children's Society Rights and Participation Project in Portsmouth. Outreach and support work with children and young people at risk of offending or Not accessing Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Enabling young people to have their voices heard and participate in their local community. Setting up and running youth groups and youth clubs to engage young people in activities in the community.

Domiciliary Care Worker, 09/2000 – 09/2002

Excel Nursing Southampton

Domiciliary Home Care Worker for Excel Nursing in Southampton. Providing care at home for older people with frailty and people with intensive care and support needs related to a range of disabilities. Providing high quality and dignified care to those in need across Southampton which has a culturally diverse population and health demographics. Tasks ranged from light support and companionship, mobility support and personal care as well as end of life and dementia care.

Education

- **BA Hons Psychology with Education Studies, 09/1997 – 06/2000**

- **King Alfred College** - Winchester
- **MSc DIPSW** : Social Work Studies, 09/2000 – 06/2002 **University of Southampton**
- **Postgraduate Certificate** : Research Methodologies and Evaluation , 07/2006 – 07/2007 **University East London**
- **Certificate of Professional Education** : Leading systems change in a complex world. , 10/2022 – 12/2022 **Delta Europe: School of Systems Change** - Online Europe-wide - Pass / Course complete

Published tools and Resources

I have written the following resources published by The Children's Society

- The Whole Family Pathway: a resource to support practitioners in implement changes in legislation for young carers and their families
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022419_Whole-Family-Pathway_AW.pdf
- Supporting young carers and their families. An introductory guide for professionals: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/supporting-young-carers-and-their-families_0.pdf
- Shaping our Future: Improving assessment and support for young carers transition into adulthood
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/young-carer_transition_report.pdf
- Young Carers in Armed Forces Families: Hampshire and Wiltshire
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/young-carers-armed-forces-families.pdf
- The challenges of estimating the numbers of young carers and knowing how to meet their needs
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/theres-nobody-is-there.pdf
- Young Carers information for Health Care Professionals
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/young-carers-information-for-healthcare-professionals_0.pdf
- Identifying and supporting young carers in families affected by HIV
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/young-carers/families-affected-by-HIV

References

Previous employer and work-related references:

- Victoria Jones, Head of People Partnering The Children's Society:

Victoria.Jones@childrenssociety.org.uk

- Matthew Reed, Chief Executive Marie Curie:

matthew.reed@mariecurie.org.uk

- Dara de Burca, Director of Operations Alzheimers Society:

dara.deburca@alzheimers.org.uk