

Report of the Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny to be held on Wednesday 11th March 2021

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Subject:

YOUNG CARERS

Summary statement:

This report provides a requested update on the Scrutiny Committee recommendations made on 2nd September 2020, which were due on 6th January 2021 but deferred until 11th March 2021.

- (a) The success rate in getting Young Carers back to school following the Covid restrictions.
- (b) The success of the re-launch of the E-learning system.
- (c) The numbers of children who have become Young Carers as a result of COVID19 and how they are being supported.

The Young Carers Service is a commissioned service which meets the Council's statutory duty to provide an assessment for Young Carers, as well as providing other resources following assessment.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

Equality assessments – none.

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Portfolio:

Children and Families

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Young Carers Service is a jointly commissioned service with the CCG's which meets the Council's statutory duty to provide an assessment for Young Carers, as well as providing other resources following assessment.
- 1.2 **(a)** The success rate in getting young carers back into school has been good the Young Carers Service haven't had any families who haven't gone back into school, although some needed more support than other. The service is currently supporting approx. 70 young carers with the concerns they have about being in school. These are mostly about transferring the virus to loved ones at home or whilst they are in school worrying about their loved ones at home and how they are managing.
- 1.3 The service has had 50% more calls to adults than usual, this has been to reassure adults about the fears they have had about the virus and children going to school and the impact their worries were having on the children.
- 1.4 The service have not had to escalate any children for safeguarding reasons, they have continued to work with children who are already known to children's social care and this demand hasn't increased.
- 1.5 **(b)** The e learning is still struggling for staff across the District to find time to complete this. During April and May when schools closed there was a slight increase. The current licence ran out at the end of the year and we only had 89 out of 200 places taken up.
- 1.6 We had put the links to the e-learning on Bradford Schools On Line and circulated to Early Help and VCS staff on 5th November and we were hopeful that this would have generated an increase from 60. This approach seems to have been productive but only a further 29 people took up the training.**(more detail in 3.3)**
- 1.7 The service may buy another 200 licences for £2,500, however the lack of engagement does raise the question of the value of e learning, as many people agree to the concept and the thought of an e learning package generates interest and a good response when mentioned but people don't seem to then find the time to complete this. Carers Resource have been exploring other ways of informing people i.e. they recently delivered a bespoke training to 180 teacher training students which seems a far more effective way of engaging with people. We will continue to explore this with Carers Resource and look for other forums to deliver this. before we ask them to buy the licence. On line seminars have become more popular since covid.
- 1.8 **(c)** There hasn't been a significant Increase in the number of young carers because of covid 19. This is probably because statistically the evidence states Carers of any type, including Young Carers tend to be carers for a long time before they realise they have become young carers. There have been 53 new referrals in each Quarter since January 2020 so referrals remain static.

- 1.9 We also note it would be difficult for young carers to know about the Young Carers Service since March 2020 because usually Carers Resource would reach out to the general public in a variety of forums/ places none of which have been happening since the beginning of Covid.

2. BACKGROUND

The Children and Families Act 2014 states that “young carer” means:

‘A person under 18 years of age who carries out caring tasks and assumes a level of responsibility for another person which would normally be carried out by an adult’

This is taken to include children and young people under 18 who provide regular and on-going care to a family member usually because that family member has significant unmet care needs arising from disabilities, mental health needs or substance misuse. That care can involve:

- Emotional support
- Taking responsibility – giving medication, looking after siblings, paying bills
- Physical Care - personal care, helping someone to dress or move around, cooking, cleaning

- 2.2 Summer/autumn/winter 2020 has continued to be challenging. The pandemic has had an impact on young carers nationally, and those in Bradford have had an especially difficult time due to the extra restrictions of local lockdown. Young people are increasingly frustrated by purely online contact as ‘screen fatigue’ crept in.

- 2.3 The service has been able to meet one-to-one with some young carers, doing garden visits or walk and talk sessions in July and August. The service however, is always aware of the vulnerability of a lot of the families they work with, especially those in households with loved ones who have underlying health conditions for whom Covid is especially frightening.

- 2.4 A good way to interact with the young carers throughout covid has been to combine elements of ‘in person’ and ‘virtual’ work by delivering packs of cooking, art or craft equipment to their homes. This has enabled the service to see the families, have doorstep conversations to check how everyone is coping and then follow up with virtual group meetings for young carers to show each other what they have been doing/making while also socialising.

- 2.5 The service continues to offer a range of levels of support – in this quarter the service had contact with 481 young carers (or their parents/guardians). The service had 53 new referrals – processing these has continued to be difficult due to covid as usually the service meets the young carers in their school where they feel comfortable and they can speak freely without fearing they will be overheard by family members.

- 2.6 Some young carers have chosen to wait until the service can see them in school, others have been happy to do the initial assessment by phone, even on their

doorstep. The service has been as flexible as possible while keeping staff and families safe.

- 2.7 The service secured some more funding for July for 10 young carer emergency grants from Carers Trust. A lot was spent on IT equipment such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones along with wifi boosters and data and some went on hobby equipment to help wellbeing. The service had an offer of support from Bradford's Education Department but Carers Resource didn't need any additional IT resources.
- 2.8 Having moved the usual youth clubs online the service have had to keep adapting to keep the young carers interested and engaged. The service has listened to the young carers and changed times of clubs in line with what they requested and are currently running them at 6.30pm after the Young People have had a chance to eat and wind down a bit. The service will continue to monitor and react to feedback since those young carers who do attend the groups find them fun and valuable. Content includes games and conversations about isolation, stress relief and also what activities they can do at home when feeling frustrated.
- 2.9 The service has done a lot of engagement and participation work this quarter, involving Bradford young carers in regional and national programs:
- The radio program on BCB continues, although we have had to record it from people's own homes.
 - West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health Partnership have consulted with our staff and young carers to help develop:
 - a WY&H young carer app. This will include sources of support, ways to contact local services, a young carer cook book amongst other things
 - an awareness raising pack for schools (primary and secondary) including resources for an assembly and a PHSE lesson.
 - Together with the Youth Work Unit – Yorkshire and Humber young carers from Bradford are helping to design the young carer part of a new national resource on loneliness and isolation. The idea was to create a calendar to raise awareness and they will be working with an artist to do that.
- 2.10 When schools reopened in September, the service along with other youth services in the area, found a very mixed response to our offer to come into schools to help support young carers. The staff are going into those schools which are allowing external visitors, subject to risk assessments and all possible precautions. As the first half term has progressed, more schools have become used to the new systems of bubbles etc and are happy to accept visitors when support is needed. As schools have opened and closed the service has responded in the same way, going in when they can.
- 2.11 The service has recruited a new worker in the team for this coming year, funded as part of Youth in Mind +. This worker has enabled the service to cope better with the additional demands for support for 1:1 work which increased due to the pressure

that the pandemic has put on families and schools and the effect this has had on young people's mental health.

- 2.12 Nine months into the pandemic response young carers, along with the rest of society, are finding life challenging and difficult but the service have kept a really good level of contact with the families so they know Carers Resource are there to help when they require support. At the suggestion of a young carer, Carers Resource are introducing a 'Get Help Now' button to their website which will link young carers to 24 hour sources of immediate support should they need them.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 That the service will continue to be creative and be supported by our other Early Help Services. We have organised joint on line bespoke modules with our Early Help Co-ordinators to look at the role of the Lead Practitioner with the Carer Resource and how they will get additional support for their families as they need it.
- 3.2 We will continue to assess the demands on our Young Carers service over the next 6 months for an increase in referrals given the Covid pressures on families.

3.3 Website/e-learning/social media

Traffic through the www.youngcarersresource.org website had increased this quarter with 1,962 views (as opposed to 1,413 in Q2).

Most users came to the site through a search engine and the most common search term was 'Bradford young carers'. People also found the site through the Carers' Resource main site, the Carers UK site and the Bradford Local Offer site.

The most viewed page was that describing the service available in Bradford. The Useful Links page was also well used with users clicking through to Young Minds, Kooth and Young Sibs.

There continued to be take up of the e-learning offer with a total of 89 learners having now taken the course. The breakdown by profession as follows:

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|-----------|----|
| BMDC | 25 |
| Education | 28 |
| VCS | 25 |
| Health | 3 |
| Police | 2 |
| Unknown | 6 |

- 3.4 [The Carers' Resource - Bradford Young Carers](#) Facebook page increased its reach. Now with 119 followers this is proving a useful way to stay in touch with the families, keeping them up to date on the activities run by Carers' Resource as well as distributing useful information from other local and national sources. Recent posts include information about the Bradford Young Carers Book Club Initiative and the No Child Cold Grant Scheme.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The funding resource implications for partners are as follows;

- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council - £151,236
- Combined Clinical Commissioning Groups - £53,323

The annual contract value will be £204,559 per annum and we have procured for a 3 year contract 2019/20 to 2021/22 with the option to extend by one year and one further year.

There are no options for consideration presented as this is a statutory duty for the Council and its partners and part of the annual programme of work for the scrutiny committee.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The work undertaken by the providers and partners in relation to Young Carers, contributes to the Council priorities by ensuring: Young Carers are safe; that they are supported to achieve the best outcomes they can in relation to their education; and their emotional well-being is monitored with support offered as and when needed.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.5 TRADE UNION

None

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The service is District Wide.

**7.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS
(for reports to Area Committees only)**

None

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

None

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Overview and Scrutiny to receive this paper for information, note the progress and support continued development in our jointly commissioned service.

10.2 To continue to receive annual reports from the service and that these are scheduled annually for June, to report on a full year of activity.

11. APPENDICES

None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

This report provides an update on the needs of Young Carers following the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014, Care Act 2014. It updates the previous annual reports presented on the 26th July 2016 and 27th September 2017 and 13th February 2019, 9th October 2019, 2nd September 2020.