

## **Report of the Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny to be held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**

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**Subject:**

**AB**

**Young Carers**

### **Summary statement:**

This report provides an annual update, specifically focusing on performance, targets and standards, as requested.

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. The Carers Resource currently holds the contract.

Appendix 1 shows the actual data from Quarter 3 and Appendix 2 is a graphical representation of some of the key data.

### **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 This report has been taken from the monitoring reporting that the Carers Resources service is asked to complete quarterly – as we are not at the end of Quarter 4 this report contains activity from April 2021 to December 2021, Quarters 1,2 and 3. The full report can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 Some comparison data has been supplied in **Appendix 2** but the service, for this year, still has one quarter to report on so it is not like for like data.
- 1.4 During Covid the service continued to develop on line services but found after a period of time children were fatigued with 'on line activity' so tried to delivered home based fun activities that children could share through pictures and social media this worked well.
- 1.5 The service didn't have any children who didn't return to school but the service did have to do more work than usual with parents who were worried about covid and the risks it posed to them as they had underlying health conditions.
- 1.6 The key challenges to the service continue to be Awareness raising, Covid related issues and transport to get children to services and activities. The local area community chest monies and one off grants are used wherever possible but funding for transport for vulnerable families is an issue.
- 1.7 The way we monitor and record what the service does also needs to be modernised in light of the digital support offered. The service is fully aware that young people when asked for feedback may not always feel they can be truthful so they are looking at ways to improve this.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 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 The service has continued to support young carers throughout the pandemic they continued to advertise the service keeping the referral procedure as simple as possible to encourage professionals to refer any young carers they identify.
- 2.3 In Oct – Dec 2021 they launched two new webforms called Support Request forms so that families are not put off by the word referral. This ensures young carers are identified to the service even if a professional does not have much detail or much time to complete a lengthy form. The forms feed directly into the services new database, eliminating transcription errors and reducing the time needing to be spent on admin tasks. The webforms also drive traffic to the website where more information about supporting and identifying young carers can be found.
- 2.4 Identifying Young Carers continues to be a challenge. Carers' Resource currently has a project with two development workers reaching into communities to increase awareness of carers of all ages, including young carers, as well as a specific project for parent carers which helps them identify sibling carers
- 2.4 All staff within the service are confident to carry out assessments. Members of the wider Carers' Resource staff have been helping overcome language barriers. The service works closely with the Early Help Family Hubs in case families need more support from a keyworker.
- 2.5 The service has;
- *Continued one-to-one work with those young carers who need that intervention, including multi-agency work as required, especially for those young carers who were receiving support as part of a plan (such as a Child Protection plan)*
  - *Continued to run 8 youth clubs – 2 in each of the Family Hub areas (one for primary age children and one for high school age). One more is in development in Shipley (which is currently served by the Keighley one).*
  - *Successfully applied for Holiday Activities Fund money to run a winter party.*
  - *Collaborated with other young carer services through the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership and so held a Halloween themed, pizza van launch event for the young carer cookbook produced.*
- 2.6 The service offers 1-2-1 support to young carers who are assessed as being highly impacted by their caring role as well as the regular youth clubs, school holiday activities and day trips that can be accessed by the majority of service users. The team continues to support some families who have a high level of need for services, attending Child in Need meetings, initial Child Protection conferences, core groups/review meetings and Team Around the Family meetings.
- 2.7 Carers' Resource gathers feedback after all trips and activities. They have tried to find different ways to do this, such as post it notes on sliding scales etc. They are consulting with their young carers committee to try to find the best ways to get honest feedback.
- 2.8 Carers resource stated that it has proved very difficult to get professionals to engage with the e-learning and after discussion with the Lead Officer about

renewing the licenses this year it was decided not to go ahead at that time, so it has not been available this year. The service instead has been targeting on line conferences and teaching with an already 'in situ' audience.

2.9 Awareness raising has changed a lot. Visiting team meetings/ GP surgeries etc is still more difficult than pre-Covid. Social media platforms are now the most effective tools and Carers' Resource communications have an intern who is supporting the to look at the they will do this well. Platform choice influences their audience, with professionals often keeping informed via Twitter, parents on Facebook and young carers using Instagram.

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **3.1 What is working well**

- *Referrals are still coming in steadily with 73 new referrals this quarter*
- *The top search terms to land on the service website in Q3 was 'young carers Bradford'. The Bradford Young Carers page has now had 2,915 views.*
- *Workers find the assessment process gives a good all round picture of what challenges and protective factors exist for the young carers.*
- *More schools know and appreciate the service and so are really accommodating working to find time and space for assessments*
- *The youth club attendance is growing and feedback is good from those who come*
- *Working in partnership with the youth service and with some funding through Youth in Mind+ we had an additional staff member concentrating on one-to-one work with young carers struggling with reintegrating into school until the end of July. We have kept her on our team to increase our capacity, extending her contract to the end of March.*
- *The website is well used with 2018 hits on the site in Q3. There have been 315 visits specifically to the Bradford Young Carers page and in reporting figures we have assumed half of those were young carers from the district accessing the digital support offered.*
- *Young carer steering group work continues, with the members asking to help us create tools for schools to use to deliver awareness raising sessions in assemblies or PHSE lessons. These are now ready to be advertised to schools*
- *The initial face to face assessment with the young carer is now routinely being used to signpost to other services they might find useful, such as Kooth. People are using the website to find other services, with views of the page 'Useful Links' jumping from 115 in 2020 to 363 in 2021*
- *Once they have met through activities or at youth club, young carers are choosing to stay in contact with each other using social media apps such as WhatsApp or SnapChat*
- *The groups have been growing and those who attend are developing friendships over the weeks, so the peer support aspect of the service is really beginning improve outcomes for larger numbers of young carers than just those who need 1-2-1 support*
- *The new database system that we have enables us to send mass SMS messages and emails easily, recording them automatically. Using this and*

- *directing to web surveys is efficient and gets a good response*
- *The training was well received by people who used it.*
- *Having worked with a group of Young Adult Carers to produce a set of short videos about going to college/university or finding employment as a YAC, we launched a new Young Carer Hub on Instagram.*
- *En masse events are possible now that video conferencing is common – for example in January we will be giving a presentation to around 150 trainee teachers in one morning.*
- *Development workers from Carers' Resource are in the communities around the district raising awareness of carers of all ages*
- *Produced short video messages about young carers at Christmas which went out on Carers Resource main Facebook page to reach a wider audience than using the young carer team social media*
- *En masse events are possible now that video conferencing is common – for example in January we will be giving a presentation to around 150 trainee teachers in one morning.*

### 3.2 What needs to happen next

- *Carers' Resource needs to continue to raise awareness of our service and the support we provide in the form of youth clubs and activities not just 1-2-1 intense work and advertise the new support request forms widely, explaining how easy it is to refer a young carer to us.*
- *The development workers need to continue to discuss young carers in all the communities within which they work*
- *We have to iron out any issues that arise with use of the new form. As with any new IT system occasional circumstances trigger unexpected issues*
- *It will always be challenging to achieve this, so workers need to keep timely completion of assessments as one of their priorities. Catching up with this backlog will be the highest priority work.*
- *We will need to work with BMDC to agree procedures for multi-agency working for those young carers who request an in depth Young Carer Needs Assessment or Transition Assessment under the terms of the Children and Families Act 2014 which will require input from agencies such as Adult Social Care*
- *Youth clubs need to continue to grow and we are still attempting to source different venues in order to change the times so the older age group meet later in the evening. We are also collaborating with the Youth Service to start an additional club in Shipley.*
- *Continue to try to recruit volunteer drivers*
- *Ensure young carers are well informed about keeping safe online and using social media since we cannot monitor the ways they choose to keep in touch with friends in the project*
- *Continue to apply for additional funds for activities*
- *Continue to offer group activities safely as they are making such a big difference to the young carers especially after so much isolation since March 2020*
- *Hopefully the demand for 1-2-1 will return to more normal levels soon so we can spend some time concentrating on helping schools with their support for young carers*
- *We agreed with BMDC that some possible changes to monitoring/reporting*

- would be advisable, and a draft new monitoring form has been produced. When this is finalised and agreed it should help to capture the outcomes of work done at lower levels of need
- Workers will need to understand the new monitoring requirements so that data is gathered properly
  - The new draft monitoring form suggests a change to this question The question in its current form is very broad which makes it difficult to answer the Lead Officer has indicated that what she wants to know is how satisfied young carers are after 1-2-1 intervention comes to an end and they step down onto the activities/clubs only level of service
  - We need to find other ways to reach large numbers of professionals. Now that people are used to doing virtual training we could deliver large scale webinars instead of e-learning. Eg we have addressed over 100 students at a time in this way
  - Staff continue to become embedded in their family hub areas and take responsibility for delivering a number of sessions each to the various teams/schools there
  - Follow up on leads generated by the development workers
  - Consider ways to report social media activity

### 3.3 Key issues

- There are always issues getting the assessments booked in and some schools are more difficult to work with especially if their processes prevent us, for example, from booking to see multiple pupils on the same visit – these issues are persisting and at the moment schools are so preoccupied with all the issues they have arising from Covid that we have not been able to overcome this
- Unfortunately, this quarter for the first time we have been affected by staff contracting Covid despite being vaccinated. This, along with staff self-isolating, has had an impact since we carry out the assessments face to face as best practice. 3
- Transport remains an issue which along with nervousness about Covid can stop some young carers accessing groups and time out opportunities
- Some activities had to be cancelled due to rising Covid rates in December
- Signposting has been more difficult as a lot of other services continue to have long waiting lists. Kooth has been an excellent addition to the offer for young people in the district.
- Youth club timing continues to be an issue with current time slots being a barrier for some young carers. Finding alternative times has still been difficult as many community spaces are fully booked with reduced capacity due to cleaning etc between groups for Covid safety. However, despite this the numbers at the clubs have increased. We will continue to monitor how much of an issue this is and move times when we can.
- transport remains difficult for a lot of families limiting access to activities unless we offer it which is very costly in time for staff or money (if we use taxis)
- There have been lots of young carers who we have been asked to do some 1-2-1 work with because they are 'struggling at the moment' (words often used by parents, teachers etc when they contact us asking for some additional support). We have been able to support them but this has taken additional staff time and has impacted the amount of awareness raising and working with

- schools (promoting Young Carer Champions) the team has been able to do*
- We have not generated the interest we would like*
- People take the leaflets and seem interested but do not follow up afterwards.*
- People visit the site but do not sign up and complete the learning. Some of these may find they are ineligible because they don't work in Bradford District. Others may not want to bother with the registration process. We had to make the learners register for the learning so that only those from Bradford could use it since the licenses were nearly £10 each*
- Over the whole 18 months the training was available only 92 people used it and the remaining licenses expired*
- As more referrals come in and need to be dealt with in a timely fashion, and the number of young carers being supported through groups and activities grows, keeping time free for awareness raising remains an issue.*
- Counting number of sessions delivered in person by staff loses a lot of information about what has been done using social media etc*

#### **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. The service has been extended into 2022/2023, with the agreement of our adult services and CCG commissioners.

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 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Carers Resource delivers a good quality service to the Young Carers of Bradford and we will continue to monitor and work closely with the service over 2022/2023.

**7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

None.

**8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

**9. OPTIONS**

None.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

10.2 That the Committee continue to receive annual reports from the service.



## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – monitoring form for Quarter 3, including case studies.

Appendix 2 – graphical representation of some of the key data.

## **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 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.