

Agenda Item 49.

TITLE	Wokingham Young Carers Service
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Wokingham Young Carers Service is delivered by Carers Trust East Midland (CTEM). In 2016 they were awarded a three year contract to deliver a young carers service to with an associated contract value of £60,149.00 per annum. The new service specification reflected an ambition to move towards group work and community engagement, including multi agency working within schools. This was a significant change from how this service had been delivered in previous years which was predominantly one-to-one work with young carers.

Since the beginning of this contract Wokingham Young Carers Service has worked with over 200 young carers supporting them in managing the impact their caring role has on their:

- Educational achievement
- Emotional wellbeing
- Feelings of isolation or loneliness

Under the Children's Act 2014¹, local authorities have a duty to actively identify young carers, carry out young carer's assessments and to implement support to reduce impact. Wokingham Borough Council commissions CTEM to do this on our behalf.

RECOMMENDATION

This report has been provided for information only

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides an overview of the Wokingham Young Carers Service and the impact it has made to the lives of our young carers over a period of three and a half years. During this period our young carers' service has seen an increase in the number of young

¹ Children Act (1989) [inserted in Children and Families Act 2014]
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/96/enacted>

carers receiving a service by over 700%. This can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- The effective working relationships with the new provider
- A robust contract mobilisation plan
- Additional resources made available for the sustainability of this contract from the provider
- The effective delivery of the commissioned provider e.g. proactive engagement with schools and children's services which has led to increased identification and referral of young carers this has directly contributed to the significant increase in the numbers of young carers being supported under the contract

Wokingham Young Carers Service is now delivering services that meet the needs of young carers in the borough. The service has moved away from traditional one to one work with young carers towards a group work/peer support approach.

Wokingham Young Carers Service offer to young carers includes:

- Group support and social activities
- Working with schools
- Young Carers Forum

In 2016 Wokingham Young Carers Service supported around 24 young carers. Improvements in commissioned services has led to an increase of provision, with over 205 young carers since the start of the contract. This amounts to a total growth of 754%. The largest rate of growth has been in the last 18 months on average receiving 11 referrals to the service each month.

There are currently 194 active registered young carers being supported by the service with an average engagement rate of 59 unique young carers per month. This is an increase of 125% from July 2018 at which time we there were 85 young carers active and an average engagement of 27 unique young carers per a month.

In 2019 there were 126 referrals to the service. 55% of referrals resulted in young carers assessments and being registered as a young carer, 37% of referrals where declined by the family, 8% were assessed and deemed not to be a young carer.

The young carers' service has fostered relationships within the community and have been successful in recruiting volunteers to support them to run youth groups and activities. They have become an integral part of the Early Help Hub in Wokingham, working alongside them to provide whole family support. The Early Help Hub was the largest referrer in 2019 with a total of 57 referrals. The second largest referral group was schools with 23 referrals and Children's Service workers including early help workers were the third highest referrer with a total of 19 referrals,

The service has established itself as a substantial resource within a number of schools, proving to be invaluable in providing additional support to young carers who may be falling behind in either attendance or academically. Three secondary schools in the Wokingham borough have taken up the Young Carers in Schools award.

The Young Carers Forum has enabled young carers to have a voice, and become active participants in shaping their own futures.

The service has ambitious plans going forward including supporting young carers to set up their own support groups in their schools, developing study support groups and ensuring young carers in Wokingham have the opportunity to participate in national young carers' events.

CTEM have been actively engaged in co-producing the young carers section of the broader forthcoming Carers Strategy 2020-2025, which will be presented to the Executive Committee in March 2020.

Background

It is estimated that there are around 700,000 children and young people across the UK are caring for family members. In 2016, the Children's Commissioner issued a survey to all local authorities in England to request data on referrals relating to children and young people providing care. Analysis suggested that 4 out of 5 local authorities were not offering any support to young carers, with too much focus on assessments alone at the expense of engaging, providing activities and working with the young carers. According to the report young carers want to enjoy their childhood and for services to listen to them and respect their views².

The Census 2011 determined there are 230 young carers aged 16 or below living in Wokingham. These figures are recognised as being extremely conservative. This is because young carers do not provide the information themselves and are dependent on parents providing this information in the census. 11% of young carers we currently work with have been referred to statutory services suffering with mental health issues.

In 2016 Wokingham Borough Council re-commissioned its' young carers service. The specification of the service reflected changes in the Children's Act 2014 and our duty to actively identify young carers, carry out young carer's assessments and to implement support to reduce impact. Service delivery, In line with current research, moved towards a more inclusive group work model.

Over the last three and a half years this service has grown from strength to strength and was cited at a national carers' conference in relation to how they have worked with a number of schools to embed the Young Carers in Schools award. This service has a significant presence in the community, with over 100 young carers and their families attending a summer fete organised by CTEM for young carers last year, promoting young carers through an art exhibition and by having a stall in the market place.

Young carers have been afforded opportunities for social recreation and emotional support. For many of our young carers the impact of this service has seen a reduction in their feelings of social isolation, increased attendance in school and improved confidence and well-being.

Areas for consideration

There has been capacity issues from the increased number of referrals and assessments. It is critical that the service still has the capacity to facilitate the group support sessions as well as identify and register new young carers.

The service is now exceeding targets determined in the service specification. The number of young carers they are now working with is far greater than we envisaged.

² HM Gov.UK (2016) The Support Provided to Young Carers in England
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/the-support-provided-to-young-carers-in-england/>

The Governments' Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting carers today³ identified that even more needs to be done in identifying and supporting young carers. We are now in a good position to achieve this.

Whilst to date this has been a managed growth and risk the service will be re-commissioned in 2021 as part of the voluntary sector procurement programme. In order to continue to meet our statutory requirements we will need to review local need and demand the financial envelope for this service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	60,149.00		Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	60,149.00		Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	To be determined		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

WBC funding does not cover the full cost of this service, additional costs are currently supplemented by the provider and fund raising

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

³ DoHSC (2018) Carers Action Plan 2018 -2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf

Wokingham Young Carers Service: Report for Wokingham Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

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