



Purpose: For Noting

Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	17 JUNE 2021
Title	YOUNG CARERS SUPPORT
Report of	KATHY MARRIOTT, HEAD OF STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS, CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report provides a summary of the Isle of Wight Council's commissioned Young Carers Programme. The recommendation is for the Committee to note this report, the progress made, and the further services planned as outlined in 2021-2
2. Young carers and their families continue to receive the help and support they need, as part of the Council's Young Carer Strategy.

BACKGROUND

3. The Isle of Wight Council commissions a support service for young carers through the YMCA. This provides support for approximately 300 young carers across the Isle of Wight.
4. Young carers often put aside their own needs so they can provide support and care for someone close to them. The average age for a young carer is 12 years old. The YMCA Young Carers Programme helps these children navigate their way through this important stage in their lives. Young carers may be responsible for contributing to the care of a family member who may have a disability, long term illness, mental health issues and drug or alcohol related problems. Aged under 18, young carers often have to juggle education, social life, and time to relax with responsibilities around the home such as shopping, housework, helping with personal care, administering medicines, and looking after siblings.

The Young Carers Programme of support includes:

- 1:1 support for higher needs young carers at home or in school
- Meeting up with other young carers in a safe space

- Welcoming and friendly staff always willing to listen
- Information and guidance to support carers and their families

Alongside valuable support, the service also co-ordinates respite for young carers, enabling them to participate in activities with their peer group. They can meet and talk to other young people in a similar situation, take trips to an amusement park, the local cinema, or the annual Young Carers Festival at YMCA Fairthorne Manor every summer.

Due to the COVID pandemic and following the government guidelines, the majority of support during the last year has been provided virtually through emails, texts, and phone call. The team have worked hard through this difficult period to offer support to the young carers. Due to the restrictions in place the team have been unable to meet with some children within the school setting but have spent a lot more time speaking to and supporting parents over the phone and directly with the young carers.

Additional funding for young carers has been made available by the local authority as part of the governments Winter Grant scheme. A total of £8400 was provided to the YMCA, which resulted in 104 families receiving support in the form of food vouchers, essential items and support towards gas/electricity and water bills. In addition, the local authority has worked with The Getaway Foundation to enable ten families to have a holiday in 2021. For many families this is the first chance they have had to take a break, which is particularly welcome after the confines of the last year.

305 young carers have engaged with the project in the last quarter. Facebook has been used to promote virtual activities such as their popular Art Club. Support has continued for 1:1 sessions virtually via zoom. Some face to face activities have continued following guidance on safety precautions. The YMCA contacted all families to see who would be happy for their child to attend an activity and gauged which activities would be feasible within the COVID guidelines.

The Young Carers Programme was incorporated into the Family Centres tender specification in 2020. This followed consultation with children and families, including young carers. Barnardo's were awarded the Family Centres contract in late 2020, with the new contract starting in April 2021. The Young carers Programme has been subcontracted to the YMCA, this will ensure continuity of support, however, builds in an integration to the wider early support being delivered through Family Centres which will be further developed in 2021-22.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

5. The key strategic planning document is the Isle of Wight Young Carers Strategy and contributes to the Corporate Plan's priorities of Opportunity and Wellbeing.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

6. The whole life costs are £51 000 per year for five years.
7. There are no further financial implications as the funding is set out in the budget for the commissioned service.

CARBON EMISSIONS

8. The commissioned provider considers carbon emissions when planning visits to schools and co-ordinate visits to locally areas within the same day to reduce their carbon footprint. Pickups or activities are usually arranged via area to further reduce this. Carbon emissions has also been dramatically decreased due to working from home and face to face 1:1s being suspended due to COVID.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The responsibility to meet the assessed needs of young carers is covered by the Children and Families Act 2014. Young carers have the right to a 'carer's assessment', which is the duty of the local authority. This assesses the effect on the young carers' wellbeing, health, education, or friendships – and whether they should continue carrying out that level of care.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

10. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in relation to the commissioned services and no negative impacts were identified or mitigating actions required. The service has a positive impact in supporting children who are young carers and their families with health needs that they are supporting.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no property implications because the provider has use of their own buildings from which to provide this service.

EVALUATION

12. The commissioned Young Carers Programme meets the duty placed upon local authorities and delivers the Isle of Wight Council's Young Carer Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

13. The recommendation is for the Committee to note this report, the progress made, and the further services planned.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

14. The Isle of Wight Young Carers Strategy is due for review and is available on <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Care-and-Support/SEND-Reforms/Support-and-Advice-for-Families/Isle-of-Wight-Young-Carers-Strategy-2017-2020>

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