

Annual Report
2022/23

RCT Young Carers



Cathrine Silver

Interim Service Manager – Carers, Direct
Payments & Service User Engagement

Annual Report 2022/23

OVERVIEW

This year has seen carer support return to the level of service delivery offered prior to the Covid Pandemic. Although this has been a largely positive process, it has not been without challenges. Our Young Carers have overcome some of their individual barriers and readjusted to life after the pandemic, while we have attempted to revert to face-to-face contacts and events taking place outside the home.

This report provides a summary of the support provided to Young Carers, (aged 0-17) and Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25). It also highlights some of the key developments achieved during a year of recovery from the impact of Covid.

BACKGROUND

RCT Young Carers Service sits within the wider all-age Carers Support Project and the Service Manager for Carers has responsibility for all carer issues, including Young Carers, Sibling Carers, Young Adult Carers and Adult Carers.

STRUCTURE OF SUPPORT FOR CARERS UNDER 25

- The service has a dedicated Young Carer Assessor who sits within the wider Information, Advice and Assistance function of Children's Services. This ensures that statutory obligations are met in terms of assessment and monitoring of young carers.
- The remainder of the Young Carer Support service is commissioned which facilitates a greater level of integration with the third sector. In January 2023, Action for Children successfully bid for the contract, and as a result continue to offer our Young Carer provision within RCT. Moving forward, as part of the new contract, Action for Children will also deliver the Sibling Carer Support as well as offering an increased level of involvement with the Schools Award.
- The support for Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25) continues to be provided by a dedicated part-time worker partially funded via the Families First grant. The funding has been confirmed for 2022/23, however there has not been any uplift included.
- Occasionally, support is offered from CSP staff to support projects or events as necessary.

TYPES OF SUPPORT OFFERED

- Assessment
- Information Advice and Assistance
- 1:1 sessions
- Groups
- Trips
- Events
- Training

YOUNG CARERS (YCs)

All referrals for Young Carer support (including siblings) goes through the IAA team for recording and allocation. The worker contacts the family or young person if they are 16+ and begins the engagement process.

Face to face assessment visits have now resumed, as well as 1-1 support sessions, (where necessary). The Young Carer is central to the development of their support plan, which when agreed, the YC Worker implements by referring to relevant agencies.

If the Young Carer declines support from the YC project, 1-1 sessions are delivered by the YC worker. Where they choose ongoing support via the YC project, they are supported to access the initial sessions, then transferred to Action for Children, (AFC). Reviews are arranged for all Young Carers at least every 6 months (sooner if the case is complex). During reviews, feedback is sought from the AFC, RFS, school etc.

Where agreed, details of Young Carers are sent to each school's Carers Champion to ensure appropriate support is offered in their school placement.

ASSESSMENTS

Although most activities and events are delivered by Action for Children, assessments remain a statutory function and the worker continues to be managed within the Children's Services Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) team.

The table below summarises the numbers of referrals for Young Carer Support:

Referrals Received by IAA

	22/23	21/22
Q1 Apr-Jun	41	10
Q2 Jul-Sep	30	16
Q3 Oct-Dec	22	28
Q4 to date	17	4
TOTAL to date	110	54

As can be seen from the table, referrals have increased and are double the number received in the previous reporting period (during the pandemic).

Referrals continue to come from a variety of sources, but as the table shows there are some opportunities to increase referrals from certain agencies. During 23/24 work will take place to generally raise awareness, and revisit referring agencies.

Source of Referrals

	22/23	21/22
Children's Services	21	10
Resilient families	27	9
Family	19	9
School	12	9
Disabled Children's Team	15	6
Health	2	3

College	6	3
YEPS service	1	3
Adult Services	2	3
CSP/Young Carers Project	2	2
Miskin	0	1

To date 125 assessments and 274 reviews have been completed. As the table below shows, some referrals are not progressing, therefore as part of the awareness raising planned for 2023/24, criteria, expectations and support opportunities will also be revisited with agencies.

Outcome of referrals

	22/23
Referred to Sibs	32
Referred to AFC	29
Inappropriate Ref	16
Not wanted	15
No Support Required	10
ID Card Only	4
1:1 Support	4

As well as the assessment, reviews, and direct support, the YC worker is responsible for the delivery of the Young Carers ID Card.

YOUNG CARERS ID CARD

The card is a tool to help young carers access information, help and support and to have a greater of their rights. The scheme continues to grow in RCT, with a steady rate of referrals.

ID Card Referrals received

	22/23
Q1 Apr-Jun	18
Q2 Jul-Sep	5
Q3 Oct-Dec	23
Q4 to date	19
TOTAL	65

(Total ID card applications to date = 134)

During 2022/23 the work was funded by Welsh Government, and we received a total of £6818. In RCT the money has been used to develop new approaches and new ways of working. Resources such as information booklets and guidance for teachers, school governors, pharmacists and GPs have been developed and distributed along with the actual cards themselves.

In RCT part of the money was also used to pay for additional hours for a member of the CSP team to promote the card and link in with as many businesses as possible.

In October 2022 there was a workshop involving the Sibling Carers and a poster promoting the card was developed (See Appendix 1). The session involved young carers sharing their experiences and stories in a creative, supportive environment.

These posters and the information booklets have now been sent to the following across RCT:

- Every comprehensive school and primary school in RCT
- Every GP surgery
- Every library

Positively, several GP surgeries have got in touch regarding staff members becoming trusted referrers and displaying the posters on their call systems. Sessions have also been delivered within schools at both secondary and primary ages, explaining how staff can become a trusted referrer.

The additional hours also enabled the worker to contact local businesses to explore the opportunity of young carers receiving a range of discounts with their card. To date the following businesses are supporting the card.

- Barry Sidings Café
- Gravity Bike Park,
- Dare Valley Country Park
- The Play Yard
- Fuse Play Centre
- New Faze Fabrics
- Penrhys Driving Range
- Lido Café

Talks are ongoing with RCT services such as theatres, the Lido and Rhondda Heritage Park to explore discounts, however nothing has been arranged to date. There have also been discussions with Pontypridd's business and development project lead and their equivalent in both Aberdare and Treorchy. Both are key figures in the town centres with connections with lots of local businesses, so hopefully this will shortly produce some opportunities for our YCs.

YOUNG CARER SUPPORT (AFC)

The table below provides a breakdown of the support offered by AFC.

<i>Young Carer Support Offered</i>							22-23	
Month	Caseload	Referrals	Groups	Attendees	Events	Attendees	1:1	
April	97	1	6	39	5	35	2	
May	96	2	9	55	5	47	1	
June	92	6	9	47	3	115	1	
Q1		9	24	141	13	197	4	
July	95	4	9	56	1	7	3	
August	95	1	0	0	8	98	3	

Sept	99	4	9	53	0	0	3
Q2		9	18	109	9	105	9
Oct	87	7	9	66	2	10	0
Nov	89	1	9	61	2	43	6
Dec	87	1	0	0	2	44	0
Q3		9	18	127	6	97	6
Jan	86	3	3	13	1	7	7
Feb	78	2	7	49	2	15	5
March							
Q4		5	10	62	3	22	12
Total		32	70	439	31	421	31

Following a successful retender, the Young Carer Support Service continues to be provided by Action for Children. This year has seen the service return to expected delivery models, and positively, all elements of support have been offered this year.

Group sessions have been back up and running after the Covid restrictions. Some venues in Taff have changed to meet the needs of the young carers and are now run from 3 different sites. The Rhondda group has moved to the Salvation Army building in Penygraig, while the Cynon groups still take place at the YMCA in Mountain Ash.

Something that was hugely missed by Young Carers were the trips to provide short breaks from caring. This year we were lucky enough to offer a family trip to West Midlands Safari Park where Young Carers and their families were given the opportunity to enjoy a free day out together. In total, 105 people attended, all giving really positive feedback about the event and the difference it made.

In addition to the family trips, our young carers have had the opportunity to visit the following places:

- Cinema trips
- Ninja Warrior
- Aqua Park
- Drayton Manor
- Vertigo
- Ponty Park
- Meals
- London
- Aberdare Park
- Barry's Sidings activity
- St Fagan's
- Cinema
- Aqua Park
- Play Barn YC
- Play Barn Families x7
- Drayton Manor
- TGI's and Cardiff

- Cinema
- Santa's Toy Mine
- Winter Wonderland
- Bristol Cribbs Causeway Shopping trip

ALL WALES CARERS FESTIVAL 2022

The project took 15 young people along to the first All Wales Young Carers Festival which was held at the Builth Wells Showground for a 3-night break. Young Carers could take part in many different activities from graffiti workshops, song writing workshops, arts and crafts, circus skills along with much more. Every evening they also had a chance to take part in silent discos or hang out in the chill-out tent.

CHOIR

The YC choir has had some great opportunities. They took part in live auditions for Britain's Got Talent (four yes's at the audition). They sang at the AFC annual Stephenson Awards, held at Glazier Hall in London. This gave them the opportunity to enjoy an overnight stay in London, and to visit some of the sights.

YC ACHIEVEMENTS

- Four Young Carers took part in developing our Action for Children Young Carers Sidekick service. This is an online advice service for young carers to access support without leaving their homes, seven days a week.
- Two Young Carers took part in interviews for a new Head of Service role in Children's Services.

Please see Appendix 2 for case studies of YC who have benefited from support.

ONLINE SUPPORT

AFC have expanded their social media provision and have made a new Young Sibling Carers Facebook page. This, along with the Young Carers page, is a place where general information along with updates on groups, trips, and forthcoming activities can be shared.

YOUTH FORUM

YC representatives will be attending the County Youth Forum, to help shape services for young people moving forward.

SIBLING CARERS

Following a pilot programme, where the unique needs of Sibling Carers were identified and supported (see Appendix 3), Sibling Carers continued to receive a limited service via the Carers Support Project.

The unique needs of Sibling Carers are now fully recognised within RCT, and support programmes have been established. This good practice has now been transferred to Action for Children and they are responsible for delivering Sibling Support as part of the new contract.

The table below shows the support offered by CSP and then by AFC for the first two months of 2023:

Sibling Support Offered 22-23					
Month	C/load	Refs	Events	No of Sibs	
April	86		8	1	166
May	86		0	4	52
June	86		0	4	48
Q1			8	9	266
July	84		2	1	5
August	85		1	5	45
Sept	93		8	1	8
Q2			11	7	58
Oct	97		4	4	36
Nov	100		3	3	32
Dec	101		0	2	45
Q3			7	9	113
Jan	101		0	2	17
Feb	95		2	1	12
March					
Q4			2	3	29
Total			28	28	465

For the period Sibling support was offered through the CSP, activities included:

- Taste of Adventure zoom projects
 - Virtual escape room
 - Boxing & mindfulness
 - Cookery
 - Photography
- Zip World
- Kidscape Zap Bullying Workshop
- Pottery Project
- Sibs Fest
- Project S

- Pottery Session
- Speed Boat Trip
- Mountain View Ranch
- Drayton manor
- Parent/child White Water Rafting Sessions
- Project S Bowling Trip
- 6 Week Zoom Project
- Poster Design
- Gingerbread House Competition
- Circus make and take session

Sibs Fest was a highlight and involved a mini festival for Sibling Carers. It was an opportunity to recognise and celebrate a group of young carers who have different needs to other Young Carers yet are rarely recognised for the role they play.

The event was held at Barry Sidings and consisted of a fire breathing performance, stilt walker, drumming workshop, sports tasters, fairground prize stalls, circus skills, live music from a DJ and GTFM and information stalls for families. In total, 166 people attended, and engaged with the activities and the information available.

The event was hugely successful, and feedback was extremely positive.

YOUNG ADULT CARERS SERVICE

The table below provides an overview of the support offered to YACs:

YAC Support Offered 22-23

Month	C/load	Refs	Ass	Rev	Events	No
April	60	6	9	0	1	10
May	66	6	6	0	3	20
June	70	1	12	1	3	20
Q1		13	27	1	7	50
July	71	4	9	1	3	9
August	72	2	2	2	3	24
Sept	73	4	2	0	4	3
Q2		10	13	3	10	36
Oct	75	6	2	3	1	11
Nov	81	2	5	9	2	20
Dec	83	4	2	1	4	33
Q3		12	9	13	7	64
Jan	85	0	1	0	1	6
Feb	71	3	6	1	2	10
March						
Q4		3	7	1	3	16
Total		38	56	18	27	166

The Young Adult Carer, (YAC) Service has a part-time worker who works specifically with the 18-25 age group. The current aim of the service is to support YACs with personal growth through educational workshops and some social events. It also provides a break from the caring role and a chance to learn new skills.

When the worker initially started (February 2022) there were a number of YACs open to CSP, however they were not fully engaging with the service and all it had to offer. Since then, there has been a process of review and revisiting expectations, and now all the YACS signed up to the service fully understand what we offer and engage at one of the levels highlighted below.

In addition to the changes to the membership of the group, following feedback from the worker regarding engagement and complexity of cases, the service has shifted slightly; a pilot involving a new more bespoke and needs-led approach was trialled. Assessments became more collaborative; plans were outcome focussed and person centred. The assessment tool has been revised and is now more relative to the age group (previously the same form was used for all carers aged 11-25).

Initial feedback from YACs and the worker has been positive, and moving forward, this will be the model used for YAC support. New YACs referred into the service will be screened for their level of need, and categorised as Red, Amber, or Green. The support offered will correspond to this initial screen and consist of the following:

- **Green** – receiving Information and Advice, (Carers News)
- **Amber** – Accessing YAC events and low-level assistance, (signposting etc)
- **Red** – requiring individual support, via an outcome focused support plan.

At the time of the report, all YACs recorded by the project had been categorised as Red, Amber and Green. With a caseload of 71, there are currently 15 Reds, 32 Ambers and 24 Greens. One of the most positive aspects of the shift towards offering bespoke support, has been enabling YACs to achieve the outcomes that matter to them. An example of this is demonstrated in the case studies of KN and LH. (Please see Appendix 4 for case studies).

The YAC Worker also supports the Caring and Supporting Each other (CASE) group. This group was set up as a charitable community interest group by the YACs. The group meets quarterly to discuss ideas for ongoing support, encouraging YACs to become actively involved in shaping the service, choosing events and topics to be covered over the next few months. The CASE group has started to raise funds, and this is an area of development moving forward.

The YAC Worker has also been working with other professionals to develop extended support networks. Joint events and projects are starting to develop, especially with Coleg Morgawg and the YEPs Service.

It is important to note, that although funding has been confirmed for next year, it does not include any uplift. This means the salary for the worker has not been covered, and there are not any resources for engagement/support work attached to the funding. Attempts will be made to source additional funding to ensure continuity of service.

SCHOOLS AWARD

The RCT Young Carers Schools & College Award was developed in 2015, following feedback received from Young Carers. They highlighted changes they would like to see within schools and colleges, including processes to ensure their own needs were highlighted to staff. They felt that if they felt supported and guided in school/college, and if they were acknowledged for the vital role they play, the more likely they were to achieve.

Our Young Carers told us that they believed if schools/colleges improved their understanding and developed a more supportive approach towards young carers, this would result in more Young Carers identifying themselves and increase the likelihood of them speaking to someone about their situation.

Since 2016, in partnership with secondary schools and colleges as well as identifying a 'Carer Champion' in each school, an award process has been established, whereby schools can be recognised for the support they put in place for Young Carers. Now schools are able to achieve certificates at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, when they achieve certain criteria.

The types of support schools and college have in place can vary from standard practices including a Young Carers notice board displaying information regarding help and support services, as well as TV's / web pages displaying information pertinent to Young Carers. Some schools offer peer-support sessions, assemblies to year groups about Young Carers and other schools provide more intensive interventions including 'Crisis Support Plans,' or tailored monitoring systems where staff on a need-to-know basis, can monitor the welfare and educational attainment of the Young Carers.

The support offered to secondary schools in RCT from CSP is the provision of a 'link' person to liaise with each school-based Carers Champion. This includes:

- Regular contact with the Carers Champion and raising awareness of Young Carers.
- Assisting with promoting awareness days including 'Young Carers Action Day'.
- Attending schools to deliver 'awareness assemblies.'
- Attending schools to deliver talks in PCSE sessions.
- Facilitating Young Carers 'drop in' sessions.
- Supporting with staff training events.
- Providing carer related information and advice.

The table below lists the schools that have already achieved, or are working towards the awards:

Bronze		Silver		Gold	
Working Towards	Achieved	Working Towards	Achieved	Working Towards	Achieved
Ysgol Nant Gwyn		Ysgol Garth Olwg	St John the Baptist		Coleg Y Cymoedd x3
Mountain Ash		Y Pant	Aberdare Community School		
Cardinal Newman		Ysgol Llanhari	Gyfun Tonyrefail Community School	Tonyrefail	
Pontypridd High					

In addition to the Secondary Schools and College Young Carers Award there is also a unit of work available to the primary schools, which usually targets Year 5 and 6 age groups. The Young Carers Primary Schools Award consists of six sessions of work, one of which includes a role play assembly of 'a day in the life of a young carer.' At the time of writing, there are three primary schools in RCT engaging in the sessions.

It cannot be ignored that the pandemic caused a significant delay in the progress and momentum of this award. However, work is now underway to strengthen existing relationships and to make connections via the YEPS Service. Hopefully the YEPS team will offer a different perspective to the support offered within schools, especially for those YCs who struggle in their educational journey and relationships with teaching staff.

If possible, we would hope to reinstate the annual 'Awards Ceremony' where recognition was given to Young Carers, Sibling Carers and YACs and there was an opportunity to celebrate their achievements. At this event, schools and colleges were also recognised for their accomplishments. If possible, we would like to work strategically to give the award more status across RCT, and something schools would strive to achieve as part of the excellence standards or positive achievement awards.

CARERS HUB

We are very fortunate within RCT to have a building we can use as a Carer's Hub. The Hub is accessed by carers of all ages and provides office space for all staff within carer support.

Action for Children their own room within the office, and since moving there, there have been positive improvements in communication and team relationships.

The Hub is used for the majority of carer sessions, including short breaks peer support, training and also for some of the 1:1 sessions.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - YCID Poster



RCT Young Carers ID
Card Poster English.pd

Appendix 2 - Young Carers Case Studies



Young Carers Annual
Report 22-23 AFC Cas

Appendix 3 - Siblings Pilot Study



Sibling Carers Pilot
Report CS.docx

Appendix 4 - Young Adult Carers Case Studies



Appendix 4 YAC Case
Studies Annual Repor