

Annual Report  
2023/24

# RCT Young Carers & Young Adult Carers



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Annual Report 2023/24

## **Overview**

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

## **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 Unpaid Carers Under 25**

- The service has a dedicated Young Carer's 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, facilitating 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. As part of the contract, Action for Children now 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.

*It is important to note that the funding has not been confirmed for 2024/25. Families First are reviewing all contracts, and currently funding has only been confirmed until June 2024, (pending the review). Essentially, this means both the post and the service is potentially vulnerable.*

## **Types of Support Offered to Unpaid Carers Under 25**

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

## Young Carers (YCs)

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

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.

## Assessments

Face to face assessment visits are offered by the Children's Services Worker, along with the option for a period of short term 1-1 support sessions, (if necessary).

The young carer is central to the development of their support plan and deciding the outcomes they wish to achieve. When agreed, the YC Worker initiates the plan, transferring to Action for Children and referring to relevant agencies where appropriate.

If the Young Carer declines support from the project, 1-1 sessions are delivered by the Children's Services 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 on a minimum basis of at least every 6 months (sooner if the case is complex). During reviews, feedback is sought from the young carer, support staff, AFC, RFS, school etc.

Where agreed, details of Young Carers are sent to each school's Carer Champion to ensure appropriate support is offered in their educational placement. This information is individual to each young carer, but also outlines the general challenges lots of young carers face, and how this can impact on their education and their social development.

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

	23/24	22/23
Q1 Apr-Jun	37	29
Q2 Jul-Sep	28	50
Q3 Oct-Dec	41	29
Q4 to date	41	25
<b>TOTAL to date</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>133</b>

During 23/24, 147 young carer assessments and 353 reviews were completed. As can be seen from the table above, referrals have increased again, showing an ongoing growth in the demand for Young Carer support within RCT. The Local Authority continues to make the highest number of referrals; however it is positive to see an increase in referrals from schools.

<b>Source of Referrals</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>Outcome of referrals</b>	<b>23/24</b>
Children's Services/L.A	112	21	Needs met using a young carer's support plan or C&S	91
Resilient families	U/K	27	Needs met by other means	9
Family School	3	19	No needs to be met	45
Disabled Children's Team	26	12	Invalid	2
Health	U/K	15	<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>
College	1	2	Assessments completed in language of choice	147
YEPS service	U/K	3		
Adult Services	U/K	3		
CSP/Young Carers Project	U/K	2		
Miskin	U/K	1		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector	3	U/K		
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>			

*\*Data has been categorised slightly differently for 23/24*

In addition to 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 understanding of their rights. This year, the additional funding previously made available by Welsh Government ended and we had an event to celebrate our young carers and the 'Story behind the Card'.

The event was not only an opportunity to promote the ID card, but also to highlight what young carers do and the difference they make. It celebrated how, despite juggling a caring role, many of them are achieving incredible things, whether through educational attainment, contributions to their community or the impact they make at home. The event was a great success and received very positive feedback from the families who attended.

In view of the positive impact the scheme has made, RCT decided to continue to offer ID cards. However due to limited resources, the additional work of promoting the card, developing the scheme, and engaging with potential partners has not been an option. Despite this, the scheme continues to maintain a level of interest, with a steady rate of referrals.

Positively, WG has started to engage with local authorities to revisit the scheme, and hopefully some resources will be made available in the future.

### **ID Card Referrals received**

	<b>23/24</b>
Q1 Apr-Jun	22
Q2 Jul-Sep	30
Q3 Oct-Dec	20
Q4 Jan-March	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>

### **Young Carer Direct Support**

Following the initial engagement and assessment phase, the Young Carer may be referred for ongoing support from Action for Children. They undertake a basic assessment of the activities the young carer would like to attend, any health and safety requirements and the outcomes they would like to achieve by engaging with the service. The young carers are offered opportunities to give feedback on the groups and events that they attend, and their progress is evaluated on a regular basis.

The table below provide a breakdown of the support offered by AFC 23-24.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Caseload</b>	<b>Referrals</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>1:1</b>
<b>April</b>	81	1	6	50	6	41	0
<b>May</b>	79	4	10	58	7	70	2
<b>June</b>	75	9	12	84	0	0	1
<b>Q1</b>		14	28	192	13	111	3
<b>July</b>	77	2	9	58	8	65	1
<b>August</b>	77	0	0	0	8	98	3
<b>Sept</b>	75	1	9	54	5	128	3
<b>Q2</b>		3	18	112	21	291	7
<b>Oct</b>	75	4	9	49	5	53	1
<b>Nov</b>	75	7	13	86	1	10	1
<b>Dec</b>	83	2	3	35	3	44	0
<b>Q3</b>		13	25	170	9	107	2
<b>Jan</b>	85	5	10	57	0	0	1
<b>Feb</b>	86	2	7	49	2	15	5
<b>March</b>	<b>84</b>	5	11	52	0	0	1
<b>Q4</b>		12	28	158	2	15	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>19</b>

### **Group Sessions**

Groups are offered across the authority in all three districts. Rhondda is held in Trebanog Community Centre, Cynon takes place in Mountain Ash YMCA and there are three groups in Taff. (Llanharan Drop-in Centre, the Llan Centre in Rhydyfelin and the CSP hub in Pontypridd).

Groups offer young carers the opportunity to meet with peers who understand the caring role, to offer a break from that role. AFC offer games, cooking, chill out areas, film nights, workshops etc.

Following each session the young carers are asked for feedback on what went well, and future sessions are decided in conjunction with their thoughts and feelings.

### **Feedback from YC:**

- I love groups and meeting my friends.
- We cook, but arts and crafts are my favourite.
- I've made loads of new friends through groups, and I meet up in school with the ones who are in my school.
- Staff are easy to talk to, and I know if I have any issues, I can speak to them.
- I love everything, especially the trips - and bowling is my favourite.
- It's time away from my caring role and a chance to speak to my friends.
- I just like chilling and taking with my friends.

As well as the groups, something that is hugely valued by Young Carers and also provided by AFC are the trips and events that provide longer breaks from caring.

### **Trips**

For trips AFC try to use local venues and suppliers within the local authority or surrounding areas. Examples include:

- Bowling/cinema etc usually going to Nantgarw or Merthyr/Cardiff.
- Swimming - local sports centres or the Lido in Ponty.
- Beaches -ca Barry, Porthcawl or Gower.
- Theatre shows in the New Theatre and Wales Millenium Centre
- Ninja Warrior

Also throughout the holidays there are additional activities that the children have requested:

- Theme parks – Thrope Park, Drayton Manor, Alton Towers, Folly Farm
- Harry Potter studio
- Lego Land
- Swimming in Cardiff or Swansea Pools

### **All Wales Carers Festival 2023**

Young Carer projects across Wales are invited to attend the All-Wales Carers Festival and RCT have attended two festivals so far. Each project (35 in total) can take 15 young people and stay for 3 days/2nights.

There are lots of activities for the young carers to take part in including:

- Singing workshops
- Graffiti art
- Jewellery making
- Head massage
- Arts and crafts
- Bouncy castles
- Outdoor games and activities
- Musical workshops
- Silent disco
- Karaoke
- Prize bingo
- Quizzes
- Chill out tents.

It's a great time to make new friends with other young carers from all over Wales and to try different activities that they might not otherwise access. It also offers some much-needed time away from their caring roles.

## **YC Choir**

The YC choir is made up of 12 young carers/sibling carers and YACs. Over the past year they have had some great opportunities. They have performed at AFC annual Stephenson Awards several times over the past few years and have performed at AFC Byte Night events at the Principality stadium in Cardiff. This year the choir were invited to work and perform alongside Charlotte Church at AFC's inaugural "Starry Night Gala".

The choir worked with Charlotte and her band throughout the year and were incredibly lucky to be able to spend some time at her retreat up at Rhyadaer.

The Gala was a star-studded event the whole process was followed and filmed by ITV's This Morning Show. This meant that the choir were asked to perform on the show, starting off their Christmas season.

This was huge for the Choir; the mentoring from Charlotte, time at the retreat, recognition from a celebrity and the gala event combined to provide a fantastic experience for all of our young carers involved.

## **YC Achievements**

In addition to the choir, our young carers have spent time in various forums and schools, raising awareness of young carers and the issues they face. Some of the carers were also recognised individually for their achievements in the celebration event last summer.

## **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.

The online service for those wishing to access support from the comfort of their own homes remains an option.

## **Training/Workshops**

- Wellbeing
- Cooking
- Mentoring

## **Youth Forum**

There are nine representatives in the Youth Forum, one from each of the groups throughout RCT. We also have two sibling carers who attend, and hopefully this number will increase next year.

The forum looks at all aspects of the service from the day to day running to budgets and planning of trips/activities. Forum training has been offered on the following topics:

- Interview techniques
- Money Management
- Delivering Services
- Equality & Diversity
- Mentoring

The forum has been instrumental in ensuring young carer voices are heard. Most recently they have been working with Gaynor Davies, Director of Education, and Inclusion Services along with Councillor Rhys Lewis to discuss issues within the education system. We also have representation on the regional, AFC UK and Ireland Young Carers Forums.

## **Family Sessions**

- Fuze
- Speedway Cardiff
- Porthcawl Day trip
- Monsters of the Mine
- Cooking
- Aladdin
- Christmas Party



## Sibling Carers

AFC also provide the support for sibling carers across RCT. Although the service is mainly aligned with the support offered to all young carers, there are sessions and topics offered that target the issues that are specific to those who care for their siblings.

These statistics are listed below:

### Sibling support offered by AFC 23-24

Month	Caseload	Referrals	Groups	Attendees	Events	Attendees	1:1
April	96	3	2	10	1	13	0
May	98	2	5	23	0	0	0
June	105	12	4	19	0	0	0
<b>Q1</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>
July	96	3	3	27	2	14	0
August	96	1	0	0	8	98	3
Sept	81	3	4	28	0	0	3
<b>Q2</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>6</b>
Oct	87	5	3	12	2	20	0
Nov	75	1	4	31	0	0	0
Dec	78	2	0	0	2	21	0
<b>Q3</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>
Jan	81	2	10	50	3	35	1
Feb	75	2	4	15	2	12	0
March	69	4	4	34	0	0	0
<b>Q4</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>7</b>

## Groups

The Sibling Carers groups are run from the same locations as the young carer groups, however there is only one offered in Taff, (CSP Hub).

Sibling groups offer similar activities, games, cooking, chill out, film nights, etc. In addition there are opportunities discuss their sibling's illness, wellbeing sessions and educational sessions.

### Feedback Sibling Carers:

- It's lovely to have monthly group sessions and be able to speak to my friends.
- Time to chill.
- We cook, which I like because I can eat and try new things.
- I've gone on a few trips and have loved them especially Alton Towers.
- We get offered so much now and I love it.
- Have met loads of new friends and I can't wait to go away in the summer for a few days.

AFC also offer parent/carer sessions so that the sibling carers and parents have that quality time together. Activities have included:

- Family day trips.
- Shows/Theatre performances.
- Monsters of the Mine.
- Cooking Sessions.
- Bowling.
- Escape Rooms.

### **Parent/Carer Feedback:**

- It's lovely seeing my daughter grow in confidence and taking part in the groups and activities offered.
- My daughter and I took part in the cooking session, we learnt new skills and recipes and most importantly spent quality time together.
- I loved Monsters of the Mine and can't wait to do it again. My son really enjoys going to the groups and on the trips.
- My daughter joined the choir last year and I can't believe the difference in her. Her confidence has soared and singing has really helped her. They have had amazing opportunities and she's loved every minute.

### **Young Adult Carers Service**

The Young Adult Carer, (YAC) Service is the support offered specifically to unpaid carers within the 18-25 age group. It continues to be delivered by a part-time worker, who is partially funded by Families First.

The 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.

All referrals for YAC support are processed through the Carer Support Project. Once recorded, the worker contacts the young person and begins the engagement process, checking the referral is appropriate, the young person is aware of the support offered by the project and consents to an assessment.

### **Assessments**

Face to face assessment visits are offered by the Children's Services Worker, along with the option for a period of short term, 1-1 support sessions, (if necessary).

The young carer is central to the development of their support plan, and deciding the outcomes they wish to achieve. When agreed, the YC Worker implements the plan by completing actions and referring to relevant agencies if appropriate.

If the Young Carer declines support from the project, 1-1 sessions are delivered by the Children's Services 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.

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

**YAC Support Offered**

<i>Month</i>	<i>C/load</i>	<i>Refs</i>	<i>Ass</i>	<i>Rev</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>April</i>	73	1	0	3	1	8
<i>May</i>	74	4	1	3	1	7
<i>June</i>	74	1	3	1	2	18
<b>Q1</b>		6	4	7	4	33
<i>July</i>	75	3	0	6	2	17
<i>August</i>	74	1	1	11	3	20
<i>Sept</i>	66	2	2	0	2	11
<b>Q2</b>		6	3	17	7	48
<i>Oct</i>	67	2	1	7	1	8
<i>Nov</i>	68	1	2	1	0	0
<i>Dec</i>	71	3	1	4	2	18
<b>Q3</b>		6	4	12	3	26
<i>Jan</i>	70	0	3	5	1	5
<i>Feb</i>	71	1	3	4	2	25
<i>March</i>	71	2	0	5	3	31
<b>Q4</b>		3	6	14	6	61
<b>Total</b>		21	17	50	20	168

The YAC Worker 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 Y Cymoedd and the YEPs Service, (see Appendix 1)

## **Sessions offered to YACs include:**

- Design your own YAC Logo and T-shirt Printing
- Bowling
- Escape Room
- Challenge Wales Sailing
- Manor Wildlife Park
- Pottery
- Wreath Making
- Case Meetings
- Caving
- White water rafting
- Zip World
- Escape Room
- Ghost Tour

## **Residential Stay**

Following feedback from the YACs, we were incredibly fortunate to be able to offer a residential. 9 YACs visited the Gower and stayed at Little Bryn Gwyn which acted as a base for various trips. The YACS had opportunities to experience new activities including sunflower fields, swimming in the LC2 and a beach day – which some young people hadn't had the chance to enjoy before.

## **Transitions**

Working with AFC we have started to develop a programme for the transition between young carers and YACS. These sessions familiarise the young carers with the staff, their peers and the activities they can expect to engage with if they are referred into the service.

## **Consultations**

Delivering person centred services is incredibly important to staff at CSP, and the YAC service is no different. We value the input of the carers we are working with and hold events to encourage feedback and open discussions about the shaping of the service and the future events that we offer. This year we have held two consultation events, which seem to have strengthened the group and improved engagement levels.

All YACS can link into the activities offered within the main project and are offered to join the mailing list for Carers News, (newsletter for unpaid carers). In addition to the generic newsletter the YACs receive regular updates in the form of an electronic YAC newsletter, (see Appendix 2).

## Young Carers 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 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.
- Assemblies.
- PSE Lessons.
- Drop Ins.
- Teacher Talks.
- 1 to 1 support with YC within school settings.

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, unfortunately there are not any primary schools in RCT engaging in the sessions.

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

### Young Carers Schools Award

Bronze		Silver		Gold	
Working Towards	Achieved	Working Towards	Achieved	Working Towards	Achieved
Ysgol Nant Gwyn	Mountain Ash Comprehensive	Ysgol Garth Olwg	Tonyrefail Community School	Tonyrefail Community School	Coleg Y Cymoedd (all 4 campuses)
	St John the Baptist School	Y Pant Comprehensive School	St John the Baptist School		
	Tonyrefail Community School		Coleg Y Cymoedd (all 4 campuses)		
	Ysgol Garth Olwg				
	Ysgol Llanhari				
	Y Pant Comprehensive School				
	Coleg Y Cymoedd (all 4 campuses)				

### 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 use the building for several groups and activities with the young carers.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Coleg Y Cymoedd Partnership Feedback



Partnership Provision  
with Coleg Y Cymoed

## Appendix 2 – YAC Newsletters



YAC Newsletter  
Summer 2023 .docx



YAC Newsletter  
Winter 2023 .docx



YAC Newsletter  
Spring 2024 .docx