



Windsor and Maidenhead Young Carers Annual Report 2025-26

Introduction

Our mission

Family Action supports people through change, challenge or crisis. It's what we've done for over 150 years. We protect children, support young people and adults and offer direct, practical help to families and communities.

We see first-hand the power of family to shape lives, for better or worse, so we speak up for the importance of family in national and local policymaking, amplify family voices and represent the changing needs of families in the UK today.

Our vision and ethos

At Family Action, our vision is of a society that understands the importance and power of family as a foundation for individual futures and connected, resilient communities.

RBWM Young Carers Service delivers a holistic, whole-family approach that places collaboration at its heart. By working closely with parents, children and young people aged 5 to 18, we support families in navigating the emotional, practical and physical challenges associated with caring responsibilities. Through strong partnerships with families and professionals, we help build supportive networks that ease pressures, strengthen resilience, and enable young carers to thrive alongside their families.

Our service aims

We provide a wide range of tailored, direct support to young carers and their families, including comprehensive young carer assessments, as well as one-to-one and whole-family sessions designed to meet individual needs. Our outreach programme further enhances this support by enabling access to enriching activities and targeted financial assistance.

Alongside this, we work in close partnership with local agencies, delivering training across all sectors to deepen understanding of what it means to be a young carer and to help organisations create environments where young carers are recognised and supported. Our Young Carers Champions programme empowers workplaces to embed sustainable, positive systems of support, ensuring young carers can be identified early.

Family Action is committed to making sure that caring is a positive experience for all their young carers. While they continue to provide care, young carers should be able to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

I am delighted to introduce the Windsor and Maidenhead Young Carers Annual Report for 2025-26. This document reflects a year of profound commitment to our mission of supporting young people and their families through change and challenge.

At the core of the RBWM Young Carers Service is a holistic, whole-family approach centred on collaboration. We work closely with young people aged 5 to 18 and their parents to navigate the emotional, practical, and physical challenges of caring responsibilities, aiming for two key outcomes: a reduction in caring tasks and an improvement in the health and wellbeing of young carers.

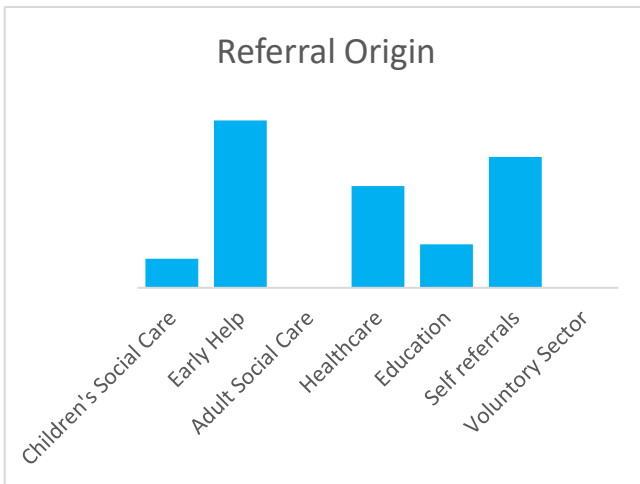
This year, our systemic partnership work has yielded transformative results. I am immensely proud that the number of young carers identified in the school census has surged, evidencing the success of our strong approach to identification and support in schools. Furthermore, our collaboration with Windsor and Maidenhead PCNs was recognized by NHS England as a best practice case study, demonstrating our commitment to embedding support systems within healthcare. We also continued to deliver direct, tailored support, young carers and their families.

We remain dedicated to ensuring that caring is a positive experience and that all our young carers can lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Thank you to every family, Young Carer Ambassador, and partner who contributed to this impactful year.

Sincerely,

Sarah Collin
Young Carers Service Manager

Key Statistics on Access and Need

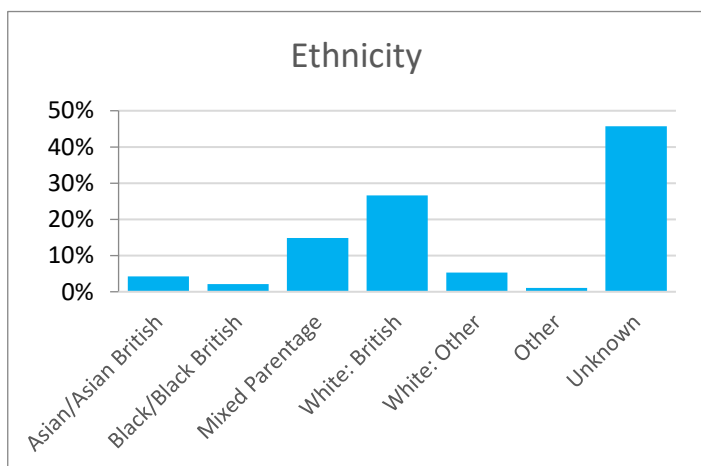
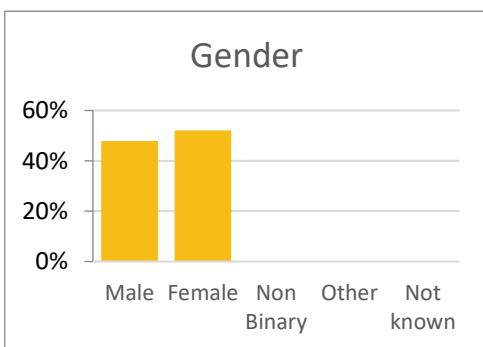
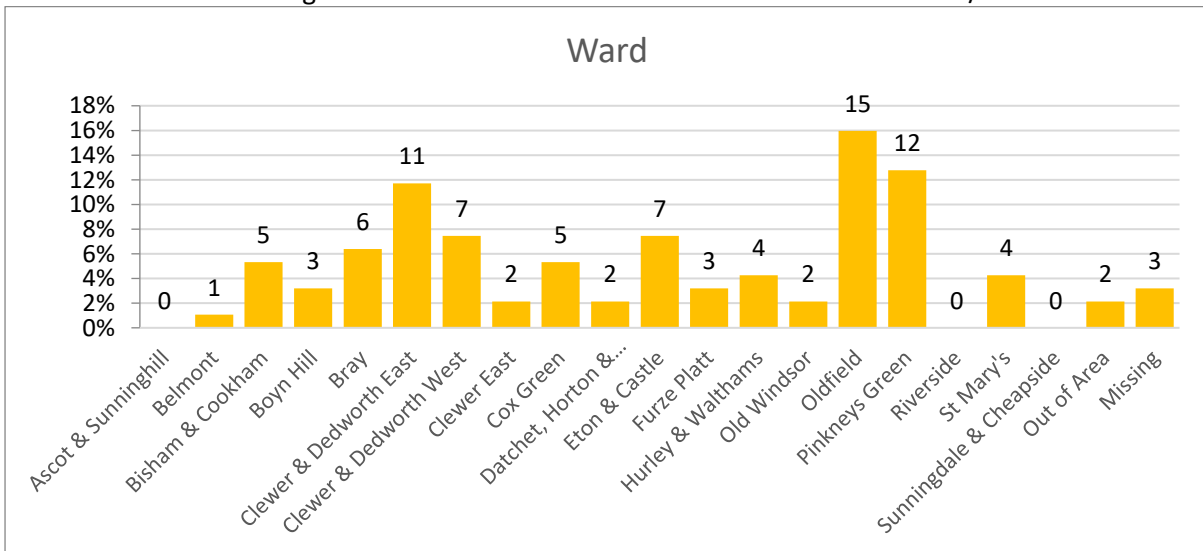


Total Registration: 111 young carers were registered to assessment their caring role and provide direct support towards achieving positive outcomes, through:

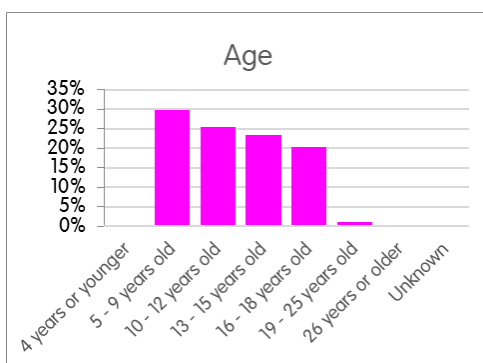
- a reduction in caring tasks through the widening of formal and informal support
- an improvement in the health and wellbeing of young carers whilst they continue to provide care

New Referrals: The service received 82 new referrals through an open referral system.

Families accessing our service are well dispersed across the borough, however we have received less referrals for families living in or near Ascot and will be an area to address in 2026/27.



Ethnicity is captured at Assessment. Unknown' accounts for service declined prior to assessment or yet to be assessed



Young Carer Assessment Findings

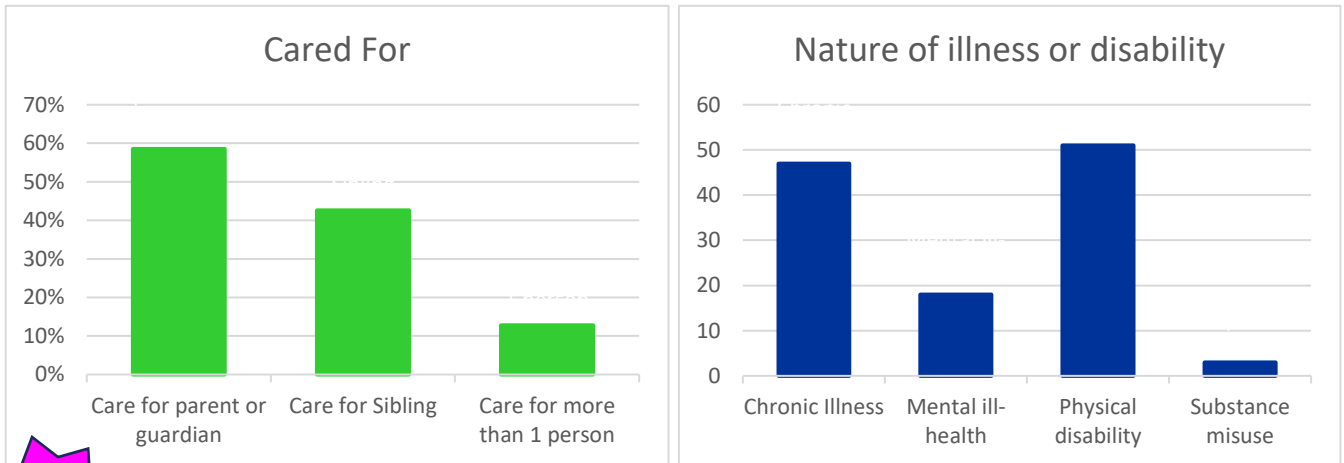
Assessments Completed: 61 Young Carers were completed, and 73 families completed direct support.

Waiting List: 29 referrals remain on the waiting list for assessment in 2026/27, with an average waiting time of 15 weeks between referral and assessment.

Referrals are risk assessed and allocated a RAG rating:

Red: Primary Carer or Young Adult 17 years old+

Amber: Time on waiting list



13% of young carers care for more than one person in their household.

14% of young carers are the primary carer in their household

Young Carer Assessments explore the level of care being provided by a young person and considers the impact of providing care on the young carer's own health and development. This discussion empowers each family to identify the most suitable support for their child and the whole family, including the cared-for.

21% of young carers supported by our service had additional physical, emotional or SEND needs of their own, which were taken into consideration when assessing their caring role.

Direct Support

Our service model utilizes a graduated pathway of support for young carers and their families, with an average intervention period of 7 weeks.

Initial Session: 16% of young carers found their initial family session sufficient to enable safe and supportive caregiving. This session considers their needs as well as those of other family members and enables each young carer to have a voice and a choice in the level of care they continue to provide. Referrals and signposting to additional services within the community widen the family's support network.

"YC1 and I just wanted to say a massive thank you for all your help - you're doing a great job! Maidenhead Fire-station popped over last night. They changed our smoke-alarms and gave us some really useful tips. They were so kind and patient and answered all of cared-for's questions - he had lots. We're also going to have a think about the Carers' Contingency Plan. Thanks so much." – Parent

Further Sessions: 84% of young carers progressed to complete a further two sessions, including an individual young carers session and a parent/carer session. This is appropriate for medium to high levels of care, allows a greater depth of discussion to ensure the young carers health and development is safeguarded. Parent/carers are trained on our wellbeing framework to strengthen their role in supporting their child as a young carer.

One to one support: 50% of young carers went on to receive one-to-one support to explore their personal experience, understanding their caring role and identify strategies to help them to manage as they continue to care.

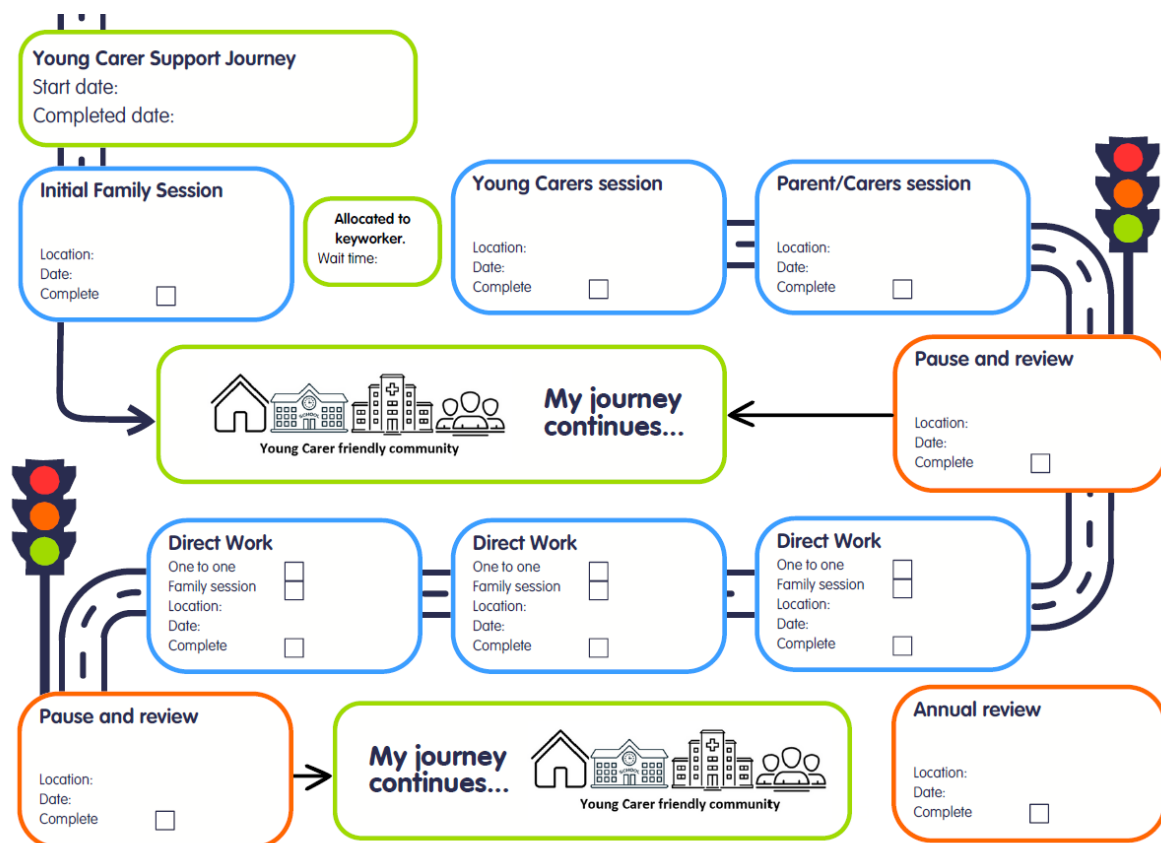
“It was great for both children to have 1:1 sessions so they could more open up and talk. It builded their confidence. - parents

It has been good. We could talk about how we can make ourselves and dad feel better and we learnt more things about young carers. – YC2 and YC3 (siblings)

“It has been a lot of fun. I have enjoyed seeing my keyworker and I now feel less worried about mum.” – YC4

“It has been helpful as I got to talk about things I would bottle up.” – YC5

“I have been very satisfied with the level of support provided, especially with YC6’s laptop [for college work]. I am more aware of not asking YC6 to do things. I was able to be honest, although eventually, and I am in contact with the right agencies. YC6 has made new friends and has now been doing full weeks at college.” - parent



Outreach, Respite and Engagement

Our diverse outreach and engagement programs provide respite and opportunity even after direct support concludes.

Young Carer Ambassadors Programme

Seven young carers have participated this academic year. Ambassadors meet monthly for leadership development sessions and are empowered to “Find Their Voice” to raise awareness and influence decision makers.

Ambassador Impact Highlights:

- Supported NHS Frimley’s survey on hospital services redevelopment.
- Contributed to the Young Carers National Voice group on a national level.
- Supported Family Action with important service update messages.
- Join an expert panels at the Young Carers All-Party Parliamentary Group reviews of Young Adult Carers access to Higher Education and Parental Mental Ill Health.

Generous partnerships and donations provided essential respite and fun for young carers and their families.

Carers Time Out Membership

34 young carers were referred to Leisure Focus, giving them free access to their local leisure centre to promote a healthy lifestyle and provide respite from their caring roles.

Your service is great because you are do-ers. YC7 is loving using the Time Out card to access the local gym, it makes a huge difference - parent

Donations and Events

Norden Farm and Legoland generously donated activity passes, which were gratefully received by 26 families.

9 brand new bikes were donated to our young carers by the charity team building company o3e. Young Carers were excited to have the opportunity to enjoy getting out in the fresh air in their local areas with their friends and families.



“We would like to thank everyone for your kind donation of a beautiful bike and all of the other stuff. Can’t thank you enough for everything” – YC8

“Thank you so much for YC8 + YC9’s bikes. They will be so excited! Really looking forward to taking them out on them and spending some quality family time together” - parent

“Thank you so much for this bike. It will help YC9 to get to work and with other transport. What Family Action does is brilliant!” - parent

35 families were gifted 150 tickets to watch Snow White the Panto at Braywick Leisure Centre, with thanks to donations from the Kevin Cruise Foundation, Cookham Dean Fete and Windsor Lions Club.

57 Young Carers received Christmas hampers, thanks to Family Action’s Toy Appeal and the Baby Bank Pyjama Appeal. We had a wonderful celebration day at our office, where parent/carers collected their children’s hampers and joined us for some hot drinks and mince pies.



“We can't thank you enough for everything you do for YC10 + YC11 and actually all the young carers. You've been so supportive and the idea of doing Christmas hampers just topped everything up. You're very kind and thoughtful.” – parents

“Seeing YC12's face light up over the hamper you gave him today means the absolute world. He loves his time with you. Everything you do makes a difference so don't forget it.” - parent

Trips and Residentials

13 young carers attended Longridge Activity Centre for a day of team building and fun activities together, funded by Cookham Bridge Rotary Club.



12 Young Carers attended Honeypot House for a residential, where they were able to enjoy a wide range of activities and build friendships with each other.



YC13 had a fantastic time at Honeypot House. She was even comparing it to her previous school residential, which she did not want to return to, and she said that if she has the opportunity, she would love to come back here again – which really says a lot.

Young Carers are reminded that they are eligible to access RBWM's FUEL programme under the extended criteria of 'young carer' and encouraged to participate in this varied activity programme.

“Being back on the FUEL programme is a really tangible example of being supported too. Again something I'm really grateful for.” - parent

System-wide Partnership and Training

We continue to drive systemic change across RBWM by raising awareness and embedding support systems within schools, workplaces, and healthcare settings

Young Carers Champions and Professionals Training

Family Action has trained 145 Young Carer Champions to date, who work to embed sustainable, positive systems of identification and support of young carers in their workplaces. We also routinely delivered a further 7 training sessions to 167 professionals in education and healthcare settings in 2025-26.

“Great training. I feel I could identify a YC and have taken away some new ideas how to support” - Teaching Assistant, Homer First Sch

“Absolutely loved it, amazing useful knowledge. Thank you for an amazing delivery of the training” – PCN Care Coordinator

“Enjoyed the visual and physical tasks. Didn't know much before but I have learnt a lot. Feel confident in putting the work in to practice.” – Pastoral Lead, Windsor Boys School



In addition to our YC Champions programme, we routinely deliver professionals training. In 2025-26, our service delivered a further 7 training sessions to 167 professionals in education and healthcare settings. Regular training enables us to ensure that information about and for young carers remains current and supports us to develop the support available to young carers within RBWM as a community.

“Insightful for a group setting to hear how other professionals work, giving ideas to others to improve” - PCN Care Coordinator

“The focus of this session on equality meant that it felt accessible and relevant for someone like myself who doesn't work directly with young carers or residents, but who still benefits from more awareness about the importance of considering and including young carers in our decision making” – Quality and Engagement Manager, RBWM

“The training session was exceptionally thorough, hugely informative, very well-structured, and expertly guided, providing a comprehensive and valuable overview of the support available for young carers within our local communities, as well as many of the challenges they and their families may face. As someone who did not have much prior knowledge in the field, I became a lot more aware of some of the relevant legislation, as well as key processes, organisations, and people young carers may count on to feel unconditionally supported in their daily lives.” – Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust Governor

Partnership Success: PCN Coding and Identification

Our partnership work with Windsor and Maidenhead PCNs was selected by NHS England to be used as a [best practice case study](#).

Key actions and outcomes from this partnership include:

- 139 Young Carers were requested to be coded on their medical records.
- 6-monthly wellbeing checks are progressing well with positive feedback.
- The SOP was adjusted to request contact upon receipt of the check-in letter and to contact young carers at age 18 to refer for an adult carers assessment.

Schools Evidence Data: Evidencing Progress

Three years of annual data collection on young carers in the school census has evidenced the strong partnership approach we have taken to identify, code, and support young carers in schools.

Census Year	2023	2024	2025
Total number of YCs identified	116	162	294

While 53% of schools in RBWM still recorded zero young carers in 2025 (significantly better than the national average of 69%), the total number identified has increased dramatically.

“I honestly really want to applaud you on the [for] the last 3 years. I think 3-4 years ago, no one knew what a YC was or had any regard for them. In looking at secondary schools this year, all schools talk about it, have policies on it and the best even run activities. This is an enormous step forward. it's part of the language now and something schools know they need to offer support on. This is incredible.” - parent

Many schools in RBWM have been trained to deliver regular young carer groups. During Q2, 6 schools successfully applied to RBWMs Carers Community Fund to deliver positive activities with their groups. Windsor Boys School used their funding to provide cooking sessions. YC Practitioner Sue Hoare visited one session and reported that there were 12 in the group altogether and they never forget to come for cooking with Chef Kev. AMAZING to see 😊



Next steps for 2026-27

The 2025-26 reporting year marks a period of significant achievement and progress in strengthening the support and identification of young carers across Windsor and Maidenhead.

A major success of this year has been the impact of our partnership and training programmes, which have driven profound systemic change and evidences a stronger network of recognition within educational settings and Healthcare. Complementing this systemic work, our generous partnerships allowed us to provide vital respite and positive activities, ensuring young carers can access opportunities for a healthy lifestyle and fun.

As we move forward, we are keenly aware of the need to build upon this progress to ensure no young carer is left without support.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the families who trust us, our Young Carer Ambassadors for sharing their voice, and the dedicated network of Young Carer Champions and professionals. Together, we reaffirm Family Action's commitment to making sure that young carers can continue to provide care while leading healthy and fulfilling lives.

Transfer of Young Carers Service to Achieving for Children

The Young Carers Service in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will transfer from Family Action to **Achieving for Children** starting **1 April 2026**. The service will be delivered as part of the **Family Hub** within the local authority's children's services.

Intended Outcomes and Impact:

- **Integrated Approach:** The transition is designed to strengthen alignment with wider services, creating a more integrated and coordinated approach to identifying and supporting young carers.
- **Service Continuity:** The existing Young Carers staff team will transfer to Achieving for Children to ensure continuity of relationships, expertise, and support. Service delivery is expected to continue with minimal disruption, and young carers will retain familiar points of contact where possible.
- **Capacity and Collaboration:** Bringing the service in-house will enable closer multi-agency working and improved information sharing, which is intended to increase the capacity to support more young carers and their families across the borough.

Family Action has been privileged to deliver the Young Carers Service in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the past 14 years. As the service transitions to Achieving for Children from April 1, 2026, the existing Young Carers staff team looks forward to transferring into Achieving for Children and working with our new colleagues to ensure the continued support for young carers and their families.