

Young Carers Project – Windsor and Maidenhead Newsletter

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Foreword by the Project Manager

Welcome to our annual newsletter for the academic year of 2019/20. This issue covers various topics to give you a roundup of the service we have provided throughout the year to young carers and their families that have been identified and supported in RBWM. Included are updates on the development of creating a 'Young Carer Friendly Community' within the Borough.

It has been a challenging second half of the year for all due to the COVID-19 pandemic; a lot of young carers and their families began self-isolating much sooner than the government requested due to existing health conditions, and many households were eventually 'shielding'. Working remotely via video link and phone calls has worked well and has made the service more accessible for some who may otherwise have struggled to access our service where location, transport or timings were a barrier. There are a few cases where face to face support has proved challenging and we are now starting to recommence some face to face support where necessary.

Going forward, this time has allowed us to reflect on the uptake, response to and benefits of having the option of face to face or video support and how to use this model for future use.

Being identified as a vulnerable group in the government guidance to schools on COVID-19 was a real breakthrough for young carers after decades of research and petitioning policy makers on the impact of caring on their education and own wellbeing. You can read more about how your school or service can get involved in our 'Young Carers Award Scheme' to help support this vulnerable group further still.

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.

Sarah Collin

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Young Carer Assessments

By law, all young carers are entitled to a Young Carers Assessment to ensure the right support is in place for their own development whilst balancing the needs of the person they care for. It is important to acknowledge young carers and let them know of their rights, even if they choose not to have a formal Young Carers Assessment. Young Carers so often describe themselves as feeling invisible in their roles. Yet, carers need care too.

We provide a full Young Carer Needs Assessment and a bespoke support plan. Our Young Carer Practitioners will work actively to reduce inappropriate caring roles and ensure caring is at a safe and healthy level.

To make a referral, contact:

rbwm.referrals@family-action.org.uk

Meet the Team



Sarah Collin – Project Manager

I have worked with Young Carers since 2006, making my way down the country from Lincolnshire to Berkshire. Over the years, I have worked alongside Carers Trust, The Children’s Society and the Department of Health and Social Care to help raise the profile of young carers through research and policy.

As Young Carers Project Manager, my role is to create a safe and inclusive space to reach families and help them explore the caring that is provided within their households. We support families to find suitable ways to balance the responsibilities of care needs, wellbeing and independence for both the carer and cared for.



Sue Hoare – Young Carers Practitioner

I first worked with young carers 14 years ago after being advised to find a job that helped me do what I love most. In 2018, I returned to working with young carers and their families in Windsor and Maidenhead. I really love it, and them.

As Young Carers Practitioner I look after all of the practical aspects of our service. Mainly making sure that all of the things we do with our children and young people are set up to keep them safe, help them make the most of their situation, guide them to fulfil their hopes and dreams and most of all to have FUN!

Scott - Volunteer



I have been volunteering since January 2019, helping with admin, groups and events.

I was a young carer for my nan in my early teens until she passed away in 2017. I am aware of the daily struggles that young carers face and all the worries they endure, and I wanted to help in any way possible.

Cate Stevens - Volunteer



I lead regular art and design based activity sessions and have shared my own experiences growing up as a young carer.

The reason I do this is because I want to offer some support to young carers, as I remember how difficult life could be sometimes when I was in their position myself.

Gemma – Volunteer



After years of focusing on my professional career, I have the flexibility to do things that make me feel fulfilled

Young carers are amazingly brave and they deserve ongoing recognition and support. Being able to contribute, even if a little tiny bit, to their happiness is rewarding, and I know I will also learn lots from them myself!



You can now follow us on Facebook! Keep up to date on our service and resources relevant to Young Carers and their families at <https://www.facebook.com/WindsorMaidenheadYoungCarers/>

Young Carers Wellbeing Programme

Up until lockdown, Family Action Young Carers had been running a monthly programme for 2 different age groups – middle school and upper school. Our aim is to equip Young Carers with skills, facilitate peer support and friendship and to provide respite from caring, exploring topics from our Young Carers Curriculum in fun and creative ways! This year, after consulting with our Young Carers and parents, we chose the topic:

Emotional Wellbeing

We are currently working with families and young carers to adapt our monthly sessions to a 6 – session group rather than a rolling monthly programme that can run remotely or face to face, given the current climate of uncertainty. This will enable Young Carers to access and benefit from a cohort of peer support and allow us to deliver Young Carer skills training in a timely manner on the following subjects:

- Understanding illness & disability
- Understanding my caring role
- Looking after my own emotional wellbeing
- Stress resilience
- Time for myself
- Caring & my future



In March, our upper school Young Carers had the opportunity to meet with 4 professionals who were former young carers, and listen to their stories of the challenges and positives of their life's journey. It was a very moving evening, and certainly raised the hopes and aspirations of those who attended.

Over lockdown, we moved our wellbeing sessions online, continuing our theme of Emotional Wellbeing – as it seemed very apt for the situation we found ourselves in. We have covered topics such as Stress Resilience and being seen as Young Carers.



"It's nice to speak to new people and listen to their stories." – 14 years old

"I enjoy it because I can open up to people and I am able to talk." – 15 years old

"I like the fact that there are other Young Carers out there!" – 16 years old

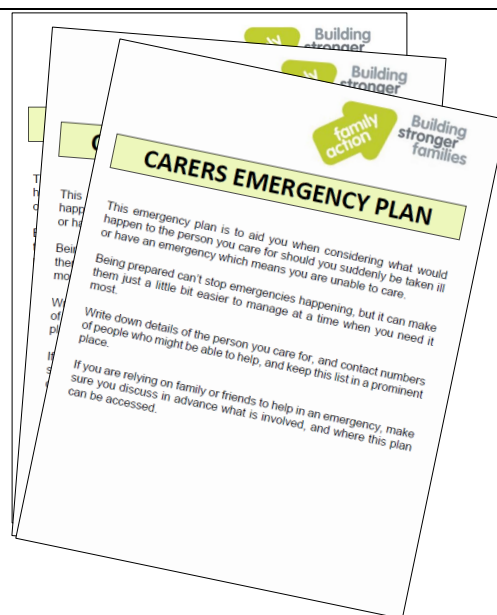
College drop in service

We work closely with Berkshire College of Agriculture and Windsor College to provide regular drop in services with the aim of identifying and triaging support to Young Carers before they leave education, completing Transition Young Carers Assessments when necessary. We look forward to being with our colleges again in the new academic year to continue this fantastic work.

Emergency Healthcare Plans

We advise all carers to create an emergency plan with the person they care for, to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be needed. Depending on the circumstances, this could be help from family or friends, or a care provider. If you or your loved ones have ongoing healthcare needs, it is important to ensure a list of medication, allergies and healthcare needs are up to date, along with a list of emergency contacts. Once completed, ensure that it is kept in an accessible place for everyone who needs to access it. To receive an Emergency Healthcare Plan, please email our team at rbwm.yc@family-action.org.uk

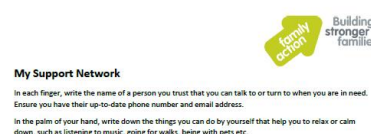
Consider ordering a Message in a Bottle healthcare emergency plan, which is widely recognised by emergency services across the UK. For more information about this scheme, and to order one, please visit the Lions Club website.



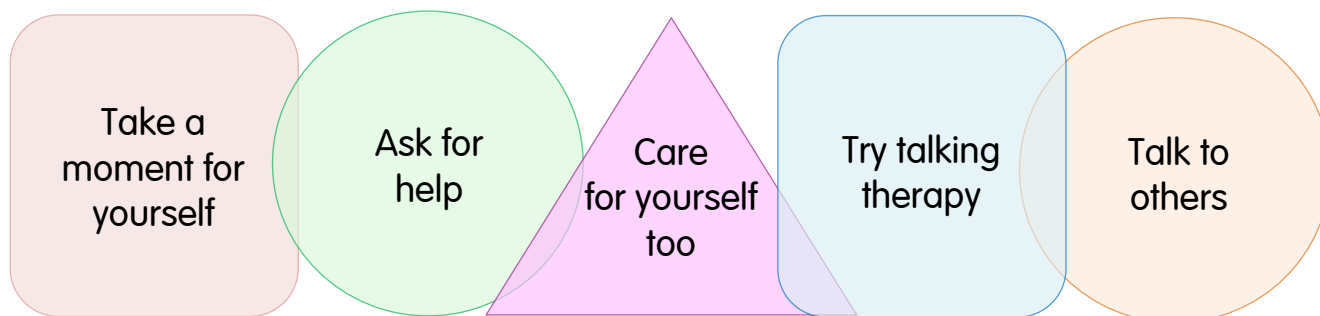
Support Networks

In any circumstance, it is helpful to be aware of your immediate support network – this can be made up of family members, friends, neighbours and contacts within the community. It is always advisable to have more than one contact within your support network. Having to organise alternative care can be difficult and concerning. Where possible, you should contact friends and family who may be able to give immediate help in providing care.

Creating a Support Network hand is a quick and easy way to identify who is in your support network. Simply draw around your hand, and each finger write one person you can call on for help. Don't forget to make sure that all phone numbers and email addresses of those in your support network are up-to-date in case you need them. In the palm of your hand, write down things you can do by yourself to have some time out, for instance read a book, go for a walk, have a quiet cup of tea.



Top Tips for Mental Wellbeing



Young Carers Award Scheme

We are delighted to be able to offer Healthcare, Education and Supporting Agencies the opportunity to partner with our **Identifying and Supporting Young Carers Award Scheme**.

You might not think there are any Young Carers in your setting, but young people with caring responsibilities are not always easy to identify.

It is vital that Healthcare, Education and Support Agencies take an approach to identify and support young carers.

One of the main reason young carers say they do not access support is **stigma**. A positive culture where young carers and their families are respected and valued by other young

people, staff and the wider community is crucial in ensuring young carers and their families feel safe and confident to access support.

Many young carers are **hidden**. All staff need to know how to identify young carers to ensure they do not slip through the net.

A young carer's family situation may change rapidly and ongoing formal and informal monitoring is therefore important.

This Award Scheme is focused on helping you to identify and support young carers within your own setting.

There are two elements to the Awards Scheme

Silver Award criteria:



- Nominate a Young Carers Champion/s within your organisation, and email their contact details to rbwm.yc@family-action.org.uk
- Young Carers Champion to attend the DHSC's Train the Trainer course, and subsequent reflective support sessions facilitated by Family Action Young Carers
- Sign a 'Working Together Agreement' with Family Action Young Carers, including a procedure to follow when referring a young carer to Family Action for a Young Carers Assessment
- Deliver Young Carers Awareness Training within your staff team and with young people within your service
- In staff teams, identify young people who may be taking on a caring role at home

Gold Award criteria includes all of the Silver Award criteria, plus:



- Deliver frequent Young Carers Support Groups or Drop In sessions (minimum of 1 per half term)
- Liaise regularly with Family Action staff through individual support and Reflective Sessions with other Young Carer Champions to evaluate, support, advise and share ideas and resources.

Young Carer Friendly Community

In October 2019, we completed a consultation with young carers and parents/guardians to gather their experiences of being seen as a young carer and supported within the community, and we have used their feedback to inform the way in which we have started to build a 'Young Carer Friendly Community' within RBWM.

Since January 2020, 20 services across healthcare, education and Early Help have pledged to support young carers in partnership with Family Action, with a number choosing to take on the national Young Carers Award scheme. These services have attended the Train the Trainer in the identification and Support of Young Carers within their own Settings to provide early intervention support for caring roles. Additionally, we have presented to the Early Help Governance Board, Children's Social Care and all schools during their Designated Safeguarding Leads meeting. We hope that families feel the difference from this and experience positive support for their young carers from across our community.



Our aim is for all young carers to feel seen, heard and supported within Windsor and Maidenhead!

Gifts and Donations :: THANK YOU WALL

Our respite activity breaks could not happen without the support of our generous donators, and we would like to say a huge **thank you** for their support this year!

<p>A huge thank you to the Cookham Rotary Club for choosing Young Carers to donate £1,250 of their fundraising!</p>	<p>Thank you to St Piran's School for raising £650 for young carers at your non uniform day!</p>	<p>Housing Solutions continued to support Young Carers and their staff have raised £1,500 through their dress down Friday's and other fundraising efforts!</p>
<p>The RBWM Democratic Services granted our service £2,000 to be able to offer many Young Carers access to Trauma Informed counselling – this has been greatly welcomed by those who have started their counselling sessions.</p>	<p>We have been honoured to receive two private donations of £1,000 and £150 respectively, which help us to continue to reach and support Young Carers!</p>	<p>Well done to everyone who attended our online quiz and auction during lockdown, which raised a fabulous £218!</p>

