

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 11 September 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Carl Harris – CEO Halton Carers Centre

PORTFOLIO: Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Young Carers Update

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report is an update on the work and achievements of Halton Carers Centre which has been produced on the request of Jill Farrell, Operational Director for Education, Inclusion and Provision.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy & Performance Board note the information provided.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton Carers Centre is the primary organisation working with young carers in Halton. Our aims as an organisation are to enhance well-being, build skills and increase knowledge for both young and adult carers in Halton.

3.2 2.7% of Children & young people in Halton were identified on the 2021 census as having a caring role. Halton has the highest proportion of unpaid carers amongst younger age groups in the country.

3.3 There are currently 954 young carers aged 5-17 registered with Halton Carers Centre, with added resources and capacity this figure would increase.

3.4 How Halton Young Carers Team supports registered young carers:

- Age appropriate groups and activities focused on increasing wellbeing
- 1-2-1 reviews with feedback from parents
- Information, advice and guidance
- Support for parent / guardian to gain the right support for the young carer
- Activities to promote family cohesion
- Access to carer break fund

- Training as appropriate
- Advocate between home and school
- Sessions in school
- Fun based activity sessions designed to give respite and build emotional resilience
- School holiday programmes
- Information about the condition of their loved one and how this plays out in reality
- Workers attending meetings MAP / CiN / CP to advocate for the young carer
- Support for both primary and secondary young carers

3.5 Things young carers may have to do at home:

- Cooking
- Housework
- Shopping
- Emotional support
- Helping with medication
- Helping with appointments
- Helping to pay bills
- Looking after Siblings

The effects of this are varied:

- It gets in the way of school and homework, resulting in lower than average attendance, persistent lateness and lower than average attainment
- It makes young carers tired, frustrated and even angry – affecting mental wellbeing
- Young carers can experience increased anxiety (heightened during Covid)
- There is less time for social interaction and simply ‘being a child’
- These all can lead to lower life chances and increased likelihood of mental ill-health

3.6 Currently Halton Carers Centre is commissioned by HBC and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board. However the majority of this is for our work with adult carers. Whilst we do receive some one off support from HBC for young carers and can apply for generic HBC project funding when it is available the vast majority of funding for this work is generated by HCC from other sources e.g. Steve Morgan Foundation, Trusthouse foundation. In 2022 we added an extra member of staff into the young carers team (funded externally) to increase capacity and whilst this was beneficial we still need more staff to meet demand. This has consequences for the future of the service as external funding becomes more competitive year on year.

3.7 Please see additional presented report.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 N/A

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As it currently stands Halton Carers Centre young carers provision is subject to external funding and is therefore not a secure service. Whilst our staff team is skilled in securing the additional income needed the external funding world is becoming increasingly more competitive and we are concerned regarding our ability to maintain the income generation required into the future.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Young Carers should be a priority group within the generic heading of children and young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Educational achievement is critical to the life chances of all children in the borough and attendance helps to maximise educational opportunity. 27% of Young Carers aged 11-16 regularly miss school. By increasing the support available to young carers we can minimise this.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Young Carers grow to be adult carers. We know that adult carers are more likely to experience poor mental and physical health.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Whilst we are in receipt of a pooled budget for work with carers in the borough we would be grateful if designated young carers funding could be considered.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None identified

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 9.1 HBC has a responsibility to young carers. We believe there are more risks in leaving the situation as it is meaning our young carers services is subject to the risks of the external funding world.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 10.1 The proposals meet any requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 11.1 None under the meaning of the Act.