



# Young Carers Service

A baseline assessment

**healthwatch**  
East Riding of Yorkshire

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Cover picture: Open field in countryside with stacked hay bails and young person posing.

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# Young Carers

## Introduction

### About Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire

Healthwatch provides an independent voice for the residents of the East Riding of Yorkshire. We listen to people's lived experiences of health and social care services and report these experiences back to service providers. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.



#### Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



#### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and social care better.

### Our approach – what is important to us?



- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with the Government, health and care services and the voluntary and community sector to make care better whilst retaining our independence.

## **About the Young Carers**

A Young Carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, has low mental health or is physically unwell or who misuses substances. Young Carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care and the structure of the family. Some Young Carers may undertake high levels of care, whereas for others it may be frequent low levels of care. Either can impact heavily on a child or young person.

Being a young carer can make young people feel good about themselves and proud of the useful skills they learn. However, many young carers don't see themselves as carers and miss out on getting the help and support they often so desperately need and deserve. Young carers take on caring responsibilities not just occasionally but as part of their everyday lives, often over a long period of time, meaning they also often miss out on opportunities that other children have to play, learn and just be young people.

The Voices That Influence team are here to help young people understand their family member's condition and learn how to cope. They also help young carers build positive relationships outside of their family. The Young Carers service endeavours to reduce the impact of caring on young people by providing activities, workshops, and other support to balance their caring responsibilities with being a child. The service strives to provide opportunities for Young Carers to learn and have fun to improve their mental and physical well-being.

## **Aims of the assessment**

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire agreed to carry out a baseline as an impartial body, reviewing the service. The purpose is to gather an overview of involvement of those involved with delivering sessions and/or support. The views and desires of young people and their families were also sought to discover the impact of the service as it is to date and provide guidance in direction of the offer as the service evolves.

In carrying out a baseline assessment within the first twelve months of the service making changes it allows a review to take place at future intervals to ensure progress has been made.

## Partners

During the East Riding Young Carers Offer Stakeholder Workshop, the 40 attendees were urged to each complete a survey to gather a baseline assessment of how Young Carers factor into local organisations and roles. The survey was open for 5 weeks following the workshop with reminders sent. Of the 40 attending, 14 responses were received.

Results were as follows.

\*Please note, qualitative data is shared together with some instances of similar information being received by multiple organisations.

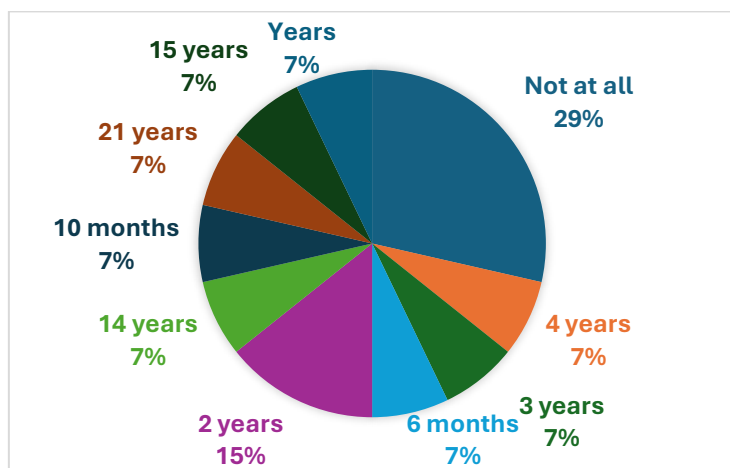
### What organisations and department or team within it do you work for?

East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) Public Health	2
Yorkshire Health Partners	2
Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire	2
Voices That Influence	1
NHS Humber Trust	1
Active Communities	1
Community Vision	1
Education Welfare Services	1
Cherry Tree Centre	1
ERYC Learning, Skills & Workforce Development	1
HEY Mind - Therapy Services Team	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

### Do you work...

Full-time	12
Part-time	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

## How long approximately have you worked with Young Carers?



## What are the services key objectives and priorities?

The responses have been collated and cover all services of respondents. Some objectives and priorities were duplicated by more than one service.

- Health protection including infectious disease, vaccinations, screening, emergency preparedness and close links to sexual health.
- Flexibility in services offered to meet the needs of people with other commitments.
- Promoting health literacy.
- Positive Lifestyles programme, focusing on outdoor activities for young people, working with other youth groups.
- Engage and support young people at risk of anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce inactivity levels among young people.
- Enhance the physical, mental, and social activity.
- Improve emotional wellbeing through positive activities.
- Providing a voice for change for young carers.
- Comprehensive support network of services to meet individual young carer needs.
- Group session for young carers.
- Young carer assessments.
- Support children and young people with health and wellbeing in a holistic, person-centred way.
- Link to useful resources.
- Signposting and referring to services.
- Deliver Healthy Child programme within the East Riding.
- Gathering feedback about health and social care experiences
- Creating reports based on work carried out monthly, quarterly and annually.
- Feeding public voice into our networks to influence change.

- Share good practice recognition.
- Stop smoking services to be available across the East Riding.
- Embed health into policies and processes across the local authority.
- Listen to young carers voice, support in influencing services and policies both locally and nationally.
- Support young carers accessing education.
- Provide a space to be a young person rather than young carer.
- Support claiming benefits.
- Community pantry.
- Preschool.
- Housing project.
- Volunteers.
- Learning and skills development.
- Counselling and therapeutic support for children and young people.
- Early intervention and prevention to support emotional wellbeing of young people.

### **What / how much of these objectives and priorities relate to Young Carers within your working week?**

The responses have been collated and cover all services of respondents. Some objectives and priorities were duplicated by more than one service.

- Currently less than 1 hour per week.
- No specific amount of time.
- Full working week.
- Varies according to caseload.
- Unsure.
- 1-5 hours per week.
- Not something we currently consider but will in the future.

### **What (if any) are the main barriers or challenges in your role relating to engaging and supporting Young Carers?**

- Young Carer identification by professionals / not self-identifying.
- Engagement (where can we talk to Young Carers)
- Concern surrounding Young Carers experiencing health fatigue by proxy and not wanting to discuss their own health issues.
- Timings (service not operating at times convenient for Young Carers).
- Drop-in sessions offered – does not give full background of complexities young people may be facing.
- Funding.

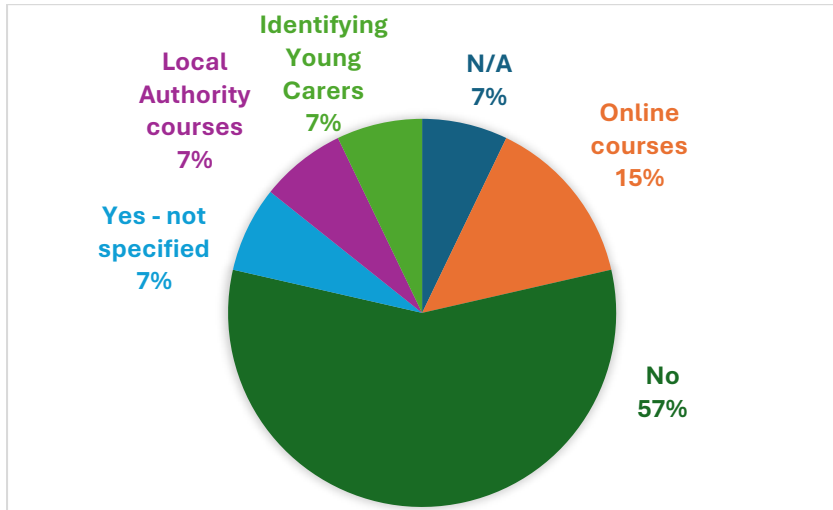
- Appropriate venues.
- Transport.
- School support for Young Carers / working with services.
- Lack of promotion about Young Carers (resources and comms to share).
- Lack of knowing what services are available for Young Carers.
- Lack of representation of Young Carers within specific groups relating to health.
- Not enough evidence of health inequalities and life experiences of Young Carers.
- Reduced consistency in attendance.
- Young Carers unable to prioritise themselves over their caring commitments.

### **If you shared barriers, what do you feel could / would be a solution?**

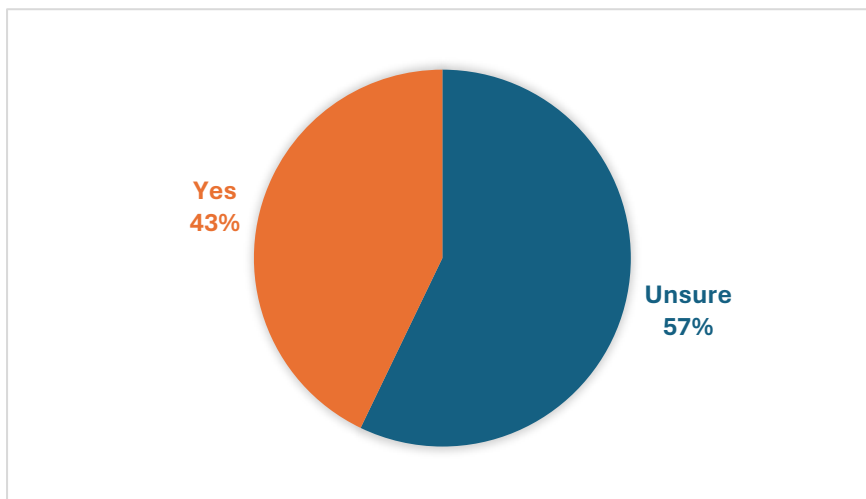
- Coproduction with Young Carers.
- Improved data sharing across the Local Authority, health services and VCSE organisations.
- Education for professionals into how to identify a Young Carer.
- Identified Young Carers broken down into groups to offer location and time appropriate support.
- Funding – internal and external funding sources.
- Well equipped, suitable, permanent venue/s.
- Travel passes for Young Carers.
- Leisure passes for Young Carers.
- Young Carers I.D badges – potential for discounts to be offered etc.
- Have a list / directory of activities available to Young Carers.
- Improved communication – MDTs, newsletter, updates etc.
- Continuously develop relationships between services involved with Young Carers – not reaching crisis to connect.
- Policy changes for more support to be mandatory – surrounding school attendance, support in lessons etc.
- Gather more evidence on inequalities and health trends faced by Young Carers.
- Support and development of key workers / staff who have direct involvement with Young Carers.
- More opportunities to share good practice and ideas.
- Respite for Young Carers – cover their caring needs whilst they access support and be a young person.



## Have you undertaken any training for your role specifically relating to Young Carers?



## Do you feel there is any additional training that would help you in working with Young Carers?



## If yes, what training would you like to receive?

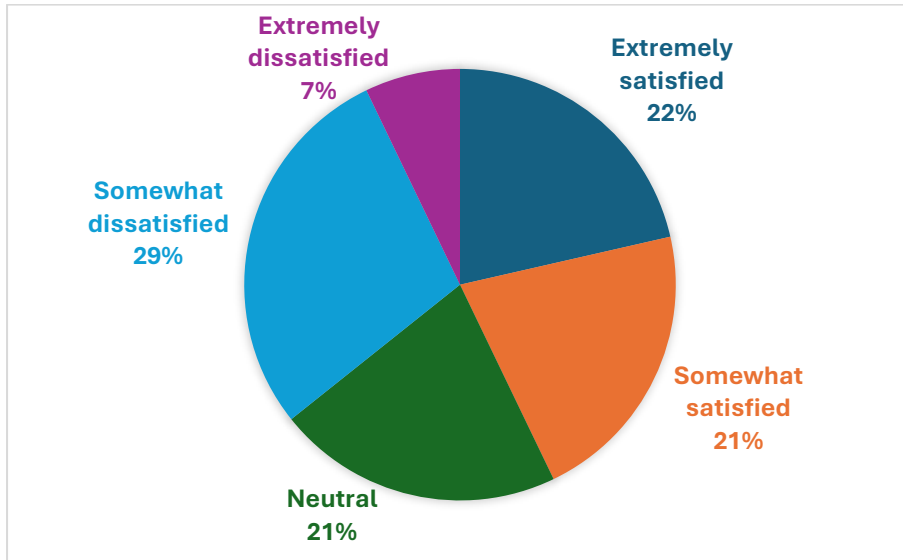
- How to support a person.
- Whole service training – what constitutes as a Young Carer, what support is available and to specifically hear Young Carers voices.

- Different ways to identify a Young Carer.
- Trauma informed training.
- Knowing the challenges Young Carers may face.
- How to assist Young Carers having a voice.
- Training for all staff working within education to aid their understanding.
- How to raise awareness.

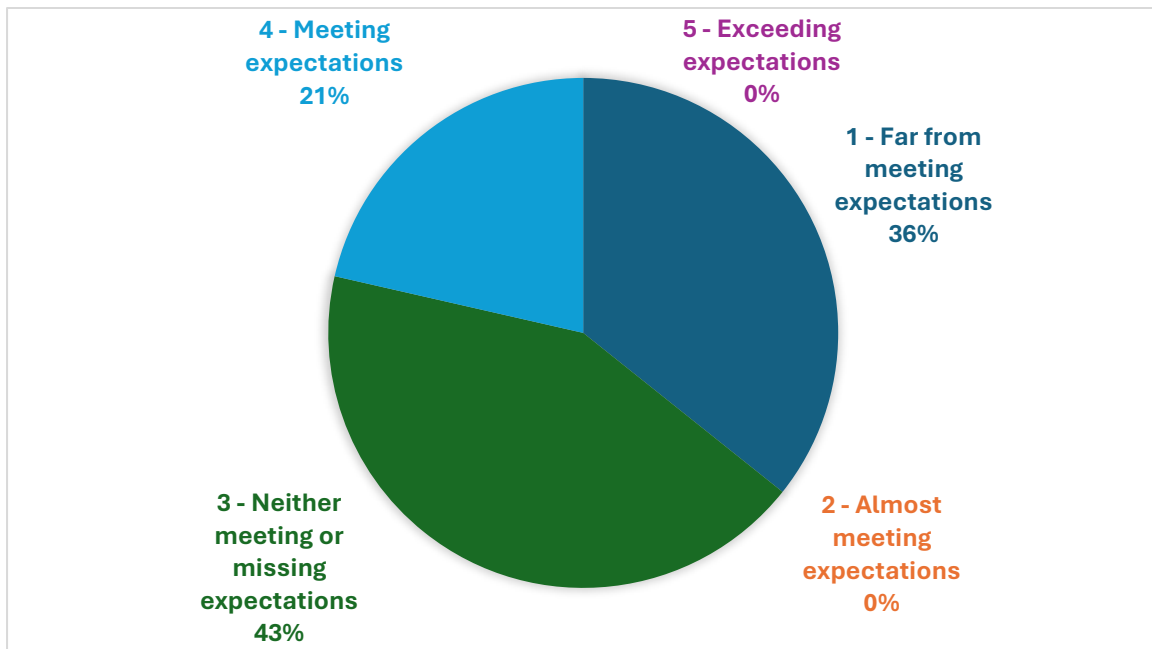
**Please share your biggest achievement / success / win from working with Young Carers.**

- Sadly, none to note.
- Unable to comment as I don't feel I have made enough impact.
- Coproduced events with Young Carers.
- Two successful activity groups.
- Made amazing awareness videos.
- Run holiday activities such as forest skills, drama workshops etc.
- Created a warm safe welcoming space for Young Carers to be themselves.
- Connecting young people to form friendships outside of their caring commitments.
- Connecting Young Carers to activities.
- Still looking!
- None yet.
- Being involved in the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) piece of work.
- None.
- None yet, not aware of any carers within current working groups.
- Supporting Young Carers to access education.
- Working with education settings to ensure no undue pressure is placed on the family regarding attendance.
- Identifying Young Carers.
- Coordinating additional support.

**Overall, how satisfied are you with the support you can offer Young Carers within your role?**



**How would you rate the impact Young Carers experience as a result of your role or organisation?**



## **Please give a brief explanation of why you gave the impact score above.**

- Lack of understanding.
- Lack of engagement.
- Not offering enough support currently.
- Not accessible.
- Frustration at having too many tasks to for the areas covered.
- Having to prioritise essential administration over actual Young Carer engagement.
- Able to accurately identify Young Carers through remaining professionally curious.
- Making referrals for Young Carers.
- Making space as inclusive as possible.
- Difficulty identifying Young Carers.
- Not being able to offer a bespoke event.
- Solely signposting.
- Not involved currently.
- Not sure what the expectations are.
- Better understanding what services are developing for their offer to work better together.
- Working with a vast array of people, it is hard to make one group a priority.

## **Is there anything else you would like to share about working with Young Carers?**

- Young Carers are amazing and an absolute honour and privilege to support these incredible young people, their unselfish commitment and dedication to their families is truly overwhelming. These young people are our unknown heroes of our community and I'm in awe of how hard they work and astonished at times by the lack of support they have. In my role I will give anything I have to support these truly inspirational young people.
- Older young carers think it is not for them. Maybe something that helped or would if younger eg. Primary school age. Having their own interests and support network maybe. Perhaps this is something that can be looked into, the differing age range, different groups for different ages, want different things as a Young Carer, maybe more activities based when younger and pampering groups to support older ones.
- They are the most amazing and resilient young people.
- I would like to see Young Carers made a priority in more circles and beyond conversations into actions for wider impact, involving the community.
- I feel one of the issues we have in the East Riding is the delay in having a Young Carers strategy and action plan, which means it has fallen off the rails of many services. It's great to see it is now being put back on the main agenda and that

there are so many services across the area who want to support and engage with Young Carers, we are one of them.

- Not sure if this survey is helpful as we are not currently doing any work, however, we would very much like to support this work and I will follow up on connections made today to ensure we do play a part going forward.

## **Partners Baseline overview.**

### **Objectives and priorities.**

Young Carers as a current priority across all services varies. Some organisations have clear identified cohorts which include Young Carers. For some services, Young Carers had not been a conscious factor until taking part in the stakeholder events. Others so not define the groups they work with, or working with young people does not fall directly within their remit.

Recommendation.

- Review the Young Carer stakeholder attendees – are the right services around the table, is there anyone missing, are the right people from organisations attending

### **Time spent to focus on Young Carers.**

Most organisations had a small allowance of time to dedicate to Young Carers specifically. Responses indicate that there are fewer services with sole focus on the Young Carer community. This may suggest that Young Carers are being supported, however their support is integrated into other groups. It is important to note, this could be considered a positive, allowing time to be a young person first in an environment which does not have caring responsibilities as a common factor with peers.

Recommendations.

- Ensure within a strategy that there is a mixture of Young Carer focused and mixed cohort available.
- Potential to offer a 'lite' version of support if attending and having needs met by non-Young Carer groups, somewhere to drop-in if needing information, advice and support ad hoc without needing to be a regular attendee.
- Remind all stakeholders, whatever their role allows, it is OK. All organisations and roles have different objectives and time is allocated accordingly.

### **Barriers or challenges within job role.**

There were multiple barriers listed for most respondents and most responses having been encountered by others. Although barriers are highlighted within the findings, themes arising are as follows.

- Communication.
- Education.
- Resources.
- Accessibility.

As respondents shared their thoughts and ideas for solutions, recommendations are not included in this section.

### **Ideal for potential solutions to barriers.**

As with barriers, many solutions were offered with most being duplicated by other respondents suggesting a collective opinion of ways to move forward. These were as follows. Some recommendations within this section directly link to the training request from those who felt it would be appropriate/needed.

- Improved communication.
- Education for both young people to self-identify, professionals who may come into contact with Young Carers and those who currently specifically identify carers.
- A directory of support for Young Carers.
- Working together with other services to share resources such as a place, time, funding and ideas.
- Resources for enabling independence and inclusion for Young Carers.
- Holistic approach to support the family around the Young Carer.

Recommendations.

- Creation of clear communications to be distributed to the stakeholder group for wider communication surrounding what a Young Carer is, what support is available and how to access this.
- Training packages to be created for a variety of audiences – Young Carers themselves, professionals, and family/friends. This should include; identification, who can support and how and knowledge of factors that Young Carers may face.
- Continue to nurture and expand relationships within the stakeholder group to enable share use of resources.
- Form a directory (relates to communication recommendation) of services that could support Young Carers with clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, how to access etc.

### **Successes, wins and achievements.**

All respondents feedback has been shared within the main body of the report, with some being summarised already. It is important again to note, those who do not feel they have had any impact on Young Carers is not to be considered in a negative light and related to having recently, or soon to begin, working with / considering Young Carers within their role, or they do not work directly with young people.

Similarly, when considering individuals satisfaction with their role / organisation and impact for Young Carers, it is vital to remember this is an initial baseline assessment and not all have previously focused on or considered the Young Carer cohort.

### **Final reflections.**

There are some incredible achievements which highlights there are stakeholders who have a lot to offer the wider group in terms of knowledge and good practice.

It is evident that those attending the stakeholder group were moved and inspired by the Young Carers and the work the Young Carers team have done so far.

Work surrounding Young Carers is beginning to infiltrate other arenas creating wider awareness proving success in a short period of time since the meeting took place.

There is a strong desire from stakeholders to improve identification, awareness and support.

## Young Carers

A survey was produced to gather information from Young Carers relating to their experience of accessing the service. There were 12 responses. This also provided an opportunity for those who are Young Carers but have not accessed the service to share why which received 1 response.

Results were as follows.

\*Please note, qualitative data is shared together with some instances of similar information being received by multiple respondents.

### How old are you?

10 years old	2
11 years old	1
12 years old	3
13 years old	5
14 years old	1
16 years old	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

### Which do you identify as?

Female	6
Male	5
Other	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

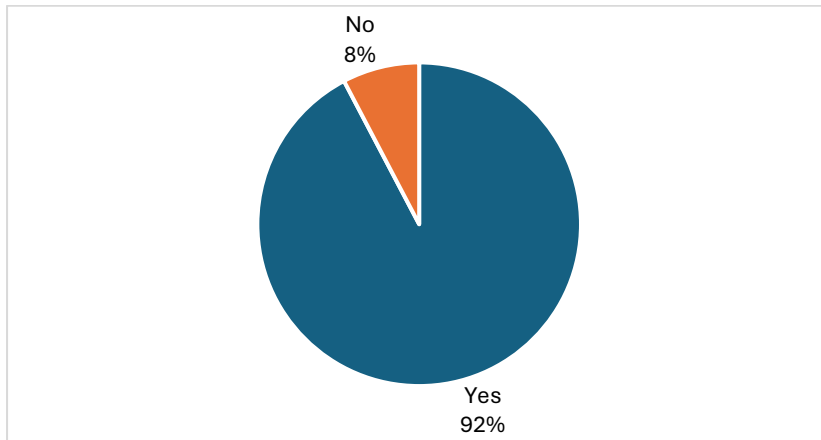
### What is the first part of your postcode?

YO25	9
YO42	1
YO16	1
YO86*	1
HU10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

\*YO86 appears to be an error, however, for transparency of responses, it has been included.



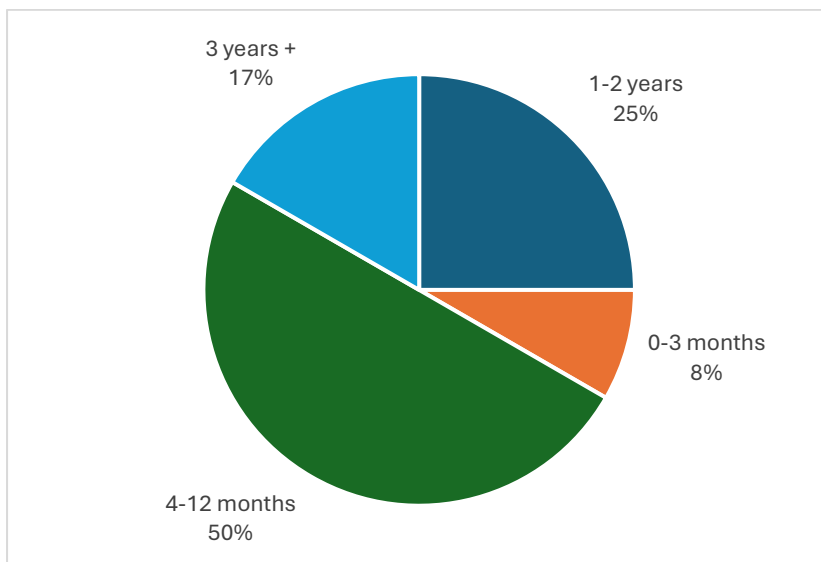
## Have you accessed the Young Carers service before?



## Of those who replied 'No', they were asked 'What stopped you accessing the service?'

Didn't know about the service.

## Roughly how long ago did you join the Young Carers service?



## What has been your favourite part of Young Carers?

- Finding people I can relate to.
- Only been here 20 minutes, it's a bit awkward.
- Coming to young carers so I'm not at home.

- The food and the people here.
- Meeting new people that do the same things as me.
- Meeting other girls and boys who are young carers.
- I feel it's a good safe open space to be able to talk.
- I really enjoy seeing Richie, Adele and the other workers. They're all so nice and friendly.
- Meeting new people, having fun, playing snooker and gaming at Driffield.
- I'm not sure.
- Meeting new friends, participating in activities, getting away from home for some me time.
- Richie and the team are nice and fun.
- Having fun with new friends.
- Meeting new friends - knowing someone is there to help.
- Being able to get out and have fun.
- Meeting new people who relate to me in a different way that I wouldn't have met in regular life.

### **What has been your least favourite part of Young Carers?**

- Talking.
- Feeling new and probably a bit old.
- Nothing.
- Not many people I fit in with.
- When I can't go.
- Sometimes I feel tired when I get there.
- I get a little anxious around meeting new people.
- I get travel sick if going a long way.
- Sometimes I don't meet people, and I feel lonely as I wasn't to enjoy it with people my own age who understand me.
- Sometimes I feel displaced and don't have as much fun as I should.

### **How has been part of Young Carers helped you?**

- Speaking about things that everyone else understands.
- It hasn't yet (completed survey the day of joining).
- Helps me cope.
- I get help and it brings me out of my comfort zone meeting new people.
- Meeting new friends and it's hopefully getting me towards an ADHD diagnosis.
- It's helped me understand I'm not the only one with a mum/parent who is poorly.
- I meet other kids who have an ill family who care for them, nobody else understands.
- Meeting new people.
- I've gained so much more confidence and reassurance from meeting other young people like me.

- The sessions are always fun and welcoming.
- It's a great place to be and the staff are really great. They're always there if you need to talk or help with anything.
- Richie talking to me about how I feel.
- I've been able to talk to other young people about how I feel.
- I've met some really nice people that I probably would have not known about until I went to young carer groups.
- It helps me get out the house, have less stress and be more active.

### **Is there anything you would like to change or add to the Young Carer service that would make it better?**

- No/nothing.
- More people my age would be better (older age bracket)
- Sessions more often.
- More activities and maybe group activities.
- Some days out, especially in the holidays.
- Some days out or weekend camping.
- To go on a residential or have Richie come into school and support me.
- Places near home.
- Football matches.
- Do more events and visit more places.
- Wrestling.
- Days out would be nice.
- I don't mind because I already like the service.
- Someone to talk about my mental health.
- An ADHD diagnosis.
- Keep it as it is but have some days out even if that's just a walk on the beach that doesn't cost anything.
- Camping.
- Lads' night.
- Paint balling.
- Go karting.
- Cooking things to eat.
- Visiting places.
- Support in school.
- Counselling.
- More groups.
- Larger activities include a larger group so that I can throw myself into the experience more.
- Mixing with other groups that aren't young carers.

## **Young Carer Baseline Overview.**

### **Demographic**

Majority of the respondents were based in the YO25 area which is where one of the sessions are held.

#### Recommendations

- Further investigation to determine if this is consistent with those registered with the service.
- Explore venue options with partners to offer a wider offering.
- If after investigation, YO25 area identification is increased, identify ways to replicate this within other locations within the county.

### **Awareness**

Although there was only one response saying they were unaware of the service, ideally everyone would have awareness of/or have it recommended by someone else.

#### Recommendation

- Partners to support with promotion/awareness.
- Celebrate successes publicly – stakeholder videos were an excellent example of Young Carers having their voices heard. Creating service and/or Young Carer success stories to prompt conversations within communities and networks.

### **Duration of accessing the service**

From the data, it is evident that there has been a considerable amount of work in the last 12 months to promote and recruit new Young Carer members. It is important to consider the reshaping of the model/service in the first quarter of 2024 which may account for any loss of longer standing Young Carers during the time the service was dormant, and recent increase when the sessions continued/evolved.

#### Recommendations

- To complete regular check-ins to ensure the service and/continues to meet the needs of those who attend sessions.
- To ascertain the reasons why anyone decides to leave/disengage with the service if it isn't due to age (turning 18).

## **What Young Carers enjoy**

From responses received, Young Carers are clear that they enjoy the sessions and value the staff involved in those sessions. Many points raised were duplicated in saying they liked that they were united by being carer, but this wasn't the defining purpose of the sessions which allowed them to be a typical young person and set their worries aside. The level of support staff provide was acknowledged as positive factor. The sessions also provide access to people and activities they may not have without the service which is clear that communities are being built within the groups.

## **What Young Carers do not enjoy**

There were multiple responses stating there was nothing the Young Carers disliked about the service. Of those that did leave a response, the main theme related to anxiety whether that is fitting in, socialising or being unable to unwind. One respondent was unhappy when they could not attend.

Recommendations.

- Soft introductions – if Young Carers could create a bio to make those joining aware of who was in the group, their likes and hobbies for example, it might allow them to prepare for starting conversations.
- Develop a way to include those who might not be able to attend a session – for example, if it is a session with a particular theme, could a version be posted out for them to complete at home instead?
- Connect with partners to discuss venue options and ease the burden of travelling for those Young Carers who find this challenging.

## **Impact of the service**

Young Carers (with the exception of the young person who had joined the service the day they completed the survey) all expressed the immense benefit of being connected to others in a similar position, and the support they felt. Meeting new people with a common understanding of the challenges they each face is highly valued.

## **Changes and additions to the service**

Several responses said they would not change anything, and those who did respond did not express any changes they wanted but offered suggestions for additions to the service. Overnight/residential activities was a popular theme followed by more outdoor sessions.

Recommendations.

- Connect with partners who have an existing overnight/residential offer.

- Consider providing outdoor activities when winter permits.
- Linking with other groups who are not Young Carers.

### **Final reflections.**

Young Carers are clear in their feedback that they highly value the service and staff. Although the number of respondents was low compared to the amount registered with the service, there were common themes throughout.

The service has a strong, positive impact on those who attend and ought to be proud of the work they do.

Partnership working in the future will be key to the wider awareness, identification and activity offer for the Young Carers.

### **Family**

A survey was produced to gather information from the families of those who are registered and attend Young Carers sessions. The purpose was to ascertain any barriers that may be faced, the impact the service has for the family and their wishes for the service in the future. Due to a technical issue at Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire, the survey was unable to be completed in the initial timeframe allocated. As a result, the survey was extended. No formal responses were received, however one family member used the Healthwatch generic feedback form to offer their views. The results are as follows.

\*Some information has been redacted to protect the identity of the family and the Young Carer.

### **Family response**

'We have had a wonderful experience with the young carers team. They have been instrumental in our daughters social activities. This is a lifeline for her as she spends time caring for me as I am disabled and she also misses out on a lot of social aspects of life. Young carers has enabled her to take time for herself and interact with her peers whom of which are in similar situations.

I cannot praise the young carers team enough as they have helped liaise with school and advocated for [the child] in situations that would help her voice be heard. All their abilities to help us as parents liaise with the schools and communicate ours and [child's] needs are brilliant and valuable tools to have on side.'

### **Final reflection.**

As with the young carer responses, it is evident that the value of the staff and service as a whole is acknowledged and appreciated. The Young Carer service impact reaches beyond that of the individual young person, into the home of the family and the education setting.

## **Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire would like to thank the Young Carers Service team within the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, all partnering agencies who attended the stakeholder event, professionals who completed baseline assessment surveys, the Young Carers who took part in the assessment and the family who submitted feedback. Photo credit: Jan Cook – Resident of East Riding of Yorkshire.



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East Riding of Yorkshire

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