

Progress Report	Project End Report: 8.3 Increase by 20% the number of registered young carers accessing support from the Young Carers service by 2025.
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Governance Group	CPA Management Group – 26th February 2025

Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project 8.3 which sought to Increase by 20% the number of registered young carers accessing support from the Young Carers service by 2025 and seeks approval to close this project as the aim has been achieved.

Summary of Key Information

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Young carers are one of the biggest single groups of children in need. Estimates suggest that in a city the size of Aberdeen, there may be up to 2,000 children and young people aged between 5 to 18 years who undertake caring responsibilities. The caring role that young carers undertake place a significant demand on their lives that negatively impact on their social time, peer relationships, education, family relationships, age and stage experiences and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, statistics in Scotland show that 80% of young carers feel that they miss out on childhood experiences, 48% young carers miss or cut short school days per year and 68% of young carers experience bullying in school (The Scottish Government, 2015).
- 1.2 Research from Barnardo’s and Children’s Society shows that young carers are 1.5 times as likely to be from BAME communities, and twice as likely to not speak English as a first language. Therefore, it is vitally important to raise awareness for the most marginalised young carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.
- 1.3 There is a lack of referrals of young carers of parents who use substances, and this is unsurprising because we know that these young carers are often hidden. Children and young people in families affected by substance use are very reluctant to inform others they are experiencing these circumstances. This is usually due to the stigma surrounding their parents’ drug or alcohol misuse and the fear of social work involvement. This low number of referrals and lack of these young carers being identified is a concern because it is known that there are many children in Aberdeen City living in substance use families. One reason for professionals not seeking support from our service maybe due to their initial assessments being based on Child Protection and whether removal of the child is necessary. Consideration may not be given to explore other supports such as young carers service alongside statutory involvement.

2. IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

- 2.1 Against this background, the CPA Board approved the project charter for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to Increase by 20% the number of registered young carers accessing support from the Young Carers service by 2025.

- 2.2 This multi-agency project team agreed to focus a number of approaches with a view to:
- To provide training to professional in helping refer those identified as young carers to access support
 - Addressing the current barriers to young carers being identified and supported
 - Improve partnership working to increase and widen support opportunities and direct referral of young carers exploring and developing a system to match partner agencies who can work with and for the needs of our kinship families.

3. **WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?**

3.1 The following changes were tested by the project:

- Training delivered to school staff and other professionals to refer young carers onto right supports
- A direct referral route of young carers from CAMHS/ADA/Charles House/Roxburgh House, Fit Like Hub to ensure that the young carer is identified and referred for support directly at the earliest opportunity.
- Developed engagement activity across the year to promote Partnership working
- Co-designed with young carers information to be provided at drop-in sessions, PSE classes and assemblies to speak directly to young people to raise their awareness for young carers to self-refer

4. **HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?**

4.1 Since the approval of the project charter in June 2023, the changes have resulted in an improvement. The project achieved a 20% increase in Young Carers supported between June 2023 and December 2024 (126 in June 2023 to 151).

Figure 1.1 Number Young Carers Accessing Support

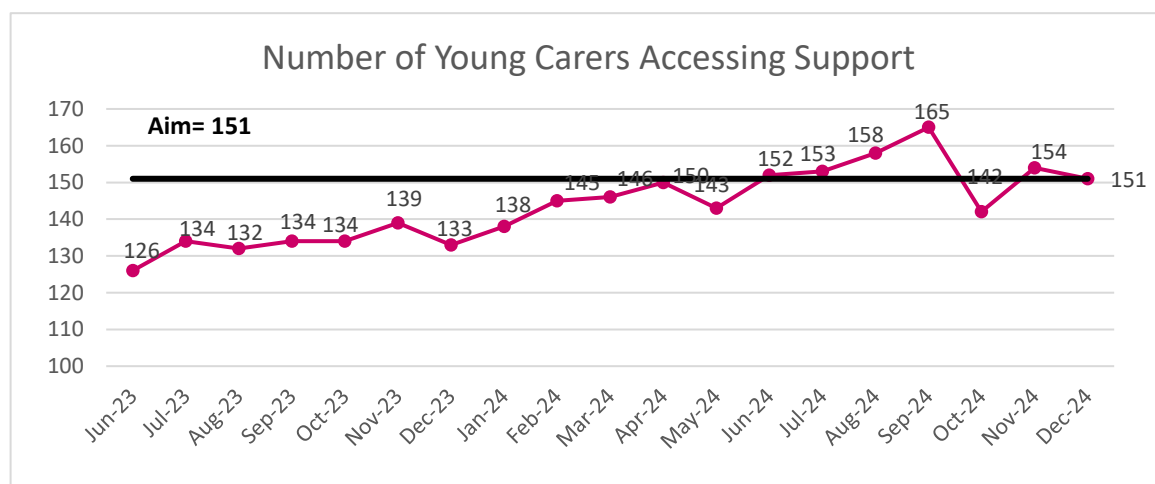
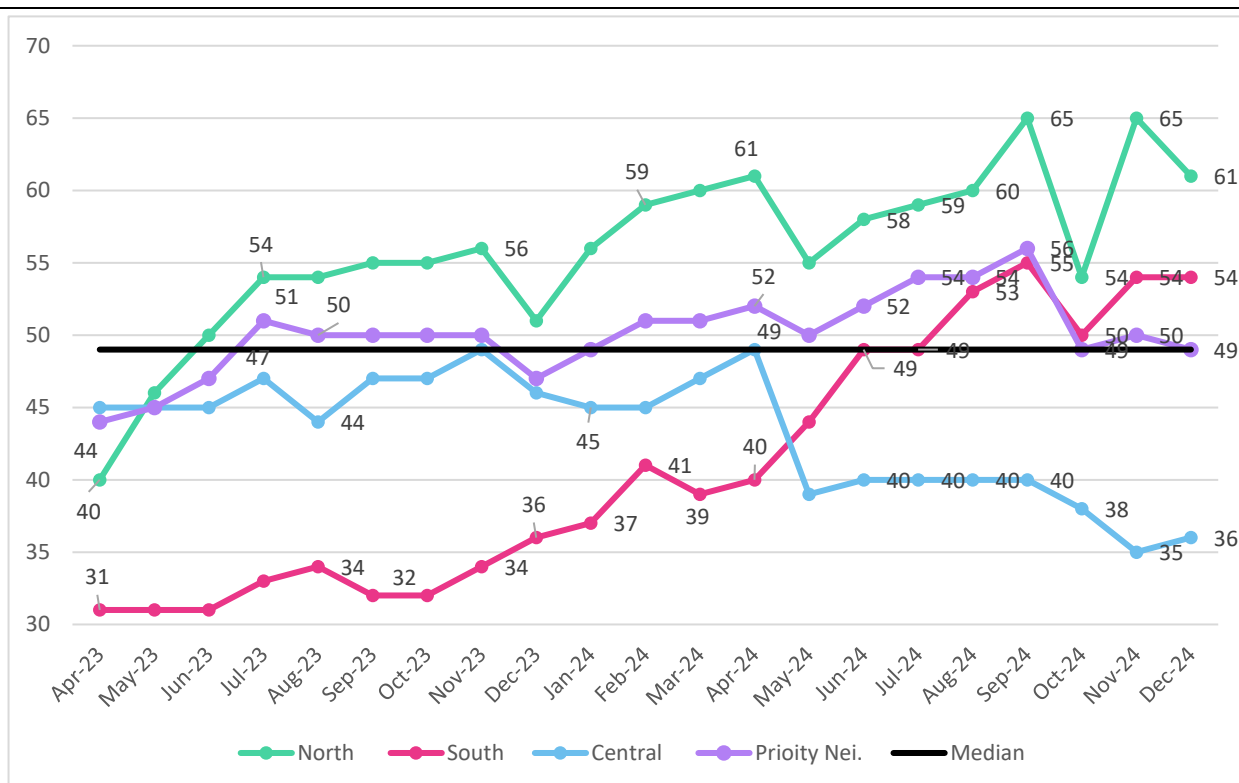


Figure 1.2 Number Young Carers Accessing Support by Locality

4.2 Of those whose address was recorded, data shows there has been increases in the number of young carers supported in two of the localities 53% (21) in North and 75% (23) in South; as well as a 23% increase in Priority Neighbourhoods. There has been decrease in the number supported in the central locality of 20%.

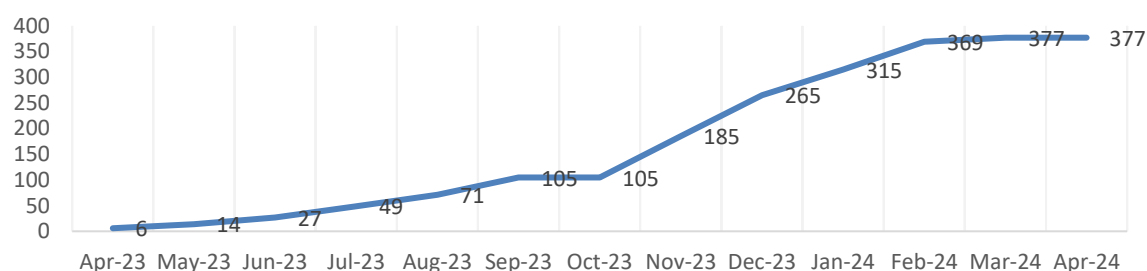


4.3 The project saw a moderate increase in the number of BAME Young Carers from 16 in June 2023 to 23 December 2024. However, we recognise that this is a result of a general increase in the number of young carers. Further work is ongoing to work with agencies such as GREC and Touch of Love to link more with these communities to support identifying where these young people may be young carers. We will review our training to provide more emphasis around identifying this group of young people.

4.4 The number of Young Carers identified as coming from homes with substance misuse has increased from 5 in June 2023 to 8 in December 2024. The increase is due to our partnership with Alcohol and Drugs Action (ADA) and them providing numbers of young carers identified within their service. We recognise again that this is an area where more specific and targeted training may be needed. Part of the issue remains that this is often a hidden group of young people across services and when they do become known that they may quickly be seen as children who need more specialist or intensive support, and the young carer aspect may be missed. We continue to work with ADA around this area of work.

4.5 The increases that we have seen have been achieved by targeted promotion and providing the “Think Young Carer Toolkit” training to all schools, external organisations including Health services, Education services, Police Scotland, and numerous Third Sector agencies 15 directly and connecting with others through ACVO and the Third Sector Forum. This resulted in more professionals understanding who a young carer is, their needs, and what supports are required. This increase of awareness is a key aim because as reported by the Carers Trust (2019), 1 in 5 children in a class has a caring role however the number of young carers recorded across Aberdeen City schools is significantly lower.

Figure 1.3 Cumulative number of professionals trained and reporting confidence in awareness of the referral process



4.6 The training has increased the number of children identified as a young carers as shown in figure 1.1 and more professionals being training in the toolkit has ensured that young carers will no longer struggle to balance their education and caring responsibilities that result in additional stress and pressure- instead being offered the right support at school and having the opportunity to complete a Young Carer's Statement to meet their needs, and a referral to the Barnardo's Young Carers service.

4.7 The training also resulted in 12 schools identifying a Young Carer lead. The Lead has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school's provision for young carers and their families. We closely liaise with the school leads to share any relevant information and opportunities for young carers and their families.

4.8 Individual Young Carer Awareness meetings commenced in local Primary and Secondary schools that were identified as a priority need due to the very low number of referrals being received such as Northfield and Bridge of Don areas which had less than 5 identified as young carers in the community. The aim was for information to be provided at drop-in sessions, PSE classes, assemblies, and to speak directly to young people to raise their awareness for young carers to self-refer. In Northfield Academy, 12 pupils came forward and identified themselves as Young Carers and Guidance staff of pupils have discussed the option to refer the Young Carers to Barnardo's Young Carers service.

4.9 The new referral form that was distributed to all agencies in January 2024, is a much shorter document of two pages that has resulted in a 34% increase of referrals. Feedback of our previous referral form was that completing the Young Carers Statement was often a barrier to receive a service due to the length of time required to complete these with Young Carers, the Cared For, and their families. Young Carer Statements will also now be completed by Barnardo's Staff with the hope that more Young Carers will be identified by more referrals being received.

4.10 Further to this, in collaboration with CLAN cancer support and ADA we have identified 12 young carers that are currently being provided with support through them and also now have the opportunity to join Barnardo's service for group activities.

4.11 Feedback from Young Carers their families and staff has been very positive including:

- I really enjoyed it, had fun and learnt new skills
- Great opportunity for a new creative experience. Creativity is so important for mental health. And as it is in a community space it raises awareness as well as making young carers feel part of the community.
- Was great to have opportunity to go to cinema as a family without the expense

- Young Carer enjoys the active sports activities it was great to be in an accessible place as a non-car driver to give YC opportunity to relax and have fun without stressing his brother with lots of travelling Great opportunity for new experiences. Connecting with nature, which is great for mental health. Encouraging teamwork, active lifestyle and independence. In a beautiful environment. Creating friendships and memories. I have seen a positive improvement in my child since going on this trip. He met other young carers from other places in Scotland too. Showing they are not alone. Not only where they live but in their country.
- I'm blown away by the generosity and compassion Young Carers and the people that have donated have shown and continue to show, not just me but all the parents and children you help. Having spoken to a couple of other parents while the girls were at the silent disco, I can with all honesty say that it's not just myself that appreciates you."
- Thank you so so much for everything, it really has been a god send having you, ML and the whole service in our lives.
- Adults group is part of my support system as it really does help me socially and get me out the house each week. It's one of the only things I get out the house for. So, it's a huge part of my support.
- Her confidence within young carers has grown so much and she's really quite involved now and has made some really good friends. It's been so nice seeing her with the groups because outside of young carers she struggles so much.
- Adults group - I'd be lost without this group, sometimes it's the only thing I have to look forward to each week. It provides a safe environment, lovely people, support and friendship. It's nice to be able to attend someone safe where you don't feel judged and you can actually relax and there isn't ever pressure to take part in planned activities, you don't need to join in discussions. You can just come, have a cuppa and be safe."
- "I've been blown away by the service. It's made a huge difference in just two short months, and I can't wait to see what opportunities next year brings and the difference it will make for us as a family
- Before being introduced to young carers I was very ill with depression and anxiety. I didn't leave the house often and struggled with day-to-day life. The support workers gave me the strength and confidence to fight for diagnosis and support of my disabled child. Before, I believed his difficulties were there because I was having difficulties. The adult groups reassured me that I am not a bad parent. That most parents of disabled children go through similar difficulties. The adult group boosted my confidence in such a way that I have joined other groups. I have completed four short courses this year. I no longer have depression. I thank the Barnardo's adult group for that. For my children, they have been given opportunities that they never would have had without Barnardo's. My son's confidence has grown massively. Along with his experiences. I am proud to have such a hardworking, resilient young carer. I am thankful he has the support of Barnardo's young carers.
- As I said I'd honestly be lost without Barnardos support & groups. My children wouldn't get their time away from their caring role and be able to go have fun with any responsibility. They know they can speak to staff if they need help or support. They can talk to their new friends about their lives. I know when I have attended groups, I feel better in myself which then allows me to care for my children better and myself.

5. HOW HAVE OUR COMMUNITIES/PROTECTED GROUPS PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT AND THE IMPACT OF THIS

- 5.1 We have continued to develop our engagement activity across the year to promote Partnership working with various organisations and currently have partnerships with Sport Aberdeen- developing our Carer and Connect service that works with up to 15 young carers on an individual basis, ELM Music Therapy- that offers therapeutic music sessions in 3 primary schools with the hope to increase this in other schools with additional funding, CFine- that offers Cooking with Confidence programmes to our

young carers and their families that have led to two of our staff gaining their Food Champions qualifications that allow as them to also deliver sessions, Bon Accord Care- that offers SVQ Child Care qualifications to young carers over the age of 16 and their families, and APA that offer drama/ music sessions for our young carers.

5.2 In 2024 we completed an amazing project with SHMU Radio. That involved 11 young carers being involved in a filming group with SHMU that commenced in January for a period of 11 weeks. The young carers created a short film about their day-to-day lives and what it is like to be a Young Carer and also included information on the supports available from the Barnardo's Young Carer's service- this was titled "Young Warriors".

5.3 The project was led by the Young Carers and solely based on the Young Carers ideas, voices and feedback. The short film is also going to be shared with agencies across Aberdeen, on our website, Aberdeen City Council website, and within the Think Young Carers Toolkit training sessions.

5.4 The film was launched during Carers Week and a great success- link below. This partnership with SHMU has also led to new projects being offered to young carers that will include a podcast type programme that is created by young carers.
Young Warrior film: <https://youtu.be/XjNyA5f7udM>

6. HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

6.1 We will continue a rolling programme of awareness raising sessions with partners to support knowledge of young carers and how to refer them to our service.

6.2 We will develop work with other partners to develop a system where if a young person identifies as a young carer but is offered support from another agency other than the Barnardo's Young Carers Service that we can capture these numbers and keep services updated with what the young carers service can offer e.g. ADA, CLAN and Quarriers.

6.3 The new young carers video, made by young carers, will be used to support marketing of the service and increase awareness of young carers.

7. HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

7.1 We will develop a system to capture number of young carers working with partnership services and update this on a regular basis.

7.2 We will monitor data quarterly to identify numbers of identified young carers and uptake of services.

7.3 We will monitor the amount of training completed and the feedback to ensure the offer is meeting stakeholders needs

8. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

8.1 We can increase the number of partner agencies we work with who can identify and record the number of young carers.

8.2 Formalised agreements for recoding number of young carer can be established and referral routes with key agencies will continue be sought

8.3 Further methods of communicating the support offered will be expanded, looking at different platforms to share information. In addition to this the project will continue to offer training to partners and young people.

8.4 5.4 We will look to develop more specific and target training alongside the 'think young carers' toolkit around how to identify BAME young carers and those impacted by substance use as well as working closely with organisations that would be more linked to these communities of young people.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Management Group:

- i) Agree to recommend to the CPA Board in March 2025 that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is ended on the basis that the aim has been achieved with currently a 20% increase on the baseline and. noting that systems are in place to continue to grow supporting opportunities for Young Carers;
- ii) Note that the dataset for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the Children's Services Board and through the annual outcome report to ensure progress is monitored; and
- iii) Endorse the opportunities for scale up and spread of the improvements as described above.

Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities:

Development of "Carers Awareness" groups for Young Carers to use their lived experience in contributing to service delivery, meeting the LOIP outcomes and raising awareness of Young Carers.

Continue to develop our respite and short break opportunities from social groups/ activities to more longer-term short breaks such as Residential Trips/ full-day respite opportunities by securing funding.

Continue increasing the awareness of the needs of young carers by delivering Think Young Carer toolkit training to a wider range of professionals via Eventbrite open sessions of the challenges that young carers face, and the potential risks associated with being a Young Carer

Continue our partnership with Avenue Art Sessions to deliver during the school holidays for Young Carers registered and non- registered with our service. We have planned 3x 1.5-hour sessions to take place in Tullos Primary School in August alongside our Northern Star colleagues.

Continuation of school engagement and awareness sessions through offering drop-in sessions, assemblies, PSE class presentations in schools that have been identified as a priority need due to low number of referrals received.

Increase number of volunteers to support our young carers as a befriender or/ and at young carer groups, outings, and events to sustain the development of our supports within the service.

Increase the number of therapeutic music support groups with our partnership- ELM Music Therapy, Music For You, and Sports Aberdeen YC Groups for Young Carers within Aberdeen City who are both registered and un-registered with Barnardo's.

Risks:

Lack of funding opportunities and receiving monies to deliver further projects and new partnerships

Being a small team with 1x FT worker, 2x PT worker, and vacant volunteer co-ordinator role impacting service delivery

CONSULTATION

8.3 Project Team

Stretch Outcome 8 Subgroup

Children's Services Board

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