

**From:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education  
Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**Subject:** Overview of Young Carers Service – Early Help and Preventative Commissioned Service

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:**

- This report summarises the scope and activity of the Young Carers Service, commissioned on behalf of the Early Help and Preventative Service (EHPS) directorate.
- The contract commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016 for a term of three years, for the service delivered within Kent
- Kent County Council (KCC) has a comprehensive Young Carers Service, delivered by Imago. The Young Carers Support Service comprises two distinct elements: workforce development; and direct support for children and young people.
- The Young Carers Service provides direct support to approximately 7,500 young carers across the county. This support can take the form of young carers assessments, 1:1 support, access to a district young carer 'Chill Club', signposting and information.
- Performance continues to improve, with referrals to the service at end of February 2018 of 7,493 (17/18 target of 7,507).
- The total annual value of the contract is £325,484 and estimated at £976,454 for the full 3-year term for KCC.
- Robust governance arrangements are in place to ensure the effective delivery of the Young Carers Service.
- The video link here provides more information about the service:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUD5hoF6eMk>

**Recommendation(s):**

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the performance of the provider in line with the contract.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. A young carer probably looks after their parent(s), or cares for a brother or sister. Research shows us that caring responsibilities can significantly impact upon a

child's health, education and development.

- 1.2. Under the amendments to the Children and Families Act, Local Authorities must take steps to ensure that all young carers under the age of 18, regardless of who they care for or how often they provide care, are in receipt of an assessment of their needs. The Children and Families Act seeks to ensure that a young carer is assessed for support, and assessed again when their support needs have changed. The assessment should find out if the young carer is participating in, or wishes to participate in, education, training or recreation; and the extent and impact of the caring role which they undertake.
- 1.3. A Local Authority is expected to take 'reasonable steps' to identify which children in their area are young carers and if they have the need for support. The Local Authority must carry out a proportionate and appropriate 'Young Carer's Needs Assessment' if it appears that the young carer has the need for support. This assessment must be carried out in a manner which matches the needs and circumstances of the young carer to whom it relates.
- 1.4. Many young carers remain hidden from services. Therefore, as an authority, KCC needs to identify and support young carers and ensure that all services are more 'carer aware'.
- 1.5. Caring responsibilities can significantly impact upon a child's health and development. Many young carers experience: social isolation; a low level of school attendance; some educational difficulties; impaired development of their identity and potential; low self-esteem; emotional and physical neglect; as well as conflict between loyalty to their family and their wish to have their own needs met.
- 1.6. KCC has a comprehensive Young Carers Service delivered by Imago. The Young Carers Service comprises two distinct elements (workforce development and direct support).
- 1.7. The Young Carers Service has provided direct support to approximately 7,500 young carers across the county, since the service began in May 2016. This support can take the form of young carers assessments, 1:1 support, access to a district young carer 'Chill Club', signposting and information.
- 1.8. Statistically Young Carers are more likely to be girls with 55% of the current cohort seen by Imago identifying as female. 84.4% of the cohort identify as white British, with 9.3% identifying as BME (a full breakdown of statistics for 2017/18 can be found in Appendix 1)
- 1.9. The workforce development element of the contract is in recognition that the identification and support for young carers needs to vary according to the type of care that is provided. Young carers are not a homogenous group. The contract ensures that the training covers a wide workforce (including schools, EHPS, Adults Social Care, health professionals and agencies such as the Department for Work Pensions). It raises awareness about young carers, the challenges they face and how best to support them.

## 2. Performance

### 2.1. Contract Management

- 2.1.1. The following activities are undertaken as preparation for contract monitoring meetings:
  - i. Data analysis of KPIs looking at a county, area and district level performance.
  - ii. Qualitative information gathered from both the provider and an Early Help perspective provides challenge and support in relation to the quality of service provision.
  - iii. Narrative and case study analysis for the performance from the provider.
- 2.1.2. The Contract Manager for the Young Carers Contract has day to day responsibility for the service and contract delivery across the county, dealing with all contractual and performance issues. This is supported by the area-based Commissioning Officers who offer, not only a district specific view, but also act to resolve any front-line provision issues (e.g. notification of workforce development training).
- 2.1.3. This information is gathered to form a 'whole contract' picture of provision to inform the contract monitoring meetings. As the contract is performing at or above the anticipated levels, the contract monitoring meetings occur on a quarterly basis, with a monthly desk-based analysis of data and qualitative information.

### 2.2. Current Performance

- 2.2.1. The overall score for this contract is rated as green, with KPIs continually met across the whole county. Where there have been geographical inconsistencies, Imago have been highly responsive.
- 2.2.2. Performance continues to improve, with the number of referrals to the service at end of February 2018 at 7,493 (against a 17/18 target of 7,507). Quality related performance indicators regarding the speed with which referrals are dealt with, the number of sessions being attended by participants and the take up of training sessions for frontline workers shows a positive trajectory with numbers of participants increasing.

### 2.3. Deep Dive

- 2.3.1. Each of the Early Help contracts are subject to an annual Deep Dive that evaluates the progress of the contract. This provides an opportunity to consider any lessons learnt thus far and how this can help to develop the delivery of the rest of the contract.
- 2.3.2. The learning from the Deep Dives has helped to further develop the communication with Early Help Units, including following up with Early Help Workers after a referral to the service has been made. Other learning from the Deep Dives has been the re-shaping of the Young Carers Service workforce training offer which now includes sessions that have multi-

agency attendance, rather than being focused on delivering to agencies separately.

- 2.3.3. The findings from the Young Carers Service Deep Dive were largely positive, with some lessons identified. In summary:
- i. The contract is proceeding in line with the original scope with some amendments to the workforce development programme.
  - ii. Imago continue to exceed targets.
  - iii. It is evident that Imago's staff are dedicated and committed.
  - iv. The organisation's structure and processes enable shared learning and a top down-bottom up approach to service delivery and development.
  - v. Economies of scale are achieved through the fact that they hold 5 other young carers contracts nationally.
  - vi. Both the provider and commissioners feel there is strong, constructive working relationship.
  - vii. If there are instances where families do not consent to the service. Imago work with them to try and overcome these barriers. If required, safeguarding procedures are followed.
  - viii. Kent's Young Carer's contract, delivered by Imago is a high performing contract and is RAG rated as green.

## 2.4. Internal Audit

- 2.4.1. Whilst the Deep Dive was undertaken within the Directorate, the contract and the Early Help Commissioning Team were also subject to scrutiny from the KCC Internal Audit Division, considering the detail of the contract.
- 2.4.2. Findings of the audit broadly matched the Deep dive findings and the contract performance was given an 'Adequate' rating with a 'Good' Prospect for Improvement.
- 2.4.3. The main areas for improvement in the contract were identified as:
- i. Joined up working with the Adult service for Young Carers.
  - ii. Some outcome KPIs are difficult to measure in practice e.g. improvement in emotional wellbeing.
  - iii. Parental consent is a barrier to the provision of the young carer service. There was a lack of information as to the number of referrals for which parental consent was not provided.
- 2.4.4. There is now an action plan in place to address these issues that is being worked through in partnership with Imago and Adult services for young carers colleagues.

## 3. Voice of the Child

- 3.1. The Commissioning Team have worked with Imago to gauge the views of young people on what it means to be a young carer, what good support means to young people and the value of the service to users.

3.2. The video link here provides a useful insight from young people:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUD5hoF6eMk>

#### 4. Financial Implications

4.1. The total annual value of the contract is £325,484 and, therefore, estimated at £976,454 for the full 3 year term for KCC.

#### 5. Governance

5.1. Regular updates on the implementation and effectiveness of these commissioning arrangements are made to the Director for Early Help and Preventative Services.

5.2. Robust governance arrangements are in place to ensure the effective delivery of the Young Carers Service, including contract and performance management arrangements that consider the need to ensure that children are effectively safeguarded, and that KCC demonstrates best value for money.

#### 6. Conclusion

6.1. Overall, KCC has seen good performance against the contract, delivered by Imago for Young Carers across the county. KCC will continue to contract monitor Imago to ensure the service is of good quality and is delivered in a timely manner to meet the needs of Kent children and young people who have a caring responsibility.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the performance of the provider in line with the contract.

Report Author: Karen Sharp  
Job title: Head of Children's Commissioning Portfolio  
Telephone number: 03000 416668  
Email address: [Karen.sharp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.sharp@kent.gov.uk)

Relevant Director: Stuart Collins  
Job title: Director of Early Help and Preventative Services  
Telephone number: 03000 410519  
Email address: [stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.collins@kent.gov.uk)