

Investing in Children Membership Award™ Re-Evaluation

Barnardo's - Action with Young Carers (Liverpool and Wirral) and Keeping the Family in Mind



Action with Young Carers (AWYC) Liverpool and Wirral continue to provide a service to young carers and their families.

Action with Young Carers Wirral is commissioned by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council to support young carers aged 5 – 18 caring for a family member and ensures that they receive a carer's assessment under the statutory duty of the council.

Action with Young Carers Liverpool is commissioned by Liverpool City Council to support young carers and young adult carers up to and including the age of 25 years who are caring for an adult. It is a citywide service that ensures young carers and young adult carers in Liverpool are identified and can receive a carer's assessment under the statutory duty of the Council.

Keeping the Family in Mind (KFIM) is a development project set up by Barnardo's AWYC Liverpool to ensure the views and experiences of young carers, children, young people and families impacted by parental mental health are listened to by service providers, commissioners and decision makers in Liverpool. Under the new commissioned service (July 2015) KFIM development work enhances and supports the wider work of the direct and indirect service across parental disability.

For the purpose of this year's assessment, I visited the project and met with several members of the team followed by young people: Michael, Daniel, Megan, Mica, Katie, Kane and Paul.

As usual everyone was exceptionally welcoming and I was really pleased to hear all about the work that has taken place over the past year and the ways in which the service truly engage children and young people in dialogue and the changes that have taken place as a result.

My report details **Opportunities for Dialogue leading to Change** both on an individual level as a service and within partner organisations.

I would like to say a big thanks to everyone who helped me with gathering the evidence to write this report and hope that I do the service justice in all the hard work that they do.

'You Can Help' (the Young Carers Film Project)

During the *Investing in Children Membership Award™* processes in both 2016 and 2017, young carers stated that things had started to improve in local schools following the work of the service but there was still room for improvement and that it was important that schools really understood their lives and that they can help young carers

in many ways.. Discussions continued with the service and young carers fully understood that to make a film the service would need to access finances!

In August 2017, the young carers supported by the service began working in partnership with commissioners, schools and First Take (a local grass root film company) to make the film.

The film was co-produced with young carers to raise awareness in schools and to ensure better identification, assessment and support of young carers. After much discussion and from their initial idea of calling the film 'Can you Help', the young carers decided to title it '**You Can Help**' as they wanted all professionals to understand they have a role to play.

"We made an educational movie about being young carers. It shows that there isn't just one mould that fits all young carers."

"We worked with a film company who listened to all our ideas and what we wanted in the film."

"We wanted it to show the reasons why we might not do stuff and how it can affect us!"

"At the start of the session with the film company we had three pieces of paper and had to write down what we wanted in it. They spoke to us all about what we wanted to do in the film and worked on it with them for about 7 to 8 months."

"Over the past year I have been heavily involved with promoting the short film 'You Can Help'. The film was very relevant in my college environment and I thought it would be very educational for the staff and tutors. After attending a meeting with the Principle I was able to show the film during a whole staff briefing. As well as showing the film I was asked to read over and analyse the protocol they have set in place to support young carers to see if I felt anything could be changed."

When I asked the young people if any of their ideas are featured in the film they replied saying:

"Yes... We did get quite a lot in there!"

"We have shown it in a load of places and delivered it at training for qualified teachers."

The film was premiered in Liverpool city centre to mark Young Carer's Awareness Day on 25 January 2018. The audience was made up of senior officials from Liverpool City Council and other organisations, as well as young carers' family members and friends.

“We are a really diverse group of young people from Barnardo’s Action with Young Carers aged from 8 to 21. We are from different cultures and backgrounds, with different experiences of education, but we have three things in common... caring for a parent, mental health and going to school. With the help of Lynne and Jane from First Take, and with the support of some very brave school staff, we made our film to help schools appreciate how very important they are to Young Carers, to let them know how they can help and to say that we know how good they can be!”

- Taken from Liverpool CAMHS article Feb 18.



Evaluation



A group has been involved in evaluating the project considering what worked well, what could have been done differently and what will happen next (for example: the outcomes and will it make a difference?). They all agreed that they had got so much out of this project and that co-production and working together made them feel their voices had been actively listened to and they can make a difference and feel empowered.

Influencing Workforce Development and Training

An awareness raising training package for schools is now being implemented and was co-produced by young carers. Young carers decided that the session begins with an edited version of their Voices and they have titled this *‘Being a Young Carer by Young Carers’*. It is also finished with the film *‘You Can Help’* to ensure schools hear from colleagues illustrating how important schools are and how they can help.

Young carers stress the importance of schools identifying and supporting them and the training package supports this and staff within schools to identify and support carers in their school.



Multi Agency Young Carers Awareness Raising

Alongside the bespoke training offered to schools, the L.A. Commissioner and KFIM Coordinator continue to deliver city wide Young Carers Assessment Awareness raising half-day sessions. This is part of Liverpool's multi agency workforce development programme; ensuring early help is being implemented with young carers at the heart. This training again was co-produced with young carers. These sessions are continually evaluated and support appropriate *'Requests for Young Carers Assessments'* into the service from multiagency professionals.

Interviews

YC's and YAC's continuously say how important it is to have the right YC's staff and someone who understand their lives and can help them and their families.

Whenever vacancies arise within the two teams, opportunities are created for young people to be involved in the interviews. Recently some carers have been involved.

"I was involved in the Young Person Advisor job interviews. I got to have an input into who got the job."

"There were 8 specific questions we asked and I got to choose the two of them that were the most important to me!"

Another young person went on to say: ***"I got to interview for the new manager's job. We gave Paula the job!"***

Choice of Venue

Young People stated that they need to be involved in agreeing the best places to meet. Feedback from the service states: ***"Though we no longer have a Liverpool city centre base, the project workers continue to work resourcefully with YC's and YAC's re where they want to meet and the YC's room has remained very important as a safe space to meet as well."***

During my discussions with the young people they all said that staff continuously ask them, where and when they want to meet.

"We always get asked and it's our choice!"

Strategic Work

To support this ongoing work at a strategic level the KFIM Coordinator has been working closely with the LCC Commissioner, School Improvement Liverpool (safeguarding lead), Liverpool Learning Partnership and LSCB (Education lead). As a result of this work, several changes have taken place in order to improve the support young carers receive in schools:

- A specific question on young carers in the Local Authority 175 Schools safeguarding audit. This includes all schools to have a Young Carers Champion

and to ensure they have a Young Carers Policy and /or ensure all their policies reference young carers. The named YC's Champion is being invited to the training sessions outlined above.

- Develop an exemplar Young Carers Policy – aligned to the Whole School Approach Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy – so all schools have access to a YC's policy. The service deliver this policy at the training session they offer and came from one of the recommendations made during the Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing in Liverpool Citywide Review March 2017, was to ensure all school/education settings have a mental health and emotional wellbeing policy, and that the role of non-school partners is clearly defined in the policy.
- Part of the Offer has been to update the School Posters which were designed by young carers. There are 8 posters in total and include 4 aimed at children and young people and 4 aimed at school staff. All schools who attend the training receive a set.



Barnardo's delivered the first session to 26 schools and it was well received and evaluated. The next session which the L.A. Commissioner and KFIM Coordinator deliver is planned for schools in autumn term.

For the purpose of this report I have included one of the posters.

“Carers were involved in designing the posters. We want schools to realise that they play a part in identifying and supporting young carers.”

- Developing a School Young Carers Champions network that meets minimum of twice yearly. This will ensure young carer's voices and views can be listened to and actions developed. The network is currently being set up and a terms of reference is due to be developed shortly.

“Each school had to identify a young carers champion for their school. It is part of the training we deliver and important that all schools have one!”

Additional to this, some of the YC's and YAC's welcome the opportunity to talk about the service and what makes a difference. Barnardo's continue to ensure that when approaches are made to the service they make sure these take place in a safe and comfortable way and that YC's understand why they are being asked for their views and what will happen as a result. The following examples were given:

Barnardo's Head Office Trusts & Innovation Manager (Ben Banks)

A meeting was set up to explore what the service means to young carers (YC's) and discuss the importance of ensuring YC's and YAC's experiences are at the heart of accessing Trust Funds. Real lived experiences of the support and their journeys was shared and will continue to inform voluntary funding.

Barnardo's Head Office Visit

Two workers from Head Office visited the project in March 2018 to find out more about the Services and two Young Adult Carers met with them to share how they have been supported and the importance of participation. The workers, Emily Cherry (Assistant Director Policy & Public Affairs) and Lisa Watch (Policy and Public Affairs Team), really enjoyed their visit and speaking with the YAC's. Emily expressed how the visit had been:

“Really energising and inspiring to hear about the work and they had walked away with loads of ideas for policy and influencing. Yes sorry but you have inspired us so much it means we will be coming back to bug you more!”

Media and Case Studies

YC's and YAC's state that they want to highlight their experiences of how Barnardo's has supported them and to raise awareness of the issues they face.

The project makes certain that YC's and YAC's can be involved in a safe and respectful way in media and marketing opportunities within Barnardo's and with external media.

By working closely with Barnardo's Media manager, YC's, YACs and their families have been involved in a variety of opportunities over the last 12 months. These include:

- **BBC TV** - A young carer & mum were interviewed on breakfast TV, to highlight *'A day in the life of a young carer.'*
- **Case Studies** – A number of YC's, YAC's and their families have worked with Barnardo's Media Manager on their case studies. They have said this has been a good experience and that they do want their stories to be used to promote the issues and tackle stigma.
- **Supporting Carers today** - Liverpool City Council was asked to produce a case study to promote the Department of Health & Social Care launch of the national Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 – 'Supporting carers today'. As Barnardo's is the commissioned young carer's service they were asked if they could support this and one of the YAC's Katie agreed.
- **Radio City** - As part of Liverpool CAMHS Partnership in Mental Health Awareness week the service was involved and supported one of the young adult carers who spoke movingly on Radio City. She talked about how caring had impacted on her mental health. She was joined by Barnardo's KFIM Coordinator and Liverpool City Council's Cabinet lead member for children's services who was able to highlight the importance of listening and supporting young carers and their families.



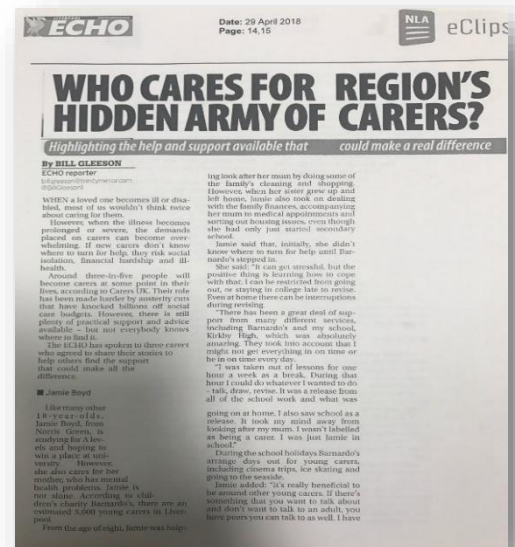
- **Primary Teach Magazine** – One of the young carers shared their story in this national magazine with the support of the local media manager and titled it, ‘A letter to my primary teacher’. The letter talks about the young person’s experience of being a young carer and asks her teacher to think about why she may be distracted in class, rather than thinking she isn’t interested when she has all her caring responsibilities to think about.

This opportunity has enabled young carers to share their experience of what it feels like to be a Young Carer and its impact which will also assist teachers in identifying potential support.

- **Liverpool Echo** – Another young person Jamie was interviewed during ‘Carers’ week’ and featured in an article in the Liverpool Echo. As part of the article Jamie talks about her experience as a young carer and the support she received from the service.

“Barnardo’s were asked if one of their service users would provide their story of being a carer for a family member. I was approached by the service as my story is successful due to me getting into university despite being a full time carer. In the article I spoke about how much impact the service has had and without their support I wouldn’t be where I am today. The article continued to say how my high school were very supportive with my situation.”

“The article in the paper allowed my voice and story to be heard by the whole city. Recently, I have had an article published in the CAMHS newsletter and the Mersey Care staff newsletter about my recent successes of pursuing my dream career as a mental health nurse.”



Festivals and Celebration Events

Throughout the year Young Carers are supported by the project to be involved in the various festivals that take place and ensure they have a voice in them. Below are some examples of this.

Now Festival 2018

Young carers were supported once again this year to take part in the Now Festival which happens in the city each year. This year’s theme was: ‘My Education, My Mental Health.’ The NOW festival has grown and is a great forum to ensure children and young people can



be heard. It takes place over 3 nights and the YC's presented their film 'You Can Help' to a packed theatre. The group were also awarded the Young Persons Judge's Participation Award which is a fantastic achievement.

Liverpool Mental Health Festival 2017

In October, young carers participated in several activities to raise awareness and challenge stigma.

- **Raise Your Voice'** - is an open Mic Night for young people. Young Carers along with other young people supported by the Liverpool CAMHS providers took to the stage to perform through poetry, spoken word, singing, instrumentals & motivational speaking. Several of the pieces focused on mental health, challenging stigma, & sharing personal experiences.
- **Williamson Square Celebration** - On the Saturday closest to World Mental Health Day, the Williamson Square Celebration was held. Young carers staffed the stall which was run with other CAMHS Partners of which AWYC Liverpool is a provider. Carers were able to participate fully in the day and raised the profile of the service and how important it is to ask for help.



Active Participation

There are a variety of groups on offer to the young carers who are regularly asked their views on what they want provided. The following examples were given:

Gym Group (11 – 16 age range)

In the past female young carers had requested the opportunity to access the gym, however the group now expressed that they didn't feel confident enough right now to access the gym yet but instead wanted to spend time together and look at the barriers affecting young women. The group now has widened its remit and changed the group name to '*Health and Wellbeing Group*'. The young carers have fed back directly to the L.A. Commissioner re-the Liverpool Lifestyle Gyms and their experiences of using them. This is being addressed and the project continue to be involved in discussions to influence improvements.

Social Media & On-line safety group

Discussions continue to take place with carers regarding safety online. Carers have stated that they continue to feel under pressure and wanted more advice and a place to feel safe. The group was set up as a direct result of these YC's experience and a safe setting is provided to enable carers to talk about the issues from their perspectives. Advice and support is also available from the staff if required.

Carers Day

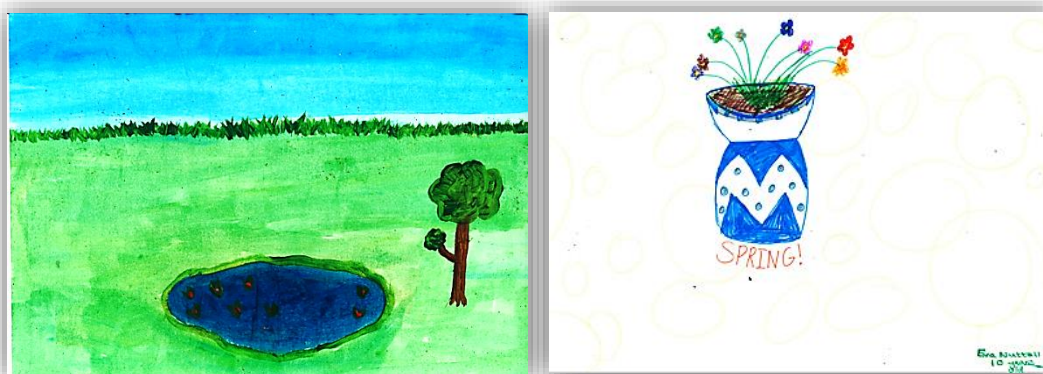
The service continue to work closely with their local Universities and FE colleges. Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) worked with Barnardo's to mark Carers Day and invited Young Carers to visit and get a feel of *'Uni life/student life'*. This was really well received by the YC's and YAC's who took part. Advocates who are currently at LJMU and were YC's themselves shared their stories and this inspired those that attended – so much so that some of the YC's and YAC's are now considering pursuing university.

"We got to go to the Uni for a day as a taster to see what it would be like. Often as a young carer you worry about going to Uni because of your caring responsibilities. We got to hear from carers at Uni what it was like and it was really good."

Art Project

Staff continue to offer opportunities for young carers to be involved in art. Over the year some of the artwork produced by the YC's has featured in the Barnardo's Calendar. One YC's recently found out that her artwork for *'Spring'* will be used in the calendar.

Below are two of the pieces of art designed by young people:



Buddy/Mentoring

Staff have been encouraging some young carers to support other young carers following *'Young people saying that buddying and mentoring is a good way to help them'*.

As a direct result to listening to their voice, new young carers entering the service are asked if they would like any peer support and if so allocated a young carer mentor.

During my visit one of the young people told me how he had supported a new young person when they first got involved in Barnardo's.

"I got to help him for the full day, answered any questions he had and supported him."

“They offer buddies to anyone new, it’s a good way to help them and have someone your age that you can talk to that is also a carer.”

“I did it for a bit. I took him to the Hive and told him all about what they do!”

Young Adult Carers (YAC)

Following suggestions to create a young adult carers Facebook page, there continues to be positive feedback and suggestions. The page is used to promote opportunities so YAC’s can quickly and easily find out what’s happening and what they can get involved in. The page is also used to assist with participatory opportunities for research and development surrounding YAC’s. A recent example of this is with Healthwatch who have been recently commissioned to undertake a consultation re-Carers Vouchers Scheme – so a post has been added to the page and YAC’s have been responding and feeding in their views

“We have a page that keeps us all informed as young adult carers. This was something we asked for and is well used.”

Activities

Throughout the year a variety of fun activities are organised for the carers and on occasions their family members. The young people informed me that they are continuously asked their views and have been involved in choosing the activities on offer:

“We decide all the activities we do. They ask us what we want and we just say. We have done outdoors activities, arts and crafts and music.”

“After we do an activity they ask us to evaluate it and say if we would do it again etc....”

“I asked to do some activities over the next few weeks and going to be doing them in the next two. I chose laser quest, bowling and rock climbing as I have never done them before.”

Working with Partner Organisations

The project continuously support young people to engage with partner organisations and ensure they are able to have a voice within issues that affect them and make changes to services outside of Barnardo’s. Below are some examples of this:

Making Our Rights a Reality (MORR)

The service have been working with a partner agency who is running the making your rights a reality project. However it was apparent immediately that the delivery times and venue wasn’t suited to YAC’s. The YAC worker worked with them to resolve this and a bespoke programme was delivered specifically for the YAC’s and as a result of the positive evaluation another course of sessions is planned!

Mindfulness Young Adult Carers Group

The YAC worker researched this locally and identified that Adult Learning - Liverpool City Council were running a course but it wasn't accessible for the YAC's. This was raised and as a result, the tutor ran a 5 week evening programme. All the YAC's said this fitted their lives better and the feedback from the group has been really positive.

Develop Yourself

This is a new Skills programme for young carers which is being run in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University and Barnardo's as a direct result of listening to young carers' views when it comes to planning their future. They have visited a different University building and learned about various careers or future opportunities during each of the 5 sessions (Nursing, Sports Science, Ship simulator, Culinary). All of the young people said that they liked being able to learn about different careers and try things that they might not have ever thought about before. Several of them said that it made them interested in attending University when they are older. The young people also reported forming closer friendships with one another over the course of the programme.

20 Stories High Yoga & Meditation 'Time to Breathe' Project

Barnardo's have been working with the charity '*20 Stories High*' who have facilitated young carers to attend weekly sessions and access a Theatre group. The project looks at how to improve both physical and mental wellbeing and where to go if the young person, or someone close to them needs some advice or support. All young carers have the choice to get involved if they want to. So far 3 YC's have stayed involved and the service are working with them over the summer with more getting involved.

Wirral Ofsted Youth Reference Group

Young Carers have attended 3 meetings in the last quarter and met with the Director of Wirral Children's services. The meetings ensure the voice of the child is heard throughout social care's Ofsted improvement plan.

Kids Time

The project supports young people affected by the mental illness of a parent or sibling. Barnardo's have been assisting young carers to attend and express their views and have their voices heard.

Future in Minds 'Consultation and mapping event'

All young people and families were invited to attend and a representation from staff members and young people/families went along to have a say.

Social Worker Students

Young people from the project have been involved in the admissions process for social workers. Both young carers and young adult carers sat on both an admissions panel and in the assessment of social work students on placement. This work is in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) social work MA course. Two young carers took part in the process, working alongside academic staff.

“Honestly thank you, I enjoyed myself so much and I agree that we make a brilliant team and loved sharing our different opinions and approaches to figuring out the different traits the candidates had. I really am thankful for you letting me join you today it was a brilliant experience and I loved every minute of it.”

Young carers have ongoing involvement in the assessment and evaluation of social work students’ practice, and their views are included in portfolios as evidence of student competence, this was reported in the March 2018 portfolio:

“Amanda’s worked really hard, you can tell. She works WITH you. It raises my self-esteem; it says ‘you’re worthwhile.’” - Quote from one of the young people involved.

2 other young people have recently been involved in the LJMU Admissions panel and are contributing to the development of a journal article and have given interviews for this. One of the young people involved in this, I was able to speak to regarding his involvement. He told me the following:

“I do the interviews for John Moore’s Social work course. I select the people who get on the course and got involved in this through Barnardo’s.”

LSCB Young Advisors - Young Carers continue to have their voices heard though the LSCB Young Advisers participation work and this feeds into local consultations that have been commissioned. 3 focus groups have taken place so far around Access to health services; the 0-19 Offer and the Liverpool Promise....

Below is some of the feedback from young people during the discussions.



CAMHS

Barnardo's work closely with Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group (as they are part of the CAMHS Offer and Partnership) and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Liverpool is one of 10 LA's/CCG's who has been part of a CQC CAMHS thematic review and young carers have met with the inspectors/researchers to feed in their views and experiences. Young Carers took part in the feedback sessions and the CAMHS evaluations re: YPAS (Young People's Advisory Service).

Director of Liverpool Children's Services

A meeting took place with the director regarding the plans for Liverpool to apply to be a UNICEF Child Friendly City. Young carers met with the newly appointed Director to share their experiences of being young carers and what things can and do make makes a difference to their lives and their families. As a result, the Director then sought the views and participation of young carers and young adult carers at very early stages of Liverpool the 'Child Friendly City' Status developments.

"I was also involved with attending a meeting regarding the matter of how Liverpool can be a child friendly city. This involved explaining our experiences of being young people in the city and how the council could make it better."

"Following my last comment the council have now arranged a follow up meeting with the Director of Children's Services and the Mayor of Liverpool to feedback how they have responded to our comments and suggestions."



As part of the LGA (Local Government Association) Peer Challenge, Young Carers along with other young people met with LGA team (partners, staff and elected members) working towards delivery of Inclusive Growth plan.

Parliamentary Committee

Young adult carer Katie took part in an opportunity in February 2018 with the parliamentary committee to give evidence as part of the Work and Pensions Committee's ongoing inquiry into support for carers. She highlighted the support Barnardo's had given her and told MPs about how this had helped her return to university and take positive steps towards her own career development.

"We got to go to the Houses of Parliament and talk about what the job centre does and doesn't do to support us as young carers. We have had a report back from them to look at and they are still working on it."

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust Partnership work



Barnardo's jointly ran a 'Big Brew' event to provide informal and relaxed opportunities for parents and young carers that they support to feed in their views re local support. They felt the best way to do this was by listening to the whole family.

"They had different sessions on and we showed the film there. We got to talk about lots of different things there!"

Barnardo's West Region Participation Conference

On the 30th June, two young people from the project were involved in the planning of the participation conference and the delivery of a workshop which they titled ***'Participation...it can get you through life.'***

One young person told me: ***"I was on the committee. We met together as a group and planned what messages we wanted to portray and how we wanted the conference to run."***

"We got all our ideas out there."

As part of the workshop they invited attendees to share their views with regards to barriers and benefits to participation along with young carers sharing their stories. Two sisters (young carers) were also supported to write their story *'Our roller coaster journey from Pakistan to Liverpool'* and they presented this at the conference.

"Being asked if my sister and I wanted to have the opportunity tell our story was so important. To us this was saying that you are important and being able to share our story really shows we are being listened to and made us feel that people want to hear our experiences. It was good to work on our story, sounds easy but it's quite hard and throughout this the workers were listening to us and supporting us to write down what has happened to us.

Barnardo's have really helped my mum and us, they have taken time to understand our past and the difficulties we are under, and nothing seems too much. They are a 'helping hand', make things fun and not all serious and they understand us....winning the 'most achieved' award meant so much to us and to our mum, thanks very much for listening and believing in us," – Fatima.

The young person on the committee then went on to tell me:

"We also decided to have a talent show at the event."

"We judged it."

The service entered 4 young carers into different categories and the *'You can help'* film into the services inspired by participation category, which was awarded runner up!

Additional to this the two sisters who wrote the story above won the *'most achieved'* category.

Presentations

Giving young carers the opportunity to speak and share their experiences at events is a common theme at the service. During my visit I was informed of a few examples of the ways the service have created a safe space for this to happen.

- As part of Mersey Care International Women's Day and Think family Seminar, a presentation was led by young carers and was very positively received.
- On the 30th June 2018, the Barnardo's West Region Participation Conference took place. 2 young people were involved in the planning of the conference and the delivery of a workshop which they titled *'Participation....it can get you through life'*. During the workshop they shared stories and invited workshop attendees to share their views (benefits and barriers to participation). The two sisters that were involved wrote their story: *'Our roller coaster journey from Pakistan to Liverpool'* and they presented this at Conference. At the event the young people won the 'Most Achieved' category for their story.

Following the success of young carers speaking at last year's teacher conference with Liverpool John Moore's University the service were invited back this year. One of the YAC's along with the KFIM coordinator, co-delivered a workshop which was really well received with over 400 newly qualified teachers took part.

As well as the above, carers also co-delivered a workshop at LJMU's Service User and Carer focused conference ensuring newly qualified Health and Social Care colleagues understand their responsibilities to YC's.

Research Opportunities

Young Carers and Young Adult carers continue to have the choice to participate in a variety of research opportunities. This came about through feedback from carers and over the past year they have been involved in. All Research must go through the Barnardo's Research Ethics Committee and be approved.

'Still Hidden, Still Ignored' Research

Young Carers involved in Barnardo's nationally, contributed to the research via focus groups and questionnaires. A number of the good practice case studies that feature in the report are from Liverpool and illustrate the importance of active listening and acting on the views on young carers. Evidence of this is through the family rooms in all Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust mental health (low medium and high secure) and

Addictions in patients units and young carers co-producing the statutory local authority assessment documentation.

Carers' Alert Thermometer for use with Young Carers

Edge Hill University researchers approached service to support the development of a Carers' Alert Thermometer for use with young carers called the CAT-YC. This short screening tool can be used to triage young carers for a full assessment of needs, or to quickly identify if information, support or additional services are required urgently. Young carers were invited to take part in focus groups which took place in July and Young Adult Carers were sent survey monkeys to feed in their views. The Researcher will be coming back in September to talk to the YC's about her findings to date.

“They are trying to make a robot thing that helps recognise young carers and they gave us things to say what questions we want putting into the robot.”

Local Government Association

The LGA has recently published a report detailing case studies from 10 local authorities describing initiatives being used to help support the health and wellbeing of young carers.

The project has been featured on how they involve young people in decisions making processes and how young carers have been put at the heart of making decisions regarding the service.

“We are always asked our views on lots of different things/pieces of work. We always have the choice to get involved or not.”

“Barnardo’s gives us every opportunity possible to influence research.”

Inclusivity



Above is a picture of Both Liverpool & Wirral Young People/volunteers/staff who attended the event at Liverpool John Moore's University in May to receive the award.

Young Carers and their families have informed the service of how important it is, that they are supported by organisations that are respectful of everyone's diversity and offer an inclusive service.

Every year the service do a review of the Navajo Award which is the Merseyside & Cheshire LGBT Charter Mark for equality and sponsored by In-Trust Merseyside & Sefton Embrace and supported by the LGBTI Community networks across Merseyside– a signifier of good practice, commitment and knowledge of the

specific needs, issues and barriers facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in Merseyside.

Barnardo's were reassessed for the award during February 2018; part of the assessment included a group of young people from Liverpool and Wirral meeting with the assessors to voice their views and experiences re-LGBTI and they are really pleased that they are successful in retaining this award.

“We put forward all the things we were going to do in our two year plan and then we were assessed on meeting it. We did and got the award again!”

“Barnardo’s supports all LGBT young carers and is very inclusive!”

“They were at PRIDE the other week.”

Individual Dialogue leading to Change

Barnardo's not only creates ways for carers and their families to be involved in shaping decisions about the organisation and partner organisations, they also support their voice on a more personal and individualised level too. Below are some examples of this:

Assessment Process

YC's and YAC's say it is important that they have the opportunity to talk about what helps them and their family.

Through the assessment, support planning and review processes, young carers talk about specific issues and highlight examples that illustrate how by actively listening they can work in partnership to improve outcomes for young carers, young adult carers and their families.

This is called the young carers statutory assessment. It was identified from listening to YC's and working with the Local Authority that it needed some improvements to be made. This has now been implemented. Barnardo's continue to ensure that all young carers are active participants in their assessments, reviews and support plans and this happens via Project Workers using a range of validated tools to set and review the distance travelled.

You Said ...

One YC wanted to go to the gym in her local community and her mum wanted to be involved in supporting her child to do this.

We Did ...

As a result the carers Project Worker looked for accessible places in the local community that they could attend the gym and gave information to the YC'S mum, who made arrangements to take her child.

You Said ...

A YAC said that she was struggling to be at University and being away from her family. She stated that she missed out on opportunities because she was always thinking about how her mum was managing at home without her. She also felt that she was not very noticeable in her class.

We Did ...

Regular review and planning meetings took place between the carer and her project worker. The YAC said, ***“What's important is knowing that you have that support and my Project Worker worked really hard, you can tell. She works WITH you. That means a lot to me because it's a personal thing rather than practical. It raises my self-esteem; it says 'you're worthwhile'. I feel like my Project Worker interested in me; she always chases me up, keeps me up-to-date.”***

You Said ...

One young carer was doing the family's washing in the bath because their washing machine was broken. The carer asked for a new washing machine.

We Did ...

The carers Project Worker applied for a grant for white goods and the family received a washing machine.

“I'm glad I trusted my worker to tell her the truth about the washing, she didn't make us feel like we were a 'bad' family.”

You Said ...

An YC wanted his mum to take him to the museum to see the mummies because he was really interested in them. Unfortunately his mum was too unwell to take him out without support and there was no-one she could ask to go with them.

We Did ...

The Barnardo's Project Worker went with the YC and his mum to the museum, making the trip possible.

You Said ...

A YAC wanted to meet with the professionals who were working with his mum because ordinarily, they came to visit when he was in college and they weren't supporting his mum in a way which was helpful to him.

We Did ...

A meeting was arranged by the project which included mum's CPN and social worker at a time when the YAC could attend. He was able to share information about how his caring responsibilities were impacting on his wellbeing and the professionals made changes to mum's Plan.

You Said ...

Another carer had applied for a Young Carers bursary at school and the paperwork had been completed but after 3 months the young carer had not heard about the outcome.

We Did ...

The Project Worker contacted the YC's school and liaised with the relevant professionals. As a result the bursary was awarded and back dated to the date of her application.

You Said ...

A YAC asked for funding to enable her to keep her mobile phone contract which was a key feature in enabling her to care for her parent from a distance whilst at University.

We Did ...

Her Project Worker applied for a grant and made a case for the YAC phone contract to be funded. The award was granted... the first time that this particular grant had been awarded for a mobile phone contract.

You Said ...

YAC X wanted to undertake an MA at University but couldn't afford to do so.

We Did ...

The carers Project Worker accessed an external grant so that YAC X. could undertake an MA.

You Said ...

YAC X has always cared for his dad who has never wanted '*strange people*' in his home. The YAC now wants to go to University out of Liverpool and feels that his dad needed additional support to enable this to happen.

We Did ...

The carers Project Worker visited YAC X's dad to encourage him to accept external support and to explain what YAC X needed in order to go to University. YAC X's dad was happy to accept support when the Project Worker explained YAC X's needs.

During my discussions with the young people they all talked about individual support that they have received from the team and the ways they have had a voice:

- ***"I got into Mersey Police Cadets scheme through Zoe my project worker. I don't think I would have been able to get involved if it wasn't for her but it was something I really wanted to do."***
- ***"I got help with getting into college as I was in and out of school because of caring responsibilities."***

- ***“I had help at home with getting furniture and stuff. I now have my own area to study and that now!”***
- ***“I also got help with getting into college. I was out of school for five years and had lots of issues with anxiety but Barnardo’s really helped me with this and I am now in college.”***
- ***“They do things that are so simple but yet so big! Things like helping you set up for credit/bank cards.”***
- ***“When I got involved they supported me with my physical and mental health. They encouraged and supported me in accessing the doctors and getting the help I needed.”***
- ***“They help you with other things and always there for you until issues are resolved.”***
- ***“They supported me setting up the ‘message in a bottle’ in my fridge.”***
- ***“I have support from them, not just for me but also for my mum.”***
- ***“They never make it so that you have to travel far. They work out times that are good for you and make sure your transport or transport costs are covered. Even if it’s £2 for a train ticket you can get a lift and not have to worry. I think that’s great!”***

Other Comments

I asked the young people to describe in one or two words what the service means to them. This is what they said:

- Helpful
- Caring
- Distraction I guess
- Open
- Interesting
- Opportunities
- Educational
- Necessary.
-

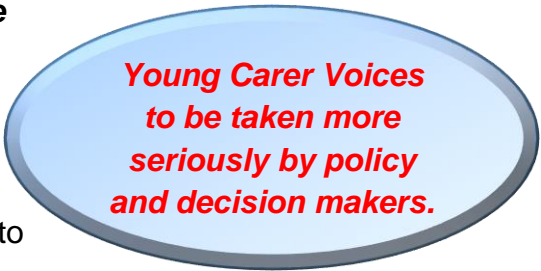
“I say the same thing every year. Barnardo’s is a lifesaving service.”

Recommendations

The young people shared some of their frustration when meeting with a local MP and would like to be the only recommendation within this report based on this feedback:

“MPs need to listen to children and young people more but they don’t believe in us so they don’t!”

I am sure that over the next year, Barnardo’s will engage into further discussion with policy and decision makers to ensure that young carers voices are taken seriously and that they have a role to play. I look forward to hearing about this work in the future.



***Young Carer Voices
to be taken more
seriously by policy
and decision makers.***

Conclusion

Once again I am completely blown away by the lengths the staff team and service go to for ensuring that both young carers and young adult carers have in ensuring their voices are heard and changes are made as a result.

My report clearly identifies the depth of the work they do and the true active engagement. After visiting the project on a yearly basis for several years now, I am once again overwhelmed by the impact the project has on not only the organisation itself but partner organisations, key decision makers and most importantly the young people and their families themselves. Every young person I have met that is involved in the service has given nothing but praise about the service and the impact it has had on their lives.

When I asked the young people if they felt Barnardo's should receive *Investing in Children Membership Award*[™] for another year based on involving children and young people in Dialogue that leads to Change, they all agreed and said:

“They offer a mixture of ways to give your views.”

“They take our voice very seriously and value what we say!”

“They should definitely get the award!”

I therefore have no hesitation in renewing their *Investing in Children Membership Award*[™] for the following year.

I would like to offer my congratulations once again and thank the staff and the young people who helped me gather the evidence to write this report.

This report has been endorsed by the young people I met with.

Well Done!

**Eleanor Seed
Project Manager
Investing in Children CIC
October 2018**

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