

Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

2 February 2012

Young Carers

Recommendations:

- (1) To agree that the support provided by the voluntary Carers Support Service continues to meet the needs of Young Carers in Warwickshire within the context of changes to adult social care
- (2) To consider whether further updates are required

1.0 Key issues

- 1.1 Cabinet requested an update from the Integrated Disability Service (IDS) on the position of Young Carer services following an Adult Service tender exercise in June 2011 to secure a provider for a major contract to support, deliver and implement services for generic Carers.
- 1.2 Prior to tender, services for this client group were provided by the Carers Support Service, based in Honiley, but subsequently the contract was secured by Guideposts. The change of provider had a significant impact on the Carers Support Service as an organisation, with potential closure being seriously considered and six month notice served to Warwickshire County Council to end the Young Carers contract.
- 1.3 This report clarifies the current position by detailing the steps taken by the Local Authority and the Carers Support Service to avert this situation and support the continuation of the Young Carers service.
- 1.4 There are no immediate significant risks. However, if additional income to support organisational running costs is not secured by Carers Support Service over the next three years, the organisation may yet be time limited.

2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 The Young Carer contract has been operating with the same provider successfully since April 2008. It has a value of £164,225 per annum with a 37% contribution year on year from Health.

- 2.2 The contract meets the needs of young carers across the county, offering support groups, activities, one-to-one befriending in schools or other locations, and home visiting as required.
- 2.3 The young people themselves select activities of interest and extra funds are raised to enable them to fulfil their aspirations for example: a short residential break in Paris, a trip to Abbey Road Studios in London, Canal Trip, First Aid Training and undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh awards.
- 2.4 The groups are reported by young carers to be supportive and cover a range of art, education, drama and sport to ensure there is something to appeal to everyone.
- 2.5 Carers Support Service, with the assistance of the IDS, also hosts an annual event for Young Carers as a celebration of achievements.
- 2.6 In 2010/2011, the organisation worked with 679 children and young people over eight and up to 18 years of age. At least 50% of youngsters attending sessions live in a family caring for a disabled child or young person. These indicators are drawn from a suite of performance measures that are regularly monitored to ensure positive outcomes.
- 2.7 Skilled practitioners having built robust relationships with young carers in their charge are able to help and support where issues are identified. Experience indicates that young carers as a group are significantly concerned about their caring duties and its impact, their families, their performance at school and their own health.
- 2.8 In seeking to minimise the effect of caring responsibilities, the organisation engages with and signposts to other relevant agencies, works with schools, supports professionals as part of the Common Assessment Framework, runs homework clubs and ensures all relevant benefits are being received by each household.
- 2.9 A group of young carers formed one of the focus groups that met Ofsted Inspectors recently. Feedback from both parties was very positive.

3.0 Summary of Actions

- 3.1 In May 2011, the Carers Support Service in partnership with Coventry University, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, Warwickshire Clubs for Young People and Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs submitted a joint bid with a value of £900,000 over a three-year period to the Big Lottery 'Youth in Focus', citing their organisation as the lead partner.
- 3.2 Following the contract award to Guideposts in June 2011, Carers Support Service were informed that their bid was accepted in principle and therefore moved forward to the second round, which involved the submission of a detailed Business Plan.

3.3 In order to help secure the provider's future, and thus attract the additional lottery income and services for Young Carers, a series of meetings with Multi Agency Commissioning, IDS and Carers Support Service resulted in the following actions:

- Multi Agency Commissioning applied for and successfully secured an exemption to tender the Young Carers contract for a period of 18 months. The contract with the Carers Support Service will now expire on 30 September 2014 to synchronise with the conclusion of the Youth in Focus Lottery bid.
- IDS management support and office space offered to the provider. The provider has now negotiated smaller office space at Holly Farm, Honiley and closed offices in Stratford and Bagington.
- The provider's Honorary Treasurer conducted a financial review of the organisation and produced a revised cash flow. There has been a significant reduction in overheads as a result of the office closures, the transfer of staff to Guideposts (via TUPE) and the restructuring of the organisation.
- The provider employed a Business Consultant to prepare the Lottery Business Plan, which was submitted by 31st December 2011 to meet the deadline, with new services to commence in April 2012.
- Carers Support Service has recruited a part-time fundraiser and set an annual fundraising target of £50,000, which they assure the Council is achievable.
- A Trustee has been successfully recruited to the Board with relevant children and young people's experience.
- Notice to terminate the Young Carers contract was withdrawn by the Carers Support Service.
- Contract performance monitoring continues on a quarterly basis with written reports submitted to ensure specification requirements are met.
- Established a multi agency Young Carer Steering Group to meet on a quarterly basis to work together to share knowledge, information and resources to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people.

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