**SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

**Provision of a Service for**

**Young Carers**

**Wokingham Borough Council**

1. **Introduction**

This is the service specification for the provision of a Young Carers service for Wokingham Borough.

1. **Background**
2. 24 young carers are currently being supported by the young carers service. However the 2011 Census data identified 698 young carers (aged 0-24) in the Wokingham Borough and according to national study carried out by the BBC, the figure could be as high as 2,000.
3. A young carer is defined for the purposes of this tender in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 as ‘*A person under the age of 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person’*. Young carers are most likely to provide care for a parent, grandparent, brother or sister, because that person has an illness or disability, mental health problem or problems with addiction to alcohol or drugs.
4. The term ‘young carer’ does not apply to the everyday and occasional help around the home that may often be expected of or given by children in families and is part of family and community cohesion.
5. A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and care responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for the young person, risking negative impact on his or her emotional, physical well-being, educational achievement and life chances.
6. Research has evidenced the detrimental effect of undertaking such caring roles has on this vulnerable group of young people and children. Research has also evidenced how their outcomes and life opportunities suffer in comparison to their peers.

1. The Council’s Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Education Welfare, Health Liaison, Community Safety together with Community Mental Health, Optalis Brokerage and Drug and Alcohol recovery service have all adopted the Wokingham Borough Council’s young carers protocol and referral pathway. The aim of the protocol is to ensure earlier, better integrated and effective responses to young carers and their families are available using the whole family approach by raising awareness with professionals, identify young carers and referring them to the young carers service for an assessment.

1. The Council is committed to making sure that caring is a positive experience for all their carers including adult and young carers. While they continue to provide care, carers should be able to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Wokingham Borough Council wants our carers to be well supported in their caring role and have a life outside their caring role including access to employment, education, and leisure activities and being able to keep in touch with friends and family. Five priorities have been identified in our Carers Strategy to achieve these priorities:

1. Identifying carers

2. Enabling carers to keep healthy

3. Addressing social isolation

4. Supporting carers’ to self-help and empowerment

5. Promoting community based approaches to support

1. The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 strengthen the rights of young carers and give greater protection to their welfare. Regardless of the level of support provided to the person cared for when there is an appearance of need, the Acts place a duty on local authorities to carry out an assessment to establish the support needs of a young carer. Local authorities when undertaking an assessment of the person cared for must consider the wider needs of the family.
2. Where services are working with families, they should ensure that the needs of dependent children in the family, including those who may be assisting with caring, are recognised. This means taking account of their hopes, aspirations, strengths and achievements and the need for advice and support for all the family
3. Wokingham Borough Council now wishes to retender for this service, putting in place a service specification in order to maximise the resources available, which includes creating increased flexibility in service provision and realising greater economies of scale. It is expected that this new service will help meet the Council’s aim to improve the life experience of young carers so they can live healthy lives, have the same opportunities as their peers to achieve their potential by improving their educational attainment and career opportunities.
4. **Service Aims**
5. The aims of the new service are as follows:

* Increase awareness of young carers across the statutory, public and voluntary sector in order to improve the identification of young carers
* Increase the number(s) of referrals for a young carers assessment
* Carry out assessments of young carers needs; providing outcome based personalised support
* To provide early intervention and support to prevent, reduce or delay escalation of support needs
* Reach out and identify young carers, to provide them with personalised support so they can as individuals, achieve the outcomes they need which will support them to learn, develop, enjoy their childhood and for them to achieve their full potential.

1. **Service Delivery**

The Service Provider will develop and deliver a personalised outcome focused support service for young carers in Wokingham Borough.

1. The Service Provider will raise awareness of the needs of young carers with services in the Council, Schools and other relevant partner organisations and promote the support services available.
2. To improve the educational attainment, attendance and health and well-being of young carers the Service Provider will ensure Schools and Colleges have appropriate support processes in place for young carers.
3. The Service Provider will engage, identify and record the details of young carers, ensuring that they reach out to all communities (geographic and social) in doing so.
4. The Service Provider will have robust referral processes in place and undertake face to face assessment with our young carers.
5. The Service Provider will ensure each young carer will have an individual outcome focused support plan and risk management plan.
6. The Service Provider will improve communication with young carers and their parents, raising awareness of all services available to young carers. The Service Provider will ensure that all information is made available to young carers and their families, is accessible and in easy read format.
7. The Service Provider will co-ordinate and develop the network of support, including making best use of universal services, and the rest of the time with specific, time-limited and outcome focused support for young carers.
8. The Service Provider will support young carers at an appropriate level through the provision of information, signposting, advice and advocacy for example to access education, activities and careers.
9. The Service Provider will actively encourage regular involvement by young carers and their families to ensure that they are involved and consulted on service development.
10. The Service Provider will be expected to provide a service which shows innovative practice and added value, and will be expected to share good practice.
11. To achieve personalised outcomes for young carers the Service Provider will be expected to develop new services for those young carers in transition to adult carers such as a buddy system.
12. The Service Provider will produce an ‘offer’ to young carers who require early lower level intervention.
13. The Service Provider will improve engagement with young carers from BME and hard to reach communities and the development of group activities.
14. The Service Provider will work with the Council and partners to implement any changes relating to updated legislation or national guidance.
15. The Service Provider will ensure they have sufficient plans in place, as a contingency, if staff take leave or are absent on sick leave.
16. The Service Provider will work in partnership with local and national organisations to improve support for young carers.
17. The service will be flexible and operate in times to meet the needs and availability of the young carers and may involve some evening work to deliver group activities and individual support.
18. The requirements of service delivery may change over the life of the contract and the Service Provider will work in partnership with the Council and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the way that the service is accessed and delivered meets the needs of those eligible to use it.
19. **Support Planning**

The Provider will ensure that:

1. Each young carer has an allocated young carer support worker.
2. Each young carer has an outcome-focused support plan and a risk management plan which outline the support to be delivered in order to achieve agreed goals.
3. The support plan will clearly link with statutory duty where appropriate to ensure that the wider needs of the individual are met.
4. The support plan will be formulated in partnership with the young carer and their family to ensure the plan is reflective of their needs, aspirations and wishes and identifies the support or actions needed to meet or achieve these, including the actions required from other relevant professionals.
5. The support plan will aim to empower the young carer to achieve their educational attainment potential and life opportunities. The support plan must be outcome-focused, defining goals which are specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time limited.
6. The support plans and risk management plans will be reviewed regularly and at least every six months or where there is a change in circumstances or risk.
7. The Service Provider will support young carers at statutory meetings.

1. The Service should provide both crisis and prevention support.
2. **Partnership Working and Complementary Services**
3. A key element to the successful delivery of this Service, and to achieving successful outcomes for our young carers, will be the Service’s ability to work alongside, and signpost to, the many other prevention and community services that exist in the Borough.
4. If a young carer is referred to the Service but a more appropriate service already exists for them, then it is expected that the Service co-operates with the other service provider to ensure that the young carer receives the most appropriate support.
5. The Service will be active in the local community and will be represented at provider forums and any other appropriate agency or multi-agency forums.
6. The Service Provider will establish and develop strong working relationships with key referral and stakeholder agencies and other support providers.
7. The Provider will consult with young carers, their families and stakeholders of the service on a regular basis to offer the opportunity to feed into service delivery, monitor outcomes achieved and ensure that the service is meeting the needs of the local area.
8. The Service Provider must be aware of key government policies, legislation and good practice guidance and use it to influence service planning and delivery.
9. **Eligibility for the Service**
10. There are three categories of criteria that must be met for young people to be eligible for the Service.

* **Eligibility criteria 1 – Age:**
* A person will be under the age of 18 and provides or intends to provide care for another person.
* **Eligibility criteria 2 – Resident in the Borough:**
* A person will live within Wokingham Borough and provides or intends to provide care for another person within Wokingham Borough.
* **Eligibility criteria 3 – Appearance of need:**
* Regardless of the level of support provided by the young carer to the cared for person, when there is an appearance of need, an assessment must be carried out to establish the support needs of a young carer.

1. Under the principles of fair access, no young carer should be unreasonably excluded from accessing the Service. Reasonable exclusions are where people do not meet the Service’s eligibility criteria and exclusion arrangements (which reflect the provider’s ability to respond to need) and those refused on the grounds of risk as a result of the outcome of a needs assessment process. Anyone refused a service should be signposted to appropriate services to meet identified needs.
2. The Service must have a clear admissions criteria and exclusion policy in place which reflects the requirements of this Service Specification. It must be shared with the referral agencies and stakeholders and be subject to regular review. All referrals received must undergo a proportionate assessment of need, risk and eligibility by the provider prior to the applicant being accepted.
3. The Service Provider will ensure that the service does not meet support needs which are eligible to be met under community care legislation.
4. **Access to the Service and Referral Pathway**
5. There are no restrictions on the source of referrals, which are likely to include:

* Self-referral
* Referral from parent or guardian
* Voluntary and charitable agencies
* Advice agencies
* Statutory agencies including Health and Social Care Services
* Schools
* Other prevention services

The Provider should endeavour to work alongside the assessment processes of other agencies wherever possible (e.g. the use of the Common Assessment Framework by Wokingham Borough Council Children’s Services) to avoid duplication of information and to ensure as much as possible that applicants are not repeatedly asked for the same information.

1. The Service is expected to meet the following targets:

* Referrals must be responded to within 2 workings days
* Assessments and visits must be carried out within 15 working days of initial referral contact

1. The Service is commissioned on a contractual basis and is therefore free at point of delivery for young carers.
2. **Demand for support and service capacity**
3. The Service will need to be able to cater for varying levels of need – short-term support, longer-term support, ad-hoc assistance, on-going reassurance, fluctuations in support need.
4. The Service will need to be designed to respond to all queries appropriately and paperwork must be proportionate to effectively balance support delivery and record keeping including the ability to demonstrate and monitor the outcomes for young carers. Risk assessments must be completed whenever required.
5. The Service Provider will need to devise flexible and innovative solutions to meet these challenges.
6. As above, the Service Provider will need to work efficiently to identify cases where support can be lessened or ceased to enable new young carers to be supported.
7. **Service Availability and Location**
8. The Service will commence on 1st July 2016
9. The Provider will have access to a desk for one person and a private room. The private room is a shared facility in a building and so will be not be for the sole use of the provider.
10. The Service Provider is able to make their own office/premises arrangements but this will be at an additional cost to the provider and is not covered under the cost of this contract. If the Provider does choose to provide their own office this must be based at a local office which is easily accessible to young carers from all parts of the Borough.
11. A local voluntary sector organisation has indicated that they may have office space available for the Provider for two – three part time support staff. Any arrangements to use this space will be the responsibility of the Provider to negotiate with the voluntary sector organisation and is not covered under the cost of this contract.
12. **Staff and Training**
13. High quality, committed and skilled staff are at the heart of successful and effective support provision.
14. The Service Provider will be responsible for the recruitment, training, induction, support and supervision of staff and will ensure that staff maintain high standards of professional behaviour and job performance.
15. The Service Provider must ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in the delivery of the Service have access to regular support and supervision and that staff and volunteers performance is monitored and managed. This is particularly important given the challenging situations that are likely to arise in supporting vulnerable young people.
16. The Provider should also endeavour to operate the service with a consistent staff team to help achieve the most effective support delivery possible.
17. As a minimum requirement, any training provided should include the following:

* A comprehensive induction programme
* Support Planning, Needs and Risk Assessment procedures
* Health and Safety Awareness
* Confidentiality and professional boundaries
* Equality and Diversity
* Complaints and compliments
* Safeguarding Children and Young persons
* Whistle blowing.

1. It is expected that staff and volunteers should have or develop:

* Experience of working with young carers
* An understanding of the impact of support needs on young carers
* An ability to work creatively with young carers and or young people
* An understanding of children and adult protection issues and procedures.
* An ability to effectively and safely assess a young person’s needs target and manage identified risk
* Experience of support planning for young carers and or young people
* An ability to work in partnership
* An ability to deliver a flexible service to young carers and or young people

1. The Service Provider will, at all times, ensure sufficient numbers of staff are available to deliver the Service as detailed in this specification.
2. Staff and volunteers involved in transportation of young carers will need to have a valid driving licence and have access to an appropriate vehicle.
3. The Service Provider will adhere to the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) which includes carrying out checks with the DBS on all staff employed and/or (if any) volunteers engaged. These checks must be at the enhanced level where staff and any volunteers provide or supervise the provision of the Support Service, and at least at the standard level for staff and any volunteers who do not directly provide the Support Services but do come into regular contact with young carers. All checks must be renewed every three years.
4. Management, accountancy and administrative support shall be provided for the Service by the Service Provider.
5. **Buildings, Transport, Facilities and Equipment**
6. If applicable it is the Service Provider’s responsibility to ensure that buildings used for the purpose of the service for young carers adequately meet the needs of the young people in the care of the Service Provider.
7. If applicable all equipment used in the provision of the service for young carers is regularly checked for safety and replaced if found to be in an unsafe condition. Records of any equipment inspections need to be maintained.
8. The Provider will be responsible for meeting the cost of IT support, telephone charges, photocopying, marketing and promotion and Carers Trust affiliation.
9. Support workers will need to have access to an appropriate vehicle to be able to support people at various locations, e.g. at young carer’s home, school, venue of their choice, meetings where advocacy is required and to deliver activities in specific locations.
10. The Service Provider shall ensure that all vehicles employed in the performance of the service for young carers are properly licensed, insured, taxed, and tested and that they comply with all regulations and requirements relating to the construction, maintenance, and operation of such vehicles. For the benefit of doubt, this shall apply whether the employee uses their own vehicle, or a vehicle owned by the Service User.
11. The Service Provider will ensure that all drivers of any vehicles used must be suitably qualified, insured, and possess the relevant valid driving licence and that any events that affect or alter the Service Providers ability to drive or the validity of their driving licence must be reported to the Service Provider immediately.
12. **Standards**

In providing the Service, the Provider must comply with all statutory provisions and of law that apply to the Service. As a minimum, the Provider must have policies/procedures to cover the following areas which are in line with, and follow, best practice:

1. Safeguarding**;**

The Provider must have in place procedures to safeguard vulnerable adults and children from abuse which comply with the Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures and the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/socialcare/concern/safeguarding>

The Provider must adhere to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which defines the scope of the Vetting and Barring scheme including the requirements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority registration.

All persons involved in providing the service will have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

1. Health and Safety;

The Provider shall abide by all relevant Health and Safety legislation and have a policy and procedure to maintain the safety of the members of the Board and Employees in their support activities.

1. Complaints & Whistleblowing;

The Provider must have a complaints and whistleblowing procedures in place. All complaints and whistleblowing activity and their outcomes must be recorded.

1. The Provider must ensure that its Equal Opportunities Policy complies with all statutory obligations as regards discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, cultural or ethnic origin, marital status, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.
2. Freedom of Information and Information Sharing;

The Service Provider will assist and supply the Council with information when requests for information are made of the Council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Service Provider will be required to abide by information sharing protocols and policies required in the provision of this service. The Service Provider and the Council will share necessary information in a secure way.

1. Any failure or breach in meeting standards should be notified to the Council immediately.
2. **National Legislation, guidance and good practice**
3. It will remain the responsibility of the service provider to be aware of current and changing legislation governing and informing the delivery of services, and will remain the responsibility of the service provider to ensure that it complies with all and any changes to national legislation and published guidance on good practice.
4. **Service Outcomes and targets**
5. All agencies, including the Provider are expected to support young carers in their progress towards achieving the Council’s key strategic priorities and outcomes for young carers. These are listed below:

* Improve educational attainment and focus on all children achieving their potential.
* Improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and students, specifically Narrowing the Gap
* Ensure the local authority and schools are ready to embrace the implications of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.
* Ensure that the voice of children and families are listened to, and influence practice and services.

1. Service outcomes

**Outcome One**

**Purpose:**  Increase identification of young carers and provision of appropriate support

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | Increase the number of young carers being supported to 200 by 31 March 2019. |
| **Output** | Identification of young carers and provision of outcome focused support |
| **Measure** | The number of referrals made to the service, assessments undertaken and outcomes for each young carer. |
| **Contract Monitoring** | Submission of quarterly monitoring reports complying with monitoring template provided by the Council.  Annual site visit undertaken by Council officer who will collect data on referrals and assessments, examples of outcomes based support plans and case studies from young carers of the impact support has had on their lives. |
| **Strategic Link** | 1. Contribute to improving educational attainment and focus on all children achieving their potential.  2. Contribute to improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils and students: specifically Narrowing the gap |

**Outcome Two**

**Purpose: Developing the voice of the young carers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | Young carers are actively involved in service development |
| **Output** | The creation of a young carers forum, or involvement in similar group, so young carers can discuss issues, challenges and service development |
| **Measure** | The number of young carers who participate in the young carers forum and the service development changes made as a direct result of their involvement |
| **Contract Monitoring** | Submission of quarterly monitoring reports complying with monitoring template provided by the Council.  This service will be visited by an officer from the Council annually who will collect, check and compare attendance records and the outcomes from the forum involvements |
| **Strategic Link** | 1 Contribute to improving educational attainment and focus on all children achieving their potential.  2. Contribute to improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils and students: specifically Narrowing the gap |

**Outcome 3**

**Purpose: Engagement with schools**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | Improved education attainment and health and well-being of young carers and young carers achieving their potential. |
| **Output** | Make contact and be involved with 10 secondary schools,10 primary schools and 2colleges, raising awareness of young carers to pupils and all staff and improving schools’ support to young carers. Disseminate good practice to all schools in Wokingham Borough. |
| **Measure** | The number of visits to schools and activities undertaken and number of referrals for an assessment made by schools engaged with. |
| **Contract Monitoring** | Submission of quarterly monitoring reports complying with monitoring template provided by the Council.  This service will be visited by an officer from the Council annually who will collect and check number of schools engagement and outcomes and will survey the schools. |
| **Strategic Link** | 1. Contribute to improving educational attainment and focus on all children achieving their potential.  2. Contribute to improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils and students: specifically Narrowing the gap |

1. **Service targets**

The service is expected to meet the following targets:

* Over the life of the contract, the service must grow the number (baseline 24) of young carers that have accessed and used the service to 200 for example 100% increase in the first year, 100% increase in the second and 100% increase by the end of the third year. The number must then increase a further 20% for each year that the contract is extended in the event that an extension is granted.
* The service must respond to referrals within two working days.
* Assessments and visits must be carried out within 15 working days of the initial referral contact.
* To provide support to/or engage with, 50 young carers per month, dependent on the number of young carers registered, by various mechanisms including but not limited to: one to one sessions, group activities, home or school visits, social media and keeping in touch through other communication channels as appropriate.
* To develop relationships with four new agencies likely to lead to long term relationships.

* To have substantial involvement likely to lead to a long term relationship with five secondary schools and twenty primary schools.

* 80% of young carers receiving higher level support are expected to have shown reasonable progress or avoided some form of more intense intervention over the period of support. To demonstrate development in young carers’ resilience.
* To demonstrate positive news stories include case studies in monitoring returns which may be used in publicity for the service.. Five stories in the first year, eight in the second year and ten in the third year.

The process for evidencing these outcomes will be agreed with the successful tenderer after the award of the contract. Please note other targets may be added as required.

1. **Monitoring and Reporting**

**16.1** The Service Provider will ensure that monitoring, evaluation and assessment of outcomes is undertaken.

**16.2** The Service Provider shall be required to demonstrate that they are willing to work with the Council to develop systems to monitor service and key performance outcomes.

**16.3** The Service Provider will be required to record all young Carers cases, contact, support and activities on the Council’s electronic case recording system – Frameworki.

**16.4** The Service Provider shall be required to monitor specifically the following equality ‘protected characteristics’:

* Disability
* Race
* Gender
* Sexual orientation
* Age
* Religion and belief

**16.5** The Service Provider will be required to complete and submit quarterly monitoring forms. The monitoring forms will be developed in conjunction with the Service Provider.

**16.6** Where appropriate the Service Provider will supply the latest Ofsted or CSCI report relevant to their organisation to the Council.

**16.7** The Council reserves the right to request access to the Service Provider’s premises and any such documentation as may be reasonably requested to ensure the satisfactory provision of the service for young carers. This may include but is not restricted to:

* Staff recruitment
* Staff Training
* Equalities information
* Policy documentation
* Compliments recording
* Complaints procedure and reporting

**16.8** Where the Council wishes to undertake monitoring visits to the Service Provider’s premises the time and date of the visit will be mutually agreed. In exceptional circumstances the Council reserve the right to undertake monitoring visits without prior notification where there are significant concerns for health, safety or wellbeing.

1. **Funding Allocation**

**17.1** The contract value is in the range of £58,000 - £63,000 per annum.